



**TEA FARMING INDUSTRY IN TURKEY AND SOCIAL
ECONOMIC HISTORY 1920-1960**

**TÜRKİYE'DE ÇAY TARIMI SANAYİSİNİN EKONOMİK
VE TOPLUMSAL TARİHİ 1920-1960***

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to present the economic and social history of the tea farming industry in Turkey between 1920-1960. In Turkey, the “domestic tea” farming industry was initiated and continued under an initiative led by the nation-state at all stages. The present study investigates the historical process between 1920 and 1960 based on news reports from the central and local press, agricultural journals of the time, and parliamentary records, using also local, and regional historical resources. The state-led initiative is considered both an intervention that regulated social and economic structure in rural areas and a policy to encourage “domestic” tea consumption. The reasons underlying this intervention are addressed in two periods. In the first period, the primary goal was to overcome social and economic problems specific to Rize, the central city of tea cultivation, and the Eastern Black Sea Region, of which Rize is a part. In the second period of the state-led tea farming initiative, the goal was to complete the goals of the preceding period, and to satisfy the domestic demand for tea consumption through “national self-

* This article is part of Rahsan Inal's PhD dissertation “The Construction of Nationalism via Relations of Production: Tea Agriculture-Industry, State and Society” was research conducted at Ankara University, Turkey.

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* Makale Geliş Tarihi / Article Received: 17.11.2020
Makale Kabul Tarihi / Article Accepted: 26.02.2021

sufficiency” policies, and to start tea exports in the years to come. As a consequence of these efforts, not only tea has become a drink easily accessible by all social classes in Turkey today, but also the social structure in the tea-producing rural areas has been transformed.

Keywords: Tea, Rize, Nation-State, Social Structure, Economy.

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Türkiye’de çay tarım sanayisinin 1920 ve 1960 yılları arasındaki ekonomik ve toplumsal tarihini sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Türkiye’de “yerli çay” tarım sanayinin bütün aşamaları ulusal devletin planlı bir müdahalesiyle başlamış ve yürütülmüştür. Araştırmada bu tarihsel süreç, merkezi ve yerel yazılı basın, dönemin ziraat dergileri, parlamento kayıtları, yerel ve bölgesel tarih kaynaklarından yararlanılarak incelenmektedir. Araştırmada devletin bu girişimi, hem kırsal alanda toplumsal ve ekonomik yapıyı düzenleyen bir müdahale hem de “yerli” çay tüketimini teşvik politikaları olarak değerlendirilerek müdahalenin temel nedenleri iki dönemde ele alınmaktadır. Birinci dönemde, çay tarımının merkez kenti Rize ve Rize’nin içinde olduğu bölge Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesi’ne özgün toplumsal ve ekonomik sorunları çözmeye hedefi öne çıkmaktadır. Çay tarımında devlet müdahalesinin ikinci döneminde ise bir önceki dönemin hedeflerini tamamlamak ve “ulusal kendi kendine yeterlilik” politikalarıyla ülke içi çay tüketimini karşılamak ve gelecek yıllarda çay ihracatı yapmaktır. Bu çalışmalar neticesinde, günümüz Türkiye’sinde çay tüm toplumsal sınıfların kolayca ulaşabildiği bir içecek olurken, çay tarım sanayinin kurulduğu kırsal alanda toplumsal yapı da değişime uğramıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çay, Rize, Ulus-Devlet, Toplumsal Yapı, Ekonomi.

INTRODUCTION

Tea is a beverage that made its way through the globe from East, i.e., China, Japan, and India, to West (Ellis et al., 2010; Besky, 2014; Rappaport, 2017; Du,

2018). These countries are all tea producing, consuming and trading countries today (Fao, 2018). They have their own tea culture in terms of preparation and service of tea, with authentic items for tea service, and traditional teatimes (Joliffe, 2003; Gürsoy, 2005; Standage, 2005; Schivelbusch, 2000; Reimertz, 2003; Saberi, 2010; Roth, 2015). When tea first reached the West, the first tea consumers were nobles (Standage, 2005; Reimertz, 2003). Tea also brought about its own culture in the countries where it was imported and became a favorite beverage. For example, Schivelbusch (2000: 80-84) states that, in England, which was the biggest consumer of coffee in Europe in the 1700s, tea would replace coffee half a century later. According to Standage (2005: 203), in early eighteenth century, when the East India Company established trade posts in China and started importing tea directly, the supply of tea increased, its price fell, and it became a product available to large groups.

In Turkey, tea is the most commonly consumed beverage. Although varieties of hot tea, ice tea, green tea and white tea are also produced, black tea is at the top of the list with 90.1% (Ulusoy and Şeker, 2013: 23). Turkey ranks the first in the world in terms of tea consumption per capita (FAO, 2018: 7).

According to the researchers, tea drinking started in the 19th century during the Ottoman period, rather than the Republican period when tea cultivation was started (Gürsoy, 2005; Duman, 2008; Birsnel, 2009; Kuzucu, 2012). Even, public places such as Çayhane (teashop) and Çayevi (teahouse) were opened in Istanbul and became quite popular (Duman, 2008: 129; Birsnel, 2009: 97-117). It was also in this period when several attempts were made for the production of tea which was only imported until then, but these attempts failed as the geographical regions suitable for growing tea were not accurately determined (Tekeli, 1962: 101; Quataert, 2008: 116- 256; Saklı, 2008: 43; Kaçar, 2010: 3; Duman, 2012: 79-82). The most significant effort for tea cultivation was when Ali Rıza Erten Bey, a teacher at Halkalı Agricultural School, scientifically proved the similarities in climate conditions between Batum and Eastern Black Sea (Arer, 1969: 59-60; Tekeli, 1976: 16; Kaçar, 1993: 4; Saklı, 2008: 55).

Tea gained wider acceptance in Anatolia after the 1950s with the increase in the number of tea factories in line with the development of tea farming. The nation-state founded after the fall of the empire attached particular importance to tea farming industry and executed a specific program and planning at all stages. After long-term efforts, tea-cultivation is now conducted in Eastern Black Sea region, and the city of Rize is the center of tea production (Çaykur, 2018: 17,18).¹

¹ There are no vast tea plantations in Turkey. Tea farming is generally done in small family orchards which are called “tea gardens” or “tea patches” as of 2018, there are 197,169 farmers in

In Turkey, the importance given by the state to tea farming is driven by political, social and economic goals (Hann and Hann, 2001, 2012). The aim of this study is, therefore, to explicate the underlying reasons for the state involvement in tea production through an analysis of the economic and social history of tea in Turkey between 1920 and 1960. As there emerged, in the course of modern Turkish history, some changes in methods of intervention in tea production, I will divide my analysis into two periods: between 1920 and 1935 and between 1935 and 1960. The primary reasons for state intervention are studied in detail in these two periods based on the examination of enacted laws and field studies conducted by agricultural experts. While in the first period the primary goal was to solve the social and economic problems specific to Rize, the central city of tea cultivation, and the Eastern Black Sea Region, of which Rize is a part, in the second period the goal was to complete the goals of the preceding period and to satisfy domestic demand for tea consumption through “national self-sufficiency” policies by rendering tea a “national” drink available to all social classes and to start tea exports.

1. THE FIRST PERIOD IN TEA FARMING INDUSTRY: THE FIRST LAW

Zihni Derin is one of the leading figures in the projects initiated by the team of agronomists and economists who were among the founding cadres of the nation-state and had influence on agricultural policies. Derin, renowned as the “father” of tea farming, arrived in Ankara after the end of World War I. He became the first general director of agriculture in the Ankara Government formed after the opening of the First Grand National Assembly in 1920. Derin coordinated the performance of soil and climate analyses in different Anatolian provinces for agricultural development. In a report by Hulusi Karadeniz, the President of Rize Chamber of Agriculture, it was stated that some families grew tea saplings brought from Batum in their gardens, the coastal land was too narrow and the inhabitants were extremely poor, and it was suggested that tea farming could be introduced for the development of the region (Arıpınar, 1966: 34; Tuncer, 1958: 24-149).² Upon this information, the Ministry of Economy sent an agriculturalist to Batum in 1921 to inspect tea farming practices. The first trials with the tea seeds brought were carried out by Hulusi Karadeniz in Rize (Rıza, 1932). It was verified that Rize was suitable for growing oranges, lemons,

the Eastern Black Sea region growing tea in 781.334 decares. 67.32% of the tea gardens owned by 63.51% of the farmers are located in Rize (Çaykur, 2018: 17, 18).

² Some villagers in Rize are known to have met the tea plant long before tea farming was introduced by the state (Arıpınar, 1966: 34; Hatipoğlu, 1939: 11; Cumhuriyet Gazetesi, 1954). Villagers from the Black Sea region who went to Batum and Chakvi (north of Batum) to work in tea harvesting brought saplings with them and planted them in their gardens (Öztürk, 2005:257-258). Nurik (1983:8) states that a tea plant assumedly 75 years old and 5-6 meter high was found by the tea master Hamza Kartal in the garden of Enez Sarı, a villager in Rize’s Pazarköy in 1949, while Kazmaz (2001: 43) mentions the name of Mustafa Asım among those who first grew tea in Rize.

tangerines and tea, whereupon a tea plantation was founded (TBMM, 1340a: 425; TBMM, 1340b: 567; TBMM, 1940a: 70). A draft law was prepared in consultation with Zihni Derin, officials from the Chambers of Commerce and Agriculture in Rize, administrative councils, local people and Rize MPs (TBMM, 1340b: 568).

2. WHY RIZE?

As the parliamentary negotiations pertaining to the law on the cultivation of tea suggest, the reason underlying the importance attached to tea farming by the nation-state in the early republican period was mainly the objective to solve social and economic problems in Rize that emerged in the late imperial period and persisted until the first years of the republic. Known as the Lazistan Sanjak during the Ottoman Empire, Rize had a dense population compared to its land area (Karpat, 2010: 429-430; TVS, 1901/2008: 429). The geography was mainly mountainous, with limited arable land (TBMM, 1340a: 423-424). Transportation and shipments to the remote Lazistan (Rize) Sanjak were only possible through the sea. In early twentieth century, there was only a wooden pier. But manufacturing industry did not exist (TVS, 1902:165-169). The only source of income other than agricultural produce was the manufacture of Rize cloth (*feretiko*), a fabric woven on hand looms in houses (Hut 2012:2-10). The fabrics produced in Rize and its villages were exported via Trabzon to Erzurum, Baghdad, Arabia and Istanbul (TVS, 1869/1993: 185). However, in the late Ottoman era, the revenues of Rize weavers had drastically fallen (Quartern, 2011: 116). Therefore, income from the manufacture of *feretiko* was insufficient. As a natural consequence of the geographical location and the limited sources of income, people were forced to seek “work away from the hometown, which resulted in some sort of seasonal employment” (Karpat, 1976: 54). The labor force in the region migrated seasonally to Russia, the Caucasus, Bulgaria, Romania, and other cities of the empire, where they lived with income from various jobs they could find (TVS, 1902: 547- 563).

The local community had close relations with Russia. Even sometimes, the people in Lazistan (Rize) Sanjak used the Russian currency in shopping and those who worked in Russia calculated their debts in ruble (Marr, 1910/2016: 90; Erkan, 2010: 64). However, following the Soviet Revolution in Russia in 1917, people in Rize had difficulty in crossing the border and travelling to these regions. As Saklı (2008) stated, the closure of the border gate was a radical change and an important turning point for the people of the Eastern Black Sea Region. In fact, the “income channels” of the people of the region were closed, triggering deep poverty.

In 1922, the deputy of Lazistan (Rize) Osman Bey who addressed the Parliament said the peasants ground a mixture of pine barks and corn, and ate corncobs (TBMM, 1338: 104). These adverse conditions sparked migration from

the region. In particular, those who returned to Rize after the revolution in the USSR could not find a job to earn income (Çetiner, 1968: 44-46). In addition to economic problems in the region, crime rates also climbed, making social security difficult to maintain (TBMM, 1340a: 423-427). In the parliamentary archives, the two options, which are summarized below, were offered for a solution:

The first is to provide people with tools in their city so that they can earn the same amount of money that they used to earn in Russia. The second is to make the people living here move to and settle in other wealthier provinces. We must choose the first option as we aim to improve the conditions for these people and increase the population of this province which has utmost political and social importance in our Eastern Front. (...) Otherwise, these people will migrate. This is an important province. There is no point in denying the importance of this place. A huge social revolution is taking place east of us and we have to pay special attention to this city to ensure that its inhabitants have a comfortable life (TBMM, 1340b: 568-578).

With “east of us” the deputy refers to the USSR. On each side of the border, “new” but completely different economic, ideological and social orders were being built. It was particularly considered that the success in the construction of USSR on the other side of the border could adversely affect the construction of a new nation-state, nationalist ideology and production relationships in Turkey.

In the first parliamentary term, the speeches of MPs during the parliamentary negotiations primarily focused on regulation of the economic and social structure to prevent people from migrating. However, it was clear from the speeches in the parliament that the MPs adopted the Russian model in tea farming practices. They knew that tea factories would be needed after the development of tea cultivation, and they considered to export tea after satisfying domestic demand (TBMM, 1340a: 432-433; 1340b: 577-586).

3. THE FIRST LEGAL SUPPORT OF THE STATE IN THE FIRST PERIOD³

The 1924 law also covered other agricultural products considered to be income-generating for villagers. Shrubs and alder trees would be removed to grow tea, and economically useful saplings such as hazelnuts, oranges, lemons, tangerines, tea, would be planted according to soil structure. The state would establish a tea and tangerine plantation in the most convenient place of Rize, the saplings would be distributed to the public free of charge, the necessary inspections would be conducted by the government within six months from the date of the law, the locations of plantations would be determined and notified to the owners,

³ The name of the law in full is “Law on Growing Hazelnut, Orange, Lemon, Tangerine and Tea in the Borçka District and Rize Province.” However, the parliamentary talks focused predominantly on Rize and tea.

who would then prepare their land accordingly. Tea farming would take place within three years, and no land tax would be imposed for ten years on farms where tea saplings were planted in due course. In addition, Borçka, a district close to Batum, was also included in the scope of the law (TBMM, 6 Şubat 1340c).

Following the adoption of the law, Zihni Derin went to Rize, and hired 200 workers to for the establishment of a laboratory and a nursery on the plot of land which is today known as “Rize Central Nursery” (Arıpınar, 1966: 35). He then visited Batum to inspect tea and citrus gardens and factories. New tea seeds brought to Rize were planted in the nursery and distributed to the public (Hatipoğlu, 1939: 16). People of Rize planted tea saplings that were distributed free of charge, and learned simple tea drying methods. But no progress was seen in tea farming. According to Muhlis Erkmen, Minister of Agriculture, (TBMM, 1940b: 9) this was normal because people did not know anything about the economic income they would earn from cultivating tea. There were no buyers for the hand-processed tea in Rize. Tea sales needed to be regulated (Rıza, 1932).

4. THE SECOND PERIOD IN TEA FARMING INDUSTRY: NATIONAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

No remarkable development in tea farming was observed between 1927 and 1935. After the Great Depression in 1929, agricultural policies changed in Turkey. In the context of “self-sufficiency policies”, agricultural economists discussed diversification of agricultural products, cultivation of products not yet raised in the country to meet domestic demand, and giving weight to industrial agricultural products in particular (Hatipoğlu, 1933: 1-6).

After an exploratory visit by the Ministry of Agriculture to observe the economic development and improvement of the Black Sea Region in 1935, tea-farming industry was reconsidered as a local and special economic issue in Rize. Steps to be taken were indicated in detail in the report “Tea Industry in Turkey” prepared by Hatipoğlu. The primary step, according to this report, was to teach villagers the methods and rules of tea cultivation by means of courses and practical training. The report also highlighted the necessity of sending young people to Russia to learn about and specialize in tea farming, to prepare books and brochures about tea, transforming tea farming industry into an institutionalized and organized enterprise, establishing organizations that would coordinate the interaction of central authorities and local institutions, introducing exemplary tea gardens to the public and launching workshops first and then factories for production. On an economic scale, proposals were made such as offering long-term, low interest loans, free seeds and seedlings to tea producers, reorganizing import and customs policies to protect domestic tea against foreign tea, even placing a ban on imported tea, encouraging consumption of and selling domestic

tea to the domestic market (Hatipoğlu, 1939: 5-132). In this period, tea was the most discussed issue among all agricultural products recently cultivated in Turkey (Tekeli ve İlkin, 1988: 71).

5. LOCAL PRACTICES IN TEA FARMING IN THE SECOND PERIOD

Following the centrally-coordinated initiatives, tea-farming activities were re-launched in Rize. In 1936, lists were sent to the central quarters and districts of Rize for the distribution of citrus and tea saplings (Rize Gazetesi, 1936a). The local press continually announced the significant role that tea would play in the country's economy; issued articles describing technical aspects of tea, heralding that Turkish tea would be known worldwide in the future (Yılmazoğlu, 1936a, 1936b, 1936c). The inhabitants of Rize were granted long-term loans by public banks to prepare tea gardens (Rize Gazetesi, 1936b). As Chief Consultant of General Directorate of Agricultural Affairs and Tea Organizer, Zihni Derin went to Rize in 1937 " to monitor the works on-site (Koyuncu, 2014: 33). Between 1937 and 1940, 82 tons of tea seed were imported from Batum (Kaçar, 1987: 7). Agricultural engineers set up exemplary gardens which villagers could see and visit every day, and held meetings in public, travel to remote villages and meet villagers face-to-face, tell them that tea leaf was a product that would bring large profits and economic prosperity (Zihnioğlu, 1998: 32, 33). The tea seeds brought from Batum to Rize were welcomed enthusiastically by big crowds (Koyuncu, 2014: 29). Hayrat Tea Nursery (1937) and Fener Tea Nursery (1938) were set up for planting the imported seeds (Aktan, 1946: 63). To encourage tea farming further, the governorship rewarded those who had tea gardens better than others (Rize Gazetesi, 1938a). While average teacher salaries ranged from 16 to 20 lira in 1938, peasants' green tea leaves were 40-60 kurush a kilo; if dry tea would be produced using the methods taught, it would be purchased for 200-250 kurush (Rize Gazetesi, 1938b, 1938c). These figures were substantial financial incentives under the economic conditions of the Second World War. In fact, although meager amounts of products were harvested from young teagardens, amounts of tea as small as 100 grams or even 50 grams were purchased for incentive purposes (Zihnioğlu, 1998: 34).

When tea cultivation areas reached 1,547 decares in 1939, it was no longer possible to process the amount of green tea leaves manually. For this reason, the first Tea Processing Workshop was established in the Rize Central Nursery and 2000 kg of green tea leaves were processed daily (Kaçar, 1993: 5; Aktan, 1946: 77-79). To encourage villagers to establish tea gardens, they were given interest-free cash advance by the state. The villagers repaid the debt upon delivery of green tea or two years after the delivery in installments. When some other people from Rize working in other cities heard of this opportunity, they returned to Rize taking their annual leaves early, and established tea gardens (Zihnioğlu, 1998: 8-9). On the

other hand, a Tea Festival “tradition” was also conceived, and the first Tea Festival was celebrated on May 21, 1939 (Cumhuriyet Gazetesi, 1939).

The agricultural staff extended the boundaries of the "First Degree" tea farming areas in the Eastern Black Sea region. Promotion campaigns continued as green tea was processed in the workshop and turned into dry tea. Hand-made Rize tea was also sent to President İsmet İnönü, MPs and newspaper editors (Koyuncu, 2014: 31, 32).

There was news in both the local and national press that factories would be established in Rize and a law was being prepared to this end. (Rize Gazetesi, 1938d, 1938e, 1939). Owing to the efforts of Hulusi Alataş, the Minister of Health, who visited Rize and saw the works on site and tasted Rize tea, the Tea Law of 1940, which was on the agenda of the parliament, was quickly enacted (Arıpınar, 1966: 36-37; Tunçer, 1958: 26; Kasapoğlu, 1966: 12).

6. THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND “TEA, THE GIFT OF THE REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT”: 1940

The preparations for the Tea Law coincided with rumors of the impending war. and its adoption and implementation coincided with World War II; the years 1940-1945 when a “Wartime Economy” was pursued (Ecevit, 1999; Boratav, 1974: 12). Even though Turkey did not actually participate in the Second World War, it received its share of the damage of the war, and certain actions were taken that led to discontent among all segments of the public (Çavdar, 2004: 16-17). In this context, the state-imposed obligations on the public, such as compulsory work, monetary taxation and seizure of agricultural products. Undoubtedly, the most severe action was the seizure of a part of harvested products either through compulsory sales at prices far below the market or through tax-in-kind (Pamuk, 1988: 100-101).

The grounds for the Tea Law, which was unanimously adopted on 27 March 1940 during wartime, involved introducing state incentives and a plan to meet domestic demand with domestic supply to improve the economic welfare of villagers through tea farming (TBMM, 1940a: 70). The most explanatory statement in this regard was made by Muhlis Erkmén, the Minister of Agriculture: "Tea farming industry is a good source of income for the Rize region and a precious gift of the Republican government" (TBMM, 1940b: 13). The law involved the obligation of the state to purchase green tea grown by the villagers, eight years of land tax exemption effective from the establishment of tea gardens, and criminal sanctions for those who would not comply with the rules in the establishment of tea gardens. Heavy fines were introduced for those who attempted to uproot tea plants in the gardens established with state incentives

without permission from the officers of the Ministry of Agriculture. In addition to simplifying red tape concerning title deed transactions of tea gardens, farmers who wanted to grow tea would be granted public land free of charge (not exceeding 5 decares), with priority being given to those who had little or no farmland. Tea gardens developed in this way would also be transferred to farmers or their inheritors free of charge and without fees (TBMM, 1940c; Resmi Gazete, 1940). Thus, the state would provide the villagers with a means of livelihood through tea, and while doing so, it would enable villagers to own “the means of production” since the product would be purchased directly by the state without the producers having to deliver their product to the “market.”

7. “THE MEANING OF PROSPEROUS LIFE: THE RIZE TEA”

The law did not only satisfy villagers’ expectations, but also helped agriculturalists technically in setting up tea gardens. Since it was not easy for villagers to come to the city, administrative procedures were simplified for them by bank representatives, notaries and civil servants responsible for tea farming who visited remote villages (Aktan, 1946: 61). 43,500 orange, lemon, tangerine saplings were distributed in and around Rize, also 486,500 tea saplings were planted by the inhabitants, and 130 kilos of processed tea were yielded as the first bulk product (Rize Gazetesi, 1940a). Because it was war time, instead of tea saplings, villagers preferred to plant corn which they used for making bread (Işıkdemir, 1941). Planting corn in the fields was also permitted in 1943 (Çakmur, 1943a: 16-22). During the Second World War when the state confiscated cereal products, the inhabitants of Rize who completed harvesting of tea leaves did not demand cash, but corn, whose price had climbed after the outbreak of war. These demands were also met. 100 kilos of corn were delivered to those who had set up an acre of tea (Zihnioğlu, 1998: 10-11). Afterwards, the second and third tea processing plants were opened (Aktan, 1946: 78-79). Tea Festivals were continued (Rize Gazetesi, 1940b). During festivals, people were instructed how to pick green tea leaves and how to process tea step by step in practice; cash prizes were also given as in the previous years (Rize Gazetesi, 1941). Import and sale of all kinds of tea and coffee in Turkey were monopolized with a new law as a central move to consolidate the monopoly on tea.⁴

A team of agriculturalists from Ankara trained “Tea Masters,” who were elected from among villagers in Rize and would be taught tea farming in courses. These people also helped other villagers set up their tea gardens and taught them tea farming (Çakmur, 1943a: 17, 18; Aktan, 1946: 87-88). While the state sent teams of agriculturalists to the villages, academic agriculturalists from Ankara

⁴ The first law on this subject was enacted in 1932 and the second in 1942 (Resmi Gazete, 1932, 1942).

Higher Agricultural Institute also lent full support to the initiative (Çakmur, 1943b; Çakmur, 1943a: 21). As of 1940, Ankara High Agricultural Institute and Directorate of Agricultural Arts Directorate began to supervise the quality of Rize tea (Aktan, 1946: 82). Analyses were carried out regularly, and by 1945, 78% of Turkey's demand for tea was grown domestically (Tekeli ve Gökçe, 1942: 7; Tekeli, 1946: 347-351). Tea grown in Rize was covered in local newspapers as follows: “The symbol of a region of this country, of its own natural asset. The token of prosperity and development, born out of an ideal. The fruit of a rural dream, an endless labor and effort that will lead to happiness and affluence” (Ekmen, 1941).

The presence of nationwide demand for tea was visible in the “Tea Parties” at a time when tea was produced in workshops. In the 1945s, “Tea gatherings, tea parties” were organized in waterfront mansions on the Bosphorus owned by some wealthy people living in Istanbul, and at Istanbul University, a leading university of the time offered, the Rector offered “domestic and cheap Rize tea” sent by the National Economy and Saving Society and the Ministry of Agriculture to the students. (Güzel, 1996: 146; Hisar, 2006: 43; Cumhuriyet Gazetesi, 1940).

8. TEA FARMING IN THE RURAL AREAS AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF TEA FACTORIES

The arrival of machines for tea factories was delayed for three years due to the Second World War. At the opening ceremony of the first tea factory on June 16, 1946, the leading tea agriculturalists were welcomed by the public (Tekeli, 1946: 385; Tekeli, 1976: 206). The factory started operations in 1947 (Çaykur, 1973: 12). After this date, tea-producing villagers also started working in these factories and became “workers” in the labor market. In the 1950 elections, the ruling party changed, but the tea-agriculture industry policies remained intact. People demanded more loans for tea farming and expected the number of tea factories to be increased (Salkaya, 1952: 13). These demands were met and between the years 1950-1960, the amount of loans allocated to tea farmers was increased (Resmi Gazete, 1951, 1953, 1956). Moreover, between 1950 and 1960, 10 more tea factories were established in central Rize and settlements close to the center (Çaykur, 2014: 130).

As is the case today, the smallest agricultural enterprises in Turkey were found in Rize in the 1950s (Açıl, 1957: 3-25). In the 1950s when the “value” of tea was set according to other consumer goods, the price of green tea bought by the state from the farmers was high. For the public, tea was synonymous with wealth (Suyabatmaz, 1950). Tea leaves were therefore called “green gold” (Koyuncu ve Arıman, 2013: 19). Satisfied with the income earned from tea gardens, villagers planted more tea saplings. As a result, between 1950 and 1960, the size of tea-

farming areas increased from 26,423 decares to 134,880 decares, while dry tea production rose from 207 tons to 5,815 tons. The number of tea-producing villagers also climbed from 11,976 to 63,497 (Keskin, 1989: 31). Naturally, it was in these years that tea was available to all segments of the society in Turkey at reasonable prices.

These years also coincided with urban development and change in Rize. Road construction projects were accelerated, and upcountry roads were built (Alemdar, 1952; Zümrüt Rize Gazetesi, 1953a, 1953b; Erkan, 1958). While Rize downtown resembled a small town rather than a city during the pre-nation-state and foundation years, those who visited the city in 1956 indicated that the downtown was spectacularly beautiful, the fate of Rize had changed, tea farming generated higher revenue for Rize, reduced migration from the city and contributed to population growth (Selçuk, 1956: 16). The people had difficulties in finding enough corn bread to eat in the 1940s, but after 1950s, they began to consume wheat bread which was regarded as “food only the rich could afford” (Arer, 1969: 47). As a matter of course, the highest population growth rate in the city center occurred between 1955 and 1960 (Zaman and Coşkun, 2008: 267). The reason for the population growth rate in this period is attributed to the effect of the employment created by the tea-farming industry and it is assumed that the expansion of tea farming into Rize and the Eastern Black Sea Region caused migration to other places to slow down to some extent (Yıldırım, 2010: 429). As their problems of food shortage and malnutrition diminished and their income from tea increased, the inhabitants of Rize began to invest in different sectors, especially construction in large cities (Zihnioğlu, 1998: 25). The 1950s and 1960s were the decades that saw increased migration from rural areas to big cities in Turkey. In Rize, however, there was internal migration from the villages to the city center where the factories were located; There were also others who returned “home” to benefit from state incentives and supports for tea (Taş, 2014). The state paid an incredibly high price to green leaves in the 50s and 60s compared to not only the products grown in the region but also the products grown all over the country (Hann and Hann, 2012: 81). The connection of the people of Rize with the Anatolian hinterland was reinforced in the 1960s. Particularly, Istanbul became the most popular city for a social life. The migration of the tea producers from Rize to Istanbul was not driven by hunger and unemployment which was the case forty years ago, but a desire brought by the welfare they achieved without leaving their land and job (Çetiner, 1968: 29-52). The world of values underwent a change as a natural result of the change in the material production process, and Rize, the capital of tea farming industry, was in the heart of this change.

9. CONCLUSION

The first serious attempts in the tea farming industry were made by the founding cadres of the Republic of Turkey. Owing to the long-term efforts of the national state that established tea farming industry, tea became a “traditional” beverage available to all social classes today. The state control on domestic tea production and sales and the state monopoly on import of tea, sugar and coffee both “protected” tea farmers and made it easier for a large segment of the society to access tea in the domestic market.

The public was instructed on how to grow tea in the border region, and at the same time, they were employed in tea factories, which helped them achieve economic prosperity. One of the common consequences for the two periods of economic and social history of tea farming industry between 1920-1960 in Turkey was the “regulation” of the social sphere by the state. The establishment of tea farming industry in rural areas and the introduction of tea as a consumer good in the domestic market by means of protection under state monopoly was also an intervention in the social structure.

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