
**THE ROLE OF BAYAT IN THE TURKISH NATIONAL STRUGGLE PROCESS ON
THE AXIS OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL (BAYATLI) ARIF BEY AND
KARAKEÇİLİ NATIONAL REGIMENT**

YARBAY (BAYATLI) ARİF BEY VE KARAKEÇİLİ MİLLİ ALAYI EKSENİNDE
BAYAT'IN MİLLİ MÜCADELE SÜRECİNDEKİ YERİ

УЧАСТИЕ ПОДПОЛКОВНИКА КАРАКЕЧИЛЬСКОГО ПОЛКА (БАЯТЛИ) АРИФ
БЕЙЯ В НАЦИОНАЛЬНО-ОСВОБОДИТЕЛЬНОЙ БОРЬБЕ

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ABSTRACT

As a result of the National Struggle, which can also be described as the struggle for the survival of Turkishness, the Turkish nation has shown the whole world what they can endure for the sake of an inch of land even under very difficult conditions. In the absence of a regular army during the period of the National Struggle, we see that a number of patriotic formations emerged to protect the unity of the homeland. These formations, called Kuvâ-yi Milliye, mean voluntary militia units that came together against the occupation forces for the independence of the homeland by taking strength from their national feelings. During the National Struggle, Turkish people supported the independence movement in all regions. In this process, Bayat district of Afyonkarahisar, known for its proximity to strategic cities in the National Struggle such as Eskişehir, Akşehir and Afyonkarahisar, was exposed to the occupation attempts of the Greek army in its struggle for independence. Although Bayat was not directly in the hot spot in the Battle of Sakarya and the Major Assault of Turkish Army due to its location, it was a settlement where the necessary military services and Tekâlif-i Milliye orders were implemented for the National Struggle. Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey, who has not been sufficiently mentioned in the pages of history, came to his hometown Bayat as a result of the arrest warrant issued by the Istanbul Government against him, supported the Kuvâ-yi Milliye movement in the Central Anatolia region and played an active role in

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suppressing the rebellions that emerged in the immediate vicinity. One of the important works of Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey in this process is that he united the militia forces around him under his command and established the Karakeçili National Regiment and created an important support force for the National Struggle. In this study, which was created by making use of archival documents, memoirs, researches and information in periodicals, we aimed to make a historical contribution to the understanding of the local and national values of Turkish independence.

Keywords: Bayat, Turkish National Struggle Period, Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey, Qaimaqam Arif Bey, Karakeçili National Regiment

ÖZ

Türklüğün hayatta kalma mücadelesi olarak da nitelenebilecek Milli Mücadele neticesi Türk milleti çok zor şartlar altında kalsa bile bir karış toprağı uğruna nelere göğüs gerebileceğini tüm dünyaya göstermiştir. Milli mücadele döneminde düzenli ordunun yokluğunda vatanın birliğinin korunması için bir takım vatanperver oluşumların ortaya çıktığını görmekteyiz. Kuvâ-yi Milliye olarak adlandırılan bu oluşumlar işgal altındaki vatan topraklarını milli duygularından güç alarak, vatanın bağımsızlığı için işgal kuvvetlerine karşı bir araya gelmiş gönüllü milis birlikler anlamına gelmektedir. Milli Mücadele döneminde Türk halkı bölge bölge bağımsızlık hareketini desteklemiştir. Bu süreçte Eskişehir, Akşehir ve Afyonkarahisar gibi Milli Mücadelede stratejik şehirlere olan yakınlığı ile bilinen Afyonkarahisar'ın Bayat ilçesi bağımsızlık yolunda verdiği mücadelesinde Yunan ordusunun işgal girişimlerine maruz kalmıştır. Bayat konumu itibariyle Sakarya Meydan Muharebesi ve Büyük Taarruz'da doğrudan sıcak noktada bulunmamasına rağmen milli mücadele için gerekli askeri hizmetlerin, Tekâlif-i Milliye emirlerinin uygulandığı bir yerleşim yeri olmuştur. Tarih sayfalarında yeteri kadar söz edilmeyen Yarbey Arif Bey İstanbul Hükümetinin kendisi hakkında çıkartmış olduğu yakalama emri neticesi memleketi Bayat'a gelerek Orta Anadolu bölgesinde Kuvâ-yi Milliye hareketine destek vermiş ve yakın çevrede ortaya çıkan isyanların bastırılmasında etkin rol oynamıştır. Yarbey Arif Bey'in bu süreçte gerçekleştirdiği önemli çalışmasından birisi de çevresinde bulunan milis güçleri kendi komutası altında birleştirmesi ve Karakeçili Milli Alayını kurup milli mücadele için önemli bir destek kuvveti oluşturmasıdır. Bu önemli olaylara şahitlik eden Afyonkarahisar'ın Bayat ilçesinin Milli Mücadele yıllarında cereyan eden olayları arşiv belgelerine, hatıratlar, araştırmalar ve süreli yayınlardaki bilgilerden yararlanarak oluşturulan çalışmada, Türk bağımsızlığının mahalli ve millî değerlerinin anlaşılmasına tarihî bir katkı sağlanması amaçlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bayat, Milli Mücadele Dönemi, Yarbey Arif Bey, Kaymakam Arif Bey, Karakeçili Milli Alay

АННОТАЦИЯ

Турецкая нация в своей национально-освободительной борьбе, которую также можно назвать борьбой за выживание тюркизма, показала всему миру, на что она способна ради своей земли, находясь в очень тяжёлом положении перенести все трудности. В условиях отсутствия регулярной армии в период национальной борьбы видим возникновение патриотических формирований для защиты единства Родины. Эти формирования, называемые как "Кува-йи Миллие", являются отрядами добровольческого ополчения, объединившиеся против оккупационных войск за независимость родины. Во время национальной борьбы турецкий народ поддерживал движение отдельных регионов за общую независимость. В этом процессе Баятский район Афонкарахисара, известный своей близостью к стратегическим городам, таким

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как Эскишехир, Акшехир и Афьонкарахисар во время национальной борьбы подвергся попыткам вторжения греческой армии. Хотя он из-за своего местоположения не был непосредственно в горячей точке во время битвы при Сакарье и Великого наступления, он стал поселением, где применялись военные услуги, необходимые для национальной борьбы и приказы Текалиф-и Миллие. Подполковник Ариф Бей, о котором недостаточно упоминается на страницах истории, приехал в свой родной город Баят в результате ордера на арест, выданного правительством Стамбула и поддержал движение Кува-йи Миллие в регионе Центральной Анатолии и сыграл активную роль в подавлении восстаний, возникших в непосредственной близости. Одной из важных работ подполковника Арифа Бея в этом процессе было объединение сил ополчения вокруг него под его командованием, создание Каракечилийского национального полка и создание важной силы поддержки национальной борьбы. Цель данного исследования, созданного на основе архивных документов, воспоминаний, научных исследований и периодических изданий о происходящих событиях в годы национальной борьбы в Баятском районе Афьонкарахисара, изучить и выявить ценности местных героев за независимость Турции.

Ключевые слова: Баят, период национальной борьбы, подполковник Ариф-бей, губернатор района Ариф-бей, Каракечилийский национальный полк.

INTRODUCTION

Afyonkarahisar, which was an independent province during the War of Independence and was called *Karahisâr-ı Sahip*, is at a strategic point with important transportation networks (Ertoý, 2020). Located at the crossroads of Ankara-Antalya, İstanbul-Konya, Ankara-İzmir railroads, the city has military importance as well as economic importance (Atabek, 1997: 402). With this feature, it attracted the attention of many states and was controlled by the British, French and Italians until the Greek occupation (Daşdemir, 2003: 88). Afyonkarahisar was seen as a key point of a possible Anatolian operation by the Greeks due to its location close to Ankara (Uyan, 2004). For this reason, the Greeks occupied the city on March 28, 1921 and left the city on April 7 after the Second İnönü Victory. On July 13, 1921, the city was again captured by the Greeks and the second occupation lasted 13 months and 13 days. On August 27, 1922, the city, which was important in the National Struggle, was liberated from Greek occupation. On the other hand, Bayat, the district of Afyonkarahisar, and its surrounding villages had an important place in the National Struggle. It is known that the district supported the Karakeçili National Forces during the National Struggle and Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey played an important role in this struggle (Altınbaş, 2011: 92).

Looking at the history of Bayat district of Afyonkarahisar, it is understood that it was founded by the Bayat tribe of Oghuz Turks in 1147 on the edge of Bayat Stream in its present location (Aydın, 1984). The ancestor of the Turks is Oguz Khan. Oguz Khan had 6 sons named Gün Khan, Ay Khan, Yıldız Khan, Gök Khan, Dağ Khan and Deniz Khan. Each son gives four grandchildren to Oğuz Khan. So the total number of grandchildren is 24. Bayat tribe, one of the 24 tribes of Oghuzes, started with the appointment of some end principalities to Afyonkarahisar region during the reign of Seljuk Sultan Alaaddin Keykubat (1203). Bayat district, also known as *Barçınlı* and *Han Barçın*, was an important accommodation place during the Byzantine and Ottoman periods as it was on the İstanbul-Baghdad caravan route (Aydın, 1984). Bayat was a small town affiliated to Emirdağ (formerly Aziziye) district during the War of Independence. According to the 2021 census, the population of Bayat is 7687 in general. Its surface area is 465 km². It is 46 km away from Afyonkarahisar on the Afyonkarahisar-Ankara highway (Afyonkarahisar Valiliği, 2023). However, since the

Afyonkarahisar-Ankara highway had not yet been built during the War of Independence due to the harsh conditions of Koroğlu Beli (altitude: 1420 m) and there was no railway network passing through Bayat, transportation from Afyonkarahisar to Bayat was provided only through Bolvadin and Emirdağ. Bayat district was more protected against the Greek army in times of occupation due to this location. This increased the possibility of being an important pillar of the Kuva-yi Milliye organizations for Afyonkarahisar and its surroundings before the establishment of the regular army. Bayat, which was right next to significant military operations during the years of the National Struggle, left a mark on the history page with its support for this struggle. Even if it was not exactly at the focal point in the first years of the National Struggle, the local people did not spare the material and moral support they could. However, since Bayat district was a small town of Emirdağ during the occupation and the National Struggle periods, many important events related to Bayat have been attributed to Emirdağ on the stage of history. Although there are studies in the literature on the importance of Emirdağ district in the National Struggle and Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey (e.g. Ertoy, 2020; Köksal, 2010; Türkmen, 2022), there is no study that deals with the liberation struggle in Bayat. In this context, within the framework of this study, we have objectively tried to compile all the relevant information about the place of Bayat in the National Struggle process on the axis of Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey and the Karakeçili National Regiment which was established by him by making use of archival documents, memoirs, researches and information in periodicals. With this work, the authors also endeavor to pay their debt of loyalty to their great-grandfather Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey. Since there is no memoir written by Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey himself and there are no reports on the actual occupation of Bayat in the archives of the Turkish General Staff, the study was eventually shaped by summarizing the narratives of the second generation informants as well. This documentation is expected to contribute to the international historical literature regarding the Turkish National Struggle.

Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey's Life and Services Before the War of Independence

Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey (also known by his rank of "district governor" in the Ottoman Army at the time), one of Central Anatolia's most important military-origin quationalists, was the son of Major Osman Bey, one of the Hacı Mustafa sons of Bayat Town's local families (Köksal, 2010). Osman Bey's children from his marriage with his first wife Döndü continue the family lineage in Bayat with the surname "Bulut" (Bayat Population Registry, 2023). According to a rumor, Arif Bey was born in Harput in 1875 to Osman Bey's second wife, a daughter of a soldier whom he married in Istanbul (Köksal, 2010). However, he would become famous with the nickname "Bayatlı" due to his family affiliation and the fact that the main base of action in the National Struggle was located here. Like his father, Arif Bey was married twice. His first wife was the daughter of Ferik Ömer Lütfi Pasha. From this marriage, his daughter Kadriye (surnamed after as Alpman) and his son Lütfi Bey (Retired Colonel Ahmed Lütfi Güngör) were born. From his second wife, who was from Diyarbakır, two daughters, Zekiye and Cahide, were born. Arif Bey, who graduated from the War School in 1893 in 1895 and entered the military service as a midshipman (lieutenant) with the registration number 1311 Infantry 27, was promoted to the rank of midshipman on January 28, 1896, first midshipman in 1898, captain in 1902, captain in 1908, major in 1914 and lieutenant colonel (formerly called as Qaimaqam in the Ottoman Army) on March 1, 1917, according to the information in the registration chart based on his retirement in the Archive of the Turkish Ministry of National Defense (Köksal, 2010). Arif Bey served in Yemen for a year in 1909-1910 and subsequently participated in the Tripoli, Balkan and

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World War I. Although it is reported that he fought close to Mustafa Kemal as the commander of the 12th Regiment in Anafartalar on the Çanakkale (Dardanelles) front during the World War I and that he later served with the same regiment in Diyarbakır and Bitlis, we do not yet have the data to confirm this information (İplikçioğlu, 1994). Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey is often confused with Mehmed Arif Bey, nicknamed "Ayııcı" (bear-leader), who served in Çanakkale and Eastern Anatolia at roughly the same time as Mustafa Kemal. In a petition of complaint about the atrocities committed in the Midyat, Savur and Beşiri districts, it is understood that Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey served as the Commander of Mardin Kuvve-i Takibiye in 1917 (Türkmen, 2022).

While he was in the rank of lieutenant colonel, he was appointed as a member of the İzmir Central Command Committee of Investigation. He personally experienced the Greek atrocities during the occupation, both at the 17th Corps Command Headquarters and other units, together with many other officers. In the report he prepared as a member of the investigation committee, the ill-treatment he witnessed is included with all its nakedness and how his friends were killed is described in detail (Baykal, 1969; Türkmen, 2016). During and after the occupation of İzmir, Colonel Bekir Sami, Colonel Kâzım Özalp, Colonel Şefik Aker, Lieutenant Colonel Ali Çetinkaya, Captain Süleyman Sururi, Captain Tahir etc. were military leaders who united the support of military units with the Kuvâ-yi Milliye. These are an indication that the organization of national forces gained momentum around Bandırma and Balıkesir. There is no definite information about whether Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey was among those who left İzmir and came to Bandırma. Most probably Arif Bey moved with them and was expecting an important mission to be assigned him. Perhaps the promises made were not fulfilled. This may have been the main reason why he decided to leave Bandırma and come to Bayat. In mid-June 1919, he passed from Balıkesir to Bursa together with retired Major Abdullah, Engineer Captain Nurettin, an artillery officer and eight soldiers. He did not stay long in Bursa. On his way to Bayat via Eskişehir, he was intercepted in Seyitgazi on June 21, 1919 by the Gendarmerie Platoon Commander, Major Rodoslu Aydın Efendi, on the instructions of the governor of Eskişehir, and asked to surrender. Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey did not respond positively to this call. In a clash with the gendarmes, one of his companions named "Tireli İsa" was killed. Abdullah Bey and a soldier were arrested. The incident was described in detail in an encrypted telegram dated 23.06.1919 and numbered 506, sent from the Eskişehir Military Staff to the 1st Corps Military Staff (MSB, 1958). Arif Bey, who did not surrender to the Seyitgazi gendarmerie, reached Bayat with the rest of his companions and went to the plateau on the Egerli mountain near the town center (Bulut, 2021).

Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey's Days in Bayat and the Establishment of the Karakeçili National Regiment

While Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey was residing in a cave with his companions in his plateau on Egerli Mountain, orders were given to the 2nd Army Inspectorate in Konya to capture and neutralize him. In his reply telegram dated July 17, 1919, General Selahattin, Deputy Inspector of the Second Army, stated that "it was understood as a result of the investigation that none of District Governor Arif Bey and his friends were in Seyitgazi and its vicinity". Later on, in addition to this telegram, he wrote a telegram on July 28th, describing the incident in detail. However, the İstanbul Government did not let Arif Bey go as he wished. An order was issued for the arrest of Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey, a member of the İzmir Committee of Investigation, and his friends (Koylu, 2015).

In addition to being from Bayat, Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey knew the surrounding area very well as he had served as an officer in Afyonkarahisar Redif Brigade in the previous years. He had a popular and fatherly personality. Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey,

who was apparently very uneasy about the Greek occupation and the order for his arrest, did not stand idle and formed a considerable militia force in a short time with the groups he gathered around him from the leaders of Bayat and the surrounding villages. According to some oral sources, the militia force included Çerkez Mehmed from Emirdağ, Kara Hüseyin, Çukurkuyulu Acemoğlu, Deli Hacı from Holuz, Kürt Ali Çavuş, Corporal Sadık, Taşbaş Mehmed (Mehmed Pehlivan) from Çatallı Village, Akpınarlı Kopuk, Sergeant Pörnekli Cumali, Sergeant Yusuf- son of Abdülkadir Hoca from Elhan Village, Kara Ahmed -son of Soğukkuyulu Pala, Tabaklarlı Kara Vahid some of whom were former gunmen and gang members (Durmaz, 2003). Since there was no surname law during the Ottoman period, people were referred to by their nicknames, their fathers' names, their ethnic origins or their hometowns. This is also the reason why Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey was called "Bayatlı" (means *someone from Bayat*).

The militia force was called the "Karakeçili Detachment" or later the "Karakeçili National Regiment" because the "Karakeçili" Turkmen tribes had a special reputation among the Turkmens belonging to various Oghuz tribes residing in the settlements in the region (Köksal, 2010). In this context, perhaps Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey also considered himself as one of the "Karakeçili". As in many parts of Anatolia, there is a dense Oghuz Turkmen settlement in the Afyonkarahisar-Kütahya-Eskişehir triangle, especially around Bayat and Emirdağ (Halacoğlu, 2009; Sümer, 1980). During the days he spent in the plateau in Bayat, Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey had both a sheltered place and the opportunity to think and plan the steps he would take for the National Struggle. It is quite plausible that he preferred his hometown to hide against the arrest warrant issued by the İstanbul Government which might be under the strong influence of the British commanders. His fellow countrymen were very hospitable to Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey and his men and provided them with food and lodging. In this process, Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey was fully convinced that he no longer had any ties with the İstanbul Government, which had issued an arrest warrant for him, and decided to establish an armed organization against the occupation. (Bulut, 2021). In Bayat, he started his work with great self-confidence as a result of the favor of the local people towards him, and then went to Emirdağ and made Çerkez Mehmet's inn his headquarters (Türkmen, 2017).

Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey's Contribution to the National Struggle

The first step taken in the region to protect the unity of the homeland during the period of the National Struggle was to make various attempts to establish the Müdafaa-i Hukuk (Defence of Law) Society in Emirdağ. In this struggle, the heroism and efforts of Nuri Bey, the district governor of Emirdağ, are noteworthy. Nuri Bey endeavored to make contact with all the people he thought would be useful and made an admirable effort to ensure that the movement reached as wide a mass as possible. While Nuri Bey was carrying out these activities, on the other hand, Mufti Hüseyin Fevzi Efendi, who was among the important figures of the district, contacted the gangs in and around Emirdağ in an effort to participate in the National Struggle and asked them to be with them in the service of the homeland. Accordingly, Balcamlı Yusuf, Çukurcalı İbrahim, Yazılı Osman, Bavurdulu Yörük Eyüp, Bayatlı Sinan, and others joined the resistance movement (Daşdemir, 2003: 97). While Nuri Bey and Mufti Hüseyin Fevzi Efendi were carrying out their activities, Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey continued his actual attempts. The core organization, which was named the Karakeçili Regiment as a result of Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey's efforts, became one of the important elements of the Emirdağ Müdafaa-i Hukuk Society (Altınbaş, 2011: 93). Among the personalities in the administrative council of the Emirdağ Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti were Havaoğlu Hacı Hüseyin, Hacı Bekiroğlu Mustafa, Kalenderzade Abdülkadir, Çerçi

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Yusuf, Mazoğlu Salih, Mukaveleci İsmail, Kürt Mehmet Çavuş, Tatar Ahmet Usta, Müftü Sabri Efendi, Çerkez Matuş Mehmet, Arap Ahmet oğlu Abdil Ağa and former District Governor Nuri Bey. At the lower levels, Gıyretoğlu Hamdi, Karacaörenli Eşkiya, Ünlü Oğlu Tahir, Kolanşamlı Sarı Bekir, Kolanşamlı Taşbaş Mehmet, Elhanlı Abdülkadir Hocaoğlu Sergeant Yusuf Çavuş, Sergeant Ali Şerif, Hamzahacılı Mıstık Efe, Höstenoğlu Celil, Çerkez Osman, Boyalı Mustafa, Milleteoğlu İsmail, Akpınarlı Kopuk, Holuzlu Deli Hacı, Çukurkuyulu Acemoğlu, Pörnekli Cumali and Elmas Pehlivan were present (Kocabaş). In addition to military organizations, the Müdafaa-i Hukuk Society in the district sent various telegrams to the authorities about the survival of the country (Sarıkoyuncu & Sankoyuncu, 2019).

Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey, who made a name for himself during the National Struggle period with the Karakeçili National Regiment he founded, was appointed as Afyonkarahisar National District Commander, including Alaşehir, by Mustafa Kemal Pasha with a telegram dated September 9, 1919, upon the proposal of Ali Fuat Pasha, who was appointed as the Commander of the Western Anatolian General Kuvâ-yi Milliye following the Sivas Congress. When the atrocities committed by the Greeks in the places they occupied became known among the people of Afyonkarahisar, this situation caused uneasiness in the city. As a result of the atrocities, the people began to harbor great hatred and anger against the Greeks. Realizing that the danger caused by the Greeks could harm them in a short time, the people of Afyonkarahisar, under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey, formed the Afyonkarahisar Kuvâ-yi Milliye Union with Salih Kesri, Hodja İsmail Şükrü (Çelikalay), Hasan Çerçel, 23rd Brigade Commander Ömer Lütü Bey, Hodja Nebil Efendi, telegraph officers Hadi Bey and Ali Bey (Çelik 1999: 245). Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey with his forces raided the armory of the British occupation forces in the Municipality Gas House one night and smuggled the weapons and ammunition here to Erkmén, which was also the center of the division headquarters, and brought them to the service of the National Struggle. He then forcibly removed Mahmut Mahir, the Mutasarrıf (in the Ottoman administrative system, the administrative head of province) of Afyonkarahisar, who was constantly trying to undermine the National Movement, from the city. When Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey arrived in Afyonkarahisar, the Redd-i İlhak (rejection of annexation) Society had just been established in the city. Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey made significant contributions to the transformation of the Redd-i İlhak Society into the Müdafaa-i Hukuk Society (İlgar, 2000).

Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey, with the forces under his command, was trying to stop the Greek advance on the one hand, and on the other hand, he had to deal with the internal revolts that broke out at that time. Following the failures of the cavalry company and the machine gun platoon in the 1st Bozkır Uprising, Karakeçili National Regiment in Afyonkarahisar was shifted to Seydişehir in the region of the rebellion as part of the measures taken by the authorities. Therefore, Arif Bey and his regiment were among those assigned to suppress this great rebellion (İplikçioğlu et al., 2000; Türk İstiklal Harbi, 1974). When Arif Bey returned to Afyonkarahisar from Bozkır, he could not tolerate the British flag flying on the high school building and ordered his men to take it down (Oğuz, 1960). Due to his success in the suppression of the 1st Bozkır Uprising, Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey, together with his Karakeçili National Regiment consisting of 210 horsemen and 55 infantrymen, left Afyonkarahisar for Ankara by train on April 22, 1920 on the eve of the opening of the Turkish Grand National Assembly to intervene in the uprisings in the Western Black Sea Region. Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey and his regiment achieved great success against the rebels around Bolu, Düzce, Nallıhan and Beypazarı (Uyan, 2004).

During the period of the War of Turkish Independence, Karakeçili National Regiment did not only record its name in regional victories, but also supported the congresses

where the liberation of the country was planned. In 1919, a congress was convened in Balıkesir, which is located on the İzmir-Bandırma Railway line, in order to organize the Kuvâ-yi Milliye troops, which acted irregularly upon the increasing occupation of the Greek army in Western Anatolia, into a regular organization and to carry out the resistance in a planned manner, and with the proposal of Hacim Muheddin Bey, it was decided to hold the next meeting in Alaşehir (Konukçu, 2000). After the congress, the settlements on the current route were informed about the decisions taken. It was announced that the Congress would convene in Alaşehir on August 16, 1919. While Erzurum and Sivas Congresses were convened after the occupation of İzmir, Balıkesir, İzmir, Nazilli and Alaşehir Congresses continued their activities in Western Anatolia, and important decisions were taken in these congresses (Urfalı, 2011: 88). After completing their equipment and soldier deficiencies, the Karakeçili Regiment moved from Emirdağ to participate in the Alaşehir Congress and to support the Western Front (Urfalı, 2011: 88). In Alaşehir, they were welcomed by the forces of Çerkez Ethem and placed in the front section allocated to them. After fighting for 5-6 days, Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey's forces faced a fierce attack by the Greeks. Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey, realizing that further resistance would cause great losses since the Greek forces were superior in terms of soldiers and weapons and their positions were higher up, realized that it was more realistic to form a new front in a suitable terrain further back. He orders his forces to retreat. Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey and the Karakeçili Regiment under his command participated in the Alaşehir Congress held on August 16-25, 1919 and complied with the decisions taken there. Accordingly, the Congress also touched upon the District and Front Organizations of the Harekat-ı Milliye (National Operations) organizations and duties and responsibilities were planned according to their ability to function. The Alaşehir Congress ended on August 25, 1919 (Urfalı, 2014: 43). Meanwhile, Mustafa Kemal and the delegation had been in Sivas for 4 months. The shortage of financial resources to leave Sivas was at its peak. On December 2, 1919, he wrote to Arif Bey, the Commander of the Karahisar Kuva-yi Milliye, that he would be grateful if a few thousand liras were sent, provided that they did not harm or offend the locals (Atatürk'ün Bütün Eserleri). Although there is no document in the archives regarding Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey's response to this request for aid, it can be assumed that the residents of Afyonkarahisar and its districts including Bayat, under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey, collected and sent the requested amount.

The Martyrdom of Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey and the Disbandment of Karakeçili National Regiment

The Karakeçili National Regiment, which participated in the Alaşehir Congress, also contributed to the suppression of the 1st and 2nd Bozkır uprisings and later Bolu and Düzce uprisings (Türkmen, 2022). However, in the meantime, Major Rüştü was wanted to be hanged by Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey because he could not manage his detachment well in Gerede. Some prominent people intervened and dissuaded Arif Bey from this idea. Arif Bey, who withdrew with his forces during the suppression of the Bolu and Düzce uprisings, during his short stay in Kızılcahamam, while waiting for the participation of new forces and preparing for duty, on the other hand, he continued his activities to win the villagers in favor of the nationalist movement and enlisted volunteers from among them. However, on the night of May 11-12, 1920, he was unexpectedly martyred with a Mauser bullet to his head while sleeping in his tent (Köksal, 2010). His tragic death caused great sorrow and reactions both in his own regiment and in the public opinion. When Mustafa Kemal Pasha took the floor in the second (secret) session of the meeting of the Turkish Grand National Assembly held on

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Monday, May 17, to give information about internal affairs, he started his speech with the incident of Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey and gave the following information:

"In my last information, I stated that a regiment under the command of Arif Bey had arrived in Yabanâbâd (the old name of Kızılcahamam) and joined forces with the Kuvâ-yi Milliye there. Four or five days ago, Arif Bey met an accident. You have probably heard about it. He was killed while lying in his tent in Yabanâbâd. Our investigations so far have not led us to a clear conclusion. Some people say that this accident could have been caused directly by those who were around him, due to the fact that he was a violent man and that he had put some pressure on his men during the operations. However, there is also some information that the people who were close to him may have planned and this is how the incident occurred. In any case, there is no clear and definite information. However, a thorough investigation is being carried out, sir." (TBMM, 1920).

However, despite all efforts, the veil of mystery behind his assassination could not be lifted. As Mustafa Kemal Pasha emphasized in his statement in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the opinions on the assassination were mostly centered on the point that the assassination was committed and operated from within his own regiment or, on the contrary, by an external hand. At this point, the assassination of Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey was a very important loss for the National Forces trying to suppress internal rebellions. With the death of Arif Bey, Karakeçili Regiment disbanded, never to regroup again (Köksal, 2010). Thereupon, the men of Karakeçili Regiment, who loved their commander very much and were deeply loyal to him, asked for permission to return to their villages. Two sentries, First Lieutenant İhsan, the adjutant who was sleeping in the tent next to Arif Bey at the time of the assassination, and Major Rüşti, the commander of Kızılcahamam Detachment, were arrested for the investigation into the incident (Genelkurmay Başkanlığı).

Arif Bey's tragic death caused the page of his service in the National Struggle to close early. However, his name was not forgotten after his death, on the contrary, it grew day by day. Among the people in his service area and especially among his compatriots in Bayat, his fatherly, but sometimes temperamental, implacable and frightening attitude, his short-lived customary rule, embellished with various heroic stories, turned into an epic that is still being told today. There are even strong rumors that Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey was the one who fired the first bullet against the enemy during the occupation of İzmir, which took place while he was a member of İzmir Central Command Committee of Investigation (Kurtuluş Gazetesi, 2011). Years later, as a result of the loyal initiatives of Bayat Municipality and the Turkish Armed Forces, a statue of Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey was erected in Bayat district square (See Appendix 2).

Occupation of Emirdağ's District Center and Bayat's Role in the National Struggle

In the period after Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey's death, the inability to adequately provide for the needs of the army in the struggle for independence led Mustafa Kemal Pasha to seek support from existing resources. The Tekâlif-i Milliye (National Mandatory Taxes) order was issued on August 7-8, 1921 with the idea of providing the needs of the military units and increasing the welfare level of the army (Şavkılı, 2011). The Tekâlif-i Milliye Orders issued just before the Battle of Sakarya were welcomed positively also in Bayat as they were accepted throughout the country. In spite of the fact that the people of Bayat were not intimidated or witnessed a de facto occupation, responded to these orders by sharing what they had with the state albeit limited.

Eight days after the Tekâlif-i Milliye Order, Emirdağ district center was occupied by the Greeks on August 16, 1921 (Avcı, 1995: 10). Greek soldiers occupied Emirdağ from

the borders of Yüreğil-Güneysaray and Dişli-Özburun with the aim of reconnaissance and material and moral losses of the people of the region (Ertoy, 2020). During this occupation, the Greeks could not enter Bayat, which was then affiliated to Emirdağ but was more sheltered and not on the route of the Greeks. However, the grandchildren of the local people who lived through the period of the National Struggle have always heard from their grandfathers and grandmothers that Greek soldiers came to Pirenli bridge near Bayat, but the men of Bayat did not let the Greeks into the town with their braveness (Bulut, 2021). The Greek soldiers demanded small cattle from Bayat to meet the food needs of their army, but their request was harshly rejected. Considering that all the men who could hold a gun first joined the Kuvâ-yi Milliye and then the regular army, it is admirable that the remaining children, sick and old men were able to resist in this way. Although there was no de facto occupation of Bayat, the men who stayed behind hid their women in haystacks and sent their animals to the plateau, and then fought and risked death if necessary.

In the meantime, after completing their work in Emirdağ and putting things in order, the Greek soldiers moved again by placing a sufficient number of military forces behind them. Turkish troops, who wanted to take advantage of the resulting security gap, deployed in the district and organized a sudden raid on the Greek forces, and the Greek troops scattered in panic. Turkish forces captured the Greek headquarters and camps and neutralized the soldiers they captured (Urfalı, 2011: 71). On August 13, 1921, the Greek army moved from Afyonkarahisar and Eskişehir and started the assault on August 23. The Battle of Sakarya, the impact of which would be felt in the homeland for years, started. Until September 10, an epic defense was displayed against superior Greek forces. On September 10, Commander-in-Chief Mustafa Kemal Pasha ordered the attack, and the power of the Greek forces was neutralized until September 13. The 22-day war, which caused heavy losses in the region, ended with the defeat of the Greeks (Urfalı 2014: 75). Greek troops started to disperse by fleeing towards Afyonkarahisar without a plan and re-entered Emirdağ. They destroyed settlements and burned down all 66 villages and parts of 57 villages in Emirdağ, Haymana and Mihaliççık. We have not found any evidence that Bayat was included. Later, on September 22, 1921, Greek troops withdrew towards Afyonkarahisar, and the military losses of the enemy gradually increased with the struggle of the patriotic gangs against the Greek armed forces. With the victorious conclusion of the Battle of Sakarya, the Western Front headquarters was moved to Akşehir and the Sivrihisar-Emirdağ-Bolvadin-Çay-Şuhut-Akşehir defense and offensive line was established. All in all, on August 16, 1921, Emirdağ district, which was subjected to Greek occupation, was liberated from occupation after 36 days of captivity by the people who did not want to leave their homeland under the enemy's feet and the army devoted to the National Struggle (Ertoy, 2020). In this way, the de facto occupation threat to Bayat, which is located in a relatively more inland region, ended.

CONCLUSION

The sons and daughters of the motherland from all over the country, who came together for the sake of unity without discriminating between rich and poor, peasant and urbanite, and tradesmen and farmers, took part in the National Struggle at the cost of their lives. Although the heroic people who participated from different parts of the country faced many problems, they did not think for a moment to give up this glorious resistance. During this period when the Turks were going through the most difficult days in history, besides the heroic nation, traitors who prioritized their personal interests over the interests of the country due to their ignorance and prejudice caused the conditions in the country to become more difficult (Selek, 1987: 73). The martyrdom of Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey by friendly fire was one of the events that disrupted the struggle. Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey was a

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commander who came to his hometown Bayat following the Istanbul Government's decision to arrest him, organized the brave people who took up arms and made unique contributions to the National Struggle. As a result of the courage of commanders like Mustafa Kemal Pasha and Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey, although the existence and unity of Anatolia was threatened for reasons, the nation defeated the enemies by using its last means and wrote the power of the Turks in history (Ertoý, 2020). The people of Bayat, who supported and contributed to the National Struggle without hesitation, took their place in the administrative structure of the Republic of Türkiye, which was established after independence. The great victory once again demonstrated how difficult it was to achieve the integrity of the homeland during the National Struggle.

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- Appendix:** Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey Statue in Bayat

