



# HISTORY STUDIES

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HISTORY

ISSN: 1309 4173 (Online) 1309 - 4688 (Print)

Volume 11 Issue 2, A Tribute to Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali ÜNAL, April 2019

DOI Number 10.9737/hist.2019.740

Araştırma Makalesi

Makalenin Geliş Tarihi: 15.04.2019 Kabul Tarihi: 30.04.2019

Atf Künyesi: Yakup YILMAZ, "1920 Elections in Kayseri, Turkey in the Period of National Campaign", *History Studies*, 11/2, Nisan 2019, s.801-814.

## 1920 Elections in Kayseri, Turkey in the Period of National Campaign\*

*Milli Mücadele Döneminde Kayseri'de 1920 Seçimleri*

Arş. Gör. Yakup YILMAZ

ORCID No: 0000-0002-3117-1625

Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi – Samsun



HISTORY  
STUDIES  
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HISTORY

Volume 11  
Issue 2  
A tribute to  
Prof. Dr.  
Mehmet Ali  
ÜNAL  
April  
2019

**Abstract:** *With the Ottoman Empire being defeated in the First World War and the consequent start of the occupation of the country, the actual structure of the state began to decline. Especially the occupation of the city of İzmir had a very intense impact on society. Mustafa Kemal Pasha landing at Samsun in response to these occupations and the gathering of helpful communities within the country and Kuva-yi Milliye<sup>1</sup> under a single roof were the steps that organized the campaign of independence. Afterward, the Erzurum and Sivas Congresses were held in which the indivisibility of the country was heavily emphasized. As a result of the occupation of Istanbul by the British, Mustafa Kemal Pasha reported that a constituent assembly should be created in Ankara. In addition, with a circular letter issued by the Committee of Representation, an assembly was being desired to be created which could save the integrity of the country with civil cooperation. Upon this desire, a constituent assembly equipped with exceptional powers was decided to be founded in Ankara.*

*A committee, composed of pre-elected müntehib-i sanis<sup>2</sup>, administration and municipal council members, and the members of Defense of National Rights, would participate in the elections to be held for the institution of the assembly. The elections, intended to be completed within fifteen days at the latest, would be performed based on secret ballot, open counting, and absolute majority and the elected members of parliament would be made sure to reach Ankara as soon as possible. Eventually, the election was finalized under these circumstances and the assembly was inaugurated on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1920.*

*Having provided support for Anatolia during the years of the Turkish War of Independence, the city of Kayseri was effectively endorsing the National Campaign. In the city where the public supported the Committee of Representation, the elections had been finalized on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1920 and the elected members of parliament started their journey to Ankara immediately. Âlim Efendi<sup>3</sup>, Remzi Efendi, Osman Bey<sup>4</sup>, and Atf Bey were elected as representatives of Kayseri. In addition to these representatives, Ahmet Hilmi Bey and Ahmet Rifat Bey, who had acted as representatives of Kayseri in the last Ottoman Chamber of Deputies which was eventually dissolved, were directly included in the new assembly as representatives of Kayseri. Having supported the campaign of independence as a city in the Sivas Congress in the same way, Kayseri maintained this support in the elections and sent its representatives to the new assembly. The aforementioned representatives included in the assembly engaged in important activities in this assembly performing its constituent function.*

\* This study was carried out by using the phd thesis on "Parliamentary Elections and Politics in Kayseri (1877-1943)".

<sup>1</sup> Irregular Turkish armed forces in the early period of the Turkish War of Independence

<sup>2</sup> A secondary elector pre-elected by voters to elect the members of parliament in a two-level election system

<sup>3</sup> A title of nobility

<sup>4</sup> A title of nobility

**Keywords:** National Campaign, the First Assembly, elections, Kayseri, Kayseri representatives

**Öz:** Osmanlı Devleti'nin Birinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan mağlup ayrılması ve sonucunda ülkenin işgal edilmeye başlamasıyla devletin fiili yapısı ortadan kalkmaya başladı. Özellikle İzmir'in işgal edilmesi toplum üzerinde tesirli etkiler bıraktı. Bu işgaller üzerine Mustafa Kemal Paşa'nın Samsun'a çıkışı, ülke içindeki yararlı cemiyetlerin ve Kuvay-i Milliye'nin tek çatı altında toplanması kurtuluş mücadelesini örgütleyen adımlardı. Akabinde Erzurum ve Sivas kongreleri düzenlenerek vatanın bölünmezliği vurgulandı. İstanbul'un İngilizler tarafından işgal edilmesiyle birlikte Mustafa Kemal Paşa Ankara'da bir kurucu meclis kurulması gerektiğini bildirdi. Bununla birlikte Heyet-i Temsiliye'nin yayınladığı bir genelgeyle, Anadolu'da vatanın bütünlüğünü, halkın katılımıyla kurtaracak bir meclisin açılması isteniyordu. Bu istek üzerine Ankara'da olağanüstü yetkilerle donatılmış bir kurucu meclisin kurulmasına karar verildi.

Meclisin teşekkülü için yapılacak seçime daha önce seçilmiş müntehib-i saniler, idare ve belediye meclis üyeleri ile müdafaa-i Hukuk azalarından oluşan bir heyet katılacaktı. En geç 15 gün içerisinde icra edilmesi istenen seçimlerin gizli oy açık sayım ve mutlak çoğunluk temelinde icara edilip, seçilen vekillerin biran evvel Ankara'ya ulaşmaları temin edilecekti. Binnettece bu şartlarda seçim neticelenmiş ve 23 Nisan 1920'de meclis küşadını gerçekleştirmişti.

İstiklal Harbi yıllarında Anadolu'nun sıkıntılılarına omuz veren Kayseri Milli Mücadeleye etkili bir şekilde destek vermekteydi. Halkın Heyet-i Temsiliye'ye destek verdiği şehirde 29 Mart 1920'de seçimler sonuçlanmış ve mebuslar hemen Ankara'ya doğru yola koyulmuşlardı. Âlim Efendi, Remzi Efendi, Osman Bey ve Atıf Bey Kayseri mebusu olarak intihap edilmişlerdi. Bu vekillerin yanında daha önce dağıtılmış olan son Osmanlı Meclis-i Mebusan'ında Kayseri mebusu olan Ahmet Hilmi ve Ahmet Rifat Beyler de doğrudan yeni meclise Kayseri mebusu olarak dâhil olmuşlardı. Bu şekilde Sivas kongresinde de şehir olarak istiklal mücadelesine destek veren Kayseri, desteğini seçimlerde de sürdürerek yeni meclise mebuslarını yollamıştı. Meclise dâhil bu mebuslar kuruculuk görevini ifa eden bu mecliste önemli faaliyetlerde bulunmuşlardı.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Milli Mücadele, Birinci Meclis, seçimler, Kayseri, Kayseri mebusları

## Introduction

The defeat of the Ottoman Empire brought about by the Armistice of Mudros in the First World War having ended in 1919 persisted with the occupation of its capital. This armistice was, in a sense, an agreement on which the destruction of the state had been signed. The Unionists<sup>5</sup>, one of the parties responsible for the war, started to abandon the country for fear of being arrested. The country was in ruins and the public's psychology was greatly weary. The British started to occupy Mosul, while the Italians began to walk into the Western Anatolia and the French began to invade Antep, Maraş, and Adana regions. The most important occupation, and maybe the one that had the greatest effect on the public, was that of Izmir by the Greeks. Immediately after this invasion, Mustafa Kemal Pasha went to the city of Samsun as the Ninth Army inspector. After he landed at Samsun, Mustafa Kemal Pasha started to control and lead the resistance movements that had commenced with the occupation of Izmir. He succeeded in gathering helpful communities within the country and Kuva-yi Milliye under a single roof. He organized the Erzurum and Sivas Congresses in order to organize the independence of the country and the national campaign. Following these developments, *Misak-ı Milli*<sup>6</sup> was acknowledged in the last term of the Ottoman Parliament with support from pro-Defense of National Rights representatives. After this acknowledgment, the British invaded and virtually abolished the Chamber of Deputies. In response, the Committee of Representation under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha enabled the assembly in Ankara to keep on with its

<sup>5</sup> Members of the Committee of Union and Progress, an Ottoman political organization active during the First World War

<sup>6</sup> *National Oath*, a set of decisions made by the last Ottoman Parliament

activities, and as a result, on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1920, the Grand National Assembly was opened, leading to a new era in the history of Turkish democracy.<sup>7</sup>

### 1- 1920 Elections

Mustafa Kemal Pasha stated his opinion that a new constituent assembly should be gathered in Ankara with civil cooperation in order for the last Ottoman Parliament, which had had its last term on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1920 and lasted for very little time due to the occupation of Istanbul by the British, to be reformed in Ankara. As a result, the Committee of Representation issued a circular letter desiring an immediate election to take place in Anatolia where an assembly could be found which could save "the integrity of the country and the liberty of the nation" with civil cooperation and make decisions on behalf of the public.<sup>8</sup>

In this statement, concerning an election on behalf of Association for Defense the Defense of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia, an assembly given exceptional powers was decided to be organized in Ankara in substitution for the Chamber of Deputies dissolved by the occupying forces. In order for this decision to come to fruition, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the leader of the Committee of Representation, notified provinces, sovereign *liwas*<sup>9</sup>, and corps commands. In this notification, it was stated that five representatives would be elected in every district regardless of their population, and the representatives of the previously dissolved parliament could come to Ankara to be representatives again. A system similar to the election method implemented in the 1877 elections was used. In the system implemented during the 1877 Chamber of Deputies elections, in order to perform the election very quickly, pre-selected members of parliament in administrative centers had elected representatives as secondary electors. As there was a similar necessity to found an assembly urgently, a similar method was implemented and representatives were decided to be elected by a committee, composed of pre-elected secondary electors, administration and municipal council members, and the members of Defense of National Rights.<sup>10</sup> Besides, *sanjaks*<sup>11</sup> would be taken as basis in the elections and the civil administrative of each region would be responsible for the elected. The elections, intended to be completed within fifteen days at the latest, would be performed based on secret ballot, open counting, and absolute majority and the elected members of parliament would be made sure to reach Ankara as soon as possible.<sup>12</sup>

Virtually performed in accordance with the issued circular letter, the 1920 elections were finalized on short notice and the assembly could be inaugurated within the intended timeframe. In response to shortcomings seen in the elections, Mustafa Kemal Pasha stated in Nutuk (The Speech) that he was in the intention of opening the assembly as soon as possible along with the representatives that could come to Ankara. He sent a notice to corps, *sanjaks*, and Defense of National Rights headquarters on April 21<sup>st</sup>, stating that the assembly should immediately be opened. A hasty attitude was adopted concerning the opening of the assembly against the

<sup>7</sup> Harun Bodur, *Kronolojik 20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (Chronological History of 20th Century Politics)*, Yeditepe, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, İstanbul 2013, p.179-209.; Rıfat Önsoy, "Milli Mücadelede Kayseri (Kayseri during the National Campaign)", *I. Kayseri ve Yöresi Tarih Sempozyumu Bildirileri (1<sup>st</sup> Kayseri and Neighboring Areas History Symposium Statements)*, History of Kayseri and Neighboring Areas Research Center, Kayseri 1997, p.229

<sup>8</sup> İhsan Güneş, *Atatürk Dönemi Türkiye 'sinde Milletvekili Genel Seçimleri (General Parliamentary Elections in Atatürk-Era Turkey)*, Türkiye İş Bankası Culture Publications, İstanbul 2017, p.109-114

<sup>9</sup> An administrative division of the Ottoman Empire

<sup>10</sup> Erol Tuncer, *Osmanlı 'dan Günümüze Seçimler (1877-2002), (Elections from the Ottoman Empire to Our Day (1877-2002))*, TESAV, Ankara, 2003, p.27-28.

<sup>11</sup> An administrative division of the Ottoman Empire

<sup>12</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk (The Speech)*, Berikan, Ankara 2011, p.300

probability that the revolts starting in regions like Düzce, Hendek, Bolu, and Gerede could hinder the inauguration of the assembly.<sup>13</sup>

A search for a place for the assembly to carry on with its activities took place before it was opened in Ankara. Consequently, a building designed as a club for the Committee of Union and Progress was chosen to perform the assembly's meeting activities. The inauguration of the assembly took place at 11:45 a.m. on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1920, with the participation of 115 representatives along with those that had been elected and arrived at Ankara. The first session of the assembly was led by Şerif Bey, the previous Director of Education and the Representative for the city of Sinop, who participated in the session as the eldest member. He defined the assembly as "the Grand National Assembly" during his first speech. During the next session performed on the following day, April 24<sup>th</sup>, Mustafa Kemal Pasha was elected to be the president of the assembly by the representatives.<sup>14</sup>

The elections in question could not be performed in some regions for certain reasons. In regions such as Gallipoli, Kırk Kilise (present-day Kırklareli province), and Tekfurdağı (present-day Tekirdağ province), representative elections could not take place due to occupations. As the representatives of these regions who had been pre-elected for the Chamber of Deputies could not come to Ankara, the regions were not able to have any representatives in the Grand National Assembly. On the other hand, representatives from such regions as Adana, Mersin, Kozan, Cebelibereket (present-day Adana), Kars, Ardahan, and Batumi were able to participate in the assembly.<sup>15</sup>

## 2- 1920 Elections in the *Sanjak* of Kayseri

In the early period of the national campaign, Kemal Bey was the *mutasarrıf*<sup>16</sup> of Kayseri. However, the *mutasarrıf* of Kemal Bey, appointed to Kayseri on March 1918, greatly displeased the British. He was requested to be dismissed from the Istanbul government by the British on grounds that he hesitated to give the rights of the Christians in Kayseri back to them. As a result of this, Kemal Bey was dismissed, in substitution for whom the very old Ali Ulvi Bey was appointed as the *mutasarrıf* of Kayseri in April 1919. This new administrative chief created troubles for the national campaign party. Indeed, he was not even informed about the meeting to be performed concerning the participation in the Sivas Congress (possibly because they did not trust him). In response to his aforementioned attitudes, the Committee of Representation asked him to be brought in and sent to Sivas. But he was eventually not brought in as he was very old and sick. Afterward, in substitution for this unwanted *mutasarrıf*, the accountant Abidin Bey was appointed, who was in turn followed by Salih Lütfi Bey in whom Mustafa Kemal was understood not to trust based on his attitudes during his visit to Kayseri. In February 1920, Asaf Bey, who would work during the elections, was appointed as the new *mutasarrıf*. Even though he appeared to be from the Istanbul government, he adopted an attitude that played both sides so to speak. He did not engage in activities against the national campaign during the elections.<sup>17</sup> In short, even though *mutasarrıfs* sometimes created problems for the Kayseri public who endorsed the Committee of Representation and the national campaign throughout this period and protested against the occupation of the country in every

<sup>13</sup> Atatürk, *Nutuk (The Speech)*, p.306

<sup>14</sup> *Birinci Büyük Millet Meclisi (The First Grand National Assembly)*, TBMM Press, Ankara 1999, p.14-15

<sup>15</sup> Ahmet Demirel, *İlk Meclis'in Vekilleri (Representatives of the First Assembly)*, İletişim, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, İstanbul 2014, p.75-77

<sup>16</sup> Governor of an Ottoman province

<sup>17</sup> Zübeyir Kars, *Milli Mücadele'de Kayseri (Kayseri during the National Campaign)*, Atatürk Research Center, Ankara 1999, p.77-82

way, the public was able to elect its representatives without a significant problem during the elections and send them to Ankara on time.

The elections started in accordance with the circular letter issued on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1920. However, problems were experienced regarding the elections in certain regions of Anatolia where the Istanbul government was effective. In Kayseri, the elections were finalized on March 29<sup>th</sup> without any crucial problem with the help of *mutasarrıfs* and the representatives headed toward Ankara.<sup>18</sup>

Judging by the certificates of election issued for the representatives elected at the end of the elections, Sabit Bey, Âlim Efendi, Remzi Efendi, Osman Bey, and Atıf Bey were elected as representatives of Kayseri for the 1920 Grand National Assembly with 89, 73, 81, 62, and 120 votes respectively.<sup>19</sup> These representatives participated in the inauguration of the assembly taking place on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> of April, 1920. In addition, as the representatives of the dissolved Chamber of Deputies could also participate in the assembly if they desired, former Kayseri representatives of the Chamber of Deputies Ahmet Hilmi Bey and Ahmet Rifat Bey also participated in the assembly later, increasing the number of total representatives to 7. However, Remzi Bey's resignation later decreased the number to 6, which did not change anymore until the end of the term.

Representatives for Kayseri elected for the 1920 Grand National Assembly and the number of votes they obtained from the electoral areas of the *sanjak* of Kayseri are demonstrated below.<sup>20</sup>

Table 1: Distribution of the votes obtained by representatives for Kayseri in the 1920 Turkish Grand National Assembly elections

Name-Surname	The number of votes the representatives obtained from Kayseri and its districts				
	Kayseri (Capital)	Develi	Bünyan	İncesu	Total
Atıf Bey	55	29	26	20	130
Sabit Bey	68	-	-	21	89
Remzi Efendi	52	28	-	1	81
Âlim Efendi	-	28	26	19	73
Osman Bey	61	-	-	1	62

Upon examining the election results, it can be seen that Mehmet Atıf Bey<sup>21</sup> had won the favor of all the electoral areas in Kayseri. He obtained the highest number of votes from every district apart from the capital of Kayseri. Sabit Bey was able to be elected as representative by receiving the highest number of votes in the capital, while Remzi Bey was able to become a representative thanks to the high number of votes he received in Develi compared to one vote

<sup>18</sup> *Birinci Büyük Millet Meclis (The First Grand National Assembly)*, p.10

<sup>19</sup> The Turkish Grand National Assembly First Term Certificates of Election for Kayseri Representatives, The Assembly Archive

<sup>20</sup> The Grand National Assembly of Turkey First Term Kayseri Representative Certificate of Election, the Assembly Archive In the first section of the certificate, Osman Bey is stated to have obtained 64 votes. However, if his votes are counted in accordance with the electoral areas, it can be seen that he actually obtained 62 votes.

<sup>21</sup> The fact that Atıf Bey was an administrative chief in the Develi district where he founded the regional Association for Defense of National Rights may have led him to be loved by the locals and obtain a high number of votes. See BCA.30.10.5.28.1. (The motion of the Kayseri representative Atıf about the amendments to be made in the National Defense Organization, the decisions of the Sivas Congress and some other issues)

he received in the capital. Among the representatives having obtained an interesting vote distribution, Âlim Efendi could not receive any vote in the capital but was able to get into the list especially thanks to the votes he obtained from the other districts (especially from Bünyan, his birthplace). Obtaining the last and the most interesting vote average in the first five, Osman Bey was able to be elected only in the last place with all but one of his votes from the capital, while the one vote was from İncesu.

After March 29<sup>th</sup> when the elections in Kayseri were finalized, the elected representatives headed toward Ankara. The verification procedures of the certificates of election of these representatives who participated in the inauguration of the Grand National Assembly on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1920 were left to be taken care of on later days. The certificates of election of Atif Bey, Remzi Efendi, and Sabit Bey were verified during the second session of the assembly on Saturday April 24<sup>th</sup>, whereas no expression has been found out to prove that the certificates of election of the other two representatives, Âlim Efendi and Osman Bey, were verified on the same day as the aforementioned representatives. However, it is understood from the official records that Osman Bey was indeed in the assembly on the same day and during the same session as the other representatives who had obtained their certificates of election.<sup>22</sup>

The first term of the Grand National Assembly proved to be a hectic period for the politics in Kayseri. Following the aforementioned two representatives having participated in the assembly, as Ahmet Hilmi Bey and Ahmet Rifat Bey, former representatives in the Chamber of Deputies which had been dissolved as per the rules, asked to participate in the Grand National Assembly, the number of representatives for Kayseri later increased to seven. The participation of Ahmet Rifat Bey and Ahmet Hilmi Bey in the assembly underwent through a long and complicated process. Ahmet Hilmi Bey himself recounts in his memoirs how they somehow escaped from Istanbul and arrived at Ankara and the Grand National Assembly as such:<sup>23</sup>

*“I could sometimes meet with my friends who knew about my place in Kuzguncuk<sup>24</sup> and my pseudonym. One day, Rifat Çalikoğlu and Nurullah Dıraz visited. We roamed around the town and they stayed the night in my place. We talked about the issues in the homeland and the ways to get across Anatolia. I knew that there was strict control on trains and ferries. However, we thought that crossing the Mudanya road with ferry would be the less dangerous way and we could find a way to hide in the ferry.*

*In those days I was closely acquainted with Nuri Bey, the record administrator of the maritime administration. He assured me that he would talk to the captain about my situation and the captain would hide me during a routine control that the British could perform on the harbor. I found the ferry that would take off from the armory on the specified day. Rifat Bey and Nurullah Bey would also set off on the same ferry. After the ferry started the journey, it came to a stop near the Virgin Tower. A British officer came on board from an approaching motor. I could deduce from his footsteps that they were talking with the help of a translator and the control was continuing. After a period of chaotic five minutes, silence returned. Rifat Bey was the first one to open the door of my cabin. ‘That is it, it is all over. The flag is raised’ he said.*

<sup>22</sup> TBMM.Zabıt Ceridesi, Term I, V.1, p.6-38

<sup>23</sup> Ahmet Hilmi Kalaç, *Kendi Kitabım (My Own Book)*, Yeni Matbaa, İstanbul 1960, p.171-172

<sup>24</sup> A neighborhood in the Anatolian side of Istanbul

Having been able to reach up to Mudanya in this way, Ahmet Hilmi Bey and Ahmet Rıfat Bey were then harbored by the police while they were about to get on the train that would leave for the city of Bursa. Afterward, they reached the city with the aforementioned train, a few days after which they headed toward Kayseri. When they reached Kayseri, they informed Mustafa Kemal Pasha about their situation, who in turn sent them a telegram stating that they should immediately participate in the assembly.<sup>25</sup> Afterward, on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 1920, they were introduced to the other representatives in the assembly and started to engage in assembly activities on behalf of Kayseri.<sup>26</sup>

With the participation of the representatives in the assembly, the number of representatives for Kayseri increased to seven. However, this seven-person representative team later reduced to six after Remzi Efendi started not to participate in the assembly sessions. Actually, Remzi Efendi joined the assembly for a short period of time and even made a motion during the presidency council elections. With the motion he made, he asked that the elections be postponed to the next day on the grounds that “The members do not completely know each other yet”.<sup>27</sup> Remzi Efendi, whose impact we can see in the assembly with such activities as mentioned, resigned from his duty as a representative on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1920, on which he was heavily debated over while his resignation was being reviewed in the assembly. As can be understood from these debates, as he was under pressure from a lot of parties to be the mufti of Kayseri, he preferred being a mufti and a teacher at Sultan Mekteb-i Farisi to being a representative. In the session during which this issue was debated, opinions were stated that Remzi Efendi submitted a declaration expressing his preference of being a mufti to being a representative when he came to Ankara and that this declaration, which suggested his resignation from the parliament, was not accepted. However, his resignation was later accepted as he was understood to be a mufti for the well-being of Kayseri and based on the opinion that his liberty should be respected.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the number of representatives for Kayseri, having been 5 on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1920, increased to 7 on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 1920 and the representatives continued their assembly activities as six people from November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1920.

As mentioned before, in the First Grand National Assembly, rather than political party formations, two different assembly groups were formed. The first group represented the government in power, while the second group represented the opposition. Kayseri representatives likewise divided into these groups. Ahmet Hilmi Bey, Âlim Efendi, Atıf Bey, and Sabit Bey joined in the first group, whereas Ahmet Rıfat Bey and Osman Bey took part in the second group.<sup>29</sup> When the list for the first group emerged for the first time, Ahmet Rıfat Bey was also included in the list. However, his name was not found on the list published on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1921.<sup>30</sup> Later, he appeared to be inclined toward the second group. Judging from his own memoirs, it can be understood that Ahmet Rıfat Bey was a highly active and opposing character within the second group, and this opposing attitude later led him not to be reelected as representative.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Kalaç, *Kendi Kitabım (My Own Book)*, p.172-173

<sup>26</sup> *TBMM.Zabit Ceridesi*, Term I, V.3, p.4

<sup>27</sup> Fahri Çoker, *Türk Parlamento Tarihi: Milli Mücadele ve T.B.M.M. I. Dönem (1919-1923) (History of Turkish Parliament: National Campaign and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey First Term (1919-1923))*, V.I, The Grand National Assembly of Turkey Foundation, Ankara 1994, p.92

<sup>28</sup> *TBMM.Zabit Ceridesi*, Term I, V.5, p.323

<sup>29</sup> *İlk Meclis Anketi (The First Assembly Survey)*, The Grand National Assembly of Turkey Culture, Art, and Publication Board, Ankara, 2004, p.23

<sup>30</sup> Çoker, *Türk Parlamento Tarihi (Turkish Parliament History)* V.1, p.303

<sup>31</sup> Hurşit Çalika, *Ahmet Rıfat Çalika'nın Hatıraları (Memoirs of Ahmet Rıfat Çalika)*, İstanbul, 1992.

Upon examining the structure and the quality of representatives of the Grand National Assembly, it can be seen that 394 out of 437 representatives were newly elected. The percentage was 79.9% to 20.1% in favor of the newly elected. Representatives with past parliamentary experience occupied about one-fourth of the assembly. The locality rate in the assembly, i.e. the rate of representatives whose birthplace coincided with the region they were elected, was 57.9%. The average age in the assembly appears to be about 43.3 when the representatives whose ages at that time are not known are subtracted. As for the educational background of the representatives, it can be seen that 33.9% were high school graduates or lower. In addition, the percentages of those having graduated from a technical school, military school, university, and religious school were calculated to be 3%, 15.1%, 20.8%, and 20.8% respectively. Regarding their professions, we can see that professions like the army, internal medicine, courthouse, education, finance, farming, and religion were dominating. Regarding whether the representatives were reelected in the next elections, only 125 of the representatives were able to participate in the next assembly, who were either from the first group or were acting independently in the assembly. None of the representatives from the second group were able to participate in the next assembly.<sup>32</sup>

As for the distribution of the aforementioned statistics throughout the representatives for Kayseri, we can see that five of the representatives were elected, while the other two participated in the assembly after their experiences in the Chamber of Deputies. Based on these numbers, it can be observed that 28.5% of these representatives attended from the Chamber of Deputies, which is higher than the general rate seen in the assembly, 20.1%. This percentage also represents the representatives that had past parliamentary experiences among the representatives for Kayseri, which approximately coincides with the one-fourth average of the assembly. Regarding the issue of locality, all the representatives were born in Kayseri except for Atif Bey who was born in the town of Arhavi<sup>33</sup>. As distinct from other representatives from Kayseri, Âlim Efendi is from Bünyan district. However, the fact that Bünyan was within the administrative borders of Kayseri increased the locality rate of the Kayseri representatives, which produces an average of 85.7%, highly above the average of the assembly in general. The average age, found to be 43.3 throughout the assembly, appeared to be close to the assembly statistics in general among the Kayseri representatives with a percentage of 42.4. The fact that Ahmet Hilmi Bey, Ahmet Rifat Bey, and Atif Bey were in their thirties, in contrast to these percentages, prevented the average age to be at higher levels. Educational background of the Kayseri representatives can be stated to be higher education. Four of the representatives were madrasa graduates, while the other three had graduated from university, two of whom studied civil service while the other one studied law. Therefore, 57% of the Kayseri representatives were religious school graduates, whereas 43% received higher education. Among these representatives, two worked as a local authority, one as prosecutor and mayor, two as professor and preacher, two as a journalist, and one as a banker; these representatives could perform more than one profession in general. Lastly, when we take a look at the issue of being reelected, we can see that only Ahmet Hilmi Bey and Sabit Bey were able to be reelected on behalf of Kayseri in the next term. Besides this, Atif Bey, originally from the eastern Black Sea region, would go on to be elected as a representative for the city of Rize<sup>34</sup>. In sum, approximately 29% of the elected representatives of Kayseri participated in the assembly in the next term, and if we are to include later elections, they went on to participate in the assembly in the later terms with a percentage of 43%.

<sup>32</sup> Demirel, *İlk Meclis'in Vekilleri (Representatives of the First Assembly)*, p.161-173

<sup>33</sup> A town in the city of Artvin, Turkey

<sup>34</sup> A city in the Black Sea region in Turkey



A more detailed table of the aforementioned data on the Grand National Assembly First Term representatives elected from Kayseri can be found below:<sup>35</sup>

Table 2: Personal information of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey First Term representatives of Kayseri

Name-Surname	Birthplace	Age	Profession	Educational Background	Foreign Language
Ahmet Hilmi Bey (Kalaç)	Kayseri	33	Teacher, journalist and local authority	Mekteb-i Mülkiye <sup>36</sup> , Higher Teacher Education School	French
Ahmet Rıfat Bey (Çalıka)	Kayseri	32	Mayor, prosecutor	Istanbul Law School	-
Âlim Efendi (ÇINAR)	Kayseri (Bünyan)	59	Professor, preacher, district council administration member	Madrassa	Arabic, Persian
Atıf Bey (Tüzün)	Arhavi	35	Local authority	Mekteb-i Mülkiye	French
Osman Bey (Uşşaklı)	Kayseri	46	Officer, banker	Ottoman junior high school, partly madrasa	Arabic
Remzi Efendi (Akgöztürk)	Kayseri	49	Professor, school principal	Ottoman junior high school, madrasa	Arabic, Persian
Sabit Bey (Gözügeçgel)	Kayseri	43	Journalist, lawyer, head clerk in a religious court	Primary school, madrasa, and private education	Arabic, Persian

During this assembly term, Kayseri was being debated over its possibility to become the capital of the country. In July 1921, among the most intense and painful periods of the national campaign, the Greek army intensified its attacks and attacked Bursa and neighboring areas in order to bring an end to the war in this period. Due to these attacks, the Turkish army had to retreat to the west of the Sakarya River. In response to this troubling situation, the Grand National Assembly started to look for and debate over possible solutions, the most significant of which was the transfer of the assembly and the capital to Kayseri. This possibility was highly discussed, and eventually, a decision to move to Kayseri was made, following which a

<sup>35</sup> These data were gathered from the curriculum vitae of these representatives found in the assembly archive.

<sup>36</sup> A civil service and politics school

committee was formed and commissioned to make necessary preparations to move to Kayseri. Some of the representatives and their families even started to move to Kayseri.<sup>37</sup>

Ahmet Rıfat Bey, the representative for Kayseri, was included in the list five representatives sent to Kayseri. With an assembly office letter dated 24.07.1921, these five representatives were assigned with the transfer of the assembly “to make necessary organizations for the Grand National Assembly of Turkey decided to be gathered in Kayseri, and to complete necessary precautions and preparations for the assembly chamber, secretariat, and miscellaneous necessities”. Even though the group took action accordingly under the shadow of all the debates, the victory of the Battle of Sakarya nullified this decision and made it an unnecessary action.<sup>38</sup>

During the days when the issue of moving the assembly to Kayseri was being discussed, Necmettin Sahir Bey, the records and correspondence administrator of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, also went to Kayseri where he would bring the archive boxes in the assembly. On such hard days of the period, Necmettin Bey made a significant decision that could illuminate the history and decided to perform a survey in the assembly. To that end, he wrote the question “What does the productivity and effectiveness of our soon-to-be-won national independence campaign depend on?” on little pieces of paper and distributed them to the members of parliament. He constantly monitored the results of the pieces of paper he had distributed and collected as many pieces as he could and hid them.<sup>39</sup> We can see the answers from 6 Kayseri representatives from these pieces of paper Necmettin Bey had hidden. Having resigned on November 9<sup>th</sup>, Remzi Bey was not able to answer the question probably because his time in the assembly was too short-lived to catch up with this survey.

Ahmet Rıfat Bey, the first to provide an answer among the second group representatives, states in his response that he gave on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1921; “It depends on the members of the assembly, elected with direct cooperation of our citizens within the national borders, to equate our opinions with the ideas that pave the way for developments and changes and to have the laws that they will thusly organize obeyed throughout our homeland”. Here, Ahmet Bey states that the assembly should be organized by representatives elected directly by the citizens and that success would come only if the new laws are regulated and practiced by taking contemporary revolutions into consideration.<sup>40</sup>

After this succinct answer given by Ahmet Rıfat Bey, another opposing representative, Osman Bey, came up with an answer on to the survey on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 1921, emphasized two factors to be important in providing the national independence with a fertile and abundant structure. The first of these factors was to transfer the assembly to a region, preferably mid-region of the country, which was heavily populated by the Turkish, and execute the constitutional law properly, while the second one was to form good relations with Europe and fight poverty. He asserted that while doing all these things, our national independence should

<sup>37</sup> Ahmet Demirel, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Sırasında Milletvekillerinin “Savaş Sonrası Türkiye’sine Bakışları”, İlk Meclis Anketi (Views of the Representatives on “Post-War Turkey” during the War of Independence)*, The Grand National Assembly of Turkey Culture, Art, and Publication Board, Ankara 1985, p.4-5

<sup>38</sup> Çalika, *Ahmet Rıfat Çalika’nın Hatıraları (Memoirs of Ahmet Rıfat Çalika)* p.82-83

<sup>39</sup> Demirel, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Sırasında Milletvekillerinin “Savaş Sonrası Türkiye’sine Bakışları”, İlk Meclis Anketi (Views of the Representatives on “Post-War Turkey” during the War of Independence)*, The Grand National Assembly of Turkey Culture, Art, and Publication Board, Ankara 1985, p.5

<sup>40</sup> *İlk Meclis Anketi (The First Assembly Survey)*, The Grand National Assembly of Turkey Culture, Art, and Publication Board, Ankara 1985, p.256

be respected and that everyone should prove themselves not to have any designs for another person's place or property to their government.<sup>41</sup>

Giving his answer on January 20<sup>th</sup>, Atif Bey stated that the caliphate and sultanate system should be changed in order for their national independence to develop them constantly, constitutional law should be regulated in accordance with national sovereignty, religious bigotry and ignorance should be eliminated, and the building of the country should be commenced using funds from the state. He also emphasized that healthy relations should be established while adopting eastern political methods, and developing with funds from the state in finance would be healthier.<sup>42</sup>

On his answer to the survey given on March 13<sup>th</sup>, Ahmet Hilmi Bey criticized previous methods and provided a very genuine conclusion. *"Only when the spirit of governance forged from the environment and character of this nation takes over this land will this beautiful homeland earn a uniquely abundant existence, which is only possible if we work the axis of the governance machine by leaning it on our people"*. In sum, he expressed that the homeland would enter into an enlightened path only by leaning the axis of the governance machine to the people.<sup>43</sup>

Six issues were prevalent throughout the answer provided by Âlim Efendi on April 1<sup>st</sup>. One of these issues was religion, prioritized by him, probably due to his status as a religious professor. He primarily stated that the nation of Islam should be granted the right to make decisions, and people should become one and work for the safety of the homeland and religion. His second issue was that the budget should be maintained in a balanced way in accordance with income and expense, while the third one was that public duties should be trusted with those adept, the fourth one was that a just governance far from cruelty should be founded, and the fifth one was that everyone should take good care of their soldiers and children. In the last item, he states his opinion that people should hold themselves in readiness and victory will bring abundance and be with those who ask help from God.<sup>44</sup>

Lastly, Sabit Bey, answering the survey on April 20<sup>th</sup>, primarily stated that transportation throughout the country should be improved. He emphasized the importance of encouraging agriculture, trade, and craft experts and increasing domestic production. According to him, especially enabling national culture and history to be taught better at schools by producing an easier and more comprehensive education should be one of the prioritized targets. Along with the education, individuals should be valued and the family institution should be provided with happiness. Laws and regulations suitable for the character of the people should be made, and these laws and regulations should be easy and applicable. Also, he was of the opinion that the results of the independence war could be more fruitful if necessary importance was given to international relations in politics and economy and trusting those adept with theories.<sup>45</sup>

If we are to review what the Kayseri representatives did besides such expectations during the three-year period, we understand that they expressed an active attitude during assembly sessions. When we analyze the activities of these seven representatives in total, five elected and two having come from the dissolved Ottoman parliament, we see that the least amount of activities belonged to Remzi Efendi, who resigned from his status as representative. Making himself known to us with the objections and the consequent proposal to the presidency council

<sup>41</sup> *İlk Meclis Anketi (The First Assembly Survey)*, p.255

<sup>42</sup> *İlk Meclis Anketi (The First Assembly Survey)*, p.254

<sup>43</sup> *İlk Meclis Anketi (The First Assembly Survey)*, p.252

<sup>44</sup> *İlk Meclis Anketi (The First Assembly Survey)*, p.253

<sup>45</sup> *İlk Meclis Anketi (The First Assembly Survey)*, p.257

elections he made during the early sessions of the assembly, Remzi Efendi later became a topic of debate due to his letter of resignation.

One of the young and hectic representatives in the assembly, Ahmet Hilmi Bey took the floor for 34 times, put forward two resolutions and two proposals and orally asked questions. Being in the first group in the assembly and actively taking part in assembly procedures, Ahmet Hilmi Bey took part in financial and executive activities.

A friend of Ahmet Hilmi Bey from the last Ottoman parliament, Ahmet Rifat Bey reflected the pace and the excitement of his youth to his activities, being the youngest Member of Parliament to represent Kayseri. As can be understood from his memoirs, he became a part of the opposition and sustained his politics in the second group. This preference created an obstacle for him in providing his political life with a future. Despite such an opposing attitude, he took part in the procedures of moving the assembly to Kayseri, and most importantly, on August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1922, he was elected to be the Minister of Justice following the resignation of the former Minister of Justice Celalettin Bey and continued his activities as a minister.<sup>46</sup> He succeeded in maintaining these short-lived and final experiences both with his opposing attitudes and his duty within the government. Within this period, he took the floor for 22 times and had one declaration, and also put forward two resolutions and one proposal.

Known for his religious personality in the assembly, Âlim Efendi took the floor for eight times, asked one question and put forward one resolution. What made him different apart from these activities was that he was asked to pray a lot following the approval of an important decision in order for it to bring good luck and be beneficial. To illustrate, after the sultanate was abolished and Abdulmejid II was elected to be the last caliph, Âlim Efendi was requested to pray for him and the session was thusly closed.<sup>47</sup> Likewise, he was requested to offer prayers for the sake of the victory of the army and the welfare of the homeland.<sup>48</sup>

Expressing a calm attitude during the assembly sessions, Sabit Bey put forward one interpellation, three questions, six resolutions, and one proposal. In contrast to his few but diverse activities, Osman Bey, one of the opposing representatives, took the floor for 19 times and was highly active within the assembly. Lastly, Atif Bey expressed a low-level activity, taking the floor once and putting forward one interpellation, two resolutions, and one proposal. However, the reason for this low-level numerical expression was that he mostly worked for the presidency council. In the elections performed on April 25<sup>th</sup>, he was elected to be the Administrative Officer with 54 votes.<sup>49</sup> Serving as the administrative officer during the first year, Atif Bey worked as the council clerk during the second, third, and fourth years and mainly served within the presidency council in the assembly.

## Conclusion

The first term of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, during which the sultanate was abolished, victories were won in the campaign of independence, and the 1921 constitution was acknowledged, lasted for 3 years and was closed with its last session taking place on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1923, following which its second term was opened on August 11<sup>th</sup>, 1923. Mustafa Kemal Pasha started to talk about the proclamation of Republic throughout the assembly whose hands were

<sup>46</sup> Çoker, *Türk Parlamento Tarihi: Milli Mücadele ve T.B.M.M. I. Dönem (1919-1923) (History of Turkish Parliament: National Campaign and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey the First Term (1919-1923))*, V.I, p.815.; Çalıka, *Ahmet Rifat Çalıka'nın Hatıraları (Memoirs of Ahmet Rifat Çalıka)*, p.101

<sup>47</sup> Çoker, *Türk Parlamento Tarihi: Milli Mücadele ve T.B.M.M. I. Dönem (1919-1923)*, V.I, p.284.

<sup>48</sup> TBMM. *Zabıt Ceridesi*, Term I, V.11, p.221

<sup>49</sup> TBMM. *Zabıt Ceridesi*, Term I, V.4, p.52

strengthened with the recent developments, and also, on his request, a snap election was performed in April 1923.<sup>50</sup>

During this period, coming to the forefront with its support for the National Campaign, the city of Kayseri continued this support with the representatives it sent to the constituent assembly. Its young and educated representatives took numerous responsibilities and engaged in a number of activities during the sessions. With its representatives taking part in both the government and the opposition groups, Kayseri took on significant tasks in the politics of the country and the formation of a newly-founded state.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal; *Nutuk (The Speech)*, Berikan, Ankara 2011
- BCA.30.10.5.28.1. (Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Cumhuriyet Arşivi, Presidency of State Archives, Republic Archive),
- Birinci Büyük Millet Meclisi (The First Grand National Assembly)*, TBMM Press, Ankara 1999
- Bodur, Harun; *Kronolojik 20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (Chronological History of 20th Century Politics)*, Yeditepe, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, İstanbul 2013
- Çalık, Hürşit; *Ahmet Rifat Çalık'ın Hatıraları (Memoirs of Ahmet Rifat Çalık)*, İstanbul, 1992.
- Çoker, Fahri; *Türk Parlamento Tarihi: Milli Mücadele ve T.B.M.M. I. Dönem (1919-1923) (History of Turkish Parliament: National Campaign and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey First Term (1919-1923))*, V.I, The Grand National Assembly of Turkey Foundation, Ankara 1994.
- Demirel, Ahmet; *İlk Meclis'in Vekilleri (Representatives of the First Assembly)*, İletişim, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, İstanbul 2014
- Demirel, Ahmet; *Kurtuluş Savaşı Strasında Milletvekillerinin "Savaş Sonrası Türkiye'sine Bakışları", İlk Meclis Anketi (Views of the Representatives on "Post-War Turkey" during the War of Independence", The First Assembly Survey)* The Grand National Assembly of Turkey Culture, Art, and Publication Board, Ankara 1985, pp.1-25.
- Güneş, İhsan; *Atatürk Dönemi Türkiye'sinde Milletvekili Genel Seçimleri (General Parliamentary Elections in Atatürk-Era Turkey)*, Türkiye İş Bankası Culture Publications, İstanbul 2017
- İlk Meclis Anketi (The First Assembly Survey)*, The Grand National Assembly of Turkey Culture, Art, and Publication Board, Ankara, 2004,
- Kalaç, Ahmet Hilmi; *Kendi Kitabım (My Own Book)*, Yeni Matbaa, İstanbul 1960
- Kars, Zübeyir; *Milli Mücadele'de Kayseri (Kayseri during the National Campaign)*, Atatürk Research Center, Ankara 1999

<sup>50</sup> TBMM. Zabıt Ceridesi, Term I, V.26, p.240.; *İlk Meclis (The First Assembly)*, p.19-23

Önsoy, Rıfat; “Milli Mücadelede Kayseri (Kayseri during the National Campaign)”, *I. Kayseri ve Yöresi Tarih Sempozyumu Bildirileri (1<sup>st</sup> Kayseri and Neighboring Areas History Symposium Statements)*, History of Kayseri and Neighboring Areas Research Center, Kayseri 1997, pp.229-235

*TBMM. Zabıt Ceridesi*, Term I, V.11

*TBMM. Zabıt Ceridesi*, Term I, V.26

*TBMM. Zabıt Ceridesi*, Term I, V.3

*TBMM. Zabıt Ceridesi*, Term I, V.4

*TBMM. Zabıt Ceridesi*, Term I, V.5

*TBMM. Zabıt Ceridesi*, Term I, V.1

Tuncer, Erol; *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Seçimler (1877-2002)*, (*Elections from the Ottoman Empire to Our Day (1877-2002)*), TESAV, Ankara, 2003



**HISTORY  
STUDIES**  
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HISTORY

**814**

Volume 11  
Issue 2  
A tribute to  
Prof. Dr.  
Mehmet Ali  
ÜNAL  
April  
2019