

CELEBRATING AND REMEMBERING THE FESTIVAL OF SEPTEMBER 9:  
RITUAL, HISTORY, AND MEMORY

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CELEBRATING AND REMEMBERING THE FESTIVAL OF SEPTEMBER 9:  
RITUAL, HISTORY, AND MEMORY

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Title: Celebrating and Remembering the Festival of September 9: Ritual, History,  
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This study scrutinizes the festivals of September 9 for the celebration of Izmir's Independence Day, both as an official ceremony organized by the nation state and as a commemorative event attended and remembered by the people. A detailed description and analysis of the festival is given with its program, parades, participants, activities, narratives, and symbolic objects. The ritual is analyzed as a totality that has been manipulated by both political elite and ordinary people and that has been affected by the political, historical, local, and festive context. Upon a thorough search of the local newspapers and periodicals of the period, it is argued that September 9 celebrations in the early Republican Turkey were dominated by a national hegemonic narrative which rested on the principles of ethnic homogeneity, national unity and solidarity, monophonic society, and state authority. In this context, the commemoration of September 9 presented the nation state an arena on which the elite had the means of festive symbolism to construct a synchronized collective memory/identity for the citizens. Nevertheless, the analysis of memories of Izmirians through oral history reveals that despite the efforts of the "omnipresent" state, the festival of September 9 has also been an event within which collective and personal memories, different from the hegemonic collective memory, can grow up. The construction of uniform national collective memory could not hinder the obstinate survival of multiple unofficial memories around the commemoration of September 9.

Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü'nde Yüksek Lisans derecesi için Ummahan Ceren Ünlü tarafından Eylül 2007'de teslim edilen tezin kısa özeti

### Başlık: 9 Eylül'ü Kutlamak ve Hatırlamak: Tören, Tarih ve Bellek

Bu çalışma İzmir'in Kurtuluş Günü olan 9 Eylül'ü hem ulus devletin düzenlediği resmi bir tören hem de insanların katılıp belleklerine yerleştirdikleri bir anma günü olarak ele almaktadır. Programı, zafer alayları, katılımcıları, etkinlikleri, söylemleri ve sembolik nesnelere ile birlikte, bayramın ayrıntılı bir çözümlemesi ve betimlemesi verilmektedir. Tezde tören, hem siyasi seçkinlerce hem de sıradan insanlarca yönlendirilen ve siyasi, tarihsel, yerel ve bayramsal bağlamda şekillenen bir bütün olarak incelenmektedir. Çalışmada, dönemin yerel dergi ve gazetelerinin derinlemesine incelemesine dayanarak, erken Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde 9 Eylül kutlamalarına ulusal bir söylemin egemen olduğu ve bu söylemin ana ilkelerinin de etnik homojenlik, ulusal birlik ve beraberlik, tek-sesli toplum ve devlet otoritesi olduğu iddia edilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, 9 Eylül bayramı ulus devlete bayramın sembolik araçlarının kullanılabilmesi için bir meydan sunmaktadır ki siyasi seçkinler, vatandaşlar için senkronize bir toplu bellek/kimlik inşa edebilsinler. Bununla beraber, İzmir'de yaşayan insanlarla yapılan sözlü tarih mülakatları göstermiştir ki "her alanda var olan" devletin çabalarına rağmen 9 Eylül bayramı çerçevesinde, egemen olandan farklı toplu ve kişisel bellekler yeşerebilmiştir. Tekdüze, milli toplumsal belleğin inşası, resmi olmayan, çoğul belleklerin inatla hayatta kalmalarını engelleyememiştir.

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Bu tezin hakkı yukarıdaki herkese, yanlışları ise sadece bana aittir.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In the year in which these words were written, on 13 May 2007, a mass demonstration took place in Izmir as a part of the country-general “Republican Demonstrations” against the current political authority. It was estimated that more than one million and a half people participated in the protest in Izmir against the government.<sup>1</sup> Although the demonstrations were mostly about “preserving secularism,” one of the government policies that the protesters were against was the cabinet’s “selling the country to foreigners.” Public speakers delivered speeches reminding the crowds that Izmir was the city “where the foreigners were thrown into the sea.” National slogans were shouted against those foreigners and for the country’s national independence and indivisibility.

The crowd was full of people carrying placards against government policies. In many placards, a similar expression drew attention: “*Gavur* Izmir.”<sup>2</sup> The usage of the expression left the impression that the carriers of the placards were proud of being “infidel” Izmirians. In one, it was written: “We are infidel Izmirians, *efes*<sup>3</sup> of the Aegean, castle of secularism.”<sup>4</sup> Simultaneously, those in the crowd who had raised their heads saw a placard on the balcony of an apartment along the Kordon: “Izmir, the city where the prayer from the mosque, bells of the church, and worship prayers from the synagogue are listened with respect.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Hürriyet*, 14 May 2007.

<sup>2</sup> *Gavur* means infidel.

<sup>3</sup> *Efe*, is a historical name given to people, who had lived in Western Anatolia, especially in Aydın and Muğla, and organized armed rebellions against the established order for various reasons.

<sup>4</sup> “*Biz gavur İzmirliyiz, Ege’nin efesi, laikliğin kalesiyiz,*” *Hürriyet*, 14 May 2007.

<sup>5</sup> “*Ezan seslerinin, kilise çanlarının, sinagog ayınlarının saygıyla dinlendiği şehir,*” from the photograph by Deniz Kovancı.



This thesis aims at analyzing how Izmirians, who, on the one hand, has entrenched the image of “throwing of the enemies into the sea” in their collective memory and, on the other hand, feel proud to be a “*gavur*” Izmirian, celebrate and remember the festival of September 9, which commemorates “throwing the enemies into the sea” and symbolizes the destruction of “*gavur* Izmir.” The goal is to analyze the national collective memory developed around September 9 and other collective memories diverged from the national one, in order to examine the hegemony of the national narrative and the survival of subaltern ones. Tracing the footprints of September 9 in people’s memories and the reasons for this existence forms the background of this thesis.

The “Introduction” of the thesis tries to explore the reasons for the guaranteed locus of September 9 in people’s memories in Turkey more and larger than memories of any other local independence days.

The second chapter seeks a theoretical framework for the specific subject of collective memory that grows up around national festivals. Three contributors to the creation of collective memory are stressed in this theoretical chapter. First, the nation state’s efforts to construct a national collective memory/identity for the citizens through symbolism in the rituals are studied. Second, literature on memory is analyzed in order to shed light on the multiplicity of collective memories, detaching from and surmounting the totalizing collective identity constructed by the nation state. And as a third element, the simultaneously fixed and flexible character of the commemorations reinforcing the remembering process is elaborated.

In the third chapter, the collective memory project of early Republican Turkey through the festivals of September 9 is discussed, according to the ideas in the previous chapter and based on a research of newspapers and periodicals. The

early nation state tried to create “appropriate” citizens, through the symbolism in the celebrations. The Republican Turkey of the 1920s-1940s dominated the national celebrations, which provided the nation state with the tool to create a hegemonic narrative and an arena to impose the national collective memory, around which the citizens were tried to be united.

The fourth chapter questions the existence of different individual or collective memories from the totalizing national memory in the context of Izmir. The oral history approach is employed in order to ascertain whether September 9 has been remembered differently by the people of different ethnic, religious, and social origins in Izmir.

And the “Conclusion” hopes to present a brief and meaningful summary of all the chapters above.

To sum up, this thesis, “Celebrating and Remembering the Festival of September 9: Ritual, History, and Memory,” analyzes the creation of the collective memory through and around the commemoration of Izmir’s Independence Day with emphasis on the national elite project of forming national citizens and the settlement of the event in people’s memories. Involving the national elite project in the study brings the danger of overemphasizing the agency of the elite. Nevertheless, this study does not have the intention to present the elite as a peerless manipulative force, imposing policies on a blank slate. September 9 is analyzed in this thesis as taking place on the historically evolved territory of Izmir that has been inhabited by Izmirian people, who have had the power of agency.

September 9, as the date of Izmir’s independence and as a national festival, has occupied a place larger than any other local independence day in the memories of the

people of the Turkish Republic. There are several reasons for September 9's exceptional place in Turkey's collective memory. First, September 9 was the official date when the national war ended. The founders of the Turkish Republic perceived it as an important date indispensable for the foundation of Turkey and picked the date as a national memorial day to be repeatedly celebrated by the nation.

Second, the state efforts to construct national memory might have been overemphasized in Izmir, because the changes in the demography after the national war and the trauma experienced by Izmirians due to the loss of population must have been erased from the collective memory as reminders of the immediate past. The early nation state gave much importance to the transformation of the former cosmopolitan port city of the Ottoman Empire into a national city. Therefore, in the early Republican Turkey, September 9 was commemorated both as a day of beginning and an end.

#### September 9 as a "Chosen Glory"

Every new political regime, nation state or not, rests upon its predecessor. Nevertheless, paradoxically, contradiction with the former one usually forms the basis of the new regime. The old regime is criticized, disparaged, or ignored in order to legitimize the existence of the contemporary one. While grappling with the former one, the current system needs to emphasize its newness. Several instruments are used to mark the new regime's novelty, originality, and legitimacy. The most effective one among these instruments is history writing. History written under the new regime seals the doors to the immediate past, hiding the historical footprints going back to the old regime. Through regime-sponsored history writing, any remnants of the old

regime within the new one are denied. Ignoring historical continuity is a political technique of imposing the originality and legitimacy of the fresh political arrangement.

It might be concluded that foundation of a new state is a binary project. On the one hand, political regime change means destruction. Most new regimes aim at deliberate oblivion, making the recent past distant and forgettable. Effort is made to transform not only the institutions of high politics but also the memories of the people. The wall between the past and the present should be built clearly in order to stress novelty and realize the sociopolitical transformation. This wall is created through the invention of the historical discourse of rupture.

The state sustains its power through naming moments of rupture, which identify “the immediate past as evil, threatening and destructive to the ‘people;’ and the new state as the heroic national subject that assumes the agency to step in save the ‘people’ from their malefactors.”<sup>6</sup> The new nation state not only emphasizes the differences between the past and present, but also announces the past as a monster to the citizens of the new nation. The immediate past is banished both materially and psychologically. The exile of the past makes the present valid, legitimate, and authoritative. The present rules over the past, the new national leaders over the new nation.

On the other hand, foundation of a new state means construction; the new regime constructs its institutions, ideology, and history, sweeping those of the old. To combine the two pillars, a new state project employs “one of the vital mechanisms through which the effect of newness is produced, [i.e.,] the creation of a

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<sup>6</sup> Alev Çınar, “National History as a Contested Site: The Conquest of Istanbul and Islamist Negotiations of the Nation,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 2 (2001), p.369.

temporal rupture, a break from the immediate past which serves to mark the onset of the nation state in a new beginning or a ‘founding moment.’”<sup>7</sup> “Founding moment” is a particular date, the first myth of the new state, that is believed to have a critical position in the emergence of the nation disjointedly from the older regime, and might be regarded as the first step of a new beginning.

Defining a beginning point makes the new nation gain its own perception of time, have a history. Unsurprisingly, this is a hegemonic type of history assimilating everything, national identities, spatial units, and personal memories, into itself. Once determined, all events within the nation state are temporally located according to the “founding moment.” This special moment becomes the datum line of the nation that all other national happenings are determined in relation to it. “From then on, time *becomes* national history,”<sup>8</sup> home becomes national territory, and “we” becomes the nation. And the nation state gains the power to create the “linear, singular and national time” as the agent that had set the “founding moment.”<sup>9</sup> Those who have the ability to give names hold the power.

Turkey, as a new nation state, was also built upon the denial of its immediate past, namely, the Ottoman Empire. Republican Turkey was regarded as a new country, culturally and historically independent of the Ottoman rule and society. The rulers of the new republic attempted to efface society’s memories about Islam and the Ottoman Empire and to replace them with secular-modern symbols, ideas, and beliefs. The aim was to transform the entire society in all aspects from appearance to

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<sup>7</sup> Çınar, p.368.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

mentality.<sup>10</sup> There was an active effort to deny and defame the past and glorify and impose the present. To this end, the new Republican Turkey named its own “founding moments.”

For a new nation state, national festivals provide effective tools to construct the myth of the “founding moment” and settle it in people’s minds. As an example, James von Geldern argues for the early Bolshevik revolutions that:

The great festivals and spectacles of 1920 helped create a foundation myth of the Revolution. Festivals can attack the [old] center – the sacra of religion or the monuments of the [former] state – but they can also raise new monuments and create new identities. They arrange time and space around moments of origin and embody its principles in the flesh and blood of myth.<sup>11</sup>

Correspondingly, the Republic of Turkey turned its “founding moments” into national holidays that would be celebrated and remembered en masse. The official date of foundation for Turkey, the declaration of the republic on 29 October 1923, became the Republic Day. In his famous *Speech*, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk initiated the history of Turkey on 19 May 1919, the beginning of the national war; it was turned into *Atatürk’s Commemoration, Youth and Sports Day*. In addition to October 29 and May 19, every year, all of Turkey goes on official holidays in 23 April (the foundation of the national parliament in 1920) and 30 August (the end of the Great Offensive War in 1922); successively, *National Sovereignty and Children’s Day* and *Victory Day*.

Despite its local meaning as a city’s independence day, September 9, being the end of the national war, was also one of the “founding moments” of Republican Turkey. Newspaper accounts and speeches made at the festivals of September 9

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<sup>10</sup> Joseph S. Szyliowicz, “Political Participation and Modernization in Turkey,” *The Western Political Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (June 1966), p.271.

<sup>11</sup> James Von Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917—1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p.177.

frequently emphasized the “fact” that September 9 was a turning point in the history of the republic; the new Turkey would not have emerged without the defeat of the enemies on September 9, 1922. For example, an anonymous article in the local newspaper *Anadolu* stressed the designation of September 9 as the “founding moment” of the Turkish Republic.<sup>12</sup> It was claimed in the article that on September 9 not only Izmir had been saved from the oppression of the West and captivity, but also the Turkish nation had proved its “glorious” existence to the entire world. “When Turkish troops were entering Izmir twelve years ago, the Grand Turkish nation was coming into existence in history with a glorious independence.” The article continues to declare September 9 not only as a festival of Izmir and the people of Izmir, but also as the Independence Day of all of Turkey.

Similarly, in his speech on 9 September 1931, Asım İsmet Bey, a Republican People’s Party member and inspector of schools, urged the audience to grant September 9 an important place in overall Turkish history, emphasizing that Republican Turkey would not have come to be without the victory of September 9.<sup>13</sup> It is evident that the event was given a critical temporal location in the history of Izmir and Turkey. September 9 became the “founding moment” of Izmir, a reference point to which any events in national Izmir was placed in time and ranked in terms of importance. The nation state turned September 9 into a date of memory, which had to be remembered by Turkish citizens collectively.

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<sup>12</sup> “Fakat şu muhakkak ki, 9 Eylülde yalnız İzmir kurtulmadı. Bu büyük günde, bütün bir Türk milleti varolduğunu tekmil dünyaya ispat etti, garbın zulmünden esaretinden kurtuldu. Türk atlılar oniki yıl evvel İzmir’e girerlerken, Büyük Türk milleti de şerefli bir istiklal ile tarihin huzuruna çıkıyordu. İşte bunun içindir ki, bugün, 9 Eylül, yalnız İzmir’in ve İzmir’lilerin değil, fakat bütün bir Türk milletinin kurtuluş bayramıdır,” *Anadolu*, 9 September 1934, p.2.

<sup>13</sup> *Yeni Asır*, 11 September 1931, p.4.

The moments of foundation are remembered and celebrated by the nation as moments of pride, or as “chosen glories,” as Vamik Volkan and Norman Itzkowitz call them:

“Chosen glory” refers to an event that induces in the members of a group intense feelings of having been successful or of having triumphed deservedly over the members of another group. Chosen glories serve to bolster a group’s present self-esteem and... are heavily mythologized. These events... become part of the group’s self-identity and are not easily relinquished.<sup>14</sup>

According to Volkan and Itzkowitz, a “chosen glory” is a past event in the history of a group that has been chosen to hold the members of a group together by stirring up shared emotions.<sup>15</sup> Some moments of group victory are chosen to be remembered and celebrated in order to create unity and solidarity within the group. Ethnic identities could not be sustained without definite moments of collective joy, which to be turned into collective memories.

September 9 was chosen by the early Republican elite as one of the national glories to be celebrated. The distancing of the recent past went parallel to the mythologizing and glorification of the “founding moments.” Since the late 1920s, September 9 has been mythologized and extolled. Even in the 1930s, although September 9 had occurred relatively a few years earlier, it was articulated in the common narrative as a national myth and celebrated as a legend by the very witnesses, as if it happened in an ancient past. A historical distance bias about September 9 was felt in the discourse of the press. The newspaper accounts and journal articles were full of heroic, even mythical, stories about September 9.

Selecting and commemorating collective emotional moments from national history is an indispensable aspect of the nationalist project that tries to arouse

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<sup>14</sup> Vamik D. Volkan and Norman Itzkowitz, *Turks and Greeks: Neighbours in Conflict* (Cambridgeshire: The Eothen Press, 1994), p.10.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*



national feelings in its citizens and to unite them around nationalism. “Founding moments” become national symbols; and as George L. Mosse suggests, “symbols, the objectification of popular myths, give people their identity.”<sup>16</sup> Jews gather around the trauma of the Holocaust. Or the citizens of Soviet Russia celebrated the glory of the Revolution as a part of their collective identity. Created myths not only serve as the path towards creating a national consciousness, but also become the cement that holds the nation united around collective identity, feelings, and memory. In the task of creating national identity and unity, national celebrations present the nation states “a cultural place to stage and rehearse beliefs, claims, and myths.”<sup>17</sup>

In the same way, the early Republican elite chose September 9 as one of the national celebrations designed to create a national identity and unity in Izmir. September 9 became the arena on which symbols of the nation were exhibited by the state and adopted by the participants. The current imprints and future projections of new Turkey were objectified in the date of September 9 and in its commemoration. Thus, Independence Day of Izmir has been one of the “chosen glories” of the Republican Turkey, on which Turkish citizens’ identities were grounded and around which Izmirian citizens’ memories were formed.

Due to the fact that it was one of the “chosen glories” of Turkey and, thus, was accreted to the Turkish national identity, September 9 occupies a place in Turkish people’s memories larger than any other local independence days do. September 9 has become a part of the identities of the people of the Turkish Republic.

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<sup>16</sup> George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), p.7.

<sup>17</sup> Simonetta Falasca Zamponi, “Old Storytellers and Master Narratives: Modernity, Memory, and History in Fascist Italy,” in Jeffrey K. Olick, ed., *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p.47.

However, the situation of September 9 is far more complicated. The national history did select it as a victory to be remembered and celebrated, but being a “chosen glory” is only one of the reasons for collectively remembering September 9. Even though it has been a glory celebrated by Turkish citizens with joy, for some people of Izmir September 9 might well have been experienced as a trauma. However, in the early Republican Turkey, everything belonging to the recent past was disclaimed, including the traumas.

### September 9 as a Forgotten Trauma

Towards the seventeenth century, Izmir had been experiencing a transformation “from a regional port into an international entrepôt.”<sup>18</sup> The transformation and the corollary commercial network were at least in the beginning motivated and controlled by the Western forces, which found in Izmir a fertile ground to canalize their endless search for markets.<sup>19</sup>

The discovery of a market coexisted with the search for intermediaries that would conduct the commercial relations. By the seventeenth century, European consulates were opened in Izmir and “from 1580 to 1650, important waves of migration brought assorted groups of people to the city.”<sup>20</sup> While Izmir was eighty percent Turkish in 1580, with “a small Greek community lived in the town,”<sup>21</sup> the

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<sup>18</sup> Daniel Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World, 1550-1650* (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 1990), p.142.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Sibel Zandi-Sayek, *Public Space and Urban Citizens: Ottoman Izmir in the Remaking, 1840-1890*. (Ph.D. Dissertation, California: University of California, 2001), p.6.

<sup>21</sup> Goffman, p.142.

following two centuries witnessed the coming of Jews, Armenians, more Greeks, and European merchants to the city.

The result was a sharp increase in the city's population. Evliya Çelebi, a famous traveler, estimated Izmir's population in 1671 as 51,500.<sup>22</sup> According to Tavernier, another traveler, the population in 1631 was 90,000 with 60,000 Muslims, 15,000 Greeks, 8,000 Armenians, and 7,000 Jews.<sup>23</sup> In addition, "around 1700 the French traveler Tournfort visited Izmir... [and noted that] 'they reckon fifteen thousand Turks in this City, ten thousand Greeks, eighteen hundred Jews, two hundred Armenians, and as many Franks.'"<sup>24</sup> Different travel books present different demographic estimations about Izmir. Nevertheless, a sharp increase in the estimations should not be neglected. As soon as it was the 1800s, a clear increase in the assessment of Greek and Jewish populations in Izmir can be observed. Texier wrote in 1836 that Izmir's population was composed of 150,000 people.<sup>25</sup> A comparison with Tavernier's accounts depicts that the number of Greeks was more than doubled since 1631 (from 15,000 to 40,000), while Jewish population increased from 7,000 to 15,000. There was an increase of 15,000 in Muslim population and that of 2,000 in Armenian one.

According to Daniel Goffman, a nearly tenfold increase happened in the population from 1580 to 1640, "producing a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-linguistic metropole."<sup>26</sup> Seventeenth century Izmir was "a port city with a

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<sup>22</sup> Cem Behar, ed. *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun ve Türkiye'nin Nüfusu, 1500-1927* (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 1996), p.10.

<sup>23</sup> Behar, p.10.

<sup>24</sup> Jacob Barnai, "The Development of Community Organizational Structures: The Case of Izmir," in Avigdor Levy, ed. *Jews, Turks, Ottomans: A Shared History, Fifteenth through Twentieth Century* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002), p.35.

<sup>25</sup> Behar, p.10.

<sup>26</sup> Goffman, p.143.

heterogeneous population, economically flourishing and bustling with trade;”<sup>27</sup> nevertheless, it is arguable that the happenings in Izmir after the seventeenth century was just an economic story. By the nineteenth century, Izmir, which had been known as the “infidel” city since the Genoese ruled the lower town in the fourteenth century, had long been remembered with its heterogeneous character, as a city in which six newspapers of five different languages were published.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, as an important notification, the indicators of increasing population and heterogeneity should not lead one to regard the pre-1700 Ottoman Izmir as a purely homogenous city. Izmir had many times been portrayed as “a buoyant city”<sup>29</sup> with no permanent owner, a city of continuous earthquakes and fires never letting any authority to build its hegemony everlastingly, a city accommodated many peoples.

A travel memory, written by Alexander William Kinglake, portrays Izmir and gives a very vital illustration of the city of the 1840s:

Smyrna, or Giaour Izmir, ‘Infidel Smyrna,’ as the Muslumans call it, is the main point of commercial contact betwixt Europe and Asia; you are there surrounded by the people and the confused customs of many and various nations; you see the fussy European adopting the East, and calming his restlessness with the long Turkish ‘pipe of tranquility;’ you see Jews offering services, and receiving blows: on one side you have a fellow whose dress and beard would give you a good idea of the true oriental, if it were not for the *gobemouche*<sup>30</sup> expression of countenance with which he is swallowing an article in a French newspaper; and there, just by, is a genuine Osmanlee, smoking away with all the majesty of a Sultan; but before you have time to admire sufficiently his tranquil dignity, and his soft Asiatic repose, the poor old fellow is ruthlessly ‘run down’ by an English midshipman, who has set

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<sup>27</sup> Barnai, p.36.

<sup>28</sup> Reşat Kasaba, “İzmir,” in Çağlar Keyder, Y. Eyüp Özveren, and Donald Quataert, eds. *Doğu Akdeniz’de Liman Kentleri (1800-1914)* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1993), p.14.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Raymond cited in Olaf Yaranga, *XIX. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Fransız Gezinlerin Anlatımlarında İzmir* (İzmir: İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Yayını, 2000), p.11.

<sup>30</sup> Literally, a fly swallower; hence, once who keeps his mouth open; a boor; a silly and credulous person.

sail on a Smyrna hack. Such are the incongruities of the ‘infidel city’ at ordinary times...<sup>31</sup>

This “infidel city” was really incongruent in an increasingly nationalizing world. Towards the end of the Ottoman Empire, the awakening of national consciousness led to inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions in Izmir.<sup>32</sup> In addition, the Ottoman bureaucracy under the rule of the Young Turks started to make efforts to create a national economy that would exclude the local, mostly non-Muslim, bourgeoisie of Izmir socially, even physically.<sup>33</sup> Later, the early Republican elite took over the mission.

In September 1922, a few days after the entry of the Turkish army into the city in September 9, a big fire destroyed almost half of Izmir. “From 20 to 25,000 buildings were lost and 2.6-square-kilometer area in the lower town was burned down.”<sup>34</sup> The burned places belonged to the non-Muslim residents of the city. Many non-Muslim people of Izmir, except the Jews,<sup>35</sup> left the city due to the burning of their houses. The War and the Fire led almost 1,100,000 Greeks leave Izmir.<sup>36</sup>

The remaining non-Muslim inhabitants of the city also had to leave after the Republic was founded. Turkey and Greece signed a treaty of population exchange, through which the Muslims of Greece were exchanged with Greeks of Turkey

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<sup>31</sup> Alexander William Kinglake, *Eothen, or, Traces of Travel Brought Home from the East* (London: Picador, 1995), p.44.

<sup>32</sup> Barnai, p.50.

<sup>33</sup> Kasaba, p.18.

<sup>34</sup> Zandi-Sayek, p.254.

<sup>35</sup> According to Soner Çağaptay, “Unlike the Greeks and Armenians, the Jews had not pursued separatist or nationalist ambitions during the last decades of the Ottomans. On the contrary, they allied with the Turks during the dissolution of the Empire... During the Turkish Independence campaign, the Jews... again allied with the Turks. They aided the Kemalist forces and fought against the Greeks. Accordingly, Turkish nationalism, which formed anti-Greek and anti-Armenian sentiments through its struggles with Greek and Armenian nationalisms, nurtured a neutral, if not positive, attitude towards the Jews,” in Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p.24.

<sup>36</sup> Biray Kırılı, *From Ottoman Empire to Turkish Nation-state: Reconfiguring Spaces and Geo-bodies* (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York: State University of New York at Binghamton, 2002), p.173.

between 1923 and 1927. The migration was compulsory and the entire Greek population in Izmir, around 1,500,000 people, was sent to Greece, while approximately 500,000 Muslim Turks in Greece came to Turkey.<sup>37</sup> The result was an achieved homogenization, the foremost requirement of a nation state, “eradicating the multi-cultural social make-up and reconstituting Izmir as ethnically Turkish.”<sup>38</sup>

The national project on Izmir has been based on changing the city from economic, ethnic, and religious diversity to homogeneity, from cosmopolitan to national, and from one without peer to one among many in Turkey.<sup>39</sup> The result was the demographic reversing of the previous three centuries: The outcomes of the first Republican census in 1927 predicates that the percentage of non-Muslims in Izmir was reduced to 13.8, while it was 61.5 in the nineteenth century.<sup>40</sup>

This thesis does not aim to conceptualize the history of Izmir as a story of marked transition from pre-national to modern-national, and to create an urban story of pre- and post-. This study also does not want to overemphasize the constructive power of the late Ottoman elite and their early Republican counterparts on the social life of Izmir. However, what Izmir had gone through was so extreme and distinguished that a two-sided story seems almost inevitable, when the Fire, the obliterating regime change, and the population exchange that reduced the population by one half<sup>41</sup> are considered. Unfortunately, a fact of old city/new city is existent and September 9 was designed by the early Republican elite to act like a wall separating the two, as one’s foundation and the other’s destruction day.

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<sup>37</sup> Kırılı, p.173.

<sup>38</sup> Zandi-Sayek, p.254.

<sup>39</sup> Goffman, p.144.

<sup>40</sup> Behar, p.64.

<sup>41</sup> “While in 1912 the estimated population of Izmir was three hundred thousand, it reduced to one hundred and fifty two thousand in 1927,” *ibid.*, p.37.

Ottoman Smyrna was a city that the Turkish Republic wanted to leave behind the walls. However, Izmir was so important that it could not be charged off, but had to be transformed. The new Republic made huge efforts to transform the city. Having experienced one of the biggest demographic changes in Turkey at the end of the First World War and national war, Izmir needed more special and dedicated efforts for transformation. Within the transformation, the entire past of the city had to be discarded. Therefore, the wounds that 1922 had left in Izmir had to be ignored; the Republican Fair had to be built on the fire area.

The ashes in the fire zone, the former-residential areas of the Greek and Armenian residents of Izmir, had to be thrown out of the new Turkish city, and its memories out of the new nation's heads. "The production and organization of space is one of the significant arenas that give materiality to the project of state formation. To put it in a different way, state formation is always, already a spatial project."<sup>42</sup> Thus, the new nation state addressed itself to the task of replacing the past memories with national symbols that would imply the new nation state's principles and future projects. In order to nationalize the people, the space also had to be nationalized. The national elite appreciated the transformation and nationalization of the space. An article published in *Yeni Asır* claimed that:

If the constructive force of the republic had not created new places out of the neighborhoods that the enemy sabotaged to ashes when escaping, Izmir would not have gained its envied prosperity... Those who did not witness the situation of the area of the Fair and *Kültürpark* (Park of Culture) – which is now the place of economy, trade, delight, and enjoyment – only ten years ago, could not be pleased as much as those who lived their early youth-ness in these sacred territory... Thus, September 9 is not only the date that the enemies were thrown into the sea, but also the turning point in the development of Republican Izmir.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Kırılı, pp.249-250.

<sup>43</sup> "Fakat eğer cumhuriyetin yapıcı kudreti, düşmanın firar saatlarında kundakladığı mahallelerden yeni alanlar fişkırtmasaydı, Izmir, bugünkü imrenilir bayındırlık ve tabiat ihtişamına sahip olmayacaktı... İktisadın, ticaretin, kültürün, zevkin ve eğlencenin elele tutuştuğu bu yerin [Fuar ve

It was very meaningful to situate a realm of national economy, the Fair, in Izmir, just as the former decision to organize the first economic congress of the new Republic in the same city. While organizing the Izmir Economic Congress between 17 February and 4 March 1923, the early Republican elite very probably aimed at converting the former cosmopolitan port into a national city of national economy. As Erkan Serçe expresses, the Republican elite intended to make Izmir the symbol of “economic independence,” which would signify the overall transformation in Turkey:

The decision to organize the first Turkish Economic Congress in Izmir was of course not a coincidence. Izmir, which had shouldered the burden of occupation, experienced the disaster of war, and was economically devastated as a result of the Great Fire and demographic alterations, became the symbol of the War of Independence. Now, this city would also symbolize the economic independence, the transition from a cosmopolitan economy based on foreign exploitation to a national economy.<sup>44</sup>

The early Republican elite regarded “particular features of the geography... with active suspicion;” Izmir was one of these geographies, considered to “belong[...] to a different universe when nationalism triumphed.”<sup>45</sup> The national elite of the new Republic decided and supported the eradication of the memories of the bygone society of Izmir through the replacement of the place, recalling the past with the concrete symbols of the nation.

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*Kültürpark alanı], daha on sene önce ne halde olduğunu bilmiyenler; ilk gençlik günlerini bu kutsal topraklarda yaşamış olanlar derecesinde sevinemezler... 9 Eylül, inkılap tarihimizde yalnız hasmın denize dökülüştü günü olmakla kalmaz, cumhuriyet İzmirinin gelişme tarihinin de başlangıç noktasını teşkil eder,” Yeni Asır, 9 September 1943, p.3, from the article of Abdülkadir Karahan.*

<sup>44</sup> “Türkiye İktisat Kongresi’nin İzmir’de toplanması kararı tabii ki bir tesadüf değildi; işgalin tüm ağırlığını çekmiş, savaşın yıkımını yaşamış, büyük yangın ve nüfus yapısında meydana gelen değişikliğin sonucu iktisadi bakımdan çökmüş olan İzmir... Kurtuluş Savaşı’nun adeta bir sembolü olmuştu. Şimdi bu sembol, iktisadi kurtuluşun, kozmopolit ve yabancı sömürüye endeksli ekonomik yapıdan ulusal ekonomiye geçişin de bir sembolü haline gelecekti,” Erkan Serçe, “İzmir İktisat Kongresi,” in “İzmir İktisat Kongresi, 17 Şubat-4 Mart 1923” (İzmir: İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2004), p.5.

<sup>45</sup> Çağlar Keyder, “A History and Geography of Turkish Nationalism,” in Faruk Birtek and Thalia Dragonas eds. *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p.8.



The Square of the Republic, the Fair, and the Atatürk monument were built in the fire area as the symbols of the new nation state. The aims of forgetting the past memories were realized through the “construction of the future memories”<sup>46</sup> spatially. Every “new political arrangement involves a new arrangement of urban space.”<sup>47</sup> The former neighborhoods of Izmir’s non-Muslim population started to accommodate the celebration of the new nation’s festivals in the Square of the Republic, pay tribute to the founder of the nation before his monument, and entertain and shop at the (Inter)national Fair. The former heterogeneous space was redesigned to accommodate national homogeneity.

A similar experience of de novo construction of the city took place in Salonica, around the same date of that of Izmir. In 1917, a great fire started in the city and destroyed the Muslim and Jewish residences.<sup>48</sup> After the fire, Greek authorities immediately engaged in efforts to rebuild the city, regarding Salonica as “a blank slate.”<sup>49</sup> Greek Prime Minister Venizelos considered the fire “almost as a gift of divine providence” that gives the chance to “eradicate[...] the last downtown traces of the old Ottoman town.”<sup>50</sup> About the post-1923 period, what Mark Mazower tells is a very familiar story:

More than thirty thousand Muslims were obliged to leave the city. At the same time, nearly one hundred thousand Christian refugees arrived from Eastern Thrace, Anatolia and the Black Sea, and turned Greeks back into a majority of Salonica’s population for the first time since the Byzantine era. In 1913, Greeks had been a minority of the city’s 157,000 inhabitants; by 1928 they were 75% of its population of 236,000. Thanks to war, the fire and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, this was now a new city,

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<sup>46</sup> Kırılı, p.251.

<sup>47</sup> Nadide Özge Serin, *Festivals of “July 10” in the Young Turk Era (1908-1918)*, (M.A. Thesis, Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2000), p.89.

<sup>48</sup> Mark Mazower, *Salonica – City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430-1950* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2005), p.298.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p.304.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

organized on new principles and populated by newcomers. By 1930, only a small proportion of Salonica's inhabitants could remember the city as it had existed in the days of Abdul Hamid.<sup>51</sup>

Izmir's destruction by the Great Fire of 1922 and the re-construction of the fire area might be regarded as a small replica of the Turkish nation building project. The burning of Smyrna was the local counterpart of the overall denouncement of the Ottoman Empire, and its rebuilding was that of the formation of the Turkish Republic. September 9 stood in this picture as a barrier that separated the unwanted past from the desired future.

The Republic has built its own institutions and buildings on the ashes, on the remnants of the Ottoman Empire. Spatial change pioneered and reinforced the collective oblivion. Izmir experienced a material loss and replacement that led to memorial loss, on which its history and nationalism was situated.

No matter the early Republican Turkey engaged in creating new memories around the chosen-ness of the "glorious" September 9, the remaining inhabitants of Izmir, who were the witnesses of the period, might have lived the national war embodied in September 9 as a trauma originated from the loss of their neighbors. However, the Republic swept the traumatic aspect of September 9 under the rug. September 9 no longer had to be remembered with losing neighbors, but "throwing the enemies into the sea." The Ottoman trauma became the Turkish glory. The ashes were removed. The city got a national make-over. The Republic bestowed the Turkish-Muslim people of Izmir an "ethnic tent"<sup>52</sup> in lieu of the neighbors they had lost. And they accepted it. The former cosmopolitan port was tried to be converted into a national city.

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<sup>51</sup> Mazower, p.310.

<sup>52</sup> Volkan and Itzkowitz, p.11.

Nevertheless, the truth is perpetual. September 9 might have been chosen as a national glory to be celebrated or as a beginning point to be conformed, but it was also a date witnessed by ordinary people in their ordinary lives. The remaining Izmirians consecutively witnessed the period of turning their co-inhabitants into enemies, the occupation of Izmir, the liberation of Izmir, the Great Fire, their neighbors leaving the city, and their neighbors disappearing in their memories; and some experienced marginalization. The departing Izmirians additionally experienced the sorrow of being expelled and leaving. Turkish Izmir lost one of its vital elements; non-Muslim Izmirians lost their Smyrna. And all events got tangled in one date, the only remembered date, September 9.<sup>53</sup> By all means, September 9 was a trauma! But a trauma belonging to and reminding of the pre-Republican past...

In conclusion, because September 9 has been one of the “chosen glories” and “obliterated traumas” of Republican Turkey, it occupies a significant place in the collective memory of the Turkish people, because in order to make the trauma forgotten, the glory should be remembered repeatedly.

This thesis tries to give a detailed analysis of the festival of September 9, Independence Day in Izmir, with its program, parades, participants, activities, narratives, and symbolic objects through an archival study of newspapers and periodicals. The ultimate aim is to study the “invention, propagation, transformation, and endurance”<sup>54</sup> of this festival and the place of September 9 in collective and individual memories.

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<sup>53</sup> It must be acknowledged that the Great Fire of Izmir, which has been buried deep in the history and minds, has started to be remembered and studied. September 9 has fallen out of the position of being the only memorial date of Smyrna turning into Izmir.

<sup>54</sup> Anastasia Karakasidou, “Protocol and Pageantry: Celebrating the Nation in Northern Greece,” in Mark Mazower, ed. *After the War Was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p.225.

In order to understand September 9 in memories, first, the literature on memory, history, and national celebrations is explored. In order to write a “history that common people carry out in their heads,”<sup>55</sup> an analysis of people’s oral and written memories is made, as a second step. “For the people of Izmir, has September 9 merely meant ‘throwing the enemies into the sea’ or does it have another connotation for them?” is one of the main questions to be asked.

According to Olaf Yaranga, after the Republic was founded, “Smyrna, which was re-baptized as Izmir, lost its face, as it had lost its name.”<sup>56</sup> This thesis also questions whether Izmir has preserved some traces of its past or really had lost its face completely. Search of individual and collective memories might shed light on the remembrance/oblivion balance in the context of Izmir, which, arguably, has a significant place in individual, social, and national being/happening.

If, as Yael Zerubavel suggests, “the holiday cycle determines which aspects of the past become central to collective memory and which are assigned to oblivion,”<sup>57</sup> and if unaltered, repetitive ritual action really makes things easier to remember, the festival of September 9 might be a suitable starting point to analyze Izmirians’ memories. Ultimately, this thesis searches for individual and collective memories “in the hope that the history... reconstruct[ed] might seem more like the history... experience[d].”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p.3.

<sup>56</sup> Yaranga, p.93.

<sup>57</sup> Yael Zerubavel, p.216.

<sup>58</sup> Pierre Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past/Volume 1: Conflicts and Divisions* (under the direction of Pierre Nora) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p.13.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FESTIVAL, BY THE STATE, BY THE PEOPLE:

#### A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*Totemic history has become critical history: ... We no longer celebrate the nation, but we study the nation's celebrations.*<sup>59</sup>

*Pierre Nora*

This thesis is, above all, about collective memory, more specifically, about collective memory taking shape through and around national celebrations. The ultimate aim is to depict “how forms of social order,” in this case what people remember en bloc, have been “historically constructed.”<sup>60</sup>

In the study, the extent of state construction in the formation of social memory is not denied but given its due. Nevertheless, rather than a one-sided and totally constructivist perspective that gives the state the most active role, the thesis evaluates the formation of social memory from a hybrid perspective that includes both the praxis of citizen construction by the nation state, and people’s agency, in the form of their participation in the festivals and their remembering of them. This hybrid perspective handles the existence of the state in its various “forms culturally,” many “cultural forms as state-regulated,”<sup>61</sup> and the overall picture of collective memory as both state-regulated and culturally. The collective identity is not merely a creation of the state or the work of the individuals, but a historical construction

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<sup>59</sup> Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” p.7.

<sup>60</sup> Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p.1.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

affected both by the nation state, the people, and the temporal, spatial, and historical context.

The thesis deals with the formation of collective memory from the specific angle of commemorations. In this theoretical chapter, the literature on rituals and festivals as manipulating the social remembering process is deeply analyzed in order to derive an appropriate theoretical framework for the specific subject of the national commemoration of September 9, Izmir's Independence Day.

The study on the literature of collective memory shows that social memory has a long list of ingredients. The collectivity they are a part of, the place they were born, the state they are governed by, among other things, effect what people remember collectively. For the sake of the study's concision, social memory is studied in this chapter as an entity with three causal origins in the context of national celebrations: (1) the nation state's attempts to construct "appropriate" citizens through symbolism in national commemorations; (2) the participation of the people in these celebrations, thus their agency; and (3) the simultaneously fixed and flexible character of the festivals. The collective memory is also grasped as a thing dependent on place and time, namely ever-changing according to the spatial and temporal context; nevertheless, concurrently reserving some never-changing recollections due to repetition in the festivals.

#### Creating Memory, Constructing Identity:

##### "The Public Rituals of the State"

National commemoration is a collective day of remembrance, celebration or mourning, by the members of the nation state. As moments of collective

remembering, national commemorations are used by nation states for the purpose of manipulating collective memory. Many scholars who study memory accept the theory that “collective memories are malleable.”<sup>62</sup> And nation states very likely take advantage of this malleability.

This section elaborates not only why collective memory is shaped by the nation state, but also how it is constructed through the symbolism in national celebrations. Before delving into the reasons and methods of memory/identity construction by the state, a brief introduction should be made about the role and importance of the state in the realm of collective memory and the reasons to choose symbolism as the basis of the state’s role in national celebrations.

It is impossible to think of collective memory without taking the collectivity in which it blossoms, into consideration. The ideological hegemony of the nation as the most accepted modern community is crystal clear. When the collectivity is the nation, the collectivity’s memory is inevitably a national one. In such a context, the nation state exists as one of the most important agents consciously or unconsciously shaping what people remember en masse. Various interests of the state direct it to engage in the manipulation of a collective remembering/forgetting process; this conscious engagement might be called “the politics of memory.”

Within the politics of memory, the nation state creates a model identity, harmonious with its ideology, for the people under its authority. Social and political identities are molded by the state as a result of its diligence in identifying and controlling the people, and to determine the contours of its power.<sup>63</sup> But, “are we

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<sup>62</sup> For an example, see Lyn Spillman, “When Do Collective Memories Last?: Founding Moments in the United States and Australia,” in Olick, p.163.

<sup>63</sup> Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson, *Sınırlar: Kimlik, Ulus ve Devletin Uçları* (Ankara: Ütopya Yayınevi, 2002), p.116.

dealing here with the politics of memory or the construction of identity?”<sup>64</sup> Memory and identity make an indispensable pair. The modern state’s efforts to determine what people remember and forget in chorus go parallel with its construction of an identity for national citizens. There is a symbiotic relationship between memory and identity. One might even take one step beyond and claim that “insofar as consciousness, the ground of ‘identity,’ is constructed by the sum of all the impressions and imaginings retained in the brain... hypothesis would be that identity and memory are virtually the same concept.”<sup>65</sup> Thus, states’ efforts to construct identity for their citizens inevitably coincide with the praxis of collective memory creation. Nevertheless, it might be theoretically truer to accept the existence of non-intersecting parts between these two elements of the equation, memory and identity.

In this equation, a national festival, almost always created and arranged by the nation state, is a big trump in the governing elite’s hand. National celebrations present an arena for the state to perform and show the frontiers of its power through authoritarian organization and orderly parades, the elements of its ideology through festive symbolism, and the range of popular support for it through forced or voluntary mass participation. National commemorations are used by the state as a realm in which it can increase its power and control over the people. And, to this end, the state uses national festivals’ recourse to “visible signs” and “official nationalist fantasies,”<sup>66</sup> thus symbolism.

Culture is a totality of common symbols. Thus, all social and political systems are fabricated and expressed through the mediation of symbols and rituals.

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<sup>64</sup> Jonathan Boyarin, “Space, Time, and the Politics of Memory,” in Jonathan Boyarin, ed., *Remapping Memory: The Politics of TimeSpace* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p.23.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Srirupa Roy, “Seeing a State: National Commemorations and the Public Sphere in India and Turkey,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48, no. 01 (January 2006), p.227.



Therefore, symbolism is one of the most effective tools that the state uses in the way towards identity creation. Symbols are among the most important political elements binding people to other people that they would have never met and to institutions that they would have never directly experienced;<sup>67</sup> thus symbols help to create a unified, organized, and meaningful whole out of scattered fragments. Political actors, consciously or subconsciously, manipulate symbols that relate to the material bases of the political power.<sup>68</sup>

The nation state uses national celebrations in order to generate legitimacy, create a national identity, and control the people through the constructed image of a unified, integrated, and egalitarian community. These attempts of the state fall within the realm of collective memory construction that might be called the politics of memory. The first step towards the creation of collective memory is to determine the temporal and spatial limits of what to remember, i.e., the national regulation of time and space, which is analyzed below.

### Festive Time and the Nation State

*A civilization comes to an end when a people no longer takes its own chronology seriously... A man who no longer knows or cares how old he is has finished with life; he might as well be dead, when he cannot know. For a civilization, as for an individual, periods when the awareness of time is lost are periods of shame, which are forgotten as soon as possible.<sup>69</sup>*

*Elias Canetti*

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<sup>67</sup> Donnan and Wilson, p.119.

<sup>68</sup> D. Kertzer [*Ritual Politics, and Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).] cited in *ibid.*, p.118.

<sup>69</sup> Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984), p.463.

For modern people, time is the calendar. Everything in the past, present, and future is compressed in the calendaric cyclicity of days and months. Calendars regulate the time and the perception of it.

Through the regulation of time, “large groups of men [and women] who may live far apart and [are] not... able to meet face to face”<sup>70</sup> are bound to the same temporal order and converge around similar memorial experiences. Eviatar Zerubavel calls this “mnemonic synchronization.”<sup>71</sup> According to him, the calendar guarantees that the remembering and forgetting will be conducted en masse by the whole community.<sup>72</sup> This synchronization is vital for the existence and unity of the nation state, which tries to create national citizens united around the same ideology, and similar feelings and memories.

Thanks to calendars, human beings have an infinitely regular apprehension of time. In every human community, order is desired; but too much order might be suffocating. All the same days everlastingly following each other might become a time-jail for people. Therefore, human beings have rendered some days as more important than others. Birthdays, anniversaries, or national commemorations etc. become drawing pins on the plain uniformity of the calendar.

In this regard, festivals might be regarded as “extraordinary occasions which lift[...] man [and woman] above the isolation of daily life,”<sup>73</sup> drawing the celebrants off the routine through festive enthusiasm. For instance, in Soviet Russia, public

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<sup>70</sup> Canetti, p.463.

<sup>71</sup> Eviatar Zerubavel, “Calendars and History: A Comparative Study of the Social Organization of National Memory,” in Olick, p.317.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p.317–318.

<sup>73</sup> Mosse, p.74.

holidays were regarded as symbolizing a break in the mundane life.<sup>74</sup> Contrary to daily regularity, a festival presents an interlude of “utopian possibilities,”<sup>75</sup> seeming to present an opening out to a different orderly conception. Nation states utilized this character of the festivals by uniting the people around festive enthusiasm.

Nevertheless, festivals also happen repetitively according to calendar regularity, thus a part of the mundane order. In other words, festivals are events that both provide a sense of rhythm and break the daily rhythm. They are both rhythmic milestones of the order and intermissions in it.

It is a humane “ability to symbolically condense thousands of years of history into a single annual cycle,”<sup>76</sup> and to isochronize the past and the present on calendar paper. The “simultaneity of the past and present”<sup>77</sup> puts the past at the present’s disposal. Every political regime needs order, and “one of the fundamental applications of order is to time.”<sup>78</sup> To regulate and control time means to control the past and people’s perception of it. All new political powers should create and impose “a new chronology,”<sup>79</sup> in order to control the time and to use the past as a means to achieve contemporary interests.

For a nation state, the ultimate temporal aim is to nationalize time. And national commemoration days very appropriately serve this end. First, a founding or liberation day, celebrated annually by national citizens, situates the nation in time, in

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<sup>74</sup> Samuel Northrup Harper, *Civic Training in Soviet Russia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), p.224.

<sup>75</sup> Ruth M. van Dyke and Susan E. Alcock, eds. *Archaeologies of Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), p.47.

<sup>76</sup> Eviatar Zerubavel, p.334.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Canetti, p.462.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p.462.

history, “thereby *historicizing the nation*.”<sup>80</sup> Now, the nation has a history that can be pointed at in a calendar, which is not constrained by individual life spans but eternalized through timely regulation and remembered through repetitive celebration.

Secondly, national festivals also “nationalize the time:”<sup>81</sup>

... commemoration days are also effective means through which *time is nationalized*... Participation in the festivities or parades, watching fireworks, going on a family vacation, visiting the parents, or even staying at home to avoid the crowd, all become means through which the public is implicated in the celebration of the commemoration day. Whatever sentiments they evoke, these days of national significance become constitutive elements in the routine of everyday life, and structure its time on a national basis.<sup>82</sup>

Therefore, national commemorations conduct institutionalized and cyclical repetition of national memories, which affects the collective remembering process. Through the commemorative cycle, “which aspects of the past become more central to collective memory and which are assigned to oblivion” are determined.<sup>83</sup> National holidays are familiar to almost every member of the national community (need not be directly celebrated by everyone); this helps to create national memories by enhancing “the social coordination of individuals’ memories.”<sup>84</sup> “On the very same day, an entire mnemonic community focuses its historical attention on the very same moment in the past.”<sup>85</sup> The nation state settles the commemorated national past in people’s minds, nationalizing the collective mind.

As said above, festivals, despite their rhythmic repetition, indicate elements of differentiated and supra-normal time. Nevertheless, as stuck between calendar

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<sup>80</sup> Çınar, p.371.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p.372.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Yael Zerubavel, p.216.

<sup>84</sup> Eviatar Zerubavel, p.317.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

regularity and timely supra-normality, festivals actually give way to no utopian possibilities outside the existing order:

Cross-culturally, festivals take place in a supranormal time... in which people experience themselves differently for the period of celebration... The feast is always related to time: cosmic, biological, or historic. Festivals were linked to moments of crisis, the breaking points in the natural cycle or in the life of human society. Death and revival constituted such moments, as did change and renewal, leading to a more festive perception of the world. Whether organized by the state or more informally, such festivals did not create an alternative existential order; rather they reinforced the existing one. People were released from the mundane and utilitarian, providing a taste of utopian possibilities. Yet festivals cannot be separated from bodily life, the earth, nature, and the cosmos, which also entails a dialogue with death and existential reflections on being.<sup>86</sup>

Festive time is a tempore of high emotionality and joy, bringing vitality, spirit to life by transcending its ordinariness. A feast is a diversion from the endless flow of life, perhaps giving meaning to human lives. However, any diversions are still a part of the order, which are very well used by the authority towards interest fulfillment, in this case, towards collective memory creation. After the regularization of when and what to remember, the nation state passes to the second phase in the construction of collective memory: where to remember.

### Commemorative Realms as Constructed Places of Memory

*... just as gold, they say, is the memory of money...*<sup>87</sup>

*Pierre Nora*

History is an abstract and, simply speaking, dead concept. It is done. But memory is living and ongoing. Between these two, there are places and objects concretizing the

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<sup>86</sup> van Dyke and Alcock, p.47.

<sup>87</sup> Nora, "General Introduction: Between Memory and History," p.15.

abstractness of history and constraining the liveliness of memory. A moment in the distant past is brought to the present through the substantiality of a building, a monument, or an emblem. “Memory is rooted in the concrete: in space, gesture, image, and object.”<sup>88</sup> Just as the scent of a perfume taking one to a moment lived years ago, the existence of a commemorative place makes a community remember the founding moment or liberation day of their nation collectively.

Every national commemoration has a commemorative place, putting on, augmenting, reinforcing, and maintaining the symbolic meaning of the event commemorated. The existence of a collectively known place symbolizing a historical event helps that event to be remembered collectively. If there was no Wailing Wall, the Jews would hardly remember the First Jewish-Roman War in 70 CE; even if they remembered, the event would hardly get and maintain its meaning for Jewish community, which is “a promise made by God that some part of the holy Temple would be left standing as a sign of God's unbroken bond with the Jewish people in spite of the catastrophes which had befallen them.”<sup>89</sup> Jews are indebted to the materiality of the Wailing Wall for a part of their intangible Jewish-ness. Therefore, commemorative places are essential to remembering.

“The language and medium of a festival is the city, its people, streets, and buildings.”<sup>90</sup> National celebrations take place in the streets of a city, between the buildings, and around the monuments. For instance, the route of the Turkish soldiers that entered Izmir and liberated the city on 9 September 1922 concretely carries the symbolic meaning of the event. The route has become the realm of memory, reminding people of the historical event of September 9, due to the repetitive festive

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<sup>88</sup> Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” p.3.

<sup>89</sup> “Western Wall,” Available [online] at <http://en.wikipedia.org> [27 June 2007].

<sup>90</sup> von Geldern, p.73.

enactment of soldiers' entrance into the city. The existence of the route as a tangible relic of the past prevents the city from breaking off the connections with its history. On the one hand, the past continues to live in the city in the present time; on the other hand, the present is stuck in the past through repetitive commemoration. The places of memory, as assistants to reminiscing, act like bridges between the past and the present, "anchor[ing] the past in the present and, alternately, the present in the past."<sup>91</sup>

Pierre Nora calls the "places, sites, causes" of history, such as archives, calendars, books, and monuments *lieux de mémoire*.<sup>92</sup> These realms of memory are both "material, symbolic, and functional:" material, as their name implies, symbolic in entitling the meaning of an event commemorated, and functional in ensuring remembering and fighting against forgetting.<sup>93</sup> *Lieux de mémoire* are also instrumental in flexibly creating meanings around and for historical events:

For although it is true that the fundamental purpose of a *lieu de mémoire* is to stop time, to inhibit forgetting, to fix a state of things, to immortalize death, and to materialize the immaterial...– all in order to capture the maximum possible meaning with the fewest possible signs – it is also clear that *lieux de mémoire* thrive only because of their capacity to change, their ability to resurrect old meanings and generate new ones...<sup>94</sup>

According to Nora, *lieux de mémoire* are concrete signs of history's suspicion of and struggle with "spontaneous memory."<sup>95</sup> The spontaneous memory would not be enough to remember collectively and continuously; so archives, anniversaries, documents, celebrations should be created to mark the days of remembrance. In addition, the memory would be corrosive of actual historical events; therefore, it

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<sup>91</sup> van Dyke and Alcock, p.36.

<sup>92</sup> Nora, "General Introduction: Between Memory and History," p.14.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., pp.14-15.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p.15.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p.7.

should be constrained within the meanings determined by the history.<sup>96</sup> So, the actual witnesses of a historical event, i.e., individual memories, are submitted to the constructed “facts” of history; distorted, molded, and transformed into *lieux de mémoire*.<sup>97</sup> For instance, the history of the First World War, in Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa, Malta, United States, New Zealand, France, and in many other countries, is not based on the individual memories of the participants, but symbolically clustered in the materiality of poppies, which “bloomed across some of the worst battlefields of Flanders in World War I,” and whose “red color [is] an appropriate symbol for the bloodshed of trench warfare,”<sup>98</sup> repeatedly commemorated on Remembrance Day.

Every government has a politics of space, creating *lieux de mémoire* for their own ends. Especially new authorities conduct “a new arrangement of urban space,”<sup>99</sup> renaming streets, creating new squares, building new monuments, to wit dominating the “symbolic centers”<sup>100</sup> of the nation. For example, immediately after the rise of the Bolshevik rule, one of the main political concerns was to “symbolically reorient” the ceremonial centers and to create new meanings around them in order to break down the spatial hegemony of the old regime.<sup>101</sup>

For nation states, space is an arena of struggle for power and legitimacy. And national celebrations provide the instrument for the political authority to achieve power and legitimacy. “Public festivities help a political party claim legitimacy by occupying the city center (the seat of political power), decorating it with partisan

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<sup>96</sup> Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” p.7.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> “Remembrance Day,” Available [online] at <http://en.wikipedia.org> [30 June 2007].

<sup>99</sup> Serin, p.89.

<sup>100</sup> von Geldern, p.193.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.



symbols, and filling it with supporters.”<sup>102</sup> It is “a monumental legitimacy,”<sup>103</sup> linking the past to the present, converting the past into a means at the hands of the political authority.

Nation states, first, manipulate the national space and time in order to, second, manipulate and control the people they rule. James von Geldern, paraphrasing Mona Ozouf, says that:

As Mona Ozouf notes in regard to the French Revolution, civic festivals were used to manipulate the value of space and time in modern times... Festivals reshuffled the urban hierarchy by selecting new routes to be taken through the city, new places to be honored, and new places to be declared sacred. Revolutionaries spurned dusty urban squares for sprawling parks whose openness modeled egalitarian society and where fête participants were not divided by class or enclosed in the walls of authority. Time was reset inside the festive circle to show the revolution, and those moments in it that organizers chose to emphasize, as a new beginning to history.<sup>104</sup>

The nation state attempts to create a national citizen that travels these new routes, honors these new places, and celebrates the new festivals. The memory of the national citizen would be a national memory created around the determined places of memory and within the fixed temporal limits. State efforts to construct collective memory coincide with the attempts to generate legitimacy for the regime and to create national identity compatible with the nationalist ideology for the citizens.

### Creating a “Culture of Consent”<sup>105</sup>

Commemoration is a perfect tool to create, impose, and manipulate. “All power organizations use and abuse rituals, in order to bond people to each other, to the

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<sup>102</sup> von Geldern, p.45.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p.43.

<sup>105</sup> Victoria de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.23.

hierarchy, and to all other things belonging to the past and future.”<sup>106</sup> The festival organizing power-holders try to impose their views, their ideology on the mass of people. They try to control, restrict, and manipulate people by creating festivals with mass participation.

Through festivals, political regimes try to provide political and social support for the ideological bases and components of their systems. One way for elites to “maintain, stabilize and perpetuate [their] power” is the manipulation of collective memory.<sup>107</sup> “Social memory is often used to naturalize or legitimate authority.”<sup>108</sup> Thus, the elites abuse festivals’ use of tradition and past time in order to manipulate the present and the future.

It should be kept in mind that what we call collective memory is created and shaped according to the period it exists. Every period has had a different understanding of collective memory and its manipulation. In modern times, history and memory are constructed by the needs of the system and “contemporary concerns than by history itself.”<sup>109</sup> In other words, contemporary interests and the plans of the state are supported by the stories of the past.

For instance, the government of Iceland organizes Republic Day celebrations in Þingvellir, the mythological meeting place of the ancient “parliament” of Iceland, in order to “keep the Icelandic ‘imagined community’ alive” and to maintain national unity around a shared myth.<sup>110</sup> The common myth about parliamentary origins

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<sup>106</sup> Donnan and Wilson, p.120.

<sup>107</sup> Rebecca Kook, “Changing Representations of National Identity and Political Legitimacy: Independence Day Celebrations in Israel, 1952-1998,” *National Identities* 7, no.2 (June 2005), p.152.

<sup>108</sup> van Dyke and Alcock, p.3.

<sup>109</sup> Spillman, p.163.

<sup>110</sup> Guðmundur Hálfðanarson, “Þingvellir: An Icelandic ‘Lieu de Mémoire,’” *History and Memory* 12 (2000), p.5, 9.

fulfills the current concerns of the Icelandic elite, that is, reawakening the nationalist aura.

As Emile Durkheim wrote, “‘commemorative’ rites... present the past to the present and justify and strengthen the one by reference to the other.”<sup>111</sup> The current interests of an authority find their way in the relics of the past. In order to fulfill its contemporary interests, such as gaining legitimacy or obtaining support for a policy, the state has recourse to the past, which has been shaped by the state’s very contemporary interests. This collusion is called the politics of history/memory.

Among many others, Walter Benjamin is the first to be remembered in the subject of history and memory constructed. Benjamin confronts the idea that the past and the present are different concepts that have to be elaborated separately. On the contrary, he believes that past and present are dependent, and history is an amalgamation of both, but more like a mirror, in which the present can see its reflection, rather than a clear depiction of past events.<sup>112</sup> In other words, the past is manipulated by the present, in order for the present to construct a history that would suit the contemporary constellation of conditions and beliefs. Therefore, in order to understand history, one should not focus merely on the past and put oneself in any past actor’s position, but recognize one’s current context and sit on the audience/agent chair in the present.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Emile Durkheim, cited in Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society—The Soviet Case* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.153.

<sup>112</sup> Vanessa R. Schwartz, “Walter Benjamin for Historians,” *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 5 (December 2001), p.1724.

<sup>113</sup> Reference to Benjamin obligates the author to mention about the essence of his understanding of history. Benjamin’s ideas about history are more than a sole manifestation of what history is. They rather constitute a manifesto for historians. For him, historians should use the malleability of the past, in order to create an enlightening history, which would “awaken” people from their dream of collective memory that is based on “life as it has been forgotten.” (Ibid., p.1729.) “Benjamin attempted to articulate memory as a resource for political action. In effect, he asserted that the past was a material resource... control of which was a key aspect of class struggle.” (Boyarin, p.26) According to him, history is “an encounter between the past and the present that is articulated as a

Charles Tilly also mentions the political construction of memory. According to him, “for the ‘politics of memory’ refers to both (a) the process by which accumulated, shared historical experience constrains today’s political action and (b) the contestation and coercion that occurs over the proper interpretation of that historical experience.”<sup>114</sup> Not underestimating the current authority’s limitation by its past experiences, this study is more into the second part of Tilly’s suggestion. The nation state “properly interprets” history and manipulate the collective remembering process in order to generate legitimacy for itself. The path towards creating popular consent for a government, especially for a new one, passes through the way of constructing an appropriate national past over the pre-national one and new memories at the expense of the old ones.

James von Geldern, a professor of Russian Studies, claims that the Bolshevik regime, like many other regimes, sought legitimacy in the past, in spite of the regime’s overt assertion to demolish the past. “Legitimacy claimed through an eternal past would seem alien to revolutionaries, whose foremost goal is to break history’s repetitive cycle.”<sup>115</sup> Claiming the villainy of the past and its goodness at the same time, perhaps, the revolution created its own vicious cycle. The history was ignored, but its advantages were embraced. Maybe it is not a vicious cycle, but the essence of the politics of history/memory construction. Attacking the immediate past does not necessitate the authority to oppose to have its own history. On the contrary, the new authority needs to have its own past with its own myths and symbols in order to defeat the hegemony of the very previous myths and symbols.

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rapidly emergent image – a flash.” (Schwartz, p.1724.) Thus, the task of the historian is to select appropriate “flashes” for awakening.

<sup>114</sup> Charles Tilly, “Afterword: Political Memories in Space and Time,” in Boyarin, p.247.

<sup>115</sup> von Geldern, p.46.

The first action of a new authority, which wants to keep the distance with the old regime, is to find a clear sign to distinguish between the new symbols and the old ones. “The boundaries of a radical beginning” should be clearly “mark[ed] out,”<sup>116</sup> and diligently embedded in people’s minds. Here steps in the idea of the moment of rupture, a break in history, “a fixed point to which all other events might henceforth be related.”<sup>117</sup>

Paul Connerton, an illustrious sociologist on the subject of collective memory, makes a recapitulating suggestion about the political moment of rupture, in *How Societies Remember*:

...the continuing struggle between the new order and the old will be definitively terminated, because the legitimacy of the victors will be validated once and for all. A barrier is to be erected against future transgression. The present is to be separated from what preceded it by an act of unequivocal demarcation. The trial by fiat of a successor regime is like the construction of a wall, unmistakable and permanent, between the new beginnings and old tyranny. To pass judgment on the practices of the old regime is the constitutive act of the new order.<sup>118</sup>

However, the new regime does not build an impassible wall before the past only to construct a new history and collective memory. The insurmountable wall also helps the new regime make its people forget the old. And “the more total the aspirations of the new regime, the more imperiously will it seek to introduce an era of forced forgetting.”<sup>119</sup> When deleting and fabricating memories is considered, national festivals emerge as appropriate instruments to erase the memories non grata. Jacques le Goff suggests that the emphasis of the French Revolution on national celebrations stemmed from such utility of festivals:

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<sup>116</sup> Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.13.

<sup>117</sup> Serin, p.114.

<sup>118</sup> Connerton, p.7.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12.

“Commemorating” is part of the revolutionary program: “All the calendar-makers and celebration-makers agree on the necessity of using the festival to maintain the memory of the Revolution.” Title I of the constitution of 1791 declares: ‘National celebrations will be established to preserve the memory of the French Revolution.’ But soon thereafter, the manipulation of memory appears. After 9 Thermidor, people have become sensitive to the massacres and the executions of the Terror, it is therefore decided to delete from the collective memory “the multiplicity of victims,” and “in the commemorative celebrations, censorship will henceforth oppose memory.”<sup>120</sup>

Censorship and replacement are two functions of national celebrations in fighting unwanted memories. For instance, in the early years of Soviet Russia, the new authority attempted to erase the symbols and memories of the old regime by replacing its festivals with new ones. “One of the objects of the celebration of revolutionary events is to overshadow and gradually eliminate the celebrations which are associated with the old regime.”<sup>121</sup>

In times of political and social transformation, new customs and traditions are presented to “new citizens” in lieu of the ones that were relinquished; the principles and objectives of the new nation are announced to the *people* through symbols.<sup>122</sup>

Nevertheless, the picture of rupture is much more complicated. The new regime not only obliterates the old and creates the new, but, at the same time paradoxically uses the symbols and myths of the old regime. In the establishment of a new regime with a new culture, old symbols are sometimes borrowed, polished, and presented. For example, the Turkish Republic, which has been based on the complete negation of its recent Ottoman past, has used the symbolic element of janissary band of musicians (*mehter takımı*) in many national festivals, despite the overstressed desire to bury the Ottoman heritage.

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<sup>120</sup> Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p.86, with reference to Mona Ozouf, *La Fête Révolutionnaire: 1789-1799* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1992).

<sup>121</sup> Harper, p.225.

<sup>122</sup> Karen A. Cerulo, “Symbols and the World System: National Anthems and Flags,” *Sociological Forum* 8, no. 2 (June 1993), p.250.

“All new regimes must create their own myths in order to re-found the nation, either through recycling already existing material or through the creation of new commemorations, that is, by organizing new celebration dates and building new monuments through which to express attachment to the new regime.”<sup>123</sup> In other words, the moment of rupture is not a phenomenon with two extremes of complete oblivion and absolute reconstruction. The new authority chooses the path of selective remembering parallel with its current interests and ideology. As James von Geldern states, “to avoid ensnaring the new culture in the old, the past had to be remembered selectively... [T]he artistic heritage could be exploited, but only on the terms of the present.”<sup>124</sup>

By creating a common and new history, with a new starting point, around which people may gather, festivals legitimize the emergence and continuity of the new regime. The celebrations create an atmosphere in which the participants breathe the air of new attachments and sentiments. “Celebrations [are] mounted and populated by men who... identify[...] themselves in and through these events as”<sup>125</sup> the followers of the new regime and opponents of the enemies of the regime, presenting their loyalty and consent to their political authority.

Nevertheless, this legitimacy, the consent of the governed for the governing elite, does not usually originate from the viewpoints of the governed, but is sponsored by the efforts of the elite, especially in authoritarian regimes. For instance, Victoria de Grazia, a historian and the writer of *The Culture of Consent: Mass*

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<sup>123</sup> Paloma Aguilar and Carsten Humlebæk, “Collective Memory and National Identity in the Spanish Democracy: The Legacies of Francoism and the Civil War,” *History and Memory* 14, no. 1/2 (2002), p.144.

<sup>124</sup> von Geldern, p.75.

<sup>125</sup> Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), p.95.

*Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, finds the basis of consent for the Fascist state in the mass organizations again by the state:<sup>126</sup>

...the creation of a nationwide political culture that might persuade people that their shared goals transcended petty economic haggling, regional and ethnic disputes, or age-old social animosities. In short, the politics of the postwar era were premised on what might be called a 'culture of consent' that, operating at all levels of the society, might play a decisive role in shaping those responsive though depoliticized mass constituencies necessary for the stabilization of advanced capitalist societies.<sup>127</sup>

One might conclude that national celebrations are "about enforcing rule."<sup>128</sup> Of course, in an authoritarian or one-party state, the elite have all the means to control the masses. Nevertheless, different ways are also required for establishing the "secular religion" in people's minds, while at the same time including them in the national *drama*.<sup>129</sup> That is why even authoritarian regimes need symbolic festivals to create and exhibit their myths and symbols. Because the identity they try to create is best read and memorized through symbols.

### Formulating an Umbrella Identity

Every regime needs an identity. And "symbols, the objectification of popular myths, give people their identity."<sup>130</sup> Not only individual but also collective identities are based on symbols. Who can deny the unifying effect of Star of David on the Jews or Turkish flag on the Turks?

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<sup>126</sup> de Grazia, p.23.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>128</sup> Corrigan and Sayer, p.6.

<sup>129</sup> Mosse, p.6.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p.7.



One of the most important national symbols is perhaps the founding myth of the nation. Founding myths would not be repeated so much in nation states, if they did not have any symbolic importance for the regeneration and integrity of the nation. The national myth of Korea, for example, has been repeated for years in schools and celebrated in order to encourage Korean nationalism:

According to myth, a tiger and a bear living in a cave prayed to the god of the sky, Hwanin, to become human. He ordered them to remain out of sunlight for 100 days and to eat only 20 cloves of garlic and mugwort. The tiger left, but the bear was transformed into a woman; now alone, she prayed for a companion, and Hwanin took her for his own wife. Their child, Dangun, became the first king of Korea, by tradition on October 3, 2333 BC.<sup>131</sup>

The genuineness of the event does not matter here. What is important is that the story of Dangun is a part of the unifying history of Korea and collective identity of the Koreans.

National festivals present one of the most appropriate spheres in which collective symbols are created, repeated, and glorified. *Coins* minted in the honor of national celebrations, *medals* of the war veterans passing in triumphal parades, *postage stamps* with commemorative dates, *monuments* to be paid homage to, *streets* named after national heroes, official memories clustered in *national archives*, an old *photograph* of a celebration moment...<sup>132</sup> All form a part of the personal, collective, and national identity, thus memory.

Simonetta Falasca Zamponi, a sociologist studying modernity, memory, and history, argues for the context of Fascist Italy that “the regime’s recourse to memory was part and parcel of fascism’s permanent search for identity... simultaneously with the efforts to build a national consciousness.”<sup>133</sup> Therefore, the state is in pursuit of

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<sup>131</sup> “National myth,” Available [online] at <http://en.wikipedia.org> [1 July 2007].

<sup>132</sup> le Goff, pp.87–89.

<sup>133</sup> Falasca-Zamponi, p.47.

not only a collective identity for its citizens, but also its “own self-understanding and definition.”<sup>134</sup>

In modern society, ritual commemorations have become “secularized religions,” establishing bonds both within the society and between the past and the present through the instrumentalization of myths and symbols.<sup>135</sup> National celebration has become “a democratic religion, in which the *people* do not worship an outside force, but their collective active participation in a community.”<sup>136</sup> They worship themselves, they worship their past. Yet, there is no hierarchical relationship between the worshipper and the worshipped, as in divine religions. On the contrary, there is a linear bond of equality between people and the past, between current society and ancestors. It is no longer the time of obedient genuflection, but of emotional democracy. Besides, there is no hierarchical relationship between the worshippers. “Within the crowd there is equality,”<sup>137</sup> “for the sake of” which “people become a crowd.”<sup>138</sup> It is not the time of hierarchical submission, but of walking in the parades together.

Let us open a parenthesis. Fancy phrases, such as “equality,” “belonging,” or “democracy,” should not impede one’s side vision as blinkers. Nationalism, constructed as a concrete ideology of homogeneity, has its own dark side, even when it shows itself within the festive enthusiasm of celebrations. Ernest Renan, Breton philosopher and writer, suggests that:

Forgetting, and I would even say historical error, are essential factors in the creation of a nation; in this, the progress of historical studies is often danger

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<sup>134</sup> Falasca-Zamponi, p.47.

<sup>135</sup> Mosse, p.2.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Canetti, p.32.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

for nationalité. Historical investigation, in effect brings to light the facts of violence, which took place at the origin of all political formations... Unity is always brutally created.<sup>139</sup>

When hegemony favors homogeneity, the *others* face exclusion, assimilation, or extinction. Let us close the parenthesis.

A ritual commemoration, as said above, sets an organic and democratic link between past and present; a link, which explains the reasons for the symbolic use of ancestors in national celebrations. “Someone in the distant past,” who has become the object of worshipping during festivals, “comes to feel as close to a person as their immediate neighbors. ‘Women who carried cannonballs on their shoulders’ during the War of Independence in Turkey... can stir up personal sentiments and feelings of connectedness some seventy years later.”<sup>140</sup> Such symbolic content stirs up the feelings of unity and belonging that hold the nation together:

For participants, it was the symbolic content which took priority, the ritual expression of a shared worship that was so crucial to their sense of belonging. A written description or even a view of these ceremonies cannot capture the uplift which came from actual participation. Mass ceremonial, public festivals, and the “hours of worship” provided by the party were the concise realization of a new political religion.<sup>141</sup>

Such national celebrations based on the shared symbols of national belonging are a part of the efforts to construct “a supra-class national identity,”<sup>142</sup> above all resentments and conflicts in the society. Ritualized celebrations of national foundation or independence conceal socioeconomic differences and clashes of a state behind the veil of “shared ideology and fundamental harmony.”<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Ernest Renan cited in Matt K. Matsuda, *The Memory of the Modern* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.206.

<sup>140</sup> Çınar, p.372.

<sup>141</sup> Mosse, p.207.

<sup>142</sup> de Grazia, p.2.

<sup>143</sup> Kook, p.154.

In this national harmony, citizens, regardless of their different classes or genders, gather around “a nationalist ideology that made consensus on the basis of patriotism. Indeed, by fostering an idea of the nation as extralocal community and by giving ordinary people the opportunity for local expression of national feeling... celebrations... literally and figuratively papered over the disturbing class resentments.”<sup>144</sup> Therefore, during national festivals, “a time of unity” is evoked, making the participating citizens “leave the conflicts of the present behind and return to a common origin in the past.”<sup>145</sup> No matter how diversified the population is, celebrations present a utopia of unity and togetherness. The national sentiments promoted in the festivals break the boundaries of locality and create a discourse of national umbrella under which strangers, often with conflicting interests, come together around the same feelings, ideas, and goals.

Festivals, not only in new but also in established regimes, are used to create an illusion of unity among the population. Elites try to utilize this unifying function of the rituals. Festivals might become a glue to hold the disunited society together, a stage to create a new history with new memories, especially in new nations. The fragility of new nations “intensif[ies] the commemorative efforts. If the conflicts of the present seem[s] intractable, the past offer[s] a screen on which desires for unity and continuity, that is, identity, [can] be projected.”<sup>146</sup>

However, no process of creation advances perfectly. Despite the fact that national celebrations are largely controlled by the nation state, festivals remain versatile occasions. The celebrants, usually dominated by state action, appear in

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<sup>144</sup> David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes* (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), p.18.

<sup>145</sup> von Geldern, p.43.

<sup>146</sup> John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.9.

celebrations as agents who create a divergence from the perfect picture in the state elite's minds.

### Educating Celebrants as Appropriate Citizens

In spite of their agency, non-elite people have usually been perceived by the nation state as citizens to be molded and educated. To wit, national celebration is a part of *civic training*. In Nazi Germany, the belief was that “the nationalization of the masses” could only be realized by creating the suitable cultural sphere in which citizens could be shaped by the political regime claiming to be “the true self-representation of the people.”<sup>147</sup> Especially in new regimes, the values and principles of which are still alien to the citizens, education becomes more necessary.

Through collective symbols in national celebrations, the nation state depicts the model identity for the national citizens. The presentations passing in the parade, the speeches made, poems read are all symbolic guidelines of how a citizen should be.

Among the festive tools with which the nation state communicates its basic ideology and the model of citizen it prefers, speeches in national celebrations deserve special attention. A good example is the Tenth Year Speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on the tenth anniversary of the Turkish Republic. In his speech, Mustafa Kemal expressed the characteristics of the Turkish people, to wit what he expected from Turkish citizens. According to him, the goal of reaching the level of modern nations would be accomplished by the Turkish nation, made up of “hardworking,” “intelligent” people with “high character,” following “positive

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<sup>147</sup> Mosse, p.207.

science” and loving “fine arts.”<sup>148</sup> The speech signifies the ideal identity that the early Turkish Republic desired to see in its citizens. This model identity is symmetric to and suitable for the dominant ideology henceforth.

Additionally, national celebrations create a suitable sphere for the elite not only to “guide” the masses towards national identity, but also to repeat and remind the presence of the state. Srirupa Roy, a political scientist, in her horizon-expanding article about republic day commemorations in India and Turkey, argues about the augmented visibility of the state in the celebrations and the dependent presence of the people in the public as celebrants:

“[N]ationalizing the public” and “seeing the state” were the dominant practices of republican commemorations in [India and Turkey]. The public came into existence not as a “state-free” autonomous space of rational-critical discourse, but was instead performed as a nation-statist artifact, imprinted with visible signs of the state and official nationalist fantasies.<sup>149</sup>

Therefore, at least in the examples of India and Turkey, the state has appeared as the dominant entity in national festivals, and the public as a part of the performance organized by the state.

Although state-sponsored, nationalism is an ideology that gathers people under its umbrella with their own consent, above all kinds of inequalities and contradictions. Supra-class national identity acts like a curtain before people’s eyes hiding state hegemony and socioeconomic inequality. National festivals provide the stage and apparatus to create this supra-class national identity. And the parade of the national festival is the podium, where the drama of national equality is publicly performed.

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<sup>148</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, “Onuncu Yıl Nutku,” Available [online] at <http://tr.wikisource.org> [30 June 2007].

<sup>149</sup> Roy, p.227.

## The Gendered Parade

If national celebration is a street theatre, in which all presentations are performed outdoor, the parade is the traveling part of it, touring the streets of the city to its spectators. The best part is no audience has to pay for it.

The parade of a national festival is a constellation of symbols. Children in folkloric clothes, presentations of a victorious war, boy scouts in their bodily masculinity, people passing in a militaristic order... All elements of the passage are symbols representing core values of the nation state remembered and celebrated. Among many others, the basic symbolic element of the parade is the route. The streets of passage, the monuments in sight, and the statues of wreath-laying, all have symbolic meanings for the nation. The parade is like a traveling gallery of national symbols.

As a good illustration, Srirupa Roy describes “the symbolic significance of the parade” of the Republic Day in the early Republican Turkey:

The symbolic significance of the parade, however, lay in its route – its mapping of the “symbolic landscape” of the new nation as it passed by the Parliament building, the headquarters of Atatürk’s Republican People’s Party, the memorials on Atatürk Boulevard, and the presidential palace – as much as in its final destination.<sup>150</sup>

Here the Parliament signifies the distance from monarchy and dedication to republicanism. Passing by the Party reveals the new hegemonic force of the new state. Naming the Boulevard after Atatürk is homage to the founding figure of Turkey and an early marker of his idolization. And choosing the presidential palace as the “final destination” makes it very clear where the real authority lies.

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<sup>150</sup> Roy, p.220.

As the example above bolsters, parades are like fashion displays of political regimes, exhibiting the ideology in vogue. The high visual-ness of the parade helps the regime express its basic principles easily both to the outer and inner audience. For example, the predominance of military staff in the processions reveals the state's leaning towards the military. Or the existence of figures such as olive branches or white pigeons is a way of showing the world the pacific attitude of the state. The excessiveness of state figures walking in the parade is, with high possibility, a symbol of the "omnipresence" of the state in every domain of life in that country, from whose streets the national parade passes.

Parades are, very importantly, instruments for popular inclusion. Samuel Northrup Harper suggests that, in Soviet Russia, individuals' participation in national festivals' parades en masse were specially promoted in order to "put [the whole community] into the spirit of the occasion."<sup>151</sup> That is how national celebrations gain the magnitude and importance of a mass movement. The participation of the people is necessary for the creation of national belonging and the rejuvenation of the collectivity. In order for "national regeneration," "men's minds and hearts ha[s] to be renewed by new festivals,"<sup>152</sup> which can be attained through the inclusion of these minds and hearts in the occasion. It is the only way for the individuals to consciously and voluntarily put the occasion and what it symbolizes into their memories.

Nevertheless, the nation state seems to be keener on perceiving the participants of the parades as symbols, rather than as influential co-partners in collective memory creation. In national celebrations, even the celebrants turn into symbols passing within the fashion display of their nation.

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<sup>151</sup> Harper, p.234.

<sup>152</sup> Mosse, p.99.



Every regime has a model identity for its citizens. And every identity has its own visual part. The model citizen not only should abide by the ideology of his/her nation or perform his/her citizenship duties fittingly, but also should look how the nation state wants him/her to look. The strict style of the clothes of the Nazi period, short hair for the women of career in early Republican Turkey, the image of healthiness for a new regime's children illustrated in red cheeks... All these bodily symbols connote political meanings. Let us speculate. Strict clothes showed Nazi Germany's preference of military discipline; short hair was the symbol for the defeminization of the women in public; and the image of healthy children is a direct reference to the regime's novelty and well-being. And in a national parade, all pass as the symbols of the nation. The main figure of any parade is the human body, thus the main symbol.

People in national celebrations carry not only national symbols (such as clothes, short hair styles, medals, or red cheeks), but also their own gender as a symbol. "The state institutes[s] a politics of the body that render[s] the individual body a public site whose purpose [is] to further the larger social organism."<sup>153</sup> Male and female citizens walk in triumphal parades of their nation with their genders on themselves as national symbols. The difference between gender roles in the society leads to assignment of different roles to men and women in national festivals and parades. The exhibition of young, healthy men would suit Nazi Germany's obsession with high masculinity and Arian race. Or the passage of female pilots on Turkish Republic Day would prove the new republic's bestowal of rights to women.

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<sup>153</sup> Terri J. Gordon, "Fascism and the Female Form: Performance Art in the Third Reich," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, no. 1/2 (January/April 2002), p.164.

In national celebrations, as well as in every sphere of life, the female body is a more commonly used symbol than the male one. The reasons might be hidden in the subconscious of human beings; nevertheless, the path is clear. Daily ethics and political ideologies, shampoo advertisements and nation building projects accessorize it with objects and use the female body for their specific causes, either as a symbol of depraved immodesty, or by chadors, or with beautiful hair, or as enlightened co-nationals.

In national propaganda, women are emblematically used to denote the principles, ideals, and values of the nation state and the social roles ascribed to female citizens. For instance, in Nazi Germany, “the notion of the healthy body as a microcosm for the healthy state was reiterated in the images of the “sacred wife and mother” in officially sanctioned art and promoted in a vast propaganda campaign enjoining women to lend their bodies to the movement to maintain the vitality of the race.”<sup>154</sup> In a specific realm of state propaganda, in national festivals, women walk in the parades symbolizing the modernization efforts of the state, read heroic poems emphasizing emotional nationalism, or wear folkloric clothes to stress the bonds with history.

Festivals are perfect tools for manipulation. Through the narrative, the organization, the events, and *invented* ideas and sentiments, festivals are used as means for the construction of ideas, feelings, attachments, memories: namely, identities. Nevertheless, acknowledgement of such a construction should not lead one to regard the governing elite, the organizer of official festivals, as the sole actor that has the power to affect and determine the memories of the masses.

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<sup>154</sup> Gordon, p.165.

The departure from national celebrations makes it easier to regard the collective memory as national memory; however, it also prepares the trap of exaggerating the agency of the nation state. Yet, the state is indeed a hegemonic actor; on some occasions and in some contexts, it “never stops talking.”<sup>155</sup> Nevertheless, the role of the nation state in creating memory should neither be underestimated nor over-emphasized.

The manipulative force of the nation state on identity should not shadow other causal elements of collective memory. More importantly, claiming the uniqueness of the state in the memory business is ignorance of the agency of all the people that have participated in and remembered the national festivals. People are indeed shaped through national commemorations; however, not only into appropriate citizens but also into agents of political action, figures of popular sovereignty, and members of a whole:

...we can still hold that the masses ‘remained mute, uncomprehending witnesses to the great achievements of the age of elite politics,’... Such a statement, however, need not imply a denial that the new politics provided a meaningful involvement for many of these ‘mute’ masses... the new politics did crystallize what is sometimes vaguely called public opinion, usually conveyed only through discussion of what the newspapers printed... Through the new politics many people were formed in this way into an organized political force which certainly expressed their shared longings for order, happiness, and national unity.<sup>156</sup>

Howsoever the state is hegemonic; no festival is celebrated without human beings.

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<sup>155</sup> Corrigan and Sayer, p.3.

<sup>156</sup> Mosse, p.210.

## Commemorating the Nation, Remembering the Commemoration:

### “The Public Rituals of the People”

In analyzing the celebrations in the earlier American Republic, Simon Newman argues that “in the festivals, rites, and symbols of popular politics, ordinary Americans played a vital role... helping create a new way of doing politics.”<sup>157</sup> It is what George L. Mosse calls “the new politics.” Mass democracy replaced the elite rule. It is the epoch of popular sovereignty and “the new politics attempt[s] to draw the people into active participation in the national mystique through rites and festivals, myths and symbols which [give] a concrete expression to the general will.”<sup>158</sup> Such a view gives ordinary people a say in the functioning and “regularization of popular political culture.”<sup>159</sup> This view also acknowledges that festivals are not irrelevant events external to people’s lives, but directly involved in the lives of the people. “National anniversaries function as a symbolic vehicle for the production of a sense of the past, but one in which many people have an actual or potential stake.”<sup>160</sup> The acknowledgement of this “stake” enables one to incorporate “ordinary” people into the story.

The governing elite try to impose their ideas on the “mass” of people through the symbolism of national festivals. They attempt to control, constrain, and manipulate people by assuring mass participation in the celebrations. However, reactions from the people and the outcomes that come into the light have always

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<sup>157</sup> Newman, p.9.

<sup>158</sup> Mosse, p.2.

<sup>159</sup> Newman, p.186.

<sup>160</sup> Adele Wessel, “Abstract,” in *History Making Making Histories* (Kensington: University of New South Wales, 2000).

been more diverse and unpredictable than what they expect and desire.<sup>161</sup> People are also participatory agents; and their joining makes the collective memory process a diverse and ever-altering one. Therefore, collective memory that is shaped by national rituals should not be considered as a solely state-made product, but as a continuous “co-production” of the people and the state:

...public rituals such as national commemorations are as much “of the state” as they are “of the people.” We may say that “the state” needs “the people” in order to complete the spectacle of republican commemoration. National commemorations are thus better understood as actively negotiated “co-productions” of official as well as civilian actors and structures.<sup>162</sup>

Especially in authoritarian regimes, this partnership might be blurred by the state power. The presence and influence of the people might be veiled by the dominant presence of the state. Nevertheless, people always make a difference with what they remember.

National rituals are primarily “among the main mechanisms through which national history is inscribed into public life, and are instrumental in the *construction of public memory*,”<sup>163</sup> and thus of public sphere. The participants, the audience, even the antagonists form a public sphere around national festive time-spaces. The formality and fixity of the events further reinforces the emergence and continuity of the public realm:

Consequently, a study of ritualized, formal, and state-organized events such as national commemoration days can indeed provide valuable insights about the public sphere. Their quality of “extraordinariness” – their self-nomination as a “day unlike any other” – enables the self-consciousness that abstract publicness requires. At the same time, their simultaneous “ordinariness” – they recur with unfailing regularity every single year – facilitates the naturalization of the public.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> von Geldern, p.209.

<sup>162</sup> Roy, pp.209–210.

<sup>163</sup> Çınar, p.371.

<sup>164</sup> Roy, p.208.

In their public spheres, celebrants participate in national commemorations as subjects that have determining force over the course and remembrance of celebrations. For instance, Soviet officials organized festivals in order to depict an ideal pattern for the Soviet citizen. However, they could not totally control the participants' perception and, later, remembering of the festivals. "Celebrations thus contributed to the formation of both official Soviet identities and unofficial and individual points of view,"<sup>165</sup> thus people are agents creating their own personal and collective memories.

No memory can be realized without a recollecting brain. No brain or collectivity of brains is without history, so no memory is history-less. "The group's memory is in fact its history,"<sup>166</sup> and vice versa. Collective memory is a historical product that is filtered through individual and collective experiences of the people, and in turn molds their present and future experiences. It is also a historically, temporally, and spatially changing phenomenon that cannot be separated from its context.

It should not be forgotten that memory also has its own classes. Collective memory varies and mutates according to "gender, ethnicity, class, religion or other salient factors, allowing for a multiplicity, and possible conflict, or memories in any society."<sup>167</sup> The multiplicity of collective memories goes parallel with their peculiarity to any group. As Pierre Nora suggests, in a community, "there are as

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<sup>165</sup> Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), p.203.

<sup>166</sup> Nora, "The Era of Commemoration," in *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past/Volume III: Symbols* (under the direction of Pierre Nora) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.), p.626.

<sup>167</sup> van Dyke and Alcock, p.2.

many memories as there are groups.”<sup>168</sup> Blacks in South Africa remember differently from the white South Africans, or women from men.

However, does not this multiplicity contradict with the efforts of the nation state to create a one, total, uniform collective memory? Can the state incorporate both the minorities and the majority, the poor and the rich, the women and the men in its collective identity formulation? Do these groups of people simultaneously remember the same?

The collective memory constructed by the state coexists with multiple collective memories sharing elements with, diverging from, or struggling with the big, one, national collective memory. In this thesis, such memories are called living collective memories. Contrary to constructivist historical efforts, these memories are alive, flowering, and ever-altering. They survive against the totalizing manipulations of the nation state. Once the multiple memories find the chance to escape from the yoke of state construction, they become limitless, affected by geographical and climatic context, the cuisine, personal relations, everything.

Just like the state-sponsored one, the living collective memories are also reinforced and gained permanence through commemorations. Celebrations are not only manipulated occasions in the purpose of creating a total collective memory, they are also events on their behalf, watched, participated, or protested by the people. Individual and group memories maintain a number of photographic shots from the commemorations that their owners have experienced. The photographs are taken, looked at, shared, and run off copies, a path towards the permanence and commonness of memory:

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<sup>168</sup> Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” p.3.

A wide range of formal and informal commemorations fuels the vitality of collective memory... Through these commemorative rituals, groups create, articulate, and negotiate their shared memories of particular events... [T]he recurrence of commemorative performances, contributes to an overall sense of continuity of collective memory.<sup>169</sup>

In other words, commemorations regenerate collective memory. In turn, the collectivity is further reinforced through memorial regeneration.

Collective memory is a battlefield of struggling forces: a participating public vs. a dominating authority, remembering people vs. a reminding state, living memories vs. constructed history. There is, on the one hand, memory, alive and fragile, on the other hand, history trying to freeze and distort the memory. “Memory is life” that binds people to “the eternal present,” whereas history is the problematic “reconstruction” of “what is no longer.”<sup>170</sup> In between, there is the festival, both acquired as a living memoir and manipulated as a historical fact.

### The Festival

The living agents, the state elite and the celebrants, even non-celebrants, are more or less appreciated in the literature as agents in memory/identity formation process in the realm of national festivals. Nevertheless, there is one more actor that should be counted: the festival itself. The “spatial,” “textual,” “figurative,” and “auditive” character of the festivals “makes it possible to seize individuals through their senses and transform them” and what they remember.<sup>171</sup> What really matters for collective memory is the transfer process that makes the collective remembering possible, and

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<sup>169</sup> Yael Zerubavel, pp.5–6.

<sup>170</sup> Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” p.3.

<sup>171</sup> Stéphane Gerson, *The Pride of Place: Local Memories and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), p.109.



this process is definitely progressed through the agency of ritual performances,<sup>172</sup> which are characterized by both repetitive monotony and flexible malleability.

### Repetition and Monotony

Evolution is repetition. In the universe, everything is repeated almost infinitely as if a never-ending process of trial and error is going on toward an ultimate aim, if any.<sup>173</sup> The coming of summer after spring, the sunset, the ebb and tide, and the same bacteria causing the same disease in different people... Some scientists claim that the Big Bang, the possible trigger of the universe, has been repeated many times. Perhaps, the universe, in every mistake, starts the process of evolution from the very beginning in order to reach the perfect.<sup>174</sup> The path that the universe employs towards accomplishing its goals is repetition.

It is the same path that the festivals take. The same historical day is celebrated again and again for years, even for centuries. The goal is for the people to collectively remember what is celebrated.

According to Paul Connerton, the commemorative ceremonies, being performances, are inevitably encircled by the “concept of habit,” which brings out “bodily automatism;” and the result is “inertia.”<sup>175</sup> As time flows, festivals and the people around are caught by inertia. A festival, celebrated many times in the same manner, could not be expected to engender the same festive enthusiasm in the celebrants. In addition, not every time, celebrations are consciously used by the

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<sup>172</sup> Connerton, p.36.

<sup>173</sup> Tahir M. Ceylan, “Madde Cahildir,” *Cumhuriyet-Bilim ve Teknoloji*, no.1059 (6 July 2007), p.8.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8.

<sup>175</sup> Connerton, pp.4–5.

nation state as tools of manipulation. Festivals seem to get free of their functionality, *ex tempore*.

But then why does the monotony and fixity of festivals not drag them to oblivion, a concept looks befitting to inertia? That is because festivals are more than arenas of state construction or intervals of non-daily enthusiasm. Rituals have the feature of inertia in their characters. Inertia has its own rhythm. And festive rhythm is ingrained in people's minds, habituated as a collective memory.

Correspondingly, Anastasia Karakasidou regards what Connerton calls "inertia" as "rhythm." According to Karakasidou, rituals that remain unaltered as a result of repetition gain the feature of rhythm, which gives the rituals the gift of illusionary authenticity.<sup>176</sup>

In the casting and performance of an authentic historical event, its reproduction, however inauthentic, nevertheless invokes the "aura" of that original event... A (national) spiritual illumination is fostered not necessarily through authenticity, but through rhythmic and repetitive, uniformed and detailed spectacles of ritualized performance commemorating the nation.<sup>177</sup>

Then, "repetitive ritual action," thus the unaltered festival, guarantees the "continuity of national collectivity" by proving both the authenticity of the commemoration as a true copy and that of the original event commemorated.<sup>178</sup> The proved genuineness of a national heroic event and the unaltered celebration of it...

The repetition, by its very nature, co-exists with monotony. The researcher of any national festival might well be accustomed to uniform newspaper accounts, almost similar programs, and never-changing route of parades. Samuel N. Harper suggests that this monotony might be beneficial for the leaders:

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<sup>176</sup> Karakasidou, p.232.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., p.231, 235.

To the outside reader there is a monotony in the reports of these meetings as they appear in the Soviet press. There is a marked uniformity, and there is not much variation from year to year except in the matter of emphasis... This uniformity is useful, however, in that it generalizes the emphasis which has been decided upon by the leaders; a particularly important slogan may thus be brought before all groups systematically and, it would seem, also effectively.<sup>179</sup>

Nevertheless, the only implications about festive repetition are not that monotony makes it easier to notice diversions or differences, or that uniformity creates the perceptions of continuity with the past. Rites also “explicit[ly] claim to be commemorating such a continuity.”<sup>180</sup> Thus, rites commemorate themselves. That is why not only organizers, participants, or audience, but also the event matters.

#### Fixity vs. Flexibility

Rituals create collective memory out of festive inertia. Repetition provides memorial settlement through fixed commemoration. Nevertheless, this fixity does not pose an obstacle against the malleability of the past. As discussed in the state construction section, authorities, especially the nation state, try to mold the past and the festivals in order to achieve their contemporary goals. Thus, it should be accepted that the past is malleable (through national commemorations, in this case) and the festivals are fixed but utilizably flexible.

Festivals are both fixed and flexible; but what about the collective memory? Not every element in the past and in collective memory is open to change and

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<sup>179</sup> Harper, p.237.

<sup>180</sup> Connerton, p.48.

manipulation. It should be admitted “both that the past is malleable and that it is fixed:”<sup>181</sup>

Some scholars, though they do not deny the busy process of construction and reconstruction, resist any implication that memory entrepreneurs have a blank slate. Past events often seem to exercise some nontrivial constraint on collective memory.<sup>182</sup>

Therefore, some fragments of memory struggle against malleability and resist changing. For instance, a city that was once cosmopolitan can preserve its pre-national memories, even against the memory endeavors of an authority that burnt down the city’s cosmopolitanism. Some “fixed continuity with past” disturbs the memorial project of the state. Besides, the acceptance of the absolute malleability of the past, thus memory, would give the state, the foremost history manipulator, the monopoly to create collective memory.

All commemorations are inherently paradoxical. All oscillate between utopian joy and orderly monotony, purposeful flexibility and blind fixity, “festive spontaneity”<sup>183</sup> and strict state organization. They involve people as actors, but reduce them to symbols. They almost worship the past, their existential origin, but want to relegate it to the concerns of the present. Pierre Nora illustrates the commemoration of the Bicentennial of the French Revolution as torn “between the awareness of distance and desire to abolish it... between stiff conservation and the embrace of the future, between fidelity to the message and the need to adapt to the needs of the present.”<sup>184</sup>

Although the Bicentennial, as all other commemorations, was full of tensions and contradictions, it was joyful, reminding, persuading, and perceptually sacred.

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<sup>181</sup> Spillman, p.162.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., p.165, with reference to Eviatar Zerubavel.

<sup>183</sup> Nora, “The Era of Commemoration,” p.611.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

Commemorations are like plays, both created and real, persuading even its author of its authenticity. Last words are from Paul Connerton, who brilliantly expresses that a commemoration is:

... more than a story told – it was *a cult enacted*. It was a rite fixed and performed. Its story was told not unequivocally in the past tense of a metaphysical present... Above all, it was through acts performed at a sacred site that the illusion of mundane time was suspended... It was at this site that temporal difference was denied and the existence of the same, the “true” and “authentic” reality, was annually disclosed.<sup>185</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

Construction is inevitable. However, many scholars have gone beyond the biased perception of one-dimensional constitution. The construction of collective memory might exist, not as a mere elite project, but as the combination of many forces: elite power, economic conditions, popular culture, festive character, and the “spirit of the time.” This chapter has analyzed three causal origins of collective memory in separate subchapters: the nation state, the people, and the commemoration. However, these three causes do not present three non-intersecting spheres, but on the contrary, have overlapping features. Therefore, the author of this thesis offers her excuses for any repetitions among the subchapters. Nevertheless, studying on collective memory has made it clear that repetition reinforces remembering.

The main question of this thesis is how the memorial power relationship between the people and the elite has been constructed in Izmir, around the commemoration of September 9. To what extent the elite have controlled the organization and celebration of the festival, thus the memories belonging to it? To

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<sup>185</sup> Connerton, p.43.

what extent public culture could flourish and survive despite the official commemoration, creating and preserving different memories?

In the thesis, the festival of September 9 is analyzed as a totality that has been manipulated and influenced by both political elite and ordinary people, that has been determined by the political, historical, spatial/temporal, and local context, and that has reciprocally manipulated and shaped its context and its attendants. Theoretically, situating an approach that puts the elite project in the center against a story that ordinary people are important as agents seems very problematic. Thus, it is preferred to use a hybrid approach, in which the ruling elite, the ruled people, the festival, and the urban context are both agents. Effort is made to combine the extent of elite construction to understand to what extent the collective identity/memory of the people have been constructed by official discourse and action in the festivals of September 9, with the extent of human presence, to what extent Izmirians have recreated themselves, their social environment and identities, and affected the remembering of September 9.

Both viewpoints have a location in the story of national commemorations. Such an approach (not combination or opposition but a symbiosis of constructivist approach and an outlook emphasizing popular participation) has hopefully added a critical stance to the thesis, which keeps the study away from national constructivism and/or nationalistic inferences. It is believed that the paradigm of “functional rituals” should be passed over, as the invention does not always become what the inventor wants it to become. “Whether or not it represented the objective truth, celebration discourse [also] shape[...] social realities as it was [being] shaped by them.”<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Petrone, p.1.

CHAPTER III  
CITIZENS BEHIND WIRE FENCES:  
SEPTEMBER 9 AS A STATE-SPONSORED FESTIVAL IN THE EARLY  
REPUBLICAN TURKEY

On September 9, 1922, the Turkish army entered Izmir, and regained the control of the city, which had been invaded by Greek forces. The day, September 9, was officially selected as a commemorative event, on which the independence of Izmir was celebrated since 1923.

This chapter explores the official celebrations of September 9 with emphasis on the state organization of the festival. The festival of September 9 is analyzed as a tool in the new Republican elite's hand, a device to construct and entrench the ideology of the new nation in people's heads. Within the festival, the nation state symbolically exhibited the ideal model identity for the new Turkish citizen. The repetitive use of the national symbols in the festival was instrumental in creating a national history and a derivative collective memory, around which all citizens would gather.

The period of study is the early Republican Turkey, from its foundation in 1923 to the end of the 1940s. This time interval has been picked as the period that this chapter covers, because the early years of Republican Turkey was a period in which the efforts to define and create the national identity and to impose it on the citizens were at the peak. These efforts to construct a national citizenship identity coincided with the intense manipulation of collective memory. Therefore, the first thirty-years of Republican Turkey were a concentrated period of identity and memory construction, which makes it qualified to be studied.

The period, which started with major shifts in population due to the war and population exchange, was demographically stabilized in later decades. While in 1927 the population was approximated to be 256, 005,<sup>187</sup> in 1935 it rose to 596,850.<sup>188</sup> The 1927 census estimated that 95.32% of Izmir's population was composed of Muslims;<sup>189</sup> in 1935, 250 Izmirians out of 10,000 were non-Muslims.<sup>190</sup> In 1927, there were 501,379 Muslim, 6394 Christian, 18,157 Jewish people living in Izmir.<sup>191</sup> The same census counted only 20 Armenian people in Izmir, 15 men and 5 women.<sup>192</sup> As a quotidian indicator, while in 1927 1,439 Izmirians got married, the number climbed up to 1,792 in 1936 and to 2,406 in 1940.<sup>193</sup>

An analysis of the commemoration of Izmir's Independence Day in the early Republican Turkey indicates that the official festival of September 9 was a very orderly organized and hierarchical celebration dominated by the presence of the state. Monotonously repeated festivals, with a never-changing program, hosted the state endeavors to educate and unite the citizens. The early Republican state desired to construct a monophonic society based on the one-ness of ethnicity, ideology, and memory. Through the symbolism in the celebrations, the new Turkish state attempted to create citizens that were unified in national identity/memory, following the hegemonic ideology, walking in the parades as the gendered symbols of the nation,

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<sup>187</sup> 28 Teşrinievvel 1927 Umumi Nüfus Tahriri, Fasikül III: Usuller, Kanun ve Talimatnameler, Neticelerin Tahlihi (Ankara: Başvekâlet Müdevvenat Matbaası, 1929), p.11.

<sup>188</sup> 1935 Genel Nüfus Sayımı Harita ve Grafik Albümü (İstanbul: İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü Devlet Basımevi, 1938).

<sup>189</sup> 28 Teşrinievvel 1927 Umumi Nüfus Tahriri, Fasikül III, p.62.

<sup>190</sup> 1935 Genel Nüfus Sayımı Harita ve Grafik Albümü.

<sup>191</sup> 28 Teşrinievvel 1927 Umumi Nüfus Tahriri, Fasikül I: Mufassal Neticeler, İcmal Tabloları (Ankara: Hüsniyatı Matbaası, 1929), p.54.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Nüfus Hareketleri İstatistiği (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık İstatistik Genel Müdürlüğü Kitaplığı, 1941), p.9.



and obediently standing behind virtual or real wire fences, which separate the audience from the state spectacle.

### A Homogenous Society of Nationally Enthusiastic Citizens:

#### Unity and Identity

The state is one of the leading actors trying to shape the social and political identities of the people. Most identities created by the state are the result of efforts to control and define the people and establish the borders of the state power. It is always easier to control and govern a defined community of identified individuals. Rituals are the perfect tools to create identifications for the ruled population. All government organizations “make use of rituals in order to bond people to each other, to the ruling hierarchy, and other things related to the past and the future.”<sup>194</sup>

The “commemorative efforts” to create a national identity are usually more pronounced and intense in new nations.<sup>195</sup> First, novelty offers a state a morsel of empty land to be filled with a new history and collective memory. The new state has to create a new national history that will separate it from the former regime, satisfy the needs of the regime, and come into terms with people’s interests. Second, novelty generally means an environment of crisis to be ended immediately and an un-established order to be regulated as soon as possible. Efforts have to be made to terminate the non-integrity of the society, to construct an identity for the new nation, and to ensure the stability of the new regime. In the face of the unmanageable

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<sup>194</sup> Donnan and Wilson, p.120.

<sup>195</sup> Gillis, p.9.

problems of the present, the commemorated past “offer[s] a screen on which desires for unity and continuity, that is, identity, [can] be projected.”<sup>196</sup>

The newly founded Turkey, as almost all new nation states, had a memorial projection for its people. By using the symbolism in national celebrations as reminders of national victories, the early Republic tried to create a visible and “an audible past,”<sup>197</sup> that would gather the new citizens under the “tent” of national unity with national enthusiasm in their hearts. The date of national memory for Izmir was September 9, the last day of the War of Independence. September 9 was used by the nation state as a date of commemoration that would “build a national consciousness”<sup>198</sup> in Izmirians and yield a national definition for new Turkey.

The analysis of September 9 programs and newspaper reports on the festivals reveals the fact that the elite demanded to create nationally enthusiastic people complying with the state rules, following elite advice, and passively watching the state procession in national celebrations, but actively defending the national ideology.

The rituals are among the most efficacious instruments with which to create nationalist enthusiasm in people’s hearts. As George Mosse suggests, “men’s minds and hearts had to be renewed by new festivals as an expression of national regeneration.”<sup>199</sup> The Republican Turkey, in its early years, portrayed the perfect citizen as the one that had the nationalist euphoria in heart and nationalist ideals in mind. “On May 23, 1927, the TBMM passed Law Nr 1041. ‘Those Ottoman subjects who had stayed outside Turkey during the Independence War,’ and had not returned

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<sup>196</sup> Gillis, p.9.

<sup>197</sup> Jonathan Sterne cited in Meltem Ahıska, *Radyonun Sihirli Kapısı: Garbiyatçılık ve Politik Öznellik* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2005), p.16.

<sup>198</sup> Falasca-Zamponi, p.47.

<sup>199</sup> Mosse, p.99.

since then would lose their citizenship.”<sup>200</sup> The new Turkey wanted its citizens to have experienced the glory of the national war and to have felt the excitement of national victory. Every measure was taken to provide this excitement. The early Republic demanded from its citizens to participate in September 9 celebrations with nationalist excitement in their hearts, remembering with pride and tears that “Izmir had been the last field of the fight of heroes on 9 September 1922.”<sup>201</sup>

As suppliers of national enthusiasm, festivals are perfect occasions by which to conceal and even forget social conflicts and differences. National celebrations form an emotional umbrella of togetherness creating a utopian world of equality among the participants. As Rebecca Kook expresses, “ritualized celebrations of independence help mask troubling ambiguities and contradictions in both new and established states, overlaying real social and political conflict with a conceptual veneer of shared ideology and fundamental harmony.”<sup>202</sup> The reality of social conflict is camouflaged in the utopian course of festivals by an illusion of harmony.

The program and the parade of the September 9 festival were not only nourished by this aura of unity and solidarity, but also designed to show this “reality.” In other words, September 9, as other festivals of the early Turkish Republic, created a stage on which the idea of unity could be seen and recreated. Celebrations became “secularized religions,” in which symbols and myths were used to establish bonds both within society and between the past and the present.<sup>203</sup> Through the creation and depiction of national myths and symbols in the rituals, “the

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<sup>200</sup> Çağaptay, p.71.

<sup>201</sup> “*Izmir, Dokuz Eylül’de, kahramanlar döğüşünün son meydanı oldu,*” *Fikirler*, 15 September 1942, p.6, from the article of Garra Sarmat.

<sup>202</sup> Kook, p.154.

<sup>203</sup> Mosse, p.2.

chaotic crowd of the ‘people’ became a mass movement which shared a belief in popular unity through a national mystique.”<sup>204</sup>

An article published in *Büyük Gazete* on August 30, 1928 mentions the frustrations and sufferings that Turkish nation had collectively experienced during the War of Independence.<sup>205</sup> According to the article, the collective memory of those sufferings united the Turkish nation and pushed them towards “adding new pages of joy and civilization to Turkish history.” Now, not the memory of grief and sorrow, but “the following of the great harbinger of the fortunate revolution, Atatürk, congregate[d] Turkish people around the future of new triumphs.” It is clear that the article presented the “hurt” of a traumatic event that was collectively experienced, “a chosen trauma,”<sup>206</sup> as the element of “national mystique” that would unify the Turkish nation.

The press was crucial in the creation of the “national mystique” by propagating the idea of national unity and solidarity. Most of the literature on the adoption of festivals stresses the suggestion that the press plays a vital role in transmitting the idea, information, and “soul” of the festival to ordinary people. Simon P. Newman analyzed the relationship between “the early national press and emerging national festive culture” in the early American Republic. The analysis might be helpful to understand the Turkish case generally, and the case of September 9 particularly:

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<sup>204</sup> Mosse, p.2.

<sup>205</sup> “*Bugün 9 Eylül ve bu mukaddes hatırayı tesit ederken eski kara günlerin acılarından ve hüsrانlarından başka dimağımızda hiçbir şey yok. Çünkü o tarihten beri her gün Türk tarihine bir saadet ve medeniyet sahifesi ilave eden Türk Cumhuriyeti; vasil Türk halkı, mesud inkılabın büyük mübeşşiri büyük Gazisi peşinden gidiyor. Her gün yeni bir zafer elde ediyor,*” *Büyük Gazete*, 30 August 1928, p.3, from the article of the editor, Zeki Cemal, *İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Ahmet Piriştina Kent Arşivi ve Müzesi*.

<sup>206</sup> Volkan and Itzkowitz, p.7.

The rites and festivals of the new republic and the expansion of popular print culture... went hand-in-hand. Festive culture required both participants and an audience, and by printing and reprinting accounts of July Fourth celebrations and the like newspapers contributed to a greatly enlarged sense of audience... This sharing of information made possible the emergence of a common national language of ritual activity. This symbiotic relationship between the early national press and an emerging national festive culture furnished the people who mounted, participated in, and watched these rites and festivals with an awareness that they were acting on both a local and national stage.<sup>207</sup>



Figure 1: “The Sublime Veteran, the youth is indebted to you for this day,” a scene from a September 9 celebration, date uncertain.<sup>208</sup>

By publishing the programs and summaries of national celebrations, the national press *advertised* national rituals and spread the atmosphere that was tried to be created at these rituals at least among newspaper readers, in the early years of the Republic. The population became informed of the *new nationalist drama* of which they were also a part through newspapers, in the absence of any other technology of

<sup>207</sup> Newman, p.3.

<sup>208</sup> “Yüce gazi, gençliğe bu günü gösterdin,” İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Ahmet Piriştina Kent Arşivi ve Müzesi, d.gül-beş.görsel.

mass communication. Becoming aware of the whole, to which they were a member, consolidated the belief in nationalist unity-solidarity.



Figure 2: A newspaper announcement for the festival of September 9: "The people of beautiful Izmir, we congratulate your Independence Day."<sup>209</sup>

The festival of September 9 was "reported on such a large scale and with such enthusiasm in the early national press"<sup>210</sup> that the attendance at the ceremonies was high and the arousal of nationalistic sentiments was solid. The interaction between the people and the press in the context of national celebrations created an aura of unity, a feeling of togetherness, and an illusion of active participation.

The theme of unity and solidarity was parallel to the national spirit of the time. It was a period of official endeavor for ethnic homogeneity and ideological unity. The nation state took serious steps towards the ethnic homogeneity of Izmir. The biggest step was the exchange of populations with the Greek state, based on the Treaty of Lausanne. Between 1923 and 1927, almost one and a half million Greek Izmirians were sent to Greece in return for nearly five hundred thousand Muslim

<sup>209</sup> "Güzel İzmirliler, kurtuluş bayramınız mübarek olsun," *Büyük Gazete*, 30 August 1928, p.3, *İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Ahmet Piriştina Kent Arşivi ve Müzesi*.

<sup>210</sup> Newman, p.4.

Turks coming to Izmir from Greece.<sup>211</sup> The result was the ethnic homogenization of Izmir. While in the nineteenth century the demographic proportion of non-Muslim population in Izmir was 61.5%, it diminished to 13.8% in 1927, according to the first census of the Republican Turkey.<sup>212</sup>

Turkish-ness was the ethnic quality that was favored over all others in Turkey. As Çağlar Keyder suggests:

The deserving and victorious Turkish population were presented as distinct from the previous inhabitants of Anatolia; no fusion or mixing could be admitted. In fact, this claim of purity is arguably the most crucial dimension of the nationalist discourse and constitutes its founding myth.<sup>213</sup>

Parallel to the claim of and intensive efforts towards ethnic “purity,” the celebrations of September 9 hosted a concentrated sample of Turkish and, to some extent, Jewish people. Being used to display the “ignominy” of Greeks and Armenians, the festival of September 9 became a suitable ground to defame the other groups living in Turkey, in spite of the decrease in their populations after the national war. The national discourse, centered on the event of September 9, identified Greeks as “imperialist maniacs” and Armenians as “traitors.” They were also blamed for the burning of Izmir after 9 September 1922.<sup>214</sup>

The Jews presented an exception to the ethnic and religious homogeneity among the participants of September 9. *Ahenk* of September 8, 1926 published a very long list of sequence of marching in the Independence Day triumphal parade. The number eighty-two and eighty-three in the sequence were two philanthropic

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<sup>211</sup> Kırılı, p.173.

<sup>212</sup> These percentages are based on the Ottoman census of 1881-1893 and the first Turkish Republican census in 1927. Behar, p.64.

<sup>213</sup> Keyder, p.8.

<sup>214</sup> “*Ermeniler, artık Türkler için hazırladıkları katliamın kendi başlarına geleceğini anladıkları için, şimdiki Kültürpark sahası olan Ermeni ve Rum mahallelerini ateşe vermişlerdi... İşlediklerin suçların büyüklüğünü idrak eden azgın Ermeniler, Türk kılıncına kalmamak için kendilerini evlerinin pencerelerinden ‘Zito Venezelos’ diye bağırarak ateşe atıyorlardı,*” *Yeni Asır*, 9 September 1963, p.10.

associations belonged to Jews: the Jewish Association of Assistance to the Poor and the Jewish Women's Philanthropic Association of Orphanage.<sup>215</sup> Jewish participation in the festival of September 9 was a normal phenomenon in the early Republican Turkey, which might be encountered often in the local press. The reasons for the nation state's "neutral" attitude towards the Jews might be that "unlike the Greeks and Armenians, the Jews had not pursued separatist or nationalist ambitions during the last decades of the Ottomans... [and] [d]uring the Turkish Independence campaign, [they]... again allied with the Turks" against Greeks and Armenians.<sup>216</sup> Besides, "the fact that this holiday was not only celebrated by us, but also acknowledged by 'others,' made it even more recognized."<sup>217</sup>

The oneness and indivisibility of the nation was completed with the oneness of the party in the early years of the Republic. In the early period of the Republic, the party stood at the center of national unity and identity. The press was a perfect means to emphasize this centrality, while the festivals made the perfect setting for it. On September 9, the entire population was reported to have gathered around and shown their allegiance to the party.<sup>218</sup> The stress on centrality and oneness coexisted with the aspirations of the nation state to create a totalizing collective memory.

In a one-party state, the party has all the means to control the masses. Nevertheless, different ways were also required for establishing the "secular religion" in people's minds, while at the same time including them in the national

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<sup>215</sup> *Ahenk*, 8 September 1926, p.3.

<sup>216</sup> *Çağaptay*, p.24.

<sup>217</sup> Arzu Öztürkmen, "Celebrating National Holidays in Turkey: History and Memory," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 25 (Fall 2001), p.58.

<sup>218</sup> "Parti... üyelerinin toplu canlılığı ve uzun müddet devam eden geçişleri İzmir'lilerin parti etrafındaki kaynaşmalarını ifade ediyordu," *Anadolu*, 11 September 1935, p.4.



drama.<sup>219</sup> Even the one-party regime needed advertisement. The festivals prepared the grounds for providing popular support, and, thus, legitimacy for the government's deeds. Therefore, September 9, as other festivals, was used by the elite in order to create the illusion of united participation around an invented sacredness and to achieve a less sacred intention of yielding consent for nation state's policies.



Figure 3: The procession of the People's Party in the September 9 parade of 1935.<sup>220</sup>

During the Second World War, in a 1940 speech on September 9, Atif İnan, the party chairman, emphasized the “common belief of the Turkish nation” that if “national integrity, historical honor, dignity, and independence” were violated, the Turkish government would be obliged to declare war as a last resort, despite its sincere dedication to peace.<sup>221</sup> Besides heroism, these narratives might be interpreted as the

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<sup>219</sup> Mosse, p.6.

<sup>220</sup> *İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Ahmet Piriştina Kent Arşivi ve Müzesi*, d.hak-uya.

<sup>221</sup> “Sulh arzularımızdaki kâmil samimiyete rağmen, hükümetimiz bugün harbi kabul mevkiinde kalırsa, milletçe şimdiden inanmış bulunuyoruz ki, milli namusumuzu, tarihi şerefimizi, haysiyet ve

quest for popularizing the government's deeds. In an age of limited technology, national festivals presented one of the government's rare possibilities to advertise itself among "its people."

The Turkish Republic from its very beginning claimed to be founded on a homogenous society with no ethnic and class conflicts. This perception of unity and solidarity was reflected in almost every aspect of life, including the festival of September 9. September 9 was wished to be celebrated in common unity, far from any political ideologies that might disunite the population. The ultimate aim of the nation state was to shape an appropriate citizenship identity with a uniform collective memory.

#### Normality of Dictation, Expectance of Compliance:

##### Order and Hierarchy

The analysis of the program of September 9 festivals reveals the mentality of the organizers of the ceremonies. In the early Republican commemorations, the ceremonial programs were full of orders given to the citizens, who were directed to celebrate exactly in the arranged way. The discourse of commanding in the programs went hand-in-hand with the expectation of obedience from the audience. The spectators were expected to obey the rules of the ceremony determined by the state, and to be in the nationally enthusiastic mood demanded by the rulers. It was expected that "the people of Izmir will celebrate the independence of their city this year again

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*istiklalimizi, yurt bütünlüğümüzü korumak için başka çare kalmadığı kanaatle milleti harbe davet zorunda kalmıştır," Yeni Asır, from the speech of Atıf İnan, 10 September 1940, p.2.*

with due ceremony in a patriotic citizen-like manner.”<sup>222</sup> Or it was a wish that “the honorable people of Izmir would celebrate the blessed day of September 9 until morning by illuminating the mosques and their houses, organizing firework shows, and lighting torches in public squares.”<sup>223</sup>

The importance given to order is clear in the programs of early Republican September 9 celebrations. The people had to stand and watch the parade and could not enter it in order not to create congestion and chaos.<sup>224</sup> The programs of the ceremonies published in the newspapers might be observed to have an obsession of order and planning. The programs consisted of everything related to the ceremonies. A list of the participants in the parade, their order of sequence, the names of public speakers, the names of their substitutes in case of their inexistence, the content of the poems to be read, the color of the clothes of the girls, the length of the batons to be carried by the boy scouts, everything had been planned by the People’s House’s Festival Committee.

Changes, disorder, or surprises in the ceremonies were not tolerated. The triumphal parade had to arrive at the Atatürk Statue at the scheduled time, in the specified sequence. The people had to remain outside the parade. It was forbidden for children below ten to enter the parade. All students would participate in the festival in identical clothes.<sup>225</sup> No cars or individuals inexistence in the program could enter the parade route. There would remain no un-adorned buildings on the way; and the

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<sup>222</sup> *Yeni Asır*, 9 September, p.4.

<sup>223</sup> “*Muhterem halkın geceleyin dahi Camilerde ve hanelerde tenvirat yapmak, havai fişenkler atmak, meydanlarda meş’aleler yakmak suretiyle bu mübarek günü sabaha kadar tes’it etmeleri şayanı temennidir,*” Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> “*25. Halk caddelerde sabit olarak alayı seyredecek ve izdihama ve karışıklığa mal kalmamak için alay arasından kimse geçmeyecektir,*” *Yeni Asır*, 9 September 1931, p.4.

<sup>225</sup> “*Bütün mektepliler yeknesak elbiselerle bayramımıza iştirak edeceklerdir,*” *Yeni Asır*, 5 September 1940, p.2.

establishments that were notified had to erect triumphal arches on the parade route.<sup>226</sup>

Any divergence from the program, any disorder would be prevented by the police, and/or the gendarmerie, and/or the military police that were assigned to enforce the festival program, to obviate any wrong-turning, and to turn any bit of chaos to order again.<sup>227</sup>

In addition to order and command, Izmir's Independence Day ceremonies were also characterized by the emphasis on hierarchy. First, the nation state was hierarchically above the citizens. The ceremonies of September 9 were dominated by the presence of the state. Srirupa Roy, in her analysis of republican commemorations in India and Turkey, mentions the hierarchical and organizational hegemony of the nation state in public commemorations:

... in India and Turkey, the event marked the birth of the nation state; the commemorative activities were organized by state agencies; and the images on display were those that signified some statist aspect or activity—whether the national flag, the military, the colorful tableaux depicting the state's protection of folk culture (India), or the iconic representations of the first head of state (Turkey)... Outside the temporal and spatial confines of the parade, the state continued to make its presence felt, whether in the form of street decorations and illuminations, the kinds of leisure-time activities that people engaged in on that day, or the traffic diversions that caused daily travel routines to be interrupted.<sup>228</sup>

The over-presence of the state, in organizing the festival and promulgating its narrative, throughout the commemoration of September 9, gave the biggest share of

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<sup>226</sup> "...kendilerine tebligat yapılan müesseseler zafer alayının geçeceği yollarda taklar kuracaklardır... Zafer alayının geçiş yoluna tesadüf eden bu mevki ve caddelerde süslenmemiş tek bir bina kalmayacaktır," *Yeni Asır*, 6 September 1942, p.2.

<sup>227</sup> "16. Zafer alayı yürüyüş sırasile heykelin etrafında mevki alacak ve halk tel örgülerin haricinde kalacaktır.

17. On yaşından aşağı çocukların alaya iştirak etmesi memnudur. Zafer alayı programda gösterilen sıra üzerine tertip edilmiştir. Her teşekkül programda gösterilen yer ve sırada mevki alacaktır...

19. Alaya hariçten hiçbir araba, otomobil ve münferit halk giremez.

20. Programın tamamii tatbikine bilim Polise, Jandarma ve inzibat memurları nezaret edecektir," *Anadolu*, 9 September 1934, p.4.

<sup>228</sup> Roy, pp.221-222.

memory creating power to the nation state. People adopted the memories of a state-sponsored celebration that was full of state-originated narratives.

Second, there was also a hierarchical ranking between the elements of the nation state. In the early years of the Republic, September 9 celebrations were under the control of the party and the People's Houses. People's House Commemoration Committee prepared the program of the festival of September 9. The celebration program and the course of the ceremonies have had some implications for the relations of hierarchy between the central government, the local governors, and the army.

Every year, before hoisting the flag up the government building, a high member of the People's Party (the governor or a parliamentary member) delivered a speech from the balcony of the military barracks.<sup>229</sup> When the place of the Turkish army in the governance of Turkey is considered, it would not be conjecture to interpret this as the clear depiction of party-army state. The party customarily gives a golden fountain pen as a gift to the commander of the platoon that ran up the flag,<sup>230</sup> as an unwritten covenant between the co-associates.

But in the hierarchy, above all stood Ankara. September 9 was not celebrated only as a local festival by the initiative of the local elite. It was also commemorated not as a local, but national moment of heroism, and dominated by the ideologies and policies of Ankara. As Roy expresses "all other commemorative events held outside the capital city were organized like fractals or microcosms that replicated the

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<sup>229</sup> "Bayrak çekme töreninden önce kışla balkonundan parti başkanı Yozgad sayılavı Avni Doğan bir söylev verecek," *Anadolu*, 9 September 1935, p.4.

<sup>230</sup> "Heryıl mutad olduğu gibi, bu yılda müfrezeye komutanına parti tarafından altın bir dolmakalem hediye edilmiştir," *Anadolu*, 11 September 1935, p.4.

structures and practices of the center.”<sup>231</sup> Dependence of the local on the center would have led to a national synchronization, which in turn would have synchronized nation’s memories.

The members of the Ankara People’s House came to Izmir for the festival of September 9. In 1936, they prepared a theatrical show. They talked about the weakness of “the revolution literature” (*inkılap edebiyatı*).<sup>232</sup> It seems as if Ankara came to give the Izmir unit a piece of advice. This detail might give other clues about the hierarchy in Turkey. Ankara was the leading, governing, advice-giving, and controlling headquarters of the country; Izmir was the one to be controlled and transformed. The former “infidel” cosmopolitan port had to be turned into a national city dependent on the new political center. Ankara had to ensure that Izmir celebrated its nationality appropriately to the ideology of new Turkey. An appropriate commemoration would have inevitably led to the adoption of the appropriate collective memory that would provide permanence for the nation.

The festival committee was formed by members from the governorship, municipality, army, Security General Directorate, and Board of Education. In the 1930s and 1940s, an officer from Izmir People’s House and the chairman of the Chamber of Tradesmen and Laborers also had voices in the organization of the festival of September 9.<sup>233</sup> The profiles of the organizers indicate the fact that the state, the local administration, and the army had effective powers on the festival of September 9. The appearance of the Chamber of Tradesmen and Laborers in the organization committee signified the importance given to economic development of

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<sup>231</sup> Roy, p.222.

<sup>232</sup> *Yeni Asır*, 9 September 1936, p.2.

<sup>233</sup> “*Heyet-i mahsusa: C.H. vilayet idare heyeti azası, kaza idare heyeti reisi, merkez komutanı binbaşı, emniyet müdürü muavini, kısmi idari reisi, maarif müdürü muavini, belediye zabıta amiri, esnaf ve işçi birlikleri reisi, Izmir Halkevi idare memuru,*” *Yeni Asır*, 1 September 1940, p.2.

Turkey. In addition, the importance given to education was clear in the presence of the Board of Education. Education was perceived as one of the basic tools to make the people adopt national values.

The ceremonies of September 9 in the early Republican Turkey were dominated by the presence of the central state. The Turkish government “aim[ed] to glorify the heroism of the locals without, however, conceding a sense of difference due to locality.”<sup>234</sup> This was a totalizing and imposing regime renouncing the variety and enforcing the ideology. The state tried to educate Izmirian citizens in conformity with the new national ideology in order to create an environment of monophony, which would lead to the unity in memory. Although the partnership of the people in the construction process was repudiated, the nation state was not able to prevent the emergence of different voices and different memories in the context of September 9 celebrations.

### Monophony and Its Disturbance

Early Republican period in Turkey can be portrayed by the picture of one nation and one party. The emphasis on totality coexisted with the efforts to create a monophonic environment, in which the state’s would be the highest, most audible voice. In 1925, “all newspapers and periodicals leaning towards the liberal or socialist opposition had been closed down.”<sup>235</sup> In 1931, the Turkish national parliament ratified the Press Law, “which imposed strict measures on press freedom in Turkey, and at the same

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<sup>234</sup> Keyder, p.10.

<sup>235</sup> Erik J Zürcher, *Turkey – A Modern History* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 1994), p.188.

time, favored the Turks: only they could own magazines and journals.”<sup>236</sup> The state was seeking to create an ethnic and ideological monophony, crushing different voices with its authority. Nevertheless, despite the homogenizing efforts concentrated around the celebration of September 9, different reactions to the festival could be witnessed, which might mean that there were divergences from the totalizing collective memory.

The researcher that analyzes the national festivals of Turkey from newspapers might suffocate working through the monotonous and uniform press accounts. “To the outside reader there is a monotony in the reports of these meetings as they appear in the... press. There is a marked uniformity, and there is not much variation from year to year.”<sup>237</sup> Most of the accounts and articles about September 9 in the newspapers have a nationalistic, epic tone that emphasizes the mythical and heroic part of the story. As an illustrative example, on the cover of *Resimli Gazete* of September 8, 1923, there is a “gallant” cavalryman on his rearing up horse with a sword in his hand illustrated as entering to liberate Izmir.<sup>238</sup>

Nevertheless, within all these “serious” and nationalistic press accounts, one may come across surprising narratives, a little space of air. It is possible to encounter exceptional articles and reports, that are more into the daily course of life and society, and perhaps more sincere. These narratives differ from the nationalistic ones in the way that they were interested in other aspects of September 9. They did not report September 9’s importance for the nation or mythical bases, but told about daily details, breaking the chain of the uneventful-ness of newspaper research. These

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<sup>236</sup> Çağaptay, p.70.

<sup>237</sup> Harper, p.237.

<sup>238</sup> “Geçen sene bugün İzmir’le beraber Türkiye’yi de kurtaran, şarkta yeni bir devir açan kahraman süvarilerimiz yıldırım gibi... İzmir’e koşarken,” *Resimli Gazete*, 8 September 1923, p.1.



articles are more helpful than the epic/heroic ones to understand September 9 celebrations, as well as the ongoing of life in Izmir at the time of celebration. However, in the early national period, in the newspapers and periodicals studied for this thesis, it was impossible to find any discourse that criticized the Republic, its policies, or September 9. Even surprises have some limits.

In, September 11, 1932 *Anadolu* reported that café owners in Kordon had been accused of profiteering. According to the account, some owners of the cafés along the way of the parade had raised their prices, even quadrupled tea prices. The account continued that in some cafés people even had to pay for their seats. *Anadolu* called this profiteering and criticized the municipality for its indiscretion and improvidence.<sup>239</sup>

On the one hand, there was a celebration which was very tightly organized and planned; on the other hand, there were chaotic overcrowded cafés that charged money even for mere sitting, and quadrupled tea-coffee prices. The sudden crowds in Izmir obliged the municipality to reorganize the city traffic scheme and redirect automobiles from busy avenues to back streets.<sup>240</sup> The obsession of order and the chaos in Izmir in September: such a weird, but meaningful, coexistence.

In the newspaper *Ahenk*, there was a humor column written by a person went by the name of Çimdik (Pinch). In the 1929's September 9, Çimdik wrote an article that mocked Kemal Kamil Bey, the owner of a famous pharmacy in Izmir, for his discount on prices for the honor of September 9.<sup>241</sup> Kemal Kamil Bey was compared

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<sup>239</sup> *Anadolu*, 11 September 1932, p.3.

<sup>240</sup> *Anadolu*, 8 September 1932, p.4.

<sup>241</sup> “*Hilal eczanesi sahibi reklam mütehasısımız Kemal Kamil bey üstadımız 9 Eylül şerefine dört gün dört gece büyük tenzilat yapıyormuş. Aferin! bravo! yaşa! Kemal bey! ... Bu asri reklâmcılığın bundan on sene evvelsine kadar hala devam eden iptidai bir şekli vardır ki Istanbulda Mahmutpaşa yokuşunda Acemler ellerinde birer çingırak... bağırlar ve ucuzluklarını ilan ederlerdi. Sümme haşa, biz Kemal Kamil beyi buna temsil etmek istemiyoruz... Yalnız Kemal Kamil beyin elinde çingırağı*

to sellers in Mahmutpaşa, who announced their sale through ringing bells in the roads. The ridiculed target of the article was Kemal Kamil Bey, not the festival of September 9. Nevertheless, by emphasizing another aspect of the festival – not as an honorary act as to prepare the grounds for discounted prices – Çimdik normalized the event of September 9, which was not mentioned as a national heroic date marked on the calendar, but as a normal day of life.

In September 11, 1937 *Yeni Asır* published a cynic-comic article about the crowding. The writer used the penname, Tokdil. Tokdil complained about the people that crowded into Izmir for the September 9 festival and the Fair. He was fed up with the celebration chaos and euphoria. And he implied that September 9 celebrations were no different from other festivals.<sup>242</sup> One cannot deduce from any nationalist/epic article the fact that Izmir became overpopulated each year during the first half of the September. In addition, Tokdil seems to have gone beyond the general tendency of inevitable sensitivity to the heroic grandeur of September 9.

Although those articles did not criticize September 9 explicitly, they anyway create a space in which September 9 was not a mythical date but a quotidian event. Normalization might be regarded as the path toward criticism. These people were lucky enough to write in newspapers through which they could make their voices heard. However, more “ordinary” people had almost no chance to express themselves. The lack of mediums for expression was combined with the cold reality of censure.

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yoktur. ...Mesela beş kuruşluk asit borik alsanız ne olacak, olsa olsa böyle beş kuruşluk şeylerin tenzilata tahammülü olamayacağı için bedava verilecektir. Zihnimizi asıl kurcalayan Kemal Kamil beyin cidden mühim bir eseri olan (Aile eczanesi) kitabını bedava veriyorlardı, bu dört gün zarfında Hilal eczanesinden isteyenlere galiba üstüne para verilecektir. Nasrettin hoca merhumun ruhu şad olsun,” *Ahenk*, 5 September 1929, p.2.

<sup>242</sup> “...Bayram; kalabalık, şenlik, çenk, çigana, çeşitli ahenklerle işte böyle geçti, zaten bundan iyisi, bundan başkası da hiçbir yerde olamaz, hepsinin iç yüzü budur ve hepsi böyledir aşağı yukarı,” *Yeni Asır*, 11 September 1937, p.2.

In 1934, *Yeni Asır* made an announcement that they would like to hear the thoughts of all citizens about September 9 celebrations in order to overcome the imperfections in the festival. Citizens could write letters to the newspaper or they could directly declare their opinions to the People's House. There was only one letter published in *Yeni Asır* from a reader whose name was Is. Hakkı, which suspiciously reminds one of İsmail Hakkı, a writer in *Yeni Asır*.

The letter was very serious and didactic. It was divided into three sections. The first heading stressed the importance of September 9 for the Turkish nation and suggested that September 9 must be called a *bayram* (festival), being “the highest festival of all festivals.” In the second section, Is. Hakkı declared that the program of the festival and the route of the parade must never change; the program and the route should continue in the way that they had for twelve years. The last section emphasized the grave importance of a perpetual program for generating patriotic feelings in the younger generations. “The consequence of this survey or private opinions of three or five people should not change either the program or the route. The ceremony style in the program makes all-the-nation feel like living that glorious date again.”<sup>243</sup>

It might be deduced from the letter that its writer was well aware of the significance of repetition in rituals and the character and the limits of collective memory. If suspicions are true and the reader himself was really İsmail Hakkı, the writer, then we might conclude that *Yeni Asır* itself did not believe in the survey it

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<sup>243</sup> “1. 9 Eylül günü Türk İzmirin varlığının, kurtuluşunun yevmi mahsusu olduğundan bunu bayramların bayramı saymakta hiçbir hata yoktur. Ve 9 Eylül gününe (9 Eylül bayramı) denmelidir.

2. Bu büyük günün hususiyeti kaybedilmemek için merasim programı on iki senedir yapılanın aynı olmalıdır. Ve güzergah da aynı olmalıdır...

3. Bu programı ne anketin neticesi ve ne de üç beş kişinin hususi fikirleri değiştirmemelidir. Bu program müebbet bir program olarak kalmalıdır. Genç neslin vatanperverlik hislerini bununla takviye etmeliyiz. O gün o programdaki merasim şeklidir ki o tarihi bir daha topyekun bütün millete yaşatıyor,” *Yeni Asır*, 14 August 1934, p.6.

made or found applying to citizens' opinions as inappropriate. This letter leaves in one's mouth the taste of censure.

The Turkish nation state desired to create a totalizing national narrative, which did not have any tolerance to different voices. Yet, in the press of the early Republican Izmir, there were some traces of divergences from the dominant narrative that might be signs of different memorial experiences. However, the holder of the hegemonic narrative also held the greatest power to control the instrument of festive repetition, which was one of the most important tools to manipulate collective memory, but which, ultimately, became the prisoner of inertia.

#### Festive Repetition: The Program

Local newspapers of Izmir in the early Republican period always gave very detailed programs of the ceremonies and parades of September 9. The programs were officially declared by the municipality; therefore, they did not show variety in the publication as to different newspapers. In addition to this invariance, the course of celebrations has also been invariant through time. The program of the festival of September 9 has remained almost never-changed until today.

Since 1923, except some mild differences, the celebrations have taken place in the same squares, around the same monuments, and along the same route. The repetitive commemoration of Izmir's independence according to a never-changing program served to the entrenchment of the festival and its connotations in people's memories. The constructed aura around national celebrations is fostered "through rhythmic and repetitive, uniformed and detailed spectacles of ritualized performance

commemorating the nation.”<sup>244</sup> Both despite and due to its monotony, unaltered and repetitive ritual action makes things easier to remember.

Moreover, not only memories, but also beliefs are cultivated by festive repetition. The more the event is commemorated similarly, the more the people believe in the authenticity and glory of the commemoration and of the original event commemorated. Repetition in rituals makes people unite at the celebration, at the authentic copy of a glorious national moment in the past. Therefore, unaltered national festivals ensure the unity of national citizens in belief and memory, thus further the “continuity of national collectivity.”<sup>245</sup>

In 1935,<sup>246</sup> the celebrations of September 9 started very early in the morning, in Belkahve, where the Turkish army had entered Izmir in 1922. At 8:00, officials from the party, from private enterprises, and from official bureaus met in the building of the People’s Party and headed to the cemetery in Halkapınar. Then, people gathered in Konak Square, where speeches were made and poems read.

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<sup>244</sup> Karakasidou, p.232.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., p.231, 235.

<sup>246</sup> “Sabahleyin saat 8 de resmiğ dairelerle parti ve özel kurumlardan davetli olanlar Cumhuriyet Halk partisinin Beyler sokağındaki merkezinde toplanacaklar ve oradan Halkapınardaki şehitliğe gideceklerdir. Saat 8.30 da Halkapınardaki şehitlikte aziz şehitlerimizin mezarı başında Halkevi adına öğretmen Karahan tarafından verilecek söyleve şehitler anıtı karşısında yer alacak olan atlı müfrezeye komutanı cevap verecektir. Söylevler bittikten sonar muzıka İstiklal Marşı çalacak ve süel müfrezeye havaya silah atarak saygı ödevini yerine getirecektir... Saat 10.15 te Kadifekale’den atılan topla kışla ve hükümet konağına, Halkapınardan gelen askerlerimizin önünde yürüyerek bu yere gelmiş olan atlı müfrezeye komutanı tarafından bayrağımız çekilecektir... bayrak çekme töreni sırasında bando sancak marşını çalacaktır. Bayrak çekme töreninden sonra kahraman ordumuz Birinci kordondan yürüyerek Atatürk heykelini selamlıyacak... Birinci top atılınca şehir içinde ve limanda bütün halk ve nakil vasıtaları bir dakika buldukları yerde kalacaklardır... 10.30 da atılacak ikinci topla uçaklar, lokomotifler, fabrikalar, vapurlar düdükle ve otomobiller kornalarile ordunun Izmir’e girdiğini muştulayacaklar ve genel sevince katılacaklardır... Saat 15.30’da Atatürk’ün anasının mezarına gidilecek, çelenkler konulacak ve Buldanlı Mustafa tarafından bir söylev verilecektir... Zafer alayı 16.30 da Kadifekale’den atılacak üçüncü topla yürüyüşe başlayacak, Basmahane, Tilkilik, Hatuniye, Mezarlıkbaşı, Başdurak, Kemeraltı, hükümet, kışla ve birinci Kordon’dan geçerek Atatürk heykeli önüne gelecek, çelenk ve buket taşıyanlar Atatürk heykeli etrafında halka olacaklardır... Gece birinci Kordon’da ve denizde fener alayları ve şehrin daha birçok yerlerinde genel eğlenceler yapılacaktır... Halkevinde gece saat 21 de konser verilecektir,” *Anadolu*, 9 September 1935, p.4.

Every year, soldiers re-enacted the Turkish army's entry into Izmir.<sup>247</sup> Half of the soldiers passed along the Kordon, the other half along the Kemer Avenue. They reached the government building exactly at 10:00, where the commander of the soldiers ran the national flag up, as his counterpart did last year. This re-enactment held the central importance at the ceremony of September 9, claiming to be the authentic copy of the commemorated event.



Figure 4: "Soldiers preparing to re-enact the entry into Izmir," in September 9, 1938.<sup>248</sup>

Subsequently, the party members congratulated each other at the People's Party center. Then, they all went to the municipal office and congratulated the municipality members. After that, all municipality and party committees went to the barracks to congratulate the army and to the government building to congratulate the governor.<sup>249</sup> In the afternoon, there was the parade. Trade and labor associations,

<sup>247</sup> "... süvari kıtası 338 senesi 9 Eylül'ünde İzmir'e giren askeri temsilen, bir kısmı Kordon'dan diğer kısmı da Kemer Caddesi'nden geçmek üzere vaziyet almış olacaktırlar. Saat ona çeyrek kala Kemer Caddesi üzerinden İzmir'e hareket edecek süvari kıtasından tefrik edilen süvariler tam saat onda Kadife Kalesi'nden atılacak topla beraber kalede hazırlanan mevkie Türk bayrağını çekecektir," *Ahenk*, 8 September 1923, p.2.

<sup>248</sup> *Yeni Asır*, 9 September 1938, p.1.

<sup>249</sup> *Anadolu*, 11 September 1931, p.4; *Anadolu*, 9 September 1935, p.2.

students and scouts walked in the triumphal parade. The celebrations ended with the torchlight processions at night.

The September 9 ceremony in 2005<sup>250</sup> followed a similar path as that of the 1923 or 1935 one. Belkahve and Halkapınar were again visited. Soldiers re-enacted the liberation of Izmir. Ceremonies took place in Konak Square and Square of Republic. Similar to the early Republican period, boy scouts attended to the ceremony. The parade in the afternoon, the torchlight procession at night, the appearance of the state and the army together, all remained the same.

Nevertheless, small differences could be observed. There was no one-party to dominate the governorship and the municipality at the same time in 2006; the governor of Izmir received the congratulations in his chair with the mayor and the Commander of the Aegean Army; and non-official night concerts in Gündoğdu Square accompanied the torchlight procession.

In 2005, high participation was “expected,” while, in 1935, universal participation was perceived to be an integral fact. The passing of almost seventy

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<sup>250</sup> “İzmir’in kurtuluşunun 83. yıldönümü bu yıl da büyük coşkuyla kutlanacak. 9 Eylül kutlamaları, sabah saat 08.30’da Kordon’dan 21 pare top atışıyla başlayacak. Törenler Cumhuriyet Meydanı’na çelenk koyma törenleri ile devam edecek. Hükümet Konağı önünde süvari birliklerinin temsili olarak İzmir’in kurtarılmasını canlandırmalarının ardından Ege Bölgesi’nin dört bir yanından gelen izciler getirdikleri toprakları Konak’daki Hasan Tahsin İlk Kurşun Anıtı’na dönecekler. Belkahve’de ve Halkapınar İstiklal Şehitliği’ndeki törenlere de geniş katılım bekleniyor...

08.30 Kordon’dan 21 pare top atışı.

09.00 İzmir Valiliği, Ege Ordusu ve Garnizon Komutanlığı, Büyükşehir Belediye Başkanlığı çelenk sunma töreni.

09.30 Belediye Başkanı Aziz Kocaoğlu, Belediye Meclis Üyeleri ile birlikte Konak Orduevi’ne giderek, Ege Ordusu ve Garnizon Komutanı’nın şahsında Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri’ne İzmir halkının şükran duygularını iletecekler.

10.00 İzmir Valisi, Ege Ordusu ve Garnizon Komutanı ile İzmir Belediye Başkanı’yla birlikte Vilayet makamında tebrikleri kabul edecek.

10.30 Süvari birlikleri temsili olarak İzmir’in kurtarılmasını canlandıracak.

11.00 Cumhuriyet Meydanı’nda resmigeçit töreni

#### **DİĞER TÖREN VE ETKİNLİKLER**

##### **Belkahve**

09.30 Belkahve Atatürk Anıtı’na çelenk sunulması, saygı duruşu ve İstiklal Marşı, günün anlam ve önemini belirten konuşmalar...

##### **Halkapınar İstiklal Şehitliği**

09.10 Halkapınar İstiklal Şehitliği’ne çelenk konulacak,” *Yeni Asır*, 9 September 2005, p.2.

years softened the orderly attitude of the festival-organizing state over the citizens. Although the program has been unchanged and the parade route has become “traditional,” the manipulative attitude and hegemonic presence of the state seems to have been diminished, being caught in the comfort of “inertia.”<sup>251</sup>

Nonetheless, the repetition enabled the national/official history to settle in Izmirians’ minds. For many participants of September 9 celebrations, the route of the Turkish army in 1922 or the government building where the flag was hoisted up were remembered instances from the past. This settlement of memories was mostly realized by people’s attendance to annually repeated ceremonies of September 9.

#### The Attendance: Voluntary and Commanded

Anastasia Karakasidou, in an article about Salonika’s liberation day, mentions police measures in order to assure loyal attendance to the celebrations. “The police made rounds to assure that every home and shop was properly adorned with the national bunting, regarded by authorities as a general expression of loyalty to the nation state and its government. Those who failed to respond in a timely manner were fined and noted in secret police dossiers.”<sup>252</sup> In the Izmir case, no tangible traces of such fines or of stigmatizing were encountered.

Nevertheless, the programs of September 9 celebrations in the early Republican Turkey consisted of clauses sounded like social pressure. For example, the sixth clause of the program of September 9 ceremony published in the newspaper *Yeni Asır* in 1931 stated that “every individual of the nation is *asked* to adorn their

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<sup>251</sup> Connerton, pp.4–5.

<sup>252</sup> Karakasidou, p.221.



houses and stores with national honor and dignity befitting this big day's glory, competing with their neighbors and acting altruistically; and they are also asked to wear their festival clothes and congratulate each other."<sup>253</sup> The social pressure in the tone of this *request* is clear; however, no sole occasion of actual forcing of people to join the celebrations was encountered in the research.

In 1933, the Republican People's Party's body of Karantina district participated in the parade of September 9 with only sixteen members. For the newspaper *Anadolu*, this was an unspeakable shame; sixteen was such a low number! In the newspaper, cleverly sarcastic implications about the incident were made within a long article about that year's celebration. It was written that the low attendance at the ceremony of September 9 on the part of Karantina body of the Party must have had something to do with its failure to organize, deliberate or not. What a surprise that this body included the richest and the most educated members of the Party in Izmir. Yet, their participation would have enriched the parade. *Anadolu* wanted to understand the reasons for their *relative inexistence*.<sup>254</sup>

Whether there was a social pressure for attendance or not, the citizens participated in a government-sponsored festival taking place at a determined location, at a determined time, and through an orderly program. In such a state-oriented festival, the citizens of Izmir remained a mere audience, watching and applauding the show of their state.

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<sup>253</sup> "6. Milletin her ferdi mağaza ve evini bu büyük günün şerefine milli haysiyet ve vekarla mütenasip bir surette komşularile rekabet edercesine donatması ve fedakarlıkta bulunması ve bayramlık elbiselerini giymesi ve yekdiğerini tebrik etmesi rica olunur," *Yeni Asır*, 9 September 1931, p.4.

<sup>254</sup> "Fırkanın Karantina teşkilatı çalışmamış veya çalışamamış olacak ki bütün nahiye ancak on altı kişi tarafından temsil edilmiştir. Halbuki İzmir'in en zengin ve en münevverlerinin çoğu Yalılar teşkilatındandır. İştirak etmiş olsalardı zafer alayı o nisbette zenginleşmiş olacaktı. Acaba bu, niçin böyle oldu? Bunu anlamayı çok istiyoruz," *Anadolu*, 11 September 1933, p.5.

One characteristic of the September 9 celebrations of the early Republican Turkey was that it was not allowed for the people to make their voices heard within the ceremony. In the celebration programs, there were clauses that ordered “people to stay outside the wire fences,”<sup>255</sup> and “watch the parade without moving in the streets.”<sup>256</sup> In 1938, in the program of the September 9 ceremony, there was a clause that banned saying anything outside the program.<sup>257</sup> People had to remain silent.

The press accounts of September 9 celebrations support the fact that September 9 was not a “people’s festival.” People attended in high numbers; however, they seemed to be there as mere spectators. The ordinary people of Izmir did not take part in the organization or show part of their Independence Day ceremony. September 9 was not a festival by them but a festival for them.

It is possible to find in the festival programs the expression that public rostrums were put in various places of the city.<sup>258</sup> However, on those rostrums not the people but members of the People’s House, government officers, or teachers and lawyers appointed by the festival committee delivered speeches. This went parallel with the general understanding of the period that the people had to be represented by the state. The state knew what was best for its people.

The local press of the period might have exaggerated the attendance figures for September 9 celebrations. One of the most common reports in the newspapers of September was of crowding. *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* on September 11, 1923 reported that with the guests from the provinces there were more than one hundred and fifty thousand people celebrating Izmir’s Independence Day; the congestion led to minor

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<sup>255</sup> “Halk tel örgülerin haricinde kalacaktır,” *Yeni Asır*, 9 September 1934, p.2.

<sup>256</sup> “Halk caddelerde sabit bir vaziyette alayı seyredecek,” *Yeni Asır*, 9 September 1934, p.2.

<sup>257</sup> “18. Bu program haricinde söz söylemek yasaktır,” *Yeni Asır*, 3 September 1938, p.2.

<sup>258</sup> “23. Muhtelif meydanlara halk kürsüleri konacak,” *Anadolu*, 9 September 1934, p.4.

accidents, such as the crushing of women and children under the crowd, which did not harm the glory of the festival.<sup>259</sup> In 1935, it was stated in *Anadolu* that the number of people who had come to Izmir from its periphery, by train, car, or boat, for September 9 had reached two hundred thousand.<sup>260</sup> In 9 September 1934, *Anadolu* reported that hotels and guesthouses were entirely occupied with people coming to Izmir for September 9 and for the International Fair, although many people stayed in the houses of their relatives or acquaintances.<sup>261</sup> The mayor had to order all the cafés to remain open in order for people coming from the periphery of Izmir not to sleep in the streets.<sup>262</sup> On the morning of September 9, the streets were congested by “a flood of people” ready to celebrate “this sacred anniversary.”<sup>263</sup>

The attendance of the festival of September 9 was never universal, but should not be underestimated. For instance, in 9 September 1941, the crowd, multiplied by the people coming from the periphery, caused a shortage of bread in the city.<sup>264</sup> News seems to confirm the alleged high number of participants at the September 9 celebrations. But, of course, the existence of the International Fair in the month of September should also be taken into account. All the visitors of Izmir on September

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<sup>259</sup> “İzmir’de şimdîye kadar hiçbir tarihte bu derece muazzam ve muhteşem bir ihtifal merasimi yapılmamıştı. Taşradan gelen misafirlerle beraber... yüz elli binden fazla insan vardı... izdihamdan dolayı yerlerde çocuk ezilmesi veya kadın basılması gibi ufak tefek kazalar istisna edilirse hamdolsun halkımızın...” *Hâkimiyet-i Milliye*, 11 September 1923, p.3.

<sup>260</sup> “Tren, vapur ve otomobillerle kurtuluş törenini görmeğe, kutlulamağa gelenlerin sayısının ikiyüz bini bulduğu söyleniyor,” *Anadolu*, 11 September 1935, p.1.

<sup>261</sup> “Beynelmilel panayır münasebetile civar vilayetlerden gelenler zaten İzmir’de göze çaracak bir kalabalık teşkil ediyordu. 9 Eylül kurtuluş bayramı için de son günlerde gelenlerle oteller ve pansiyonlar tamamen dolmuştur. Gelenlere güç halle yer bulunabilmektedir. Pek çok kimseler de tanıdıklarının evlerinde misafîrlikte kalmışlardır,” *Anadolu*, 9 September 1934, p.3.

<sup>262</sup> “İç illerden gelenler o kadar çoktuki otellerde yer kalmamış, uray halkın sokaklarda kalmaması için bütün kahvelerin sabaha kadar açık bırakılmasını emretmiş, kahvelerin bazı kısımlarına bölmeler konularak yatak yerleştirilmiş, halkın barınması sağlanmıştı,” *Anadolu*, 11 September 1935, p.1.

<sup>263</sup> “Sabahleyin erkenden caddeler, bu mukaddes yıldönümünü tes’it için evlerinden çıkanları almıyacak hale gelmişti. Caddeleri, gittikçe kabaran bir insan seli doldürmüştü,” *Anadolu*, 11 September 1934, p.1.

<sup>264</sup> “Şehrimizin sokaklarında iki gündür pek büyük bir kalabalık görülmekte ve hatta bu yüzden biraz da ekmek sıkıntısı çekilmektedir,” *Yeni Asır*, 9 September 1941, p.2.

9 might have not participated in the ceremony.

In addition to emphasizing the high participation at the celebrations of September 9, local newspapers also stressed the enthusiasm and excitement experienced by the participants of the festival. Here is an example from *Ahenk*, published on September 9, 1926:



Figure 5: People gathered in Konak Square to celebrate September 9, 1928.<sup>265</sup>

With the dawn, children dressed up and ran to the streets and public squares. Everybody is smiling cheerfully. All the people, women and men, are standing, smiling, and congratulating each other. Avenues and bazaars became congested very early in the morning. All public transportation vehicles, cars, automobiles, bicycles... boats are covered with red and white colors. Every building, houses... shops, the government building, military barracks and every spot have been adorned in order to celebrate this date of honor. Windows and balconies of buildings facing the route of celebration have been occupied by the people watching the streets, and fancy and happy people and vehicles of transportation passing. Many ornate cars that will participate in the triumphal parade pass before the windows. Streets are full

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<sup>265</sup> Hamza Rüstem Fotoğrafhanesi.

of people running in the streets with flags and ornaments in their hands.<sup>266</sup>

This article presented a hyperbolic manifestation of the excitement of the September 9 crowd. Everyone in the scene was pictured as passionately celebrating the independence. However, the article was published on the very same day that the celebrations took place, which means that this account of festive enthusiasm at the September 9 celebration was written one day before the enthusiasm was lived.

Whether exaggerated or not, the presence of people in September 9 celebrations was real. They participated in the festival, watched or attended the parades, decorated their houses, hanged up flags, sang national anthems, carried torches in processions, thus, contributed to the production and reproduction of the public during the national commemoration of September 9.<sup>267</sup> People's participation could be under social pressure or independently chosen, or both. The "enthusiasm" and "excitement" stories about September 9 crowds in Izmir are instrumental in conveying "the doubled nature of publicness, as simultaneously commanded and voluntary, obedient and self-willed."<sup>268</sup> Izmirian people indeed were bounded by the limits of a government-sponsored celebration and appeared in the September 9 parades as government-commanded gendered symbols of the nation; nevertheless, they were also co-agents in the construction of those symbols and what they reminded of.

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<sup>266</sup> "Çocuklar şafaklar beraber süslenerek caddelere, meydanlara döküldüler. Herkesin yüzünde hande, gözünde hande parlıyor. Bütün halk, kadın, erkek herkes ayakta, herkes gülüyor. Birbirini tebrik ediyor. Pek erkenden caddeler, çarşılar izdihamdan geçilmez hale geldi. Bütün vesait-i nakliye, arabalar, otomobiller, velespitler... vapurlar süslü, kırmızı beyaz renklerle örtülü. Her bina, ev... dükkan, hükümet, kışla... ve her nokta süslenmiş, bugünün şerefini, bugünün muhabbetini tesit ediyor. Büyük caddelere nazır binaların balkonları, pencereleri daha erkenden işgal olunmuş, her pencere ve her balkonda birçok başlar, caddeleri, gelen, geçen, süslü, şetairetli vatandaşları, vesait-i nakliyeyi temaşaya koyulmuş. Her noktada izdiham dakikadan dakikaya artıyor. Büyük ihtifal alayına iştirak edecek çok süslü ve temsili otomobillerin biri gelip biri geçiyor. Elinde bayraklarla, süslerle oraya koşan, birden süratle geçen vatandaşlar işlerini ikmale çalışıyorlar," Ahenk, 9 September 1926, p.2.

<sup>267</sup> Roy, p.223.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

## Gendered Celebrations: Festive Images for Women, Men, and Children

In a discussion on the French Revolution, Richard Sennett suggests that “the revolution should invent how a ‘citizen’ looks like.”<sup>269</sup> Revolution as a movement that overthrows the old system should create the corresponding change also in human bodies. A citizen figure that represents the break with the past should be created. The changed bodies would symbolize the social change and impose the transformation on the people. “The people should be convinced that they see themselves, but reincarnated themselves” in the revolution’s new human being image.<sup>270</sup>

It might be claimed that the elite that had founded the Turkish Republic engaged in an effort of creating a similar change, because the foundation of Turkey was based on an analogous process of historical rupture and imposed transformation. An insurmountable wall before the Ottoman past had to be created in order to make the people forget the old. In the national festival of September 9, the human body emerged as the realm on which nation state strategies of creating new memories were situated. New citizens with new outlooks would symbolize the principles and objectives of the new nation.

Women are overburdened with the duty of being symbols, a burden which multiplies that of men. Many aspects of life are expressed through female bodies. Rituals, being the commonly attended meetings of a group, witness the usage of women as emblems of the ideology, the ideals, or the values.

Since the very first celebration of September 9, the entrance of the Turkish army in the city, the following occupation of the government building, and the

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<sup>269</sup> Richard Sennett, *Ten ve Taş- Batı Uygarlığında Beden ve Şehir* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2002), p.255.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

running of the flag up the building has been re-enacted.<sup>271</sup> There was an interesting scene within the re-enactment. Before the flag ceremony, the commander of the platoon went near two female students, whom he released from the darkness by tearing off their black “mourning clothes.” The commander ran violently, pushed the doors forcefully, and tore off the clothes brutally: The male soldier’s “manly” deeds contrasted with the passivity of the female students, waiting for someone to release them from the captivity of their black clothes.

This scene was an exact allegory of the early Republic’s perception of gender roles. Female citizens had to wait silently for men to liberate them. The early Republican government demanded the monopoly of giving rights to women; the male power holders did not want women to gain their rights by themselves.<sup>272</sup>

“Women’s roles in holidays seem to have been akin to their roles in other parts of the socialization infrastructure,” writes Amitai Etzioni.<sup>273</sup> When analyzing celebrations’ relation with gender in her book *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin*, Karen Petrone states that “celebrations also had implications for actual social relations between Soviet men and women and the definitions of male and female gender roles.”<sup>274</sup> While the goal of the

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<sup>271</sup> “Müfrezeye komutanı evvela Kışla balkonuna çıkarak, orada siyahlara bürünmüş bir kız talebenin üstündeki matem örtüsünü yırtarak hamil olduğu Türk bayrağını alıp şeref direğine çekecek ve müteakiben kışladan koşar adımla hükümet konağına da gidip keza orada da siyahlara bürünmüş kız talebenin üstündeki matem örtüsünü yırttıktan sonra kapalı bulunan hükümet kapısını zorlamak suretiyle açacak ve yukarıda balkonda hazır bulunacak sancağı da bizzat yerine çekecektir,” *Anadolu*, 5 September 1941, p.2.

<sup>272</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap—Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003), p.149.

<sup>273</sup> Amitai Etzioni, “Toward a Theory of Public Ritual,” *Sociological Theory* 18, no. 2, (March 2000), p.55.

<sup>274</sup> Petrone, p.10.

government through festivals was stated to be the creation of a “New Soviet Man” out of citizens,<sup>275</sup> women were left behind in the ranks of hierarchy.<sup>276</sup>

When the Turkish case is considered, it is seen that the current period’s general and official understanding of female status was reflected in the perception and appearance of women at September 9 celebrations. The state wanted to control every aspect of society, including the women. In spite of the existence of liberating reforms for females, traditional gender roles were carried on by the Republic’s founders; the primary role of the women was to breed and educate sons that would preserve and govern the new nation and the new state, and daughters that would contribute to the re-production as their mothers did.<sup>277</sup>



Figure 6: A Female teacher with her students in the ceremony of September 9, 1925.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Petrone, p.12.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., p.45.

<sup>277</sup> Zehra F. Arat, “Turkish Women and the Reconstruction of Tradition,” *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East- Tradition, Identity, and Power*, Fatma Müge Göçek and Shiva Balaghi, ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p.72.

<sup>278</sup> Source uncertain.



The supposition in the basis of this role was not merely biological reproduction or bringing up children, but total re-constitution. Woman's role to repeatedly reconstitute, renew and, thus, reinforce both herself and her nation in every realm has been constantly underlined through time. This assigned role has no signs of an independent goal to liberate women, a goal independent of women's tasks. The appearance of women as teachers in the ceremonies of September 9 might be explained through this mission assigned to them. Being teachers and showing children what to do was the most active role given to women in the festival, underlining the importance given to their role of breeding and raising children loyal to the fatherland and the nation.

In the early Republican era, efforts were made to create the image of modern and social woman. Girls participated in sports festivals, older woman in republic balls. In this regard, it might be suggested that in Turkish secularism, woman was a symbol in her own right "in the exhibition of the 'modernity.'"<sup>279</sup> For instance, in the early years of the Republic, women were sent abroad to obtain educations in how to make Western clothes, so they would wear them and introduce and advertise the Western way of dressing to other people in Turkey.<sup>280</sup> The aim was to guarantee the preservation and reinforcement of the biggest visual pillar of Turkish revolution, namely the transformation of attire, through the efforts of women.

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<sup>279</sup> Cihan Aktaş, *Tanzimat'tan Günümüze Kılık Kıyafet ve İktidar 1* (Istanbul: Nehir Yayınları, 1989), p.179.

<sup>280</sup> Çağla Ormanlar, "Püsküllü Beladan Şapkaya," *75 Yılda Değişen Yaşam Değişen İnsan: Cumhuriyet Modaları*, Oya Baydar ve Derya Özkan, ed. (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1999), p.47.



Figure 7: Female students of sewing school in the ceremony of September 9, 1929.<sup>281</sup>

In short, in the beginning, the visual role of the woman was to get out of the chadors and veils in order to demonstrate that Turkish nation had nothing to do with the Ottoman and the Muslim, and that the Turkish state was so secular and modern that it liberated its women as much as their Western counterparts. Turkish women were charged with the duty of re-creating the regime by carrying the emblematic indicators of it (secular and Western attire and activities) on themselves. Those missions and duties were all embodied in the body of “the Republic’s first Miss World,” Keriman Halis.

The body of Keriman Halis showed and proved to the entire world and Turkey that the Turkish state had reached the level of the Western states both in the faculty of beauty assessment and in liberating women. The body of Keriman Halis was the display of the materialization of modernization efforts and secularism having

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<sup>281</sup> *Anadolu*, 11 September 1929, p.1.

replaced Islam; the body of Keriman Halis was a national body.<sup>282</sup> In 1932, besides the “*Gazi Hazretleri*” (the highest veteran, i.e., Mustafa Kemal Atatürk), Miss Beauty of the World, Keriman Halis, was also invited to the celebrations of September 9.<sup>283</sup> She, as a national hero, would look “dashing” in the parade of September 9, but she did not come.

Just like the early Republican radio abstaining from giving voice to women as agents with their own problems, but recruiting them as announcers, hence involving them in “the voice of the nation” as modern symbols,<sup>284</sup> the organizing elite of September 9 did not perceive the participant women as agents in their own rights, but included them in the ceremonies as symbols of modernity and national unity.

Women were not neglected nor included in the ceremonies of September 9. During the early Republican period, the presence of women in the festivals was an important subject that was discussed within the festival organization committee. In the 1933, the festival committee decided that “the appearance of women in the Festival of September 9 and in the following Republic Festival had been approved as parallel to high rights granted to Turkish women by the Republic.”<sup>285</sup>

Although social and political rights were granted to women, the Turkish nation state was patriarchal, not allowing women to struggle for their own rights. The male rulers of Turkey perceived women as symbols and tools in the path towards modernization and Westernization, not as human beings equal to men.<sup>286</sup> Then, how

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<sup>282</sup> Çınar, s.71.

<sup>283</sup> *Yeni Asır*, 16 August 1932, p.1.

<sup>284</sup> Ahıska, p.147.

<sup>285</sup> “...cumhuriyet bayramında kadınların da büyük bir tezahür yapması cumhuriyetin Türk kadınlarına bahş eylediği yüksek haklar itibarile muvafık görülmüştür,” *Yeni Asır*, 29 August 1933, p.4.

<sup>286</sup> Arat, s.72.

can one be persuaded that the Republic was “a just system recognizing no discrimination between men and women?”<sup>287</sup>

In the ceremonies of September 9, women and men were assigned to different roles. For example, reading elegies and poems was always the job of women in the celebrations, which is not surprising when the insurmountable social perception of women as sentimental beings is considered. While women either read poems or stood on the cars driven by men in the parades (as shown in the figure below), men joined the triumph as hunters, scouts, football players, fencers, or cyclists.<sup>288</sup>



Figure 8: A presentation in the parade of September 9, 1927.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> Zihnioğlu, p.120.

<sup>288</sup> See Çağaptay: “On May 12, 1928, the TBMM passed Law Nr 1246, stipulating that ‘the right to establish boy scouts units or other scouting groups under any other name or title, in or outside schools, belongs exclusively to Turkish citizens.’ The government was cognizant of the rise of nationalist athletic militias elsewhere in Europe, and was making sure that non-Turkish minorities would not be able to establish such groups in Turkey,”p.69.

<sup>289</sup> Source uncertain.

Especially in the 1930s, men at the celebrations were pictured by the newspapers as vigorous, youthful, and healthy people, walking in steady and strong steps with their backs straight. There was an obvious emphasis on the youthfulness, healthiness, and masculinity of the male participants. It was very natural for a government, emphasizing historical rupture and originality on every occasion, to support and reinforce novelty with the discourse and exhibition of the youth. Besides, it was a period, when fascism's glorification of masculinity was in vogue.



Figure 9: Male cyclists in the ceremony of 9 September 1926.<sup>290</sup>

In addition to the different roles assigned to men and women, Republican Turkey, beginning with the Kemalist era, also used the symbols of male and female bodies side by side as another symbolic tool. For instance, in the early Republican Turkey, republic balls or the festival of September 9 were important occasions for displaying

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<sup>290</sup> *İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Ahmet Piriştina Kent Arşivi ve Müzesi*, d.gül-beş.görsel1-6\_9eylül1926\_bisikletçiler\_mehmet vasfi.

male and female bodies together. This was a clear exhibition of the new secular system, as opposed to the Ottoman past, which separated men and women in the public sphere. The modernization and secularization of Turkey was visually embodied in men and women dancing together at republic balls and marching side by side in September 9 parades.

Not only women and men, but also children appeared in the ceremonies of September 9. As future adults, “children’s civic identity [was] shaped through repeated cultural rituals... and adults rel[ie]d on the culture surrounding festive scenes to construct citizenship for children.”<sup>291</sup> *Anadolu* reported on August 31, 1924 that the parade of September 9 would include children, girls wearing red and white dresses with wreaths in their hands and boy scouts.<sup>292</sup>



Figure 10: A child in the September 9 parade of 1930.<sup>293</sup>

<sup>291</sup> Lorinda Cohoon, “Festive Citizenships: Independence Celebrations in New England Children’s Periodicals and Series Books,” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2006), p.132.

<sup>292</sup> “5. Beyaz elbiseleri libas ellerinde ellerinde çelenklerle hanım kızlar, ... 9. Çelenkli kırmızı elbiseli hanım kızlar, ... 33. İzçiler,” *Anadolu*, 31 August 1924, p.2.

<sup>293</sup> Source uncertain.

The Independence Day celebrations of Izmir both used child bodies as symbols in the national narrative and introduced children with the national narrative. “Of course, celebrations [were] not the only times in which citizenships [were] put into place, but their yearly, regularly scheduled occurrences provide[d] them with a memorable narrative power that adults... recognized and [drew] on to make a path for”<sup>294</sup> children to adopt citizenship values and national collective memory.

The Turkish Republic, which declared itself to have been founded on equality and unity, had different citizenship perceptions and projections for men and women. Deduced from the ceremonies of September 9, while men were given active roles in the celebrations such as sportsmen, scouts, and public speakers, women were charged with duties like bodily standing as symbols of the nation on cars passing in the parade, orienting and taking care of students as teachers, and reading poems as emotional beings. Men and women not “lucky” enough to enter the parade stood behind wire fences, living their own conflicts and inequalities. They watched the parade pass, as a small copy of the society in which they lived.

#### A Geographic and Socioeconomic Microcosm:

##### The Parade as the Sublime Route

“The language and medium of a festival is the city, its people, streets, and buildings.”<sup>295</sup> Every political regime engages in a spatial politics of arranging the urban space, creating its own national *lieux de mémoire*, and confiscating the

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<sup>294</sup> Cohoon, p.148.

<sup>295</sup> von Geldern, p.73.

dominance on the “symbolic centers”<sup>296</sup> from the former regime. Parades are among the main elements in this spatial game, marking the transformation in the connotations of the space.

Parades are fashion displays of, especially, a new nation. Every regime change uses a symbolic, visual dimension, in order to make the change more understandable, more adjustable, and to “show” the differences from the old regime. While the symbols of the old regime are sidelined and outlawed, those of the new are brought to the fore, repeated, and glorified. New customs are presented to “the new citizens,” instead of the relinquished old customs and traditions, through symbols.<sup>297</sup> Thus, by symbols, people believe in, or are made to believe in, the originality and legitimacy of the new regime. And parades lay a gallery before the governors to exhibit their nation’s goals and values.

In the parade of September 9, 1929, several symbolic presentations were included, as allegories of the nation’s principles.<sup>298</sup> The first was the “Tableau of Dark Days,” in which a soldier, having liberated Izmir from the enemies, was standing next to a girl symbolizing the homeland. A symbolical relation seems to have been established between women liberated by the men of the country and the country liberated by its male citizens. Men had pulled the country out of “the dark

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<sup>296</sup> von Geldern, p.193.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., p.250.

<sup>298</sup> “*Kara Günler Tablosu: (Kara Günler) yazısı ile korkunç işgal ve istila günlerinin bütün feccatini gösteren büyük iki tablo... Yunanlılara karşı beslediği kin ve intikam hislerini yeniden tazeledi... Zafer Temsili: Ortada İzmirli Kurtaran Mehmetçik parlak süngüsü ile (Vatan) temsili hanım kızın yanında bekliyor. Melekler; köylü kızlar; yerde oturmuş, vatanın etrafını sarmış, duruyordu... Cümhuriyet Temsili: Her tarafı kale ile sarılmış bir vatani gösteren ve dört köşesinde beyaz elbise giymiş dört güzel hanım bulunan araba... Maarif Temsili: Bir bahçe içinde küçük çocuklar üzerinde (Maarif) yazılı olan tenekelerde ortadaki ağacı suluyorlardı... Tayyare Timsali: İki hanım kız bir tayyarenin içine girmiş, tayyareci elbisesi giymişler, pervane dönüyor ve tayyare ilerliyordu... Hilaliahmer Timsali: Bir harp meydanında göğsünden yaralanmış bir kahramanın nermine bir hanım eli yarasını sarıyor, daha beride yaralanmış, yüz üstü düşmüş bir asker bir yudum su diye inlerken kendisine Hilaliahmerin müşfik eli su uzatıyordu.” Anadolu, 11 September 1929, p.2.*



days.” In another presentation, some children formed a tableau for the national education system. The children were watering a tree with buckets, on which the word “education” was written. This scene was a clear indication of the importance given to education, which would turn the new Republic, portrayed as a sapling, into an experienced tree, with the help of the young generation.



Figure 11: The Presentation of the Tableau of Dark Days, 9 September 1925.<sup>299</sup>

The parades of September 9 in the early Republican Turkey were dominated by the presence of the state and the army. The civil and military elite walked at the front of the procession. The “mass” of people had to stay away from the parade, watching passively in the places determined by Izmir’s People’s House Festival Committee. The role assigned to them was to throw confetti, flowers, and cologne on the people passing. Any automobiles, vehicles, or individuals that tried to go into the parade

<sup>299</sup> Source uncertain.

would be taken out by municipal police officers and the responsible parties punished.

Parades are the motors of celebrations. They present the “ordinary citizen” the sole chance to actively participate in the politics of the country, in the spirit of the community, and in the ideals of the nation. They give “to the political action or to the celebration the significance of a mass movement.”<sup>300</sup> Despite the social differences between them, all the people commemorating the same event gather around the shared belief in nationalist ideology in nation’s processions.



Figure 12: "A September memoir of Izmir victory," 9 September 1924.<sup>301</sup>

Correspondingly, in the festival of September 9, people from different socioeconomic backgrounds participated in and watched the ceremonies together. September 9 celebrations, in a way, acted as the radio did in the early Republican

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<sup>300</sup> Harper, p.234.

<sup>301</sup> "İzmir zaferi, eylül hatırası," *Hamza Rüstem Fotoğrafhanesi*.

Turkey. As Meltem Ahiska expresses, by addressing all the people, the radio presented an integrating technology assembling the elite and the common people, men and women in the same audibility.<sup>302</sup> Similar to the radio, the festival of September 9 incorporated all Turkish citizens of Izmir, regardless of their social, economic, or cultural backgrounds. The parades of September 9 democratically fixed different people at a national time-space, just as the radio also did.<sup>303</sup>

One can deduce the socioeconomic profile of the early Republican Izmir from the participant lists of the triumphal parades. For instance, in 1933, the tobacco workers union, cobblers; tailors; shoe tradesmen; groceries; fishermen, hairdressers; pharmacists; bakers; the Association of Casino and Coffee Owners; tinsmiths; drivers; glassworkers; blacksmiths; press workers; stonemasons; licensed companies of telephone, electricity, and water; cutting and sewing dormitories; teamsters; and the Association of Maritime Workers participated in the parade in the September 9 celebrations.<sup>304</sup> Because “Turkish workers” wanted to join the parade, their workplaces were on holiday for the afternoon of September 9; train workers and tradesmen also joined the celebrations.<sup>305</sup> The parade was like a mirror image of the economic life in Izmir of the early Turkish Republic. Similar to what James von Geldern expresses for Bolshevik festivals, also in the festival of September 9 “politicians, artists, and simple citizens were mixed in a single great performance, with the needs and particulars of each group contributing to the final product.”<sup>306</sup> “In

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<sup>302</sup> Ahiska, p.21.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid., pp.21-22.

<sup>304</sup> *Yeni Asır*, 9 September 1933, p.2 and *Anadolu*, 9 September 1933, p.4.

<sup>305</sup> *Anadolu*, 1 September 1931, p.2.

<sup>306</sup> von Geldern, p.208.

this sense, festival enthusiasts were correct in believing that festivals were models of the greater society surrounding them.”<sup>307</sup>

Many companies and enterprises of Izmir assured their place in the September 9 parade. Their existence in the parade was a symbol and public demonstration of national loyalty. But, more importantly, they had the opportunity to make their own advertisements in the parade.



Figure 13: The car of *Hamza Rüstem Photograph Studio* in September 9 parade, date uncertain.<sup>308</sup>

During the early Republican period, Izmirians from different economic backgrounds walked together in the parades of September 9 according to their occupations. Groups such as tobacco workers, shoe tradesmen, groceries, fishermen, hairdressers, pharmacists, bakers, coffee owners, tinsmiths, drivers, glassworkers, blacksmiths, press workers, stonemasons, and maritime workers participated in the parade and passed down the triumphal road as equal citizens. The presence of people from every

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<sup>307</sup> von Geldern, p.208.

<sup>308</sup> *Hamza Rüstem Fotoğrafhanesi*.

economic stratum in the parade might be regarded as an attempt to create solidarity and equality within the most diversified and unequal section of society, that was the economy. In addition, diversified occupational groups in the parade signified the importance of the economy for the new Republic.

Despite the emphasis on economic harmony, the parade also accommodated the elements of socioeconomic differences. The Bureau of the Chamber of Tradesmen and Laborers brought some poor children to the procession in the clothes given by the Chamber.<sup>309</sup> Those children had come to the Chamber barefoot and in ragged clothes; however, in the parade, they were wearing neat and clean dresses, singing the anthem of the Republic.

The triumphal parades of September 9 celebrations, between 1923 and the 1940s, were like a microcosm of Turkey of that time, with the state marching at the front heading its people, the army having a predominated presence and established position, women passively standing as symbols of their community and country, and people enthusiastically but inexpressively watching the passage in the sidelines.

### Concluding Remarks

The tradition of celebration in the early Republican Izmir seems to have been parallel to what Pierre Nora calls “the classical model of national commemoration,” for which ritual spaces provide “vibrant” instruments to define national identity and

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<sup>309</sup> “Parti işçi ve esnaf birlikleri bürosu, bayram günü sabahleyin fakir işçi ve esnafın 600 çocuğunu, birlik çatısı altında baştan aşağı giydirmiş, onları öğle yemeğine misafir etmiş ve bir kısmını da ihtifal alayına katmıştır. Büronun bu güzel eseri bütün görenleri mütehassis etmiştir. Birlikler binasına perişan kıyafetlerle, yalınayak, başkarak, giren yavrular, temiz ve düzgün bir kıyafetle çıkmışlar, cumhuriyet marşını söylemişler, oynamış, bağrımış, sevinçlerini göstermişlerdir,” *Anadolu*, 11 September 1935, p.4.

create collective memory.<sup>310</sup> The celebrations of September 9 were very orderly planned and hierarchical, based on the sovereignty of the nation, and organized and supervised by the state. It was a period of “monument-building,” “when major events were celebrated simultaneously throughout the country at identical sites with identical rituals and processions, without regard to specific individual and group identities but with respect for the succession of generations.”<sup>311</sup> The ignorance of individual specificity and ethnic diversity coexisted with the assumption of an epic and unified history, which would lead to unified aspirations and collective remembering.

Such a festival, watched but not participated in, by many people and processed almost within the framework of the chain of order and command, was cut out for the state as an arena to apply its citizen creation projections. The model citizen that the state wanted to form through symbolism in September 9 celebrations was one that participated in the festival with national euphoria, but remained behind real or virtual wire fences. That person was not to question any of the policies or commands of his/her the-one-and-only state and was to warn those who do. Thus, while the people were given a passive role in the presence of the state, they had to fight actively against its adversaries. While charging the citizens with this duty, the Turkish state seemed to resort to the strategy of ignoring the presence of its adversaries through declaring the “reality” of universal attendance at the September 9 celebrations, as if everyone supported the state. Order, control, and universal participation: The heaven of a hegemonic state is a unified, controllable, and homogenously-ordered population.

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<sup>310</sup> Nora, “The Era of Commemoration,” pp.614-615.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., pp. 615.

The Turkish state has had an understanding of “good citizen,” symbolized by the voiceless crowd in the official festival of September 9. The rules of the ceremonies had to be obeyed; the order of the festival had to be kept. In September 9 “military pomp and circumstance predominated, while people watched from the sidelines.”<sup>312</sup> In this festive environment, a state-dominated public that was “a spectator of but also a participant in rituals celebrating the primacy of the state”<sup>313</sup> emerged.

The paradigm of “the construction of the nation” identifies the nation merely with its “constructors” and “process of construction.”<sup>314</sup> However, the nation is both a sphere of totality in national identity/memory and a fragmented realm of different voices.<sup>315</sup> Rather than perceiving the nation state as the construction cartel, a hybrid perspective of “co-production,”<sup>316</sup> which might shed light to national identity and collective memory formation process better, has to be employed. In the context of September 9 rituals in Izmir, both the elite and ruled people played constitutive roles in the production of a national identity, public, and memory:

...the formation of [the] “statist public” was not a unilinear undertaking of a monolithic entity known as the state. Instead, it emerged out of the actions and interactions of state as well as non-state actors, and in this sense is better understood as a “co-production” rather than a peremptory top-down project.<sup>317</sup>

Due to this “co-production” different memories have found fissures to arise and flourish in Izmir, despite the standardizing efforts of the national collective memory constructors.

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<sup>312</sup> Mosse, p.92.

<sup>313</sup> Roy, p.225.

<sup>314</sup> Ahiska, p.18.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Roy, p.225.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid., p.227.

## CHAPTER IV

### FESTIVAL BEYOND WIRE FENCES:

#### SEPTEMBER 9 AS A DATE OF LIVING MEMORY TODAY

*Stories, Leslie Marmon Silko explains, are the tools we need not just to survive, but to overcome. They are a protection that allows us to save ourselves, but also active instruments for changing the world – because there is power in words.*<sup>318</sup>

*Alessandro Portelli*

Memory and history are in endless fight. History regards memory as an incomplete, false, misleading, and emotional account of the past. Memory ceaselessly strives for survival and subjective independence against history, which continuously tries to imprison it within the fences of objective reconstruction. Memory is a living concept belonging to the present, while history is a made-up artifact of “what is no longer.”<sup>319</sup>

Despite the differences, it is not uncommon to witness memory as surrendering to the distortions of history. The project of history is influential on collective memory. The nation state attempts to synchronize the memories of its citizens in terms of time and space and to unify them under the umbrella of what they remember and forget. Although this endeavor usually succeeds over other ways of remembering, no state effort can prevent the existence of multiple living memories.

This chapter attempts to illustrate the tensions between collective memory formed by the nation state and different individual memories in society in the context of Izmir. The aim is to explore the existence of different collective memories in the city, which was once known for its cosmopolitan character. Could different

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<sup>318</sup> Alessandro Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), p.40.

<sup>319</sup> Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” p.3.



memories get through the national construction and flourish around the commemoration of September 9? It is asked whether Izmirian people with different ethnic and cultural origins have accumulated and maintained different memories and perceptions about the festival of September 9. And it is questioned whether the possible existence of multiple collective memories defying the totalizing national one might be considered as a trace of the city's cosmopolitan past.

In this chapter, oral history is employed as a tool for research. The oral history method might expose images and perceptions of September 9 “registered in individuals’ memories, and discourses through which these memories [are] expressed.”<sup>320</sup> Hopefully, oral history, the recording of individual memories, might bring an opening-up to the deadlock of memory-history struggle. As Alessandro Portelli suggests, “in practice, oral history stays mostly in between: its role is precisely to connect life to times, uniqueness to representatives, as well as orality to writing.”<sup>321</sup> Thus, the oral history approach acts like a bridge between constructed history and living memory, between past and present, individual and community, academic historical writing and daily dialogue. Accordingly, individual memories have traces of both national memory and resistance to it, of constructed-ness and progression.

However, is oral history a reliable instrument? Do interviewed people express their memories, perceptions, and thoughts honestly, even when facing the “narrative authority” of the interviewer that is usually “the first person who speaks in an oral history interview?”<sup>322</sup> As one of the interviewees of this thesis expressed, people cannot remember even recent history, the event of September 9, the Fire, or the First

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<sup>320</sup> Öztürkmen, p.50.

<sup>321</sup> Portelli, p.6.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid., p.9.

landing of Greeks in Izmir.<sup>323</sup> Does memory recreation, loss, incompleteness, or change pose impediments to a clear depiction of history? More importantly, can one make generalizations out of an individual memory?

The totalizing history, and thus its collective memory, does not involve all the people under its umbrella. People develop parallel, counter, or additional memories. Therefore, the inclusion of individual identities in the story is not only horizon-expanding, but also ethical. Pierre Nora expresses that “there are as many memories as there are groups.”<sup>324</sup> This thesis does not go too far to claim and try to prove that there are as many memories as there are individuals. Nevertheless, the existence of individuals in the study appreciates the existence of reactions different from what the nation state has designed and expected. This chapter tries to delineate those different reactions, and does not claim to generalize any individual comments.

Before passing to the analysis and presentation of individual narratives about the festival of September 9, the demographic history of Izmir, which was mentioned in the “Introduction” part of this thesis, should be briefly re-evoked. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the demographic structure of Izmir started to change, as trade developed. The number of Greeks increased; Jews and Armenians settled in the city.<sup>325</sup> Europeans also came to this newly flourishing port, became the Levantines of this new cosmopolis, and their “presence began to be more salient in the city towards

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<sup>323</sup> “Kültür düzeyleri farklı, olaylara bakışları farklı... 9 Eylül’de ilk kurşun olayı vardır (o kadar yakın bir tarih ki), o bile sanki 300 yıl önce olmuş bir olay gibi. Kimse tam olarak ne olduğunu bilemiyor. O gün çıkan gazeteler bile farklı şeyler yazıyor. Bu yangın konusunda, Yunanlıların ilk İzmir’e çıkışları konusunda da böyle,” Hakan Taşkırın, ~45, interview by the author of the thesis, tape recording, Izmir, Turkey, 21 June 2007.

<sup>324</sup> Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” p.3.

<sup>325</sup> Goffman, p.142.

the end of the seventeenth century.”<sup>326</sup> The result was “a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-linguistic metropole.”<sup>327</sup>

However, the foundation of the Turkish Republic was based on the homogeneity of population. After the war in 1922 and through population exchange between 1923 and 1927, the government sought to make Izmir demographically homogenized. The cosmopolitan memories were to be forgotten and the space was to be cleared out for national ones. Yet, it was not just an effort to forget, but the creation of new memories. The cosmopolitan port was to be turned into a national city with national sites. As Biray Kolluoğlu-Kırlı writes, the annihilation of the cosmopolitanism in the city was actually “an act of creation, an attempt to build places of (counter) memory, opening up a terrain upon which the new nation’s imprint, its Muslim and Turkish identity, could be carved and its cosmopolitanism nationalized.”<sup>328</sup>

Despite the nation state’s efforts to homogenize the population, Izmir still is not demographically uniform. Among its population are “native” Muslims, Levantines, immigrants from the Balkans, Jews, *mübadils* (Turks who came from Greece through the population exchange), and already absent Greeks and Armenians... The existing presence of ethnically and culturally different people in Izmir might be a sign for the existence of different outlooks and traditions, and multiple memories in the city.

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<sup>326</sup> Biray Kolluoğlu-Kırlı, “Forgetting the Smyrna Fire.” *History Workshop Journal* 60 (Autumn 2005), p.42.

<sup>327</sup> Goffman, p.143.

<sup>328</sup> Kolluoğlu-Kırlı, p.27.

If, as Lyn Spillman writes, “past events often seem to exercise some nontrivial constraint on collective memory,”<sup>329</sup> and if, as Eviatar Zerubavel adds, “every society requires some fixed continuity with past concerns,”<sup>330</sup> could Izmir have maintained some elements, some memories and views of life from its two hundred years of multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-linguistic past?

I conducted eight interviewees with people living in Izmir. I asked them what they remember about the ceremonies of September 9. The results are clustered under three headings: (1) how much they remember about the festival of September 9, “Remembering: Sonorous and Silent;” (2) what they remember and think about September 9, “Remembering Differently;” and (3) how they remember September 9, “Sites of Memory.”

The previous chapter has tried to map out the course of collective memory through an investigation of written, semi-official narratives of newspapers and periodicals mentioning September 9. This chapter endeavors to deepen the analysis based of official, written programs or epic/nationalistic articles through “listening to oral narratives of national holidays.”<sup>331</sup> Although most of the interviewees did not personally witness September 9 celebrations of the early Republican Turkey, an analysis of their memories might shed light on the dynamics of permanence vs. blurring of collective memory.

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<sup>329</sup> Spillman, p.165, with reference to Eviatar Zerubavel.

<sup>330</sup> Eviatar Zerubavel paraphrased in Spillman, p.165.

<sup>331</sup> Öztürkmen, p.53.

## Remembering: Sonorous and Silent

What one remembers varies according to many factors. First, there are individual factors. The areas of interest, the unclouded-ness degree of the mind, or the healthiness level of sensation organs are influential on noticing and memorizing. Second, the collectivity one belongs is effective on one's memory. The gender of the individual, the home town of living, ethnic origins, religious beliefs, the occupation, and the sports team one supports, affect one's memory. It is not interesting that people believing communally in a religion or in a sports team or living together think, feel, and remember the same. What is surprising is that people living together develop different attitudes and memories, which designates the fact that different parameters, such as a hegemonic narrative, "national mystique,"<sup>332</sup> or silent resistance, are point at the issue of collective memory.

This section tries to analyze what Izmirians remember about September 9 celebrations and what have been buried to oblivion, in the light of these parameters. The ultimate aim of the section is to bring to light where Izmirians from different ethnic and cultural origins put September 9 on their remembering/forgetting scale.

İbrahim Tezcan is an immigrant from Macedonia, Skopje, who came to Turkey with his family on 18 May 1960. Although he participated in his first ceremony of September 9 in 1961, he said that he had known about the historical background and meaning of September 9 when he was in Skopje.<sup>333</sup> He also, being a

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<sup>332</sup> Mosse, p.2.

<sup>333</sup> "9 Eylül'ü de ilk önce Çamdibi İlkokulu'nda kutladım... Ben gelmeden önce biliyordum ki, tarihte okudum hep bunları. Makedonya'dayken 9 Eylül'de neler oldu, neler bitti, bunları biliyordum ben. İzmir nasıl kurtuldu, Yunanlılar nasıl saldırdı, nasıl bütün dünya ülkeleri Türkiye'ye karşı oldu," İbrahim Tezcan, 71, interview by the author of the thesis with Mukaddes Ünlü, tape recording, İzmir, Turkey, 23 July 2007.

primary school teacher, clearly remembers the details of the celebrations that have taken place in Alsancak.

The knowledge and interests of Lütfü Aksungur, a 95-year-old journalist and Izmirian for 90 years, and his wife Mebrule Aksungur, 87-year-old retired teacher and Izmirian, in Turkish history and the independence of Izmir are unsurprisingly very strong. In addition, Lütfü Aksungur, a witness of the Greek occupation of Izmir and the later independence of the city, gives special importance to the date of September 9.

Not only people in Izmir and its provinces celebrate and remember September 9. According to Pelin Böke's account, *mübadils* in Tekirdağ used to organize boat trips to Izmir in order to attend the ceremonies of September 9 and to visit the Fair.<sup>334</sup>

It might be concluded that the living memories of ethnically Turkish people in Izmir ("natives," immigrants, and *mübadils*), although they have come from different cultural origins, have been affected by the totalizing national memory and reinforced through the national commemoration of September 9. These people from the interviews have adopted the hegemonic narrative of the Turkish nation state, of which they are citizens. Therefore, it might be claimed that the shared element of nationality is an effective contributor to collective memory, which sometimes does not have any geographical limits, but travels all the way from Skopje, Crete, or Tekirdağ to Izmir. Nevertheless, one should abstain from any generalizations that might blur individual reactions.

But, geographical limitlessness is occasionally frustrated by generational memory blurriness. Özge Ekim Bıçakçioğlu does not seem to be as interested in and

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<sup>334</sup> "Mübadillerle ilgili çalışırken ben, Tekirdağ'a gitmişler, 9 Eylülde gemi kaldırıyorlarmış İzmir'e. Fuar'a geliyorlarmış, 9 Eylül'e. Onlarda Balkan milliyetçiliği var tabii," Pelin Böke in Vinçenza Kopri, 75, interview by the author of the thesis with Pelin Böke, tape recording, Izmir, Turkey, 13 July 2007.

informed about the celebrations of September 9 as Mebrule and Lütfü Aksungur or İbrahim Tezcan:

I do not remember the festival of September 9 very much. I remember the torches passing at night. Perhaps, I went to the ceremonies, when I was a kid, but I cannot remember. I just remember that once I played drum in the band in Karşıyaka.”<sup>335</sup>

Nevertheless, Bıçakçioğlu patriotically equalizes September 9 with the hostility towards the Greek people.<sup>336</sup> Lack of information and enthusiasm does not hinder the adoption of the nationalist message given in September 9 celebrations.

Contrary to the all other interviewees, Vinçenza Kopri, identifying herself as an Italian-Izmirian, said that she was uninformed about September 9.<sup>337</sup> She asked what September 9 was. She did not know whether celebrations have been organized in Karşıyaka or any torchlight processions have taken place. Her memories about the festival of September 9 was nebulous, she could not vividly remember the content of the ceremonies. Despite the vague quality of Vinçenza Kopri’s memories about September 9, her memories about what her parents and relatives experienced during the war between Greece and Turkey and the Great Fire were very clear:

In 1920, during the Fire, Italy sent a ship to take Italians. My father went, too. My father’s brother’s wife fell into the sea and caught the ship by swimming. My father went with them. Then, they returned, when the war ended. The Italians asked: “Do you like to stay here or want to go to your place?” They chose Izmir and came back. My mother was *tabii* unmarried in 1922. England took all the English people here to Malta, when war erupted. My mother went to Malta. After the war, they asked: “Do you want to stay here or go to Izmir?” They chose Izmir and came back to here.

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<sup>335</sup> “Genelde bayram deyince gece geçen meşaleleri hatırlıyorum. Küçükken gittiysem hatırlamıyorum. Ama 9 Eylül’de Karşıyaka stadında bandeda çalmıştım,” Özge Ekim Bıçakçioğlu, 25, interview by the author of the thesis, online, Istanbul-Izmir, Turkey, 29 March 2007.

<sup>336</sup> “O günde önüme Yunanlı çıkmasın vururum. Hakikaten çok bir vatansever olasım geliyor,” Bıçakçioğlu.

<sup>337</sup> “9 Eylül ne hatırlatıyor, bir harbin başlangıcı mı, sonucu mu? Rumların buradan gitmeleri... E güzel bir şey tabii,” “(Fener alayı) Gece? Bilmem. Herhalde yapılıyordu. Bilmiyorum,” Vinçenza Kopri, 75, interview by the author of the thesis with Pelin Böke, tape recording, Izmir, Turkey, 13 July 2007.

Vinçenza Kopri's silence about September 9 and Turkish nationalism contradicts the clarity of the memories she obtained from her parents. It might be argued that her stance is more than an uninformed silence, but a conscious praxis of "not telling." Gary Minkley and Martin Legassick, in their elaboration of the subject of silence in history, claim that:

...history... is constituted as much through these mechanisms of "not telling" as by the ways of telling. Here language, meaning, and discourse as much as political need, social position, and multiple and shared context and the related concerns with race, class, and gender all contribute to the not telling of power in and of history.<sup>338</sup>

The social, economic, and political context of the individual, what s/he or her/his group has historically gone through, and her/his class, gender, and ethnicity determines when s/he talks and remains silent. The power relations in history contribute to the memorial assimilation or silent remembering. It is the silence of the resisting or ignoring narrative in the face of the violence and authority of the official narrative.<sup>339</sup> Silence, sometimes, does not mean oblivion, but resistance of some memories against the hegemonic one. "The individual historical actor" might have the power to "contest the 'grand patterns and overall schemes' of history."<sup>340</sup>

Erol Yafe, identifying himself as a Jewish Izmirian, is very knowledgeable of the history and festival of September 9, as his friend, Marko Kohen. They both remember the ceremonies in detail:

I participated many times in September 9... The things I remember the most about the ceremonies are the military parades. We sometimes walked in the parade with our school. Sometimes we were not in the procession, and went for watching. Bands... It was very very excessively crowded. I remember

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<sup>338</sup> Gary Minkley and Martin Legassick, "'Not Telling': Secrecy, Lies, and History," *History and Theory* 39, no. 4 (December 2000), p.7.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9.

<sup>340</sup> Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, "'I Saw a Nightmare...': Violence and the Construction of Memory (Soweto, June 16, 1976)," *History and Theory* 39, no. 4 (December 2000), p.24.



when I was a little child, my father put me on his shoulders, because I couldn't see.<sup>341</sup>

It appears that Yafe and Kohen have adopted the national celebration of Izmir. They have incorporated September 9 in their memories. Erol Yafe launched into explaining this adoption during the interview:

We should distinguish people in the context of Izmir. The Jews and the Greek-rooted ethnic minority are not the same. Because in the War of Independence, the Jews were engaged in activities for preserving the territory that they lived in. However, people with other ethnic identities, Greeks or Levantines, did not act like this. Therefore, when you ask today, the comments of a Christian person about September 9 will not be the same as those of a Muslim-rooted or Jewish-rooted Turk. Because in that period, as we all have read from history books, another state came, they tried to found a state more close to them. But Jews have nothing to do with such a goal. Because Jews do not have a state. Jews generally act according to the drive to maintain the values of the country that they live in. Thus, the joys and problems of this country are the joys and problems of the Jews.<sup>342</sup>

According to Yafe, the conciliatory attitude of Jewish people has coexisted with their adoption of their country's values and traditions. This adoption has led to a unity in identity and memory. Jewish people have been a part of the festival of September 9, to which, in return, they have given a place in their memories. The dynamics of memory seems to have followed the path of official history, which included the Jews in triumphal parades, and depicted them as non-separatist co-residents, but ultimately as foreigners.

The interviewed Muslim Izmirians have vast knowledge about the national history of Izmir and vivid memories of the commemoration of September 9, although they have come from different cultural backgrounds. Yafe and Kohen, sharing the same urban environment with their Muslim neighbors but diverging from them in terms of religion, also, to some extent, share the collective memory molded around

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<sup>341</sup> Marko Kohen, 45, interview by the author of the thesis, tape recording, Izmir, Turkey, 10 July 2007.

<sup>342</sup> Erol Yafe, 42, interview by the author of the thesis, tape recording, Izmir, Turkey, 10 July 2007.

national celebrations and history. It is evident that September 9 has printed itself on the collective memory of the interviewed Turkish and Jewish people. Vinçenza Kopri's silence about September 9 diverges from other interviewees' reactions, showing that the sharing of the same urban and daily environment does not suffice to create similar memories.

### Remembering Differently

In the subject of national celebrations, the findings of an oral history approach vastly differ from those of a newspaper survey. After the investigation of newspapers and review of the literature, most researchers can bring forth coherent studies about national festivals with consistent arguments. On the contrary, oral narratives hardly present an orderly, logical, and consistent story, whose inconsistency, paradoxically, might be meaningful.

This section analyzes the interviewees' individual memories and personal opinions about the public ritual of September 9, hoping to further clarify whether ethnic and/or cultural differences affect what people remember and feel about the festival. The narratives below might be read both as different components on the assembly line or as an un-assembled film.

Rauf Lütfü Aksungur remembers the liberation moment and the first celebration, above all.<sup>343</sup> According to him, the event of independence was celebrated by many people in the streets with euphoria, which formed the basis of the festival of September 9. The passing of almost eighty-five years has not made him

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<sup>343</sup> "Hepimiz evde oturuyorduk, yedi odalı evde. Yunanın geldiğini de gördüm, kaçtığını da gördüm," "İzmir'in kurtuluşu sevinç içerisinde geçti, halk sokaklara döküldü. Rumlar kaçtı, Ermeniler kaçtı. Alsancak'ta oturuyorlardı o zaman onlar," Rauf Lütfü Aksungur, 95, interview by author of the thesis with Mukaddes Ünlü, tape recording, Izmir, Turkey, 27 February 2007.

forget the day on which his sisters hurried to sew flags to greet the army, his neighbors cooked food for the soldiers, or his father took him to the seaside in order to join the enthusiastic crowd saluting the Turkish army. In Lütü Aksungur's memory, the first celebration is more underlined than the successive ones. What he remembers seems to be more based on what he witnessed in 1922, than what has been lived since.

What Erol Yafe remembers the most about the celebrations of September 9 is the militarism in the ceremonies.<sup>344</sup> He suggested in the interview that celebrating militaristically was a Turkish tradition, which could hardly disappear. Besides memories, Yafe also uttered some opinions about celebrating September 9. He highlighted the fact that the meaning of September 9 was manipulated according to the ideology of the authority in office.<sup>345</sup> "Some governments organize more militaristic and nationalistic celebrations, while others turn September 9 into a festival of concerts." For him, the bringing of independence days, such as September 9, to the fore is a part of the policies of current political authority, trying to make essentially important dates, such as April 23, forgotten. According to him, commemorations like September 9 have been "burnished" as "festivals of concerts;"

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<sup>344</sup> "Tabii 9 Eylül törenlerini izledim. Tabii çok militerdir genelde bizim kutlamalarımız. Sadece 9 Eylül değil 29 Ekim, 23 Nisan, hepsi. Çünkü Türkiye'de öyle bir gelenek var. Dünyada da bir sürü kutlama günleri var. Mesela Brezilya'da Rio, Fransa'da vs daha laik kutlamalar yapılır, ama biz New York'taki Türk Günü yürüyüşlerine bile Mehter takımıyla katılırız. Bu bizim toplumsal bir kutlama şeklimiz herhalde. Türkiye'de yaşayan insanlardan Hollandalıları gibi eğlenmelerini bekleyemezsiniz. Yani Türkler de böyle, biz böylesek böyle," Yafe.

<sup>345</sup> "Bugünkü iktidara baktığınızda, milliyetçilik kısmını kullanmamaya çalışarak, ama bana kalırsa milliyetçiliği kullanmayarak daha çağdaş bir alternatif getirmiyorlar, bu defa da Arap milliyetçiliğine çekmeye çalışıyorlar aslında insanları. O yüzden, bir bakıyorsunuz işte bir iktidar geliyor, daha milliyetçi, daha militer gösteriler; öbür taraftan 23 Nisan'ı çocuk bayramı gibi hatırlatmalar, öbür yandan da 9 Eylül'ü konserler bayramı haline getirme... Bana sorarsanız 9 Eylül coşkuyla kutlanması gereken bir gün, ama gerçekten öyle kutlanıyorsa coşkulu bir gündür. Yoksa başka nedenlerle, sadece hedef şaşırtmak için, işte konserler ya da daha militer gösteriler oluyorsa, o da aldatmaca bence... Yoksa 9 Eylül İzmir'in kurtuluşu, ama mesela bana sorarsanız en önemli gün 23 Nisan'dır... Ama o gün TBMM'nin açıldığı unutturulmaya çalışılıyor gibi. Kasıtlı değil belki ama. Türkiye'de hala mevcut devrimli karşı-devrimciler çatışıyor. O yüzden 9 Eylül gibi kurtuluş günleri parlatılırken, 23 Nisan gibi meclisin kurulması da farklı bir boyuta çekiliyor. Türkiye'de böyle bir politika var," Yafe.

while the founding day of the Turkish National Assembly has been left to oblivion, under the guise of the Children's Day.

Marko Kohen complains about the contemporary celebrations of September 9. According to him, the recent concerts organized within the September 9 ceremonies are disadvantageous for the permanence of the festival. The concerts and the fake, "inflated" crowd have nothing to do with the meaning of September 9, keeping the nationalist feelings in the background.<sup>346</sup> Moreover, he seems to be disturbed by the fact that the celebrations no longer take place in the streets but in stadiums. Here, the oral history approach proved to be beneficial in exposing information about "changes in the forms of the celebrations, such as the gradual transition from street-level celebrations to large-scale stadium performances."<sup>347</sup>

For Mebrule Aksungur, September 9 connotes the ceremonies in which she participated, when she was young:<sup>348</sup>

My sister's house is now facing the Square of the Republic. Ceremonies take place there, almost every day. When we were kids, the windows of hotels were rented in order to watch the parade... Thousands of people came to the celebrations. They were sleeping in the streets, all hotels were full. Not only us, everybody rented windows... In the parade, soldiers were passing; all associations were passing with their cars; students become angels on those cars; even I once became an angel... All associations hired trucks. Girls wore beautiful clothes. The ceremonies were major... So many people came from outside the city that there were no vacant places in the hotels... The ceremonies lasted for hours and continued till night... Soldiers marched along Kordon for hours. And the people watched them on the sidelines.

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<sup>346</sup> "Şimdilerde o kadar görmüyorum artık. Diğer bayramlar da hep stadyumlara falan taşındı. Kordon'dayken başkaydı. Çıktığım gibi görürdün. Şimdi daha zor oldu. O yüzden pek görmüyorum artık. Şimdiyse gece konserleri düzenleniyor... Bence konserlerin dezavantajı var... Böyle yapınca sahte bir kalabalık ortaya çıkıyor. Adamın milliyetçi bir duygusu yok, ama maddi olanakları da yok. Konseri veren sanatçı da ayağına kadar gelmiş. Bu kadarını da ben yapayım, diyor ve gidiyor oraya. 9 Eylül'ün amacıyla hiç alakası yok. Ben karşıyım böyle şişirilmiş topluluklara," Kohen.

<sup>347</sup> Öztürkmen, p.50.

<sup>348</sup> Mebrule Aksungur, 87, interview by the author of the thesis with Mukaddes Ünlü, tape recording, Izmir, Turkey, 27 February 2007.

For Mebrule Aksungur, September 9 means the “good old days.” She suggested during the interview that she still lived in those days, got highly emotional and always cries, when she watched September 9 ceremonies. Aksungur said that she, every time in September, felt the national enthusiasm as a dedicated Kemalist. Her attitude might be an indicator that the narrative of early Republican September 9 celebrations was more influential on actual witnesses and participants than on later members of the nation, who remain to be mere hearers.

Contrary to the talkativeness of Mebrule Aksungur about September 9, Vinçenza Kopri continued to maintain her silence. When she was asked her opinions about the meaning and ceremonies of September 9, her answer was “How should I know? They pleased me, they were fun.”<sup>349</sup>

According to an un-interviewed person that has published one of his memoirs online, Baskın Oran, September 9 evokes the memories of applauding the cavalymen passing along the First Kordon. Although he remembers September 9 as a date of pleasure and joy, the festival also reminds him of a closer date of sorrow: September 6, when the pogrom against Greek and Armenian citizens took place in Istanbul.<sup>350</sup>

What the festival of September 9 reminds Hakan Taşkıran of is the performances at schools, to which the attendance was compulsory.<sup>351</sup> He remembers

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<sup>349</sup> “*Ne bileyim ben? Hoşuma gidiyordu, eğlenceliydi tabii. Alsancak’ta. Törenler geçiyordu, bandolar bilmem neler,*” Kopri.

<sup>350</sup> “*Sizin bu yazıtı okuyacağınız 9 Eylül günü, çocukluğumun İzmirinin büyük keyif günüydü. Sabah erkenden Birinci Kordon’a çıkar, beklerdik. Bundan 73 yıl önce şehri düşmanlardan kurtaran atlılarımız, kılıçlarını çekmiş vaziyette, atlarının nalları o günkü kaba parke taşlarda kıvılcımlar çıkartarak Altay Lokalinden İskele’ye doğru dıgıdık dıgıdık geçecek diye heyecanlanırdık. Geçerken de ellerimiz patlayana kadar alkışlardık, tezahürat yapardık. Benim bu yazıtı kaleme aldığım 6 Eylül günü ise, bundan 50 yıl önce, büyük korku ve ıstırap çekmeme sebep olan gündür,*” Baskın Oran, “Çocukluğumdan İki Tarih,” Available [online] at [http://www.batitrakya-atilim.com/html/cocuklugumdan\\_iki\\_tarih.html](http://www.batitrakya-atilim.com/html/cocuklugumdan_iki_tarih.html) [30 March 2002].

<sup>351</sup> “*Biz okuldayken çalıştırılıp götürülürdük kutlamalara. Beden eğitimi derslerinde çalıştırılırdık. Kortej hazırlanırdı yürüyüş için. Ben ‘85’te mezun olduğuma göre, 1985 öncesinden söz ediyorum...*

his endeavors to run away from the rehearsals. Nevertheless, Taşkıran also recalls his enthusiasm in the festival, triggered by the bands, military marches, and concerted action.

Ethnic, religious, gender, economic factors, among many others, indeed determine what people remember. Nevertheless, sometimes purely individual causes manipulate the remembering/forgetting balance. A qualitative survey of different people's memories about the same subject shows that individuals might be affected by different parts of the same story, regardless of the groups they belong to. One might recall September 9 through a hotel window, free small gifts thrown from trucks,<sup>352</sup> compulsory school performances, passing cavalymen, or pogrom. By no means underrating the impact of the standardizing collectivity on what one remembers, it should not be forgotten that remembering is also an individual story, "where the meaning assigned to the... 'national holiday' becomes more important than the occurrence of it."<sup>353</sup>

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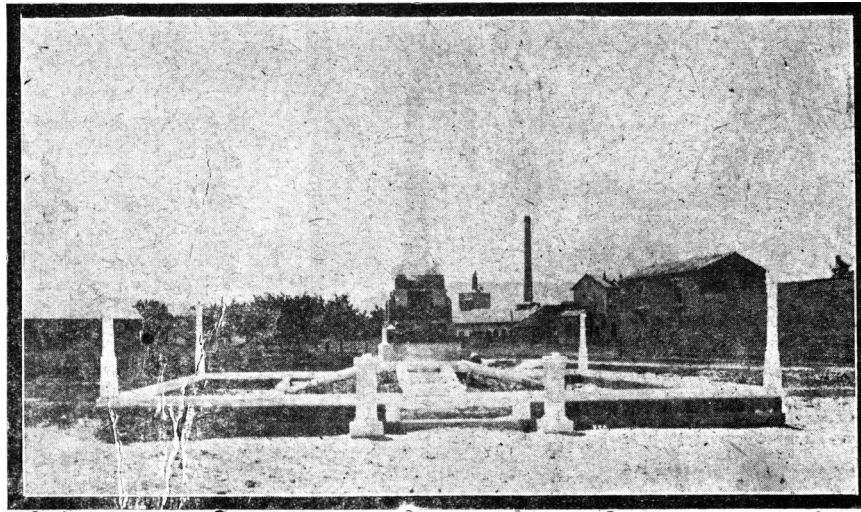
*Okulda, çocuklar için ne kadar önemli olsa da bir angaryaydı. Hepimiz kaçmaya çalışırdık bir şekilde. Kimi zaman da orada bandoların çalması insana bir heyecan verir, hep birlikte bir şey yapmanın verdiği, işte o askeri marşların birçoğunun güzel havasının olması. Biraz karışık yaşanan bir şey aslında. İlk İzmir kurtulduğu anda neyse o anda yaşanan duygular taze oluyor, ondan sonra biraz eskiyor. Nasıl aynı filmi sürekli seyrederseniz artık rutin olur, artık tat almamaya başlarsınız, o tarzda bir şey... Efeler var bizim hatırladığımız. Benim de hatırladığım bir efe... Arkadaşlarıyla 9 Eylül'de yürürlerdi. İlk 9 Eylül'leri hatırlayan yaşlı insanlarla röportajlar yapılırdı," Taşkıran.*

<sup>352</sup> "Benim hatırladığım 9 Eylül'ü hiç okulda kutlamıyorduk. Hep dışarıda kutlanıyordu, Alsancak'ta. Gündoğdu'dan Cumhuriyet Meydanı'na kadar geçit töreni oluyordu. O geçit töreninde... Öyle yolda, ayakta seyrediyorduk, oturmak için yer yoktu. Yolun iki tarafına diziliyordu insanlar. Resmigeçit oluyordu. Mesela vali geçiyordu, asker komutanları geçiyor, el sallıyorlardı. Atlı askerler geçiyordu, gaziler, efeler, öğrenciler, izciler. Kamyonların arkası açılıyordu, kasaları, oraya köylü kızları, köylü kıyafetleriyle, koyunlar, keçiler, orasını öyle bir köy evi gibi yapıyorlarmış. Orada yufka yazıyordu kadınlar, öyle hatırlıyorum ben kamyonun arkasında. Bir de şirketler reklamlarını dağıtıyorlardı. Mesela sabun atıyorlardı, sabunun ucunda kendi reklamları vardı, şirketlerinin sakız atıyorlardı çocuklara, balonlar atıyorlardı... Hala aynı kutlanıyor, hala aynı yerlerde aynı yürüyüşler yapılıyor," Mukaddes Ünlü in Tezcan.

<sup>353</sup> Öztürkmen, p.53.

## Sites of Memory

The never-changing program for September 9 celebrations shows that the nation state has tried to create some realms of memory around the Independence Day. The Square of the Republic facing the Bay, Halkapınar Cemetery where Turkish soldiers martyred fighting Greek soldiers are buried, and Belkahve where Mustafa Kemal first saw Izmir have been used repeatedly as realms of commemoration in the festival of September 9. Almost all of the interviewees remember these places; however, only a few mentioned them. Nevertheless, many narrators clustered their memories in some places, images, or objects, i.e., sites of memory.



ازمير قورتلوشنك بويوك شهيدلىك نامى نيجيل ايچون خانة پيكارده زكيز اولومان شهيدا .بدەمى

Figure 14: Halkapınar Cemetery, 1928.<sup>354</sup>

Six people among the interviewees mentioned September 9 as the date of “throwing Greeks into the sea.”<sup>355</sup> It is evident that the image of Greeks being thrown into the

<sup>354</sup> *Büyük Gazete*, 30 August 1928, p.2, *İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Ahmet Piriştina Kent Arşivi ve Müzesi*.

<sup>355</sup> Taşkiran, Lütfü Aksungur, Mebrule Aksungur, Yafe, Bıçakçıoğlu, and Tezcan.

sea has become a symbol, a visual site of memory, that unifies different people's memories about September 9. İbrahim Tezcan regards the event of sending away the Greek soldiers as glorious and honorable for İzmir.<sup>356</sup> According to Özge Bıçakçioğlu and Erol Yafe, this image was inlaid in their minds in school through education. Nevertheless, while Bıçakçioğlu internalized the event and turned it into a rage against the Greek "invaders,"<sup>357</sup> Erol Yafe seems to be more neutral and pacifist.<sup>358</sup> Vinçenza Kopri has a pendent suggestion about the issue: "September 9... Departing of the Greeks from here... Well, it is a good thing, I guess."

Besides the Independence Day, the month of September also means the Fair season for İzmir. Every year, the International Fair of İzmir is organized for ten days, including September 9, which increases the possibility that the Fair is one of the sites of memory reminding İzmir's Independence Day. Correspondingly, the foundations of the İzmir Fair were laid in 1927, first as "Exhibitions of September 9." Early Republican elite decided to open the Exhibitions on September 9; in this way, "the joy of freedom and the pride of a new economic enterprise could be celebrated at the same time."<sup>359</sup> Yaşar Aksoy notes that the early Republican elite were in an effort to direct the "economic aspirations of independent and proud Turkish state, which was

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<sup>356</sup> "9 Eylül'de düşman denize döküldü ve Türk bayrağı ilk kez burada dalgalandı, büyük bir şereftir bu," Tezcan.

<sup>357</sup> "Yani küçükken daha ilkokuldan beri hep 9 Eylül eşittir Yunanlıları denize döktük. Sanki ülkeye bir tek Yunanlılar saldırmış," Bıçakçioğlu.

<sup>358</sup> "Türkiye, Yunanistan'la bir savaş yapmış, 9 Eylül'de bitmiş. Nihayetinde burada savaşı kazanmış, denize döktü veya dökmedi. Ama bugün artık Türkiye'yle Yunanistan NATO'da aynı barış paktında yaşayan, AB'de aynı sıralarda oturmak isteyen iki ülke olduğuna göre, 9 Eylül'ü artık Yunan düşmanlığını köriklemek için kutlamak saçma. Sembolik olarak belki kuruluş günü, kurtuluş değil ama kuruluş günü, gibi yorumlanabilir. Ama bu gerçeği değiştirmeyecek tabii," "9 Eylül İzmir'in kurtuluşu olmakla beraber aynı zamanda Kurtuluş Savaşı'nın nihai noktasıdır. Yani, okulda bize ne öğrettiler, 9 Eylül'de Yunanı denize döktük ve savaşı kazandık. O yüzden 9 Eylül genel Türkiye'nin kurtuluşu. Türkiye'nin de bayramı, sadece İzmir'in değil. 9 Eylül savaşı bitirdiyse, Türkiye'nin de bayramı olabilir," Yafe.

<sup>359</sup> "Dr. Behçet Uz, Büyük Eserini Anlatıyor," in "70 Yıllık Sevda: İzmir Fuarı," (İzmir: İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2001), p.14.



founded through throwing of the enemies into the sea in 9 September 1922.”<sup>360</sup> The elite of the early Turkish Republic attempted to make the Fair the center of the national economy and a site of Turkish nation.

The Fair and the *Kültürpark* in its current place was founded in 1936 on the ashes of the Great Fire in 1922, which destroyed most of the non-Muslim neighborhoods of İzmir. Actually, İzmir in the 1930s was characterized by a “building enthusiasm,” based on the removal of debris from the fire area.<sup>361</sup> According to Behçet Uz, the mayor of İzmir between 1931 and 1941, the opening of the Fair ended the question of the fire area; a rich and prosperous area replaced “the large and harmful injury at the heart of the city.”<sup>362</sup> Therefore, construction of the Fair was not only a process of building, but also that of removing.



Figure 15: A scene from the fire zone, date uncertain.<sup>363</sup>

<sup>360</sup> Yaşar Aksoy, “İzmir Enternasyonal Fuarı,” *ibid.*, p.1.

<sup>361</sup> Tülay Alim Baran, *Bir Kentin Yeniden Yapılanması: İzmir 1923–1938* (İstanbul: Arma Yayınları 2003), p.49.

<sup>362</sup> *Anadolu*, 2 September 1936, p.2.

<sup>363</sup> The photograph depicts the İsmet Paşa Boulevard paved within the fire zone. On the left, two churches can be seen. On the right side, there is yet-to-be cleaned fire debris and seawards the Exhibition of September 9. “*Mezarlıkbaşı'nı İsmet Paşa Bulvarı'na bağlamak ve yangın yerlerini imar etmek için açılan İsmet Paşa Bulvarı'nın bir kısmı. Sol tarafta yarısı görülen bina St. Polycarpe Kilisesi, az ilerisinde kubbesi fark edilen kilise ise Dom Kilisesi'dir. Bulvarın sağ yanında henüz temizlenmemiş olan yangın mahalleri (Günümüz Efes Otel) ve denize doğru Dokuz Eylül Panayırı yer almaktadır,*” text written by Fikret Yılmaz, *İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Ahmet Piriştina Kent Arşivi*

Arguably, the building of the Fair was a memorial project of the governing elite. It was founded on the fire area, once the residential neighborhood of Franks and Greeks. The Fair was a national project of symbolizing the now bygone cosmopolitan past, which had to be forgotten, and welcoming the national future, as a part of the collective memory henceforth:

The memories of the destroyed Frank district, and the choices to build the *Kültürpark* and the monument in the fire zone – spaces that are overloaded with the imprints of the new Turkish nation – can be seen as instances of collective forgetting and construction of future memories in the process of nation-building through the mediation of city spaces.<sup>364</sup>

The former neighborhoods of Izmir’s non-Muslim population were signs of unwanted heterogeneity for the new nation. Therefore, they were transformed into national sites, where homogeneous national memories could flourish.



Figure 16: The entrance gate of September 9 Fair, 1937.<sup>365</sup>

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ve Müzesi, *İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Ahmet Piriştina Kent Arşivi Ve Müzesi Şube Müdürlüğü Fonu*, Foto\_19.

<sup>364</sup> Kırılı, *From Ottoman Empire to Turkish Nation-State*, p.251.

<sup>365</sup> “9 Eylül Panayırı giriş kapısı,” *İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Ahmet Piriştina Kent Arşivi ve Müzesi*, a.ibb.izfaş.görsel.3-14\_1937.

As the spatial project of building the Fair on the former residences of non-Muslim Izmirians clearly depicts, the early nation state manipulated the space in Izmir. The nation state has changed the places in order to change what people remember. “At the heart of history is a criticism destructive of spontaneous memory,”<sup>366</sup> expresses Nora. One of Vinçenza Kopri’s memories might enlighten the spatial manipulation in Izmir, trying to replace the existing memories with new national ones:

In the past, I mean, when there were Greeks, they used to call Alsancak<sup>367</sup> the Punta. Once, a friend of mine and I got lost, when touring the Fair; we lost our mothers. Then, we went to the police officers at the gate. They asked, “Where do you live?” I said, “In the Punta.” I didn’t know. The police officers laughed, I have never forgotten this. I was 7 or 8 years old.<sup>368</sup>

The Fair was both a place of entertainment and trade. It was presented to the Turkish population of the city perhaps as a substitute for the lost non-Muslim shops and taverns. Most importantly, the Fair was built to cover the economic function of Izmir’s former role as a cosmopolitan port city. The cosmopolitan economy of the Ottoman era was transformed into national economy symbolized by the concrete buildings and area of the Fair. The loss of trade that the people of Izmir were accustomed to must have been overcome in order to remedy the local and national economy and in order to normalize the social relations to which Izmir was accustomed. In time, the Fair became “international,” but never did attract traders as the former port city had.

The Fair has indeed penetrated in the memories of Izmirians. However, the connection between the Fair and September 9, a connection which used to be solid in the early Turkish Republic, seems to have been blurred. Only one of the interviewees

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<sup>366</sup> Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” p.3.

<sup>367</sup> *Alsancak* means “the red flag.”

<sup>368</sup> “*Alsancak’a eskiden, yani Rumlar varken, Punta derlerdi. Bir sefer bir arkadaşımın Fuar’da gezerken kaybolduk, annemizi kaybettik. Derken kapıda polisler var ya, hemen oraya gittik. Sordular, sen nerede oturuyorsun, diye. Punta’da dedim. Bilmiyordum. Güldü polisler, hiç unutmam bunu. Belki 7–8 yaşındaydım,*” Kopri.

mentioned the Fair within the interview: Vinçenza Kopri. She said that they used to visit the Fair very often during September.

When it was asked whether, in the early Republican period, the people from out of town came to Izmir for the Fair, Lütfü Aksungur criticized the question sharply; he certainly suggested that those people “came only for the festival of September 9. They esteemed it as a duty.”

When the subject is September 9, it was only Vinçenza Kopri from the Punta, who remembered the Fair. For the other interviewees, the Fair is not one of the realms of memory that reminds them the event or festival of September 9. It seems as if the connection between September 9 and the Fair, which was constructed by the early Republican elite, was broken off. It seems as if today no one remembers that the Fair was once the Exhibition of September 9.

Not only geographical urban sites or historical images, but also certain objects store memories in themselves. For instance, according to Erol Yafe, “September 9 has always been the reminder of the end of summer and the opening of schools. The beginning of autumn, the day you start to wear cardigan.” For him, then, a cardigan is memorabilia for September 9.

September 9, for some interviewees, has adopted new connotations in different locations. The day is no longer remembered only in the realms of official celebration, Halkapınar cemetery, Konak Square, or Atatürk monument. The café in Kordon where every year Mebrule Aksungur drinks a cup of coffee on the same date, the Fair where the pavilions are toured by Kopri with her family, and the Gündoğdu Square where not the official ceremony but night concerts take place on every September 9, have become some *lieux de mémoire* for Izmir’s Independence Day.

If the vast literature on memory is right in suggesting that particular sites become the realms in which memories are situated, preserved, and remembered,<sup>369</sup> and if these “realms of memory” really have something to do with the meaning of the occasion that they signify, then it might be claimed that September 9 has acquired some local meanings other than the nationalist one. Perhaps, September 9 has gained new places to express itself, which “allow [it] to escape from history.”<sup>370</sup>

Nevertheless, it is also clear that September 9 has never got rid of its nationalistic connotations. Throwing the Greeks into the sea or the Turkish soldiers’ entry into Izmir usually triggers Izmirians’ memories about September 9, as sites of memory.

### Concluding Remarks

Memory is shaped by many forces: the circumstances at the time of experience, the elapsed time, and “the sociopolitical context of an experience, in particular the way in which revisions of a nation’s historical memory compel individuals to repress or alter their private memories.”<sup>371</sup>

This chapter has attempted to present some individual histories, i.e., “private memories,” from Izmir, through oral history interviews with eight Izmirians. The aim has been to reveal the process of “the conscious and unconscious (re)construction of

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<sup>369</sup> See Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History;” Daniel J. Walkowitz and Lisa Maya Knauer, eds. *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Erica Carter, James Donald, and Judith Squires, eds. *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1993); Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin, eds. *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003)

<sup>370</sup> Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History,” p.19.

<sup>371</sup> Pohlandt-McCormick, p.38-39.

a story in the remembering of the historical event”<sup>372</sup> through the analysis of oral narratives.

On the one hand, there is the official commemoration of September 9, which has been orderly and hierarchical, and organized and dominated by the state. It has been designed to create a unified Turkish history, “which, because it [is] epic, combative, and goal-oriented, [has] its winners... and its losers, who [are] reduced to silence.”<sup>373</sup> National commemorations, the festival of September 9 in this context, are used to gather people around a unified national memory.

On the other hand, there are multiple memories that have broken free from the unifying efforts of this total collective memory. Oral history research has revealed that Izmir accommodates such multiple living memories, even around its national day of liberation. It is not to say that the official history has been undermined in memory by Izmirians, but to recognize the fact that “through oral narratives, individuals recounting their own historical experience can counter official history and contribute more nuanced memories to social history.”<sup>374</sup>

Most of the people, who have adopted September 9 as a festival, identify the day with “throwing the enemies in to the sea,” parallel to the collectivizing national memory. Nevertheless, some memories slightly sidestepped the hegemonic narrative. Despite the existence of almost no change in the state-dominance of September 9, in its repeated program, or in the understanding of “appropriate” citizenship, the day of September 9 seems to have obtained some features of a local festival of the city, gaining extra sites of memory that create a haven, but not far from the pressure of standardizing nationalism that shadows every bit of locality.

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<sup>372</sup> Pohlandt-McCormick, p.39.

<sup>373</sup> Nora, “The Era of Commemoration,” p.615.

<sup>374</sup> Pohlandt-McCormick, p.38.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

On September 1, 1931, an announcement appeared on the second page of *Yeni Asır*, a local newspaper of Izmir. The small announcement briefly described the importance of September 9 as the salvation of Izmir, as well as Turkey, and *ordered* the Turkish people of Izmir to “be ready to celebrate it with great enthusiasm!” Eight days after this announcement, on September 9, for the ninth time, the people of Izmir celebrated the independence of the city. They gathered in Konak Square, listened to the patriotic speech of Asım İsmet Bey, a Republican People’s Party member and inspector of schools, applauded the elegy for martyrs by Semiha Süreyya Hanım from the People’s Houses, and watched the parade. They watched party members, tobacco workers, cobblers, groceries, fishermen, ironworkers, union drivers, press workers, scouts, girls with red dresses, the Red Crescent Association, primary school students etc. walking in the parade. The “mass” of people had to stay away from the parade, watching immobile in the places determined by the Izmir’s People’s House Festival Committee. The role assigned to them was to throw confetti, flowers, and cologne on the people passing. Any automobiles, vehicles, or individuals that tried to go into the parade would be taken out by municipal police officers and the individual responsible punished.

There are different scenarios about that scene. One scenario displays participants and audience in September 9 celebrations applauding and bursting into tears with patriotic euphoria. One might easily come across this scenario in mainstream press and nationalist literature. However, there may be another scenario: *Towards the end of the parade, towards the sunset, the Aegean cool sea breeze,*

*imbat, started to blow softly from the calm September sea to the inlands. The breeze lifted up the ashes from burned parts of the city, the former residential areas of the Greek and Armenian former residents of Izmir, and brought them to the commemoration place. Ashes rained on the parade and the audience. Seeing ashes, some people from the parade or from the audience must have raised their heads and remembered their Greek and Armenian neighbors; and they must have felt something: guilt, sorrow, hatred, longing, revenge? Hesitancy between “Turkish nationalism and cosmopolitan city identity based on social relations dominant before the war forced individuals to take sides...”<sup>375</sup>*

In this study, the collective memory of people in Izmir was examined through the analysis of the festival of September 9. The foremost aim was to explore the unifying collective memory, i.e., the dominant narrative, formulated by the nation state, and multiple living memories that have managed to escape from being standardized by the state’s memorial project.

First, the literature on memory, identity, and public rituals was discussed in order to present a theoretical framework for the subject of the collective memory that emerged around the national festival of September 9. The elaboration of literature formulated the theoretical path; consequently, the causes behind collective memory were clustered in three groups. First, the project of the nation state to construct nationally appropriate citizens and, thus, their collective memory/identity through symbolism in public rituals were studied. Second, the multiple collective memories, which escaped from the assimilating and standardizing project of national memory

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<sup>375</sup> Leyla Neyzi, “*Ben Kimim?*”: *Türkiye’de Sözlü Tarih, Kimlik ve Öznellik* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), p.92.



creation, were scrutinized. In the third section, the event of remembering and celebration, i.e. the public commemoration, was examined, in order to understand the festive mechanism of memory installation in people's minds.

As a consequence of the literature review, a hybrid theoretical framework for September 9 was developed. The festival was not analyzed as a one-dimensional phenomenon affected by one actor, but handled as a totality of organizers, audience, and festive setting; and the collective memories around it were studied as manipulated by numerous factors such as the reminding political authority, remembering people, historical context, local environment, time/space dimension, and festive inertia.

Second, the specific subject of state-sponsored celebrations of September 9 was studied. An analysis of the celebrations of the early Republican Turkey made it apparent that the festival of September 9 was based on order and hierarchy, dominated by the state that pushed the citizens to the sidelines, where they could watch the symbols of their new nation state pass in the triumphal parade; or people were included in the parades and ceremonies as the gendered symbols of the nation. Through this symbolism, the nation state tried to "pass on values to its citizens,"<sup>376</sup> to create a citizenship identity appropriate for the new nation's principles. The primary aim of the organizers of September 9 ceremonies, and other public rituals, was to construct a collective memory, which would lead to and coexist with one-identity, one-nation. "One might almost say: no memory, no identity; no identity, no nation;"<sup>377</sup> and the early Turkish Republic attempted to identify itself, its citizens,

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<sup>376</sup> Javier Moreno-Luzón, "Fighting for the National Memory: The Commemoration of the Spanish 'War of Independence' in 1908-1912," *History & Memory* 19, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2007), p.69.

<sup>377</sup> Anthony D. Smith, "Memory and Modernity: Reflections on Ernest Gellner's Theory of Nationalism," *Nations and Nationalism* 2, no. 3 (1996), p.383.

and the collective memory in the “present time”<sup>378</sup> of national rituals. To make a long story short, the commemorations of September 9 brought out “the political culture of those who organized them,”<sup>379</sup> a political culture that was based on the hegemony and over-presence of the state; “their desire to maintain a particular version of history,”<sup>380</sup> a history collectively remembered with its national glory; and their approach towards citizens, an approach that was characterized by order, education, and expectance of compliance.

What has been related so far was not peculiar to the festival of September 9 and might be valid for any national commemoration in early Republican Turkey. Nevertheless, September 9 also had its own peculiarities. Together with being a repetitively commemorated date of foundation and glory, September 9 was also a date of finale and trauma, efforts to obliterate of which were systematically made (through population exchange, public rituals, and the re-organization of the urban space). Due to this binary dynamics, how people celebrate and remember September 9 becomes important. Are the images and memories of September 9 dominated by the hegemonic nationalist narrative? Does the festival of September 9 only mean “throwing the enemies into the sea” for the contemporary residents of Izmir?

In the fourth chapter, personal memories and histories about September 9 were collected using the tool of oral history. Eight interviews were made, in order to explore different memories about September 9. Analysis made it clear that “there is no single collective memory;”<sup>381</sup> that ethnically and culturally different people might develop different memories about the same subject; and that the nation and the

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<sup>378</sup> Ahıska, p.103.

<sup>379</sup> Moreno-Luzón, p.70.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid.

national boundaries of remembering are not completed matters, but identities in progress. In the Izmir case, multiple collective memories that were able to flourish despite the totalizing national memory were revealed through oral history research. The impact of the national identity on remembering is crystal clear. Nevertheless, it might be argued that the historical experiences through which the Izmirians went – the Greek-Turkish War, the Great Fire, and the population exchange – affected what they included in their memories and identities, which were inherited by the younger generations, in respect of the ethnic and religious groups to which they belong. Whereas some Izmirians speak out loud about September 9, some prefer, or arguably, are “reduced to silence.”<sup>382</sup> And still others might engage in a neutral, but adoptive attitude, participating in, remembering, and sonorously talking about the September 9 celebrations.

To put it in a nutshell, this thesis, “Celebrating and Remembering the Festival of September 9: Ritual, History, and Memory,” analyzed the construction and progression of the national collective memory and multiple memories around the commemoration of September 9, Izmir’s Independence Day, both as a memorial project of the nation state and as an ongoing relational process. It is evident that “commemorations reveal core characteristics of nationalism and nation-building processes.”<sup>383</sup> But, it is also obvious that despite the state presence and visibility, commemorations are also real events experienced by real people, who develop their own memories. The festival was regarded in this thesis, both as a part of the national drama and as a humane experience; as a manipulated and lived play, imagined but not imaginary.

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<sup>382</sup> Nora, “The Era of Commemoration,” p.615.

<sup>383</sup> Moreno-Luzón, p.68.

This study departed from the safe environment of hometown, touched the unknown waters of the pre-Republican past, dived in the official, ordered, and hierarchical narrative of the festival of September 9, and ultimately coincided with a niche of air hosting different voices in the face of the hegemonic one. The voyager has always had back in mind the echoing aim of searching for the traces of Izmir's past in its contemporary setting. Have Izmir "lost its face, as it had lost its name?"<sup>384</sup> Might the existence of different narratives and memories resisting against or coexisting with the dominant nationalist one be a sign of a "hesitant" nationalism, rather than a determined one, in "the city where the prayer from the mosque, bells of the church, and worship prayers from the synagogue are listened with respect?"<sup>385</sup> Are the memories developed around un-nationalist sites or the narrative of "*gavur* Izmir" powerful enough to fight the dominant narrative of "throwing the enemies into the sea?" Or has the hegemonic nationalist narrative assimilated all these narratives into an Izmirian nationalism? This aim of seeking the leftovers of the past in today's Izmir did not stay close to any of the "nationalist positions that categorically condemn the pre-1922 landscape or [their] post-nationalist counterparts that nostalgically idealize the cultural, linguistic, and religious plurality."<sup>386</sup> The goal of this thesis was not the condemnation or glorification of the past, but tracking down the vestiges of it in the memories of contemporary Izmirians.

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<sup>384</sup> Yaranga, p.93.

<sup>385</sup> From the photograph by Deniz Kovancı.

<sup>386</sup> Zandi-Sayek, p.255.

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