



Universiteit  
Leiden

The Netherlands

**Muslim merchants and working-class in action :  
nationalism, social mobilization and boycott  
movement in the Ottoman Empire 1908-1914**  
Çetinkaya, Y.D.

**Citation**

Çetinkaya, Y. D. (2010, May 26). *Muslim merchants and working-class in action : nationalism, social mobilization and boycott movement in the Ottoman Empire 1908-1914*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/15553>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/15553>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

## THE SHIFT FROM FOREIGN TO “INTERNAL” ENEMIES, 1910-1911

During the 1908 Boycott Movement, a boycott against Greece was proposed following the declaration of the Cretan Assembly for unification with Greece. However, this was prevented, thanks to Greece’s official veto. The proposal of a boycott against Greece also worried the elite of the new Young Turk regime. It was the heydays of the 1908 Revolution, and such an act against Greece would probably damage the intercommunity relationships in the Ottoman Empire, which had a significant number of Greek citizens. The prominent figures of the Boycott Movement, and particularly the Committee of Union and Progress, did not want to risk the newly created atmosphere of fraternity.

Yet, the Young Turk regime had significant problems both with Greece and the Ottoman Greek community. The 1908 elections, for instance, revealed this tension between different communities and the political groups representing them.<sup>1</sup> The Boycott Movement of 1908 did not include Greece as a target. Greece’s attitude also helped this decision, as it did not dare to affirm the proclamation of the Cretans.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, there

- 1 Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, “İstanbul’da 1908 Seçimleri,” *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol. XV, No. 89, May 2001, pp. 15-24; Hasan Taner Kerimoğlu, “İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti’nin Rum Politikası 1908-1914,” Unpublished PhD Thesis, Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir, 2008, pp. 33-54.
- 2 Greece at the same time tried to constitute an entente with the Ottoman Empire and get rid of the diplomatic isolation in the Balkans. Thanks to this prospective collaboration the Cretan Issue could have solved. However this political project could not realized. Helen Gardikas Katsiadakis, “I Elliniki Kivermisi kai to Kritiko Zitima: 1908,” (The Greek Government and the Cretan Question. 1908), *Aferoma ston Panepistimiako Daskalo Vas. VI.*

was no boycott called against Greece at that time, although there did occur such a rather weak call.<sup>3</sup>

Still, the Cretan Question persisted as one of the pressing issues during the Second Constitutional Period. This is why during the autumn of 1909 a boycott against Greece related to the Cretan Question came on the agenda.<sup>4</sup> It was once again a futile proposition, due to the social and political milieu of the young regime, and lasted no longer than a month. Only in the late spring of 1910, the conditions were rife for a boycott to emerge as a social movement against Greece.

The protests against Crete's call for *enosis* (union) with Greece provoked a wave of political meetings. Ottomans who by now were quite experienced with the boycott as weapon started to call for a boycott against Greek merchandise. The boycott organizations, which were mainly comprised of port workers, notables and low-ranking bureaucrats, were reactivated during the mass meetings against Greece. Within a short time, problems emerged regarding the definition of what was Greek. The boycott officially targeted the Hellenes, the citizens of the Greek state, and exempted the Greek citizens of the Ottoman Empire, the *Rums*. Yet, the Greek community and the patriarchate claimed that the Ottoman Greeks were also affected by the boycott, since both groups had profound and intimate relationships. The debates on the definition of Greekness bred tension between the Muslim and Orthodox communities and harmed their relationship.

Moreover, foreign merchants (such as the British, the French and the Italians) were injured as a result of boycotting activities. The merchandise of foreign merchants, imported in Greek vessels, was boycotted as well. Moreover, there were Greeks who were citizens of these countries. A number of foreign merchants in the Ottoman Empire were considered Greek by mistake and experienced problems in the ports for a significant period of time. This caused concern for both the boycotters and the Ottoman state in front of the Great Powers. However, these debates and obstacles did not halt the expansion of the boycott, which lasted a year and a half.

---

*Sifiroera*, (Athens: 1992), p. 370.

3 Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, *1908 Osmanlı Boykotu: Bir Toplumsal Hareketin Analizi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004).

4 Evangelia Ahladi, "İzmir'de İttihatçılar ve Rumlar: Yunan-Rum Boykotu (1908-1911)," *Ke-bikeç*, No. 26, 2008, p. 188-190; Hasan Taner Kerimoğlu, "İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin Rum Politikası 1908-1914," pp. 192-198.

### 3.1. The Cretan Question

The Cretan issue emerged as a diplomatic question after the independence of Greece in 1829. Over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there appeared numerous riots and upheavals in Crete for a union with Greece. The revolts in 1833, 1841, 1858, 1866, 1878 and 1895 were the most significant events in the history of Crete. As a result of these insurrections, Crete gained a number of privileges. However, the concessions that the Crete received from the Ottoman Empire did not diminish the struggle of the Greek Cretans and the tension between the Christian and Muslim inhabitants of the island. The Pact of Halepa gave semi-independent status to the island under the rule of a Christian governor in 1878. However, the Ottoman Empire was not able to control the island, and the 1896 revolt paved the way for a war between Greece and the Ottoman Empire. Although the Ottoman Empire won the war, Crete became an autonomous state under the administration of Prince George of Greece, thanks to the intervention of the Great Powers.<sup>5</sup> The tie between Crete and the Ottoman Empire was only a diplomatic recognition of Ottoman rights by the Great Powers. Practically, the island was detached from the empire. The rule of Prince George, however, did not satisfy the desires of Cretan nationalists who were longing for a union with Greece.

The Cretan Question remained one of the important issues for Greek and Turkish nationalists. The Ottoman Turkish press informed the public about the incidents in Crete after the 1896 revolt, and there appeared a mobilization in the Ottoman Empire to help their co-religionists. However, the administration of Abdülhamit II did not allow this mobilization to grow, and the propaganda on the Cretan Question was left to the hands of the Young Turk movement in exile.<sup>6</sup> The Greek Cretans' dissatisfaction with the rule of Prince George culminated in the 1905 Therriso Uprising, which also was an indication of the rise of Venizelos (a Cretan leader) in Greece's political life of. The result was the replacement of Prince George with the new High Commissioner Alexander Zaimis. Once again without guaranteeing the support of the Great Powers, Cretan Greeks were not able to make the *enosis* with Greece a reality.

---

5 Nükhet Adıyeke, "Osmanlı Kaynaklarına Göre Türk-Yunan İlişkilerinde Girit Sorunu (1896)," *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1993, pp. 235-246.

6 Ayşe Nükhet Adıyeke, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Girit Bunalımı (1896-1908)*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000), pp. 244-250.

After the 1908 Revolution, the Cretan Question became one of the popular issues in the Second Constitutional Period. The boycott against Greece and the Greeks came on agenda in May 1910 and did not disappear again until November 1911. In 1910, Cretan officers were officially asked to take an oath of allegiance to the king of Greece. In May, the deputies of the Cretan Assembly also took an oath of fidelity to the king of Greece. However, there were sixteen Muslim deputies in the assembly, and they refused to do so, causing a political and diplomatic crisis. This crisis only passed when the assembly was suspended. Yet, it caused a great reaction in the Ottoman Empire, and hundreds of meetings were convened in towns all over the empire in order to protest Cretan Greeks and Greece. These mass meetings paved the way for a boycott at the end of May 1910. Furthermore, in April 1910 Crete elected Venizelos to the Greek Parliament. This also had repercussions in the Ottoman Empire. Yet, the election of Venizelos to the Greek Parliament by Attica in the August 1910 elections and his becoming the Prime Minister of Greece in September 1910 gave the boycott a new impulse.<sup>7</sup> The last political and diplomatic crisis that triggered a reaction in the Ottoman Empire and affected the Boycott Movement was the crisis in the appointment of *kadis* (Islamic judges) to Crete. The Cretan Greeks refused to accept the Ottoman Empire's right to appoint a *kadi* there. In May 1911, this issue turned into a political crisis and utilized by the Boycott Movement to galvanize the emotions of the Muslim people in the Ottoman Empire. The Cretan Question could only be solved after the Ottoman Empire's defeat in the Balkan Wars and after the *enosis* had been made reality and endorsed in diplomatic circles.

### 3.2. Meetings, Direct Actions and the Mobilization of Society

The proclamation of the boycott against Greece coincided with a general wave of meetings regarding the Cretan issue in most urban centers all over the empire. A number of these meetings were spontaneous and vibrant, while others were officially organized and contrived. Between May and June 1910, the newspapers were filled with reports regarding these meetings, about how they were convened, who gave speeches, what the speakers said, and how the meetings had been organized. The mobiliza-

7 Helen Gardikas Katsiadakis, *Greece and the Balkan Imbroglia: Greek Foreign Policy, 1911-1913*, (Athens: 1995), p. 32.

tion process that these meetings triggered made a crucial contribution to the boycott movement. At first sight, these meetings precipitated the galvanization of the nationalist sentiments of Muslim public opinion in the Ottoman Empire. The mobilization process was comprised of direct actions, volunteer enlistment initiatives, agitation, and an upsurge of emotions. This national atmosphere paved the way for the boycott, for picketing, the obstruction of economic activities, and blockades.

Traditional Turkish historiography has framed these meetings as spurious undertakings of the Committee of Union and Progress or the Ottoman government. Yet, a general look at this mobilization process depicts a different scenario. In several towns, meetings were organized by the direct support of the Committee of Union and Progress, while in other towns the level of mobilization instilled fear in the elites, the members of the Committee of Union and Progress, and particularly the Ottoman government. The elites tried to constrain the meetings and the mobilization of the masses in these particularly passionate towns.

One of the places where such a meeting was held was Manastır. There, a prominent member of the Committee of Union and Progress openly criticized the meetings in front of the Ottoman public. Ferid Bey underlined the “fatuity” of these meetings, which was entertaining Europe. His speech was received with displeasure. However, this meeting is significant for the analysis of the boycott movement. This particular meeting was convened in the *place de la liberté* (*hürriyet meydanı*) and sent a telegram to the government, demanding in their petition from the government to issue an ultimatum to Greece and threaten the country with a general boycott of Greek merchandise. This was the first public plea for a boycott against Greece. The British consul, Arthur B. Geary, claimed that the meeting had been organized by the Committee of Union and Progress. Yet, Ferid Bey’s speech indicates that there were different views among the members of the committee. Delegates of different nationalities convened at the municipality.<sup>8</sup>

As mentioned above, there were hundreds of meetings in almost all provinces and towns of the Ottoman Empire. In most of these meetings, the crowds gathering in a central public place sent telegraphs to the governors, the Ottoman government and foreign embassies, protesting the political developments regarding Crete. The reading of these telegraphs

---

8 FO, 294/50, No. 23, 14 May 1910, p. 29; FO, 195/2357, No. 23, 14 May 1910, p. 448.

consumed a significant amount of time in the Ottoman parliament. Therefore, the parliament decided to read only the names of the towns that had sent telegraphs.<sup>9</sup>

The speeches during these meetings were delivered in different languages. For instance, in Üsküp the speeches were in Turkish, Bulgarian, Serbian and Spanish, but according to the British consul they were exact translations of each other. This gives the impression that the meetings were organized by a particular political power. From the Üsküp meeting, we can also understand that tensions between different communities also had an impact, as Albanians were not invited to the meeting in this town.<sup>10</sup>

In a large open-air meeting in the *Place du Dix Juillet (10 Temmuz Meydanı)* of Salonica, several thousand people gathered to protest to Cretan issue, but the Bulgarians refused to attend. The meeting was an orderly one, since it was officially organized by the Union and Progress Clubs. Yet, the British consul—like other consuls in other towns—underlined the fact that most of the crowd was comprised of the lower classes. A few hundred people came from the neighboring town of Langaza. According to the report of the British consul, everything was pre-arranged, and after a short while the crowd quietly dispersed. In addition to the government and the foreign embassies, the meeting also sent telegrams to the mayors and the *ulema* of Pristina, İpek, Dakova, Ghilan, and Prizren. These very telegrams might have triggered similar meetings in those towns. Furthermore, similar meetings were held in Drama, Serez, Kavala, Katerina, Tikveş, Avret Hisar and Langaza. Four thousand people gathered in Resne in order to protest the oath of the Christian Cretans.<sup>11</sup>

A protest meeting was convened in the courtyard of one of the principal mosques of Edirne, where about 2,500 persons participated in the demonstration. As typical, the participants were composed of the head of the Muslim community, a member of the local branch of the Committee of Union and Progress, and representatives of the non-Muslim communities, such as a Bulgarian teacher, the secretary of the chief rabbi, and a Greek grocer.<sup>12</sup> The participation of non-Muslims in these meetings was also a confirmation of their Ottomanness. The *İttihad* congratulated

---

9 MMZC, Vol. V, 1910, pp. 163-164.

10 FO, 195/2358, No. 29, 19 May 1910, p. 7.

11 FO, 195/2357, No. 56, 15 May 1910, p. 450.

12 FO, 195/2335, No. 25, 13 May 1910, p. 93.

a merchant in Denizli, Dimiloğlu Mihalaki, who gave a speech in a meeting and claimed that Crete was the honor of the Ottomans.<sup>13</sup>

These meetings were held in order to draw the attention of the Ottoman public to the Cretan Question and to provoke the mobilization of the ordinary people for the national cause. Therefore, a year later, when the boycott began to be applied in a more severe way, another similar meeting was convened once again in Edirne. Four thousand people were present in this meeting; a Turkish lawyer, an Armenian teacher, a prominent member of the Jewish community, and a Kurd addressed the crowd. The British consul claimed that it was more an organized meeting, rather than a spontaneous expression of popular opinion. Moreover, he claimed that the municipal police visited the bazaars and shops in order to “invite” people to the meeting.<sup>14</sup> It was evident that a new stage in the boycott movement coincided with a mass meeting.

Like in many places in the Ottoman Empire, a large crowd congregated in one of the main streets of Beirut on 25 May 1910, carrying banners with slogans such as “Crete or Death.” Similar to other meetings all over the empire, rather temperate speeches were delivered. Only Sheikh Mustafa Galayani threatened Greece with war, a siege of Athens, and the capture of King George. According to the report of the British consul, the people gathered in the square did not show much enthusiasm. The meeting dispersed after several telegrams had been sent to the embassies, the ministries and the grand vizier. Similar meetings were held in Sidon and Haifa. The British consul underlined the support of the government officers in organizing of these meetings.<sup>15</sup>

It was thought that these meetings were organized following the instructions of the Ottoman government, which wanted to enhance its position concerning the Cretan Question. The British consul stated that the meeting in Damascus had an “air of artificiality” and, therefore, “a large proportion of the crowd which had been shepherded with flags and bands from the poorer quarters of the city, dispersed long before the ‘speeches’ were over.”<sup>16</sup> The terminology of the consul should be underlined. The consul’s derogatory attitude towards the actions of the lower class and the people in general are the main reason why one may consid-

---

13 “Girit için Miting ve Gönüllü Taburları,” *İttihad*, 30 Mayıs 1326 (12 June 1910).

14 FO, 195/2364, No. 36, 29 May 1911, p. 172.

15 FO, 195/2342, No. 25, 26 May 1910, p. 234.

16 FO, 195/2342, No. 18, 10 June 1910, p. 297.

er the boycott actions as a conspiracy of the government or the Committee of Union and Progress. This mentality was prevalent among the Ottoman elite, and today dominates in the circles of historians who write on these issues.<sup>17</sup> The Greek periodicals in the Ottoman Empire and Greece also employed a similar argumentation in their evaluations of the boycott movement. For them, a nation cannot hand over its official policy to a flock of porters. *Embros* (Athens) argued that after the promulgation of the constitution in 1908 the claim that freedom is nothing but an empty cry became prevalent in the Ottoman Empire. It was only the Young Turks who consulted such kinds of methods in Europe, and it was only in Turkey that the weapon of the boycott became very popular.<sup>18</sup>

In some of the towns, these gatherings worried the Ottoman central bureaucracy. A telegraph sent by the meeting convened in Mihalıçık/Ankara was threatening the Ottoman government: condemning the acts and claims of the Greek King on Crete, the leader of the meeting, Necib, stated that they had started to enlist volunteers in order to fight those who wanted to take Crete from the Ottoman nation. They would meet with the citizens at the Sarıköy train station and not depart from the telegraph office until they received a definite word of assurance concerning the Cretan issue. This was not all. He also declared that the volunteers would seize the Sarıköy train station. The Ministry of Interior Affairs warned the governor of Ankara concerning the volunteers and a prospective seizure of a train. The governor appeased the Interior Ministry, saying that the crowd had already dispersed thanks to the operations of the local governor and the gendarmerie sent to the town.<sup>19</sup>

The Ottoman government was usually interested in the meetings that triggered the mobilization of the masses, or direct actions, or at least claims that may cause a loss of official control on society. Thus, when the meeting in Kula/Aydın declared that they would form a large unit in order to get rid of and punish those who irritated and terrorized the Ottomans, the government wanted the governor to stop such types of initia-

---

17 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 306, Document No. 172, Paris, 5 August 1910. The correspondence of French diplomatic circles indicated that the boycott campaign had an anarchic character that undermined the compliance of Ottoman people with their government's laws. Therefore, the French ambassador wanted to warn the Ottoman government about this fact in a friendly manner.

18 "O Apokleismos stin Konstantinupoli," (Boycott in Istanbul), *Embros* (Athens), 6 June 1910.

19 BOA, DH. MUI. 103-1/23, Documents No. 1-2-3, 29-30 Mayıs 1326 (11-12 June 1910).

tives.<sup>20</sup> Most of the meetings lasted one day. However, in some places such as Margiliç/Yanya the duration and number of meetings increased in a short time. The meetings took off with drums and flags and continued with enlisting volunteers, but did not come to an end. After three days of mobilization, some of the volunteers planned to march towards the center of the province and the excitement and agitation continued at a high level. The governor-general ordered the local governor (*mutasarrıf*) to disperse the people by force if necessary and wanted him to assure people that the government had the power to defend Ottoman of Crete.<sup>21</sup> It is not clear if the crowd in Margiliç was dispersed by force, but that was definitely the case in Kuşadası/Aydın. The gendarmerie used bayonets to disperse a crowd who blockaded a Greek ship in the port.<sup>22</sup>

The commander of the gendarmerie in Limni/Cezayir Bahr-i Sefid was not as fortunate since the soldiers under his command were not eager to disperse the crowds. The officers were afraid of an assault on the non-Muslims of the town and wanted to stop the boycott mobilization. Yet, the already gathered crowd spit in the commander's face.<sup>23</sup> The officers had reasons to fear such an assault since there occurred such instances in other towns of the empire. For instance, the Greek community of Jaffa was attacked during a meeting about the Cretan issue.<sup>24</sup> However, the gendarmerie officer in Limni was harshly criticized by the daily press in Salonica, particularly by the newspaper *Rumeli* which had formerly condemned the excessive acts of the boycotters.<sup>25</sup>

The mobilization during the meeting in Adapazarı did not subside quickly either, and this was why the Ministry of the Interior wanted the *mutasarrıf* to move from İzmit to Adapazarı in order to deal with the

---

20 BOA, DH. MUI. 104-1/21, Documents No. 1-2, 1 Haziran 1326 (14 June 1910).

21 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-1/38, Document No. 3, 24 Mayıs 1326 (6 June 1910).

22 BOA, DH. MUI 110/23, Document No. 1, 26.C.1328.

23 BOA, DH. MUI. 109/54, Document No. 1, 8 Haziran 1326 (21 June 1910).

24 BOA, DH. MUI. 99/43, Document No. 1, 17 Mayıs 1326 (30 May 1910).

25 FO, 195/2358, No. 85, 8 July 1910, p. 157. There were officers similar to the commander in Limni in other places. Although the local ranks of the Ottoman bureaucracy to a great extent supported the boycott in advance, persons like Nureddin Efendi in Salabora were against the movement. This is why the director of the Salabora Customs House, Nureddin Efendi, was considered an enemy of Ottomanism by the Boycott Committee of Preveze and removed from his position. It is possible that he did not allow the boycotters to work freely in the customs house which was a vital place for the boycott movement. The Preveze Boycott Committee even published an announcement criticizing him in *Rumeli*, a newspaper published in Salonica; FO, 195/2358, No. 85, 8 July 1910, p. 157.

masses. The *mutasarrıf* informed the government that the level of the masses' excitement had calmed down after he had contacted the local governor (*kaymakam*) and the notables via telegram. Still, the central government was not satisfied with his reports and sent him to Adapazarı. The report that he sent from Adapazarı very well depicts the mobilization of different segments of society. At first glance he had realized that the town was full of peasants. There had been a crowd of people who agreed to meet in the town in order to demonstrate for the Ottoman Empire's rule in Crete. It was not only the peasants or the lower ranks, but also the town's notables and prominent persons who convened the meeting. The emotions of the crowd were galvanized; yet, thanks to the imam's calming sermon during the Friday prayer, 30,000 people acted in a restrained manner. However, although the meeting in general was temperate, the crowd's decisions were daring and audacious. If the government would show any kind of weakness in defending Crete (which was claimed to be the honor of the Ottomans), people would stand up and take action.<sup>26</sup>

As mentioned above, the enlisting of volunteers emerged during the meeting wave of 1910 in different parts of the empire. These initiatives and newly formed organizations tried to communicate with each other, but did not develop into a full-fledged society, due to government's undertakings. A telegraph regarding the enlistment initiatives was sent to Diyarbakır from Trabzon, signed by the leader of the Trabzon Volunteer Society (*Gönüllü Cemiyeti*) on behalf of the *müftü* and the mayor.<sup>27</sup> The Volunteer Society was formed on the day when 30,000 convened in Trabzon. The same telegram was also sent to Erzurum. By informing the other towns about their enlisting activities, the people of Trabzon called these other towns to do the same. The governor of Erzurum, Celal, warned the government that these types of initiative might incite the populace. The Ministry of the Interior asked the local officers why they would permit such agitating telegrams to be sent.<sup>28</sup>

The ministry also warned the Post, Telegraph and Telephone Administration regarding these types of telegraph, the latter informing the former that after a meeting in Konya many inciting telegrams had been sent to different parts of the empire.<sup>29</sup> One of these telegrams had been received

---

26 BOA, DH. MUI. 100-1/35, Documents No. 3, 7-8, 20-22 Mayıs 1326 (2-4 June 1910).

27 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/17, Document No. 11, 2 Haziran 1326 (15 June 1910).

28 BOA, DH. MUI. 100-2/8, Documents no. 2/1-3, 1-3 Haziran 1326 (14-17 June 1910).

29 BOA, DH. MUI. 100-2/8, Documents No. 1, 19 Mayıs 1326 (1 June 1910).

by a meeting convened in Smyrna. The meeting in Konya launched an initiative to raise funds for the enrolment of volunteers for a war with Greece. The president of the Konya committee invited the *müfti* of Smyrna to start a similar movement. The telegram from Konya informed them that 50,000 volunteers were ready to march against Greece for their 50,000 co-religionists in Crete. These volunteers were begging the people of Smyrna to join them. This call was met with great enthusiasm. The meeting in Smyrna replied that the entire Muslim population of the province of Aydın was ready and had begun to form volunteer battalions.<sup>30</sup>

The meetings held in the towns of the province of Aydın sent telegrams to the government and the newspapers of Smyrna and informed the public that they were enlisting volunteers. These initiatives were not anonymous, as the telegrams were signed by the heads of similar organizations. The commander of the national troops in Manisa, Süleyman Sırrı, wrote that they had already formed a volunteer battalion and were ready for a military mobilization.<sup>31</sup> The Head of the Volunteer Society, Tevfik, wrote to the government that they had started to enlist volunteers in Urla.<sup>32</sup> The telegram of the commander of the national battalion of volunteers in Nazilli was very detailed: Sadettin Bey reported the number of volunteers and their commanders for each district of Nazilli. He mentioned eight different districts (such as Yılara, Arpaz, and Kuyucak) and claimed that the total number had reached 3,985 volunteers in a very short time.<sup>33</sup> Enlisting initiatives also took place in Denizli, Koca-i Atık, and Menemen.<sup>34</sup>

The same telegram was also sent to Diyarbakır by Emin Efendi, the president of the Konya Volunteer Committee, on the same day. The governor-general of Diyarbakır advised to summon a meeting composed of Muslim and Christian notables as well as the mayor and the *müfti* of the town. The meeting was held at the municipality building and decided to

---

30 FO, 195/2360, No. 39, 6 June 1910, p. 196-9.

31 "Manisa Milli Taburlar Kumandanı Süleyman Sırrı, "Manisa'dan Çekilen Telgraf Sureti," *İttihad*, 30 Mayıs 1326 (12 June 1910).

32 Urla'da Gönüllü Cemiyeti Reisi Tevfik, "Urla'dan Çekilen Telgraf Sureti," *İttihad*, 30 Mayıs 1326 (12 June 1910).

33 Nazilli'de Milli Alay Kumandanı Sadettin, "Nazilli'den Çekilen Telgraf Sureti," *İttihad*, 30 Mayıs 1326 (12 June 1910).

34 "Koca-i Atık'ten çekilen Telgraf Sureti," *İttihad*, 30 Mayıs 1326 (12 June 1910); Menemen'den Çekilen Telgraf Sureti," *İttihad*, 30 Mayıs 1326 (12 June 1910); Girit İçin Miting ve Gönüllü Taburları," *İttihad*, 30 Mayıs 1326 (12 June 1910).

ask the government's view on the issue. The government informed the governor-general of Diyarbakır that they were working to maintain Ottoman rights and that volunteers were not needed at that moment.<sup>35</sup> The most active volunteer committee was the one in Konya, trying to control volunteer enlisting activities in Edirne as well. The British consul of Edirne informed the embassy that the meetings of the volunteer committee in the town were held at night and that a considerable number of people had already enlisted. He was informed that a telegram from Konya had asked how the movement was proceeding in Edirne. The answer was that the Edirne was in a position to furnish 40,000 volunteers.<sup>36</sup>

An enlistment initiative also occurred in Serez/Salonica; the notables of Serez visited the governor of Salonica in order to learn whether the government had its consent. The government replied quickly, banning any kind of activity.<sup>37</sup> A similar event took place in Çatalca/Edirne, where a committee had been formed and had started to organize volunteer units. A number of these volunteers also applied to the local government in order to be sent to a prospective war. The Ministry of the Interior warned the *mutasarrıf* of Çatalca that the government was not in need of volunteers.<sup>38</sup> An organization of volunteers also appeared in Manastır, and it was claimed that the initiative had received the consent of Niyazi Bey. This volunteer initiative went hand in hand with the boycott mobilization.<sup>39</sup> Most of the initiatives seemed to fizzle after the first excitement; yet, the British consular of Smyrna informed his ambassador that the enrolment of volunteers in the province was still ongoing and that there was great enthusiasm among the Muslim population. Feverish meetings continued to occur in Manisa, Denizli, and Nazilli.<sup>40</sup>

The boycott movement was a weapon used in times of peace, but this does not necessarily mean that it lacked violence. In different types of boycott movements and in different countries, various forms of violence have occurred again and again. Although the main goal of boycott movements is to persuade the public to abstain from consuming certain merchandise, often other types of obstacle are also employed: picketing and

---

35 FO, 195/2347, No. 18, 7 June 1910, p. 279.

36 FO, 195/2335, No. 30, 13 June 1910, p. 120.

37 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/17, Document No. 17-18, 29 Mayıs 1326 (11 June 1910).

38 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-1/4, Documents No. 1-2, 25 Mayıs 1326 (7 June 1910).

39 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 306, Document No. 46, Manastır, 22 June 1910.

40 FO, 195/2360, No. 41, 15 June 1910, p. 206.

ostracism are the main enforcement vehicles of boycott movements. Both may be performed either in peaceful or violent ways. Both vehicles were utilized during the Ottoman boycott movements, particularly in eliminating certain merchants from the market.

*Tellals* (public criers) played a significant role in proclaiming and publicizing the boycott at first. However, they were employed not only for announcing the boycott, but also for watching the boycotted shops and guarding the picketing lines in later phases of the movement. The latter function was crucial, since the main announcement of the boycott was done anyway by the periodicals and the publications of the Boycott Society. *Tellals* made the declaration of the boycott audible in public places with their cries and monitored the boycott with watchful eyes.

The existence of such *tellals* is mostly referred to in the complaints of the Greek-Orthodox community. As mentioned above, the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate brought complained about the boycott in Akhisar/Aydın, in order to attract the government's attention to the problem. In a telegram, it claimed that the boycott had been announced by these public criers and that it was the Ottoman Greek shop-owners that suffered the most, having to shut down their stores.<sup>41</sup> In Erzurum, it was the public crier who announced the meeting held before the Government House. As was the case in many towns; the mayor, a cadet, and a non-Muslim representative spoke about and condemned the encroachment on the territorial integrity of the empire.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, it was *tellals* in Preveze/Yanya who declared that the boycott against Greek ships was to begin after 9 June. The head of the porters at the customs house had declared the boycott to the trade agencies, but the announcement was done publicly by criers.<sup>43</sup>

After the *tellals* had proclaimed the boycott, there appeared the watchmen of the Boycott Movement, who tried to secure that Greek shops would be ostracized. In most places, they used coercion and threats whenever they felt it was necessary. There appeared watchmen in front of Greek shops, particularly in the Muslim quarters of Smyrna, keeping customers away from the stores. The Greek shops were also marked by particular signs so that the Muslim public could easily recognize them as such.<sup>44</sup>

Interestingly, the most faithful advocates of the Boycott Movement

---

41 BOA, DH. MUI. 110/38, Document No. 2, 12 Haziran 1326 (25 June 1910).

42 FO, 195/2347, No. 35, 2 June 1910, p. 251-53.

43 BOA, DH. MUI. 106/9, Documents No. 2-3, 6 Haziran 1326 (19 June 1910).

44 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 41-43, Smyrna, 11 April 1911.

were the Cretan immigrants. Particularly in the port cities of Mediterranean, such as Smyrna and Antalya, they emerged as a street force against the Greek shops. The bands of Cretan Muslims marched through the streets of Smyrna and compelled the Greeks to either shut down their stores or abandon their Greek citizenship.<sup>45</sup> If they rejected to do so they were beaten. The Cretans, who gathered at the port to prevent the communication between a Greek steamer and the shore, annoyed the Greek consular dragoman. The dragoman lost his temper and fired three shots towards the Cretans, thereby weakening the position of the Greek consul with the boycotters and the Ottoman government.<sup>46</sup> In Antalya, Muslim Cretans entered several Greek shops and told the owners that they had started the boycott and mobilized other Muslim artisans and merchants against the Greeks.<sup>47</sup> In Kala-i Sultaniye, two Ottoman Greeks were allowed to disembark from a ship of the notorious Destouni Company, so that they could attend the funeral of a relative. However, when a private boat took the two persons to the Konak Square, 300 convened in order to protest. They were led by Muslim Cretans.<sup>48</sup>

A Muslim Cretan damaged the property of a Greek coffeehouse keeper in June 1910. The leader of the local boatmen guild in Beirut, Scharkawi, was arrested because of his support for this Cretan. There appeared a tension between the boatmen of Beirut and the government during these incidents.<sup>49</sup> In October 1910, a group of Muslim Cretans who were defined as “a band of hooligans” by the British consul, blocked the Greek steamer *Elli* from docking at the quay of Smyrna; their leader Akif had even offered armed resistance.<sup>50</sup>

---

45 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, No. 87, 1911.

46 FO, 195/2360, No. 41, 15 June 1910, p. 204.

47 BOA, DH. MUI. 108-1/9, Document No. 2, 12 Haziran 1326 (25 June 1910).

48 FO, 195/2345, No. 55, 17 June 1910, p. 115. Similar rumors regarding the Cretan immigrants' actions against Greeks had appeared in Izmir already in 1909. A boycott against the Greeks was provoked in late August of 1909, but was halted by the elites, particularly the Committee of Union and Progress. The Cretans of Smyrna were very active in this early attempt at a boycott. Stories of such picketing efforts by the Cretans were published in Greek newspapers, such as *Patris*. However, the governor of Aydın, Kazım Bey, repudiated such stories and assured the government that there were no blockades of shops. Yet, afterwards he still wanted the Boycott Society to publish a statement in order to condemn any assaults on individuals. Even this early example from 1909 indicates that boycotting activities were going hand in hand with these kinds of offenses. BOA, DH. MUI. 5-2/15, Documents No. 1, 3; 10-11 Ağustos 1325 (23-24 August 1909).

49 FO, 195/2342, No. 32, 23 June 1910, p. 326.

50 FO, 195/2360, No. 85, 6 October 1910, p. 378.

It was not only small businesses, but also banks that suffered during the boycott. It was claimed that the Bank of Athens in Kavala/Salonica was besieged by armed men who prevented customers from entering.<sup>51</sup> However, the *mutasarrıf* of Drama/Salonica denied this claim and only confirmed the existence of a peaceful boycott.<sup>52</sup> This attitude and claim of a local governor were typical during the movement, as will be discussed below. The picketing and sieges sometimes achieved their goal. For instance, a Greek leather merchant, Grigor Aleksiyu, had to close down his shop in Edremit/Hüdavendigâr due to the pressures of the boycotters, and after a year diplomatic and administrative correspondence was still continuing.<sup>53</sup> The picketing of Greek stores by groups of boycotters was one of the most often underlined facts concerning the boycott mentioned in the Greek newspaper *Embros* published in Athens.<sup>54</sup>

The Ottoman government sent a decree to all provinces concerning incidents of enforced picketing around shops of Ottoman citizens during the boycott. The government wanted governors to stop these actions.<sup>55</sup> Before this general warning by the government, only the governor of the province of Konya had informed the Ministry of the Interior that they succeeded in re-opening the shops that had been forcibly shut down in Antalya.<sup>56</sup> However, a year later Greek shop owners were still complaining about their shops being picketed. They claimed that even their relatives were not able to enter their shops. The shop of the Greek consul's dragoman was also boycotted, and the boycott was only lifted after the dragoman had resigned from his post.<sup>57</sup>

However after the first months of the boycott, claims regarding violence and coercion occurred more and more frequently. This happened for two reasons. First, the boycott became stricter, and the movement needed a full-fledged application of its rules. In general, coercion is always a vehicle to enhance consent during boycott movements, and the Ottoman boycott was no exception. Secondly, the victims of the boycott

---

51 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-28, Document No. 1/1, 31 Ağustos 1326 (13 September 1910).

52 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-30, Document No. 2, 28 Eylül 1326 (11 October 1910).

53 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-12, Document No. 5, 9 Mart 1327 (22 March 1911). The shop was closed down in May 1910.

54 "To Mpoikataz eis Thessalonikin," (The Boycott in Salonica), *Embros* (Athens), 22 August 1910.

55 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/17, Document No. 67, 23 Haziran 1326 (6 July 1910).

56 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/17, Document No. 41, 14 Haziran 1326 (27 June 1910).

57 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, Antalya, 26 March 1911.

put forth claims regarding violence during the boycotting activities. They did so in order to stop the boycott by appealing to existing laws, because a boycott was legitimate and legal only if it was applied in peaceful terms. The neutral attitude of the Ottoman government was based on the boycott's peaceful character. Thus, by referring to instances of violence, the victims of the movement tried to force the government and the Great Powers to stop the boycott. The Greek daily *Embros* reported instances of attacks and coercion from the first week onwards.<sup>58</sup>

Such a conflict between the factions occurred in Burhaniye/Hüdavendigâr. Workers employed in an olive grove whose owner was a Greek citizen were attacked by a group of armed men. The local governor (*kaymakam*) refused to believe the story of this attack and informed the Ministry of the Interior that a Muslim had interfered with the workers because the owner had not been around, afraid that his olives would be damaged. Moreover, the genuine reason for the owner's complaint was the boycott of his grove; this boycott had been applied peacefully according to the governor. Meanwhile, in Burhaniye the olives of Trikopliidi, a Greek citizen, were bought by a Muslim. Yet, his workers were attacked, and this time one of the workers received a head injury. The *kaymakam* wrote to the government that it was not certain if this had been an attack by the boycotters, or a quarrel between the workers.<sup>59</sup> In Ulucak/Smyrna, a case of arson occurred. The owners of the olive grove there were a Greek citizen and three Ottoman Greeks. The peasants who tried to extinguish the fire were forcibly prevented from doing so. The Greeks of Manisa could not harvest their entire crops, and the doctors and pharmacists were expelled from the town.<sup>60</sup> The British consul in Smyrna also underlined that in the interior regions the boycotters made use of force. For instance, a British subject was prevented from harvesting his figs and grapes, because the boycotters were under the impression that he was

---

58 "Ai Tarachodeis Skinai tis Smirnis," (Scenes of Chaos in Smyrna), *Embros* (Athens), 31 May 1910. The article quoted a report regarding Muslim crowds attacking Greek shops in the bazaar of Smyrna. Most of the shops were closed because of the chaotic atmosphere, and those who refused to close their stores were threatened with knives. There occurred many scuffles during the day. *Embros* claimed that the Greeks also bravely fought against the Muslims, although it argued that the Muslims injured the Greeks. "To Mpoikotaz stin Thessalonikin," (Boycott in Salonica), *Embros* (Athens), 9 June 1910. According to *Embros*, one of the Greek restaurants was attacked by a group of Muslims and their furniture was destroyed.

59 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/2-2, Document No. 2, 8 Şubat 1326 (21 February 1911).

60 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 41-43, Smyrna, 11 April 1911.

Greek.<sup>61</sup> The Greek consul also emphasized that in the hinterland of the port cities and towns, where the power of the central government was weaker, the boycott was much stricter.<sup>62</sup> This fact was also underlined by the French consuls in their reports. Accordingly, the government lost authority and power as one travelled from the Aegean coast towards Inner Anatolia.<sup>63</sup>

In Ayvalık, Hacı Atnasi sold his olive grove to an Italian citizen; yet, the farm was besieged and its workers and watchmen expelled. The *kaymakam* of Ayvalık informed the Ministry of the Interior that Atnasi had not sold the olives, but the farm. Therefore, it should not have been possible to boycott a grove owned by an Italian. However, there were instances in which the boycotted sold their properties—such as shops, ships, farms, and the like—to foreigners in order to rescue themselves from the Boycott Movement. Still, there were many cases in which the boycotters continued to boycott sold properties, if they believed that the transfer of property had been a trick. The Boycott Society expressed its suspicion to the British consulate in a meeting regarding these sales and accused foreign embassies of protecting Greeks.<sup>64</sup> Hence, the new Italian owner continued to be boycotted, leading to the Italian embassy consulting the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In Ayvalık, the boycotters also besieged Greek shops by placing men in front of them.<sup>65</sup> The picketing of shops in Ayvalık destroyed the Greeks' business in the region. Panaghiotti Pantaleon, who wanted to transfer his Greek Pantaleon Oriental Navigation Company to a British liability company, confessed to the British consul that “the boycott had naturally quickened his desire to transfer his property to a British company.”<sup>66</sup> Another Greek entrepreneur, Andrico Plaska, officially named his employee Alexander Scoudamor (a Maltese and British subject) as the owner of his butcher shop. Furthermore, Scoudamor claimed compensation

---

61 FO, 195/2360, No. 72, 16 August 1910, p. 331.

62 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, Smyrna, No. 919, 19 March 1911.

63 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 105, Smyrna, 8 June 1911; CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 57-62, Paris, 23 April 1911.

64 FO, 195/2360, No. 75, 30 August 1910, p. 348.

65 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-6, Document No. 2, 23 Teşrinisani 1326 (5 November 1910).

66 FO, 195/2383, No. 22, 30 April 1911, p. 85. Pantaleon was one of the first companies in the port of Smyrna to be boycotted, at the very beginning of the Boycott Movement. See “Ai Tarachodeis Skinai tis Smirnis,” (Scenes of Chaos in Smyrna), *Embros* (Athens), 31 May 1910.

because of the boycott and entered his name on the list of the British embassy. Therefore, the boycott turned an employee into a so-called shop owner in order to avoid the boycott and to claim compensation.<sup>67</sup>

The transfer of navigation companies also caused problems between the United States and the Ottoman Empire. The Hacı David Company was sold to a US citizen and operated under the American flag in 1909. However, the crew was Greek. On one of the company's ships, there occurred a fight between the crew and recently discharged Ottoman soldiers. The fight had begun with the passengers' reaction to the low quality of the company's service. Yet, in a short time the fight was transformed into a national question. The company was notorious for their bad services and had become a symbol for the exploitation of Ottoman customers. It was claimed that the Greek crew and the captain were insulting the Ottoman people. The main actors of the Boycott Movement, the port workers, considered the fight a humiliation of the Ottoman nation by the company. As a result, a boycott against the company began in January 1911 in the Ottoman ports. The US embassy lodged a protest with the Ottoman government, but the boycott only stopped when a boycott against another American company, Singer Sewing Machines, was organized. This incident very well shows how a mundane issue of daily life could turn into a national problem and how a company's being transferred to a different nationality could also be perceived as a trick.<sup>68</sup>

The Ministry of the Interior warned the provinces of Aydın, Halep and the region of Karesi Region on 30 November 1910 about placing picketers in front of shops and forcibly preventing people from working. Therefore, the Ottoman state paid compensation to foreign businesses, and the government wanted to put an end to these payments. Hence, the government wanted local governors to punish such activities. This document proves that there were such cases and that the state did pay compensation for these acts.<sup>69</sup> However, the Ottoman state soon tired of claims for compensation and in 1911 began to refuse responsibility for losses incurred because of the Boycott Movement.<sup>70</sup>The Boycott Move-

---

67 FO, 195/2383, No. 71, 23 September 1911, p. 290.

68 Osman Köse, "Osmanlı-Amerikan İlişkilerinde Bir Kriz: Hacı David Vapur Kumpanyası Boykotu (1911)," *Bellekten*, Vol. LXVIII, No. 252, August 2004, pp. 461-482.

69 BOA, DH. SYS 22/1-24, Document No. 4, 17 Teşrinisani 1326 (30 November 1910).

70 FO, 195/2383, No. 12, 22 February 1911, p. 40. When the British consul visited the governor-general in Smyrna regarding a compensation application he seized the opportunity to reiterate new position of the government.

ment and the position of the local governments did not change drastically, even a year later. A British citizen by the name of Charles Wilkinson encountered significant difficulties with the Boycott Movement. He rented a farm from a Greek called Tricoupis and continued to employ Greek workers and officers in his field. The farm was leased to him probably because of the Boycott Movement, and the remaining Greek workers attracted the boycotters' anger. These boycotters attacked Wilkinson's farm and wounded his workers.<sup>71</sup> The British embassy warned the Ottoman government about this matter and wanted it to pay compensation for the losses. At first, the local governors refused the claims, as they had done in similar cases. However, the farm was attacked again and again. Finally, the British vice-consul in Ayvalık forced the consul-general of the province of Aydın and the British embassy to make the government put pressure on the local bureaucrats regarding the Wilkinson case.<sup>72</sup> After the third attack and the resulting injuries, the Ministry of the Interior wanted the *mutasarrıf* of Karesi to send a report about the inquiry. Yet, the local governors did not reply urgently. Therefore, the Ministry of the Interior had to write again to ask about the outcome of the investigation. The investigation was expanded from Burhaniye to Ayvalık and Edremit, and several of the offenders were arrested and the notables and prominent people in these towns admonished.<sup>73</sup> Although the case was considered closed, Wilkinson's farm was attacked a fourth time. This time, both crop and production facilities were destroyed and burned.<sup>74</sup> This last attack indicates the power of the Boycott Movement and the reluctance or incapacity of the local governors *vis-à-vis* the boycotters.

Similarly, an Italian citizen in Ayvalık could not harvest the olives he had bought, because a group of armed men blockaded his entrance to the olive grove. Moreover, the Greek embassy continued to report acts of violence to the Ottoman government. One of these reports claimed that the boycotters had seized the crop of a farm owned by the Greek Karali, and consequently the gendarmerie took into custody twenty people who had

---

71 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/2-4, Document No. 2, 14 Eylül 1327 (27 September 1911).

72 FO, 195/2383, No. 65, 6 September 1911, p. 268; FO, 195/2383, No. 68, 20 September 1911, p. 277; FO, 195/2383, No. 69, 23 September 1911, p. 280.

73 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/2-4, Document No. 6/1, 28 Eylül 1327 (10 October 1911).

74 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/2-4, Document No. 10/1, 23 Teşrinievvel 1327 (5 November 1911); FO, 195/2383, No. 80, 31 October 1911, p. 329; FO, 195/2383, No. 82, 8 November 1911, p. 335.

been frequenting the Greek consulates in Kavala/Salonica and in Alasonya/Manastır.<sup>75</sup>

Like many nationalist boycotts in different parts of the world, in the Ottoman Empire the boycott organizations also established inspection teams in order to control whether shops were selling Greek goods. In one of these inspections in Salonica during the first month of the boycott, bottles of Greek cognac sold in a Jewish grocery shop were destroyed. The Jewish owner was also “severely thrashed” when he tried to protest, according to the British consul’s report.<sup>76</sup>

A Russian merchant in Giresun was also affected by the Boycott Movement; in this incident a crowd of people, not part of the Boycott Society, as well as the port workers became involved in the assault. The Russian merchant imported barrels of cognac from Piraeus, but the Boycott Society did not allow him to carry the cognac from the port to his shop. Furthermore, the boycotters threaten him not to take the boxes with the barrels out of the customs house. The boycotters threatened that, if he would do so, they were going to break all the barrels. When he had his own porters carry the cognac, a crowd of people attacked these porters, broke open the barrels and poured the cognac into the sea. Although the importation of cognac became a public issue and the embassy interpreters and the police were there, no one could stop the crowd.<sup>77</sup> The governor of the province of Trabzon claimed to the government that the local police forces had secured the transportation of the cognac to the shop. He confirmed that an attack had taken place and that a barrel was broken in that incident. He informed the government he was secretly investigating this incident. This secrecy indicates that the governor was also afraid of the public opinion.<sup>78</sup> The direct actions and assaults of the port workers were generally dependent on their defense of their monopoly rights in the ports. In the first day of the boycott, two workers were beaten because of unloading goods from a boycotted vessel and working on behalf of the porters.<sup>79</sup>

A Greek newspaper from Athens was also boycotted in Smyrna, particularly in March 1911. The boycotters received the information that

---

75 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-18, Document No. 14, 18 Temmuz 1326 (31 July 1910).

76 FO, 195/2358, No. 82, 28 June 1910, p. 127.

77 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-28, Document No. 28, 24 Nisan 1327 (7 May 1911).

78 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-28, Documents No. 31-32, 27 Nisan 1327 (10 May 1911).

79 “Episodia,” (Incidents), *Proodos*, 5 June 1910.

a Russian steamer would bring Greek newspapers from Piraeus, which would then be distributed to the town from the French Post Office. When the newspaper vendors started to carry the newspaper packages off the ship, the boycotters attacked and confiscated the newspapers. Most of them were destroyed. However, the boycotters were not content with this attack and attacked and destroyed the shop of a newspaper dealer. The Police arrived after the attack had ended and detained the owner of the shop, a Greek citizen by the name of Panos Anastasopoulos, and his employee Grigorios Kefalas from the island of Sakız/Chios. The Governor-General Nazım Paşa expressed his regret regarding the incident and maintained that he did not approve of such actions. However, he also wanted the newspaper dealers to suspend the import of Greek newspapers from Greece at least for a while. The detained boycotters and the Greeks were released after a short time.<sup>80</sup>

A similar incident happened in Smyrna. There, a British subject by the name of Fritz Vadova imported goods from Greece via a steamer of the then famous Austrian Lloyd company. He was unfortunate, since the new, stricter wave of the Boycott Movement made the merchandise questionable, even when it was on a non-Greek steamer and owned by a non-Greek subject. The customs duty of the goods was paid, and the boxes were loaded on the carts. However, the Boycott Committee interfered and threw the goods on the street, where they stayed for days. The governor-general ordered the chief of police to deliver the goods to the owner, but he did not fulfill his responsibilities. The British consul reported that the governor-general's orders were disregarded and that he was helpless.<sup>81</sup>

A German company was confronted with the Boycott Society because they rented a tugboat whose personnel was Greek. The Boycott Society forcibly obstructed the loading of the German company's wine barrels, and another thirty people prevented fish owned by another German merchant from being loaded on a Greek ship.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, even foreign merchants experienced the boycott of Greek merchandise if they had any relationship whatsoever with Greece or the Greeks.

---

80 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, Smyrna, No. 1023, 27 March 1911.

81 FO, 195/2383, No. 24, 31 March 1911, p. 94. After fifteen days, thanks to the requests and diplomatic pressure that the British embassy in Istanbul put on the Ottoman government, the case of Fritz Vadova was solved. The British consul in Smyrna believed that the governor-general and chief of police, Cemal Bey, had difficulties in controlling the boycott organizations. FO, 195/2383, No. 33, 15 April 1911, p. 140.

82 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-25, Document No. 3, 13 Temmuz 1327 (26 July 1911).

Apart from *tellals*, picketing lines, coercion and watchmen, the Boycott Movement utilized posters, stickers, signboards and placards in order to enhance the application of the boycott and indicate the targets in advance. For example, to indicate whether an establishment was Greek, the Boycott Society wrote in chalk on shop fronts the word “*Yunani*.”<sup>83</sup> The Bank of Anatolia also suffered from having hung the sign “*Yunanlıdır*” (it is Greek) on its entrance. It took almost a month for the bank to get rid of the signboard on its entrance, after they put pressure on the public authorities.<sup>84</sup> The posters on the walls and windows of shops kept customers away and ruined the business of the boycotted targets. Within the first month of the boycott, in different parts of Istanbul several shops owned by Greeks closed down due to the absence of customers. Most of the owners complained to the Ottoman government about the offensive and humiliating posters on their walls. Dimitri Grasas closed his two shops in Beşiktaş; Filanga and Mandilas closed their wine house and restaurants; the Habiri brothers closed their grocery in Beylerbeyi; and Nikola Arayoyoani, Dimitri Borla and Nikola Galanis closed their stores in different parts of Istanbul.<sup>85</sup>

The owners of a drapery store in one of the main streets of Salonica ventured to erase the boycott marks on their wall. However, Kerim Ağa<sup>86</sup> appeared with his men and threatened to cut the owner’s throat if he again dared to wash off the sign. The shop owner sought protection from the police, but decided to close his store after he could not receive any official protection.<sup>87</sup> The Central Boycott Committee of Salonica published in *Rumeli* an announcement disapproving of such actions. This announcement first of all confirms the existence of such acts of violence. The writing on public walls and the imposition of boycott signs on shop windows were also condemned in this announcement. The Boycott Committee wanted the police forces to prevent these kinds of actions which

83 FO, 195/2360, No. 75, 30 August 1910, p. 347.

84 Evangelia Ahladi, “İzmir’de İttihatçılar ve Rumlar: Yunan-Rum Boykotu (1908-1911),” p. 196.

85 BOA, DH. MUI. 109/16, Document No. 2, 15 Haziran 1326 (28 June 1910).

86 He was the head of the porters in Salonica and the leader of the Boycott Movement. Detailed information about him and his activities will follow below.

87 FO, 195/2358, No. 82, 28 June 1910, p. 126. After these instances of violence, three Muslims (one of whom was a Cretan boatman) were arrested. The Ottoman press condemned these actions and considered them illegal. However, those managed to remove the boycott marks from their storefronts were still few and far between in July 1910; FO, 195/2358, No. 85, 8 July 1910, p. 157.

were not in line with the “honor and dignity of the Ottoman nation.”

The newspaper *Rumeli*, considered to be the official voice of the Committee of Union and Progress in Salonica, proposed to leave any kind of “rowdiness to the sons of Plato.” The newspaper made a call to the public to be firm and serious and act in a polite manner. *Rumeli* even condemned persons who chalked the word “boycott” on storefronts and demanded certificates of nationality.<sup>88</sup> Another store was more fortunate in another incident: the owner managed to paint over the boycott mark under the eyes of the police. This was after the publication of the Boycott Society’s announcement. The newspapers *Rumeli* and *Yeni Asır* approved of removing boycott marks, but underlined also the need for a “firm maintenance of the boycott against the Greeks.”<sup>89</sup> However, in one of its declarations published in *İttihad* the Boycott Society of Smyrna wanted the Ottomans not to buy from Greek stores that were marked.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, it referred to these markings and signs as a fact.

The boycott was generally announced via public placards hung in various parts of Ottoman towns. For instance, in Salonica, at the very beginning of the Boycott Movement, a notice in Turkish and French was placed in various parts of the town. The declaration on the walls invited patriotic citizens to defend their country and defined what a boycott really was.<sup>91</sup> The Greek newspaper *Proodos* complained about the posters plastered all over Bursa, as well as the leaflets that were playing on the emotions of the Muslim public.<sup>92</sup>

There appeared pamphlets which depicted the sufferings of the Muslims in Crete. These types of publications were effective in mobilizing the sentiments of the Muslim public. *Girid Kurbanları* (Victims of Crete) was a pamphlet written by Naziktir Muzaffer and told stories about how the Muslims of the island suffered at the hands of “the savage Greeks” (*vahşi Rumlar*).<sup>93</sup> The dichotomy of “savagery and civilization” was frequently used in the discourse of the Boycott Movement. The Greeks of Crete

88 “Boykot,” *Rumeli*, 15 Haziran 1326 (28 June 1910).

89 FO, 195/2358, No. 83, 29 June 1910, p. 135.

90 “İzmir Harb-i İktisadi Heyetinin Beyannamesidir:” *İttihad*, 29 Ağustos 1326 (11 September 1910). The expression in article seven of the declaration was: “7. Memleket dahilinde işaretli olan Yunanlı mağazalarından ahz ü itada bulunmamak ve yanlışlığa meydan kalmamak üzere her mağazadan şahadetname sual etmek.”

91 FO, 195/2358, No. 79, 18 June 1910, pp. 106-107.

92 “O Emporikos Polemos,” (The Economical War), *Proodos*, 5 June 1910.

93 Naziktir Muzaffer, *Girid Kurbanları* (Victims of Crete), (Dersaadet, Edib Matbaası, 1326).

and Greece were acting in an uncivilized manner, whereas the Ottomans were fighting against them in accord with the requirements of civilization.<sup>94</sup> According to *Girid Kurbanları*, Muslim women and children were killed “barbarously,” and their murderers who were “thirsty of Muslim blood” insulted their honor. The pamphlet narrated the escape of a group of Muslims from Greek gangs during the Greek insurrection. At the end, the Greeks massacred the group and raped the women.<sup>95</sup>

Two other pamphlets on Crete were published in the course of the Boycott Movement. They were on the main characteristics of the island, particularly the history and geography of Crete. *Girid*, for instance, was focused on the presence of Islam and the Muslim community and their heritage on the island.<sup>96</sup> These types of publications attempted to construct a link between the island and the Muslim population in general. The pamphlet entitled *Girid: Mazisi, Hali, İstikbali* (Crete: Its Past, Present, Future) was to a great extent about the history of Crete. In addition to offering a historical narrative, the pamphlet included illustrations depicting the sufferings of Muslim Cretans. For instance, in one of these pictures a Muslim girl aged about 10 was depicted. Her arm had been cut off by “savage Christians.”<sup>97</sup> The term *hristiyan* (Christian) was preferred by the writers in the narrative, instead of *Rum* or *Yunani*. This usage might have enhanced the Islamic discourse of the movement. Another photograph showed an eight-year-old child whose head and legs had been wounded by Christian Cretans.<sup>98</sup> The news from Crete quoted in newspapers depicted similar sufferings of the Muslims in Crete. It was claimed that Greeks turned mosques into taverns, killed unborn children (*cenin*) in their mother’s womb, insulted Islam and humiliated and abused Muslim women.<sup>99</sup>

The government still received from the Greek embassy complaints concerning provocative posters in 1911. The Boycott Movement and the means of publicizing the targets went hand in hand. The Boycott Society

---

94 “Hakaretler İslamlara Mahsurdur,” *İttihad*, 19 Ağustos 1326 (1 September 1910).

95 Naziktir Muzaffer, *Girid Kurbanları*, pp. 12-13.

96 *Girid* (Crete), (Bab-ı Ali: Matbaacılık Osmanlı Anonim Şirketi, 1325-1326).

97 *Girid: Mazisi, Hali, İstikbali* (Crete: Its Past, Present, Future), (Kostantiniye: Matbaa-i Ebuziya, 1328), p. 76.

98 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

99 The Boycott Society also made use of this kind of discourse. See Boykotaj Teshilat Komisyonu, “Beyanname,” *İttihad*, 7 Haziran 1326 (20 June 1910); Halit Tefvik, “Boykotaj Kalkabilir mi?” *İttihad*, 16 Ağustos 1326 (29 August 1910).

generally announced the targets as well as the society's goals in newspapers.<sup>100</sup> However, the Boycott Movement insisted in using posters since it made the movement publicly visible. According to one primary source, the Greek embassy protested the posters hung on the Greek shops in Kala-i Sultaniye (Çanakkale-Dardanelles) and the indifference of the local governor to the issue.<sup>101</sup> Fliers calling the "Ottoman people" to boycott were distributed in Manastir. These handbills were not stamped and openly distributed. The French consul reported that officials did not intervene.<sup>102</sup> These fliers were widely used in the Boycott Movement in order to propagate the goals of the movement. The names of the Greek merchants and shops were usually announced in the newspapers, but these kinds of leaflet were used to galvanize the sentiments of the public. Such a handbill disseminated by the boycotters in Kala-i Sultaniye wanted Muslims to cut their relationships with the Greek merchants. This caused panic among the Greek population of the town.<sup>103</sup>

A significant feature of the placards is the fact that the Ottoman bureaucracy considered them illegal. According to the Ottoman government and the local governors, placards on the walls of the shops were not compatible with the "peaceful" character of the boycott movement. Therefore, publishing lists of the names of firms and shops as boycott targets in the newspapers was not an assault, but posting placards on particular walls or windows was considered coercion. Thus, in many places the government wanted local governors to tear down the placards. For instance, the governor of Salonica informed the government that the placards posted in Serez were all taken down. However, it was not clear who had posted them. The lists in the newspapers were generally published by the Boycott Society. Furthermore, the Boycott Society wanted the Ottomans to inform them regarding those Greek citizens whose names did not appear on these lists. The Ottomans were called to be watchful and active in this process.<sup>104</sup> In contrast, the placards and posters on the walls

---

100 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, Smyrna, 24 February 1911. This source quotes a declaration of the Boycott Society that appeared in the newspaper *Köylü* and warns the employees of postal services, the Administration of Public Debt and the Customs, who regularly ate in a Greek restaurant. *Köylü* announced that if the officials continued to eat there, their names would be publicized in the newspaper.

101 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-27, Document No. 3, 2 Mart 1327 (15 March 1911).

102 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 306, Document No. 46, Manastir, 22 June 1910.

103 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 50, Pera, 22 April 1911.

104 The Boycott Society started to publish lists after 15 June 1910. "İzmir Boykotaj

were generally posted anonymously, and this is why it was difficult to find out who had posted them. In Serez, the placards were taken down, but no one was caught for having put them up.<sup>105</sup>

In Bursa, there appeared numerous posters on the walls, while there also was a boycott against the Greek consul who was not even able to find a car for his own transportation. The Greek embassy particularly referred to the widespread placards when it reported the assaults on Greeks in different places of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>106</sup> In Ayvalık, the boycotted Greeks could not even harvest the olives that they had bought; this mobilization against them was achieved by means of the placards posted everywhere in the town. The placards as well as yelling men on the streets terrorized the non-Muslims of Ayvalık and led them to request help from the government.<sup>107</sup> An American ship company who suffered from the consequences of the Boycott Movement in İskenderun/Aleppo also referred to the placards there.<sup>108</sup> In Mersin, a placard signed by the Boycott Society of Mersin remained in place on the main road of the town for two days. The text of this poster was provocative and tried to incite the Muslim Population against Greece. The placard wanted Muslims not to forget the experiences that Muslim Cretans had had. According to that poster, Muslim girls were raped and their cut noses and ears sent to Athens. The Boycott Society warned those who were frequenting the Greek cafes. The boycott organization threatened them and announced that the names of these “shameless” persons would be published in the fourth edict of the society.<sup>109</sup>

### 3.3. The Boycott Society

The *Boykotaj Cemiyeti* (Boycott Society) or the *Harb-i İktisadi Cemiyeti* (Society of Economic Warfare) was founded in the first days of the 1908

---

Cemiyeti'nden,” *İttihad*, 2 Haziran 1326 (15 June 1910). The lists published by boycott societies, particularly the Boycott Society of Smyrna, were very detailed. “Harb-i İktisadi Heyetinin Beyannamesidir,” *İttihad*, 5 Eylül 1326 (18 September 1910).

105 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-26, Document No. 6, 28 Mayıs 1327 (10 May 1911); BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-6, Document No. 11, 10 Haziran 1327 (23 June 1911).

106 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-26, Document No. 7, 26 Mayıs 1327 (8 May 1911).

107 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-10, Document No. 4, 23 Teşrinievvel 1326 (5 November 1910).

108 BOA, DH. ID. 130/1, Document No. 59, 13 Şubat 1326 (26 February 1911).

109 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 108-109, Mersin, 22 June 1911. For an early warning of the Boycott Society in a declaration for the same reason, see “İzmir Boykotaj Cemiyeti'nden,” *İttihad*, 15 July 1326 (28 July 1910).

Ottoman Boycott. It was organized spontaneously in the course of boycott, and its branches were concurrently formed all over the empire. The 1908 Boycott lasted roughly six months during the chaotic political atmosphere of the 1908 Revolution. This is why, like many organizations that appeared in this particular era, it was not a legal society. However, after the 1909 legal regulations regarding public meetings and organizations, civil societies were taken under the control of the government. After 1909, many nationalist organizations aiming at the public good were established according to this regulation. However, although the main body of the Boycott Society did not disappear following these regulations, it did not become legal either. It was present in the brief boycott of August 1909. Yet, the Boycott Society emerged as a full-fledged mass organization after 1910. It was active in the main centers of the empire and had flourishing branches in numerous towns. The organization and activities of the Boycott Society were part and parcel of national organizations—such as the *Donanma Cemiyeti*, the *Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti*, and so on. Yet, apart from those organizations, it was never legalized since its main body of operations was on the edge of legal regulations.<sup>110</sup>

The basic feature of the boycott, the consumer's refraining from buying certain goods, was the only legal action of the movement. However, in order to obtain the loyalty of consumers, to transform the movement into a mass mobilization and to increase its application, the Boycott Society performed many illegal actions. Therefore, it had a mysterious, secret and amorphous character until it disappeared. In most places it was dominated by the port workers and their structural hierarchy. In some of the centers, the young cadres of the Committee of Union and Progress were active in its branches. The Muslim notables actively involved in national organizations such as the *Donanma Cemiyeti* were vigorous participants in the boycott committees of provincial towns.

The activities and the members of these different national organizations intersected particularly in small provincial towns. Over the course

110 As mentioned above, most of the activities of the boycotters were considered part and parcel of the secret pursuits of the Committee of Union and Progress. Although the support of the Committee of Union and Progress, particularly its lower ranks, has been evident in the Boycott Movement, the activists and leaders of the movement also gave their activities an official air in order to legitimize or legalize their interventions. For instance, the leader of the Boycott Society in Preveze/Yanya, Mehmet Ali Efendi, interfered with the consumers as if he had an official, authorized responsibility. This state of affairs was the main subject of complaints, apart from the acts of intervention against consumers. BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-6, Document No. 7, 17 Teşrinievvel 1326 (30 October 1910).

of the Boycott Movement, its opponents frequently complained about the excessive activities of Cretan Muslim immigrants and concealed support by officials and nationalist organizations. The consul of Greece in Antalya stated that the president of the local *Donanma Cemiyeti*, Zeki Bey, was also a prominent member of the Boycott Society. He belonged to the Cretan immigrant community, which was the most passionate social base of the movement in Antalya. The *Donanma Cemiyeti*, the government office, and the civil registration office were close to each other, and Zeki Bey regularly moved between these offices. Therefore, when a Greek citizen decided to gain Ottoman citizenship, the boycott on his business was immediately removed. The division of labor between the boycotters and the official administration was well organized and worked fast according to the Greek consul of Antalya.<sup>111</sup>

Thus, the national organizations active in the course of the Second Constitutional Period supported the cause of the Boycott Movement. For instance, the branch of the *Donanma Cemiyeti* in Diyarbakır put up posters in the town's most easily visible places and tried to attract public attention to the Cretan issue. "If they (the protecting powers) do not give us our rights, if committing an injustice they attempt to take Crete, we shall dye every side in red blood" was written on the placards.<sup>112</sup> The official journal of the *Donanma Cemiyeti* also published articles and nationalist poems endorsing the goals of the Boycott Movement.

The formation of the boycott committees in the provinces had different dynamics. Some of them were established as a result of the initiative of central boycott organizations in Istanbul or Salonica, while others were formed spontaneously in the course of anti-Greek demonstrations on the Cretan issue. For instance, in Ergiri/Yanya a boycott committee was organized and the meeting in the public square dispersed after its declaration. Yet, the Boycott Society in Yanya had been established beforehand, and it was only obeying the orders of the Boycott Society in Istanbul.<sup>113</sup> The governor of Aydin was informed at the very beginning of the Boycott Movement that the initiative of the boycott was brought on the agenda by newcomers to Smyrna.<sup>114</sup> There is no exact information on how the boy-

---

111 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, Antalya, 26 March 1911.

112 FO, 195/2347, No. 23, 29 June 1910, p. 327.

113 BOA, DH. MUI. 115/18, Document No. 2, 11 Temmuz 1326 (24 July 1910); BOA, DH. MUI 102-2/17, Document No. 45, 19 Haziran 1326 (2 July 1910).

114 BOA, DH. MUI 102-2/9, Document No. 1, 27 Mayıs 1326 (9 June 1910).

cott started in various places, or who the first activists were. The consul reports indicate that there were many local committees all over the empire, who ordered the strict application of the boycott.<sup>115</sup>

The lively activities and network of the Boycott Society at the very beginning of the boycott in 1910 triggered the intervention of the Ottoman government. The Ministry of the Interior wrote to the Administration of Public Security that there were two boycott committees functioning as if they were formal societies. The ministry reminded the Administration of Public Security that no such civil societies had been approved by the government. Therefore, it was the duty of the state to forbid those who acted outside the law.<sup>116</sup> Before this decree, the Ministry of the Interior had refused the request of the Tram Company to issue an order to the Boycott Society. The Tram Company had been threatened with a boycott by the Boycott Society, if they would not dismiss their Greek employees. The Ministry of the Interior stated that they could not establish contact with an illegal organization.<sup>117</sup> The Tram Company and the Port Administration in Smyrna continues to struggle with the demand of the boycotters to dismiss their Greek employees.<sup>118</sup>

However, during the Boycott Movement the government had to communicate with the boycott organizations, but it was not consistent in doing so. For instance, in the same week when the government refused to contact the Boycott Society, it informed the governor of Beirut that they had forced the Boycott Society in Istanbul to order its branch in Jaffa to relax the boycott. However, it became obvious later that nothing had happened and that the boycott continued as it had before. It was first claimed that the Society of Economic Warfare in Istanbul had sent an order to apply the boycott in the way permitted by the government.<sup>119</sup> The Jaffa Boycott Committee decided to ask the Beirut Boycott Society what to do. They stated that they would also consult the Beirut branch if they received orders from the capital. Later, it turned out that neither the Boy-

---

115 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 306, Document No. 136, Athens, 24 July 1910.

116BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/17, Document No. 46, 23 Haziran 1326 (6 July 1910).

117 BOA, DH. MUI. 111/38, Documents No. 1-2, 20-26 Haziran 1326 (3-9 July 1910).

118 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 82, Athens, 29 April 1911; CPC. Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 92, Smyrna, 2 May 1911.

119 The government forced the Boycott Society in Istanbul to send an order also to Yanya, because the boycott there was still continuing and foreign merchants' interest were significantly damaged. BOA, DH. MUI. 113/49, Document No. 1, 14 Temmuz 1326 (27 July 1910).

cott Society in Istanbul nor the Beirut Boycott Society had sent such limiting orders. The British consul in Beirut argued that the boycott in the city had started thanks to the encouraging telegrams of Kerim Ağa from Salonica.<sup>120</sup> The Boycott Committee on the island of Lemnos, which was to a great extent comprised of Muslim porters and boatmen, referred to a letter that they had received from the Kavala Boycott Society.<sup>121</sup> Therefore, each boycott committee upheld contact with a boycott organization in the central towns of the empire.

As a result of this network between boycott organizations in different parts of the empire, the decrees of the government became more frequent and stricter in tone. The Boycott Society enforced various institutions to obey its boycott regulations. The Boycott Society of Smyrna threatened the Istanbul Regie Administration with a boycott, if it would not dismiss their Greek employees within five days. In November 1910, the Ottoman government was still trying to limit the movement. A telegram that the Ministry of the Interior sent to the province of Aydın claimed that the boycott society was neither a legal nor an official organization, but it should at least have been based on public opinion and common will. On the contrary, the society was using coercion in the application of the boycott.<sup>122</sup> Therefore, it was apparent that the government was willing to tolerate a peaceful but illegal organization. However, the boycott organizations did not obey the Ottoman government, and the Ottoman state was pressed between the boycotters and the Great Powers.

The most visible members of the Boycott Society were the port workers and activists who prevented trade transaction in the towns. The society's image was that of a secret committee as well as a crowd of low-class persons. Thus, the Boycott Society sent a declaration to the foreign consuls, saying that their organization consisted of prominent elected individuals. These eminent persons were obeying international law and civilized regulations. The declaration claimed that unlawful actions were rare, although there was a massive participation of the lower classes, and this proved that the boycott was controlled by these elected committees. The rumors regarding the illegal actions of the boycotters were only Greek tales.<sup>123</sup>

---

120 FO, 195/2342, No. 32, 23 June 1910, p. 324.

121 BOA, DH. MUI. 109/54, Document No. 1, 8 Haziran 1326 (21 June 1910).

122 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-24, Documents No. 2-3, 1-4 Teşrinisani 1326 (14-17 November 1910).

123 This declaration submitted to the foreign consul appeared even in Greek newspapers;

The Boycott Society in Smyrna also published declarations in the newspapers, stating that the Ottomans should not pay attention to those who acted on behalf of the Boycott Society without showing their stamped documents. The organization claimed in these declarations that those who opposed the Boycott Movement had recruited agents to act illegally and unlawfully in order to create a bad image for the society.<sup>124</sup> Rumors regarding anonymous and undated threatening letters sent to particular institutions and firms forced the Boycott Society of Smyrna to announce that they had nothing to do with these intimidations. The society wanted the Ottomans not to believe those who did not have special Boycott Society certificates.<sup>125</sup> Even the Boycott Society itself had to publicly disapprove of threats and coercion. However, the activities of the boycott organizations increased and expanded over the course of first six months of the movement. In one of its declarations, the boycott organization stated that the newspaper *Alsancak* was its official journal.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, the Greek consul of Smyrna also complained about this particular journal.<sup>127</sup>

According to a British dispatch, the Boycott Society had three vital functions: preventing communication between Greek vessels and the shore; not allowing goods that did not bear the seal of the committee; and preventing the public from entering “Hellenic shops.” The British embassy closely watched the Boycott Movement, as did the other consuls, because it was affecting all foreign interests. For instance, according to a consular dispatch, Greek shops were stocked with British goods. Therefore, the Boycott Society and the British consul in Smyrna often were in contact with each other. In one of these meetings, the Boycott Society of Smyrna promised the British consul that all facilities would be bestowed on the British trade.<sup>128</sup> The British ambassador in Istanbul depicted the boycotters as an “illiterate Turk of the lowest class” with a “fanatical spirit.” Since the actions of the port workers (including the porters and ligh-

---

“Peri erga Pramata en Smyrni: Mpoikotatzides Grafontes pros tous Proksenous,” (Strange Incidents in Smyrna: Boycotters address the Consuls), *Embros* (Athens), 16 July 1910.

124 Boykotaj Heyeti, “Beyanname: Osmanlı Vatandaşlarımızı,” *İttihad*, 14 Haziran 1326 (27 June 1910).

125 “İzmir Boykotaj Cemiyeti’nden,” *İttihad*, 12 Eylül 1326 (25 September 1910).

126 Hasan Taner Kerimoğlu, “İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti’nin Rum Politikası, 1908-1914,” pp. 201-202.

127 Evangelia Ahladi, “İzmir’de İttihatçılar ve Rumlar: Yunan-Rum Boykotu (1908-1911),” p. 198. Not even one copy of this newspaper has survived in the libraries or archives of Turkey.

128 FO, 195/2360, No. 75, 30 August 1910, pp. 347-348.

termen) played a vital role in the movement, it was considered a lower-class movement.<sup>129</sup> This was also an argument used to force the Ottoman elite to surrender to the actions of the lower classes as well as to belittle the movement.

In the port cities, it was the port workers who took the leading positions in the boycott organizations. However, in cities such as Edirne different professions also took the initiative. There, a dealer in second-hand goods and prominent figure in the politics of the town was the chief of the boycott committee.<sup>130</sup>

The Ottoman state feared the diplomatic pressure of the Great Powers and the potential compensation it might have to pay for the losses of the merchants. The most urgent problem was unloading foreign merchandise from Greek ships and disembarking Greek passengers. The Ministry of the Interior not only underlined the fact that the Boycott Society was an illegal organization, but also wanted local governors to restrict the activities of the local boycotters, such as refusing the telegrams signed by the boycott committees, and to unload the merchandise with the help of gendarmerie.<sup>131</sup> The telegrams going back and forth between different boycott organizations and from the central Boycott Societies to the branches indicate to a particular network.

When the boycott movement entered a new period of intensity in March 1911, the boycott organizations informed their dependent communities by using the available communications technology. The British consul in Smyrna reported that the central boycott committee of the province sent its instructions regarding the new decisions for the strict application of the boycott via telegrams. In this report, the consul underlined the fact that these new instructions emanated from the general center of the organization in Salonica. Therefore, it was the Boycott Society of Salonica that directed other boycott organizations and the movement in general.<sup>132</sup> The French consul in Smyrna also referred to the influence

129 FO, 195/2345, No. 15, 20 June 1910, p. 116.

130 FO, 195/2335, No. 33, 29 June 1910, pp. 129-131.

131 BOA, DH. MUI 110/40, Documents No. 1, 3/1, 19-24 Haziran 1326 (2-7 July 1910); BOA, DH. MUI. 109/48, Documents No. 1-3, 19-28 Haziran 1326 (2-11 July 1910); BOA, DH. MUI 111/8, Documents No. 1-2, 24-25 Haziran 1326 (7-8 July 1910). The boycotters not only communicated with each other thanks to the telegraph, but they also demanded assistance from the Ottoman government. For instance, the leader of the Boycott Society in Kuşadası, Mustafa Ahmed, wrote to the Ministry of War to request help with communications; BOA, DH. MUI 110/23, Document No. 1.

132 FO, 195/2383, No. 20, 25 March 1911, p. 77.

of Salonica over his town. He wrote to Paris that several delegates from Salonica had visited Smyrna; following this visit, the boycott which had been quite relaxed for several months started to become more strictly applied. A number of violent incidents occurred.<sup>133</sup> Although we do not have enough evidence to prove such a claim, it is certain that there was a hierarchy among the network of boycott organizations.

There exists information regarding the boycott societies which allows us to conclude that they were organized according to the administrative units of the empire. For instance, a report by the Greek consul of Aydın, who was most interested in the activities of the organization, stated that the Central Boycott Society of this province had resigned. Therefore, there would be an election held in order to form a new one. The Boycott Committee of Smyrna was asked to nominate five persons. These nominees were to convene a meeting in which the central boycott committee of the province was to be elected. It was this committee that was to administer the boycott in the province.<sup>134</sup> This was not the first time that the Boycott Society in Smyrna had changed its administrative staff. Nine months before this election, the committee of directors had resigned due to their work load, and the committee changed.<sup>135</sup>

The Ottoman state was trying to limit the boycott to Greek merchandise that came on board Greek ships, but the boycott societies were trying to be much stricter. The Boycott Society of Istanbul (*Dersaadet Boykot Heyeti*) wrote to Mustafa Ağa, the head of the porters of the oil entrepot, ordering not to unload goods from Greek ships. They also wanted to be informed regarding any shipments loaded onto these vessels. Two days later, the society sent another telegram, requesting not to unload the oil barrels and direct the owner of the goods to the Boycott Society.<sup>136</sup>

However, the Boycott Society exhibited diverse attitudes and had a number of negotiations with the shipping agencies. One of the shipping companies was sailing under the Greek flag, although most of its share was owned by British capital. The company and the Boycott Society settled on an agreement. If the ships of the company hoisted a British flag

---

133 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 41-43, Smyrna, 11 April 1911.

134 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, No. 102, Smyrna, 2 April 1911.

135 "İzmir Boykotaj Cemiyeti'nden," *İttihad*, 12 Eylül 1326 (25 September 1910).

136 BOA, DH. MUI. 125/24, Documents No. 2-3, 13-15 Ağustos 1326 (26-28 August 1910). The telegrams of the Boycott Society forwarded to the Administration of Public Security by the Ministry of the Interior stated that this organization had not even submitted a letter of application for a legal foundation.

while they were entering the port of Smyrna, they would not be boycotted. This was significant because it shows that neither the Ottoman governor-general of the province of Aydın nor the British diplomatic representatives were enthusiastic about defending the rights of the company, since it was sailing under the Greek flag. When a ship of the company forgot to hoist a British flag, the boycotters blocked its unloading at the quay, and the British consulate forwarded the company's appeal to the Greek consulate.<sup>137</sup>

Apart from the Boycott Society and the boycott committees, there were other organizations, such as the *Boykotaj Teshilat Komisyonu* (Boycott Commission for Facilities), facilitating the boycott. These types of organization were generally formed by merchants and issued a particular certificate that protected merchants from the boycott. This is why there were different signatures under the declarations concerning the boycott in different periodicals.<sup>138</sup> The first of the declarations of the Salonica Boycott Society mentioned above announced that a certificate had been printed in order to avoid any misinterpretation regarding Ottoman Greek citizen who were officially exempt from the boycott. The certificates were distributed by Kerim Ağa within twenty-four hours after the merchants submitted their names, addresses and description of their trade and paid 10 Kuruş.<sup>139</sup> The Boycott Society of Smyrna announced that the certificates were free of charge,<sup>140</sup> encouraging merchants to request a certificate in order to protect themselves from the boycott. The society called on merchants to request a certificate in almost all declarations published in the newspapers. The *Boykotaj Teshilat Komisyonu* in Smyrna operated under the umbrella of the municipality,<sup>141</sup> therefore, an illegal commission acted under one of the town's major institutions.

It was neither enough nor even feasible to limit the access of the boycotters to the telegraph offices in order to restrict their communication

---

137 FO, 195/2360, No. 85, 6 October 1910, p. 377-381.

138 See BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/9, Document No. 18, 30 Mayıs 1326 (12 June 1910) for the declaration of the Boycott Commission for Facilities (*Aydın Vilayeti Boykotaj Teshilat Komisyonu*).

139 FO, 195/2358, No. 79, 18 June 1910, p. 103. The *Proodos* claimed that these certificates appeared both in Istanbul and Salonica. These certificates reminded Greek newspaper of the 1908 Austrian Boycott during which these certificates were first issued. "O Apokleismos," (The Boycott), *Proodos*, 7 June 1910.

140 "İzmir Boykotaj Cemiyeti'nden," *İttihad*, 2 Haziran 1326 (13 June 1910).

141 "İzmir Boykotaj Cemiyeti," *Beyanname*, "İttihad", 14 Temmuz 1326 (27 July 1910).

and empire-wide organization. The Ministry of the Interior still complained about the correspondence between different boycott organizations and branches on 31 July 1911.<sup>142</sup> On the other hand, the newspapers were very effective in distributing knowledge concerning the boycott. The boycotters utilized the daily press in advance, in order to guide their own organization and divert public opinion. The second wave of intensity in the course of the 1910-11 Anti-Hellenic Boycott Movement was also triggered by newspaper articles and announcements in March 1911. The local press, particularly in the towns, was very effective in disseminating and propagating the decisions of the boycott organizations.<sup>143</sup>

For instance, in Mudanya the port workers paid close attention to news from Salonica. The most popular boycott leader in 1910 and 1911 was the leader of the port workers in Salonica, Kerim Ağa. The boatmen of Mudanya intensified the boycott based on the news they received through the newspapers of Istanbul and Salonica. They also contacted the boycott organizations in these centers. Therefore, the government was asked to force these organizations to write to Mudanya. However, Kerim Ağa's declarations provoked the boycotting activities of port workers.<sup>144</sup> Thus, as mentioned above, the Ottoman government tried to put pressure on Kerim Ağa and block his entry to the quay of Salonica.

### **3.4. Muslims versus non-Muslims: "Our Greek Citizens are Exempt from the Boycott!"**

Although the emergence of the boycott movement in 1910 was a political and popular reaction related to the Cretan Question, one should contextualize it within the framework of the phenomenon of the National Economy. As it will be argued in the following chapters, the National Economy first emerged as a theory and started to be put in practice during the Second Constitutional Period. After the 1908 Revolution, the National Economy came to the agenda as a proposition for the development of a native Ottoman economy. However, as the political ideals of the revolution and the atmosphere of fraternity started to evaporate, the content of the National Economy was Islamized. The discourse and policies of the

---

142 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-28, Document No. 34, 18 Temmuz 1327 (31 July 1911).

143 FO, 195/2383, No. 20, 25 March 1911, p. 78.

144 BOA, DH. MUI. 2-7/29, Documents No. 6, 7-9, 3-5; 22-26 Ağustos 1326 (4-8 September 1910).

National Economy began to propagate the enhancement and advance of Muslims against the alleged hegemony of non-Muslims in the economy.

The historiography on Turkey considers this turn a result of the political aims of the Turkish elite, or the project of nationalist political organizations. The popular social movements, such as the boycotting activities, however uncover the other side of the story. These movements contributed to the nationalization of the Ottoman economy, and different sections of society played their parts within this process. As a result, it becomes possible to draw a much more detailed picture of the social origins of this political project. For instance, in the declaration of the Trabzon Boycott Committee, the first principle was “the boycotting of Greek dwellers in the country.” The economic activities of Greek merchants came next.<sup>145</sup> Similarly, the Smyrna Boycott Society stated in one of its numerous declarations that the boycott should harm the interests of the Hellenes, so that they would be forced to migrate “first by their own will.”<sup>146</sup> This indicates the boycotters’ inclination of eliminating Greeks from the empire, not only in economic but also in demographic terms.

Within this context, Islam, as an ethnic marker and identity, also played a crucial role, since the notables and port workers as the main actors of the boycott movement were Muslims. This is why national and Islamic references were used during the Boycott Movement in order to justify the ultimate cause. Islamic arguments were also utilized to galvanize the sentiments of the Muslim population and legitimize the movement in the eyes of the Ottoman Muslim public. The active presence of Muslim notables and the Muslim working class within the Boycott Movement paved the way for a frustrated relationship between different communities of the Ottoman Empire. As a result, although the boycott only targeted Greece and its economic presence, the Ottoman Greek community started to suffer as well. The boycott became a crucial weapon in the elimination of non-Muslims from the economy in particular and the society in general.

The boycott declaration by the Boycott Society insisted on the fact that the boycott was against the Greeks of Greece (*Yunanlı*), not the Ottoman Greeks (*Rum*).<sup>147</sup> The notice published by the Boycott Society of Sa-

---

145 FO, 195/2362, No. 21, 24 July 1910, p. 72.

146 “İzmir Harb-i İktisadi Heyetinin Beyannamesidir,” *İttihad*, 29 Ağustos 1326 (11 September 1910).

147 One of the first declarations of the boycott societies was the one by the Eyüp Sultan Boy-

lonica in most of the newspapers of the town highlighted this fact. This declaration warned the Ottoman public that “our” Greek “Ottoman fellow countrymen” were exempt from the boycott. Moreover, in order to avoid any misinterpretation, the Boycott Committee printed certificates for non-Hellenic merchants; these would be handled by Kerim Ağa, the head of the lightermen guild.<sup>148</sup> However, the rumors and claims regarding the boycott of *Rums* immediately became the subject of public debate, just after the promulgation of the boycott decision. Articles in Turkish newspapers denied such claims and condemned such actions, if there indeed were any.<sup>149</sup> Yet, it was not easy to discern Greeks who were citizens of Greece from Greeks who belonged to the Ottoman Greek Orthodox community. As mentioned in the first chapter, many Ottoman Greek merchants took on the citizenship of various European states in order to facilitate their trade transactions in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After its independence from the Ottoman Empire, Greece became one of the states who gave citizenship status to Ottoman people. Therefore, there were many Greek merchants who were holding Greek citizenship and at the same time were members of the Ottoman Greek community.

The Ottoman Greek press reacted to the Boycott Movement with the claim that a boycott against Greece would harm the interests of the Ottoman Greek community. At the outset of the movement, the Greek press stated that the Ottoman state and economy would receive damage as well. They questioned the argument of the boycotters that Ottoman citizens were exempt from the boycott.<sup>150</sup> The newspaper *Proodos* put forth three points: firstly, goods imported from Greece were to a great extent sold in the shops of Ottoman Greek merchants. Secondly, it was the Ottoman Greeks who generally found employment in the stores of Greek citizens. Lastly, the citizens of the Kingdom of Greece and the Ottoman Greeks were tied to each other not only by trade networks, but also by family relationships. *Proodos* wrote that there were many cases in which

cott Society, published in *Tanin*. In the fourth article, the declaration asked the Ottoman public to discern *Rums* from *Yunanis*. “Boykotaj,” *Tanin*, 12 Haziran 1326 (25 June 1910).

148 FO, 195/2358, No. 79, 18 June 1910, p. 103; the declaration regarding Ottoman Greeks is in article 2.

149 “Boykotaj Hakkında,” *Tanin*, 5 Haziran 1326 (18 June 1910).

150 The Greek press quoted articles and comments from the Turkish press, which stated that the Ottoman Greeks should certainly be exempt from the boycott. For instance, see: “Sholia tis [Tanin],” (The Comment of [Tanin]), *Proodos*, 6 June 1910. In this comment, *Tanin* stated that Ottoman citizens were able to distinguish an Ottoman Greek from a Hellenic and that their patriotism would prevent them from boycotting their own citizens.

husband and wife, cousins and even brothers and sisters possessed different citizenships.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, the newspaper warned the Turkish press and the boycotters that a boycott against the Greeks of Greece will naturally harm the interests of Ottoman citizens. It was not only the newspapers but also the Ottoman bureaucrats who occasionally warned the Ottoman public concerning family ties between *Rums* and *Yunanis*. The governor-general of Smyrna, Mahmud Muhtar, addressed a group of boycotters in a local club of the Committee of Union and Progress and underlined the blood and friendship ties between Greeks.<sup>152</sup>

For instance, there was the confusing case of the owner of a mill in Uzunköprü/Edirne who was boycotted. He was speaking mainly Greek and only able to write in Greek. He was married to a Greek woman and operated a second mill in the neighborhood, which was property of his wife. However, he was not a Hellenic subject, contrary to the claims of the boycotters who placed notices on the wall of his mill and forcibly prevented customers from entering his establishment. Rather, he was a British citizen of Maltese origin. The British consul and the governor-general of Edirne worked hard to convince the boycotters of his British citizenship. It was not until mid-November 1910 that the boycott on his mill was revoked.<sup>153</sup>

In another case, a small eatery close to the quay of Salonica was boycotted, based on the claim that its owner was a Greek. However, it turned out that the owner of the restaurant was the brother of the manager, who was actually a US citizen. Therefore, the boycotters came up against the dragoman of the US consul.<sup>154</sup> Considering these cases, it is not a great surprise to come across a family in which the family members each held the citizenship of a different country. In Menemen/Aydın, John Koundouros intended to purchase a land for tobacco cultivation. However, his family ties made this purchase rather interesting: his brother was the president of the Cretan Executive Committee, the arch-enemy of the

---

151 "Alli Opsis tou Apokleistou," (The Other Facet of the Boycott), *Proodos*, 11 June 1910.

152 Vangelis Kechriotis, "II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi İzmir'de Hıristiyanlar ve Müslümanlar Arasında Günlük İlişkiler," *Toplumsal Tarih*, No. 184, Nisan 2009, p. 26.

153 FO, 195/2335, No. 54, 20 October 1910, p. 240; FO, 195/2335, No. 58, 12 November 1910, p. 257. The arguments between Mr. Gallia, the British consul, and the governor-general of the province of Edirne continued until September 1911. FO, 195/2364, No. 8, 16 February 1911, p. 37; FO, 195/2364, No. 14, 6 March 1911, p. 60; FO, 195/2364, No. 36, 29 May 1911, p. 172; FO, 195/2364, No. 40, 29 September 1911, p. 191.

154 FO, 195/2358, No. 83, 29 June 1910, p. 135.

Boycott Movement. He bought a large piece of land between Menemen and Old Phocaea, but in the name of this nephew Adam Adamopoulos, who was an American citizen.<sup>155</sup> A Greek citizen by the name of Nikolaos Hacıargiriou, who lived in Antalya, as a result of the Boycott Movement applied to the Ottoman civil registration office in order to receive Ottoman citizenship. His brother Pandeli was already an Ottoman citizen.<sup>156</sup>

Corollary to this fact, many Ottoman Greeks were neither Ottoman citizens nor had any official registration anywhere else in order to avoid tax burdens. The legal state of Greeks also caused serious problems in the Ottoman parliament elections in 1908, when many Greeks were excluded from suffrage. Hence, after the promulgation of the boycott against Greece, it became a disputed matter to distinguish who was an Ottoman Greek and who was not. For instance, several activists who picketed the Greek stores in Antalya claimed that they were also boycotting those Greeks who were advocates of Greece, which is in itself an ambiguous claim since it was quite subjective to decide who was working for Greece and who was not.<sup>157</sup> The Boycott Society of Smyrna complained about Ottoman Greeks who had been raised believing in the idea of a larger Greece. The organization criticized not only the *Yunanis*, but also those who had a Greek mentality.<sup>158</sup> The Turkish newspaper *Tercüman* accused the Ottoman-Greek newspaper *Proodos* of betraying the country, because it wrote against the boycott movement. *Proodos* claimed that patriotism was not a monopoly of the majority.<sup>159</sup> It was not only *Proodos*, but almost the entire Greek-language press that was accused of being an advocate of Greece or the Greek national idea. Both the Turkish press and the declarations of the boycott societies claimed that the Greek-language press incited native Greeks against the Ottoman Empire. The Smyrna Boycott Society referred to the Turkish press in one of its declarations as the “true interpreter of all Ottomans.”<sup>160</sup>

The Islamic and national discourse of which the boycott made use and the mobilization of the Muslim section of Ottoman society turned the

---

155 FO, 195/2383, No. 35, 22 April 1911, p. 146.

156 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, Antalya, 24 March 1911.

157 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/17, Document No. 67, 23 Haziran 1326 (6 July 1910).

158 “İzmir Boykotaj Cemiyeti’nden,” *İttihad*, 23 Haziran 1326 (6 July 1910). The original expression in Turkish is “Yunaniler ve Yunan Kafahlar.”

159 “O Apokleismos,” (The Boycott), *Proodos*, 7 June 1910.

160 “İzmir Harb-i İktisadi Heyetinin Beyannamesidir,” *İttihad*, 29 Ağustos 1326 (11 September 1910).

movement into a conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims. Therefore, the MP of Serfiçe, Harisios Vamvakas, brought up the concept of *müstemin* in an article published in *Isopolitia*. These were people who came from abroad and resided in the empire. Their ethnicity and religion were not different from that of the citizens of the Ottoman Empire, and they were contributing to the economy of the country. Harisios referred to the Islamic law and claimed that the *müstemin* who did not act against the interests of the Ottoman state should have been under protection. A boycott against them was damaging the interests of these Ottoman subjects who had intense economic and commercial relationships.<sup>161</sup> For him, the boycott should not be considered an outcome of patriotism, since it was harming the economy of the empire. Therefore, Harisios underlined the interrelation between Ottoman citizens and *müstemins* and tried to use an argumentation against a social movement, by utilizing an Islamic discourse.

Clashes between Muslim and non-Muslim communities were not absent over the course of Ottoman history. Particularly in Lebanon there occurred serious conflicts between different communities during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Tension between different ethnic groups also emerged after the heydays of the 1908 Revolution. Rumors of massacres circulated among different religious communities and made the relationship between communities more and more precarious.<sup>162</sup> This is why Beirut and its hinterland became one of the centers of the Boycott Movement, where ardent instances of direct action occurred. In its first week, the boycott in Beirut was not particularly passion-laden. However, on 17 June 1910, after the Friday prayer, a significant crowd of people gathered in one of the main mosques of the town. Sheikh Abdurrahman Selam led a procession, followed by a man dressed up as Janissary with a sword, another holding a Koran, and two men with green banners. The march of the people ended in a square, and several speeches were given in order to excite the public. Although the demonstrations were in general moderate, Greek shops were forced to close, and two of them were damaged.<sup>163</sup>

---

161 Harisios Vamvakas, "Ö Emporikos Apokleismos," (The Economic War), *Isopolitia*, 20 June 1910.

162 Vangelis Kechriotis has demonstrated how different kinds of tension appeared between Christians and Muslims during the Second Constitutional Period in daily life in Smyrna, by focusing on various social and cultural issues. Vangelis Kechriotis, "İl. Meşrutiyet Dönemi İzmir'de Hıristiyanlar ve Müslümanlar Arasında Günlük İlişkiler," *Toplumsal Tarih*, No. 184, Nisan 2009, pp. 18-27.

163 FO, 195/2342, No. 32, 23 June 1910, p. 325.

The Greek consul in Smyrna was also afraid of the proclamations and declarations of the boycott committees and the speeches held in clubs and mosques. He claimed that these speeches were provoking the fanaticism of the Muslims against the Greeks.<sup>164</sup> The French consul in Smyrna claimed that the *khodjas* in the mosques were teaching the people about why and how to boycott. The “lessons” that were taught in the mosques were repeated in the speeches in the clubs and on the streets.<sup>165</sup> The foreign consuls were very watchful concerning the sermons in the mosques and the behavior of the religious cadres. However, regarding the mobilization of the Muslim population on the grassroots level, the Ottoman state apparatus did not pay attention to the mosques, because nothing truly threatening occurred in or around the mosques. Only in a few instances during the Boycott Movement did the imams or sheiks play a part in the mobilization of the masses. Therefore, such claims were rather related with the Orientalist visions of foreign observers. The Ottoman government was more afraid of the lower classes.

The French consul in Rodos (Rhodes) reported that the Muslim population of the island was fanatically against the Greeks and that was why they faithfully supported the boycott. The consul emphasized that even the moderate Muslims had told him that they would declare a holy war if the European states supported the Cretan Assembly.<sup>166</sup> The Greek community and particularly the elite complained about the predominance of the word *gavur* (infidel) in daily life. The mobilization during the Boycott Movement likely did increase its usage in the nationalist discourse. Mihail Sofroniadis claimed that *gavur* was used in order to point out non-Muslims, although the new constitutional era had promised fraternity between different communities.<sup>167</sup>

Posters on the Cretan problem that were hung by the *Donanma Cemiyeti* in Diyarbakır caused fear of a massacre among the Christian population. The British consul thought that the Cretan question was not a popular issue. Nevertheless, a massacre of non-Muslims and plundering of their property may have resulted, according to the consul.<sup>168</sup> Therefore,

164 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, Smyrna, No. 919, 19 March 1911.

165 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 41-43, Smyrna, 11 April 1911.

166 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 306, Document No. 21, Rodos, 11 June 1910.

167 Mihail Sofroniadis, “Gkiavour!” (Infidel), *Ap’Ola*, 19 Eylül 1910, in Mihail Sofroniadis, *Apo tin Apolitaria ston Kemaliso: Artra apo ton Elliniko tipo tis Konstantinoupolis 1905-1921*, (Athens: 2005).

168 FO, 195/2347, No. 23, 29 June 1910, p. 327.

even a nationalist discourse based on Islamic arguments or addressing the Muslim population provoked fear of a clash between different communities.

Although Bulgaria had gained its independence, there were still tensions between Muslims and Bulgarians in both Macedonia and Thrace. Moreover, the newspaper *Embros* mentioned an economic war between Bulgarians and Turks, as these two communities did not frequent each other's shops.<sup>169</sup> The killings, murders and assassinations between the two communities paved the way for an undeclared boycott.

As a matter of fact, the Ottoman government was alarmed because of the emerging tensions between different communities. The government warned the ministries and all provinces of the empire that a discourse based on Islam or Christianity was contrary to the general Ottoman interests.<sup>170</sup> The government warned the Ottoman public and the governors twice within the same month. Although the Boycott Movement was the outcome of people's *hamiyyet* (patriotism) according to the government's decree, there appeared some instances of assault against Ottoman non-Muslim subjects, which may have led to a general clash between Muslims and Christians.<sup>171</sup> In May and June 1910, during the wave of meetings against the Cretan Assembly's oath of allegiance to the King of Greece, tension arose between Greeks and Muslims. Even in towns such as Edirne, where there was no clash or outward hostility, relationship was no longer friendly.<sup>172</sup>

As a result, one can claim that the Boycott Movement that commenced in May 1910 was officially against the Greeks of Greece, but expanded to the Ottoman Greek merchants in a very short time. There is significant evidence concerning this expansion. For instance, the Ottoman Ministry of the Interior sent a third order to all provinces, underlining the fact that the protest was indeed expanding to the economic activities of Ottoman citizens and their shops. Other than in the previous two orders, the ministry this time also wanted its order to be published by the Ottoman press.<sup>173</sup> The governor of Konya, in line with the statement of Ministry

169 "Emborikos Apokleismos Boulgaron kai Tourkon," (Bulgarian and Turkish Economic War), *Embros* (Athens), 24 November 1910.

170 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/17, Document No. 1, 29 Mayıs 1326 (11 June 1910).

171 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/17, Document No. 3, 27 Mayıs 1326 (9 June 1910); BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/17, Document No. 36, 17 Haziran 1326 (30 June 1910).

172 FO, 195/2335, No. 30, 13 June 1910, p. 120.

173 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/17, Document No. 67, 23 Haziran 1326 (6 July 1910).

of the Interior, considered the boycott dangerous since it might trigger a clash between different communities.<sup>174</sup> The *mutasarrıf* of Preveze was worried during the first weeks of the boycott because of the fact that the population of his town was to a great extent composed of non-Muslims. He feared that the boycott might lead to a clash between the different religious communities. The government informed the governor of Yanya that nothing would more harmful to national interests than a conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims.<sup>175</sup> The great majority of the town was Greek-Orthodox and, therefore, a boycott against Greece was also harmful to the trade of Preveze, which depended on business relations with Greece. Thus, it was the Albanians from Margariti and the Bosnian immigrants who enforced the boycott.<sup>176</sup>

During the wave of meetings and demonstrations against Greece regarding the Cretan issue, there occurred a number of incidents that caused much fear not only among the Greek-Orthodox community, but also other Ottomans. For instance, in Kala-i Sultaniye a Muslim preacher by the name of Mehmet Efendi spoke against the Greeks and claimed that it was not only the Cretans who had sworn fidelity to the Greek king, but all Greeks who resided in the Ottoman Empire. He argued that it was a sacred duty for Turks to eliminate the empire's Greeks and that he himself would kill twenty of them. Cevad Bey (a prominent political figure in town) protested this kind of language and withdrew from the council that had been formed to organize the meeting at which Mehmet Efendi spoke. This fanatic speech alarmed the Greek community of the town. The British vice-consul claimed that there was no genuine "patriotic spirit" among the Muslims, but that such speeches, particularly by a preacher, might cause clashes between different communities.<sup>177</sup>

One of the boycott targets consisted of the Greek employees of various corporations and institutions. Even non-Muslims employed by the state were boycotted. For instance, in November 1910, the Ministry of the Interior warned the governor of Aydın concerning the boycott of a non-Muslim state official in İnegöl, considering this action an improper act.<sup>178</sup> As will be mentioned in detail, the most visible aspects of the Boy-

---

174 BOA, DH MUI 105/12, Document No. 1, 3 Haziran 1326 (16 June 1910).

175 BOA, DH. MUI. 106/9, Document No. 2-3, 6 Haziran 1326 (19 July 1910).

176 FO, 195/2358, No. 84, 1 July 1910, p. 145.

177 FO, 195/2345, No. 2, 21 May 1910, p. 90.

178 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-24, Document No. 5, 18 Teşrinisani 1326 (1 December 1910).

cott Movement were the picketing of Greek shops. The picketing caused anxiety among state elites and, in turn, led them to warn the local authorities that such actions would probably lead to a clash between Muslims and non-Muslims.<sup>179</sup>

An instance of such tension occurred in Tarsus (Mersin) and provides information how conflicts indeed occurred in daily life. A Greek citizen and employee of the Ottoman Bank was said to have insulted a crowd gathered in order to protest Crete's declaration of a union with Greece. According to a report sent to the Ministry of the Interior, a Greek officer showed his contempt for the crowd by saying: "Here they are, the mob, they think that they will turn the European public opinion against us." Moreover, the report claimed that the same officer had humiliated several of the Muslim merchants who had acted in accord with the boycott; this humiliation was about to create an "undesired event." The first confrontation between the employee of the Ottoman Bank and the meeting was a coincidence, but very well shows how such a confrontation may have emerged. Subsequently, the Ottoman Bank became a boycott target, even though the report did not particularly point out the employee as a Greek citizen, but as a person who served the interests of Greece (which in itself is a rather vague statement).<sup>180</sup>

In another incident, a transportation commissioner of the Ottoman Anatolian Railways, Kostaki İnceoğlu, was said to gather Muslim porters who were working for him. He addressed 130 porters and asked where they had learned how to boycott. He fired all of them and asked them to boycott a different business. By doing so, he provoked the reaction of the Turkish press. *Tanin* published an article criticizing the commissioner, claiming that he had betrayed a country that had fed him and his ancestors. This article was then re-published in the pages of *İttihad* in Smyrna. The article advised the Ottoman public not to consider him an Ottoman, since he preferred Greece to the country where he earned his livelihood, and neither should Anatolian Railways ignore his behavior.<sup>181</sup> However, it soon became apparent that Kostaki İnceoğlu was in fact innocent and that the rumors about him had been the result of a scheme against him. He had had a problem with one of the porters, and his enemies used the

---

179 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/9, Document No. 8, 1 Haziran 1326 (14 June 1910).

180 BOA, DH. MUI. 108-1/46, Document No. 3, 19 Haziran 1326, (2 July 1910).

181 "Bu Nasıl Osmanlı?" *Tanin*, 7 Haziran 1326 (20 June 1910); "Bu Nasıl Osmanlı? Tanin Refikimizden:" *İttihad*, 10 Haziran 1326 (23 June 1910).

boycott to spread lies about him. *Tanin* and the Boycott Society officially apologized to the commissioner.<sup>182</sup> Such schemes with the aim to ruin specific persons by spreading lies related to the Boycott Movement were not uncommon; foreign merchants particularly complained about them.<sup>183</sup>

Another incident occurred in Smyrna, where a captain of the Pantaleon Company was said to insult his Muslim workers. The port workers probably refused to unload the ship because of the boycott; however, the newspapers reported that the captain would only employ port workers to unload his ship on the condition that they convert to Christianity. He was also said to have insulted the workers by wondering when they finally would exchange the hat for the fez and thereby become proper human beings. The newspapers reported this incident as an outcome of the boycott and a humiliation of Islam.<sup>184</sup>

Tension between Muslims and non-Muslims also occurred in Yanya. This time, the complainants were the non-Muslim notables of Preveze, who reported several instances of assault against Christian children. They claimed that their most sacred possessions had been insulted and that they had been humiliated and attacked in the middle of the bazaar. The governor of Yanya informed the Ministry of the Interior that several of these assaults had actually been provoked by Christians. According to Governor Mustafa Zihni, the primary reason for the increase in the tensions between different communities was the Boycott Movement. Sailors, merchants and their consul were also mentioned in the reports of the governor.<sup>185</sup> As mentioned above, tensions between different communities occurred particularly in Lebanon. For instance, in one incident during the Bayram Holiday there two persons were killed and eight wounded. As a consequence, the Boycott Movement became more and more terrifying for both elite and commoners.<sup>186</sup>

The discourse of the Boycott Movement in 1910 and 1911 was still based on Ottomanism. The movement legitimized its actions by referring to the general interests of Ottoman Society. This is why the Cretan Question was

182 "Kostaki Inceoğlu," *Tanin*, 12 Haziran 1326 (25 June 1910); "Harb-i İktisadi Cemiyeti'nden Varid Olan Cevab Şudur," *Tanin*, 12 Haziran 1326 (25 June 1910).

183 Vangelis Kechriotis, "II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi İzmir'de Hristiyanlar ve Müslümanlar Arasında Günlük İlişkiler," p. 25.

184 "Boykotajın Tesiri- İslamiyet'e Tecavüz," *İttihad*, 3Eylül 1326 (16 September 1910).

185 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/17, Documents No. 70-71-72, 22 Haziran 1326, (5 July 1910).

186 FO, 195/2343, No. 48, 10 October 1910, p. 117.

always at the center of the debate and the apparent target was Greece. Yet, as mentioned above, the discourse was also oscillating between Ottomanism and Islam. Muslim identity appeared as a distinctive reference point, distinguishing this boycott from the 1908 Ottoman Boycott. In practice and contrary to the official claims of the Boycott Movement, non-Muslims other than Greek citizens were also affected by the movement.

However, these were only the first steps of a longer-term trend. After the Balkan Wars, in 1913 and 1914, the Boycott Movement turned against non-Muslim communities and aimed at a total Islamization of the Ottoman economy. From then on, Muslims became the only addressees of the mobilization efforts. However, even in 1910 and 1911 there were several instances in which the non-Muslims of the Ottoman Empire were also negatively affected by the Boycott Movement. The 1910 annual report of the British ambassador in Greece also claimed that the spreading anti-Greek Boycott Movement affected both Hellenes and Ottoman Greeks.<sup>187</sup>

Georgios Bousios (Yorgos Boşo Efendi), the MP of Serfiçe, stated in one of his articles that the boycott declared against Greece in practice included the Ottoman Greeks. He wrote that one group of Ottoman citizens had raised doubts regarding the Ottoman identity of another group of Ottoman citizens; the Boycott Society wanted non-Muslims to prove their Ottoman identity by issuing a certificate. He reminded his readers that the Ottoman nation was not only comprised of porters and lightermen. For him, every non-Muslim was a potential subject of Greece if the Boycott Society had not confirmed otherwise. He also asked why the Boycott Society had not met with prominent Turkish, Greek and Armenian members of the commercial communities.<sup>188</sup> *Embros* (Athens) reported that the Ottoman Greeks of Salonica had been asked to wear a fez instead of a European hat in order to prove their Ottoman identity. The newspaper article underlined this paradox and reminded its readers that during the 1908 Boycott they had been asked to get rid of their fezzes.<sup>189</sup> The newspaper tried to stress the fact that the boycott was against the Greek world in general.<sup>190</sup>

The Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate complained to the Ministry of Jus-

---

187 FO, 881/9802, Greece Annual Report 1910, p. 3.

188 G.A. Bousios [Yorgos Boşo Efendi], "İ Ektelestiki Eksousia kai epi tou Boykotaj Epitropi," (The Executive Power and the Boycott Society), *Isopolitia*, 27 June 1910.

189 "To Mpoikotaz stin Thessalonikin," (Boycott in Salonica), *Embros* (Athens), 9 June 1910.

190 "İ Katastasis Epideinoutai," (The Situation is Getting Worse), *Embros* (Athens), 15 June 1910.

tice that the Greek community in Akhisar/Manisa greatly suffered from the boycott. According to the report of the patriarchate, the Boycott Society had proclaimed a boycott against the Ottoman Greek community by recruiting a number of *tellals* (public criers). Furthermore, they posted guards in front of the Greek shops and stores in order to block customers from entering. As a result, a number of Greeks had had to close their shops, and their business had been eliminated.<sup>191</sup> The main reason for the boycott against the Ottoman Greeks was the presence of two teachers with Greek citizenship in the Greek school and another Greek citizen working in the Greek Church. After the declaration of the boycott, they had been dismissed by the Greek Orthodox Community. However, the boycott did not cease because these three Greek citizens did not leave the town. According to a telegram sent to the Ministry of the Interior by the notables of the Greek schools, the Boycott Society had announced that even those persons who talked to these three Greek citizens would become a boycott target.<sup>192</sup>

In this case, the local ranks of the Ottoman bureaucracy did not repudiate the existence of such a boycott against Ottoman Greeks and informed the government that they were doing their best to stop it. Usually, these types of claims were denied by the local governors. The British consul in Smyrna, Henry D. Barnham, in a report accused the Greek population who “think and talk of nothing else but this Cretan Question and who by their actions do everything to provoke the Turks.”<sup>193</sup> The French consul of Cidde (Jeddah) wrote a similar statement regarding the relationship between Muslims and Greeks. According to him, the Greeks of the town were in a dangerous mood. He claimed that the Greeks were provocative in their talk and their behavior. On the other hand, the Turkish officers were arrogant and did not have good intentions towards the Greeks.<sup>194</sup> These reports clearly prove how the Cretan issue affected the daily lives of the common people belonging to different communities. This is why Barnham wanted the governor-general of the province of Aydın, Mahmut Muhtar Paşa, to remain in his post to preserve the peace between Turks and Greeks and prevent conflict between them.

---

191 BOA, DH. MUI. 110/38, Documents No. 1-2-3, 12 Haziran 1326 (25 June 1910).

192 BOA, DH. MUI. 107/39, Documents No. 7-8, 11 Haziran 1326 (24 June 1910).

193 FO, 195/2360, No. 39, 6 June 1910, p. 198.

194 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 306, Document No. 251-252, Cidde (Jeddah), 15 October 1910.

The recruitment of Greek citizens or any other relationship with them could be a reason for a boycott. Therefore, the Ottoman Greeks were alerted since there were many Greek citizens within their community, working in various jobs, as teachers and skilled employees in the service sector. Regarding this employment, there emerged a rather harsh polemic between the Greek and Turkish press of Smyrna over the course of the Boycott Movement. One of the hotly debated issues was the Greek teachers who taught in Ottoman schools. The Turkish press claimed that they were provoking the Ottoman Greeks against the Ottomans and that this was undermining the unity of the Ottoman Empire. Turkish newspapers asserted that the Ottoman Greeks preferred Greece to the Ottoman Empire as a result of this education. The Turkish newspaper of Smyrna, *İttihad*, wrote that these Greek citizens were to be expelled from their institutions by force, if they were not fired by the Ottoman Greek community.<sup>195</sup> *İttihad* claimed that the state of the Greek community was harmful to the Ottoman Empire, since most of the Greek press of Smyrna was in the hands of Greek citizens.<sup>196</sup>

Such convoluted problems regarding Hellene-Greek versus Ottoman-Greek identity also occurred in the agricultural sector. Boycotters prevented the workers on the farm of one Ibrahim Ahmed Efendi from executing their duties. The reason for this boycott supposedly was the Greek identity of Ibrahim Ahmed Efendi who guaranteed the government that he was an Ottoman citizen from Beyşehir. He reported that he was considered a Greek citizen because he was from Beyşehir. The governor (*mutasarrıf*) of Karesi quoted the reply of the governor (*kaymakam*) of Edremit, stating that the workers did not boycott because they did not want to.<sup>197</sup>

There appeared many instances of boycotting non-Muslims instead of Greek citizens, especially in the province of Aydın. Therefore, the consuls of the Great Powers in Smyrna decided to act collectively if the interest of foreign subjects other than the Hellenes would be threatened by the Boycott Movement.<sup>198</sup> The consuls excluded Greek citizens from their protection and thereby admitted the boycott's legitimacy. This is the reason why most documents regarding boycott activities in the Ottoman

---

195 "Rum Cemaati ve Yunaniler," *İttihad*, 13 Mayıs 1326 (26 May 1910).

196 "Yine Rumlar ve Yunaniler," *İttihad*, 17 Mayıs 1326 (30 May 1910).

197 BOA, DH. MUI. 117/56, Documents No. 1-2, 24 Temmuz 1326 (6 August 1910).

198 FO, 195/2360, No. 54, 6 July 1910, p. 265.

archives are related with the affairs of foreign citizens other than the citizens of Greece.

For instance, the boycotted lighters and boats in the port of Smyrna, particularly during the spring of 1911 when the boycott was strictly applied, did not belong to a Greek but to an Italian citizen. In one case, the police detained five Ottoman citizens thought them to be Greek citizens. Subsequently, the Grand Vezier in a telegram to the Ministry of the Interior particularly underlined the fact that the persons claimed to be Greek citizens were indeed Ottomans.<sup>199</sup>

Ottoman Greek merchants also had to struggle with the Boycott Movement. For instance, one of the owners of a flour factory in Dedeğaç complained that the flour that he had sent to an Ottoman citizen in Kavala, Nikola Pavlo, by means of an Ottoman steamship was boycotted by the port workers. The *mutasarrıf* of Drama and the governor of Salonica wrote to the Ministry of the Interior the boycott was due to the Greek citizenship of the factory owners. The intervention of the Ottoman government helped to prove the Ottoman citizenship of the owner, Yani of Kırkkilise. However, in the same week flour produced in his factory was boycotted in Gümülcine and in several other towns in the province of Edirne. Once again, he sent a telegram to the Ministry of the Interior and, after offering his thanks for the government's previous intervention, asked the ministry to intervene once more, but this time with the governor of Edirne. In this telegram, he also underlined the fact that the documents he had received from the Dedeğaç Chamber of Commerce confirmed his Ottoman citizenship.<sup>200</sup> In the case of two beerhouses with Ottoman shareholders, the Boycott Society of Smyrna left the decision to boycott to the Ottoman citizens.<sup>201</sup> However, in many cases it was enough to entertain any kind of relationship with a Greek citizen to be boycotted.

The cigarette paper produced by Anastasyadi in Galata for the benefit of İzmir's Greek Hospital was also the subject of boycott; their importation to İzmir was prohibited by the boycotters. There were many instances during the Boycott Movement in which rolling papers, matches, and tickets were boycotted due to illustrations of the Greek king, the Greek flag or other national symbols depicted on them. However, there

---

199 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-24, Documents No. 23-24, 11 Nisan 1327 (24 April 1911).

200 BOA, DH. MUI. 104-1/46, Documents No. 1-8, 2-12 Haziran 1326 (14-25 June 1910).

201 "İzmir Boykotaj Cemiyetinden," *İttihad*, 2 Haziran 1326 (15 June 1910).

is no mention of such an illustration in Anastasyadi's case. The only reason for this boycott was his citizenship. The Minister of Commerce and Public Works wrote to the Ministry of the Interior and confirmed his Ottoman identity based on the official documents that Anastasyadi had submitted.<sup>202</sup> The governor of Aydın sent a report and disavowed the existence of such a boycott. According to this report, there was a boycott of another cigarette paper brand in Manisa, but it was discontinued after it became apparent that its owner was an Ottoman citizen. Like so many other, this report also revealed that the boycott was applied to many Ottoman citizens.<sup>203</sup>

The greatest damage was done to the maritime sector of the Greek economy. It was easy for the boycotters to closely watch the Greek ships that regularly visited the Ottoman ports. An Ottoman ship company owned by non-Muslims also suffered from the Boycott Movement because of a ship that they had bought from a Greek company. In 1910 and 1911, there were many instances of Ottoman companies purchasing boycotted ships. These were usually bought by Ottoman Greeks and, subsequently, became a target. The General Director of the Banque de Mettelin and the Guruci Company sent a telegram to the government, stating that they had purchased the ship in place of an old ship and that it had been registered with the Ottoman port administration. However, the company did not manage to extricate itself from the boycott.<sup>204</sup> The Ottoman flag that the ship flew did not rescue the company from the boycott. The İzmir Boycott Society prohibited the companies' transactions between Ottoman ports.

The Boycott Society was very suspicious of the transfers of goods from Greek citizens to Ottoman citizens. Such a transfer of property occurred in Üsküdar, where two Ottoman merchants by the names of Trinidisi and Yorgi bought a pasta factory whose former owner had been a Greek citizen. The Ottoman merchants announced their purchase in the newspapers *İkdam* and *Proodos*, but the Üsküdar Boycott Committee did regard this transfer of property as fake. Trinidisi and Yorgi sought help from the government in order to rescue themselves from economic ruin.<sup>205</sup> Similarly, several markets and shops in Üsküdar were boycotted, even though

---

202 BOA, DH. SYS 22/1-22, Document No. 2, 21 Temmuz 1327 (5 August 1911).

203 BOA, DH. SYS 22/1-22, Document No. 3, 24 Ağustos 1327 (6 September 1911).

204 BOA, DH. MUI. 107/19, Document No. 2, 10 Haziran 1326 (23 June 1910).

205 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-26, Documents No. 2-3, 19 Teşrinievvel 1326 (1 November 1910).

the owners of these shops were Ottoman citizens. They claimed that this boycott was without reason and cause.<sup>206</sup>

The Destouni Line, which had greatly been affected during the initial days of the Boycott Movement, passed into the possession of an Ottoman subject. Their steamers began to operate between the ports of Salonica and Istanbul. However, one steamer of the line, *Anghelike*, was boycotted “on the ground that the sale to the Ottoman subject had not been a *bona-fide* transaction,” even it was carrying Muslim refugees from Bulgaria. The boycotters only allowed the passengers to disembark. The ship could only depart to Kavala and Dedeğaç with the help of Kerim Ağa’s written instructions, informing the lightermen of these two towns that the ship may unload its cargo but should not be allowed to take on load.<sup>207</sup>

The boycott usually targeted the trading and economic activities of Greek citizens, but since it was a popular movement, several strange instances also happened. In Adana, an actor of the Turkish Drama Company was boycotted and the performance stopped. The police reported that the boycott was applied only for one night, because one of the players was a Greek citizen. However, the director of the theater company, İsmail Behçet, denied this and assured the Ottoman public that the player was an Ottoman citizen.<sup>208</sup>

The blockade of Greek shops was one of the direct actions of the Boycott Movement and appeared in the first week of its existence. An official report on one of these events from İzmir revealed the fact that there were Ottoman shops among those that had to be closed down because of the picketing.<sup>209</sup> Various kinds of attacks on Greek shops in the market place were not new in the Ottoman Empire. The increasing tension and conflicts between different communities had led to attacks and harassment before. Before the declaration of the boycott, several Ottoman Greek shops had been disturbed by crowds who convened to protest new developments regarding the Cretan Question.<sup>210</sup> In Syria and particularly in Beirut, such incidents became a familiar phenomenon during the Boycott Movement.

---

206 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-26, Document No. 1, 25 Eylül 1326 (8 October 1910).

207 FO, 195/2358, No. 115, 10 September 1910, p. 348.

208 BOA, DH. MUI. 109/46, Document No. 3, 16 Haziran 1326, (29 June 1910).

209 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/9, Documents No. 2-3, 27 Mayıs 1326 (9 June 1910).

210 BOA, DH. MUI. 99/43, Document No. 1, 17 Mayıs 1326 (30 May 1910).

Picketing of Greek stores was the most effective form of direct action during the Boycott Movement. A merchant in İzmir, Philip Kotlidi, had opened a new shop in Menemen, but it was boycotted with the claim that he was a citizen of Greece. After a month and a half, he complained to the government that the governor's orders in his favor had failed. In his complaint, he confirmed that he and his ancestors were Ottomans and had served the Ottoman motherland. What is crucial in his report is that he referred to the boycott as an outcome of the explicit interests of a few individuals.<sup>211</sup> That is to say, he pointed out the existence of competition and rivalry. In the same month, but this time in Bergama, the farm of Fotiyadi was seized by the boycotters; Fotiyadi's son, a teacher at the Heybeliada School of Theology, assured that his father was a citizen of the Ottoman Empire. He asked how the estates and assets of Ottoman citizens could possibly be boycotted and pleaded with the government to send orders to the province of Aydın.<sup>212</sup>

The Aegean islands were densely populated by the Greek community, and this made their economic situation quite precarious. Their close relationships with Asia Minor were sometimes cut, and the blockade caused significant economic damage, particularly to the small islands which were dependent on the main land. The Chamber of Commerce in Midilli (Lesbos) convened a meeting in order to debate the negative effects of the boycott on the trade of the island. Two Muslim members of the chamber proposed to form a boycott society in order to regulate the boycotting activities. They claimed that such a committee could inspect the merchandise and prevent non-Greek merchants and goods from being boycotted. However, the suggestion was declined; instead, the merchants decided to send telegrams to the Ottoman parliament and ask for help.<sup>213</sup>

The President of Midilli's Chamber of Commerce sent a telegram to the MP of Midilli, Panayotis Bostanis, and complained about the boycott of their island in Edremit. An Ottoman merchant had sent goods to Akçay, but had been blocked in the port of Edremit. He reported that there were many merchants complaining about the boycotting activities. Seven non-Muslim notables sent a telegram to the Ministry of the Interior, proclaiming that the boycott in Ayvalık had extended to Ottoman businessmen.

---

211 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-24, Document No. 35, 31 Mayıs 1327 (13 June 1911).

212 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-24, Document No. 38, 26 Mayıs 1327 (7 June 1911).

213 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, Midilli, No. 235, 30 March 1911.

This complaint regarding the boycott of Ottoman Greeks was signed by several local Greek citizens.<sup>214</sup>

The boycotting of the merchants of Midilli did not end following the complaint. Therefore, the vice-president of the Midilli Chamber of Commerce, Apostol, sent a telegram to the government in order to inform them that in Dikili Ottoman commodities sent to Ottoman merchants by Ottoman ships were still being boycotted. The Greek consul also informed the Foreign Ministry of Greece that in March of 1911 the boycott in Dikili, Akçay, Edremit and Kemer had been very strict.<sup>215</sup> Accordingly, one of the captains of these ships could obtain not even a glass of drinking water at the port. Apostol informed the government that the boycott appeared to expand to Bergama; as a result the merchants of the island were facing bankruptcy.<sup>216</sup> The governor of Aydın informed the government that, as soon as the Boycott Society had learned that the owner of the goods were Ottomans, the merchandise had been carried to the stores. The *kaymakam* of Bergama also maintained that the goods had arrived in his town.<sup>217</sup>

However, the complaints of the Midilli Chamber of Commerce did not end, and the officials continued to send telegrams regarding the boycotting of the island, including to the MP of Midilli in Istanbul, in order to air their grievances. The situation deteriorated since in Edremit and Dikili the boycotters declared that they would also boycott those merchants who brought commodities from Midilli. Thus, the Ministry of the Interior wrote to the governor of Aydın that such a boycott of an Ottoman island should be banned, although the *mutasarrıf* of Karesi reported that the complaints of the Midilli merchants were only based on their anxiety and worry.<sup>218</sup>

### 3.5. National Economy, Muslim Merchants and the Working Class

One of the most significant features of the Second Constitutional Period (1908-1918) was the rise of the National Economy. Thoughts concern-

214 BOA, DH. MUI. 22/1-10, Document No. 11, 22 Mart 1327 (4 April 1911) and BOA, DH. MUI. 22/1-10, Document No. 4, 23 Teşrinievvel 1326 (5 November 1910).

215 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, Midilli, No. 235, 30 March 1911.

216 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-15, Document No. 2, 9 Nisan 1327 (22 April 1911).

217 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-15, Document No. 6, 26 Nisan 1327 (9 May 1911).

218 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-10, Document No. 13, 15 Mayıs 1327 (28 May 1911) and BOA, DH. SYS 22/1-15, Document No. 13, 24 Mayıs 1327 (6 June 1911).

ing the development of a native industry became quite popular immediately after the promulgation of the constitution in 1908. The 1908 Ottoman Boycott popularized ideas about the construction of a native industry. Claims for the abolition of the capitulations and étatist policies emerged within the context of the National Economy thesis. After the political atmosphere of fraternity had started to evaporate, the Young Turks put forth specific policies in order to enhance the state of Muslims and Turks within the economy. The mobilization of the public for the National Economy was also a significant aspect of this process. Yet, this aspect is generally disregarded in the historiography on Turkey. The economic boycott was a political weapon to mobilize the public opinion and the masses. The boycott enabled different sections of society to play a role in this process. Thanks to the boycott, the masses, workers, merchants, and notables together participated in politics. Demands for the construction of a native industry were followed by critics of foreign domination within the Ottoman economy. The capitulations were considered one of the ultimate reasons for Ottoman backwardness. Non-Muslims became one of the targets of critics for a National Economy. The boycott turned towards them as a social movement that aimed at eliminating non-Muslims from the empire's economy. The 1910-1911 Boycott Movement was an important link in this transformation.

The general discourse of the Boycott Movement after 1908 was based on Ottomanism. However, during the 1910-1911 Boycott, Islamic and Turkic elements also took their place within this discourse. At that time, Ottoman Greeks and Armenians were not yet targeted, but included in the definition of "us." Whenever a Greek citizen was to be replaced by an Ottoman citizen in a particular economic sector, the replacement still might have been an Ottoman Greek or Armenian. Yet, it was also widely claimed that Muslims constituted the most backward element within the economy. In daily life, the border between Ottoman Greeks and Hellenes was sometimes trespassed, as the boycotters sometimes included the Ottoman Greeks when they eliminated Hellenes from the Ottoman Empire. As mentioned above, it was often difficult to distinguish between them.

To be a Greek citizen or to have any affiliation with them became disastrous for merchants during the Boycott Movement. Thus, merchants like Yorgaki İstradi were afraid of being associated with Greek citizens. He wrote to the newspaper *İttihad*, refuting the rumors that he had been

entertaining relationships with the late Alexander and a person by the name of Kasmati.<sup>219</sup>

The boycotters and the writers who defended the boycott referred to the Ottoman Empire as the land of Muslims. For instance, Fahri wrote in *İttihad* that Greeks who wanted to be Greek citizens or to defend the interests of Greece were free to leave the country, if they wanted to. Nobody forced them to live in the Ottoman Empire, and the better should leave the “Turkish land.”<sup>220</sup> In the same issue, M. Sai wrote that wealthy Ottomans should take advantage of the opportunity of the Boycott Movement and invest in the sectors left by the Hellenes. He wondered why the Ottoman Greeks and Armenians did not run the taverns in the port of Smyrna, which were entirely owned by foreigners. M. Sai addressed particularly the Muslims whom he wanted to invest in the economy, in small enterprises or in the newly formed *cemiyet-i müteşebbise* (Society of Entrepreneurs) in Istanbul. He claimed that it was a social responsibility for the wealthy to invest and that the poor and the workers had rights to their wealth.<sup>221</sup> Yet, Muslim notables made different kinds of investments in the Ottoman Empire and competed with foreigners. For instance, before the commencement of the boycott in 1910, Tiridzade Mehmed Pasha stirred up trouble among the Oriental Carpet Manufacturers in Uşak. The carpet company accused him of inciting people and producers against the company. The British consul even claimed that he was provoking a boycott of the company’s shipments.<sup>222</sup> A year earlier, Tiridzade Mehmed Pasha had been accused of boycotting a yarn dying factory in Uşak. However, the governor of Uşak informed the government that foreigners considered his initiative to establish a national company for carpet trading preparations for a boycott. Therefore, there were instances of rivalry between Muslim merchants and notables on one side and the foreigners on the other, but also instances of collaboration.<sup>223</sup>

The investments of Muslims attracted the attention of the Turkish press. Berberzade Hafız Ali Efendi who had grocery stores all over the province of Aydın decided to open a new shop in Smyrna. *İttihad* praised his enter-

219 İzmir’de Çiviciler İçinde Yorgi Istradi, “Tebaa-i Osmaniyyeden Çivici ve Demirci Yorgaki Istradi,” *İttihad*, 6 Ağustos 1326 (19 August 1910).

220 Fahri, “Boykotaj Niçin Kalkmaz,” *İttihad*, 21 Haziran 1326 (4 July 1910).

221 M. Sai, “Boykotaj Münasebetiyle, Umum Hamiyetli Osmanlılara,” *İttihad*, 21 Haziran 1326 (4 July 1910).

222 FO, 195/2360, No. 11, 7 February 1910.

223 BOA, DH. MUI. 66.2/1, Document No. 22, 25 Şubat 1909 (10 March 1909).

prises and his personal qualification and reported on his plans concerning Smyrna. *İttihad* claimed that Smyrna was desperately in need of such a respectable Muslim grocer whom Ottomans could trust. They would no longer be obliged to give their money to foreigners, particularly to Greek citizens. The newspaper also underlined the fact that Hafız Ali had already donated a significant amount of money to the navy. Such a donation was considered one of the most significant nationalist acts of the time.<sup>224</sup> Therefore, Berberzade Hafız Ali constituted a proper role model who invested, donated to national charities, and competed with foreigners.

The foreign consuls and Greece claimed that the boycott was harmful not only to Greece, but also to the Ottoman Empire itself. Both the internal and international trade and economy were damaged because of the Boycott Movement. It was also claimed that, apart from the merchants, the workers in the ports of the Ottoman Empire suffered economic loss. Although these statements were not entirely incorrect, the Boycott Movement had a different motivation: the construction of a national economy, in which the Muslim and Turkish elements would prevail.

The newspaper *Proodos* argued that not only Greeks would suffer from the boycott, but also Turkish merchants. Everybody had to pay more for transportation and had difficulties in finding vessels to carry goods. Therefore, the “primitive weapon” of boycott was harmful to the economy of the Ottoman Empire in general.<sup>225</sup> However, the boycotters and the Turkish press had a different point of view; they concentrated on eliminating the Greek element from the economy. Therefore, the French consul in Rhodes had been right when he claimed that the boycott’s aim was the elimination of the Greek element from the empire. He stated that there was a new power gaining strength in Turkey. This new social force was protected by the Committee of Union and Progress and the official authorities, but it was not identical to them.<sup>226</sup> For instance, a branch of the Orient Bank in Soma/Smyrna was boycotted because of its Greek director. The boycott of the bank was denounced by the governor-general, the local head of the police department, and even the representatives of the Committee of Union and Progress. Yet, these initiatives were not enough to put an end to the boycotting of the bank.<sup>227</sup>

---

224 “Bir İslam Bakkaliye Ticarethanesi,” *İttihad*, 13 Teşrinievvel 1326 (26 October 1910).

225 “Autocheiriasmoi,” (Suicides), *Proodos*, 6 June 1910.

226 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 51-53, Rodos, 22 April 1911.

227 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 106, Smyrna, 27 May 1911.

The Greek press paid attention to the emphasis that Turkish periodicals put on the National Economy. *Proodos* quoted *Jön Türk*, which claimed that the boycott was paving the way for the enlargement of the Ottoman trading navy. *İkdam*, on the other hand, claimed that Greece had prospered thanks to the gains earned from the Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, Greece had great interests in the empire, but was not treating the Ottomans on Greek soil well. Therefore, it was the Ottomans' duty to cut all relationships with Greece.<sup>228</sup>

The French ambassador had been right when he claimed that the Jewish community of Salonica and their Turkish fellows had benefited from the perpetuation of the Boycott Movement.<sup>229</sup> He repeated his assertions seven months later, when the boycott was applied more strictly after March 1911. The French consul in Salonica reported to the French ambassador in Pera that the newly formed *Donanma Cemiyeti* and the Boycott Movement had organized a specific division of labor. Both had close relationships with the Committee of Union and Progress. Both Jews and *dönmes* (Jews converted to Islam) were active in these organizations. According to his report, the *Donanma Cemiyeti* was to play a crucial role in taking over the coast navigation that had been done by Greek vessels before the boycott. This is why Jewish and Muslim merchants were looking forward to replacing Greek trading activities between the Ottoman ports. The report stated that the new motivation within the Boycott Movement had been incited by this particular social class.<sup>230</sup>

The British ambassador in Athens in his annual report referred to "the underlying desire to make Ottoman and especially Salonica merchants profit at the expense of Greek trade."<sup>231</sup> A year later, the British annual report claimed the same. The boycott harmed the interests of its most active social group, the lightermen. The British ambassador wrote that the "lightermen found themselves victimized for the benefit of Turkish and Jewish ship owners."<sup>232</sup> The most active social group of the Boycott Movement, the port workers, helped Ottoman ship owners tremendously in their competition with foreign ones. The foreign naval transportation companies complained to the Ottoman government that the boatmen demand-

---

228 "O Apokleismos," (The Boycott), *Proodos*, 7 June 1910.

229 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 306, Document No. 180, Tarabya, 6 August 1910.

230 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 36, Pera, 28 March 1911.

231 FO, 881/9802, Greece Annual Report 1910, p. 3.

232 FO, 881/10003, Greece Annual Report 1911, p. 4.

ed more money from the customers of foreign ships. By doing so, they indirectly compelled customers to travel on Ottoman ships. The Ottoman government wrote to the governor-generals of the empire's coastal provinces not to allow such illegal actions of the boatmen in the ports. Yet, the government described the act of the boatmen as "genuine boycott" (*hakiki boykot*) in its dispatch to the provinces. The concept referred to a distinct way of boycotting which would pave the way for the establishment of a national economy.<sup>233</sup> Therefore, the Ottoman bureaucracy was well aware of the movement and its specific goals and terminology. Similarly, *İttihad* called the Ottoman public to join the boycott not only as an occasional weapon, but as an everlasting economic war. As a result, no one would be able to insult their religion, nation and honor.<sup>234</sup>

Peros Kalambelis, an executive manager working in the Dardanelles, wrote to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece and claimed that it would be impossible for Greeks to extricate themselves from the boycott, because the Turks had learned the merits and advantages of such a weapon and were ready to utilize it whenever necessary. Henceforth, the boycott would be the Sword of Damocles for the Greeks.<sup>235</sup>

The French consul in Salonica repeated his social analysis several times when writing about the boycott movement. In September 1911, he also referred to a Cretan Muslim ship owner who played a significant role in the formation of the *Donanma Cemiyeti* in Salonica. He had lobbied the mayor of Salonica in order to receive institutional support. His efforts for the making of a Boycott Movement and a civil navy organization were successful in eliminating the Greek flag from the Ottoman ports in a short period of time, according to the French consul. The consul also underlined the fact that the *Donanma Cemiyeti* was comprised of Muslims, rather than being an Ottoman union.<sup>236</sup>

Marquis Pallavicini, the Austrian ambassador in Istanbul, also told the French ambassador in Vienna that the boycott was a stroke of luck for

233 BOA, DH. HMŞ. 9/14, Document No. 1, 21 Eylül 1327 (4 October 1911); BOA, DH. HMŞ. 22/2, Document No. 1, 21 Eylül 1327 (4 October 1911).

234 "Şehr-i Cari-i Ruminin..." *İttihad*, 3 Eylül 1326 (16 September 1910).

235 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, Dardanelles, 21 March 1911. The Greek ambassador and the local consuls also claimed that the boycott was a weapon used by the local merchants and notables to serve their personal interests; BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-31, Document No. 3, 16 Teşrinievvel 1327 (29 October 1911). The British merchants brought on the agenda a similar claim in an earlier example. See BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-24, Document No. 6, 17 Teşrinisani 1326 (30 November 1910).

236 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 131, Salonica, 3 September 1911.

the big interests. Having experienced the boycott in the Ottoman Empire since 1908, he stated several times that it was the Boycott Society who had power over the movement, and not the government or the Committee of Union and Progress.<sup>237</sup>

The lightermen, stevedores, porters and boatmen were the main actors of the boycott, particularly in the port cities of the Ottoman Empire. They were the most organized social group of the Boycott Movement. Their declarations and activities constituted the main aspects of the movement. The main spokesman of the movement was the head of the lightermen in Salonica, Kerim Ağa. The head of the lightermen in Istanbul was also the movement's head and the main spokesman in the capital.<sup>238</sup> Yet, it was not only the porters in the ports but also the porters in towns inland who played a crucial role in the movement. This is why the Boycott Society of Eskişehir thanked these "boycott heroes," and particularly their head, Ömer Onbaşı, and the head of the carters (*arabacılar*), Arap Ömer Ağa.<sup>239</sup> The boycott societies generally acted as anonymous organizations, and it was always the port workers who spoke on behalf of the boycotters. However, the port workers were also under the control of the boycott organizations. At the beginning of the Boycott Movement, the port workers of Istanbul took an oath of allegiance to the boycott before the Boycott Committee.<sup>240</sup>

The foreign consuls and the non-Turkish press despised the port workers and claimed that it was a shame for the Ottoman state to leave politics and diplomatic affairs to the hands of porters and lightermen.<sup>241</sup> At first sight, the tone of such remarks was not particularly contemptuous. *Proodos* asked in the first days of the boycott why the duties of statesmen and diplomats were left to the port workers.<sup>242</sup> However, in the later phases of the boycott, disdain turned into mockery and insult.

Kerim Ağa, for instance, was portrayed in the Greek press as if he was

---

237 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 68, Vienna, 28 April 1911. It was not necessarily a native interest, but according to the French consul Austria and Germany were the biggest competitors of the Greeks in trade in the Ottoman Empire. CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 75-76, Athens, 26 April 1911.

238 "O Emporikos Apokleismos Irlusen," (The Commercial Boycott Has Started), *Proodos*, 5 June 1910.

239 "Eskişehir Boykotaj Cemiyetinden:" *İttihad*, 21 Haziran 1326 (4 July 1910).

240 "To Kritikon Zitima," (The Cretan Question), *Proodos*, 6 June 1910.

241 "O Emborikos Apokleismos," (The Economic War), *Embros* (Athens), 26 June 1910.

242 "Autocheiriasmoi," (Suicides), *Proodos*, 6 June 1910.

the master of commerce in the Ottoman Empire. He was depicted in illustrations and cartoons as an ugly Oriental figure, sitting on a pillow, smoking a *nargile* (water-pipe), and giving orders to the workers around him.<sup>243</sup> In a short period of time, he became one of the most famous persons of the empire. He was regularly mentioned in the political and popular press and became the subject of diplomatic correspondence. Several times he was detained and sent to jail, but he did not lose his power in the port of Salonica, or his influence over different ports of the empire. His relationship with the Committee of Union and Progress and his position as head of the most powerful guild of the empire facilitated his domination in trade. Likewise, the heads of the port workers elsewhere appeared as prominent figures of their towns in this period. For example, in Antalya, where a significant number of Cretan immigrants were living, Süllü Ağa and Fehim Ağa emerged as significant political and social agents. They not only played a crucial role in the anti-Greek boycotts, but also carried their struggle into the national movement, even in the Armistice Period.<sup>244</sup>

The Turkish press also published polemic articles against the Boycott Movement. Most of the newspapers and journals were for the movement. However, there were a handful of newspapers that criticized the actions of workers or the role that they played in the movement. For instance, there emerged a polemic in between the two major newspapers of Trabzon, *Meşveret* and *Tarık*. *Tarık* criticized the domination of the port workers and particularly Kerim Ağa in the Boycott Movement. *Meşveret* replied that it was the boatmen who exhibited nationalist sentiments. The newspaper asserted that Kerim Ağa, Ahmet Ağa and Hüseyin Reis had brought up the issue of Ottoman union for the public opinion, and that they sacrificed their interests for the national cause. Therefore, they should be applauded and not criticized. If the boycott had been organized by elites, pashas and *beys* instead of persons like Kerim Ağa, it would have lasted only two days, so the newspaper claimed.<sup>245</sup> The new

---

243 For a typical illustration see: Mihail Sofroniadis, "Hronografima: Sic Transit Gloria Mundi!.." (Column: Thus the Fame on Earth is Fleeting), *Proodos*, 18 January 1911, in Mihail Sofroniadis, *Apo tin Apolitarhia ston Kemalismo: Artra apo ton Elliniko tipo tis Konstantinoupolis 1905-1921*, (Atina: 2005).

244 Mustafa Oral, "Meşrutiyet'ten Cumhuriyet'e Antalya'da Yunan Karşıtı Sosyal Hareketler: Giritli Göçmenler ve Kemalist Hamallar," *Toplumsal Tarih*, No. 138, Haziran 2005, pp. 60-68.

245 CPC, *Turquie 1897-1914*, 307, Document No. 174-175, Trabzon, 14 November 1911. The Article "Boycot" was published in *Meşveret* on 11 November 1911.

Italian consul who arrived in Salonica in August 1911 was amazed by Kerim Ağa and his men's role in the Boycott Movement and the power of the port workers.<sup>246</sup>

The port workers on the Ottoman quays—such as porters, lightermen and boatmen—were a well-organized social group who pressed for their economic and social rights in several ways over the course of Ottoman history. Their actions in this cause varied from boycott to strike. The Boycott Movement gave a legitimate “national” argument to their struggle. As mentioned above, they gained significant social rights thanks to their struggle during the 1908 Ottoman Boycott. Before the promulgation of the boycott in 1910, the port workers behaved in similar ways. For instance, on 3 April 1910 the boatmen of Haifa demanded three times the sum they had agreed upon with the passengers, halfway between the shore and the steamer. This was not an isolated phenomenon, since other boatmen came to help when travelers wanted to take boats to the steamer on their own initiative. Yet, the travelers were desperate when they encountered an organized group of boatmen. The case was brought to court, and two of the offending boatmen were arrested. However, the inquiry was not satisfactory for the consuls, because the boatmen soon were released again. As the British consul in Beirut underlined, the boatmen were an organized corporation in all Levantine ports, and such a vain inquiry might be “a dangerous precedent highly discreditable to any Government.”<sup>247</sup>

The boatmen utilized these mass mobilizations and national campaigns in order to strengthen their social conditions. Thanks to these boycotting activities, they consolidated their position *vis-à-vis* the state, the trading companies, and the Port Company. Their active presence in the movement facilitated the confirmation of their traditional rights in the ports. The governor-general of Yanya and the governor of Preveze asked the *Rüsumat Müdüriyet-i Umumiyesi* (Public Administration of Customs) about the legal status of the port workers. If the workers were not organized as guilds and were paid wages in return for their work, they should be considered officers. That is to say, they could not participate in the Boycott Movement since they would be a part of the state apparatus. However, if

---

246 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, No. 9047, Salonica, 13 August 1911.

247 FO, 195/2342, No. 21, 18 April 1910, p. 137. The two boatmen condemned to five weeks imprisonment and costs under section 179 of the Ottoman Criminal Code on 25 June 1910; FO, 195/2342, No. 33, 28 June 1910, p. 329.

they were organized as a guild and worked for fees, they would have the monopoly in the ports and customs.<sup>248</sup>

The Ministry of the Interior tried to undermine the boatmen's traditional rights, since their social power instilled fear in the elites. They had good reason to be afraid. The Cretan porters in Smyrna, for instance, considered the boycott a suitable occasion to strike against the shipping agents and the lighter owners. This was an opportunity to abolish an agreement made by the government on their behalf. This agreement limited the number of Muslims among the porters to one-third of their total number.<sup>249</sup> The British consul in Smyrna reported that the governor-general of the province of Aydın thought of summoning the boycott leaders and threatening them with punishment based on the law on strikes.<sup>250</sup> Therefore, the governor also considered a significant part of the boycott activities as workers' actions. The Boycott Movement also provoked the Zonguldak mine workers. In order to help the port workers of Ereğli, who were boycotting a Greek ship, the miners also stopped their work in the mines. As a result, the Greek ship was without adequate coal supply. Subsequently, there emerged a crisis between the Mine Company and the workers, and the company threatened the workers with a lockout. This decision also frightened the local governor and the government, since 5,000 workers would then be ready to march to the city center. The Ministry of the Interior also feared that, if these workers were to march into the city, great disorder would probably follow. Thus, the ministry ordered the local governors to prevent such a lockout. Furthermore, the Ministry of the Interior wanted the governors of Bolu, Zonguldak and Ereğli to restrict the mobilization of the workers in the port, in transportation, and in the mines. The governors replied to the ministry that the government should send additional troops to the region, in case it became necessary to apply force. Therefore, the boycott of a Greek ship in Zonguldak over a very short period of time led to great excitement and chaos.<sup>251</sup>

In the end, the Ministry of the Interior was not able to limit the monopoly of the port workers. The Administration of Customs confirmed

---

248 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/7, Documents No. 37-38, 8 Haziran 1326 (21 June 1910).

249 FO, 195/2360, No. 41, 15 June 1910, p. 206.

250 FO, 195/2360, No. 54, 6 July 1910, p. 266.

251 BOA, DH. MUI. 102-2/7, Documents No. 34, 35, 48, 55-59, 14-20 Haziran 1326 (27 June-3 July 1910).

the monopoly rights of the port workers one month later.<sup>252</sup> The *Nezaret-i Umur-ı Bahriye* (Ministry of Naval Affairs) also affirmed the rights of the lightermen, stating that foreign companies did not have any rights of transportation.<sup>253</sup> This monopoly was the main pillar of their social power. This is why there were numerous incidents of porters threatening porters newly hired by the foreign companies on the Ottoman quays. In Jaffa, the old porters pushed the newly hired ones into the sea.<sup>254</sup>

Irrespective of their power, the port workers were losing money because of the Boycott Movement, since they did not have a fixed income. Their wages depended on the amount of work they did. This is why, in Smyrna, the Boycott Society had to threaten several porters, lightermen and carters who unloaded Greek merchandise. In a declaration, the Boycott Society stated that an Ottoman should not work for the enemy, even when he was starving. There is evidence that there were port workers with Greek citizenship who tried to work nevertheless. The port workers who were threatened by the Boycott Society in this case may have been non-Muslim port workers, but this was the only case in which a group of port workers was criticized during the Boycott Movement.<sup>255</sup>

In most of the towns, they were the only social group who fought for the boycott, even though they lost wages when they refused to unload goods and passengers from the ships. One source of revenue that they did have was the certificates printed in order to prove merchants' identity. These certificates were sold for 10 *kuruş* and provided a small budget for the movement. Moreover, the inspection teams of the Boycott Organization, who inspected the shops and stores, were said to force merchants to "pay for their protection against boycottage." These sources of income to a certain extent did support the livelihood of the port workers.<sup>256</sup> The newspaper *Embros* also claimed that these certificates were invented to fill the pockets of Kerim Ağa, who had lost his commissions because of the refusal to unload Greek merchandise. According to the Greek journal, this was the new source of income for "generous and ascetic" Kerim Ağa.<sup>257</sup> The boycott organizations also established a fund

252 BOA, DH. MUI. 113/49, Document No. 2, 3 Haziran 1326 (16 July 1910).

253 BOA, DH. MUI 107/54, Document No. 2, 24 Haziran 1326 (7 July 1910).

254 BOA, DH. MUI. 109/50, Document No. 10, 21 June 1326 (4 July 1910).

255 "İzmir Boykotaj Cemiyeti'nden: Hamiyetli Hamal ve Arabacılarımızı," *İttihad*, 28 Haziran 1326 (11 July 1910).

256 FO, 195/2358, No. 82, 28 June 1910, p. 126.

257 "O Monos Ostis Meta..." *Embros* (Istanbul), 12 June 1910. (Article Lacks a Headline).

(*sandık*) in order to support the port workers.<sup>258</sup> Moreover, there were initiatives to raise money for the benefit of the port workers. The inhabitants of Mustafapaşa in Istanbul collected 328 piasters and hand the sum over to the porters and boatmen in order to support them at the very beginning of the boycott. *Proodos* guessed that these donations may have increase in the later phases of the Boycott Movement.<sup>259</sup>

### 3.6. The State and the Boycott Movement

The Ottoman government held contrasting attitudes towards the Boycott Movement. First of all, an effective boycott against Greece would have put economic pressure on the country and reduced its aspirations regarding Crete. The Cretan Question galvanized the emotions of the Ottoman public and put pressure on the government. The Boycott Movement channeled the pressure to a different target. Therefore, the boycott was useful for the government in terms of politics and diplomacy. At the beginning of the movement, the members of the government employed the argument of the local governors and low-ranking bureaucrats who said that the boycott was the outcome of the free will of the people. The Ottoman government even referred to Venizelos's candidacy to the Greek parliament as a provocation that triggered the patriotism of the Ottomans.<sup>260</sup> Grand Vizier Hakkı Paşa gave the Greek ambassador Gryparis a furious reply when the latter criticized Ottoman coercion and violence, stating that he was not able to prevent the anger of a people provoked by Greece.<sup>261</sup>

The mobilization of the Ottoman public increased day by day, and the expansion and intensification of the boycott undermined the control of the government on society. For instance, an old Khodja in Bornova (Bournabat)/Symrna convened a meeting in one of the *medreses*; several soldiers of the Bournabat garrison also participated. He preached to the gathered crowd about a Holy War and prayed for the destruction of

---

258 "Aferesie ton Hamalidon," (Malpractice of Porters), *Proodos*, 6 June 1910.

259 "O Apokleismos," (The Boycott), *Proodos*, 7 June 1910.

260 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 306, Document No. 180, Tarabya, 6 August 1910.

261 "Biaion yfios tou M Vezirou Apenanti tou Presbeuti mas," (The Fierce Wording of the Grand Vizier against our Ambassador), *Embros* (Athens), 27 May 1910. The first evaluations of the Boycott Movement held the Ottoman government responsible for its emergence. It was claimed that the government was too weak to deal with the Cretan Question and wanted to use the boycott in order to put pressure on Greece. "Ai Scheseis Elladas kai Tourkias," (Turkish-Greek Relations), *Embros* (Athens), 30 May 1910.

the new regime, which he condemned as the “arch-enemy of Islam.” He referred to the incidents in Crete as proof of his claims.<sup>262</sup> He was arrested the following day; this incident shows that the government did consider such mobilization as dangerous to its existence.

The Boycott Movement employed coercion in different parts of the empire, and the trade of other countries was also negatively affected in the course of the boycotting activities. Moreover, as mentioned above, the social tensions between different communities of the empire increased. The government also started to fear a clash between Muslims and non-Muslims, and the governor-general of the province of Aydın addressed the similarity between the *Rum* and the *Yunani*. When the governor visited the City Club in order to give a speech on the boycott, he underlined the fact the Ottoman Greeks and Greek citizens both had the same religion and language. Furthermore, their similarity was complicated by intermarriage. Most of the merchants in the region had Greek citizenship. Therefore, he warned the boycotters to be cautious regarding possible clashes between different communities.<sup>263</sup> Furthermore, the Minister of the Interior and a prominent member of the Committee of Union and Progress, Talat Bey, advised the head of the Boycott Union in Istanbul to put an end to the boycott.<sup>264</sup> There were many rumors in political and diplomatic circles, saying that the boycott was to end. There even appeared news items in foreign newspapers, reporting its end.<sup>265</sup> In response, the Boycott Society frequently published declarations in local newspapers, proclaiming that the boycott had not been lifted.<sup>266</sup>

At first, the Ottoman government had tried to prevent the emergence of the Boycott Movement. It had sent orders to Trabzon and Samsun/

---

262 FO, 195/2360, No. 39, 6 June 1910, p. 198.

263 “Havadis-i Mahalliye [Boykota Dair],” *Ittihad*, 15 Haziran 1326 (28 June 1910). The governor also argued that boycott was a weapon of weak states against stronger ones. According to him, one should not expect the Ottoman nation to boycott a weak and small Greece. However, Greece was backed by the Great Powers, and this was why it was legitimate for the Ottomans to utilize the weapon of boycott. This argumentation was also a defense for the boycott, even though he harbored fears.

264 “Harb-i İktisadi Dolayısıyla...” *Ittihad*, 30 Haziran 1326 (13 July 1910).

265 “Anti-Greek Boycott to Be Ended: Turkish Ministerial Circular,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 2 July 1910. Foreign newspapers were paying attention to every little sign regarding the cessation of the boycott. “The Greek Boycott in Turkey,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 27 October 1910.

266 For instance, see: İzmir Boykotaj Cemiyeti, “Beyanname,” *Ittihad*, 14 Temmuz 1326 (27 July 1910).

Canik, declaring that such a boycott against Greece was not needed since the government was taking the necessary steps. According to the government, the boycott would probably cause a bad impression among the European public and so was contrary to the general interest of the country. The government was doing its best, and the Crete Question was about to be solved in favor of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>267</sup> However, the government did not manage to halt the emergence of the boycott; the local governors informed the government that the port workers, merchants and people were acting in accord with the boycott. The governor of Trabzon wrote to Istanbul that it was the strong emotions of the Ottoman public that had triggered the movement. The Ottoman government took steps in order to stop the boycott, but these attempts only triggered the reactions of the Boycott Society. The Smyrna Boycott Society published a declaration stating that the government advised them to stop the boycott. This declaration proclaimed that they harmed neither the interests of foreign citizens nor the Ottoman Greeks. Therefore, it was their right of expression to call on people for a peaceful boycott against Greece. Contrary to the demands of the Ottoman government, the Boycott Society wanted the Ottoman public not to relax the boycott.<sup>268</sup> The Boycott Society repeated its claims regarding the government's anti-boycott attempts and condemned the actions of several governors in a number of declarations.<sup>269</sup>

Since the government could not impede its emergence, it tried to regulate and limit the Boycott Movement. The government had available two courses of action in order to deal with the problem: first it sent orders to the local governors to ensure the implementation of the law. The doyen of the consular corps in Smyrna visited the governor-general of the province of Aydın and thanked him for his support. In this meeting, the governor showed the doyen a telegram that had just arrived from the Ministry of the Interior, instructing him to utilize every means to stop the boycott. However, the British consul in Smyrna underlined the fact that, four days after this meeting, the governor-general still had not been able to do anything about the Boycott Movement. He asserted that the movement "was sustained by a feeling of hatred against the Greeks on the part of the

---

267 BOA, DH. MUI. 98-1/56, Document No. 2, 16 Mayıs 1326 (29 May 1910).

268 İzmir Boykotaj Cemiyeti, "Beyanname. Hamiyetli Osmanlılara!" *İttihad*, 21 Haziran 1326 (4 July 1910).

269 İzmir Boykotaj Cemiyeti, "Beyanname: Muhterem Osmanlılara!" *İttihad*, 27 Haziran 1326 (10 July 1910).

Mohammedans which increased as time goes on.”<sup>270</sup> The British consul in Salonica also thought that the Ottoman government at last understood that the boycott had gone too far and that the excesses of the boycott organizations were “not only illegal but inexpedient.”<sup>271</sup>

Secondly, the government put pressure on the Istanbul Boycott Society. In June 1910, the government even forced the Boycott Society to send specific orders to its branches in different provinces. In this order, the Boycott Society limited the boycott exclusively to Greek merchandise on Greek ships.<sup>272</sup> The Boycott Committee in Trabzon on 21 July 1910 declared the regulations in line with the government’s limitations. The British consul in Trabzon claimed that the declaration had been issued by the Boycott Society of Salonica. According to these regulations, any foreign merchandise on foreign vessels and non-Greek merchandise on Greek ships were exempt from the boycott. Yet, Ottomans were banned from using Greek vessels or having any kind of economic relationship with Greeks of Greece.<sup>273</sup>

Therefore, non-Greek goods on Greek ships and Greek merchandise on non-Greek ships were exempt from the boycott. Although the Boycott Society assured the government that they had indeed sent such an order, the events after June 1910 do not confirm this. One of the significant aspects of the relations between the society and the government is the fact that government dealt with an organization that legally did not exist. This aspect will be analyzed below. The government repeated the argument that the Boycott Society sent its order to the provinces several times,<sup>274</sup> wanting the Boycott Movement to stay in the economic sphere—that is to say, a boycott consisting only of the consumers’ refusal to buy certain goods.<sup>275</sup> Not even the actions of the porters and lightermen in the customs were included in this definition.

The Great Powers protested the Ottoman state when their merchants faced difficulties as a result of the Boycott Movement. The official definition of the boycott brought about claims of the foreign merchants whose

---

270 FO, 195/2360, No. 54, 6 July 1910, p. 266.

271 FO, 195/2358, No. 83, 29 June 1910, p. 135.

272 BOA, DH. 102-2/17, Document No. 61, 8 Haziran 1326 (21 June 1910). There are several telegrams to the provinces but this is the first one.

273 FO, 195/2362, No. 21, 24 July 1910, p. 72.

274 For instance, a typical definition of the concept of boycott was sent to Yanya. BOA, DH. MUI. 113/49, Document No. 1, 14 Temmuz 1326 (27 July 1910).

275 BOA, DH. MUI 105/12, Document No. 1, 3 Haziran 1326 (16 June 1910).

interests had been damaged.<sup>276</sup> For instance, in one of these complaints the ambassador of Austria-Hungary underlined the fact that their merchants had trusted in the Ottoman state's word and sent their merchandise to the Ottoman Empire; hence, the damage caused by the boycott should be paid by the government.<sup>277</sup>

Thus, the Ottoman government did not stop writing to the provinces and reminding the local government of the official limits of the boycott. After a while, the government wanted the local governors to compel the boycotters, if necessary by force, to act within those limits. In September 1910, the government became stricter and took measures against the Boycott Movement. In an order sent to the province of Salonica, the government allowed the local governor to use the gendarmerie to prevent the boycott's negative effects. According to this telegram, international trade had been badly damaged, and the damaged interests of the foreign merchants undermined the honor of the Ottoman state. The most famous and popular character of the boycott movement, Kerim Ağa, was banned from entering the customs house and the quay.<sup>278</sup>

In September 1910, the government became firmer against the Boycott Movement, because, after a brief period of relaxation in August, it had become more aggressive again. In August, most of the ships carrying foreign (other than Greek) merchandise and Greek goods on foreign ships did not experience many problems due to the boycott. However, at the end of August, a Greek ship in Preveze encountered a blockade of the port workers. Several hundred people, including Cretans and *hodjas* (Muslim preachers), convened a meeting in order to support the boycott of the port workers.<sup>279</sup> Kerim Ağa convened a meeting of lightermen, porters and carters and declared new regulations regarding the application of the boycott—that is, an enlargement. Henceforth, all foreign merchandise on Greek ships and all Greek commodities in any vessel were to be boycotted.<sup>280</sup>

This is why the government decided to put pressure on the Boycott

---

276 FO, 195/2360, No. 58, 15 July 1910, p. 276. A meeting was held as result of the remonstrance of the Italian merchants. In this meeting, the British consul stated that the boycott in Smyrna had been ordered by the Boycott Committee, as it had happened in Constantinople. Therefore, he claimed, they should not trouble their ambassadors with these complaints since they knew about the boycott in Istanbul.

277 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-1, Document No. 2, 7 Eylül 1326 (20 September 1910).

278 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-2, Document No. 1, 7 Eylül 1326 (20 September 1910).

279 FO, 195/2358, No. 107, 1 September 1910, p. 301.

280 FO, 195/2358, No. 115, 10 September 1910, p. 347.

Movement. However, resorting to police force was not an easy decision. M. H. Clonarides & C. LTD., a company established in Greece but registered in Britain, was sending barrels of beer from its brewery in Piraeus; it had been boycotted since the commencement of the movement, but the situation became intolerable in November 1910. Its beer barrels were lying in front of the customs house of Smyrna, and the company tried to carry them into town. However, their porters were stopped by forty to sixty boycotters, and the company requested help from both the governor-general and the British consul. Having to leave the barrels behind in order to wait for help, they found them pierced and empty standing in a row the next morning. The British consul assured his protection of the remaining barrels. Yet, when the porters began to load the barrels on a cart, a group of boycotters arrived, pulled the horse away, and once again unloaded the barrels. The British consul returned to the office of governor-general and witnessed the latter's distinct orders to the chief of police to use force in case of any further hindrance. The consul then went to the customs house for the third time. The chief of police and a dock-porter who was also the representative of the Boycott Committee negotiated the loading of the barrels, and the police asked the British consul if it was possible to postpone the loading to the following day, since the boycotters had already forcibly removed the company's carts. Then, hand-pulled carts were brought to the quay, but the boycotters threw them into the sea in front of the consul and the chief of police. When the consul asked the chief of police to carry out the orders of the governor-general, the chief replied that he had no orders at all and sent a policeman to the governor to ask for further instructions. At last, the policemen afforded sufficient protection, so that the barrels could be moved in the evening. The British consul complained to the embassy that no one had been arrested and that the police had not intervened even when there had been force. The reason for such hesitant behavior was fear of spilling blood. Although most of the British reports claimed that the government had no authority over the boycotters, the British consul in this case asserted that the acting governor had an "ill-concealed intention to act hand in glove with the boycotters." He demanded additional pressure on the Sublime Porte to send more stringent orders to the governors in the province of Aydın.<sup>281</sup>

The government kept reminding the local government of the limits of

---

281 FO, 195/2360, No. 91, 3 November 1910, pp. 398-403.

the boycott in 1910 and 1911.<sup>282</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was under the pressure of the Great Powers, also tried to reduce these limits, claiming that the Ottoman state should defend the interests of foreign merchants, even if they were Greek. However, the Great Powers could not act collectively to stop the boycott because they had different opinions regarding the movement. Austria-Hungary was reluctant to become involved.<sup>283</sup> Therefore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs forced the Ministry of the Interior to take measures against the Boycott Movement.<sup>284</sup> The orders of the Sublime Porte had an effect on the boycotting of foreign merchants at the end of 1910. Although the offenders who had been detained were released after a very short time, the complaints of the British merchants barely increased.<sup>285</sup> The telegrams of the Ottoman government underlined that, if the boycotters trespassed these limits, the governors should resort to armed force. However, the government continued to send similar telegrams and wanted the governor to act in accordance with the gendarmerie regulations still in November of 1911, at the end of the 1910-11 Boycott wave.<sup>286</sup>

Greece, other foreign states and the Greek press made two incompatible claims regarding the attitude of the Ottoman government towards the Boycott Movement. First, it was claimed that the government had lost its power in the face of the acts of the “mob” of port workers. This was also an argument to force the government to impede the actions and mobilization of the port workers throughout the empire. On the other hand, it was stated over and over again that in fact the Ottoman government was responsible for and had orchestrated the Boycott Movement; the real power belonged to the Young Turks and the Boycott Society, and the leaders of the movement were nothing but their hand puppets.<sup>287</sup> Although the Ottoman government and the elites in general took advantage of the Boycott Movement, one cannot claim that it was under its con-

---

282 A similar telegram was sent to Edirne province; BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-4, Document No. 1, 16 Eylül 1326 (29 September 1910). Or again to Salonica BOA, DH. SYS 22/1-27, Document No. 1, 2 Eylül 1326 (15 September 1910).

283 CPC, *Turquie 1897-1914*, 306, Document No. 126, London, 22 July 1910.

284 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/2-1, Document No. 2, 6 Şubat 1326 (19 February 1911).

285 FO, 195/2360, No. 99, 30 November 1910, p. 428; FO, 195/2360, No. 103, 20 December 1910, p. 445.

286 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-28, 23 Teşrinievvel 1327 (3 November 1911).

287 For a similar claim see: “İ Katastasis Epideinoutai,” (The Situation is Getting Worse), *Embros* (Athens), 15 June 1910.

trol. The French ambassador wrote several times that it would be unfair to claim that the government was encouraging the Boycott Movement; rather, it did not have enough power to prevent the movement, although it wanted to limit it.<sup>288</sup>

The provincial governors and the other ranks of the local bureaucracy did not pay much attention to the warnings of the central authority. To a great extent, they tolerated and overlooked the boycotters' excesses. Sometimes, they tried to explain the reasons and motivations behind these actions and to legitimize them. If the Ottoman government did persist in their orders, then the local bureaucrats ignored them. The central government had to insist very strongly in order to get results. One has to be aware of the fact that there were divergent attitudes concerning the Boycott Movement in different ranks of the state bureaucracy.

The main argument that the local ranks of the bureaucracy employed was the fact that the boycott depended on the free will of the people and should be taken into consideration within the framework of free trade. Therefore, the government had no right to intervene in the market and compel consumers to buy certain goods. A report sent to the Greek Foreign Ministry in the second year of the Boycott Movement demonstrates that these kinds of reply by the local bureaucrats had become a typical answer when consuls visited them. It was in vain to expect from them any reaction them against the Boycott Movement.<sup>289</sup>

The *kaymakam* (district governor) of İskenderun/Aleppo informed the governor of Aleppo that he had no right to interfere if there were no incidents of violence. Furthermore, he emphasized that Greek firms could hire independent porters or use their own boats to load or unload their merchandise.<sup>290</sup> The governors of the province of Hüdavendigâr, Kütahya and Salonica all emphasized that the boycott was only the decision of people not to consume certain goods and, therefore, an outcome of people's will.<sup>291</sup> The French consul in Rhodes had problems in defining the

288 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 306, Document No. 38, Tarabya, 19 June 1910; CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 50, Pera, 22 April 1911.

289 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, No. 87, 1911. The report wanted Greek diplomats to highlight the fact that the Greeks did not oppose the free will of the Ottoman nation, but their excessive actions.

290 BOA, DH. MUI. 112-2/17, Document No. 40, 13 Haziran 1326 (20 June 1910).

291 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-31, Document No. 6, 22 Teşrinievvel 1327 (4 November 1911); BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-30, Document No. 2, 28 Eylül 1326 (11 October 1910); for a similar telegram from the governor of Karesi see BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-10, Documents No. 5-6, 27 Teşrinievvel 1326 (9 November 1910).

main character of the boycott movement. The governor-general and the general secretary of the province asserted that it was the right of the people and the workers not to work if they so wished. Moreover, the general secretary told the consul that the Ottomans had learned about the concepts of strike and boycott from the Europeans. Therefore, they were only imitating the West.<sup>292</sup>

The arguments and negotiations surrounding the general character of the Boycott Movement between the British consul of Edirne and the governor-general of that province lasted one year. The governors of the province stated that there were no laws prohibiting peoples' participation in the boycott. Therefore, the government was not responsible. On the other hand, the boycotted businessmen and the consul claimed that a certain segment of the population had been subjected to force and that the government had not placed a notice declaring that the owner was not Greek, but British. According to them, the government should have posted gendarmes before the mill where boycotters kept customers away, and it should not have allowed the boycotters to post on the wall the notice declaring the owner as a Greek.<sup>293</sup>

When the Greek shops were forced to close, the acting governor Tevfik Bey (who was the director of the educational department and the president of the local branch of the Committee of Union and Progress) in Smyrna issued a declaration in which he approved the Boycott Movement. He also mentioned that all acts of violence, such as the forced closure of shops, would be punished. Furthermore, he convened a meeting with the editors of the daily press and advised them to take a moderate and calming stance regarding the movement. He warned them not to inflame public opinion.<sup>294</sup>

The local governors in the province of Trabzon informed both the governor-general and the local vice-consuls that there was nothing that could be done regarding the boycotting activities, since they were peaceful actions by the local people.<sup>295</sup> The *kaymakam* of Zonguldak added another restriction to these limitations: although the boycott was carried

---

292 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 51-53, Rodos, 22 April 1911. The consul replied by reminding that some characteristics of the West produced disease. Therefore, one should also make sure to include the cure together with the imitation that would bring disease.

293 FO, 195/2364, No. 14, 6 March 1911, p. 61; FO, 195/2364, No. 27, 26 April 1911, p. 123.

294 FO, 195/2360, No. 41, 15 June 1910, p. 204.

295 BOA, DH. MUI. 117/64, Document No. 3, 13 Temmuz 1326 (26 July 1910).

out by the people and the workers, and although the government had no right to intervene, the workers should not be allowed to crowd the public squares in the center of the town. A public march to the center would have indicated that there was public and official encouragement behind the boycott, according to the *kaymakam*. Therefore, the boycotters were not allowed to use violence and coercion, and the workers were not allowed to use tactics similar to a strike. The bureaucracy and the elite were cautious and anxious regarding the mobilization of people on the street.<sup>296</sup>

The governor of Beirut warned and advised the boatmen of the city who refused to unload French products and held the monopoly in the port. Loading or unloading merchandise was their free will, since they were not officers or servants of the state. They had to be convinced or forced to do so, as the governor could not achieve their compliance. He informed the government that he would take recourse of the law as well as regulations concerning the freedom of trade and work.<sup>297</sup> He also published a notice on the instructions from the Sublime Port, in which he repudiated the claims that the British Empire held an unfriendly attitude towards the Ottoman Empire regarding the Crete. The government was competent in dealing with the question;<sup>298</sup> however, it was not easy to act since the united boatmen were a powerful group in the town. For instance, the governor of Yanya and the *mutasarrıf* of Preveze informed the government that unlawful actions, such as preventing the passengers of Greek ships from disembarking and instigating disorder, should be punished. However, the governors hesitated to take action, because of the social origins of the movement. They wanted the Ottoman government to confirm the need to take action and sent specific orders regarding the blockades.<sup>299</sup> Similarly, the second vice-governor of Trabzon informed the government that he had advised the mayor and the head of the Boycott Society regarding the actions against the Bank of Athens. Still, he asked the government what to do if the boycott representatives were not to accept the terms that he dictated to them.<sup>300</sup> Thanks to the efforts of the French consul, the Boycott Society conceded the fact that the Bank

---

296 BOA, DH. MUI 112-2/7, Document No. 35, 16 Haziran 1326 (29 June 1910).

297 BOA, DH. MUI. 108-2/3, Document 1, 22 Haziran 1326 (5 July 1910).

298 FO, 195/2342, No. 32, 23 June 1910, p. 326.

299 BOA, DH. MUI. 112-2/7, Document No. 45, 19 Haziran 1326 (2 July 1910).

300 BOA, DH. MUI. 110/26, Document No. 2, 21 Haziran 1326 (4 July 1910).

of Athens was a French enterprise and published a declaration in a local newspaper, *Meşveret*, saying that they did not want to harm the friendship between the Ottomans and the French. To this end, they declared that the boycott against the Bank of Athens was over.<sup>301</sup>

In Kala-i Sultaniye, the boycotters claimed that some of the ships sailing under the Russian flag were in fact Greek ships. Therefore, the *mutasarrıf* of Kala-i Sultaniye had no choice but to write to the Port Administration in Istanbul to ask whether these ships had been sold to a Russian company or not. He hesitated to take action against the boycotters because of their social power and legitimate position in society. The posters advertising the Boycott Movement about town also became a subject of criticism. The governor accused the Greek vice-consul, since these posters were only hung in the neighborhood of the boatmen and could not be considered as violence. Therefore, a local bureaucrat in Kala-i Sultaniye did not put pressure on the boycotters, but accepted their demands.<sup>302</sup> This official treatment provided space for the movement.

In the course of the Boycott Movement, the government was not successful in forcing the local governors to prevent the excessive actions of the boycotters, particularly the port workers. In September of 1911, the Ottoman government was still sending orders to the coastal provinces, requesting the local authorities to apply the legal regulations.<sup>303</sup>

It was not only the power of the Boycott Movement that forced the local bureaucracy to side with the movement. The local ranks of the officers favored the boycott and usually tried to legitimize the boycotters' excesses. A most intriguing case was that of a public prosecutor who accused a French citizen, Jan Rolan, for not acknowledging the Boycott Society; this was an illegal organization, but a prosecutor still accused a person of not recognizing it.<sup>304</sup>

The local governors did not approve of coercion and force, but they did try to explain the reasons behind them. The *mutasarrıf* of Antalya informed the central government that, although the closed Greek shops had been re-opened and the aggressors detained, the vice-consuls there still complained about the boycott. While explaining the situation in An-

---

301 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 306, Document No. 79-80-81, Trabzon, 7 July 1910.

302 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-17, Documents No. 3, 5/2, 19 Kanunuevvel 1326 – 28 Mart 1327 (1 January – 10 April 1911).

303 BOA, DH. HMs. 9/14, Document No. 1, 21 Eylül 1327 (4 October 1911).

304 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 57-62, Paris, 23 April 1911.

talya, the *mutassarif* emphasized that the French consul of the town was the son of a Greek doctor. Therefore, the complaint of the consuls might have been related with their Greek identity or their philhellenism.<sup>305</sup> The director of the civil registration office in Antalya, Hüsnu Efendi, told Nikolaos Hacıargiriou, who applied for Ottoman citizenship, that the nation and the government together were boycotting the Greeks and that they would force all Greek citizens on Ottoman territory to assume Ottoman citizenship. If they did not assume Ottoman citizenship, then the government would send the Greek consulate back to Greece. He claimed that the boycott would end only then.<sup>306</sup> However, the report of a Greek manager from the Dardanelles claimed that Dimitri Liyakos who had already applied for Ottoman citizenship was not able to get an exemption from the boycott; his coffeehouse was besieged by the boycotters, and his customers had been expelled.<sup>307</sup>

The governor of Preveze also referred to the British consul as an advocate of Greek interests and claimed that he had been trained in Corfu.<sup>308</sup> The governor of Adana informed the central government that the boycott against a theater company had been limited to one night only, trying to diminish the significance of the movement and therefore the reaction of the government.<sup>309</sup>

The *mutasarrif* of Karesi informed the government about the secret ambitions and goals of the boycotted parties in Edremit. According to the governor, the Greek owner of a farm rented his land to a British citizen, but still could not escape from the boycott. Moreover, the governor claimed that the farm was close to the sea and that the boycotted party was planning to kidnap the renter and extort money from the government in order to compensate for the damage caused by the movement. The *mutasarrif* of Karesi informed the government that he had given the necessary orders to impede such plans. It is evident in this case that the governor took measures not against boycotting activities, but against a prospective intrigue of the boycotted persons.<sup>310</sup> There were also false claims for compensation. The British consul reported that in Smyrna sev-

---

305 BOA, DH. MUI. 112-2/7, Document No. 41, 13 Haziran 1326 (26 June 1910).

306 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, Antalya, 24 March 1911.

307 AYE, A-21, 1910-1911, Dardanelles, 21 March 1911.

308 BOA, DH. MUI 113/49, Document No. 3, 30 Haziran 1326 (13 July 1910).

309 BOA, DH. MUI 109/46, Document No. 2, 26 Haziran 1326 (9 July 1910).

310 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/2-3, Document No. 2, 16 Temmuz 1327 (29 July 1911).

eral of the British subjects who applied for compensation were “looking upon this idea of compensation as an easy way of making profits.”<sup>311</sup>

The Greek consul visited the governor of Aydın and informed him regarding the picketing of the Greek stores and Greek citizens who no longer could buy goods to cover their most urgent needs. The governor replied that the order for this boycott had been given by the Boycott Committee of Salonica and that they could do nothing but wait. The governor thus referred to an order by the Boycott Society as if it were legitimate and procedural. The committees of the Boycott Movement and the Boycott Society were illegal organizations, and their legal status was underlined in many official documents. However, the governor of Aydın did not hesitate to follow their orders.<sup>312</sup>

A typical example of the local governors' approval of the Boycott Movement and the Boycott Society occurred in Balya/Karesi. The Boycott Society declared a boycott against an Ottoman mine corporation for the dismissal of Greeks from the mines. The *kaymakam* of Balya emphasized that the society had not acted against the law. He confirmed that he approved of the dismissal of the Greeks, but added that the boycotters had not harmed the production and business of the firm. The reply of the *kaymakam* and the *mutasarrıf* of Karesi read like a defense or legitimization of the Boycott Society. However, the vice-president of the mining corporation complained about the boycotters' persistent harassment of the employees and the mines in the telegram he sent to the Ministry of the Interior. He was worried that the violations of the law would ruin their business where more than 2,000 Ottoman workers were employed.<sup>313</sup>

The *mutasarrıf* of Bolu claimed in his report to the government that the complaints of the Greek ships that they could not buy coal from Ereğli were groundless. He argued that the main reason for these complaints was not the boycott, but their greed for money from the insurance companies. This allegation was also contrary to his former report about the case. In that report, the *mutasarrıf* concentrated on the boycotters and assured the government that he and the *kaymakam* of Zonguldak were taking preventive measures. However, even in that report they had under-

---

311 FO, 195/2360, No. 95, 17 November 1910, p. 419.

312 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-24, Document 21, 13 Nisan 1327 (26 April 1911).

313 BOA, DH. MUI 108-1/48, Documents No. 2 and 3, 15-17 Haziran 1326 (28-30 June 1910).

lined that the Boycott Movement was the expression of the people's free will and consisted of peaceful actions.<sup>314</sup> The *kaymakam* of Ereğli was also accused of not helping a Greek ship that experienced problems. A Greek ship had started to sink about 65 meters from the coast, and it was claimed the *kaymakam* had not allowed the boatmen to help the sailors and passengers.<sup>315</sup> Three months later, the Ministry of Foreign and the Ministry of the Interior were informed in greater detail about how the ship was rescued.<sup>316</sup>

The most obvious defense or praise of the Boycott Movement and particularly the Boycott Society appears in a report of the Administration of Public Security. This report maintained that the Boycott Society was the outcome of national enthusiasm and sentiments. It was not governed as a society, but as a voluntary movement. Therefore, the state of affairs was under control, and an outburst was not too likely.<sup>317</sup> Similarly, the mayor of Istanbul referred to the report of the *mutasarrıf* of Üsküdar, saying that a boycott against a factory was consistent with the official limitations on the boycott. However, he only referred to the statement of the local boycott committee in his reply. Typically, he stated that there was nothing he could do about the boycott, since it was an expression of national emotions, repeating the argumentation of the Boycott Movement.<sup>318</sup>

The local governors were not only sympathetic to the Boycott Movement, but sometimes also members. The government warned the province of Edirne because in Mustafapaşa, the *kaimakam*, the judge and the member of the court were all on the board of directors of the Boycott Society. The Ottoman government had to remind them of the fact that the state and its bureaucracy should stay impartial in the face of the movement. There were many grievances regarding the damage caused by the boycott, but the authorities to which the victims would apply were in fact part and parcel of the movement.<sup>319</sup>

---

314 BOA, DH. MUI. 112-2/7, Documents No. 56, 57, 17-18 Haziran 1326 (30 June-1 July 1910).

315 BOA, DH. MTV. 46/3, Document No. 1, 26 Kanunievvel 1326 (8 January 1911).

316 BOA, DH. MTV. 46/3, Document No. 3, 12 Mart 1327 (25 March 1911).

317 BOA, DH. MUI 112-2/7, Document No. 58, 29 Haziran 1326 (12 June 1910).

318 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-26, Document No. 5, 6 Teşrinisani 1326 (19 November 1910).

319 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-3, Document No. 1, 9 Eylül 1326 (22 September 1910). The government reminded its neutrality three months before to Aydın province and want the governor to stop the participation of local bureaucracy to the boycott movement; BOA, DH. MUI 102-2/9, Document No. 9/1, 3 Haziran 1326 (16 June 1910).

The governor of Smyrna advised the head of the Tobacco Regie that they should solve their problem via negotiations with the Boycott Society. The Boycott Society encouraged the marketing of tobacco in the city, and the Regie tried to stop this initiative. The governor brought both the society and the Tobacco Regie together in his office and wanted them to reach a compromise. Although the Boycott Society was not a legal entity, it was asked to negotiate in the office of the governor-general. When the government ordered the arrest of those boycotters who encouraged the illegal marketing of tobacco, the vice-governor replied that the telegrams sent by the Boycott Society were anonymous (in most cases, it was the deputies or the vice-consul who replied to the government, not the governors themselves). Therefore, he claimed that they did not know whom to detain. As a response, the Ministry of the Interior reminded the authorities of the province of Aydın that it was easy to find out who had sent the telegram from the post office. As mentioned above, the governor-general himself had met the representative of the Boycott Society in his office; therefore, it was obvious that the local ranks of the bureaucracy aided the Boycott Society, even when it was acting against the law.<sup>320</sup>

In Ergiri/Yanya, the Boycott Committee was under the leadership of the mayor. A meeting was convened in the public square of the town, and 200 Muslims and non-Muslims announced a boycott against Greek merchandise. The Boycott Committee was comprised of five Muslims and five non-Muslims. The Ottoman government informed the governor of Yanya that a meeting could only be convened within the limits of the law, but that this kind of organization was not acceptable.<sup>321</sup>

At the time when the 1910-11 Boycott wave came to an end, the famous Turkish author Süleyman Nazif was the governor-general of Trabzon, after he had served as the governor of the provinces of Kastamonu and Trabzon during these two years. In one of his reports to the government, he touched upon the boycott issue and summarized his view: if boycott was a means to realize the national interest, he certainly would have advocated it. However, the state's politics of trade and the trade of politics had been left in the hands of the porters

---

320 BOA, DH. SYS. 22/1-7, Documents No. 1-3, 15-28 Teşrinisani 1326 (28 October – 10 November 1910).

321 BOA, DH. MUI. 115/18, Documents No. 1-2, 11-12 Haziran 1326 (24-25 June 1910), The date of the meeting was 8 June 1910.

and boatmen because of the Boycott Movement. The rise of the power of the port workers was not a promising development for the empire.<sup>322</sup> He stated that the damage caused by the boycott also harmed the interests of the Ottoman Empire, both politically and economically.<sup>323</sup> However, he did not take any actions against the boycotters, unless they turned violent. He advised a Swiss merchant to hire his own boats and assured him that no one, particularly not the port workers of Trabzon, would obstruct him.<sup>324</sup>

Although the ranks of the local bureaucracy clandestinely supported the boycotters, the Boycott Society in Smyrna complained about the interference of the government and the police. This was due to the dominant nature of the boycott in the city. Since the boycott was more extensive in Smyrna, the pressure on the boycotters was also more intense.<sup>325</sup> Several of the members of the Boycott Society were even detained, and this triggered the reactions of other boycott organizations in the region. For instance, the Tire Boycott Commission sent a telegram to Smyrna and asked why the organization in Smyrna did not protest. According to their message, the oppression of the national interests and the protection of foreigners should finally come to an end. The Tire Boycott Commission asked the commission in Smyrna what activities they planned for their next meeting. Clearly, the network of boycotters was working well. This network and the social origins of the boycotters were putting pressure on the Ottoman state apparatus. The following day the Boycott Society announced in the newspaper that their friends who had been arrested a couple of days ago had been released.<sup>326</sup> However, the tension between the boycotters and the local bureaucrats did not decrease due to the picketing activities. The police forces and the gendarmerie intervened in the picketing, resulting in scuffles between the boycotters and the gendarmerie. This is why the Boycott Society of Smyrna published a declaration, asking whether the police's duty was to defend and to serve the Hel-

---

322 BOA, DH. SYS 22/1-28, Document No. 37-39, 22 Teşrinievvel 1327 (4 November 1911).

323 CPC, Turquie 1897-1914, 307, Document No. 174-175, Trabzon, 14 November 1911. He also summarized his views to the French consul of Trabzon in one of their meetings.

324 BOA, DH. SYS 22/1-28, Document No. 37-39, 22 Teşrinievvel 1327 (4 November 1911).

325 M. Fahrettin, "Boykotaj Etrafında Enzar-ı Millete," *İttihad*, 14 Teşrinievvel 1326 (27 October 1910).

326 "Tire Boykotaj Komisyonundan İzmir Boykotaj Komisyonuna," *İttihad*, 14 Teşrinievvel 1326 (27 October 1910); "İzmir Boykotaj Komisyonundan Tire Boykotaj Komisyonuna," *İttihad*, 14 Teşrinievvel 1326 (27 October 1910).

lenes in the Ottoman Empire or not. The society stated that there was great social pressure on them to protest the government through mass meetings because of the negative attitude of the police forces.<sup>327</sup> The government and the local governors had reasons to fear the social power of the boycott network.

---

327 "İzmir Boykotaj Cemiyeti'nin Beyannamesi," *İttihad*, 15 Teşrinievvel 1326 (28 October 1910).