



A Modern Mining Settlement in Early Republican Turkey: Cürek

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Research Article

Acknowledgement

This study was produced from the thesis study carried out in the Cultural Studies program of Yıldız Technical University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences.

History

Received: 10/04/2022

Accepted: 02/06/2022

ABSTRACT

After the proclamation of the republic in 1923, western social structures that governed various aspects of social and spatial life in Turkey were adopted. The economic policies of the nineteen thirties, along with policies regarding urbanization and public works carried out by the state during the following decades, contributed to the social and spatial change of the country. Economic growth was regarded as a tool in turning Turkey into a modern state. In this context, Divriği Iron Mines Operation set up in 1938 contributed substantially to the urban life and modernization of the town of Divriği, whose population was until that time predominantly composed of peasantry. In Cürek, where mining took place, a new settlement was established for the workers and civil servants who worked for the Divriği Iron Mines Operation. Built on new, modern, and western patterns of everyday lives, the structures that governed the new settlement transformed people's daily routines within social and cultural domains, in addition to economic ones. This study, based on the example of the Cürek Settlement, aims to highlight how state policies, investments, and regulations over patterns of macro structures and the microstructures of everyday lives were becoming interconnected in modernist perspectives of the era. Based on an ethnographic survey of historical documents, interviews of employees and the local population, we aim to present how in particular this settlement had an effect on the lives of the people in the region and how it could be seen as an example of similar projects in Turkey in general until the 1980s, the time at which many of the settlements were abandoned and evacuated.

Keywords: Early 20th Century Modernization, Mining-Settlements, Urban-Life, Cultural-Transformation.

Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye'sinde Modern Bir Maden Yerleşkesi: Cürek

Bilgilendirme

#Bu çalışma, Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Ana Bilim Dalı Kültürel Çalışmalar programında yürütülmekte olan tez çalışmasından üretilmiştir.

Süreç

Gelis: 10/04/2022

Kabul: 02/06/2022

Öz

1923'te cumhuriyetin ilanından sonra, Türkiye'de sosyal ve mekansal hayatın çeşitli yönlerine hâkim olan batılı sosyal yapılar benimsendi. 1930'lu yılların ekonomi politikaları, takip eden on yıllar boyunca devlet tarafından yürütülen kentleşme ve bayındırlık politikaları ile birlikte ülkenin sosyal ve mekansal değişimine katkıda bulunmuştur. Ekonomik büyüme, Türkiye'yi modern bir devlet haline getirmenin bir aracı olarak görülüyordu. Bu kapsamda, 1938 yılında kurulan Divriği Demir Madenleri İşletmesi, o zamana kadar nüfusu ağırlıklı olarak köylülerden oluşan Divriği'nin kent yaşamına ve modernleşmesine önemli katkılarda bulunmuştur. Madencilik yapıldığı Cürek'te, Divriği Demir Madenleri İşletmesi için çalışan işçi ve memurlar için yeni bir yerleşke kuruldu. Gündelik hayatın yeni, modern ve batılı kalıpları üzerine inşa edilen, yeni yerleşkeye hâkim olan yapılar, ekonomik olduğu kadar sosyal ve kültürel alanlarda da insanların günlük rutinlerini değişime uğrattı. Cürek Yerleşkesi örneğinden yola çıkılarak yapılan bu çalışma, gündelik hayatın makro ve mikro yapı kalıpları üzerine gerçekleştirilen devlet politikalarının, yatırımlarının ve düzenlemelerinin nasıl birbirleriyle bağlantılı olduğunu dönemin modernist bakış açısıyla aydınlatmayı amaçlamaktadır. Tarihi belgelerin etnografik yöntemle incelenmesine, çalışanlarla ve yerel halkla yapılan görüşmelere dayanarak, özellikle bu yerleşkenin bölgedeki yaşamları nasıl etkilediğini ve yerleşkenin çoğunun terkedildiği ve boşaltıldığı 1980'li yıllara kadar Türkiye genelinde benzer projelerin nasıl bir örneği olarak görülebileceğini ele almayı amaçlıyoruz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Erken Yirminci Yüzyılda Modernleşme, Maden Yerleşkeleri, Kent Yaşamı, Kültürel Dönüşüm.

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How to Cite: Baykan A, Kaya G, (2022) A Modern Mining Settlement in Early Republican Turkey: Cürek, CUJOSS, 46(1): 63-74

Introduction

During the early twenties, the economic policy carried out by the new state of the Turkish Republic was insufficient in industrial production. The profits made in the fields of commerce and banking and the agricultural surplus couldn't yet be turned into promoting industrial production (Kepenek and Yentürk, 2004: 61). The private enterprise could not rise to the challenge and with the Great Depression of 1929, the state in Turkey had to take over the workings of new economic policies and thus, the state intervention in the economy increased (Boratav, 2006: 137-140). Consequently, the state attempted to take responsibility for both the industrial and agricultural development of the young nation.

In 1931, the congress of the ruling political party CHP (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, the Republican People's Party) defined the political order as a single-party regime, with the right to form the government under the guiding doctrines of republicanism, nationalism, populism and secularism, adopted during the previous programs, and *etatism* and reformism that were now added as main tenets of the party. With *etatism*, they aimed to define the state's position as above the conflicts of class relations and used it to account for the one-party system embedded in the government (Tekeli and İlkin, 2009: 212-3). In this regard, the economic policies of *etatism* were implemented to increase industrial production and the state carried out policies to ensure the unity of ideology and economic planning overall. The party tended to fulfil a program of industrialization through the first Five-Year Industrialization Plan in 1933 and adopted *etatism* as the main principle of the driving force for the industrialization of the country (Tekeli and İlkin, 1982: 80). In addition, the new state further adopted western social structures, such as in education and in legal structures, in order to help create a new individual identity and a spatial and social life. Hence, the republican principles politically led to the adoption of a new social and individual identity, and the new economic policies of the state contributed more and more to the social and spatial change of the country (Asiliskender, 2009: 153). In short, economic growth was considered a necessary and primary tool to achieve the goal of modernization.

The state aimed at the transformation and modernization of the country. Therefore, it strove to put architectural projects into practice to incorporate modern life into everyday life. The principles adopted by the newly established state could thereby be seen in the new architectural forms as well. The transformation intended to create a modern society in every social and cultural field. This was to be achieved not only by changes in urban space but also by changing modern city life to be formed in that space. In this regard, it was thought that modernization would only be possible by transforming the daily and social life of the residents (Kaya, 2001: 13-14). The industrial enterprises, and settlements built around them in many parts of Anatolia, played a crucial role in the formation of a modern identity and they affected the places where they were established, with the idea that

people could live in modern spaces in line with the principles of the newly established republican state.

In compliance with the above worldview, along with the construction of industrial enterprises, the housing needs of the workers came to the fore. As of the early 1930s, the settlements were thereby built in the vicinity of these enterprises to meet their needs. However, the main purpose of building these houses was basically to create a new model in spheres of social life, rather than simply meeting housing needs (Onur, 2021: 667). In addition, there were two features that brought into prominence the ideological basis of this endeavour. Firstly, it was believed that securing the workers' future and productivity by keeping them healthy was beneficial to the enterprises aiming to boost profitability. Second, there were housing types based on different lifestyles, classes and status. In addition to housing types with geographical and location-based distinctions, such as in urban and rural residences, there were also different housing types for different positions of social status, such as for civil servants, workers, managers, or the rich and the poor (Cengizkan, 2004: 30).

In this context, Cürek situated in the town of Divriği assumed a modern new identity especially by means of the principle of *etatism* in the early republican period. The inauguration of the Divriği Iron Mines Operation in 1938 created new employment opportunities for the people of the region who previously led a settled life in agriculture and animal husbandry in the villages nearby. The new operation called for a need to build a settlement that would be allocated for employees of different status such as the workers, managers and civil servants. With the establishment of the operation, housing problem of employees coming from other cities and almost every village in the town was solved by constructing a new settlement, which contributed to the formation of a new urban culture with a cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Formation of a Modern Architecture and Spatial Transformation in Cürek

From the start, the founding ideology of the new republican state took its shape with a potent centralized government, with the aim of gathering workers and peasants and all other groups of the society around a common political and social identity. After the Great Depression of 1929, the first 'Five Year Industrial Plan' was put into practice. This program was a turning point in economic policy and the first reformist move of the new economic organization, which gave an impetus to the discovery of iron mines in Divriği. Within the framework of the plan to make an industrial breakthrough, many factories were set up in many parts of Anatolia, and Divriği was one of these districts where iron ore was high. The works were first carried out in Divriği and then in the Kayacık Village, which remained as the headquarters of the operation until the completion of the Cürek Settlement. The process of building the Cürek Settlement

took place between 1939 to 1941 and aimed to establish a fully modern mining village. In 1942, the administration moved to Cürekk, located 5 to 6 kilometres further down from the mining areas. Civil servants and workers, along with their families, settled down in the lodging houses built here as well (Sakaoğlu, 2008: 49; TDÇ Genel Müdürlüğü, 1988: 24).

The industrial enterprise and settlement constructed around it are spatial formations bearing the traces of the ideology of the republican period and led to changes in urban life. Within the framework of modernization and industrialization efforts, the settlement was designed to help make workers lead a modern lifestyle. The construction of the employees' houses by the state was thereby a well-organized attempt in line with the republican ideology and principles.

"The administrative procedures followed and applied by the Government of the Republic on the works of development and reconstruction of the country which the Ottoman Empire left to the republican regime in a ruined and backward state were amended in a more modern and improved way in 1934 after the tenth year of the Republic. With the purpose of creating a general harmony in arts and technical unity to establish cities, towns and buildings, the law that entrusted the works of the construction of the state-owned buildings and urbanization to the Ministry of Public Works was enacted and it was put into practice since that date." (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1938: 273)

The buildings in the settlement exemplify the modern and western architectural understanding and life coming to Turkey from Europe in the early years of the Republic. They spatially reflect the new identity represented by the operation. Workers' residences constructed in the early republican period of Turkey (1923-1950) have some features from Ebenezer Howard's concept of "Garden City" (Bahçe Şehir) coined at the beginning of the 20th century and Tony Garnier's "Cité Industrielle" (Endüstri Kenti) regarded as a vision of utopian planning (Cengizkan, 2004: 39). The construction of the buildings lasting for 4 years, from 1938 to 1942, was influenced by German architects and was similar to the examples of modern housing bearing the signatures of famous artists, city planners and architects such as Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Hans Scharoun and Otto Bartning in terms of both settlement pattern and layout, reinforced concrete construction method, architectural solutions and details (Durusoy and Polat, 2017: 66). An engineer, whose father was a grocer in the settlement and who lived there from 1945 to 1951, pointed to the Bauhaus architectural style of the settlement and explained his inquiries in Germany to find any mention of the Cürekk Settlement in the archives:

"The construction of the Cürekk Settlement was inspired by the Bauhaus architectural movement that dominated Germany between 1919-1933. When I went to Germany, I visited Bauhaus University in Weimar where that trend was very popular. I wondered and asked the professors if they had any information about Cürekk in their records. They stated that it was a pioneer trend and their guidance

became so influential that the settlements constructed in the foundation of Israel in 1948 were created in accordance with this trend. Therefore, it is said that Cürekk was established by German architects and civil engineers." (Duran Önder, Personal Interview, 12 June 2019).

In this regard, the settlements established by the state should also be regarded as a spatial effect that contributes to the westernization of Anatolia (Asiliskender, 2009: 157). However, whereas modernization emerged as a spontaneous process in western countries, unlike them, the early republican period of Turkey benefited from modernization movements as only a tool to construct a nation-state with altered forms of social consciousness *vis-à-vis* every-day lives and worldviews (Tekeli, 1995: 51-55). Likewise, economic growth was thereby regarded as a tool to turn Turkey into a modern country and Cürekk was built as a unique settlement reflecting an image of the aims of modernization across the country. It was well-designed to create a so-called civilized atmosphere as compared to the town centre of Divriği. The residents of the new settlement experienced new things, such as indoor plumbing which they had never been familiar with. Moreover, electricity was regarded as an icon of republican modernity and an important feature of the spirit of progress (Bozdağan, 2001:147). Houses with luminous windows at night portrayed an image of modernity in urban life. Though the town centre was not supplied with electricity in the 1940s, Cürekk benefited from it. In this respect, the Cürekk Settlement represented modernization by electricity, one of the most sought-after components of the republic.

"In our new house, there were unfamiliar items such as tables, chairs, sofas, armchairs, bed bases, wardrobe and buffet that we didn't use to have... Apart from them, there were a lot more things which I was not familiar with... We called the large room where we enter the house from the landing with three steps as a hall. Here there were sofas, armchairs, chairs with a table like the ones at school and we would have our meals at that table from then on... There were iron spring bedsteads in the rooms. Wool-filled mattresses we had brought from the house in Divriği were spread on the bedsteads and we would no longer sleep on the floor but on these bedsteads, so my mom would no longer lay the bed in the evening and put them in the locker in the morning... Next to the entrance, there was a cooker, which had been brought from Germany, taking up a large space... The sink and water flowing through the faucet embedded in the wall made me very happy. I thought for a long time about where the water came from and where it ran... The fourth door to the hall was even more surprising. There was another door after the sink at the entrance. When I opened the door, a white ceramic squat toilet bowl was in sight on the floor of the small room covered with white tiles. When I pulled the chain hanging on the tank called the reservoir, water flowed with a splashing noise. There was even a bidet tap. To remember the semi-open toilet in the garden of our house in Divriği, the problem of carrying water with the pitcher was ending... The greatest surprise came when it got dark.

When I pressed the button on the wall, the lamp glass hanging from the ceiling gave light. It even lit up more than both the kerosene lamp numbered 7 and the luxury lamp. We had these buttons and lamp glasses in every room, kitchen, toilet and even in front of the outside door. The lamp glasses would not become sooty at all.” (Önder, 2010: 9-10)

The spatial characteristics of the settlement were similar to those of other settlements. In the planning of the houses in the settlement, the physical characteristics of the place and seniority levels among employees were considered and civil servants with seniority were accommodated in much better houses. There were single-storey houses for civil servants working in the office while unit managers and engineers were staying in two-storey buildings. As for the manager of the operation, he was living in a different two-storey house with a basement where his caretaker was residing. Manager's house was located in the centre of the settlement and managers living there seemed to keep all buildings with their residents under control as the main representative of the whole country. Given these circumstances, in the first years of the operation, only civil servants with their families were allocated houses.

There were also a workers' boarding house and a guest house consisting of two floors designed to accommodate single workers, and single civil servants working for the operation or coming from other cities respectively. On the first floor of the guest house, there was a club assigned for civil servants with an outdoor and indoor area.

“The workmasters and engineers used to live in their lodging houses. The number of these houses were not enough and were not designed for the workers. Other workers living nearby commuted from their houses to the workplace and after they left their work in the evening, they went back to their villages such as those of Ziniski, Ađar, and Purunsur. The ones living far from the mines stayed in the workers' pavilion that we regarded as workers' boarding house. For example, our village was distant and there were 15-20 people working in the mines from our village. The ones who hadn't rented a house in the centre of Divriđi used to stay in the workers' house because the number of the lodging houses was not sufficient.” (Mustafa Gürsoy, Personal Interview, 20 January 2019)

“The civil servants' club had both an indoor and an outdoor area with a front balcony. The upper floor was used as a dormitory and I was staying there until I got married. The rooms were generally for one person, but there were also double rooms and if I'm not mistaken, there were around 20 rooms and 1 suite. This was the guesthouse of the operation reserved for the elite guests. It was more well-kept, and inspections were made constantly. There was also another guest house in the building used as a sports club with 8-10 rooms, but it was given to the permanent residents. The status of this place was more primitive and simpler than the bigger one.” (Haydar Erkan, Personal Interview, 8 August 2021)

In case of an extraordinary situation in production, it was necessary for technicians and senior workers to step in immediately, take the necessary precautions, and ensure that the production would return to its normal functioning by making various interventions. This requirement enabled these workers to reside in the settlement. During the following decades, new houses constructed in an area called Sekizevler in the settlement were thereby allocated only for them: *“These new buildings were intended for workers working in machinery maintenance, workshops, and excavator foremen, charge hands, and technicians. Meanwhile, there were 8 blocks and 16 flats that were adjacent to each other”* (Dursun Yıldırım, Personal Interview, 4 August 2021). Only in the late 80s when the Divriđi Iron Mines Operation moved to Selavattepe located in the west of Divriđi and the settlement was evacuated by the civil servants, the workers were given houses in Cüreke and then it was abandoned to its fate.

A great deal of priority was also given to the development of individual and family life in order to enable work efficiency. There were buildings such as houses with gardens, a hospital, a building for the town official, the *mukhtar*, a mosque, a grocery store, a butcher's shop, a laundry plant, a tailor shop, a fire station, a post office, a gendarmerie station, and a workers' boarding house. Other buildings included a guest house, warehouses, a workshop, a primary school, a secondary school, and a management building of the operation transformed later into a high school. Consequently, the residents didn't need to go to the town centre to shop since almost everything they needed was at their disposal. Over time, those who settled around the settlement also benefited from units such as the schools and the grocery store. Thus, the spatial life in the settlement was shared with other residents of the town, spreading its area of influence in alternative patterns of everyday existence.

“The peasantry of the surrounding villages, even those from Zara, Kangal, İmranlı, Arapkir were shopping at the grocery store (ekonomi) because it was 80 percent cheaper than the centre of the town ... It was a complete supermarket, with clothes, underwear, fabric, domestic appliances, food and beverage. It contributed a lot to the economy of the region.” (Murtaza Özkan, Personal Interview, 10 August 2019)

“Products such as eggs and milk were brought from the villages to meet the needs of the employees which led to such a contribution and activity. They used to come from Norşun and Güneş villages to sell their vegetables and fruits in summer. For example, the pear brought from Norşun was placed in an open area above the grocery store and sold, and permission was requested in the defence unit and a place was shown for them to be sold.” (Dursun Yıldırım, Personal Interview, 4 August 2021)

Education of the society was one of the main discourses of the modernization movement in this period. In this respect, great importance was given to education in Cüreke Settlement in parallel with the country in general.

At first, there was only one primary school followed by the inauguration of a secondary school in 1966 and a high school in 1984 which played an important role in the education of the children living in both Cürekk and surrounding villages. The fact that schools were located within the settlement was a reflection of the modernization goal in the spatial design. They also helped strengthen the relationship established with the centre of the town. When there was not a secondary school in the settlement, the employees' children were transported to the centre of the town by trucks of the operation: *"The distance between the Cürekk Settlement and Divriği was 11 km, and the students used to go there and return with the trucks carrying the workers since there was not a school in Cürekk"* (Necdet Sakaoğlu, Personal Interview, 7 December 2019).

"When I finished primary school, I started Nuri Demirağ School. I spent the first year with my aunts, as there were no means of transportation. The truck with tarpaulin allocated as a student bus in the 2nd grade was carrying about 30 students in a cloud of dust and in danger of freezing during the winter months. The new bus for 14 people, while I was in the 3rd grade, made our life easier." (Önder, 2010: 17)

Infrastructure facilities were also provided in the settlement. In addition to the sewage system, electricity and clean water equipment, there was a central heating system built in the late 1960s. In addition to the fact that the rents of the houses were cheap, electricity, water and fuel needs were also met free of charge. The operation produced its own electricity in the first years of its establishment and supplied the electricity needs of the residents with the power plant it owned.

"My father started to work as a civil servant in the operation in 1938. I was born in 1942. We were living in the Cürekk Settlement and it was a beautiful site. The people who came there were very envious of our lifestyle. It was first set up by Etibank and in the first years of its establishment and Etibank installed the infrastructure facilities... There were more than 100 residences and they were very useful. At first, we used to keep warm with Zonguldak hard coal which was provided free of charge by the operation. A central heating system was installed in the late 1960s and the people were relieved. Hot water was running all the time and it was free of charge. In electricity, no fee was charged up to 100 kw." (Saffet Öztürk, Personal Interview, 7 January 2020)

Social Transformation in a New Cultural Space

As far as industrial enterprises were concerned, not only the buildings where production took place but also the means of introducing and spreading a new lifestyle and culture to the society at large through them were at the core of policies (Doğan, 2009: 77). Accordingly, the new architectural buildings representing modernization can also be regarded as the space of social transformation in line with the modernization movement in the region they are realized. In Cürekk, apart from the spatial needs of the employees, an architectural concept that took into

account their social-cultural needs was also adopted. There were also social facilities such as children's playgrounds, a movie theatre along with sports facilities such as a swimming pool, a tennis court and basketball, football and volleyball fields, which enabled residents and the ones living in Divriği and surrounding villages to improve their social and cultural relations.

The facilities offered by the operation caused changes not only in the habits and identities of employees but also made a huge impact on the residents living in the vicinity of the settlement. Especially, based on the workforce requirements of the operation, the people coming from other cities, particularly educated managers, engineers and civil servants, who were not from Divriği changed and diversified the social and cultural environment of the settlement. These administrators who were civil servants acted as representatives of modernization and contributed to the propaganda of the republican regime. Through the education they got, they played a key role in instilling new habits and a modern lifestyle in the settlement (Doğan, 2009: 92). It can be said that a cosmopolitan atmosphere was established. The experience of living together with different identities affected the social structure and enabled the formation of an institutional structure along with the regulations made in the new social order.

"You could go to the poolside, sit comfortably with your family, have dinner and spend an evening. My family didn't use to benefit from some activities like tennis. However, I personally used to play tennis and basketball, and I would swim in the pool. They couldn't speak out against me because I was working in the grocery store, I was in the union for a while, and then I was in touch with the managers and senior civil servants." (Murtaza Özkan, Personal Interview, 10 August 2019)

"We faced some minor discrimination, but we benefited from the facilities. There were some rules in the settlement. For example, as far as I remember, the civil servants on Monday and Tuesday, women on Wednesday and Thursday, and the young people would go to the pool on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. In addition, when we went there, we could easily buy a portion of meatball and we were drinking a small bottle of raki even if the manager of the operation was sitting in front of us and having fun." (İhsan Aydoğan, Personal Interview, 14 August 2019)

"We were going to the poolside in the summer, and it was open to everyone. The distinction between workers and civil servants was clearly visible. The workers and the officers did not sit together very often. It was very rare that a unit manager could sit with his workers and officers. Everyone's sitting area was different. Managers and officers were sitting in separate groups among themselves. The poolside would only be open in the evenings for 3-4 months in summer and lunch service was not available. We were having dinner there as singles in the evening. Also, those who wanted to come from their home with their families could have dinner together there. Food service would start around 5-6 pm and be open until 11 pm. Sometimes, live music was also performed, and it

was banned in parallel with the view of the political power. In addition, families would come together and special entertainments were held on New Year's Eve, but after 1980 they banned them as well. There were even concerts and theatres in the movie theatre. We even gave plays when I was in secondary school." (Haydar Erkan, Personal Interview, 8 August 2021)

In this respect, the settlement also featured the characteristics of a closed community that mostly served the employees of the operation. Parallel to the project of forming individuals of a modernized nation, there was an atmosphere of an isolated settlement from the rest of the town. For instance, in order to meet the workforce of the operation, a policy such as giving priority to the family members of the employees living in the settlement was followed in personnel recruitment.

"The people in the settlement consisted of an elite class, lived very comfortably and seemed to know everything. They were called as if they were an elite group separate from the residents of Divriği and the surrounding places. Maybe they came from there, but once they got inside, they came into contact with a different atmosphere.... One of the reasons why the social structure was different is that some lived there and went to study in other cities, and those who did not go to study would start working in the operation through an acquaintance after a while since the management building was there. They didn't have a problem and so to speak they didn't have anything to worry about. At worst, those living in the settlement would become civil servants or workers, but the outsiders would look at them with envy and could not be employed. In other words, it was a little more difficult to get a job from the outside, but our position was an exception. We were desired employees and then we would start working there directly." (Haydar Erkan, Personal Interview, 8 August 2021)

These types of modernization projects put into practice directly by the state portrayed a totalizing understanding of modernization (Aritan, 2008: 49). The existence of social and residential spaces that contribute to the continuation of production more effectively in the mines made the employees more visible in the social space. Women who were recluses in their homes or farms had also the possibility to join the activities with their families. They all learned new modern patterns while benefiting from cultural activities. For instance, the movie theatre played a prominent role in the transformation of their daily routine and it operated as a cultural centre. The matinées were intended separately for families, workers and students.

"The movies would be at both 8 am and 5 pm on Mondays and Thursdays, according to the shift hours of the workers. They were aimed at civil servants and families on Tuesday and Wednesday. If not, they would also come on Fridays and Saturdays. On Monday mornings students would come, but if the school was in demand, they could watch films on Sundays... We showed lots of Yılmaz

Güney's films. People would pour in and we would make sacrifices as movie theatre operators. For example, we would show the same film 3 times instead of 2 times and tell the people coming from Divriği by bus and peasants coming from their villages by tractor to wait so that they could not return home without watching the film." (Abidin Akça, Personal Interview, 25 July 2021)

In these films, the modern lifestyle and new habits that the Republic wanted to convey to the people were shown. The films they watched left traces in the memory of people living until the theatre was shut down in the 1980s.

"While I was going to secondary school in Divriği in 1965, I was staying in my aunt's house in Cürek. I saw the cinema for the first time there. I went there to watch a film once and when I got home, I told my aunt about what I had seen. She said that it was good for me to have seen a lot of cars for the first time." (Şükrü Öztürk, Personal Interview, 4 August 2019)

In this regard, the movie theatre serving not only the employees but also the residents of the town and surrounding villages helped transform the town and the settlement of the operation where it was constructed as a spatial structure in which the modern lifestyle was depicted. The theatre and the workers' boarding house also hosted various entertainments or cultural events such as plays and concerts. These events would be organized by the operation or workers and they became a means of socialization for them.

"From time to time, the operation would invite some folk singers. For example, Aşık Veysel came and gave a concert for us. I never forget some others such as Nurettin Dadaloğlu, Daimi, Ali Akber Çiçek and Zaralı Halil. These concerts used to be arranged in both workers' boarding house and the movie theatre and they would sing folk songs to the civil servants and workers." (Mustafa Gürsoy, Personal Interview, 20 January 2019)

In the Cürek Settlement, the difference in status reflected in the construction of the houses also stood out in the separate social facilities for workers and civil servants. Workers' boarding house was a place where workers accommodated, ate in the cafeteria and socialized with each other. It was also a place where different ways of disciplining them were implemented so as to change their way of life. The attempt to transform the settled daily life and working habits of the people coming from the village is directly proportional to the modernization efforts of the republican state trying to form a more 'civilized' and modern identity. This effort to discipline the workers who used to live in their villages by subsisting on agriculture and husbandry was made to create a new working class which is an indispensable element of modern industrial society and a settled life.

"At first, there were strict rules. For example, those who first got a job in the mine had to be clean-shaven. The authorities of the operation would have their dress taken off and would give them a uniform. Then, they used to throw the worn clothes into the big iron cauldrons. The

people were poor and there was no medicine against lice, and they used to do so to secure cleanliness. There was such a rule during the first years, but after a few years, when vaccines and drugs were gradually released, these practices were abolished. Now that people learned about the world, their own cleanliness became their own responsibility, hence the rules were stretched and finally removed. They were right. There would be no long hair and beard. Moreover, the operation would give summer and winter clothes with shoes just like in the military. However, this practice changed over time because the nation developed and became modern. In the end, the workers did not talk about lice anymore.” (Mustafa Gürsoy, Personal Interview, 20 January 2019)

Similarly, the school enabled some children living in the village to get an education as boarding students under the auspices of the operation in order to have them meet the needs of the operation for employment in the future. It was regarded as appropriate to hire the children completing primary school as apprentices to get faster results in the efficiency of the workforce. Sadık Özgür, the founder of the Kale Lock brand, was one of these children who studied and worked in the operation from 1945 to 1948. In brief, becoming a worker was the indication of becoming a member of the modern world and, the operation in the early republican period helped peasant children get an education and create new members of the working class through primary school.

“I was also very happy with the dream and excitement of becoming a brand-new person. Now I came to believe that I was freed from a life as a shepherd and misery. Now I was going to school from morning to noon, and in the afternoons, I started to work as an apprentice in the workshop. My clothes had also changed. I was wearing my school clothes from morning to noon, and in the afternoons, I was wearing my overalls and going to my master at the lathe.” (Akar, 2011: 31)

The meeting centre where the civil servants came together when they knocked off work was the club. They used to play games, drink something and chat together when they finished up work. They also used to hold a feast for the ones who went into retirement and were appointed to other state enterprises.

“It was the place where the officers, whose shifts were over, drank tea and coffee in the evening, rested their minds, and sat down on the weekends, playing various games of cards and backgammon, chatting. All kinds of drinks were also consumed. It had both an indoor and an outdoor area with a front balcony. It was active in summer and winter. Since it was equipped with a heater, it was possible to sit outside in the summer and inside in the winter. There were also a separate TV room and a reading room.” (Haydar Erkan, Personal Interview, 8 August 2021)

“We had a very nice guesthouse. All kinds of drinks were available. They used to drink either alcohol or tea. It was a place where officers met and chatted. The manager

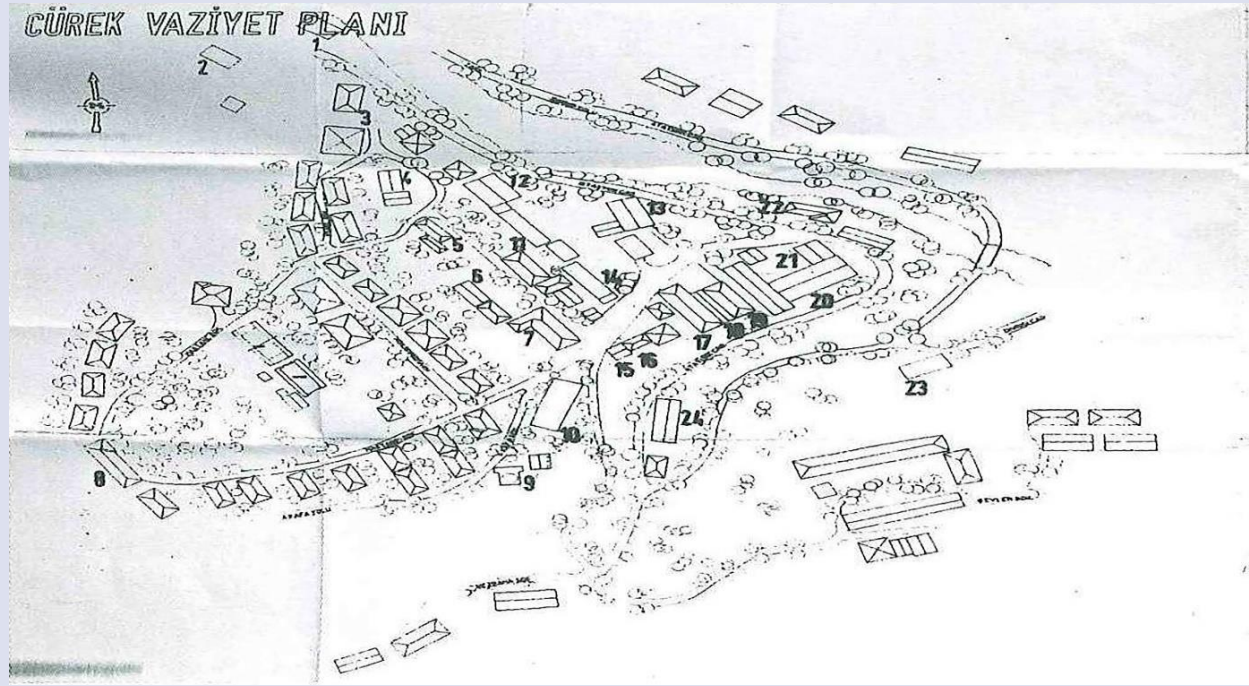
of the operation would go there with vice managers three or four days a week. Everyone certainly used to respect him. Special events used to be organized. For example, when someone was appointed to another state enterprise, we would have a farewell night with officers and engineers. It used to be a very nice atmosphere and everyone including the manager of the operation would come there. A list of the participants used to be made during the day and tables used to be arranged. In the evening the entertainment accompanied by live music used to take place.” (Abdurrahman Ömerbeyoğlu, Personal Interview, 9 August 2019)

Conclusion

Several industrial enterprises were established across many cities in Anatolia under the influence of the *etatist* industrial policy of the early republican period during the first half of the twentieth century. With the establishment of these enterprises, the housing problem of employees and everyday needs came to the fore, which were solved by constructing complex and comprehensive settlements nearby. These settlements did not only consist in providing housing and physical facilities but also a modernist life-style. Within this framework, the Divriği Iron Mines Operation which was opened in this period pioneered the formation of a modern settlement creating an urban culture from a small piece of land, parallel to the modern industrial policy developed by the state. The settlement of Cürekk, as presented above, was a spatial reflection of the modernization goal in total aspects of life, as set by the republican state. Parallel to the formation of a new urban space, various social practices helped change the social structure. Compared with the rest of the spatial and social structures found in Divriği, the town centre, the facilities and services offered in Cürekk differed in all aspects. The spatial and social standard of life offered by the operation provided an alternative and introduced to new generations a new horizon in working and living conditions, and a way of collective life as a new experience in work and recreation. In so doing, they set an example for communities and local residents outside the settlement per se, hence influencing a wider scale of geographical transformation.

However, the Cürekk Settlement lost its spirit in the late 1980s when the Divriği Iron Mines Operation moved to Selavattepe. After the evacuation of the settlement by the civil servants, only workers were allocated houses in Cürekk and then it was abandoned to its fate. Although a protection order was made as a registered cultural asset by the Sivas Regional Conservation Council in 2007, Erdemir Group, an economic enterprise specializing in mining gained the property of the area in the aftermath of the wide-scale privatization flows of this era and objected to the protection status.

Appendices



Map 1. Settlement Layout (Divriği Municipality Archive, as cited in E. Durusoy and E. O. Polat, 2017: 63).

(1) Station, (2) Aerial Ropeway, (3) Teacherage, (4) Movie Theatre, (5) Guesthouse, (6) Telephone Exchange Building, (7) Secondary and High School, (8) Hospital, (9) Mosque, (10) Heating Centre, (11) Primary School, (12) Repair Garage, (13) Warehouse, (14) Garage, (15) PTT (Post and Telegraph Organization), (16) Grocery Store, (17) Warehouse, (18) Warehouse, (19) Warehouse, (20) Workshop, (21) Fire Station, (22) Gendarmerie Station, (23) Coffeeshouse, (24) Workers' Boarding House



Picture 1. Cürekk Settlement in the 1950s.



Picture 2. Single-Storey House.



Picture 3. Two-Storey House.



Picture 4. Manager's House



Picture 5. Workers' Boarding House.



Picture 6. Guesthouse.



Picture 7. Civil Servants' Club (Eti Bank).



Picture 8. Laundry Plant- Tailor Shop.



Picture 9. Grocery Store.



Picture 10. Bakery.



Picture 11. Mosque.



Picture 12. Hospital.



Picture 13. Primary School.



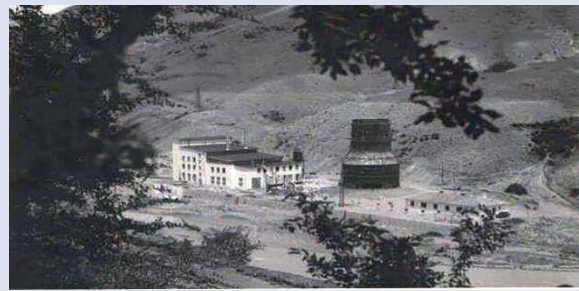
Picture 14. Secondary and High School.



Picture 15. Heating Centre.



Picture 16. Water Tank.



Picture 17. Power Plant.



Picture 18. Tennis Court (Eti Bank).



Picture 19. Basketball Field.



Picture 20. Swimming Pool.



Picture 21. Movie Theatre.



Picture 22. A concert held by Celal Yıldız in the Movie Theatre.



Picture 23. The manager's Wife, Müyesser Birkan, with Senior Civil Servants and Their Families, and Workers with Their Families in the Background by the Poolside in the Late 1950s.



Picture 24. Cürekk Settlement in Ruins.

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