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Kemalism in the Periphery: Anti-Veiling Campaigns and State-Society Relations in 1930s Turkey

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Chapter 2

The Debate on Women's Veiling and the Anti-Veiling Campaigns before the 1930s

“Yandan yırtmaç çarşaflar
Görünüyor tombul bacaklar
Kapanın şeytan postallar
Bayılıyor size gören esnaflar”⁶³

I. The Ottoman Legacy

Women's clothing has been a matter of intense debate in Turkey since the Ottoman period. The Ottoman state issued various directives and regulations to control women's dress, and, especially, to monitor Muslim women's loyalty to Islamic dress codes, by intervening in the length of veils or thickness of the fabric used for them. The color, size and form of women's dress were all subject to state regulation. As Quataert emphasizes, these regulations were part of a long tradition of Ottoman clothing laws that aimed at extending state control over society and disciplining the behavior of its subjects.⁶⁴ In the 18th century, for example, when upper class Ottoman women began to wear fancy *feraces*, the Ottoman state had to impose some restrictions on *ferace* styles, especially banning tight models and thin fabrics due to pressure from the ulema.⁶⁵ Regulations demanding modesty in women's clothes, and, above all,

⁶³ An anonymous song criticizing modernized *çarşaflar* that had a vent, and asking women to cover themselves properly in order not to attract the *esnaf* (tradesmen). The song is claimed to be from the last years of the Ottoman era, circa 1915-1918. Reşat Ekrem Koçu, *Türk Giyim Kuşam ve Süslenme Sözlüğü*, İstanbul: Sümerbank Kültür Yayınları, 1969, p. 9.

⁶⁴ Donald Quataert, “Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720-1829,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29(3), 1997, pp. 403-425.

⁶⁵ Aktaş, 2006, p. 54; Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, İstanbul: Metis, 2011[1994], p. 247. The *ferace* is a long mantle, a full coat with wide arms and body, and skirts to the floor, worn by Ottoman women as outdoor clothing. The *ferace* changed significantly, especially in the 19th century. Its form and color diversified and it turned into a long overcoat-like outdoor dress by the end of the empire. See Koçu, 1969, pp. 108-111. For more on the Ottoman women's attire in the 19th century, see Melek Sevüktekin Apak, Filiz Onat Gündüz and Fatma Öztürk Eray, *Osmanlı Dönemi Kadın Giyimleri*, Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1997. See also Nora Şeni, “Fashion and Women's Clothing in the Satirical Press of İstanbul at the

admonishing Muslim women against imitating Christian women or European styles, were on the rise with the increasing influence of the West in the 19th century.⁶⁶ This increase was related to the ongoing change in women's social role and dress since the Tanzimat era, and particularly, to the tendency of the upper class Ottoman women in urban areas to follow and adopt European fashions, notably after the Crimean War.⁶⁷

Women's clothing and attire had become a central issue, a locus of struggle for the supporters of various political positions by the late 19th century.⁶⁸ In the 1870s, a set of regulations concerning women's dress, prohibiting the use of transparent face veils and light-colored *feraces* were issued.⁶⁹ This was also a period when the *çarşaf* increasingly replaced the *ferace* as Ottoman women's outdoor attire.⁷⁰ However, in 1881, Sultan

End of the 19th Century," in *Women in Modern Turkish Society*, Şirin Tekeli (ed.), London: Zed Books, 1995, pp. 25-45.

⁶⁶ It should be underlined that it is not always clear to what extent these regulations were applicable or were intended to be applied in the entire Ottoman land. In other words, given the ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity of the Ottoman society, which spread over many provinces, it is difficult to make generalizations on clothing and clothing change, except for the cases where the Ottoman state issued laws concerning the state officials or the army. Most of the time, the sources are also not clear about the targeted geography of the clothing regulations regarding women's dress. Many of the regulations in the 19th century, for example, seemed to be limited to Istanbul. Reşat Ekrem Koçu indicates that the first regulation that prohibited the Ottoman women from dressing inappropriately (meaning, not properly covered) and fanciful was issued in the 18th century, during the reign of Sultan Ahmet III. This regulation was concerned only with the clothing of the women in Istanbul, for example. Likewise, the regulations in the Hamidian era seem also limited to Istanbul. See Koçu, 1969, p. 8-9.

⁶⁷ Yakut, 2002. See also Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women, The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East, 1860-1950*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988 and Fanny Davis, *The Ottoman Lady: A Social History from 1718 to 1918*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1986. Şeni indicates that in its transformed form, elite Ottoman women's outdoor clothing was in fact very similar to that worn by the European women in the late 19th century, and this similarity was criticized by the Ottoman satire of the time. Şeni, 1995, p. 30. For a defense of women's veiling and its compatibility with women's education and participation in social life in one of the first women's journals published during the Tanzimat Era, see Ayşenur Kurtoğlu, "Tanzimat Dönemi İlk Kadın Yayınında Dinin Yer Aşıl Bıçimleri," in *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Kadının Tarihi Dönüşümü*, Yıldız Ramazanoğlu (ed.), Istanbul: Pınar Yayınları, 2000, pp. 21-52.

⁶⁸ Şeni indicates that women's covering, together with polygamy, was one of the dominant themes of the modernist literature at the end of the century. Şeni, 1995, p. 27.

⁶⁹ Meral Akkent and Gaby Frager, *Başörtü*, Frankfurt: Dağyeli, 1987, p. 106.

⁷⁰ According to some scholars, the *çarşaf* originated in the Arab provinces, and the first woman that appeared in Istanbul in the *çarşaf* was the wife of the Syrian governor, Suphi Pasha, in the mid-19th century. See Akkent and Frager, 1987, p. 105; Apak et.al., 1997, p. 103; Aktaş, 2006, p. 68-70. It is argued that it was adopted as a reaction to cultural Westernization of 19th century Ottoman society since the *çarşaf* was supposed to provide better veiling compared to the *ferace*.

Abdülhamid II issued a regulation based on the advice of the *Şeyhülislam*, the highest religious office of the Ottoman state, which banned the use of the *çarşaf* in public and crowded places, limited its use to side streets, and urged the police to report women wearing thin face veils and gathering in groups in public places.⁷¹ Regulations on women's clothing continued throughout the reign of Abdülhamid II, but restrictions had little effect, and various kinds of women's outdoor dress continued to coexist in the public space. In 1889, the use of the *ferace* was restricted and allowed only for palace women.⁷² This resulted in an increase in the use of the *çarşaf* especially by urban women. Nevertheless, due to the security concerns of the sultan, who was worried that the *çarşaf* would be used to hide the wearer's identity, it was banned in 1892.⁷³ This ban also proved ineffective and women continued to use the *çarşaf* as a common veil.⁷⁴

The public debate over the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* intensified in the aftermath of the 1908 Constitutional Revolution. In fact, according to the foreign observers, one of the immediate changes the 1908 revolution brought was the decrease in the number of women wearing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in Istanbul.⁷⁵ The latest trends in European fashion, which came to be associated with progress, were adopted by the elite women.⁷⁶ *Çarşaf* models became

See Muhaddere Taşcıoğlu, *Türk Osmanlı Cemiyetinde Kadının Sosyal Durumu ve Kadın Kıyafetleri*, Ankara: Akın Matbaası, 1958, p. 23.

⁷¹ Akkent and Frager, 1987, p. 106. Women's access to certain public places in Istanbul, such as Beyazıt, Aksaray and the Grand Bazaar was also restricted by the same regulation. It has been argued that in addition to the concern about the misuse of the *çarşaf* to hide the wearer's identity, another reason for the decision of Abdülhamid II to limit the use of the *çarşaf* was his first impression that this black veil resembled the mourning cloths of Christian women. Aktaş, 2006, p. 69.

⁷² Servet Muhtar Alus, "II. Abdülhamid Devrinde Kadın Kıyafetleri," *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası* 2(13), January 1951, pp. 544-547. Koçu argues that this decision proved ineffective. See also Koçu, 1969, p. 9.

⁷³ Akkent and Frager mentions that the sultan had prohibited the use of the *çarşaf* in 1883 as well. See Akkent and Frager, 1987, pp. 106-109.

⁷⁴ Işın argues that although there were strict regulations concerning women's clothing and appearance in public life, the Hamidian era was also a time when women began to participate in the public sphere in an unprecedented manner. Likewise, through fashion journals and newspaper advertisements on women's health, hair styles and cosmetics, women's outdoor clothes and dress models changed significantly in this era. See Ekrem Işın, "Tanzimat, Kadın ve Gündelik Hayat," *Tarih ve Toplum* 51, March 1988, pp. 22-27. See also Palmira Brummet, *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908-1911*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, pp. 226-227.

⁷⁵ Caporal, 1982, p. 146. Some women were attacked in Istanbul for not abiding by the religious norms. See Yakut, 2002, pp. 23-24.

⁷⁶ Brummet, 2000, p. 226. However, Brummet also indicates that in the saritcal press of the era, this increasing interest in European fashion was severely criticized. She claims that

shorter and more diversified, and began to resemble cloaks.⁷⁷ Continuous warfare in the 1910s also had dramatic effects on the life and public appearance of Ottoman women. Many women began to work in governmental offices, workshops and trades, thereby significantly increasing women's participation in public life.⁷⁸ This created greater room for women's freedom and eased the pressure of seclusion. Further relaxation of women's veiling in the urban centers was criticized by conservatives on the grounds of women's dignity and the duty of the Ottoman state to abide by Islamic regulations.⁷⁹ In 1912, the chief religious official, *Şeyhülislam* Abdurrahman Nesib Efendi, issued a statement declaring that change in the form of women's *çarşaf*s would not be tolerated and women should abide by the Sharia norms regarding clothing. Yakut indicates that while the statement was not effective, similar regulations were attempted by other conservative state officials in the later years and the question of controlling women's veiling continued to be a concern.⁸⁰ Women who adopted more modernized versions of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were severely criticized. There were even attacks on women in the streets of Istanbul.⁸¹ To counter the popular propaganda that the Balkan Wars

"conspicuous consumption was satirized as a weakness to which Ottoman women were particularly prone; their consumption of European styles and the drain on financial resources that it entailed had to be restrained, as did their attraction to *allafranga* lifestyle." Ibid., p. 230.

⁷⁷ There were different *çarşaf* models in use, such as baggy-*çarşaf* (*torba çarşaf*) and cloak-*çarşaf* (*pelerinli çarşaf*). See Apak, et.al., 1997, p. 104. Taşcıoğlu mentions a *çarşaf* type called "tango-*çarşaf*," which was a name used in this era for the Europeanized *çarşaf* models with shorter skirts and cloaks, usually worn together with long gloves. Taşcıoğlu, 1958, p. 53.

⁷⁸ See Yavuz Selim Karakışla, *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire: Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women (1916-1923)*, Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2005. On the other hand, although the number of women who joined the workforce increased in urban settings, the situation was different for women in rural part of the empire. Emphasizing the shift in textile production from small workshops of Anatolia to workshops and factories in more industrialized urban areas, van Os points to the deteriorating situation of women in Anatolia. See Nicole A.V.M. van Os, "Feminism, Philanthropy and Patriotism: Female Associational Life in the Ottoman Empire," unpublished PhD thesis, Leiden University, 2013, pp. 337-378.

⁷⁹ For a summary of the debate on women's veiling during the Second Constitutional Era, see Yakut, 2002. In this period, the idea of making the *çarşaf* compulsory for women by law was proposed by some in conservative journals like *Sırat-ı Müstakim*. See Caporal, 1982, p. 81.

⁸⁰ Yakut, 2002, p. 24. Lewis mentions that in April 1911, the *Şeyhülislam* issued a warning for all Muslim women, urging them not to wear European dress. See Lewis, 1961, p. 229. In 1919, during the government of Damat Ferit, the idea of issuing a regulation on women's veiling came up. The *Şeyhülislam* of the time, Mustafa Sabri Efendi, suggested that the issue would better be solved by enacting legislation rather than a regulation. See Yakut, 2002, p. 25.

⁸¹ Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhittin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği*, Istanbul: Metis, 2003, pp. 109-110. See also van Os, 2013, p. 220. In 1912, the Ministry of

had been lost because of uncovered women, Mehmet Tahir had to write and publish a small brochure in which he tried to convince the public that these women had made important sacrifices and aided the Ottoman army.⁸²

Reformist male intellectuals, by contrast, emphasized the social harm women's seclusion had inflicted on Ottoman society. They openly condemned women's veiling, especially, the use of the *peçe*, maintaining that it excluded women from social life, prevented them from getting an education, and therefore, impeded their social development. For Abdullah Cevdet, one of the most prominent Unionist and materialist Ottoman intellectuals, for example, the *çarşaf* was one of the reasons for degeneration in Ottoman society. He argued that a woman's veiling was not meant to segregate her from public life, but to protect her dignity.⁸³ Likewise, for another modernist author, Selahaddin Asım, Ottoman women had lost their social function and become sexual objects; women's veiling was one of the reasons for this miserable situation in Ottoman society.⁸⁴ Another advocate of a reform in women's clothing, Kılıçzade Hakkı, pinpointed women's veiling as the reason behind women's ignorance, moral decadence, and the backwardness of the Ottoman state.⁸⁵ It was not reasonable to maintain such a harmful practice in the name of a religious and national tradition.⁸⁶ In his ideal Ottoman society, women would dress as they wished and nobody would interfere in their choice; there would be no state regulation of women's veiling. For Ziya Gökalp, a prominent ideologue of Turkish nationalism in the late Ottoman period, continuation of such an ancient and primitive tradition like veiling was an insult to Turkish women; he asserted that it should be abolished.⁸⁷ Towards

Interior had issued an order that banned those foreigners who published against veiling from the Ottoman Empire. Ibid., p. 221.

⁸² See Mehmet Tahir, *Çarşaf Meselesi*, İstanbul: Sancakciyan Matbaası, 1915.

⁸³ Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1973, pp. 390-391; Caporal, 1982, p. 89.

⁸⁴ Selahaddin Asım, *Türk Kadınlığının Tereddidi yahud Karışmak*, İstanbul: Resimli Kitab Matbaası, n.d. For a more recent edition, see Selahaddin Asım, *Osmanlıda Kadınlığın Durumu*, Metin Martı (ed.), İstanbul: Arba, 1989.

⁸⁵ Kılıçzade Hakkı, "Pek Uyanık Bir Uyku," *İctihad* 55, 21 February 1328[1912]. It is interesting to note that Kılıçzade Hakkı's suggestion for how to reform women's clothing was not to opt for state regulation but for a gradual, moderate change through practice. See Yakut, 2002, p. 24.

⁸⁶ Kılıçzade Hakkı, "Kadın ve Tesettür Meselesi," transcribed and reprinted in "Kılıçzade Hakkı'nın Tesettüre İlan-ı Harbi," *Toplumsal Tarih* 66, June 1999, pp. 34-36.

⁸⁷ Aktaş, 2006, p. 114. In his memoirs, as Ahmet Emin (Yalman) mentions that Gökalp had indeed prepared a pamphlet against veiling, linking it with "primitive social origins." However, the pamphlet was too radical to publish at the time. See Ahmet Emin, *Turkey in the World War*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930.

the end of the empire, the newspaper *İleri*, published by Celal Nuri and Suphi Nuri, well-known Unionists of the era, in particular, became a platform for discussions of women's problems, including the issue of reforming women's clothing.⁸⁸



Figure 2.1. A postcard from the Second Constitutional Period showing a group of women in black *çarşafs*, watching a parade in Istanbul.

Source: Sacit Kutlu, *Didar-ı Hürriyet: Kartpostallarla İkinci Meşrutiyet (1908-1913)*, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2008.

The subject of women's veiling was also a concern for the Ottoman women's movement.⁸⁹ Although the primary points of struggle for the members of the movement were women's right to education and participation in the public life, they also began to discuss the proper form of women's veiling in the public sphere and what form the "national dress" (*millî kıyafet*) of the Ottoman women should assume.⁹⁰ For many, Ottoman women's veiling

⁸⁸ Zihnioğlu, 2003, pp. 85-88.

⁸⁹ For Ottoman women's movement, see Çakır, 2011. For a discussion on feminism in the Ottoman Empire, see Nicole A.N.M. van Os, "Osmanlı Müslümanlarında Feminizm," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce I: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi*, Mehmet Ö. Alkan (ed.), İstanbul: İletişim, 2001, pp. 335-347.

⁹⁰ For more on the "national dress" debate in the late Ottoman Empire, see Nicole A.N.M. van Os, "Millî Kıyafet: Ottoman Women and the Nationality of Their Dress," in *The Turks*, vol. 4, Hasan Celal Güzel, C. Cem Oğuz and Osman Karatay (eds.), Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002, pp. 580-592.

was improper; it was in line with neither the Islamic veiling codes nor the necessities of public life.⁹¹ Among the women's journals, the journal *Kadınlar Dünyası* (Women's World) was particularly vocal in advocating a change in women's veiling and in underlining the necessity to define the national dress of Ottoman women.⁹² The journal even voiced the idea of founding an association to nationalize women's dress.⁹³ This idea was not realized, however. Nevertheless, the Association for the Defense of Women's Rights (*Müdafaa-i Hukuk-u Nisvan Cemiyeti*), which was one of the women's organizations that flourished during the Second Constitutional Era, declared among its primary goals in its program the reforming of women's clothing, increasing their participation in the workforce and eliminating traditions that had deleterious effects on Ottoman women.⁹⁴ The main target for Ottoman supporters of women's rights was the *peçe* since there was near consensus among the reformists on its non-Turkish character and its negative impact on women's health and social roles; it impeded their participation in the workforce. Reformists criticized the inconsistency in women's veiling: women in Anatolia did not wear the *peçe*, and there was a great deal of variation even among the districts of Istanbul.⁹⁵ It is important to note that one of the concerns these women's journals had in suggesting a reform in women's veiling was the extent to which the reform complied with Islamic norms. The claim that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were not Islamic was used to support the idea that they could be eliminated.⁹⁶ Likewise, women's rights advocates were

⁹¹ One of these women who criticized the social pressure on women regarding veiling was Emine Semiye Hanım. Zihnioglu, 2003, p. 54. For other examples, see Çakır, 2011. In fact, even before this period, there were a few Ottoman women intellectuals, like Fatma Aliye Hanım, who openly criticized the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* and claimed that they were non-Islamic veils adopted from foreign cultures. See Işın, 1988. Fatma Aliye Hanım was also critical of financial burdens of following Western fashion, however. Part of the issue was that these European style clothes were import goods, which made their consumption harmful for national economy. Similar arguments appeared in women's journals of the time, as well. See van Os, 2013, pp. 217-218.

⁹² Aynur Demirdirek, *Osmanlı Kadınlarının Hayat Hakkı Arayışının Bir Hikayesi*, Ankara: İmge, 1993, p. 105. It should be underlined, however, the debate on the national dress and the harms of over spending continued during this era as well. In fact, as van Os suggests, "the criticism against expenditures on foreign fashion intensified at times of external military threats and during the long years of war." See van Os, 2013, p. 227.

⁹³ Çakır, 2011, pp. 249-250.

⁹⁴ Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler I: İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi 1908-1918*, İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1984[1952], pp. 481-482.

⁹⁵ Çakır, 2011, pp. 253-256.

⁹⁶ On the other hand, there was no consensus on the question of veiling in general. In *Kadınlar Dünyası*, for example, there were articles arguing that the disappearance of women's veiling

equally cautious in their criticism of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* so as not to lead the way towards excessive Westernization in women's clothing. Their campaign for a reform in women's dress was shaped within a nationalist framework, one that emphasized national economy, saving, consumption of national goods, and the dangers of following Western fashion to the extreme.⁹⁷

Women's dress in urban settings changed further especially after WWI. The use of the *peçe* decreased, and particularly in Istanbul, more women began to use overcoats or cloaks instead of the *çarşaf*, together with various different models of headscarves.⁹⁸ As in previous decades, these changes went hand in hand with attempts to control women's clothing, and women's veiling continued to be a matter of regulation for the state authorities as well as the subject of an intense debate with wider political implications until the end of the empire.⁹⁹ At the same time, an increasingly important component of the modernist Ottoman elite's political vision was the idea of the "new woman," i.e., the woman who broke with old traditions, participated in the public life, and worked with men to save the nation and the state. As early as 1913, in her novel *Yeni Turan* (The New Turan), Halide Edip, the most important female figure of the Turkish nationalist movement, had imagined this new Turkish woman dressed in an overcoat, her hair covered with a headscarf; she had removed her *peçe* and *çarşaf*.¹⁰⁰

was only a matter of time, but there were also those who argued that women's veiling was a condition of Islam. See Çakır, 2011, pp. 258-259.

⁹⁷ For more on this point, see Çakır, 2011; van Os, 2013. Even the most radical members of the women's movement, like Nezihe Muhiddin, could be critical of the "cultural degeneration" that Westernization had brought, particularly through non-Muslims. See Zihnioglu, 2003, p. 75.

⁹⁸ Akkent and Frager, 1987, p. 186. In 1915, for example, women were allowed to remove the *çarşaf* during the working hours at the government offices. However, the length of the skirts of the women officials was subject to police control. Aktaş, 2006, p. 132

⁹⁹ For an announcement of the Istanbul Police Department in 1917 asking women to avoid wearing shorter skirts, corsets and thin *çarşafs* and a subsequent announcement declaring the previous order null, see Caporal, 1982, pp. 147-148; Graham-Brown, 1988, p. 130. For examples of various statements issued by the office of *Şeyhülislam* between 1912 and 1919 concerning women's loyalty to Islamic veiling, see Yakut, 2002, pp. 24-25.

¹⁰⁰ Taşkıran notes the novel *Yeni Turan* as a reflection of the mental transformation regarding women's roles in the Ottoman society. Tezer Taşkıran, *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Kadın Hakları*, Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1973, pp. 59-60.



Figure 2.2. A colored image of a group of women in “modernized” *çarşafs* in early 1920s Istanbul.

Source: The film *Istanbul Do/Redo/Undo: Waters, Streets, Faces* by Nezih Erdoğan.

II. Kemalist Vision of Women’s Modernization and the Question of Veiling

Berktaş argues that although there is a strong continuity between the late Ottoman Empire and the Turkish republic in the emphasis on the “new woman” and her central role in the nationalist agenda, the male elite of the republic had to face, to a much greater degree than did their Ottoman counterparts, the difficult task of reconciling the ideal “national woman” with the ideal “modern woman.”¹⁰¹ In other words, it was difficult to bring together the image of the new Turkish woman as the embodiment of national values and identity, and the new modern woman as the reflection of the Europeanized face of the new state. Especially in the first years of the regime following the War of Independence, the emphasis on the role of women in the war, particularly on the self-sacrifice of the Anatolian women, became the image along the lines of which the new Turkish woman would be envisioned. There was a glorification of the traditional peasant woman of Anatolia as the essence of national womanhood. At the same time, however, women were called into the public sphere to take their part in national development and to play their role as the symbols and carriers of modernization. The issue of women’s

¹⁰¹ Fatmagül Berktaş, “Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Feminizm,” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce I: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi*, Mehmet Ö. Alkan (ed.), İstanbul: İletişim, 2001, pp. 348-361.

clothing and outward appearance was perhaps the terrain where this paradox became the most crystallized.

Even in the women's movement inherited by the republic from the empire, which became institutionalized as the Turkish Women's Union (*Türk Kadınlar Birliği*), the emphasis on the "national" was quite strong during the years of transition to the new regime. While the organization backed the republican project of modernization, its supporters were keen not to compromise national identity and morality.¹⁰² The *çarşaf* had acquired new meaning during the national struggle; at the very first protest organized in Istanbul in reaction to the invasion of Izmir by the Greek army in 1919, all women in attendance were wearing black *çarşafs*, even though it had become very rare attire in the capital by then.¹⁰³ In 1923, when asked about her views on women's veiling, Nezihe Muhiddin, the head of the Turkish Women's Union, which was the most active and radical women's organization during the early republic, maintained that women's covers were their national dress and that the *çarşaf* was an obstacle neither to progress nor to women's participation in public life.¹⁰⁴ As Zihnioğlu suggests, this was probably an attitude Muhiddin had adopted in order not to overshadow the primary point of struggle of the union: gaining the political rights of women. However, it reflects the atmosphere at the dawn of the republic regarding women's veiling. Although the founders of the Women's Union appeared in the press in 1923 having removed their face veils, they were all covered, many of them in the *çarşaf*, which was still considered as the national dress of Turkish women. Two delegates who represented Turkey at the congress of the International Alliance of Women in Rome in 1923 also wore this national dress, albeit in its quite modern form, and without the *peçe*.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Zihnioğlu argues that this transition coincides in women's movement with a transition from the ideal "Islamic woman" emphasized by the early Ottoman feminists to the ideal "Turkish woman" of the nationalist feminists. See Zihnioğlu, 2003, pp. 76-77.

¹⁰³ Halide Edip was one of the speakers at the demonstration and she had become a symbol of women's participation in the national struggle in her black *çarşaf*. She was not wearing the *peçe*, however. For more on Halide Edip's political role in this era, see Ayşe Durakbaşı, *Halide Edip: Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm*, Istanbul: İletişim, 2000; İpek Çalışlar, *Halide Edip: Biyografisine Sığmayan Kadın*, Istanbul: Everest, 2010.

¹⁰⁴ Zihnioğlu, 2003, p. 113.

¹⁰⁵ For a picture of the delegates that appeared in the newspaper *İleri*, see Zihnioğlu, 2003, p. 142. For a picture of the founders of the Women's Union in 1923, see *ibid.*, p. 131. Although women were more hesitant to discuss the issue of veiling in 1923, some modernist male intellectuals were more vocal in criticizing it. For example, see Suphi İleri, "Kadınlarımız," *İleri*, 11 February 1339[1923], quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 87-88. A picture of the executive board of

It was, in fact, quite apparent even in the first years that the new regime favored modernization of women's clothing, more particularly, the removal of the *peçe*. Although Mustafa Kemal never directly addressed the issue of unveiling or referred to the necessity of organizing anti-veiling campaigns to change women's dress, it was obvious in a number of his speeches that for him, the general habits of dress widespread among women in Turkey in the early years of the republic did not have a modern and national character.¹⁰⁶ In one of his speeches in Izmir in 1923, having mentioned that the most important aspect of social life that draws foreigners' attention in the cities of Turkey was women's veiling, he emphasized that it should be simple; it should also not be such that it prevents women from participating in public life. For him, this was the type of veiling required by Islam.¹⁰⁷ During his visit to Konya in March 1923, he argued that women's education and participation in public life should be the main concerns, and that the issue of clothing was secondary. He also stated, however, that what had to be taken into consideration in the issue of veiling were both the spirit of the nation and the necessities of the time. Without mentioning the *peçe* or the *çarşaf*, he advised women to abstain from going too far in either direction: meaning to neither veil nor unveil to excess. He also mentioned that the form of veiling assumed should be simplified.¹⁰⁸

It is important to note that in Mustafa Kemal's public speeches, there was no overt censure of covering the hair. In fact, he was critical of women who tried to imitate European women and carried the change in their style to extremes, and urged Turkish women to maintain their modesty.¹⁰⁹ However, his preference, reflected in the way women around him dressed and in the general discourse of the regime on women's modernization, was Turkish women's adaptation to "civilized" norms in every field, including clothing. While the number of these norms governing women's clothing increased over the years, during the early years of the republic, women's emancipation was

the Women's Union published in *Milliyet* shows that many of the members had not only removed their *çarşaf*, but also their headscarves by 1927. See *ibid.*, p. 191; 209.

¹⁰⁶ Price quotes him saying that in Turkish villages women live with men without segregation and that gender segregation and the *peçe* are Arab traditions. See G. Ward Price, *Extra-Special Correspondent*, London: Harrap, 1957, p. 141.

¹⁰⁷ *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri II*, Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 1989, p. 85.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 91 and p. 154.

¹⁰⁹ Zehra Arat, "Turkish Women and the Republican Reconstruction of Tradition," in *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East: Tradition, Identity and Power*, Fatma Müge Göçek and Shiva Balaghi (eds.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, p. 62.

very much associated with women revealing their faces to the world. Grace Ellison, a British author who interviewed Mustafa Kemal right before his marriage to Latife Hanım in 1923, quotes him as saying that women would be liberated in a year's time, meaning that they would uncover their face and participate in the public space alongside men.¹¹⁰ Until their divorce in 1925, Latife Hanım, Mustafa Kemal's wife, always appeared in public without the *peçe* and accompanied her husband, which was something extraordinary at the time and a dramatic change for many of her contemporaries, men and women alike.¹¹¹ Most of the news about the couple did not fail to mention that Latife Hanım was without the face veil (*peçesiz olarak*) though she wore the *çarşaf* occasionally and certainly used a headscarf all the time.¹¹² Foreign journalists and correspondents also stressed her difference from the majority of the Turkish women by referring to her removal of the face veil. Isaac Marcossion, an American journalist, for example, describes the moment he met Latife Hanım during his interview with Mustafa Kemal as follows:

A few moments later the most attractive Turkish woman I had yet met entered - I should say glided - into the room. She was of medium height, with a full Oriental face and brilliant dark eyes. Her every movement was grace itself. Although she wore a sort of non-Turkish costume - it was dark blue - she had retained the charming head-dress which is usually worn with the veil and which, according to the old Turkish custom, must completely hide the hair. The veil, however, was absent for Madame Kemal was one of the emancipated ones. Some of her brown tresses peeped out from beneath the beguiling cover.¹¹³

Mustafa Kemal was mainly concerned with gender segregation and women's exclusion from the public sphere, which was the general norm in most parts of the country. In 1923, during their tour in Western Anatolia, he and Latife Hanım had not met a single woman in the places they visited, and so he was relieved when they were welcomed by a group of women, school teachers and wives of a few professionals living in the town, dressed in the *çarşaf* but without the face veil, in Edremit, a small seaside town in the north of Izmir. Mahu Hanım, one of those women and the owner of the house where

¹¹⁰ Grace Ellison, *Ankara'da Bir İngiliz Kadın*, translated by Osman Olcay, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1999, p. 211.

¹¹¹ For more on Latife Hanım, see İpek Çalışlar, *Latife Hanım*, İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2007.

¹¹² In one occasion, at the funeral of Mustafa Kemal's mother in 1923, she was in a black coat and a black face veil. See Çalışlar, 2007, p. 103.

¹¹³ Issac F. Marcossion, *Turbulent Years*, New York, 1969 [1938], p. 170.

Mustafa Kemal and Latife Hanım stayed in Edremit, remembers Mustafa Kemal thanking her for the only civilized night they had spent during the entire visit; civilized because of the participation of women.¹¹⁴ In the 1920s, even Ankara, the capital of the new republic, was famous as a city with no woman around. Many of the bureaucrats and parliamentarians had not brought their families to the city, and the few women who did come from Istanbul were a source of gossip when they were seen in public places in their Istanbul style *çarşaf*.¹¹⁵ Even some of the leading elite of the new regime seemed to have reservations about women's public visibility and mixed-gender gatherings that were newly emerging in the capital.¹¹⁶

Women's veiling and segregation was such a prevailing practice in the first years of the republic that Latife Hanım's abandonment of the *peçe*, her modern way of dressing, and her appearance at public meetings and accompanying her husband on visits was made an issue by the opposition; her clothing and attitude was an indication of the anti-religious character of the regime that Mustafa Kemal and his followers were trying to establish.¹¹⁷ At the beginning of 1923, one of the opposition groups, the Ottoman Revolutionary Committee of Anatolia (*Anadolu Osmanlı İhtilal Komitesi*), distributed a handout calling Muslims to resist Mustafa Kemal. On the handout, there was a picture showing Latife Hanım sitting with Mustafa Kemal and a few other men at a public meeting, with her hair covered, but her

¹¹⁴ For Mahu Hanım's memoirs see Nazmi Kal, *Atatürk'le Yaşadıklarını Anlattılar*, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2001. Mustafa Kemal had also insisted that women sit together with men on the dinner table that night. He mentioned again years later in 1936 how pleased he was the night he spent in Edremit, adding that it was priceless to see women and men together, and incomparable to any of the gifts and compliments he received during the entire visit.

¹¹⁵ Falif Rıfki Atay, *Çankaya*, Istanbul: Bateş Atatürk Dizisi, 1998, p. 353; 386; 410. Istanbul style here refers to more modernized styles of *çarşaf*, which were seen as too loose to appropriately cover the body, and thus were a source of gossip.

¹¹⁶ The acting British Consul in Ankara in 1927, Geoffrey Knox, notes his observations as follows: "even among the leading members of the Government, two of the most outstanding figures, Fevzi Pasha, the sheet anchor of the régime, and Abdul Halik Bey, the present Minister of Finance and one of the most able administrators that Turkey possesses, appear untouched by the prevailing secularism. Fevzi Pasha, a devout and practicing Mussulman, devotes all his attention to his duties and is never seen in the social life of Angora. Abdul Halik Bey is liberal enough to play bridge and tennis and to keep up excellent relations-on neutral ground- with one or two European diplomats, but he clearly shows his disapproval of female emancipation by never appearing at any mixed gathering." See Despatch from Sir G. Clark to Sir Austen Chamberlain, the British Government Foreign Office (hereafter FO) 371/12320, 20 June 1927.

¹¹⁷ Taşcıoğlu notes that the first few years of the republic were not very different from the previous era regarding women's clothing. The *çarşaf* (in its various forms) was the general outdoor dress. Taşcıoğlu, 1958, p. 81.

face uncovered.¹¹⁸ She was the embodiment of the new Turkish woman that Mustafa Kemal's regime aimed to create. The handout implied that Muslims had to resist Mustafa Kemal if they did not want to see their wives and daughters behaving so immorally. Even Latife Hanım's crossing of her legs while sitting was a sign of immorality. During the visit of Mustafa Kemal and Latife Hanım to Adana in March 1923, the *müftü* of Adana issued a public declaration, which was published in the newspapers of the time, assuring that Latife Hanım's accompanying her husband was not contrary to Islam, and that her clothing was in line with Sharia.¹¹⁹ The Adana *müftü*'s statement was probably seen as necessary to prevent public reaction. It was in a way also a declaration that the removal of face veil was not against Islamic dress codes.

On the other hand, the modernization of women's clothing that had begun in the late Ottoman Empire was continuing, even accelerating, under the republic. *Çarşaf* models had already been changed considerably in big cities; cloak-like *çarşafs* with shorter lengths were common, and more modernized forms of covering the hair had become fashionable. In major cities, more women had begun to remove their *peçe*, to replace their *çarşaf* and to wear overcoats instead, and to prefer covering their hair with turbans or with a black rectangle scarf tied at the back of the neck, which was called the *sıkmabaş* style.¹²⁰ The educated and elite segments of the population were the forerunners since they were already adopting European styles in their daily lives even before the republic. The general public's perception of what Atatürk preferred with respect to women's clothing also played a role in women's adoption of modern styles.¹²¹ Female teachers were the vanguard in this regard since the dress code of state officials had been determined by a number of state regulations, one of which banned the use of the *peçe* for school teachers on 15 January 1924.¹²² The existence of a considerable number of women who had already removed their *peçe* and *çarşaf* was also important for legitimizing

¹¹⁸ Çalışlar, 2007, p. 179.

¹¹⁹ Mehmet Önder, *Atatürk'ün Yurt Gezileri*, İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1998, pp. 5-6.

¹²⁰ Caporal, 1982, p. 646; Akkent and Franger, 1987, p. 186. Taşcıoğlu considers these modernized ways of covering the hair as a transition from the *çarşaf* to its total abandonment and adoption of the hat. She states that this transition continued throughout the 1920s and the hat could spread among the urban women only in the 1930s. Taşcıoğlu, 1958, p. 58.

¹²¹ Some women removed their *peçe* and *çarşaf* and adopted an overcoat and a headscarf because they heard that Atatürk had told women to do so. It seems that such rumors were effective in encouraging women to remove their veils. For an example of such an account, see Akkent and Franger, 1987, p. 194.

¹²² Yakut, 2002, p. 26.

the new forms of women's clothing as the modern and national norm, and for consolidating them as symbols of these norms. The press, in particular, played a significant role in promoting new dress norms for men and women alike, publishing the latest trends in Western fashion regularly as a guide for readers.¹²³ Women's journals also had a crucial impact on transforming women's dress and trying to create a national synthesis of Western styles and local traditions, the latter believed to be authentically Turkish. Mixed-gender public meetings became the norm and European style entertainment, such as balls or tea parties, began to characterize the republican social life, especially in big cities. These gatherings created the occasions where unveiled women would appear confidently as the new participants in public life.¹²⁴ Therefore, there had already been a gradual change in women's dress beginning from the early years of the republic. In the 1920s, a more radical change, however, would take place in men's clothing through direct state intervention.

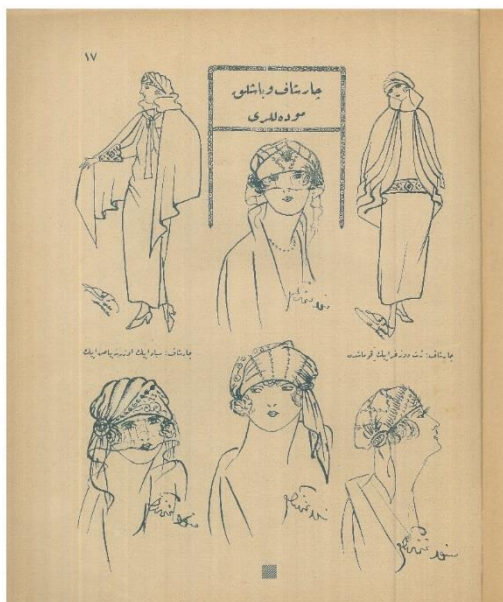


Figure 2.3. A page from the journal *Resimli Ay*, showing fashionable models of *çarşaf* and headdress in the 1920s. The caption reads “çarşaf and headdress models.” *Resimli Ay*, April 1924.

¹²³ In 1925, one could even see a picture of a woman in her bathing suit as the cover of a journal. See *Resimli Ay*, v. 7, August 1341 [1925]. For more on the journal's views on women, see Tülay Alim Baran, “Resimli Ay’da Kadın,” *Toplumsal Tarih* 63, March 1999, pp. 6-10.

¹²⁴ There was also a debate on such activities like balls as causes of consumerism and over spending. Women in particular were criticized for their addiction to fashion, which was harmful for the national economy. Even the members of the Women's Union supported such critiques. Nezihe Muhiddin, for example, had suggested in one her articles in 1927 that women could wear tuxedos at the balls instead of luxurious dresses. See Zihnioğlu, 2003, pp. 187-188.

III. Republic's First Dress Reform: The Hat Law of 1925

In almost all major studies on early republican Turkey, published both in Turkey and abroad, the introduction of the European hat to replace the Ottoman fez is considered to be one of the most significant, if not the boldest, of Kemalist cultural reforms, and has been widely known as “the” dress reform of the new regime. The debate over the modernization of men’s headgear had in fact begun earlier in the nineteenth century and intensified during the Second Constitutional Period after 1908.¹²⁵ Thus the hat was not a total novelty in the 1920s, at least not for the elite segments of the population. Some Ottoman intellectuals, for example, had proposed a dress reform in the army and argued that all soldiers should wear the modern hat.¹²⁶ However, with the Balkan Wars and World War I, and, especially afterwards, during the occupation of Istanbul and parts of Anatolia, the hat again came to be associated primarily with foreigners, occupiers, and “infidels.”¹²⁷ The fez continued to signify the Muslim-Turkish identity, while the *kalpak*, a black Turkic wool cap wider at the top, would become the symbol of Turkish national struggle, since it was the headgear of the leaders of the resistance movement in Anatolia.¹²⁸

The introduction of the hat as modern men’s headgear came during the visit of Mustafa Kemal to Kastamonu and İnebolu in August 1925. He first arrived in the city of Kastamonu bareheaded, holding a Panama hat, to the surprise of many, and emphasized the importance of modern clothing during

¹²⁵ The hat was criticized by some Ottoman modernists as a symbol of religious reactionism. See Patricia Baker, “The Fez in Turkey: A Symbol of Modernization?,” *Costume* 20, 1986, pp. 72-85.

¹²⁶ See Kılıçzade Hakkı, 1328[1912].

¹²⁷ See Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs 1925*, vol. I: *The Islamic World since the Peace Settlement*, London: Oxford University Press, 1927, p. 74, fnt. 1. See also Orhan Koloğlu, *İslamda Başlık*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1978, pp. 64-65.

¹²⁸ In fact, as a Central Asian headdress, the *kalpak* was already a popular form of headgear among Turkish nationalists in the late Ottoman Empire. Koloğlu mentions that the first attempt in the late Ottoman Empire to change men’s headgear was to replace the fez with *kalpak* and *kabalak* (a khaki cloth cap) in the military. *Kalpak* was especially worn by the officers during ceremonies while *kabalak* was the headgear of all soldiers in war and peace times. See Koloğlu, 1978, pp. 62-63. An idea of introducing the *kalpak* as the national headgear was proposed to the first parliament established by the nationalist movement in Ankara in 1920, but then no action was taken. See Mahmut Goloğlu, *Üçüncü Meşrutiyet (1920)*, Ankara: 1970, pp. 176-177. See also Kemal Zeki Gençosman, *Altın Yıllar*, İstanbul: Hür Yayınları, 1981, p.114. Toynbee argues that the *kalpak* expressed the emphasis of the new Turks on their national identity and historical origins well, but it was not suitable for their equally important desire to become like civilized nations and not to be a peculiar people. See Toynbee, 1927, p. 73.

his meetings with different segments of the population.¹²⁹ Two days later, in his speech at the Turkish Hearth (*Türk Ocağı*) in İnebolu,¹³⁰ having characterized the contemporary Turkish dress as neither national nor international, he introduced the hat as civilized headgear and proclaimed it as a necessity of modern life:

My friends, there is no need to seek and revive the costume of Turan. A civilized, international dress is worthy and appropriate for our nation, and we will wear it. Boots or shoes on our feet, trousers on our legs, shirt and tie, jacket and waistcoat – and of course, to complete these, a cover with a brim on our heads. I want to make this clear. This head-covering is called a ‘hat’ (*şapka*).¹³¹

On his return to Ankara on 1 September 1925, those who came to welcome Mustafa Kemal were all wearing a hat. The next day, a governmental decree made it compulsory for state officials to wear the hat.¹³² On 16 October 1925, a group of deputies introduced a bill to the parliament proposing that the hat should be compulsory for state officials, and that all men’s headgear other than the hat, including, of course, the traditional Ottoman fez, should be banned. The reasoning of the bill was that the issue of headgear, though in fact an insignificant matter in itself, had a special importance for the Turkish nation whose aim was to join the family of contemporary civilized nations.¹³³

¹²⁹ Mahmut Goloğlu, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi I: Devrimler ve Tepkileri (1924-1930)*, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2007, pp. 154-155. See also Patrick Kinross, *Atatürk: The Rebirth of a Nation*, London: Weinfeld, 1993[1964], pp. 411-417.

¹³⁰ The Turkish Hearths was an association founded in 1912 to promote Turkish nationalism. For more, see Füsün Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları (1912-1931)*, İstanbul: İletişim, 1997. See also François Georgeon, “Kemalist Dönemde Türk Ocakları (1923-1932),” in *Osmanlı-Türk Modernleşmesi (1900-1930)*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006.

¹³¹ Quoted in Houcheng Chehabi, “Dress Codes for Men in Turkey and Iran,” in *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah*, Touraj Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher (eds.), London: I.B. Tauris, 2004, p. 214.

¹³² For the text of the decree, see Baker, 1986. In fact, the reform in men’s headgear had started earlier, with the adoption of the German-style service cap in the navy in May 1925. Thus, the reform was indeed first introduced in the army. See Koloğlu, 1978, p. 79. See also Chehabi, 2004, pp. 212-213. On the same day, another governmental decree (*İlmiye Sınıfı ve İlmiye Kisvesi Hakkında Kararname*) banned the wearing of religious dress, vestments or insignia, by people other than those holding a recognized religious office. See Lewis, 1961, p. 269. On 30 November 1925, with a change in the Criminal Law, the wearing of religious garment by unauthorized people without any permission or official authority was sanctioned to three months to one year imprisonment. See also Goloğlu, 2007, pp. 177-181.

¹³³ *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi* [Turkish Grand National Assembly Minute Book], Volume 19, Meeting 14 (25 November 1925), p. 221.

The fez had become a mark to distinguish the Turkish nation from the civilized nations and it was necessary to erase this “identification mark,” and to replace it with the common headgear of all modern nations, the modern hat. Nurettin Pasha, a deputy of Bursa, maintained that the bill was trying to codify what had already been regulated by a governmental decree, so the decree could be lifted.¹³⁴ He also argued that the law’s intention to limit people’s choice of headgear was a violation of the constitution. This proposal received severe criticism in the parliament.¹³⁵ The main argument of the supporters of the bill was that the hat had already been adopted by many in the society. In the end, the law required all state officials and members of the parliament to wear hats, characterized the hat as the general headgear of the Turkish nation and banned the “continuation of any habit that was incompatible with this.” Thus, wearing traditional or local headgears such as the fez was prohibited. Article 3 of the law made the parliament as well as the council of ministers responsible for monitoring the implementation of the law.¹³⁶

The hat reform received substantial societal reaction. According to Halide Edip, among all Kemalist reforms until then, it was the one most seriously opposed.¹³⁷ A number of protests occurred in provinces like Sivas, Malatya, Erzurum, Kayseri, Rize, Giresun, and Maraş.¹³⁸ These protests were

¹³⁴ Nurettin Pasha, known as Sakallı Nurettin Pasha, was one of the army commanders during the Turkish War of Independence. He was elected as the deputy of Bursa as an independent candidate in 1924 by-elections against the candidate of the RPP. He is known particularly for his responsibility in the brutal repression of the Kurdish uprising in 1921 (Koçgiri Rebellion in Dersim), and atrocities against the Greeks in Western Anatolia. See Mete Tunçay, *T.C. 'nde Tek-Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması (1923-1931)*, İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1992[1981], pp. 117-120.

¹³⁵ Nurettin Pasha was also criticized by the press. He was even declared to be a reactionary, propagating resistance against the revolution. Later, Independence Tribunals also informed the government that Nurettin Pasha’s speeches against the Hat Law at the parliament influenced the mass protests against the hat reform. See Ergün Aybars, *İstiklal Mahkemeleri I-II (1920-1927)*, İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1988, p. 412.

¹³⁶ Koloğlu argues that holding the parliament responsible was a special character of the Hat Law, since usually council of ministers was responsible for monitoring the laws. Koloğlu, 1978, p. 94.

¹³⁷ Halide Edip, *Turkey Faces West: A Turkish View of Recent Changes and Their Origin*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930, p. 224. Halide Edip also claims that the way the hat reform was put into practice was not Western, and “the opposition of individuals among the men in the street, really much more westernized than those who carried the measure through, had a note of wounded self-respect rather than of objection to wearing hats.”

¹³⁸ For a more detailed discussion of the collective resistance against the Hat Law, see Brockett, 1998. See also Goloğlu, 2007; Koloğlu, 1978; Tunçay, 1992; Aybars, 1988, Baker, 1986. Schick suggests that wearing a hat had come to mean to apostatize from Islam, since clothing was a mark that had separated communities and represented communal identities in the Ottoman society (and also in Islamic history). There had been a link between changing one’s

repressed very severely, people who were involved were characterized as reactionaries and counter-revolutionaries by the official discourse and in the press, and many protesters were tried by the Independence Tribunals, which had been established and equipped with enormous powers after the Sheikh Said Rebellion, a Kurdish-Islamic uprising that had emerged and quickly spread in the southeastern provinces of the country at the beginning of the same year.¹³⁹ These trials resulted in the persecution of some people, and in the arrest of many more.¹⁴⁰

The economic aspect of the reform also created social discontent since hats were scarce in the country, and when available, they were very expensive. It was particularly difficult for the poor masses. Because going out bareheaded was considered inappropriate, there were individual instances of nonobservance of the law apart from collective resistance.¹⁴¹ In fact, although the law stated that headgear other than the modern hat was banned, criminal sanctions remained uncertain, as the criminal law had yet to be amended. This did not occur until 1939, when wearing of headgear other than the hat was penalized with up to three months imprisonment.¹⁴² Yet, many people faced police prosecution for continuing to wear turban, fez, or local headgear, not

religion and changing his cloth, and this was influential in people's reactions to the Hat Law. See İrvin Cemil Schick, *Bedeni, Toplumu, Kâinatı Yazmak: İslâm, Cinsiyet ve Kültür Üzerine*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2011, pp. 151-154. See also Baker, 1986. Some of the protestors were in fact opposing the reform because they did not want to become "infidels." One of the modernist journals of the time, *İctihad*, published an article to counter this link in public opinion between changing religion and changing of the headgear, and to argue that the hat was not Christian but originally a Muslim headgear used first by North African Muslims. See Sadık Albayrak, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Batıcılık*, İstanbul: Araştırma Yayınları, 1989, pp. 90-91.

¹³⁹ See Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion: 1880-1925*, Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1989. See also Şaban İba, *1925 Kürt İsyanı ve Kemalist İktidar*, İstanbul: Özgür Üniversite Yayınları, 2011. Apart from the declaration of martial law in the region, the first article of the High Treason Law was also immediately changed to include the use of religion for political purposes as a criminal offense.

¹⁴⁰ For more information, see Aybars, 1988.

¹⁴¹ For example, there were people who did not go out of the house in order not to be seen bareheaded. Koloğlu, 1978, p. 95; Aktaş, 2006, p. 179. Berkes states that there were also some people who left the country because of the Hat Law. Berkes, 1973, p. 485. Küçük mentions that a Bektashi dervish, Selman Cemalî Baba, had left Turkey for Albania because he did not want to wear a hat. Hülya Küçük, "Sufi Reactions against the Reforms after Turkey's National Struggle: How a Nightingale Turned into a Crow," in *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*, Touraj Atabaki (ed.), London: I.B. Tauris, 2007, pp. 123-142. A local newspaper of Ordu was reporting in January 1926 that the municipality should help the children of the poor and the street porters to buy hats. Gençosman, 1981, p. 117. Even the state officials found it difficult to afford a hat and the government accommodated them with a one-year term loan called the "hat advance." Aktaş, 2006, p. 183.

¹⁴² Tunçay, 1992, p. 151.

only in the immediate period after enactment of the law, but continuously (though unsystematically) throughout the single-party era and even later.¹⁴³

One crucial aspect of the Hat Law of 1925 was its timing. It came after the Law on the Maintenance of Order, which was introduced to equip the government with extraordinary powers in order to secure the order that had been shaken by the Sheikh Said Rebellion. Mustafa Kemal himself pointed at the relationship between this law and the hat reform as follows:

We did that [the Hat Law] while the Law for Maintenance of Order was still in force. If it had not been in force we should have done so all the same; but one can say with complete truth that the existence of this law made the thing much easier for us. As a matter of fact, the application of the Law for Maintenance of Order prevented the morale of the nation from being poisoned to a great extent by reactionaries.¹⁴⁴

The Law on the Maintenance of Order shaped the second half of the 1920s in a critical way, significantly increasing the control of the regime over every domain of the social and political life, until its abolition in 1929. This period, sometimes referred as the Period of Maintenance of Order, was the formation period of the Kemalist single-party regime. It is characterized by very important reforms, ranging from secularization of the family law to the adoption of the Latin alphabet. In other words, the growing authoritarianism of the regime paved the way to more radical cultural change, including the modernization of clothing.

There were two other aspects of the hat reform that were particularly relevant to the issue of women's un/veiling. On the one hand, the Hat Law marked a turning point in the public debate on modern and national clothing. The law itself and the public discussion that ensued focused on men's clothing, but they had wider references to the importance of the modernization of the outfit of the nation, and thus with direct implications for women's clothing.¹⁴⁵ Mustafa Kemal himself touched upon the issue of women's veiling during the very same visit to Kastamonu when he introduced the hat. In fact, this was one of the very few occasions where he rather explicitly referred to the form of veiling from which women should abstain. In one of

¹⁴³ Chehabi, 2004, p. 217. See also Baker, 1986.

¹⁴⁴ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *A Speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk 1927*, Istanbul: Ministry of Education Printing Plant, 1963, pp. 738-739.

¹⁴⁵ Aktaş argues that the Hat Law was linked to the modernization of women's clothing since it represented a different life style where traditional or religious clothing had no place. Aktaş, 2006, pp. 185-188.

his speeches during this visit, he stated that women could uncover their face and see the world around them; there was no harm in this if women were to be inculcated with religious and national morality.¹⁴⁶ In another speech, he mentioned that he had seen some women who were trying to cover their face with a piece of cloth or *peştamal* and turning their back or closing up by sitting on the ground when they came across men in the street. He characterized these acts as strange and primitive and the source of ridicule of the Turkish nation, and said: “Gentlemen, would the mothers and daughters of a civilized nation assume such an absurd and vulgar pose? This is a situation that ridicules our nation. It has to be corrected immediately.”¹⁴⁷

Thus, the Hat Law of 1925, while only touching upon men’s headgear, created a general atmosphere where clothing change became a signifier for the modernization of the new republic and women’s dress was not an exception in this regard. The distinction between “civilized” and “uncivilized” forms of clothing came to occupy public discourse; modern women’s clothing began to appear more frequently in the press. It was only to be expected that women’s veiling would become an issue given this mood that had taken on the tone of a national campaign for modern clothing: the link between the reform of men’s headgear and women’s veils was in the air. The speech of Mustafa Kemal against the face veil during his visit to Kastamonu helped to reinforce this link and forge the idea or perception that, like the fez, women’s veiling was also not approved by the new regime, despite the fact that no open reform agenda or official move in this issue had been put into practice.¹⁴⁸ Some opponents, for example, used this perceived link between the abolition of the fez and the removal of the veil to mobilize people against the Hat Law. In some of the organized reactions to the hat reform, protestors claimed in their propaganda that women’s face would also be uncovered.¹⁴⁹ In Kayseri, for example, a rumor that the government would soon outlaw the veil played a role in reactions against the Hat Law.¹⁵⁰ Oral historical testimonies also indicate that there were rumors in Istanbul that the *çarşaf* had been prohibited, that Atatürk

¹⁴⁶ Caporal, 1982, p. 647.

¹⁴⁷ Quoted in Zehra Arat, 1995, p. 61. For the whole speech in Turkish, see *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri II*, p. 227.

¹⁴⁸ Later in the 1930s, Tekin Alp would also write in his famous book *Kemalizm* that Atatürk’s speech against the face veil proved enough for many women to remove their *peçe* and adopt modern hat in the 1920s. He would claim that “the fact that the *peçe* and the fez were removed almost at the same time was an indication for women’s march towards liberty together with men.” Tekin Alp, *Kemalizm*, İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Gazete ve Matbaası, 1936, p. 123.

¹⁴⁹ Aybars, 1988, p. 407.

¹⁵⁰ Chehabi, 2004, p. 215; Brockett, 1998, p. 49.

had ordered women to stop wearing it, just like men had been ordered to stop wearing their fez and turban.¹⁵¹ A telegraph of a group of women schoolteachers in Sivas, which was directly sent to the Prime Minister İsmet Pasha in February 1926, perhaps best illustrates how the link between the introduction of the hat and the removal of the veil was perceived and experienced at the local level. The women teachers complained about the rumors created by some men in Sivas who had claimed that the hat would be removed soon and women would have to wear the *çarşaf* again. Women teachers asked the prime minister to see to it that the necessary measures be taken concerning these rumors and those who had spread them.¹⁵²

The hat reform and the way it was applied had serious repercussions among ordinary people concerning women's veiling as well. Many women had removed their *peçe* and *çarşaf* because of such rumors and because of the encouraging atmosphere created by the hat reform to modernize clothing. Afet İnan, for example, argues that it became possible for the women students of the Faculty of Medicine to remove their *çarşaf* only after the inculcations of Mustafa Kemal in his speeches on modern clothing in 1925, and after the enactment of the Hat Law.¹⁵³ On Republic Day in October 1925, following the beginning of the hat reform during Mustafa Kemal's visit, newspapers reported that everybody, including the women teachers, had participated in the celebrations in Ankara with modern hats on their heads. One of those teachers, Mevhide Atıfet Hanım, had criticized the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* after she argued that Turkish women became equal with men under the republic: "The new enlightened mothers of the future are not so naïve a people that they would search for honor, virtue and grace under the *peçe*, under the *çarşaf*. They are confident that honor and purity are to be found in spirit, in manners, deep in essence."¹⁵⁴ The change in women's clothing towards the end of 1925 was so visible, at least in the major cities, that the foreign press also celebrated this

¹⁵¹ Akkent and Frager, 1987, p. 189.

¹⁵² Turkish Republic Prime Ministry Republican Archives (hereafter PMRA) 030.10/104.679.4, 16 February 1926. Having received the copy of the telegraph and the order of the prime minister to take the necessary measures, the minister of interior informed the prime minister a few days later that according to the report of the governor of Sivas, such rumors were told by a certain Nergiszade Boyacı Ahmed and a legal investigation of him had begun. There was also an official request to transfer his case to the Independence Tribunal. The minister of interior also ensured the prime minister that all relevant authorities had been informed accordingly; they had been directed to prevent similar events from happening and to hand people who were involved in similar activities over to legal authorities.

¹⁵³ Quoted in Aktaş, 2006, p. 191.

¹⁵⁴ Quoted in Gençosman, 1981, p. 114.

as the liberation of women and their becoming the symbols of modern Turkish life under the new regime.¹⁵⁵

Likewise, the Hat Law could function as a reference point for those who wanted to initiate a similar change in the way women dressed. In fact, as shall be seen in the following section, the first anti-veiling campaigns emerged after the implementation of the hat reform, and some local administrators who organized these campaigns invoked the hat reform as a source of inspiration and legitimacy. It can be argued that the speech about women's dress that Mustafa Kemal delivered within the context of the hat reform probably served to encourage some sectors of the local elite who wanted to lead a change in women's dress similar to the one in men's clothing. The fact that the anti-veiling campaigns of the 1920s primarily targeted the *peçe* should not appear as a coincidence since Mustafa Kemal's speech could be read as his direct criticism of the segregation of women and, particularly, the covering of their face, thus, the use of the *peçe*. As vanguards of the revolution, some state officials and members of the provincial elite saw themselves in the position of leading the way in their localities for the modernization of women's clothing as well.

On the other hand, the fact that women's veiling remained intact in the official clothing reform of the regime created an ambiguous and ambivalent situation that shaped the anti-veiling campaigns in the years to come. In other words, the Hat Law perhaps had a more significant mark on the transformation of women's clothing in terms of the method that should be followed in such a reform process. The decision of the regime not to outlaw the veil deserves attention in understanding the anti-veiling campaigns in the mid-1920s and afterwards, given the determination of the new regime to modernize clothing (as it was reflected in the Hat Law) and the means it had secured to do so. As stressed by Lewis, "even the great reformer, buttressed as he was by the Law for the Maintenance of Order and the 'independence tribunals,' did not venture to legislate against the veil."¹⁵⁶ The second half of the 1920s was in fact a time of very important and radical reforms in Turkey. Thus, a law banning the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* would not be unthinkable. However, it was deliberately avoided, and never even suggested until the mid-1930s. The determined way the Hat Law was applied and the reactions it received perhaps formed one crucial element shaping the attitude of the

¹⁵⁵ Zihnioğlu states that there were 15 news reporting about Turkish women between June and December in 1925 in *New York Times*. See Zihnioğlu, 2003, p. 167; fn.35.

¹⁵⁶ Lewis, 1961, p. 271.

Kemalist regime on the reform of women's clothing, preventing it from outlawing veiling out of fear that it might cause a social reaction even stronger than the one the Hat Law received.¹⁵⁷ This point was in fact underlined by some contemporary observers of the reforms in Turkey. Toynbee, for example, refers to the accounts of Western travelers in Central and East Central Turkey in 1925 and 1926, and quotes them, arguing that "to enforce the emancipation of women in rural districts by the same drastic methods which they had employed in forcing hats upon the men would raise a storm."¹⁵⁸

Therefore, one can argue that the enormous reaction the Hat Law received was one important factor underlying the decision of the Kemalist regime not to outlaw veiling. However, it is also important to note here that this was not the only reason. Falih Rıfkı Atay, a member of Mustafa Kemal's close circle of friends, for example, argues that the president was convinced that women's emancipation would be realized gradually, as a result of education and social transformation, rather than as a byproduct of a law or regulation. He claims that Mustafa Kemal knew from the very beginning that the issue of honor was as central as religion for Turkish society and acted accordingly; this was why there was no article related to women's clothing in the Hat Law.¹⁵⁹ He also claims that although he tried to promote modern life in the cities, Mustafa Kemal did not force peasant women to change and this was perhaps the only issue he favored an evolutionary approach.¹⁶⁰ Having analyzed the reports sent from various consulates in the provinces regarding the social position of women, the British Ambassador in Istanbul, Sir George R. Clark, was also reporting in 1927 along the same lines:

In general the results seem to be such as might be expected when a Muslim country is swung from the extreme repression of women laid down by Islamic Law to the freedom of 20th-century Europe. Still, it is worthy of note that the rulers of modern Turkey have had the wisdom or prudence to allow a considerable measure of liberty to those elements which continue to think the veil and the customs of Islam a necessity.

¹⁵⁷ For a similar argument, see Aktaş, 2006, p. 189.

¹⁵⁸ Toynbee, 1927, p. 77, fnt. 1. Toynbee also quotes them reporting that "while among the menfolk in the villages the working of the new Western leaven was already perceptible, the traditional subordination and effacement of the womenfolk showed no sign of change." Toynbee, 1927, p. 77.

¹⁵⁹ Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Niçin Kurtulmamak*, Istanbul: Varlık, 1953, p. 81. It should be noted, however, that the Kemalist regime did not hesitate to intervene in the religious domain through some quite radical secularization policies.

¹⁶⁰ Atay, 1998, p. 412.

Doubtless they trust to the schools to inculcate in the new generation ideas that will bring in the projected reforms automatically.¹⁶¹

If one reason for the Kemalist decision to not take a radical stance on women's dress was the prudence of the leading elite, the other one was related to the patriarchal concern the regime shared while trying to modernize gender relations. The emphasis on the necessity of remaking the nation's women along modern lines existed side by side with an equally strong emphasis on protecting women's morality, pointing to a process which is characterized by Zehra Arat as the replacement of Islamic patriarchy with a modern one.¹⁶² In other words, reforms were within the "modern-yet-modest" formulation, the patriarchal consensus between the elite and non-elite male actors.¹⁶³ This implied a strategy of initiating a change in women's clothing without so much undermining existing hierarchies and moral codes. The motivation behind understanding unveiling as the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, without for example attacking covering of the hair as such, can be best understood within this framework. However, contrary to what has been generally emphasized in the literature,¹⁶⁴ neither the prudence of the regime nor its patriarchal concerns led to a total abandonment of the idea of regulating women's veiling through official decisions. Such decisions were indeed taken in the 1920s to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, albeit only at the local level and only with the efforts of the provincial elite, lacking a central coordination, and the strength of a law, or even of a general decision or regulation originating from the center. This

¹⁶¹ Despatch N. 384 from Sir G. Clerk to Sir Austen Chamberlain, FO 371/12320, 20 June 1927.

¹⁶² Zehra Arat, "Kemalizm ve Türk Kadını" in *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, Ayşe Bertkay Hacımirzaoğlu (ed.), İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998, pp. 51-70. See also Zehra F. Arat (ed.), *Deconstructing Images of "the Turkish Woman"*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998. In the Kemalist perception of women's emancipation, women would be part of the public sphere as asexual subjects and their primary role as mothers and house managers would remain intact. For more on this see Deniz Kandiyoti, "Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish Case," *Feminist Studies* 13(2), Summer 1987, pp. 317-339. See also Yeşim Arat, "The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey," in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (eds.), Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997, pp. 95-112; Ayşe Saktanber, "Kemalist Kadın Hakları Söylemi," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce II: Kemalizm*, Ahmet İnsel (ed.), İstanbul: İletişim, 2001, pp. 323-333.

¹⁶³ Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Hazards of Modernity and Morality: Women, State and Ideology in Contemporary Iran," in *Women, Islam and the State*, Deniz Kandiyoti (ed.), Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 48-76; Fatmagül Bertkay, "Cumhuriyet'in 75 Yıllık Serüvenine Kadınlar Açısından Bakmak" in *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, Ayşe Bertkay Hacımirzaoğlu (ed.), İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998, pp. 1-11. See also Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Veiled Discourse-Unveiled Bodies," *Feminist Studies*, 19(3), Fall 1993, pp. 487-518.

¹⁶⁴ See, for example, Tunçay, 1992, pp. 150-151.

was precisely what was expected from the local administrators and the state officials: to lead the way and to try to make the ideals of modernization a reality in their localities.¹⁶⁵

IV. Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the 1920s: a Weak Attempt at Changing Women's Dress

On 29 October 1925, the second anniversary of the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the head of the Turkish Hearth and the Teachers' Union in Trabzon, Mustafa Reşit Bey, addressed the crowd gathered for the celebration of this national holiday. Decorated with laurel leaves and flags, like the other major buildings in the city, the Turkish Hearth was the center of the celebrations in Trabzon town square, and Mustafa Reşit Bey made his speech from the balcony of the building. Underlining the merits of the republican regime compared to its predecessor, which he characterized as the "corrupt" Ottoman regime, he finished his speech with the following statements:

The civilized world has known us as an uncivilized people in bizarre clothing, in baggy trousers and big turbans. But in fact, these are the lands of the most civilized and dignified people in the world. Foreigners would certainly see the true essence of this dignified nation in our contemporary clothing. A thousand thanks and gratitude to the Republic that would carry us to prosperity with the blessings and prosperity of the motherland, and to the great savior who rescued it. Long live the nation; long live the revolution; long live the Republic!¹⁶⁶

Having been born in Trabzon in 1892, educated in Istanbul as a biology teacher, and served as a teacher and mid-level bureaucrat in the Ministry of Education and the General Inspectorships with different capacities in different places throughout his career, Mustafa Reşit Bey was typical of the republican local elite in the provinces. His reference to clothing as the final mark of his speech for the Republic Day in October 1925 was in fact no coincidence. The hat had very recently been introduced as the modern male

¹⁶⁵ Mustafa Kemal in fact touched upon the necessity of a vanguard role played by the state officials in the issue of the modernization of clothing during his visit to Kastamonu, and also afterwards, during the course of the hat reform. See Goloğlu, 2007, p. 161.

¹⁶⁶ Mustafa Reşit Tarakçıoğlu, *Trabzon'un Yakın Tarihi* [1986], reprinted in Hikmet Öksüz and Veyssel Usta (ed.), *Mustafa Reşit Tarakçıoğlu, Hayatı, Hatıratı ve Trabzon'un Yakın Tarihi*, Trabzon: Serander, 2008, p. 199.

headgear by Mustafa Kemal, and the bill to ban all headgear other than the hat countrywide had been proposed to parliament only two weeks earlier, turning the issue of the modernization of clothing into one of the most topical issues in the country. It was thus within such a context that Mustafa Reşit Bey talked of the backwardness of the old clothing in his speech, and tried to promote the idea in Trabzon that modern clothing would fit the Turkish nation and represent its “civilized essence.”

The efforts of the provincial elite in Trabzon to promote modern clothing, in fact, went beyond the support they had given to the regime’s legal reform to change men’s headgear. On 2 October 1925, members of the Turkish Hearth in Trabzon decided at a mixed-gender meeting that women members should remove their *peçes* and *çarşafs*, wear overcoats and hats, and participate in social life.¹⁶⁷ They also decided that male members should wear a hat, following the example of Mustafa Kemal. As the earliest example of an anti-veiling campaign we know in the 1920s,¹⁶⁸ this decision of the Trabzon Turkish Hearth was seen by its members as a natural result of the role of the Turkish Hearth in guiding the people of Trabzon in their adaptation to modern ways and in being good supporters and promoters of the ideals of the revolution.¹⁶⁹ Members also decided to advise women of the city accordingly in private meetings and conversations, and to encourage them to participate in public life.

This local initiative to change women’s clothing in Trabzon was followed by similar attempts in a number of other cities. The mayor of Eskişehir issued a statement in December 1925 calling for the women of the city to remove their *peştamal*. The statement was issued only a few days after the enactment of the Hat Law and was clearly motivated by it:

My dear townsmen, who lead the way in the struggle for civilization as they did in the struggle for liberation.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 200.

¹⁶⁸ An earlier attempt against gender segregation should be mentioned here. In December 1924, the governor of Istanbul issued a circular that removed the curtains dividing men’s and women’s sections on trams, trains and boats. Caporal, 1982, p. 650. Then in 1925, gender segregation was completely abolished on these vehicles. Zihnioğlu, 2003, p. 167.

¹⁶⁹ Even before the establishment of the republic, there had been some local elite in Trabzon who supported the idea of adopting Western clothing. See Tirebolulu Hüseyin Arpaslan, *Trabzon İli Laz mı Türk mü?*, Giresun, 1339[1923], quoted in Çapa, 1996. Some ulema members and local notables were trying to counter such arguments and prevent the women of Trabzon to follow Istanbul women in the modernization of clothing by sending petitions to state authorities. See Ebubekir Hazım Tepeyran, *Belgelerle Kurtuluş Savaşı Anıları*, İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1982, pp. 91-93.

At a time when the last law has spread the hat among the Turkish nation, the time has also come to bring the *peştamal* veiling, which is very uncomely, into line with civilized clothes and civilized views; thus this *peştamal* veiling, which is a very primitive and uncivilized dress, has to end. Instead, dresses worn by a fraction of our women have to prevail. The *peştamal* veils, which look especially grim because of their colors, have to be dyed with simpler and more dignified colors, and transformed into civilized clothing by changing their form. The municipality asks and requests this from our respected people and is confident that this change will be pursued until the beginning of January.¹⁷⁰

The “request” of the mayor of Eskişehir shows not only how strongly the link between the hat reform and the change of women’s clothing was felt at the local level, but also the willingness of the local elite to reach a compromise on existing practices. No penalty was mentioned in the statement in the case of non-compliance. Although a total removal of the *peştamal* was the ideal, the mayor was ready to settle for a few civilizing adaptations, if women were unable to do away with it completely. *Peştamals* were too colorful to look civilized, according to the mayor; they gave the women of Eskişehir a rural and backward appearance at a time of national revival for civilized dress. It is also interesting to note that the mayor was referring to a group of women of Eskişehir whose clothing should set an example for other women. Not mentioning exactly the kind of dress to which he was referring, the mayor probably meant the way some teachers or other state officials dressed in Eskişehir at the time.

Later developments in Eskişehir demonstrate that this initial statement of the mayor was ineffective and did not bring the expected change in women’s clothing. Having seen this, the city council of Eskişehir issued a decree banning the *peçe*, the *peştamal* and the *bohças* women carry while going to the public baths.¹⁷¹ However, it seems that this decree was not or could not be implemented very effectively. Then, in January 1927, the provincial council of Eskişehir (*Vilayet Genel Meclisi*) issued a regulation along the same lines:

¹⁷⁰ Çapa, 1996, p. 24.

¹⁷¹ A *bohça* is a kind of bag created by tying up the crosswise ends of a square cloth. It is used in villages or by the poor more often, and thus has rural connotations. As we understand from the ban, some women in Eskişehir were carrying their clothes and goods to the public bath by making *bohças*, and this must have been a concern for the local authorities because of the rural or “primitive” image they created in the city.

Article 1-It has been decided by the city council to ban in the city center, the *peçe* and the *peştamal* used by some women and to prohibit *bohças* that women carry when they go to the public bath. If there are still people who refuse to comply with the decision, the relevant article of the Law on the General Administration of Provinces will be implemented; that is, based on the minutes handed over by the Committee of Provincial Administration [*Vilayet İdare Heyeti*], they will be fined, from five to twenty-five liras, .

Article 2- In the district capitals of the province, this decision will be applied two months after its declaration.

Article 3- In the villages of the province, this decision will be put into practice six months after its declaration.¹⁷²

All the headmen (*muhtar*) would be informed of the decision of the provincial council by the police in the neighborhoods in the provincial center, and by the gendarme in the district capitals and villages of the province. The headmen would be responsible for notifying the public accordingly, by visiting each house, door by door. The police, the gendarme and the municipal police sergeants (*belediye çavuşları*) would be responsible for implementing the decision. Yakut argues that the decision of the provincial council proved quite effective in the province of Eskişehir, especially in the provincial center.¹⁷³

In the meantime, the scope of the anti-veiling campaign in Trabzon surpassed that of the decision of the members of the Turkish Hearth. A group of members of the Turkish Hearth and the Teachers' Union, organized as "guidance committees" (*irşad heyetleri*), began visiting the districts of the province and the villages, informing people about the reforms of the new regime and its views on civilization and modern clothing.¹⁷⁴ There were also news items and articles in the local newspapers promoting modern dress. Some members of the Trabzon Provincial Council submitted a proposal in

¹⁷² Yakut, 2002, p. 27.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 28. Yakut also mentions that similar anti-veiling campaigns were organized in Bursa and Ordu in the 1920s, but he does not provide any details about the time and content of these campaigns.

¹⁷⁴ Guidance committees were inculcating the notion, for example, that the hat was not contrary to Islam. Their work was of course not limited to propaganda directed at modern clothing, but also advised against speaking in Greek or encouraged saving. Some of these committees had medical doctors as members, and thus provided free medical care in the villages they visited. Since he was the head of both Trabzon Turkish Hearth and the Teachers' Union, Mustafa Reşit Bey had assured that the members of these two organizations work in coordination in these committees. He himself presided over the visits of some of these committees to the villages. See Öksüz and Usta, 2008.

December 1926 to ban the *peçe*, and to reform women's dress, thereby transforming it into a modern and national form:

The Turkish republic is based on Turkish culture, and its reference is our great Gazi [Mustafa Kemal]. The whole society is a follower of this great guide. Our province is a port of the Orient, its door opening to the West. It is the strongest holder of the Turkish existence. Therefore, it is a requirement of public interest to make a decision about contemporary women's clothing, which is a product of a foreign culture and lacks a national character. We propose a reform of this primitive and non-national clothing, the banning of the *peçe*, and the transforming of the clothing of women, who comprise half of our society, into a national and civilized form. We request an urgent debate on this proposal.¹⁷⁵

The proposal submitted to the provincial council was discussed at a meeting in the Trabzon branch of the Republican People's Party before it was discussed and voted on in the council, which indicates the support and involvement of the local party members in the process.¹⁷⁶ The proposal was accepted unanimously, and the *peçe* was prohibited in Trabzon on 11 December 1926.¹⁷⁷ As the British Consul in Trabzon reports, the edict of the *vilayet* was "threatening the refractory and their nearest male relations with sundry fines and varying terms of imprisonment."¹⁷⁸ The province of Rize soon followed Trabzon; a similar decision banning the *peçe* in the city was made by the provincial council in January 1927.¹⁷⁹

In some of the provinces, decisions of the local authorities to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* seemed to have been influenced by the orientation of the Prime Minister, İsmet Pasha, during his visits to these cities. In Aydın, the provincial council decided to prohibit the *peçe*, the *çarşaf* and the *peştamal*, together with some men's clothing, like the *zeybek* attire, which was peculiar to the region, at the beginning of 1927, following the visit of the prime minister. The governor of Aydın later informed the prime minister about the

¹⁷⁵ Çapa, 1996, p. 27. Another proposal was submitted to the provincial council to reform men's clothing and to ban baggy trousers and provincial shirts (*mintan*), which, it was argued in the proposal, were making those who wear them look primitive and "semi-savage." The proposal was accepted and peasant men were given six months to adopt civilized village clothes. Some district municipalities also issued similar regulations. See *ibid*.

¹⁷⁶ Yahut, 2002, p. 27.

¹⁷⁷ Çapa, 1996, p. 27.

¹⁷⁸ Report from Consul Knight to Sir. G. Clerk in Constantinople, FO 371/12320, 12 May 1927. Caporal claims that the police was ordered to take those who continued veiling to the nearest police station. See Caporal, 1982, pp. 648-649

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*.

decision of the council in a letter in which he referred to the “wish” İsmet Pasha had expressed during his visit concerning the transformation of the clothing of the people of Aydın into a civilized form:

To the Prime Minister of Turkish Republic, His Excellency İsmet Pasha
2.2.1927, Aydın

My honorable pasha,

At its first meeting on the first day of the new year, the general council of the province issued a decision, the copy of which is attached, that the clothing of the people of Aydın, especially that of the women, which you noticed during your visit to Aydın last year, should be transformed into a civilized form. I am proud to inform you that I am striving toward the fulfillment of your wish, and with this opportunity, I request you accept my most special respects.

The Governor of Aydın¹⁸⁰

As the letter of the governor shows, the anti-veiling campaign in Aydın was inspired by the visit of the prime minister and his ideas regarding the clothing of the people in the province. There is no mention in the letter of an order given by the prime minister to ban the veil, or a directive to issue a decision through the provincial council. Thus it remains unclear whether he ordered the governor to initiate a direct ban. However, it is certain that the need to civilize the clothing of the people of the province, or at least the concern of the prime minister that the dress widespread in the city was uncivilized, had been voiced during the conversations between the prime minister and the governor. This demonstrates the role the “wish” the central elite had to civilize women’s clothing and their encouragement of it played in the initiation of the anti-veiling campaigns, and particularly in motivating the local administrators to realize these campaigns so as to gain the approval of Ankara. As it had been in Aydın, the *peçe* was banned by the provincial council of Muğla, also at its meeting following the visit of the Prime Minister İsmet Pasha.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ PMRA 030.10/53.346.6. *Zeybeks* were the irregular militia in the Aegean region of the Ottoman Empire, who fought against the Greek occupation during the Turkish national struggle. The *zeybek* costume was banned in Aydın most probably because it was seen as backward and rural, just like the *peştamal* veil, by the political elite.

¹⁸¹ PMRA 490.01/17.88.1. The date of the meeting is unclear in the document, but as understood from some references, it was most probably in 1926.

With the encouragement coming from Ankara and the motivation of the provincial administrators, the need for the modernization of women's clothing began to be voiced in many cities, and local newspapers were central for this campaign. In the anti-veiling campaigns of the 1920s, the issue of women's veiling was approached not only as part of the modernization of Turkish society in general, but also as part of the struggle for women's equal rights. The idea that women were emancipated by the new regime was prevalent and this was further strengthened by the momentum created by the campaign of the Women's Union for women's political rights,¹⁸² and especially by the total secularization of the Civil Code in 1926. This idea provided a further support to the local efforts to modernize women's dress. In 1928, a local newspaper in the province of Ordu published an article in which it was argued that Turkish women had been granted all the rights and freedom they needed by the revolution and that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were inappropriate for the new position of the Turkish women.¹⁸³ Enlightened Turkish women had understood this fact, the author argued; they had freed themselves from the meaningless and feudal influence of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. Contemporary civilization would not tolerate women wearing these forms of clothing. In these "historical days," Turkish women had all the right to dress in a modern way, and there was no need for a directive to come from the center for this to happen.

As seen in the last example, the general discourse of these early anti-veiling campaigns in the second half of the 1920s revolved around the distinction between civilized and uncivilized ways of clothing. The logic the political elite, both in the center and the provinces, used was similar to what fueled the opposition to the fez, which had been characterized as Oriental, non-Turkish, and traditional. The *peçe*, the *çarşaf* and the *peştamal* were viewed as rural, backward, and uncivilized. The survival of traditional women's clothes at a time of a national celebration of modernization and women's rights in the discourse of the new regime was seen by many Kemalist elites in the provinces, men and women alike, as a contradiction, as something

¹⁸² In many Anatolian cities, Turkish Hearths were the centers of the campaign for women's political rights, which was initiated by the Turkish Women's Union right after their establishment in 1923. Trabzon Turkish Hearth, for example, also actively supported the campaign by organizing meetings where women members would support the cause for women's right to elect and to be elected. Such meetings also provided opportunities for women to appear in public in modern clothing. See Caporal, 1982, pp. 690-691. See also, Öksüz and Usta, 2008.

¹⁸³ Çapa, 1996, pp. 24-25.

dissonant with the spirit of the time. Removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was perceived as an indispensable part of women's emancipation and their civilized status under the republican regime.

The impact of the efforts and campaigns of the local elite in the 1920s, however, remained limited. Although Mustafa Reşit Bey was confident in his memoirs that new reforms had received no negative reaction from the people of his hometown, Trabzon, and that even the most difficult of the changes, such as the abandoning of gender segregation and women's seclusion, had been adopted quite easily,¹⁸⁴ the reality was in fact quite different. Writing about the political situation in Turkey around the same time the ban was put into practice in Trabzon, Toynbee reported the failure of the anti-veiling campaigns in 1927: "at the time of writing, the Government had been attempting to make the abandonment of the veil obligatory in the Vilayet of Trebizond and in certain other districts, but had been compelled to abandon this experiment owing to the strength of the opposition which it encountered."¹⁸⁵ Having noted the reputation of Trabzon as one of the most "reactionary" cities in Turkey, the British Consul in Trabzon explained the continuation of the old veiling habits by underlining the strategies women used to get around the banning of the *peçe*. According to the consul, the inhabitants of Trabzon were "somewhat easy-going" compared to the other cities in his consular district, Rize and Erzurum, and this was reflected in the way they reacted to the anti-veiling campaign initiated by the local government.¹⁸⁶ Women were almost completely absent in the public life of Trabzon except as teachers and students, but it appears that, according to the account of the consul, in the few instances they appeared in public, women in Trabzon wore the *çarşaf* in a way not requiring the *peçe* to cover their face:

¹⁸⁴ Öksüz and Usta, 2008, pp. 196-197.

¹⁸⁵ Toynbee, 1927, p. 77, fnt.1.

¹⁸⁶ Needless to say, such characterizations of Trabzon as "reactionary" or "easy-going" were subjective readings of the British consul as a foreigner. In fact, as a multi-ethnic, multi-religious port city, Trabzon was still quite cosmopolitan during the early 20th century. However, the ethnic composition changed dramatically after the deportations of Armenians in 1915 and mass expulsion of the Greeks due to the compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey as part of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. See Michael Meeker, "The Black Sea Turks: Some Aspects of Their Ethnic and Cultural Background," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2(4), October 1971, pp. 318-345. See also Renée Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, a second anti-veiling campaign was launched in Trabzon in mid-1930s, which faced severe opposition from various segments of the city population.

At all events, being confronted in the present instance with a mere conciliar decree lacking the force of law, they [women of Trabzon] and their men-folk devised a compromise which, from their point of view, proved a complete success. The “*petché*,” or short black veil which fell over the face, was duly discarded, while the “*charshaf*,” as not being a veil in the sense of the decree, was retained in all its amplitude, and serves to protect the features to the exact extent desired by the wearer. Modesty being as much a distinguishing mark of the Trebizond women as jealousy is of their husbands, the situation has, to all intents and purposes, remained the same as before the promulgation of the edict, and with this state of affairs the local authorities have to be satisfied, at least for the present. The few female faces to be seen in the streets are, with very few exceptions, those of either school-mistresses or schoolgirls, who, having been the objects of special legislation, are, of course, in a category apart. The latter, growing up without the traditional restrictions of dress or manners will doubtless never adopt those of their mothers, except possibly in the case of a very few old-fashioned families where the tradition of filial piety is still strong.¹⁸⁷

It seems that while the banning of the *peçe* in Trabzon had some impact, it did not result in the modernization of women’s clothing or a decline in the practice of veiling itself. As the British Consul suggested, the main difference that could be seen was generational due to the impact of modern education and schooling. In another report on the progress of modernization in his consular district, the consul wrote that European-type entertainment and social gatherings were very exceptional in Trabzon, and at such gatherings like balls, only the wives of the officials and officers or schoolgirls could be seen, and the very few Turkish women who danced belonged to the latter group. Despite this very limited progress in eliminating gender segregation and modernizing women’s clothing in Trabzon, he nevertheless noted that the situation of women of Trabzon was still better compared to what it was in other eastern cities, where women’s veiling remained intact: “In my despatch No. 3 of the 12th May I had the honour to report on the almost total absence of modernization with regard to the position of women, and in this respect Trebizond, backward though it be, is ahead of the other eastern vilayets,

¹⁸⁷ Report from Consul Knight to Sir G. Clerk in Constantinople, FO 371/12320, 12 May 1927. Consul Knight also reported that there were no women professionals in Trabzon, except for schoolteachers, a few drudges in the women’s wards of hospitals and two women clerks at the Trabzon post-office. He noted, however, women were to be seen everywhere in the countryside, working the land. In the cigarette factory in Samsun, there were also women workers.

where, at least in the towns, the face is still hidden by the “petché” as completely as if the Ghazi had never been heard of.”¹⁸⁸

In other cities, as well, the change in women’s clothing was primarily visible in the dress of state officials and women of high-status families. The British Consul in Mersin consular region, for example, reported in 1927 that although his district was “old-fashioned and fanatical” in general, there was steady progress in the emancipation of women:

The new type of woman now so familiar in Constantinople, turbaned or hatted and dressed in the modes of Paris, most of whom set a distinctly rapid pace, is making her appearance in Adana and Mersina in the shape of wives and daughters of imported officials or manufacturers and notables who had been abroad. Officials on the spot are also dutifully modernizing their womenfolk.

He noted a livelier social life compared to Trabzon, at least in the city centers of Mersin and Adana, mentioning mixed-gender public places and gatherings among the higher classes for which the harem would seem to have remained in the past. Girls had begun to walk about the town by themselves in Mersin, more Turkish women had started to appear at the public balls, and more of them had learned how to dance, with the daughter of the governor leading the way in this regard.¹⁸⁹ The countrywomen had never worn the veil anyway, and girls who had begun to go to school adopted the modern manners in clothing, as in the case of Trabzon, which would, according to the consul, contribute to the extinction of the veil in the future, despite the fact that it was observed by many women: “a large number of townswomen of the *bourgeoise* class are still heavily veiled or half-veiled, and I understand that the Ghazi is wise enough not to impose any unveiling order in these parts. But the veil is, I think, dying a natural death. Girls growing up will simply not wear it.”¹⁹⁰

Such observations of the foreign diplomats point to a geographical difference in terms of the pace or scope of the change as well.¹⁹¹ Having read

¹⁸⁸ Report from Consul Knight to Sir G. Clerk in Constantinople, FO 371/12320, 12 June 1927.

¹⁸⁹ Report from Consul Chafy to Sir G. Clerk in Constantinople, FO371/12320, 21 May 1927. The consul notes in his report that the governor was so very annoyed at the first public ball in the town that women would or could not dance and he had told the consul personally that his daughter would be the first to dance at the next ball. A Hungarian professional dancer was teaching dancing at houses in both Mersin and Adana.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. See also the Report from Consul Chafy to Sir G. Clerk in Constantinople, FO 371/12320, 27 May 1927.

¹⁹¹ For a detailed discussion on the influence of geographical differences in explaining the multiple transitions of late Ottoman societies to modernity, see Cem Emrence, *Remapping the*

all the reports, the British Ambassador in Istanbul also claimed that larger towns accessible to the sea or the railway were ahead of those in the interior of the country and the countryside in adopting European type manners, clothing, social gatherings, and entertainment.¹⁹² In Izmir, for example, which was one of the most cosmopolitan cities in Turkey, there was a lively social life among the elite, and increasing interest in modern sports, theater and dancing. The acting British Consul underlined the distinctive character of social gatherings as follows: “the real change lies not so much in the closer association of the Turk and the European as in the admission of his women-folk to the revels. Today the shortest skirts and the most powdered face are to be seen on the Turkish lady at these gatherings. It is only at the gaming tables that she has not yet made her appearance in public.”¹⁹³ According to his observation, the veil (meaning, the face veil) had practically disappeared in Izmir, although it was still possible to see it on some older women, in some villages or in remote and poorer suburbs, like Buca and Bornova, which points to an uneven change even within a particular province.¹⁹⁴ Although people in the upper classes and the younger generation, in particular, were prepared to adopt the European clothing, it appears that the ordinary women had removed the face veil, but were more reluctant to a total change in clothing even in a city like Izmir: “modern European headgear is as yet practically unknown to

Ottoman Middle East: Modernity, Imperial Bureaucracy and the Islamic State, London: I.B. Tauris, 2011. Emrence emphasizes the differences between the coast, the interior and the frontier regions.

¹⁹² Despatch N. 380 from Sir G. Clerk to Sir Austen Chamberlain, FO 371/12320, 20 July 1927. For the British diplomats, the existence of Europeans or non-Muslims living in a town was also a factor influencing the pace of change in women’s clothing. The British Consulate in Edirne (Adrianople), for example, reported along the same lines as the consul of Mersin district that a slow but sure progress in women’s position was occurring in the city, and that the veil had become rare since “the Jewesses of the town (of whom there are many) are always there to set at least a Levantine, if not a European, standard of dress and behavior.” See the Report from Consular Officer, FO 371/12320, 25 May 1927.

¹⁹³ Copy of the Report from Acting Consul in Smyrna, in Despatch N. 380 from Sir G. Clerk, FO 371/12320.

¹⁹⁴ The acting consul also reports, for example, that a large number of women were veiled in the province of Aydın when he visited there the previous holiday, but that the authorities had not interfered: “It appears that there had been considerable traffic in undesirable women in certain cabarets and clubs of Aidin, and the more conservative portion of the population objected to the scenes which took place there. In Sokia [Söke, a district of the province of Aydın], on the other hand, the large garden belonging to the resident manager for the Macandrews and Forbes Company had been recently lent for a garden party for charitable purposes. The whole population of Sohia attended and none of the women was veiled.” See Copy of the Report from Acting Consul in Smyrna, in Despatch N. 384 from Sir G. Clerk, FO 371/12320.

the Turkish women of Smyrna. As a general rule the Turkish costume is little changed except for the omission of the veil. It appears to go against the grain for the Turkish woman to do away with the symbol of the distinction between Moslem and the non-Moslem.”¹⁹⁵

In short, it seems that despite all the campaigns and propaganda, the change in women’s dress in the 1920s was limited to the elite or educated segments of the population. In fact, even among some elites, there was still reluctance to getting used to the “modern” ways, especially regarding women’s clothing and public appearance. One of the most prominent speakers of the Kemalist regime, Falih Rıfkı, expressed this reluctance in 1929 as an impact of yet uneradicated “Oriental” mind and past:

In the houses in which we were born, in the schools in which we studied, in the thoughts, feelings, and customs by which we were raised, in our clothing, our common understandings, and the way that we carry ourselves, from top to bottom, everything has changed. Neither a man nor a generation can emotionally absorb such widespread chaos that has taken place in the past eight to ten years, no matter how much he had every intention of doing so. The wound of being Oriental has encrusted us. There yet exists a scab on our skin. With a vigorous brush of this scab, it can again be infected. We are half humans. Our correct ideas are still fighting against our wrong feelings. We still have a considerable number of brave revolutionaries who won’t let their wives emerge from the *kafes*. The *sarık* that we cast off winds itself around our feet and trips us.¹⁹⁶

Likewise, speaking on Republic Day in October 1928 at the Istanbul branch of the Women’s Union, İffet Halim Hanım pointed to the slow pace of development in the modernization of women’s clothing even in a city like Istanbul:

Our men have put on the hat and understood its benefits in a very short time. It was hoped that after them, our women would also feel the same necessity especially in a place like Istanbul, which is one of the most civilized cities of Turkey. However, unfortunately, the last couple of years have been wasted as a period of stagnancy. An outside eye would see us dressed in complete confusion. Some of us wear overcoats, some of us cover our heads with turbans, some with tulle, and a small number of us wear hats. We can no longer hesitate to choose a way of dressing that is equivalent to the way men do. Those who, I do not know why,

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Falih Rıfkı (Atay), “Bizim Çocuğumuz,” *Çocuk Haftası* 1, 1929, quoted in Libal, 2014.

still continue to hide their faces, still cover their head, should sincerely admit that they do not recognize how much harm they do to themselves because of this unnecessary insistence.¹⁹⁷

V. Conclusion

The question of women's unveiling had been on the agenda of the modernist elite, men and women alike beginning in the late Ottoman Empire. It was particularly shaped by the stigmatization of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as uncivilized clothing, and, hence, focused on their removal. The initial changes in women's dress along these lines had already begun before the establishment of the republic, and locally organized bodies, like the Turkish Hearths, had already created spaces in the provinces for women's greater public participation and for the struggle against gender segregation.¹⁹⁸ The anti-veiling campaigns of the 1920s can thus be seen as a continuation of a line of thought in Ottoman/Turkish history that had linked modernization and social development with women's emancipation and with the change of their outfit since the 19th century. On the other hand, they were unprecedented since the provincial elite attempted to directly intervene in women's clothing.

The anti-veiling campaigns in the 1920s were limited in number and remained as local initiatives. Although they stemmed from a much older debate ideologically, they were clearly motivated by the Hat Law of 1925 in terms of timing and as a source of legitimacy. Even though the law only concerned men's headgear, it triggered a public debate on civilized dress, including women's clothing, and the importance of modernizing the outlook of the Turkish nation. Therefore, a campaign for the modernization of clothing of nearly national proportions was waged throughout 1925. Moreover, the attempts to change women's dress by the local elite of some provinces had emerged as part of this general momentum. The uncompromising manner in which the Hat Law was put into practice by the Kemalist regime and the reactions it received led to the tendency to deal with women's clothing not by enacting laws or imposing central decisions, but through propaganda, guidance, and most importantly, by trusting the modernist visions and ambitions of the local elite. As the case of Aydın shows, the central elite also

¹⁹⁷ Gençosman, 1981, pp. 117-118.

¹⁹⁸ Üstel states the role Turkish Hearts played in modernization efforts, and how they were criticized by the conservatives for organizing mixed-gender meetings and women's gatherings. See Üstel, 1997, pp. 137-140. In this sense, it should not be a coincidence that the anti-veiling campaign was first initiated by the Turkish Hearth in Trabzon.

did not hesitate to encourage the provincial administrators to work towards making these visions a reality.

Although limited to a few provinces, the early examples of anti-veiling campaigns in the 1920s created a path that would be followed later. In provinces where there was an outright ban, the campaigns were more limited at first, as was the case with the statement of the mayor of Eskişehir, or the decision of the Trabzon Turkish Hearth. However, they gradually accelerated and were reinforced by the decisions of the local administrative bodies when the initial attempt was unsuccessful. Decisions to ban veiling in the 1920s were mainly made by the provincial councils, which were probably thought to have a more effective legal capacity compared to municipalities based on the Law on the General Administration of Provinces. The early campaigns of the 1920s seem to be more focused on the removal of the *peçe* and elimination of rural clothing peculiar to each province. The aim was to change women's clothing primarily in the provincial centres, although some of the decisions were to be applied in the district capitals and villages as well, as in the case of Eskişehir.

As discussed above, however, early anti-veiling campaigns did not become country-wide phenomena, and in places where they were initiated, they proved largely ineffective. The fact that similar bans were issued in the 1930s by the provincial authorities of the same cities that had initiated a campaign in the 1920s can be seen as an indication of the limited and weak impact of the earlier attempts. The main wave of anti-veiling campaigns would begin in the 1930s, when the Kemalist single-party regime became increasingly authoritarian in every domain following its consolidation of power. Local attempts to eliminate the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, and to modernize women's clothing would be applied in a much more comprehensive manner during this main wave, both in terms of content and the scope, and the intensity of the propaganda regarding it.