

BANDITRY AND DESERTION IN THE WESTERN ANATOLIA DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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ABSTRACT

The issue of internal security caused by the First World War is one of the most important problems to be investigated in the Ottoman Empire. Safety and security become a vital question for the State especially in times of war. Because, the success of the State in the battle fields is one of the necessary conditions to ensure peace and trust within the country. The First World War worsened the conditions of the Ottoman Empire, which was in political, economic and social collapse at that time. The authority of the State got weakened during the war time; accordingly, the emerging economic and social crisis were reasons for the disturbance of peace. Another reason that threaten the internal security of the Empire had been the rapidly increasing banditry activities especially since 19th century. Demographic and ethnic structure got changed due to migration in the post-war period, accordingly, the emergence of the unemployment and landlessness was one of the effects that resulted in increasing and spreading of the banditry activities. Geographical location of the living regions and the climatic features also were the reasons for increasing in this kind of activities. In addition to the banditry activities, the state faced especially during the war years with the matter of deserters as a major problem causing the disturbance of peace. The historians mention almost 300.000 deserters during the First World War. Deserters were not only the cause of the deterioration of the internal security but also of the failures of the front lines especially in the second half of the war. Ethnic and demografic structure of the Empire, geographical features, climatic conditions, demands for the independence of the ethnic elements could qualitatively alter security issues lived in the region.

In this study, the traditional conception of history will be overthrown, and the past will be tried to be explained not by generalizations but by using documantery materials as well as minimization of the time and place. With this approach, the

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Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives, specifically the Ministry of Interior and the Public Order records sent by the Provinces, will be examined. In particular, the banditry activities and the criminal events caused by the deserters in the Western Anatolia during the First World War will be tried to be identified.

Key Words: *Western Anatolia, Banditry, Deserters, First World War, Internal Security*

BİRİNCİ DÜNYA SAVAŞI YILARINDA BATI ANADOLU'DA ASKER KAÇAKLARI VE EŞKİYALIK

ÖZET

Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nın neden olduğu iç güvenlik sorunu Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda araştırılması gereken en önemli problemlerden biridir. Güvenlik ve asayiş savaş zamanlarında devletin özellikle hayati sorunudur. Çünkü devletin savaş alanlarındaki başarısı ülkenin içindeki güvenliğin ve barışın sağlanmasını gerektirir. Birinci Dünya Savaşı Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun sosyal, ekonomik ve siyasal çöküşüne neden olmuştur. Devlet otoritesi savaş boyunca zayıflamıştır. Ekonomik ve sosyal sorunlar barışın bozulmasının da nedenleri olmuştur. Eşkiyalık faaliyetlerin özellikle 19. yüzyıldan bu yana artması da imparatorluğun iç güvenliğini tehdit eden bir diğer unsurdur. Demografik ve etnik yapının savaş sonrası yaşanan göçler nedeni ile değişmesi ve buna bağlı olarak ortaya çıkan işsizlik ve topraksızlık eşkiyalık faaliyetlerinin artmasında ve yayılmasındaki etikilerin başında gelmektedir. Yaşanılan bölgenin coğrafi konumu ve iklimsel özellikleri de bu tür faaliyetlerin artmasının nedenlerindedir. Eşkiyalık faaliyetlerinin yanı sıra özellikle savaş yıllarında devletin karşısına büyük bir sorun olarak çıkan ve asayişin bozulmasına sebep olan diğer bir faktör de asker kaçakları meselesidir. Büyük Savaş yıllarında yaklaşık olarak 300.000 asker kaçağından bahsedilmektedir. Asker kaçakları sadece iç güvenliğin bozulmasının değil, özellikle savaşın ikinci yarısında cephede yaşanan başarısızlıklarının da nedenidir. İmparatorluğun etnik ve demografik yapısı, coğrafi özellikleri, iklim şartları ve etnik unsuların bağımsızlık talepleri bölgede yaşanan güvenlik sorunlarını niteliksel olarak değiştirebilmektedir.

Yapılacak olan çalışma ile geleneksel tarih anlayışı yıkılarak, geçmiş genellemeler ile değil, zaman ve mekân küçültülerek ve dokümanter malzeme kullanılarak anlatılmaya çalışılacaktır. Böyle bir yaklaşımla Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşiv belgeleri özellikle de Dâhiliye Nezareti Asayiş Kalemi ve Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyetine gönderilen kayıtlar incelenecektir. Özellikle I. Dünya Savaşı yıllarında Batı Anadolu'da başta eşkiyalık faaliyetleri olmak üzere, asker kaçaklarının neden olduğu adli olaylar da belirlenmeye çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Batı Anadolu, Eşkiyalık, Asker Kaçakları, Birinci Dünya Savaşı, İç Güvenlik*

In the Ottoman Empire, problem of security is based on society-government relations, and ensures an appropriate atmosphere to explore politics and its effects on daily life together. In this study, the issue of internal security will be discussed not in a frame of institutional development but in the frame of political and societal structures' effects on each other and external interferences especially significant during the 20th century. The matter of internal security is examined not in the widespread aspects of public sphere but within the limitations of time and space¹.

The representatives of Annales Ecole such as Le Roy Ladurie and Fernad Braudel enabled regional history studies to gain importance by narrowing the study scale. The past is no longer handled with one single topic and generalizations, but it started to be explained with regional and more detailed information. It is aimed to come to a conclusion by demeaning the time and space with the micro-history perspective, and studying documentary records. Thus, history is no longer the history of the elites only; it begins to serve the public and society to explain them². In this article, time and place are used as bases in a micro-concept, the internal security problems in Aydın region which covered a large portion of the Ottoman Empire and especially the Aegean Region during the World War I, and the precautions taken by the state are evaluated from the perspective of social history.

On August 4, 1914 the Ottoman armies participated in this great and destructive war, with the expectation for a quick conclusion, by joining the Central Powers. As it is also described by many historians, the World War I was a widespread and total war in which countries used up all their human and economic resources. Additionally, this war turned out to be a multi-frontier, and attrition-war with the technological improvements and the expansion of penetrating abilities of state governments into society³. There is no doubt that such a big war caused the Ottoman Empire to experience political, military, social and economic depression. These depressions experienced during the War, and especially the economic ones, confronted the Empire with internal security problems. During this period of time, banditry actions, deserters and judicial cases were the leading ones among the most common internal security problems.

¹ Nadir Özbek, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İç Güvenlik, Siyaset ve Devlet, 1876-1909", *Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Fall-2004, Number:16, 2004, p.59-60.

² Salih Özbaran, *Tarih ve Tarih Öğretimi*, İstanbul, 1992, p.30-31, 52.

³ Norman Davis, *World War One A Short History*, London, 2007, p.36-37; see also: Keith Robbins, *The First World War*, New York, 1993; John Terraine, *The First World War 1914-1918*, Macmillan, London, 1992.

If the Ottoman Anatolia especially in the 17th century is observed in terms of social history, it is seen that there are lots of “*rebellion*” movements. The characteristics of the Ottomans’ land and unique structure of the state attributed different meanings to the rebellion movements throughout the centuries. The Ottoman Empire struggled to prevent banditry events from turning into rebellions with using a pragmatic and flexible policy or employing the policies of bargain and suppression⁴. Before explaining banditry in the Western Anatolia within the borders of Aydın Province, it is necessary to answer some questions at first. If banditry is a movement of rebellion to whom it was against this rebellion? Why did these bandits rebel? What kind of people were these rebelling, and how did they maintain their lives? Were there periods when the banditry actions mounted up, and were there any specific features of their banditry territories? Which precautions did the State take against these rebellions? Was the policy applied by the state a successful one? It is necessary to answer these questions first, while evaluating -with respect to the conditions of the region and the period- the banditry movements which were among the key reasons of disruption of the security in the Western Anatolia and locally within the borders of Aydın Province during the World War I.

Banditry is a special field of study which is especially identified with the history of Western Anatolia and has unique value in enlightening social history. “*Eşkiya*”⁵ is the plural form of “*şaki*” and generally used instead of it. The bandit is lawless, highwayman and rascal. Banditry, a name given to a lawless community, is composed of nonhomogeneous individuals. The common thing among these individuals was that they rebelled against the authority and they disturbed the order as a result. Following the explanations, the first question to be asked is: “*What was the order and by whom was it represented?*” The order was the authority of the state, and those representing the order in the region were state officers. The bandits who rebel against the state’s authority in their regions weakened the

⁴ Karen Barkey, in *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route State Centralization*, alleged that the Ottoman State used the group of bandits, but when they become useless, the Ottoman State followed the destruction policy towards these bandits. Mehmet Öz, “Modernleşme Öncesinde Osmanlı Toplumunda Eşkiyalık Hareketlerinin Niteliği ve Özellikleri”, *Osmanlı’dan Günümüze Eşkiyalık ve Terör*, Ed: Osman Köse, Samsun, 2009, p.36.

⁵The concept of “*efe*” added the concept of “*banditry*” especially in Aydın province of the Western Anatolia. Hobsbawn, a Marxist historian, described “*social banditry*” as defenders of justice, the name of justice, vengeance and the warriors in the eyes of people as heros. From this perspective, the “*efe*”, in the mountains of Aydın Province, was evaluated within the concept of “*social banditry*”. There is no sharp division between the “*efe*” (hector) and banditry at the beginning of XIXth and XXth century, but it should be noted both of them objected the orders. Eric. J. Hobsbawn, *Eşkiyalar*, 2008, İstanbul, p.25-26.

authority, made disregarding laws made their own regulations, and they establish alternative mini-states, and punished those who disobeyed their regulations. These were common instances to be seen around the Aydın Province, as well⁶. Yet, it should not be thought that these rebellions were only against the state. They also made for the hills by rebelling against the pawnbroker whom they could not pay their debts, against the landlords who victimized them, and against family of the girl they loved when they were not allowed to marry her. In such cases, the concepts of “*social banditry*” or “*efe*” were formed. Aydın mountains were full of “*efes*” who made for hills by rebelling against torture, abasement, and revilement and thus they were perceived as the protectors and heroes of the society. Even if they lived in different periods and under different conditions, Atçalı Kel Mehmet, Yörük Ali Efe, Cafer Efe, Kılıoğlu Hüseyin, and Çakırcalı were only several of them. Eventually, if the stories and ballads of heroism are left aside, the bandits are people who kill, violate public order and security by bullying, and endanger life and property by raiding⁷. The bandits, described as waylayers, robbers, and rampageous, pernicious and factious people, met their needs by committing crimes and this fact always accompanies their heroic stories⁸.

Banditry, being one of the resources of the insecure atmosphere in the Western Anatolia during the World War I, gradually expanded in the region due to the political, economic, and social changes in the wartime. Due to the growing strategical importance of the region in this period, regional Greek settlers’ support to the Allied Powers and Greek State, and immigrations; the issue of internal security deepened within the borders of Aydın Province. Especially after the Turco-Italian War(1911-1912), Greek bandits easily passed the Western coast of Anatolia. The Greek bandits arrived at the coasts of Kuşadası via the Samos Island and went all around the Province, but it can be seen that power of their effectiveness was diminished as they moved towards the hinterland. The bandits coming from the islands were also supported by the Greek citizens and they were even protected from the security forces⁹. For instance, it was reported to the Ministry of Interior Affairs that Greeks from the Samos Island came to Söke district, they smuggled animals in co-operation with a band led by a Çamlı villager; Greek

⁶ Olcay Pullukçuoğlu Yapucu, *Modernleşme Sürecinde Bir Sancak Aydın*, 2007, İstanbul, p.175.

⁷ Mehmet Öz, “Modernleşme Öncesinde Osmanlı Toplumunda Eşkialık Hareketlerinin Niteliği ve Özellikleri”, *Osmanlı’dan Günümüze Eşkialık ve Terör*, Ed:Osman Köse, Samsun, 2009, p.36.

⁸ Ali Bardakoğlu, “Eşkialık”, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, XI, Diyanet Vakfı Yay., İstanbul, 1995, p.462-466; Şemseddin Sami, *Kâmûs-i Türki*, İstanbul, 2001, p.780-781.

⁹ Engin Berber, “İkinci Meşrutiyet Döneminde Aydın Vilayetinde İç Güvenlik Sorunu”, *Askeri Tarih Bülteni*, Number:28, Ankara, 1990, p.65.

bandit Yoran Nikola, and the local community complained about this. Due to the increasing complaints, the band was followed and fought against, the band leader Nikola and his friends Kostantin and Inmayon were captured dead, and the others ran away¹⁰. After the Balkan Wars, the dominance of Greek bandits was more violent, organized and oppressive than others. One of the reasons for this was the fact that the Greek State and the Ottoman Empire were at war and the security of sea routes could not be ensured by the Empire¹¹. Apart from this, Greek bandits believed that the region will eventually be united with Greece, and behaved accordingly. The mountains were full of bands and the bands wiped away the authority of the state in the region. They were the bands who ruled, questioned, and robbed the community¹². We know that Greek bandits, who were also in co-operation with local Greeks during the World War I, both expanded their field of activity and intensified their actions¹³. In this period, the Greek bandits, well-known for their predatory manners in the wartime kept doing usual crimes such as kidnapping, robbery, animal smuggling with the help of Greek outlaws living on the islands. The Ottoman Empire made the Greek community living in the neighborhoods like Foça, Bergama, Çeşme and Karaburun which were close settlements to the islands, moved to the interior parts. Even temporarily, they tried to maintain security of the shoreline of the region by using such a method¹⁴. It can be observed that not only the Turks but also local Greeks took part in banditry actions in the Western Anatolia and especially within the Aydın Province, and the wartime conditions enabled them to move and act more easily.

The geographical conditions of the Western Anatolia and the Aydın Province made it easier for the bandits to move and act more speedily. Bandits liked mountains, steep valleys, forests, and narrow passages, because these places were as unapproachable as the bandits themselves. Çamlık, Gökbel, Beşparmak, Madran mountains which were located in the region, and covered with pine and beech forests enabled bandits to easily escape from the security forces of the state and hide themselves. The mountains were kinds of shelters for the bandits and obstacles for the corps chasing them. The climate of the region was another factor affecting the movement abilities of the bandits, expanding their regional dominance, and increasing their domination and power. In this region, the fertile plains

¹⁰ BOA(Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri), DH.EUM.3.ŞB(Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyeti 3. Şube), Dosya no:17, Vesika no:20, 1332/1916.

¹¹ Engin Berber, "İkinci Meşrutiyet...", p.67.

¹² Sabri Yetkin, *Ege'de Eşkiyalar*, 1990, İstanbul, p.15-17.

¹³ Feroz Ahmad, *İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme*, İstanbul, 1985, p.114; Engin Berber, "İkinci Meşrutiyet...", p.62.

¹⁴ Erkan Serçe, *İzmir ve Çevresi Nüfus İstatistiği 1917*, İzmir, 1998, p.6.

helped them to survive in spring whereas snowy mountains did not leave a passage for the corps in winter season¹⁵. The bandits went down to the plain in summer and spring months and this helped them feed themselves and their followers, whereas it was seriously harming the social and economic life of the villagers growing products in their fields. This situation was a huge loss for the villagers. The people who were afraid of the bandits closed themselves into their houses instead of cultivating their lands or harvesting their products. Naturally, the villagers who did not cultivate or harvest, did not feed their families, did not pay their debts, and pay their taxes to the state. These negative conditions forced them to leave their lands and villages, and had a deep impact on their social and economic life. Thus, the villagers made for the hills in the end¹⁶.

The primary reason that lies behind the existence of banditry in the Western Anatolia was socio-economic problems. Weakness of the central state power because of the political, military, social and economic problems, wartime conditions, lack of judicial practices, and the occurrence of physical and moral violence made the already existing banditry which was a deeper internal security issue in this region¹⁷. As of 19th century, in the process of integration of the Western Anatolia with the capitalist system, the agriculture was commercialized and as a natural result of this, incomes increased and the landlords gradually got richer. On the other hand, more villagers were left landless and got poorer, income was shared unequally, and these conditions caused the banditry to expand more¹⁸. Besides, although railways improved agriculture and trade in the Aydın Province, they were not able to prevent unequal distribution of the income and land in this region. Ever-changing dynamics of the province caused discomfort especially in the second half of the 19th century, and people deemed state responsible for the discomfort and insecurity. Thus, being left as surplus population and constituting a potential resource for banditry, such citizens either rebelled against the local leaders who were deemed responsible for the injustice and discomfort; or made for the hills. The community did not report them to the

¹⁵ Fernand Braudel, *Akdeniz ve Akdeniz Dünyası*, trans: Mehmet Ali Kılıçbay, Ankara, 1993, p.53-54.

¹⁶ Sabri Yetkin, *Ege'de...*, s.17-18; Hobsbawn, *Eşküyalar*, p.45.

¹⁷ Mehmet Emin Üner, *Aşiret, Eşküy ve Devlet*, İstanbul, 2009, p.78-79; Eric J. Hobsbawn, *Eşküyalar*, p.77-78.

¹⁸ Mehmet Beşikçi, "Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Devlet İktidarı ve İç Güvenlik: Asker Kaçakları Sorunu ve Jandarmanın Yeniden Yapılandırılması", *Türkiye'de Ordu, Devlet ve Güvenlik Siyaseti*, İstanbul, 2010, p.164-165.

gendarmerie in order to ensure justice or sometimes because of their fear from the bandits in the mountains¹⁹.

It was not possible to talk about peace and state authority at the beginning of the 20th century. Reasons did not change and the conditions were worse than the second half of the 19th century. The most fearful bandit of the region, Çakırcalı²⁰ was still free, and when examined from the perspective of social banditry, Çakırcalı was a folk hero, and he protected the people from Greek bandits. Additionally, by 1911, the Ottoman Empire continually fought against the foreign countries. It is a well-known fact that hardships of the wartime broke all the balances within the country down. The war caused the communities to fight against each other behind the frontiers and it created an atmosphere of constant insecurity and terror. The problem of security in this highly cosmopolitan province worsened as a result of the interventions of the consuls of foreign countries in the banditry events, and the undisclosed support of foreign companies to some bandits. Moreover, several negative reasons such as inadequate precautions, incapable governors, and lack of central authority in the rural provinces, lawlessness of the local authorities, insufficient number of gendarmerie forces increased the banditry events in the wartime.

Additionally, during the War, it was possible to see many usurpations, robbery, and kidnapping events and there were many instances of these. For example, in Aydın Province, it was reported that a car travelling from İzmir to Çeşme was stopped around Gülbahçe-Urla by nearly thirty Greek bandits, each of the passengers were wounded four times with a knife, and a Muslim woman was usurped by taking out her rings using a knife. During the week, in the same district, it was also reported that another Muslim was murdered and the sheep feeding around were usurped, and the cars were robbed. However, Greek bandits were not caught, so the transportation between İzmir and Çeşme was interrupted for a while and the authorities were asked to catch the bandits immediately²¹. Another event accompanied by the bandits in the region occurred around Söke. In a notification sent to Aydın province on January 1, 1919 (1335), it was stated that Sıdkı Efendi who was the acting company commandor of the 6th company of the 174th regiment was murdered while going from Burun district of Söke to Akköy; and the freely wandering herd which came to the sentry was an evidence of his

¹⁹ Sabri Yetkin, *Ege'de...*, p.85.

²⁰ Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe died on September 17/18, 1911.

²¹ BOA, DH.ŞFR(Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemî), Dosya no: 95, Vesika no:4, 1335/1919.

death. So, the corps were immediately sent to chase the bandits²². The corps on duty clashed with the bandits and a sergeant who was the commander of the corps was injured, but the bandits were chased and eventually caught. In the report sent to the Ministry, it was emphasized that the bandits were the Greek²³.

During the World War I, Yörük Ali, Kılıçoğlu Hüseyin, Sancaktarın Ali, Mesutlarlı Mestan, Dokuzun Hasan Hüseyin, Kozaklı Mehmet, Danişmentli İsmail and Demirci Mehmet Efe who were wandering in Aydın Mountains are among the important bandits of the period. These bandits brought huge benefits in saving the occupied Anatolian land by joining the Turkish revolutionaries during the War of Independence, and they became legendary heroes. The braveries of Yörük Ali Efe²⁴ and Kılıçoğlu Hüseyin Efe against the Greek invasion were big enough to compensate for all their sins of the banditry years²⁵.

It is likely to find many documents, belonging to the year 1916, about the insecurity of regions. If the archive documents are analyzed it is seen that those causing the insecurity are not only the bandits living in the mountains; those whose lands were usurped, those were unemployed, the deserters also caused such insecurity. For instance, governor of Aydın reported several housebreakings, jewellery and gold robberies, usurpations, and arrestments of the local bandits to the Ministry of Interior Affairs. On first night of October, it was reported that a fruit and grape merchant called İstanbullu İzzet Efendi in Bıçakçı village of Ödemiş was abducted by Yanık Halil İbrahim and his band and he was released later on²⁶. One of the most frequent actions of the bandits was kidnapping the children of the rich and demanding a ransom. The actions were not only done with the aim of gaining money, but they also resulted from personal hostilities²⁷.

Reports submitted to the Ministry of Interior Affairs from Aydın Province which included cases causing insecurity all around the province are

²² The population of Aydın Province was nearly 240.000 during the First World War. The population of non-Muslim was not much more than the population of Turks. The rate of non-Muslims population, Greeks, was only similar to Turks in Söke, kaza of the Aydın Province. Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu(1830-1914)*, İstanbul, 2003, p.212; *İzmir ve Çevresi Nüfus İstatistiği 1917*, p.6-10.

²³ BOA, DH.ŞFR, Dosya no:95, Vesika no:1, 1335/1919.

²⁴ Sabri Sürgevil, "Milli Mücadelede ve Yörük Ali Efe", *Milli Mücadele'de Aydın Sancağı ve Yörük Ali Efe Sempozyumu*, Aydın, 2007, p.137-140.

²⁵ Asaf Gökbel, *Milli Mücadelede Aydın*, Aydın, 1964, p.51.

²⁶ BOA, DH.EUM.3.ŞB, Dosya no:16, Vesika no:6, 1332/1916.

²⁷ *Hizmet*,1891.

also kept in the archive records. If the reports of the data collected from all the districts are examined, a general crime map of the province can be created. If these reports are examined, it is seen that various types of crimes such as physical attacks, wounding, robbery, child murders for the alimony, drunkenness, gun shooting, pickpocketing, abortion, insulting the officials, rebellion, housebreaking and entering, animal theft, intimidation, forgery, abduction of women, and bribery. Additionally, news about the criminals and the crimes were posted in provincial newspapers like Ahenk and Köylü. The reasons for the crimes in the provinces, types of the crimes, ages of the criminals (ranging from 14 to 70 ages), educational levels of the criminals (literate, illiterate, higher education graduates), genders (female, male and sub-sections like widowed, single and married), origins of the criminals (Islam, Jewish, Greek, Armenian), residence of the criminals (in the city, in the village), number of their crimes (first time criminals, ex-convicts, suspects), occupations of the criminals (official, teacher, merchant, agriculturalist, fisherman, goldsmith, craftsman, captain, unemployed) are among the information provided in the reports sent to the Ministry of Interior Affairs. Even if there was no crime within the provinces, it was an obligation to send these lists or to inform about the situation with a report.

Evaluation of several reports will show us how the war determined the factors of crime in the province and how it increased the number of criminals. To exemplify, if the criminal records sent from Aydın province to the Ministry of Interior Affairs in January 1917, are examined that 530 crimes were committed, and actors of 518 of these were known but 12 remained cold cases. 865 people were arrested, but only 64 of them were jailed. Robbery, physical attack, pickpocketing, and banditry were among the most common crimes. 142 of 436 single man arrested were jailed because of robbery, and 41 were jailed because of physical attacks. In January, 1917, it is reported that 80 women did crimes and 30 (13 single, 16 married, 1 widowed) of them were found guilty of robbery. In general, 724 of 865 criminals were included in the crimes for the first time. Out of 865 criminals, 758 were Muslim, 97 were Greek, 2 were Armenian, and 8 were Jewish. When the criminals are classified according to their occupations, the leading profession was farmers and laborers. Of 308 farmers, 286 were arrested and 22 of them were wanted. 248 laborers and 204 unemployed people were right behind the farmers in terms of crime numbers. 78 farmers, 85 laborers and 77 unemployed people took part in robberies. As for the most common types of crimes, physical attacks were the second after the robberies. While there were no criminals among the fishermen and boatmen, 20 of homeworkers, 29 of civil servants, and 43 of craftsmen committed the crime of physical attacks. 327 of the crimes were committed in the city and

203 were done in the countryside. 387 of 865 criminals were townsman whereas 478 of them were villagers. Only 56 of all the villagers and 8 of the townsmen were found guilty. In terms of the criminals' age range, it is known that 441 criminals were between 20 and 30, 170 criminals were between 14 and 20, 38 criminals were between 40 and 50, and 9 of all were above 50 years old. In an observation based on literacy levels, it was stated that 690 criminals were illiterate and 175 were literate²⁸.

In a crime report sent from Aydın Province to the Ministry of Interior Affairs in May 1917, a total of 625 cases were listed. In 625 cases, 909 people were arrested, 17 were jailed. Total number of criminals caught and imprisoned in May was 926. Of all these criminals, 725 were men (448 single men, 269 married men, 8 widowed men), and 201 were women. Laborers and unemployed people with the numbers of 210 and 217 respectively. The reports of this month and other months in the year show us the striking fact that the number of criminals jailed were far less than that of the criminals caught in total. For example, in May 1917, a total of 271 farmers were arrested because of the crimes they did, but only 17 of them were imprisoned. If the reports are examined in terms of the criminals' origins, it can be observed that 137 Greeks came after 773 Muslims. Muslims mostly got involved in robbery (236 people), and physical attack (89 people). In an evaluation based on the residences, it can be confirmed that 470 criminals lived in cities, 456 criminals lived in the villages, 495 crimes were done in cities and 220 crimes were done in the villages. In terms of age ranges, the report in May shows us that there were 376 criminals between 20 and 30, and only 6 of them were imprisoned. 30-40 year-olds came right after this age range with 248 criminals. An evaluation of the crime records on the basis of educational levels does not surprise us at all. It was revealed that there were 770 illiterate criminals whereas there were only 155 literate and one higher education graduate criminals in the lists. Illiterate criminals mostly got involved in robbery (268 people) and physical attacks (75 people)²⁹.

As seen in the examples given above, by examining the monthly crime reports, it is possible to draw a crime map of Aydın province. It is stated in these reports that the number of existing bandits in the region mounted up in the wartime, and because of these bandit bands accompanied with deserters, there was no life and property security of the community. In this period, it was reported that especially robbery cases mounted up, and mostly farmer

²⁸ BOA, DH.EUM.ADL.(Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyeti Takibat-ı Adliye Kalemi), Dosya no:28, Vesika no:36, 1335/1919.

²⁹ BOA, DH.EUM. ADL., Dosya no:36, Vesika no:22,1335/1919.

and laborer groups got involved in crimes. The villagers who were always oppressed by the bandits, who could not cultivate and harvest their lands and products, could not pay their taxes and had to abandon their lands in the end. The laborers working on these lands were also unemployed and could not earn money to feed their families. Thus, the war brought economic depressions, and the economic depressions caused the social change. An authority gap due to the wartime conditions was also added to all these negative conditions, and insecurity became an inevitable problem.

Apart from the reports of simple crimes between the years 1914 and 1918, some reports of suicides, sea and land accidents, fires and political murders were also prepared and sent to the Ministry of Interior Affairs. For instance, in October 1916, it was reported that 82 shops and 4 houses burned due to various reasons, and the economic damage was 620500 kurus in total³⁰. In the wartime, the economic damage resulted from insecurity in the country revealed poor people. It was questioned whether most political murders were seen in this period or not, but in the monthly crime reports there were no incidents of political murders.

Besides the problem of banditry, during the World War I, another important problem related with internal security problem was deserters. This problem should not only be considered as a military problem that weakens the manpower of the army at the frontiers³¹. Deserters should be perceived and examined as a serious internal security problem especially in the wartime, and as a threat against the obligatory military service, and against the legitimacy of the state. Bearing in mind that the World War I was a widespread war, it is clear that deserters problem is closely connected to the system of obligatory military service that the state try to put into practice. The first question to be answered about the problem of deserters which is one of the problems threatening the internal security is: “*Why do these people go over the hill?*” Within the obligatory military service system, one of the fundamental terms of the unspoken agreement between the state and those enrolled is that the enrolled soldiers will comply with the state’s rules, and the state will meet the needs of them³².

³⁰ BOA. DH.EUM. ADL., Dosya no:27, Vesika no:31, 17 Safer 1335/1919.

³¹ Eric Jan Zürcher, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun Son Döneminde Asker Kaçaklığı”, *Çarklardaki Kum:Vicedani Red*, Ed: Özgür Heval Çınar, Çoşkun Üsterci, İstanbul, 2008; all armies were face to the problem of desertions. It was known that there were nearly 130-150.000 deserters in the German army. These deserters escaped from Germany to Holland, Denmark. During the First World War, 13.5 million soldiers were enrolled to army, but 1% of them deserted from the German army.

³² M. Şefik Aker, “İstiklal Harbi’nde 57. Tümen ve Aydın Milli Cidali”, III, *Askeri Mecmuanın Tarih Kısmı*, 1 September, 1937, Number:47, p.272-273; Ergün Aybars, *İstiklal Mahkemeleri*, 1997, İstanbul.

A total of 2.873.000 soldiers were enrolled in the Ottoman army during the World War I³³. The number of deserters increased particularly by the second half of the war. Ahmet Emin Yalman expressed that the number of deserters in the Ottoman Army was 300.000 and this number rose up to 500.000 by the year 1918. Liman von Sanders, who was one of the high-ranked commanders in the war, also mentioned similar numbers³⁴. The commander of German corps in the Ottoman Empire and the general of cavalry, Sanders says: “*There are more than 300.000 deserters in the Ottoman Army now. Those people do not support the enemies but they threaten the national security by escaping to outlands of the country and plundering there. The corps should be sent everywhere to catch the escapees.*”³⁵. Edward J. Ericson who used General Staff records also confirmed the numbers mentioned by Yalman and stated that these numbers increased up to 500.000 during the war. It was seen that 17 per cent of enrolled were deserters in the Ottoman army. In this period, around 476.000 soldiers died because of illnesses, 145.000 soldiers were captured, 305.000 soldiers died or were lost in the war, and 303.000 were wounded and lost their abilities to fight. If these numbers are taken into consideration, 500.000 deserters must be considered as an important reason for losing power to fight and for experiencing internal security problems. In the evaluations about Aydın province, from August 2, 1914 -the beginning of the war- until 1916, 20.578 non-muslim deserters and 28.950 Muslim deserters were mentioned³⁶.

Especially in the last years of the World War I, the Ottoman army had to fight in six frontiers, and the war proceeded against the Central Forces. So, the economic situation of the state worsened and basic needs of the army could not be provided. Accommodation, food, and dressing were among the basic needs that were not provided and this led to an increase in the number of deserters in time³⁷. The soldiers were hungry and their feet were naked, and their minds were preoccupied with their families’ need and security. They could not fight under these circumstances. And due to the fall of cultural and religious belief that dying at war was something sacred

³³ Edward Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War*, 2001; In this book 2.900.000 soldiers were enrolled the army during the mobilization.

³⁴ Mehmet Beşikçi, “Birinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Devlet İktidarı ve İç Güvenlik...”, p.153.

³⁵ Eric Jan Zücher, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun Son ...”, p.21; Accordig to Zücher deserters not only lived front-back but also joined the other armies such as Araps and British.

³⁶ Mehmet Beşikçi, “Birinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Devlet İktidarı ve İç Güvenlik...”, p.154; Cengiz Mutlu, *Birinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Amele Taburları*, İstanbul, 2007.

³⁷ Mehmet Hacısalihoğlu, “İçerme ve Dışlama: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Askere Alma”, *Türkiye’de Ordu, Devlet ve Güvenlik Siyaseti*, Der: Evren Balta Parker- İsmet Akça, İstanbul, 2010, p.79-80.

increased the number of deserters day by day³⁸. Irregular payment of the soldiers' salaries, probability of losing the war, psychological deformity and exhaustion among the soldiers were other reasons for the increasing number of deserters. Nevertheless, during the World War I, the most important reasons for the deserters were the loss of belief in the rightfulness of the war, suspicion about the honesty of the governors, uncertain duration of military service, and the belief that this duration was being changed according to the conditions of the day, and exhaustion resulting from that³⁹. Deserters asked some questions themselves because the answers of these question were related with their lives. How would they maintain their lives after war? Would they go back to their villages? Would they be able to find their families and lands as they left them? When they went back to their villages, majority of the soldiers could not find their families and lands, and those who found could not return to their villages because of their constant fear of getting caught by the gendarmes. For this reason, many of the soldiers joined bandits or created their own bands. Armed bands of deserters rebelled both against the state and against the private property.

It is known that deserters who were one of the key factors destructing security and social order in Aydın Province co-operated with the bandits and gave harm to people's lives, properties, and chastity, and they even attacked the soldier corteges. For instance, on February, 23 in 1916, a bands of deserters raided the houses, usurped money and goods in Aydın and Çine. The band was chased immediately and one of the bandits was caught death and two others alive; and the rest were chased as well⁴⁰. In October, the events caused by the deserters increased and the prison breakers also joined them. For example, the bandits called Ali and Mustafa who came to Hacı Araplar district of Çine usurped the properties of two people and also raided some treadmills in the same township. Three of the five bandits threatening the community were caught dead and the others were chased⁴¹. In the last month of 1916, the number of deserters increased dramatically. Two of them, Mustafa and Mahmud crossed Şerif's path⁴² and usurped his and the passengers' money, and another deserter Mustafa killed two people and

³⁸ Mehmet Hacısalıhoğlu, "İçerme ve Dışlama: Osmanlı...", p.89; Mehmet Beşikçi, "Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Devlet İktidarı ve İç Güvenlik: Asker Kaçakları Sorunu ve Jandarmanın Yeniden Yapılandırılması", *Türkiye'de Ordu, Devlet ve Güvenlik Siyaseti*, Ed: Evren Balta Pakker- İsmet Akça, İstanbul, 2010, p.153.

³⁹ M. Şefik Aker, "İstiklal Harbinde 57. Tümen ve Aydın Milli Cidali", I, *Askeri Mecmuanın Tarih Kısmı*, March 1, 1937, Number:45, p.85.

⁴⁰ BOA, DH.EUM.3.ŞB, Dosya no:15, Vesika no:92, 1332/1916.

⁴¹ BOA, DH.EUM.3.ŞB, Dosya no:16, Vesika no:6, 1332/1916.

⁴² BOA, DH.EUM.3.ŞB, Dosya no:17, Vesika no:27, 1335/1919.

usurped their money. Mobile corps were sent to this region where there was no road security to chase the bandits, for all that Mustafa and Mahmud were arrested in the end. Moreover, Hasan who was a member of Kel Mehmed band around Kuşadası was also arrested. In a report from Aydın province to the Ministry of Interior Affairs, especially usurptions, kidnappings in Bergama, Aydın, Soma and Kuşadası were mentioned and deserters were impeached as doers of crimes, and the authorities were asked to take necessary precautions⁴³. On October, 31 in 1918, in another report sent to the lieutenant governor of Aydın, Nureddin Pasha related with the bands of deserters and it was asked to take necessary precautions to make the bandits who were acting with political aims. Additionally, it was stated that the soldiers would be discharged after the armistice to be signed after the war, and a general amnesty was decided for the deserters⁴⁴.

The Ottoman Empire took some precautions against the worsening banditry and internal security problems which arose from faulty military policies, illiteracy, lack of team spirit due to constant reformation of the corps, lack of trust in the officers, lack of food, beverage and medicine. The authorities who tried to maintain security by preventing banditry actions of the soldiers wanted to prevent people from making for the mountains by releasing proclamations, adjurations, and recommendations, and they stated that those who could not be caught will be punished for their crimes in the afterlife⁴⁵.

The failure in dealing with the problems created by the deserters and the bandits who were two biggest reasons of insecurity in Aydın province was rooted in the insufficiency of the gendermeria organization, lack of mobile gendermeria corps, and insufficient knowledge of the corps and the commanders about the region. The reason why the gendermeria could not cope with the bandit bands and deserters was that it was an organization constructed to fight at wars. For example, in the World War I, gendermeria organization was supported with substantial manpower. On August 2, 1914, with the beginning of the war, gendermeria corps were sent to the frontiers either mobilized or stable, and soon two third of the stable corps were transferred as mobilized corps to the same frontiers⁴⁶. This situation led to security problems behind the frontiers. The superficial changes were made with the idea that the war will not last long. However, the war that was

⁴³ BOA, DH.EUM.3.ŞB, Dosya no:17, Vesika no:21, 1332/1916.

⁴⁴ BOA, DH. ŞFR, Dosya no:92, Vesika no:32,1334/1918.

⁴⁵ Sabri Yetkin, *Ege'de...*, p.72-73.

⁴⁶ Mehmet Beşikçi, "Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Devlet İktidarı ve İç Güvenlik...", p.160; Halim Alyot, *Türkiye'de Zabıta: Tarihi Gelişim ve Bugünkü Durum*, Ankara, 1947.

thought to last shorter lasted for four years and the distance between the frontiers and the hinterland got shorter and this caused security weakness in the country. Another reason for the failure of gendermeria in the region and for the insecurity was that the gendermeria did not have better guns and arming than the bandits. It is known that the bandits captured all their guns by smuggling, and the deserters took their guns with them while leaving the army⁴⁷. It was an obligation for the gendermeria to be specially trained to chase and catch the bandits and deserters, and to know the geography very well in a region like Aydın province where the mountains were the primary settlement for the bandits. Additionally, gendermeria had to be reorganized and improve its gunpower in order to cope with the deserters and the bandits. The first step taken in this issue was a regulation to organize the gendermeria which was released on June 19, 1916. In a notification, it was commanded that a team of chaser corps composed of strong soldiers and skilled shooters would be formed in every district and region. The number of chasing corps could be changed depending on the number of deserters and bandits. Along with these precautions, insufficiency of manpower in Gendermeria organization was intended to be solved. In this perspective, it was thought that enrolling the volunteers into gendermeria would solve this problem. Along with this plan, the questions such as “*Who are going to be these volunteers?*” and “*Are there any preconditions to be enrolled in gendermeria divisions?*” arose in minds. It is observed that those volunteers in Gendermerias were the fugitives coming from Caucasians and the Balkans. Employing the fugitives in such an issue complies with the policy of the government to turkify Anatolia and particularly the army. It was also necessary to solve the communication problem between the gendermeria forces, and to regulate the chain of command. Thus, capability of the gendermeria to move and interfere in the events would be improved. Training, discipline, and promotion issues of the soldiers would be in charge of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, and the issues related to security were handled by the Ministry of Interior Affairs⁴⁸.

Another precaution was taken to ensure order and security in the region was the general amnesty. According to some historians, this manner showed helplessness of the state. Although the general amnesties served to maintain temporary security in this district, in the second half of the 19th century, because of the failures at the frontiers and because of breaching the promises

⁴⁷ Olcay Pullukçuoğlu Yapucu, *Modernleşme Sürecinde Bir Sancak*, p.200-201.

⁴⁸ Mehmet Beşikçi, “Birinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Devlet İktidarı ve İç Güvenlik...”, p.166; Fuat Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki’nin Etnisite Mühendisliği(1913-1918)*, İstanbul, 2008.

to stop banditry, the region regressed to its former situation in a short time⁴⁹. During the World War I, three general amnesties were proclaimed by the state to pacify and embrace and rehabilitate for the deserters, but expected results of general amnesties were not successful. It was clear that amnesties did not reduce the number of banditry actions, because neither the community, nor the bandits trusted in the government about the general amnesty. The bandits, who were apologized from the state, might make for the hills again and begin to complaints from the state. For instance, Takalı Mehmet - a bandit around Kula district was one of them. The bandit Ahmed was killed by the owner of the house, and other powerful bandits of Aydın region Himmet and Perakendeoğlu Mehmed were also killed by the commander Mehmet Tevfik⁵⁰. It was evident that the Ottoman Empire could not attain the expected result by granting a general amnesty to the deserters in order to ensure security in the region.

Eventually, the state and army was two important inseparable factors for the security of community. During the war years, the state was the guarantee of the security of people's life and property and faced with many difficulties in order to ensure justice and safety. The Ottoman military units had to fight not only against the enemy at the frontiers, but also against the internal and external enemies by struggling with the bandits rebelling against the state authority and trying to create their own authority. A point bear in mind that banditry, which disturbed the internal security of the country, resulted from the political and economic deteriorations of the Ottoman Empire. In wartime, banditry actions increased in the Western Anatolia and especially in Aydın province. One should not only talk about the Muslim-Turk bandits in this period; the geographical positioning of the region and newly founded Greek State's dreams about Anatolia led the Greek bandits also to participate in banditry actions. It is not possible to talk about a safe and secure environment in Aydın province if the actions of military fugitives along with the banditry existence in the region are taken into consideration. The Ottoman Empire tried to take necessary precautions to stop banditry movements in Aydın province. However, the Empire was in a war situation, and lack of enough soldiers made it harder to chase the bandits. The fact that the soldiers did not know the region well, and were not paid salary regularly, and were not granted with a life insurance if wounded were among the serious problems to handle while chasing the bandits. The idea of amnesties -even temporarily- disappointed the state. Because the state could no employ bandits leaved from mountains and this caused them to make for the

⁴⁹ Sabri Yetkin, *Ege'de...*, p.100-101.

⁵⁰ BOA, DH. EUM. AYŞ., Dosya no:7, Vesika no:71, 1335/1919.

mountains again. This situation also discouraged the gendermeria forces who chased and caught the bandits. Moreover, the bandits who ceased fire were killed by the soldiers although they were given a promise by the state. These facts destroyed the bandits' faith against the state. Because the bandits thought that they were stabbed in the back by the state. In respect to all these conditions, it can be concluded that it was impossible for the Empire to win the war in the frontiers without ensuring the internal security.

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