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

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Chapter 3

Contextualizing the Anti-Veiling Campaigns of the 1930s: An Overview

"*Kadını asırlarca kafes, dam, peçe altına hapsederek körelttikten sonra uluorta muhakeme yürütüyorlar. … Kadın şiir, roman yazar mıymış? Resim yapar mıymış? … Yapmamalı imiş; şiiri, güzelliği inceliği kaybolurmuş. Görüyorsun ya, onu, hâlâ, saksıda çiçek gibi görmek istiyorlar.*"[199]

I. Turkey in the 1930s

Many scholars of early republican Turkey see a change in the character of the Kemalist regime beginning in the 1930s. Mete Tunçay, a prominent historian of the period, argues, for example, that until 1931, it was the formation process for the new regime.[200] In his periodization, the year 1931 marks the consolidation of the authoritarian single-party system in Turkey, with the period between 1931 and 1945 being relatively stronger and more compact in political terms. According to him, the consolidation of the regime in 1931 was realized and implicitly declared at the "third" congress of the RPP in 1931,[201] where the main characteristics and principles of the regime were formulated. These principles constituted the official state ideology known as the Six Arrows.[202] The 1931 RPP congress and the party program issued during it were the manifestations of the policies that would shape Turkey in the 1930s.

[199] An excerpt from Şükûfe Nihal's novel *Çöl Güneşi* (Desert Sun), which began to be published as a serial in the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* in 1931 and continued throughout 1932. It was published as a book by the same title in 1933.

[200] Tunçay, 1992.

[201] This was in fact the second congress of the party. The first congress was in 1927, but the RPP referred to this congress as the second congress, "because it retrospectively adopted the congress in Sivas in 1919 as its first, thus emphasizing (false) identification of the RPP with the national liberation movement and monopolizing its heritage." Zürcher, 2004, p. 175.

[202] Tunçay, 1992, p. 308. These six arrows are republicanism, nationalism, populism, secularism, statism and revolutionism. The first four principles were accepted in the previous congress in 1927. The last two, statism and revolutionism, were added at the congress in 1931. These principles were incorporated into the constitution in 1937. For a detailed discussion of these principals as the founding blocks of the Kemalist ideology, see Taha Parla, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmî Kaynakları, v. 3: Kemalist Tek-Parti İdeolojisi ve CHP'nin Altı Ok'u*,

It was in fact 1929 when the extraordinary measures taken after the Kurdish/Islamic rebellion of 1925 had come to an end, and the government decided to abolish the Law on the Maintenance of Order. The prime minister İsmet Pasha (İnönü), in his speech at the party meeting, explained this decision of the government by referring to their confidence that a legal and administrative system that would prevent oppositional forces from mobilizing against the regime had been successfully established during the four years the law was in force.[203] He argued that the government succeeded in finding a new type of state based on an understanding of republican citizenship and the separation of religion and state.

Considering İsmet Pasha's speech declaring the end of the emergency period and beginning of a new era in 1929, the periodization offered by Tunçay might sound contradictory at first sight. However, after publicly maintaining that it had abolished all opposition and succeeded in creating a strong, established order, the Kemalist regime suffered two unexpected blows to its self-esteem. The first one was a short experience in 1930 with multi-party system, which turned into a test of confidence and legitimacy for the regime. Established in August 1930 with the encouragement of Mustafa Kemal, the Free Republican Party (FRP) became unexpectedly popular as an opposition party, especially amongst the middle and lower segments of the society, reflecting their discontent with some of the Kemalist reforms instigated up until then.[204] As the second attempt to initiate a transition to a multi-party system,[205] the FRP was considerably successful in the local elections against the RPP, which represented the regime, Atatürk being its immutable president. The FRP's party meeting in Izmir turned into a protest against the government. This success of the FRP alarmed the regime and drew its attention once again to its inability to spread its ideals to the larger public. Faced with an increasing social support for the FRP, which tended to get out of their control, the ruling elite turned their back on the opposition party

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Istanbul: İletişim, 1992. See also Taha Parla and Andrew Davison, *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey: Progress or Order?*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004.

[203] "Başvekil Pş. Hazretlerinin Nutku," *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, 5 March 1929.

[204] For a detailed discussion on the Free Republican Party, see Walter F. Weiker, *Political Tutelage and Democracy in Turkey: The Free Party and its Aftermath*, Leiden: Brill, 1973; Cem Emrence, *99 Günlük Muhalefet Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, Istanbul: İletişim, 2006; Cemil Koçak, *Belgelerle İktidar ve Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, Istanbul: İletişim, 2006.

[205] The establishment of the Progressive Republican Party in 1924 by a group of political elite critical to the Kemalist circle was the first experience of the regime with a multi-party system. For more on the Progressive Republican Party, see Erik Jan Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic: The Progressive Republican Party*, Leiden: Brill, 1991.

shortly after its establishment. The party was closed just three months after it opened. Immediately following its closure, Mustafa Kemal began a three-month-long inspection tour throughout the country. The tour gave him the opportunity to more closely observe the scale of and the reasons for the social discontent, which had risen to the surface during the FRP experience. The tour also gave him the chance to formulate a new road map to institute a stronger regime.[206]

The second shock was an incident in Menemen, a small town in the province of Izmir, on the Western coast of the country. In December 1930, a small group in Menemen, who called themselves the Army of the Caliphate, attempted to declare an Islamic order against the republican administration.[207] The incident was quickly suppressed, but the rioters beheaded a young officer who tried to stop them. Even more traumatic for the regime than this violent act was the indifference or reluctance of the people of Menemen to intervene. Mustafa Kemal had interpreted this reluctance as a tacit support or approval on the part of at least some segments of the population: "the approval shown by some members of the community of Menemen for the savageness displayed by the reactionaries (*mürteciler*) is a source of shame for all patriots and the supporters of republicanism."[208] This reaction of the political authority to the Menemen incident was also due to its crucial difference from the other rebellions that had previously occurred. This incident had occurred in a town of a province in the West, supposedly more developed in terms of urban and economic parameters than those in the Eastern parts of Turkey, and which, therefore, should have been well-integrated into the Kemalist regime and/or easily controlled by it.

This event had such an effect upon the political elite that it initiated a discussion similar to the one raised after the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925. In addition to the ineffectiveness of the reforms that had been carried out thus far, some elite even criticized some of the Westernized practices of the new era, such as the beauty contests, which only served to alienate the majority

[206] For more on the tour of Mustafa Kemal in 1930, see the memoirs of Ahmet Hamdi Başar, who attended the tour as his advisor. *Ahmet Hamdi Başar'ın Hatıraları 1: Meşrutiyet, Cumhuriyet ve Tek Parti Dönemi*, Murat Koraltürk (ed.), Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Universitesi Yayınları, 2007.

[207] For a critical analysis of the Menemen incident, see Umut Azak, "A Reaction to Authoritarian Modernization in Turkey: The Menemen Incident and the Creation and Contestation of a Myth, 1930-31," in *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*, Touraj Atabaki (ed.), London: I.B. Tauris, 2007, pp. 143-158.

[208] *Vatan*, 28 December 1930, quoted in Tunçay, 1992, p. 293.

from the principles of the state.[209] The political elite's perception of the event also revealed its awareness of an existing discontent within society. The president demanded an investigation into the political roots of the event and strict control over the press in addition to the harsh suppression of the rebellions and forced migration of the people in the region who were accused of being involved in the uprising.[210]

The reactions the regime faced in 1930 and the rising discontent within the population were as much the result of the economic failure brought on by the Great Depression, as they were of the national policies and extraordinary measures applied during the second half of the 1920s. In fact, Cem Emrence argues that the effects of the economic crisis on Turkey were one of the primary reasons for the founding of the FRP.[211] As an overwhelmingly agricultural economy exporting agricultural goods, Turkey was hit hard by the crisis, which was felt severely by both the peasantry in the countryside and the merchants and workers in the cities. "Rising social discontent became the undisputed reality," Emrence suggests, which then led the president to try to channel this increasing opposition to a new political party that would work under his control. The program of the opposition party focused on economic issues, following a liberal agenda to counter the effects of the crisis.[212] With the FRP's elimination from the political scene, Turkey turned towards statism and state-led industrialization as a reaction to the Great Depression.[213]

This turn towards more state control in the economy had a spillover effect on other segments of the political and social sphere. Önen and Reyhan, for example, indicate that the Provincial Law of 1929, which entailed a

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[209] Nurşen Mazıcı, "Menemen Olayı'nın Sosyo-kültürel ve Sosyo-ekonomik Analizi," *Toplum ve Bilim* 90, Fall 2001, pp. 131-146.

[210] Tunçay, 1992, p. 294.

[211] Cem Emrence, "Politics of Discontent in the Midst of the Great Depression: The Free Republican Party of Turkey (1930)," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 23, Fall 2000, pp. 31-52.

[212] This emphasis on fighting the crisis was also voiced explicitly by the president of the FRP, Ali Fethi Bey (Okyar), in his speeches. See ibid.

[213] For Turkey's search for a new economic policy during the crisis, see İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *1929 Dünya Buhranı ve Türkiye'nin İktisadi Politika Arayışları*, Ankara: ODTÜ İdari İlimler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1977. See also Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye'de Devletçilik*, Ankara: İmge, 2004. Zürcher suggests that this turn was also shaped by the 1931 party congress, where the circle around the prime minister İsmet Pasha, who advocated a strict definition of statism, won out against those who favored a more liberal interpretation, such as Celal Bey (Bayar), the head of the Business Bank (*İş Bankası*). See Erik-Jan Zürcher, "Turkey in the first World Crisis: From Authoritarianism to Totalitarianism," in *Routes into the Abyss: Coping with Crises in the 1930s*, Helmut Konrad and Wolfgang Waderthaner (eds.), Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013, pp. 127-138.

centralist structure in public administration, was directly linked to the economic policy of statism.[214] Zürcher also argues that having maintained a leading role in the economy, the Turkish state increased its power in every aspect, which marked a different phase in the history of the Kemalist regime beginning with the 1930s. The elimination of all civil society organizations, their incorporation into the party structure, and the merger of the state and party in 1936 were the main components of the political repression that characterized the second phase of Kemalism, and this political repression was linked to the economic policies that emerged as a reaction to the effects of the Great Depression.[215] The crisis of 1929 deepened the social discontent and paved the way for a mutual loss of trust between the political elite and the majority of the population, combined with the traumatic events of 1930 – the FRP experience and the Menemen incident. Thus, "the authoritarian state that had been in being since 1925 felt a need for total control of every aspect of social life" in the 1930s.[216]

Çağaptay also characterizes the 1930s in a similar way, as "High Kemalism" or "Kemalism par excellence," by focusing on the ideological components rather than the effects of the Great Depression and the statist policies following it.[217] According to Çağaptay, Turkey had focused on recovering from a decade of continuous warfare and major reforms of political restructuring in the 1920s. It was only after the establishment of a secular republic that Kemalism turned its attention to matters of ideology and became a more nationalist and authoritarian regime. Bozarslan also differentiates the 1930s from the previous phases of Kemalism by referring to its assuming a relatively compact form as an "autonomous" ideology with the formulation of

[214] Nizam Önen and Cenk Reyhan, *Mülkten Ülkeye: Türkiye'de Taşra İdaresinin Dönüşümü (1839-1929)*, Istanbul: İletişim, 2011, p. 540.

[215] As part of this political repression, the passing of a new press law in 1931 should also be mentioned. It gave the government the right to close down any newspaper or journal that published anything contradicting the state policies, and thus resulted in the silencing of all opposition. See Alpay Kabacalı, *Başlangıcından Günümüze Türkiye'de Matbaa, Basın ve Yayın*, Istanbul: Literatür Yayınları, 2000.

[216] Zürcher, 2013. This urge for greater state control among the political elite was also quite visible at the time, especially during the discussions at the congress of the RPP in May 1931. See *C.H.F. Üçüncü Büyük Kongre Zabıtları 10-18 Mayıs 1931*, Istanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931.

[217] Soner Çağaptay, "Reconfiguring the Turkish Nation in the 1930s," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 8(2), Summer 2002, pp. 67-82.

the Six Arrows.[218] He argues that compared to a "Janus-like" Kemalism of the 1920s, "which was at the same time nationalist and the bearer of a project of civilization," Kemalism of the 1930s was transformed into an ideology of a nationalist revolution, creating "an openly and self-consciously anti-liberal and anti-democratic regime."

Many changes in the 1930s indicate such a turn towards a more authoritarian regime. One was the increasing role of the RPP as an important instrument for spreading the ideology of the state and mobilizing the society. The party was of course there before the 1930s as well, but it was much less active and crucial politically, due to the extraordinary powers of the cabinet based on the Law on the Maintenance of Order between 1925 and 1929.[219] It became much more active in the first half of the 1930s, especially under Recep Peker, the secretary-general of the party between 1931 and 1936. The party, however, could never turn into an independent institution, and in 1936, it became closely identified with the state apparatus, a process known as the merger of the state and the party in the literature. The first steps towards this merger were taken at the general congress of the RPP in May 1935. In the new regulation of the party that was accepted at the congress, the party and the government were described as two complementary organizations. According to the new regulation, the government was born out of the party and they together constituted a union.[220] The merger was put into practice by a circular of the Prime Minister İnönü in June 1936.[221] According to the circular, the Minister of Interior would become the general secretary of the party, the governor of a province would at the same time be the head of the RPP local branch, and the inspector-generals would also monitor the party branches and activities in the region where they served. Although it has been characterized as a merger of the state and the party, it can indeed be seen as a process through which the state took over the party: all those who were in charge at the time as the head of the party branch in the provinces were removed from the office

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[218] Hamit Bozarslan, "Kemalism, westernization and anti-liberalism," in *Turkey beyond Nationalism: Towards Post-Nationalist Identities*, Hans-Lukas Kieser (ed.), London: I.B. Tauris, 2006, pp. 28-34.

[219] Erik-Jan Zürcher, "The Ottoman Legacy of the Kemalist Republic," in *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*, Touraj Atabaki (ed.), London: I.B. Tauris, 2007, pp. 95-110.

[220] For the details of the discussion at the congress on the articles of the new party regulation concerning the relationship between the party and the government, see *C.H.P. Dördüncü Büyük Kurultayı Görüşmeleri Tutulgası, 9-16 Mayıs 1935*, Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1935, pp. 99-105.

[221] See Cemil Koçak, "Siyasal Tarih (1923-1950)," in *Türkiye Tarihi 4: Çağdaş Türkiye 1908-1980*, Sina Akşin (ed.), Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1997, pp. 84-173.

by the circular and the current governors took over their duty. The secretary general of the party, Recep Peker, was removed from his position three days before the circular.[222] The merger of the state and the party was completed by the incorporation of the Six Arrows into the constitution in 1937, thus making the party principles the main principles of the state.[223]

As part of these policies of centralization and increasing state control, the number of general inspectorships, which were institutions in charge of controlling the affairs of the provinces and organizing the operations of all governmental departments in the general inspection zone, also increased in the 1930s.[224] The First General Inspectorship (*Birinci Umûmî Müfettişlik*) was established in 1927 in the Kurdish provinces in southeast Turkey following the Sheikh Said rebellion. The second one was formed in February 1934 for the Thrace region, followed by the Third General Inspectorship in 1935 in charge of eastern and north-eastern provinces. As part of the policy of the merger of the state apparatus and the party mentioned above, the general inspectors were also the highest inspectors of all the branches of the party organization in their areas, and thus the inspectorships and the RPP were in close contact and relationship. Moreover, in addition to their primary aim of maintaining security and state control in their inspection zone, general inspectorships were also concerned about creating "civilized" cities. According to the law, part of the responsibilities of the general inspectors was to monitor and support the development of their inspection zones, not only in terms of economy, infrastructure or public health, but also in terms of social, cultural and civilizational progress.[225] Such generally defined responsibilities of the inspectors would sometimes lead their heavy involvement in attempts to change social life and manners in their regions. As it will be discussed in the next chapter, some general inspectors played an active role in the implementation of the anti-veiling campaigns within this framework.

In addition to the RPP and the General Inspectorships, one other institution that is particularly important for understanding the policies and nature of the Kemalist regime in the 1930s is the People's Houses

[222] Peker was in favor of maintaining the relative autonomy of the party from the government and the state. Ibid., p. 115.
[223] Ibid., p. 116.
[224] For more on the General Inspectorships, see Cemil Koçak, *Umûmî Müfettişlikler (1927-1952)*, Istanbul: İletişim, 2003. See also M. Bülent Varlık (ed.), *Umumî Müfettişler Toplantı Tutanakları - 1936*, Istanbul: Dipnot, 2010.
[225] For the text of the governmental decree detailing the entitlements and responsibilities of the general inspectorships, see Koçak, 2003, pp. 303-307.

(*Halkevleri*). Established in 1932 (right after the abolition of the Turkish Hearths) as a cultural organization organically linked to the RPP, the People's Houses aimed primarily at educating the masses and mobilizing people at the local level in accordance with the ideals of the new regime.[226] They were designed to be the major center for meeting and socialization in a particular city, and they would lead the social and cultural life in their localities through their activities and publications, reaching far to the villages by organizing village committees and People's Chambers.[227] The People's Houses were responsible for creating an atmosphere where provincial people could become familiar with elements of modern life, from theater to dancing. It is therefore not surprising that they were heavily involved in initiatives for cultural change, including the anti-veiling campaigns. In fact, as it will be seen in detail in the following chapters, together with the municipalities, these three important institutions and their administrators – the RPP local branches, the inspectors-generals and the People's Houses – played a critical role as the actors of the anti-veiling campaigns in the periphery, and as milieus in which dynamics of the campaigns were shaped.

Besides the mark of these institutions, a second wave of reforms, especially ones targeting cultural and social modernization, took place in Turkey in the 1930s.[228] Western weights and measures were adopted in 1931. The call to prayer (*ezan*), together with other elements of worship, such as the sermons, was Turkified in 1932.[229] The music reform (modernization of Turkish music) and the language reform (purification of Turkish and elimination of words with Persian and Arabic origin) were among the most

[226] For a recent study on People's Houses and their role in the domestication of Kemalist reforms at the local level, see Alexandros Lamprou, "Between Central State and Local Society. The People's Houses Institution and the Domestication of Reform in Turkey (1932-1951)," unpublished PhD dissertation, Leiden University, 2009.

[227] Bozdoğan suggests that it was under the patronage of the People's Houses "that villages and peasants became primary objects of the 'civilizing mission' of Kemalism." Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001, pp. 98-99.

[228] As Zürcher suggests, the first wave of reforms included the measures taken in mid-1920s such as the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, the Hat Law of 1925, and the secularization of the penal Code and the civil code in 1926. See Zürcher, 2004, p. 173.

[229] Turkification of the language of worship was also one of the most radical attempts in the beginning of the 1930s that received a considerable reaction. For more information, see Dücane Cündioğlu, *Türkçe Kur'an ve Cumhuriyet İdeolojisi*, Istanbul: Kitabevi, 1998 and his *Bir Siyasi Proje Olarak Türkçe İbadet I*, Istanbul: Kitabevi, 1999. See also Umut Azak, *Islam and Secularism in Turkey: Kemalism, Religion, and the Nation State*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2010.

radical of Kemalist reforms in the 1930s aiming at cultural modernization.[230] The Society for the Study of Turkish History, established in April 1931, and the Society for the Study of Turkish Language, founded in June 1932, both played an active role in launching research and theories in support of Turkish nationalism, which did not remain as academic studies but were included in school curriculum as part of ideological indoctrination.

The year 1934 was particularly significant in terms of the intensity of changes and reforms introduced. The Settlement Law, which entailed the resettlement of thousands of people due to the state alleged security concerns, was enacted in June;[231] the Surname Law, which made acquisition of family names mandatory for all citizens, was issued in July;[232] the law on the removal of appellations and titles like *efendi* and pasha, and the abolition of all civilian grades, decorations and medals was passed in November. Towards the end of the year, women gained the right to vote and to be elected in parliamentary elections, which was celebrated in the public discourse as the last and most important breakthrough towards women's emancipation.[233] Another law, usually referred to as the Dress Law (*Kisve Kanunu*) in December prohibited the clergy from wearing their religious garments outside of service. The law included the people of all religions, including Jewish and Christian clergy.[234]

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[230] These reforms were publicly referred as "revolutions" at the time when they were put into practice (*Musiki İnkılâbı* and *Dil İnkılâbı*). In the 1930s, newspapers were full of articles reporting different developments regarding these revolutions. One important component of the music reform was the banning of the broadcasting of Turkish classical and folk music on radio stations from November 1934 to September 1936. See Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna*, Ankara: SBF Yayınları, 1980, p. 92. See also Orhan Tekelioğlu, "Modernizing Reforms and Turkish Music in the 1930s," *Turkish Studies* 2(1), 2001, pp. 93-108. For the language reform, see Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

[231] The law had an assimilative design, aiming at measures to impose Turkish language and culture on non-Turkish groups, particularly the Kurds. For more on the Settlement Law, see Erol Ülker, "Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey: The Settlement Law of 1934," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 7, 2008. See also Soner Çağaptay, "Kemalist Dönem'de Göç ve İskan Politikaları: Türk Kimliği Üzerine Bir Çalışma," *Toplum ve Bilim* 93, Summer 2002, pp. 218-241.

[232] For more on the Surname Law, see Meltem Türköz, "Surname Narratives and the State-Society Boundary: Memories of Turkey's Family Name Law of 1934," *Middle Eastern Studies* 43(6), 2007, pp. 893-908.

[233] Women had already gained the right to vote and to be elected in the local elections with the Municipal Law of 1930. Granting of women's political rights was mentioned in the RPP's 1931 program as one of the aims of the party. See Koçak, 1997. In the parliamentary elections of 1935, 18 women deputies were elected to the parliament.

[234] Although this law concerned only the attire of the religious personnel, it is important to note that the anti-veiling campaigns were not the only attempts at the regulation of clothing in the 1930s.

Writing in December 1934, right after the enactment of the Dress Law and at the heyday of the language and music reform, the American ambassador reported his observations of the societal reaction to this sequence of reforms in the following way: "society, meaning the totality of the Turkish population and the foreign element in the country as well, is more bewildered then ever by this latest addition to the astonishing succession of 'movements' put under way within the last few weeks."[235] The acceleration of the reforms in 1934 was also recognized at the local level. In one article published by an Adana newspaper, the author characterized the last months of 1934 as the fastest and most valuable days of the "big Turkish transformation."[236]

In short, the 1930s mark the Kemalist regime's consolidation as an authoritarian single-party regime. From the beginning of the decade onwards, the Turkish state extended its control over society and increased its interventions in the cultural and social life of its citizens in an unprecedented manner. A series of reforms were put into practice in many areas, from music to language, which aimed at a more determined break with the Ottoman past, and with all habits and norms coded as traditional, uncivilized, false or backward. This was a time when visual expressions of modernization, such as clothing, gained a particular significance reflecting "the progress" brought about by the Kemalist regime. As Bozdoğan puts, "what was unique to the Kemalist program in the 1930s was the inordinate time and energy invested in changing the forms of things and the official production, supervision, and dissemination of a distinctly republican *visual* culture of modernity."[237] Placed in this larger context, the anti-veiling campaigns thus can be seen as part of the attempts at cultural modernization in the 1930s, a project which gained one of its most symbolic manifestations in the discussions about women's modernization and emancipation.

[235] Correspondence from Robert P. Skinner to the Secretary of the State in Washington DC, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA) Record Group (hereafter RG) 84 Box. 350: 10/15/3 vol. 703, 5 December 1934.

[236] A. Remzi Yüreğir, "Hızlı Günler," *Yeni Adana*, 10 December 1934. He mentions the Surname Law, the removal of the traditional titles, women's gaining of the right to elect and to be elected, the Dress Law for the religious personnel, and the music revolution as the main components of this "fastest phase."

[237] Bozdoğan, 2001, p. 59. In her book, Bozdoğan provides a discussion on the importance of architecture in the 1930s as a visible expression of the Kemalist revolution.

Figure 3.1. A propaganda poster of the RPP in mid-1930s, showing the "revolution" brought about by the new regime in clothing and marriage.
Source: Lilo Linke, *Allah Dethroned: A Journey through Modern Turkey*, London: Constable & Co LTD, 1937.

II. Women's Modernization and Un/Veiling in the 1930s

On 14 June 1930, a French journalist's visit to Istanbul and his article discussing Turkish women's progress made the headline of the national newspaper *Cumhuriyet*.[238] Reprinting the photographs used by the journalist, photographs that show Turkish women in their old clothing, *Cumhuriyet* quoted what the article had to say about how Turkish women had become modern in a very short time after the establishment of the republic. The indications of this change was the total disappearance of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, except for some old ladies in the remote corners of Istanbul and Ankara, and the increased presence of women in the public sphere. The newspaper celebrated the observations of the French journalist that "the East was totally erased" in Turkey; Turkish women had been freed from the

[238] "Türk Kadını Hakkında Bir Makale," *Cumhuriyet*, 14 June 1930.

shackles of religion, and they were now living, dressing and marrying exactly like their sisters in the West.

It was quite common in the Turkish newspapers of the 1930s, national and provincial alike, to publish articles from Western newspapers praising the progress of Turkey.[239] Ideas of the European observers on Turkey, their approval and praise were the litmus test used to assess degree of modernization and the success of the republic. European dress codes and habits were a constant reference point. It was a matter of pride when an article published in a Dutch newspaper characterized the dress of the people of Ankara as "clean, orderly and European."[240] The way Westerners approached Turkish women's appearance was especially important. Since "no single item of clothing has had more influence on Western images of Middle Eastern women than the veil,"[241] its removal would be the most powerful symbol of social change, both for the Western observers and in the eyes of the Kemalists. In other words, changing Turkish women's images by emancipating them from the "chains" of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* and bringing them into the public sphere were the best ways of distancing the new republic from its Ottoman and Islamic past, and creating a sense of a break with and triumph over it.[242] Among the Turkish upper classes, "you look like a foreigner" was the biggest courtesy a woman could receive.[243]

Although these motivations were already guiding Kemalist policies and discourse on women in the 1920s, the stigmatization of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as uncivilized attire grew and more explicitly expressed in public in the 1930s. The propaganda posters of the RPP in the 1930s reflected this stigmatization through women's images; the contrast between the *peçe* and

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[239] For examples of such articles published in provincial newspapers, see "Türk Kadınının Vaziyeti," *Yeni Asır*, 30 July 1934; "Türk Mücizesi," *Hakkın Sesi*, 7 November 1935; "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Bayramı," *Kars*, 26 Novermber 1934.

[240] See "Bir Hollanda Gazetesinin Memleketimiz Hakkındaki İntibaaları," *Anadolu*, 6 September 1934

[241] Graham-Brown, 1988, p. 134. Çınar also indicates that one of the reasons why the female body, especially women's clothing and public visibility, became a significant means through which the state could display Turkey's new image as a secular nation-state was the European perceptions of the Ottomans, which were shaped by the Orientalist representations of veiled women hidden behind the harem. See Çınar, 2005, p. 60.

[242] Bozdoğan argues that there were two major symbols of the "shift" that the republic represented, the idealized modern Turkish woman (as opposed to the Ottoman harem) and Ankara as a modern capital (as opposed to the capital of the empire, Istanbul). In fact, as powerful visual expressions, modern architecture, modern city and modern woman were closely connected and often identified with one another in the public images and discourses throughout the 1930s. Bozdoğan, 2001, pp. 80-87.

[243] Taşçıoğlu, Ankara, 1958, p. 74.

the *çarşaf* on the one hand, symbolizing the old and backward, and their removal and adoption of modern clothes on the other, symbolizing the new and modern.[244] As Bozdoğan underlines,

> Among the most canonical photographs of the Kemalist *inkılap* [revolution] are those of unveiled women in educational and professional settings – as students, artists, lawyers, doctors, even aviators. There were also photographs of women in public spaces of parks, sports events, fairs, and national holidays. Images of modern women as inhabitants of modern spaces were preferred propaganda statements.[245]

In various mediums of popular culture - films, novels, advertisements, women's journals and lifestyle magazines - an ideal image of new Turkish woman in modern attire and outlook was promoted and the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was identified with incorporating modern norms into one's life, with being civilized and becoming part of the new Turkey as modern citizens.[246]

In addition to women's public visibility and participation in the professional life alongside men, certain idealized characteristics of Turkish women, such as beauty and good manners, were particularly celebrated as part of their roles as representatives of Turkey's modernization. One important occasion where such characteristics were promoted in the 1930s was the national beauty contests, the first of which was organized in 1929 by the newspaper *Cumhuriyet*. Having a beauty contest would be an indication that Turkey was as civilized as the other countries that were sending their beauty queens to international beauty competitions and that Turkish women were as beautiful and modern as their counterparts in the West.[247] These contests were

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[244] For an example of these posters, see Lilo Linke, *Allah Dethroned: A Journey through Modern Turkey*, London: Constable & Co LTD, 1937, p. 215. Bozdoğan refers to the propaganda magazine published by the Ministry of Interior for the foreign audience in the 1930s, *La Turque Kemaliste*, where such juxtapositions appear in many different images. Bozdoğan, 2001, p. 63.

[245] Ibid., p. 82.

[246] For a detailed discussion of one of the most popular magazines in the 1930s, *Yedigün*, which tried to facilitate the norms of modern life among its readers, see Camilla Trud Nereid, "Domesticating Modernity: The Turkish Magazine *Yedigün*, 1933-9," *Journal of Contemporary History* 47(3), 2012, pp. 48-504.

[247] A. Holly Shissler, "Beauty Is Nothing to be Ashamed of: Beauty Contests as Tools of Women's Liberation in Early Republican Turkey," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24(1), 2004, pp. 107-122. For an article by the editor of *Cumhuriyet*, Yunus

also an opportunity to stage the new image of Turkish, unveiled and dressed in modern clothing. In fact, many news reports and commentaries published about these contests, in and outside of Turkey, did not fail to make references to the removal of the veil. When she returned to Turkey from the international competition in Paris, the Turkish beauty queen of 1931, Naşide Saffet Hanım, said in an interview that the most frequent question she received was whether Turkish women were wearing the *peçe* or dressed like her. She had assured the international public that Turkey had now adopted European manners; the *peçe* had been removed.[248] When Miss Turkey, Keriman Halis Hanım, won the international contest and became Miss World in 1932, this was celebrated as a "national victory" and as the most effective propaganda campaign that Turkey could ever launch at the global level; the whole world had the chance to learn about the new Turkish woman and centuries of harem legends and images of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were finally erased.[249] However, beauty contests and such propaganda campaigns were concerned with sending the Turkish public a message as much as they were with conveying the right image in the West. As Shissler suggests, "Turkish beauty queens really did embody a social agenda just by existing."[250] One primary element of this agenda inside the country was to normalize women's new image; to defame the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as uncivilized attire responsible for Turkey's backwardness and to promote the adoption of modern clothing.

The emphasis on women's outward appearance in the 1930s was also related to women's increasing political mobilization. It is not be a coincidence that the importance of women's roles in social and political life was underlined in the party program issued at the general RPP congress in 1931.[251] With the decision to allow women's participation in the local elections in 1930, women's membership in the party began to be considered very critical by the regime leadership. As one party document indicates, initially, women's

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Nadi, along the same arguments, see Yunus Nadi, "1931 senesi Türk Güzeli," *Cumhuriyet*, 21 January 1931.

[248] "Türk Güzelinin Zaferi," *Cumhuriyet*, 8 April 1931. For articles that reprinted the celebrations of Turkish women's removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the context of the beauty contests in European newspapers, see "Dünya Güzeli ve İtalyan Gazeteleri," *Cumhuriyet*, 28 August 1932; "Türk Kadınının Zaferi," *Cumhuriyet*, 3 February 1933.

[249] See, for example, "Anlatalım!," *Cumhuriyet*, 14 February 1932. For Yunus Nadi's article drawing parallels between the victory of the Turkish national struggle against the Greeks on 30 August 1922, and Keriman Halis's election as Miss World see, "Büyük Zaferin Zaferleri Silsilesinden…," *Cumhuriyet*, 31 August 1932.

[250] Shissler, 2004, p. 120.

[251] Zihnioğlu, 2003, p. 221.

applications for membership to local party branches were subject to the approval of the party center. The process was simplified in 1930 and the approval of the local branches was seen enough for women's acceptance into the party.[252] It is crucial to emphasize, however, that the target of the party was those women who were not state officials, since officials were not allowed to be the members of the party according to the Law on State Officials (*Memurin Kanunu*).[253]

As much of the news and articles revealed in the provincial newspapers, however, despite these initial efforts, the level of women's participation in the party as well as in organizations like the People's Houses was still considered low. Women's acquisition of the right to participate in parliamentary elections in 1934, and the upcoming national elections in 1935 were particularly seen as appropriate occasions to reverse this situation. The party center kept sending directives to its local branches to increase women's membership in the party in this period; it was characterized as vital for the success of party activities to secure women's active participation.[254] These directives were also published in the provincial newspapers.[255] Some local branches of the RPP were trying to mobilize women for party membership by organizing meetings at which women could learn about the party principles and program. The RPP Administration in the province of Kars, for example, published in the provincial newspaper an announcement explaining that according to the party regulations, party members were not allowed to vote for non-member candidates; thus women had to be party members in order to be elected as second voters.[256] They organized a meeting specifically for women at the local party branch to explain the party program and to make it easier for women to join the party. In the announcement, the local party administration informed the women of the city that the first phase of the

[252] PMRA 490.01/1.4.10 and PMRA 490.01/1.4.20.

[253] Thus, those women who were state officials but applied to be members of the party were denied membership. But it was also mentioned that they were seen as "natural" members of the party anyway. See, Memur bayanların fırkaya kaydedilemeyeceği, PMRA 490.01/1.4.10, 2 September 1930.

[254] For example, see *Cumhuriyet Half Fırkası Genel Kâtipliğinin Fırka Teşkilâtına Umumî Tebligatından Halkevlerini ilgilendiren kısım, cilt 5, Temmuz 1934 den Birincikânun 1934 sonuna kadar*, Ankara: Ulus Matbabası, 1935, p. 55.

[255] See, for example, "Hanımlara bir Salık," *Antalya*, 13 December 1934; "Kadınların Saylavlığı, Fırka Genel Kâtibi Bay Recep Peker'in Tamimi," *Yeni Asır*, 14 December 1934; "C.H.F. ve Kadınlar," *Antalya*, 20 December 1934; "Kadınlar," *Yeni Adana*, 23 December 1934.

[256] "C.H.F. İdare Heyeti Reisliğinden," *Kars*, 17 December 1934. The announcement was published again, on the 20th of December.

general elections (to elect the second voters) was fast approaching and "it was in women's own interest" to participate in this party meeting. A similar meeting was organized in Izmir by women themselves; more women began to become members of the party and the People's House in order to show their gratitude for their newly acquired rights.[257] Women's compliance with these calls and applications for membership to the party in various cities were also frequently reported in the provincial newspapers, most probably in order to contribute to further political mobilization of women.[258] Some even claimed that the number of women becoming party members was about to exceed the number of male party members in certain cities.[259] Women's active involvement as delegates in the local party congresses and their election as members of the local administrative councils were also publicly celebrated in the newspapers.[260]

Women's membership in the party and other political institutions, and their political mobilization would almost automatically imply their removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*; stigmatized as backward, uncivilized and non-Turkish, these veils were the ideological opposites of all the norms that the Kemalist regime was trying to promote. However, despite all the propaganda and efforts to the contrary, the picture was quite different than it was depicted in the article of the French journalist that mentioned at the beginning of this section. The "East" was in fact not erased; the *peçe*, and particularly, the *çarşaf* were still pretty common in Turkey in the mid-1930s. Towards the end of 1934, Mahmut Yesari, a well-known novelist and playwright of the time, complained in his column in *Yedigün* that women were still veiled in some parts of Turkey.[261] That is why a second wave of anti-veiling campaigns would be organized, this time in a much more militant way compared to the campaigns of the 1920s.

[257] "İzmir kadınları üye yazılıyor," *Yeni Adana*, 12 December 1934; "İzmir kadınları fırkaya üye oluyorlar," *Halk*, 13 December 1934.
[258] See, for example, "Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkasının başardığı ve başaracağı işler…," *Yeni Adana*, 17 December 1934; "Fırkamız Bayanlarımız," *Antalya*, 3 January 1935; "Gümüşhanede kadınlar C.H.Fıkasına giriyorlar," *Kars*, 24 January 1935; "Giresunda fırkaya giren kadın üyeler," *Halk*, 21 January 1935.
[259] See, for example, "Gümüşhane bayanları istekle fırkaya yazılıyor," *Halk*, 21 January 1935; "Gümüşhanede Kadınlar," *Kars*, 24 January 1935.
[260] See, for example, "Halk Fırkasının ocak ve nahiye kongreleri bitti," *Yeni Adana*, 1 January 1935; "Samsun vilayet umumi meclisinde kadınlar da bulunacak," *Halk*, 21 January 1935.
[261] Nereid, 2012, p. 502.

Figure 3.2. Women in *peştamal* veil at a local market in Sivas in mid-1930s.
Source: Lilo Linke, *Allah Dethroned: A Journey through Modern Turkey*, London: Constable & Co LTD, 1937.

III. Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the 1930s

III. a. Timing

The main wave of the anti-veiling campaigns began in mid-1934 and reached its peak in 1935.[262] As mentioned above, there were a great many reforms in 1934, but it is hard to explain simply why the anti-veiling campaigns started in 1934. It seems that particularly significant in terms of the timing of the anti-veiling campaigns was women's acquisition of their political rights on 5 December 1934. Although there were anti-veiling campaigns before this date, they increased dramatically in number afterwards. Anti-veiling campaigns spread all over the country in 1935. They often came with references to the prior reforms that had been carried out to elevate women's social status, especially regarding acquisition of political rights.

[262] It should be mentioned, however, that *Cumhuriyet* reports the banning of the *çarşaf* in Safranbolu, then a district of the province of Zonguldak, as early as August 1933. See "Safranboluda çarşaf menedildi," *Cumhuriyet*, 21 August 1933. This is the only anti-veiling campaign I could locate that happened before the beginning of a sequence of anti-veiling campaigns that would begin in 1934. That is why I argue that the main wave begins in the year 1934, though it is possible that in a number of cities or towns, there were direct bans or campaigns issued before 1934. The first anti-veiling campaign we see in 1934 is the banning of the *çarşaf* in Giresun in April.

In Turkey, women's struggle to gain their full political rights had begun long before the 1930s. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the pioneering organization in this regard during the republican period was Turkish Women's Union, which was established in 1924 primarily to achieve this goal.[263] While the idea of granting women's political rights had surfaced several times in and outside of the parliament before 1930, particularly during the debates on the changes in the electoral law and in the constitution, women's struggle was able to gain its first concrete achievement with the acceptance of the new Municipal Law of 1930. With this law, women were granted the right to vote and to be elected in local elections. In 1934, with changes in the constitution, women finally gained the right to elect members and to be elected to the parliament. On the day the necessary changes were accepted in the parliament, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü delivered a speech in which he characterized this reform as one of the highest achievements of the Kemalist revolution; the Kemalist revolution would always be known as a revolution of women's liberation.[264] According to İnönü, Turkish women, who had acquired their social rights through the Civil Code of 1926, finally found the chance to complement them with political rights, which opened to them the door of public life. In other words, the idea was that the granting of these rights would increase women's participation not only in political life, but also in every sphere of public life, implying that women would join the work force and would appear in public in variety of roles in greater numbers. In fact, as mentioned above, following the law granting women political rights, there was a campaign to increase women's membership to the party. In addition to the party, there appeared also an increase in the organization of special women's sections in the local branches of many associations in the provinces, or in the establishment of new associations by women themselves.[265] The idea that this reform would bring women's greater participation in the public life was also promoted in the local newspapers.[266] In many provinces, women organized meetings to celebrate their new rights

[263] For a detailed discussion of Turkish women's gaining of their political rights, see Zihnioğlu, 2003.

[264] *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi*, term IV, 5th legislative year, vol. 25, meeting 12, 5 December 1934.

[265] For example, in Trabzon, leading women of the province had come together to establish a women's section in the Airplane Association. See, "Tayyare Cemiyeti Kadınlar Derneği," *Halk*, 10 December 1934. It seems that the newly established institutions were mainly called "social institutions" with philanthropic aims. See "Samsun kadınları sosyal bir kurum yaptılar," *Halk*, 21 January 1935.

[266] For example, see "Kadınlarda Saylav Seçilecekler," *Halk*, 6 December 1934.

and to send thank you messages to the president, to the prime minister, to the RPP and to the parliament.[267]

Women's right to elect and to be elected was seen as the final and most important step in the new regime's effort to modernize women. The lack of these rights in many European countries was a constant reference point in underlining the progressive character of this move for Turkish women. Many interpretations of this development, both at the national and local level, emphasized its (supposed/expected) effect of relegating Turkish women's backward image as "hiders behind the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*" to the pages of history. In other words, news and articles on women's gaining of their political rights usually referred to the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as well; there was a connection between the two in terms of the advancement of women's social status. In fact, Mustafa Kemal himself hinted at a connection between women's political rights and the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in his speech after the granting of these rights:

> This decision provides Turkish women with a place in social and political life that is above all nations. From now on, in order to see Turkish women in the *çarşaf*, under the *peçe* and behind the *kafes*, it would be necessary to look at history. Turkish women have gained their civilized place at home and have shown success in business life. Turkish women whose first experience with political life was at the local elections now gained their biggest right with the right to elect and to be elected [to the parliament]. This right, which is lacking in many civilized nations, is now at the hands of Turkish women and they will use it with confidence and merit.[268]

This connection between the modernization of women's clothing and their political rights was also constantly emphasized in the local newspapers. An article published in a Trabzon newspaper shows how this link was reinforced at the local level: "The news agency notes the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in Muğla. Does the women's right to elect and to be elected to the parliament … not mean the abolition of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* anyway?"[269] Another article in a Kars newspaper celebrated women's political rights as a sign of the universal character of the Turkish revolution; these

[267] See, for example, "Trabzon Kadınları Sevinçlerini Büyüklerimize Bildirdiler," *Halk*, 10 December 1934; "Türk Kadınlığının Unutmam'lığı," *Halk*, 10 December 1934; "Kadınların Bayramı," *Halk*, 10 December 1934; "Urla Kadınlarının Sevinci," *Halk*, 24 December 1934.
[268] "C.H.F. Grup Kararları," *Yeni Asır*, 6 December 1934. See also "Atatürk Ulusal Savaşında Kadından Saylav Yapacağını Söylemişti," *Yeni Asır*, 16 December 1934.
[269] Cevat Alap, "Ayinesi iştir kişinin Lafa bakılmaz," *İkbal*, 13 December 1934.

rights would rescue Turkish women from their ages of imprisonment symbolized by the *peçe*, the *çarşaf* and the *kafes* [lattice].[270] Likewise, in his report on the yearly performance of the local party administration of Antalya, which was read at the local party congress, the head of the Antalya party branch pointed to the particular significance of the upcoming national elections because of women's participation and their liberation from centuries-old segregation symbolized by the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*:

> The Turkish revolution had found the Turkish woman behind the *kafes* at home, in the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the street and in a servile situation in the family. But now, the Turkish woman is among us, equipped with rights that her sisters lack in the most civilized countries.[271]

Evidently, there was a widespread assumption on the part of the Kemalist elite, at the center and in the periphery, that women's acquisition of political rights meant their increasing participation in public life and, therefore, modernization of their dress. In other words, they assumed a direct link between women's visibility and the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, since they were the ultimate symbols of women's seclusion, the very obstacle to their visibility. Women's participation in the public sphere wearing *peçe*s and *çarşaf*s was a contradiction; having gained all their rights, modern Turkish women had to be modern in dress as well.

A contemporary observer also hinted at a link between the granting of women's political rights and the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. In fact, while reporting about the change in the election law to include women's suffrage, the American ambassador argued that this change also included an article aiming at the elimination of the veil. Skinner mentioned in his correspondence that he had enquired into the matter at the *Vilayet* (the governor's office), and learned that the article added to the election law about the recognition of the identity of the voter was concerned with women's

[270] "Kadınlarımızın saylav seçimi," *Kars*, 24 December 1934. *Kafes* is a lattice or a window grill, used to enclose windows for privacy. For another example from an Adana newspaper mentioning this connection, see "Türklerde dün ve bugün kadının değeri," *Ak Günler*, 5 January 1935.

[271] Report of the administrative board presented at the RPP 1934 Congress of the Province of Antalya, PMRA 490.1/618.28.1, 11 December 1934. The provincial chairman of the party also indicated that during the year 1934 the efforts of the party administration in Antalya to increase the number of party members in the city were particularly focused on gaining women as members.

wearing of the face veil. The ambassador interprets this as issuing a legal regulation concerning the use of the *peçe*:

> I now have the honor to enclose herewith translations of the laws in this regard, as published in the Official Gazette. Article 3 of Law No. 2598 states: "The ballot of those voters whose person and identity is not discernible at the moment of the casting of the vote shall not be accepted." Inquiry by the Embassy at the Vilayet indicates that this provision aims at the discouraging of the wearing of the veil by women in general and during the elections in particular. Thus, the granting of votes to women is used as another weapon towards the Government's objective of abolishing the veil and the other relics of the Ottoman tradition. Previously the Republican régime has discouraged the use of the veil, but this is the first time that a positive legal measure in this regard has been taken.[272]

The wording of the article, as it was correctly translated by the ambassador, did not include any direct reference to the face veil or elimination of the face veil.[273] However, Skinner could be right to suspect that adding of this new article to the election law, while granting women the right to elect, could hardly be a coincidence. In other words, the spirit of the law might have entailed a concern about the veil, even if its wording did not. Ever since the era of Abdülhamid II, there had been an apprehension that the veil could be used to conceal one's identity; so it is likely that this article was shaped by the fear that the veil would be used for a similar purpose during elections. It is debatable, however, whether this can be read as issuing a legal measure against the veil in the way that the American ambassador claims.

Women themselves also drew a similar association between the gaining of political rights and unveiling. As it will be discussed in Chapter 5 in more detail, in celebrations and gatherings women organize in various cities to celebrate their political rights, the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was mentioned as part of women's efforts to be worthy of this reform.[274] The petition of *Trabzon İdman Yurdu*, a local youth and sports club in Trabzon, to

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[272] From Robert P. Skinner to the Secretary of the State in Washington DC, NARA RG 84. Box. 350: 10/15/3 vol. 702, 20 December 1934.

[273] For the full text of the law in Turkish, see *İntihabı Mebusan Kanununun Bazı Maddelerinin Değiştirilmesine ve Kanuna bir Madde İlâvesine Dair Kanun*, Law no. 2598, 11 December 1934.

[274] See, for example, "Türk Kadınlığının Kıvancı," *Yeni Asır*, 9 December 1934; "Atatürk Kadınlarımıza Değerli Işler Dileyor, Her Tarafta Kadınlar Kıvanç Içinde,"*Yeni Asır*, 11 December 1934.

the city council requesting a ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* also justified this request by referring to women's new rights. Reporting from Trabzon, the local newspaper stated that at the meeting of the club, "it was decided that it is not right for Turkish women to continue wearing the *çarşaf* and the *peçe* at a time when they vote and are elected as deputies and as members of the municipal and provincial councils."[275]

While trying to understand the timing of the anti-veiling campaigns, another possible connection can be made with Turkey's hosting of the 12th Congress of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship (IAW) in Istanbul in April 1935. This was an important opportunity for the Kemalist regime to display the progress it had achieved in the modernization of Turkish women. As Libal suggests, the congress may have created an additional impetus for women's suffrage, since "having women in parliament when the IAW Congress convened in Istanbul a few months later would contribute to Turkey's image as a 'progressive' and 'modern' country."[276] In fact, the American ambassador also drew the connection between the granting of suffrage to women and the holding of the IAW Congress:

> It is not at all improbable that impetus was given to these concessions by the fact that on April 18th, next, the Twelfth Congress of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship will meet at Istanbul. Turkey is fond of modernization and of making good show, and women suffrage and eligibility to the Assembly is in step with occidental ideas and should make a favorable impression on the proposed International Congress of Women in Istanbul. Color is lent to these conjectures by the speech of the Prime Minister in which he said that the ballot and eligibility to the chamber were not given to women as favors but as just rights.[277]

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[275] "Trabzon Kadınları da Çarşafları Atıyorlar," *Yeni Asır*, 16 February 1935. Some local newspapers of Trabzon reported that the petition was given by Trabzon Home for Adolescents (*Trabzon Erginler Yurdu*). See "Kadın Peçe ve Çarşaflarının kaldırılması hakkında erginler yurdu belediye meclisine muracaat ediyor," *Halk*, 11 February 1935. See also "Trabzon Gençliği," *İkbal*, 13 February 1935.

[276] Kathryn Libal, "Staging Turkish Women's Emancipation: Istanbul, 1935," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4(1), Winter 2008, pp. 31-52. Libal indicates that an official IAW account claims that the president of the IAW met the mayor of Istanbul before the congress, mentioned about women's suffrage in Turkey and then this conversation was passed on to Mustafa Kemal.

[277] Correspondence from Robert P. Skinner to the Secretary of the State in Washington DC, NARA RG. 84 Box. 350: 10/15/3 vol. 702, 11 December 1934.

Likewise, the congress may have also strengthened the aim of removing the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, or at least decreasing their use as much as possible, given that unveiling, too, was an equally strong symbol of women's emancipation to be displayed to the delegates coming from all around the world. In fact, references to Turkish women's "liberation" from the veil could be seen in photos, publications and news about the congress and in the reports and press releases of the IAW.[278] In her speech at the congress, the head of the Turkish Women's Union, Latife Bekir Hanım, would thank Mustafa Kemal for "rescuing" women and for giving them their political rights by referring to unveiling: "in Turkey, women were called by Atatürk to remove the *çarşaf* and to take their place next to men."[279] There was no such public call by Atatürk; but there were anti-veiling campaigns initiated in different cities throughout the year before, as well as, after the congress.[280]

III. b. Scope, Content and Discourse

It is difficult to determine in exactly how many cities and towns anti-veiling campaigns were initiated.[281] However, it can safely be argued that anti-veiling campaigns were very widespread in Turkey in the second half of the 1930s. For example, there were also some local attempts to eliminate certain men's clothes, such as baggy trousers, and these were also initiated in the mid-1930s. However, they remained quite few in number and involved only a limited number of provinces.[282] The anti-veiling campaigns, on the other hand, were

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[278] Libal, 2014. Libal mentions that numerous photos were showing Turkish delegates in fashionable Western attire. One of the U.S. delegates, Josephine Schain, argued on a radio program after her return from Turkey that she had seen only two veiled women during her entire trip in the country, which included not only Istanbul but also Ankara and a trip to some Turkish villages near Bursa. See ibid.

[279] Caporal, 1982, p. 695.

[280] It is interesting that Latife Bekir Hanım would refer to a call by Atatürk and thus reinforce a common idea that he called upon women to remove their *peçe* and *çarşaf*. Such statements were in fact contributing to the effectiveness of the campaigns in the 1930s.

[281] For the list of the cities where there was an outright ban, see Appendix.

[282] There was a campaign and a municipal ban against men's traditional baggy trousers, the *şalvar*, in Adana, for example. See "Caket pantalon," *Akşam*, 10 November 1934; "Adanada yasak edilen kıyafetler," *Cumhuriyet*, 13 December 1934; "Ulusumuza yakışan kılık," *Ak Günler*, 5 Ocak 1935; "Giyim kuşam işleri yabana atılamaz," *Ak Günler*, 5 Ocak 1935. It is important to note that the ban on men's *şalvar* was initiated earlier than the ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in Adana. See "Adana Belediyesi peçe çarşafı kaldırıyor," *Halk*, 18 February 1935. Likewise, in Maraş, the baggy trousers of men, known as the *karadon* in the region, was banned by the municipal council. The decision was taken simultaneously with the ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. See the letter from the RPP Maraş Administration to RPP Secretariat General, PMRA 490.01/17.88.1, 5 November 1935.

countrywide phenomena; they were not geographically specific. Moreover, the existence of an anti-veiling campaign did not seem to be related to ethnic, religious or any other characteristic of the social composition of the city in which it was initiated.[283] To the extent that can be followed from the local newspapers and archival documents, a large number of anti-veiling campaigns resulted in the declaration of outright bans. Although a few of these bans were issued by the provincial councils led by governors, the great majority of them were achieved through city councils, as part of the legal capacity of municipalities.[284] In either case, implementation of the bans was mainly in hands of the municipal police (*zabıta*), and as it will be discussed in the next chapters in more detail, women who continued to wear the prohibited veils had to pay fines in some instances.

The content of the bans and actors involved varied in different cities. Some cities only banned the *çarşaf*; others, both the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*; while in yet others, the ban also included the *peştamal* or other local varieties of veil. In Antalya and Erzincan, for example, the ban also included the *kafes*, in addition to the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. The campaigns that included the removal of the *kafes* indicate that the eradication of gender segregation and the elimination of all barriers to women's visibility were among the significant motivations behind the anti-veiling campaigns. In Rize, the city council even asked women to remove their umbrellas, which they were using to conceal themselves.[285] In most of the decisions declared, women were given a certain period to adapt to the new norms and advised to replace their *çarşaf* with an overcoat. This period was different in every city, but the general tendency was to grant a shorter time, like a couple of weeks, for the removal of the *peçe*, and a longer one, three to six months, for the *çarşaf*.[286] This was probably because the *peçe* was considered easier to remove, since women did not need to replace it with other clothing, unlike the *çarşaf*. It was perhaps also related to the fact that uncovering women's faces was considered to be a more urgent task.

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[283] Thus it was possible to see an anti-veiling campaign in any city, from important province capitals to the smallest district capitals. As it will be discussed in the next chapter, such characteristics could affect the shape and end results of the campaign, however.

[284] In Erzincan, for example, the ban was issued by a decree of the provincial council.

[285] See "Rizede Peçeler ve Çarşaflar Kalkıyor," *Yeni Asır*, 1 March 1935.

[286] For example, in Fethiye, a district of the province of Muğla, the city council had provided women with 15 days to remove their *peçe*, while they were given a six months' time for the replacement of their *çarşaf*. See, "Bodrum kent kurultayı Çarşaf ve peçe giyilmesini yasak etti," *Halk*, 13 December 1934.

The process leading to a decision to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* most often began as an initiative of a group of local elites in a certain local institution, supported by a propaganda campaign in the local newspapers, and in most cases, eventually followed with an outright ban. In Aydın, for example, the People's House members began discussing the removal of the *peştamal* veil in early 1934, while the actual ban came a year later.[287] Not only in Aydın but in many cities, especially People's Houses and their members played a significant role in the organization of the campaigns. In Siirt, in March 1935, it was at a meeting of the People's House that the decision to remove the *peçe* was first declared.[288] In the case of Diyarbakır, for which we lack information whether or not an outright ban on the *peçe* or the *çarşaf* was issued, the anti-veiling campaign also began through the efforts of the members of the People's House, who were all men, as understood from the news. They organized a meeting where they decided to be the first to remove their family members' *peçe* and *çarşaf* so as to be the vanguards of the struggle.[289] In some cities, People's House was the center of the meetings held together with other local institutions in order to discuss the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*. In Çankırı, for example, "all institutions," including the local party branch, had organized a joint meeting at the People's House and decided to remove the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the city.[290]

It should be emphasized that in Istanbul and Ankara, the two major cities or the "center" of the county, there was no anti-veiling campaign, at least not a publicly declared one, by either the city council or the initiative of any local institution.[291] Ankara, the capital of the new republic, was a stage upon which to display the modern face of the Turkish society. Thus, the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was perhaps considered as a given. Similarly, in Istanbul, issuing a ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* would have undermined the image of the city as the most cosmopolitan and developed city of the country. In fact, there are indications that propaganda was considered sufficient to initiate a change in women's dress in these cities. At least, this was what was declared by the authorities publicly. The lack of any decision in Istanbul, for instance, became an issue in some newspapers. Rumors emerged that the *peçe*

[287] "Aydında peştemalı kaldırmağa çalışıyorlar," *Cumhuriyet*, 14 April 1934.
[288] "Siirtte peçelerin kaldırılmasına karar verildi," *Halk*, 25 March 1935.
[289] "D. Bekir Halkevi üyeleri kendi ailelelerinin çarşaf ve peçelerini kaldırdılar," *Halk*, 24 December 1934; "Diyarbekir kadınları da çarşafı atıyorlar," *Cumhuriyet*, 29 December 1934.
[290] "Çankırı'da Peçe Çarşafların Atılması Kararlaştırıldı," *Yeni Asır*, 1 January 1935; "Memleketin her tarafında Çarşaf ve Peçeler kaldırılıyor," *Halk*, 3 January 1935.
[291] As it will be discussed in the next chapter, the case of Izmir was more complicated.

and the *çarşaf* would also be banned in Istanbul, like in many Anatolian cities, but the governor of the city declared that there was no need for any decision or ban for the enlightened and progressive people of Istanbul; it was expected that women of this advanced city would remove their *peçe* and *çarşaf* by themselves.[292] The case of Izmir, on the other hand, was more complicated. Together with Istanbul and Ankara, it can be considered as part of the "center" in terms of its socio-economic composition and relatively more cosmopolitan population. In fact, since there was no visible anti-veiling campaign in the city, it must have been seen as such by its local administrators as well as by the regime as well. However, one letter by the governor of Izmir, Fazlı Güleç, to the Ministry of Interior in 1937 indicates that there was a propaganda campaign behind the scenes to "convince" those women who were wearing the *çarşaf* in the city. In other words, without harming the image of Izmir as a "modern" city by openly organizing an anti-veiling campaign (and thus admitting that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were an issue), the governor had preferred to solve the "problem" ensuring that no report would appear about it in the newspapers.[293]

Although local decisions to ban the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* may vary in terms of scope and mechanisms used, one can talk about overarching elements or reference points that were generally used in the propaganda discourse of almost all local campaigns against these veils. One of these references was the removal of any sign of the "old regime." In many of the decisions banning the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, and also in the commentaries and news reports about the anti-veiling campaigns, these forms of clothing were stigmatized as the remnants of the old regime, the old mentality, and the Ottoman past. In fact, this was a manifestation of a more general strategy of the new regime to rely

[292] "İstanbulda da çarşaf çıkarılacak," *Cumhuriyet*, 4 September 1935. A news report published in a Trabzon newspaper mentioned that there were police centers in some neighborhoods of Istanbul which warned (*tenkid*) women who were living in their area of control against going out with the *çarşaf*. I could not see another source mentioning such a practice, however. See "İstanbul münevver kadınları bu garip örtüyü kendiliğinden atacakdır," *Halk*, 16 September 1935. Another news report published in an Izmir newspaper indicated the total removal of the *kafes* in Istanbul. No ban or decision by the municipality was mentioned. See "Kafesler Kaldırılıyor..," *Anadolu*, 21 September 1934.

[293] See the letter from the Governor of İzmir, Fazlı Güleç, to the Minister of Interior, Şükrü Kaya, Turkish National Police Archives (hereafter TNPA) 13216-7/1, 24 November 1937. For more on the case of İzmir, and particularly, on the guidance of the Minister of Interior to the governor, see the following chapter. Given that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* also existed in Istanbul (and even in Ankara), it is possible that although there were no public anti-veiling campaigns in these cities, the local authorities might have engaged in similar activities to prevent, or at least to limit, the use of these veils.

on binary oppositions and comparisons with the Ottoman past. As Libal puts, "the early republican regime relied upon discursive constructions of Ottoman backwardness to legitimize the new national leadership and construct a new Turkish citizen subject," and this could be widely seen in the discussions on women's clothing as well.[294] In one of the articles published in Trabzon newspaper *Halk* calling upon women to remove their *peçe* and *çarşaf*, the author characterized the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* as the only remaining elements that continued to humiliate the Turkish nation; they were the "black stamp of the palace and the sultanate" on the blameless and clean forehead of a generation that was capable of proving its capacity to reach the highest point in the civilized social life.[295] In another article, the same author equated women's use of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* with men's use of the *fes*; like the *fes*, the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were also Ottoman vestiges, and therefore, it was absurd to insist on wearing this kind of clothing in contemporary civilized times.[296]

Another frequent motive mentioned in the anti-veiling campaigns was the cleansing of the public sphere of anything that was coded as a sign of backwardness, and derived from "uncivilized" modes and behavior. The *peçe* and the *çarşaf* had been seen as signs of backwardness ever since they became an issue of debate, but this discourse reached an unprecedented level during the anti-veiling campaigns of the mid-1930s. In other words, equating the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* with backwardness, and therefore, with being uncivilized, was perhaps the most frequent reference point in the anti-veiling campaigns. At the meeting of a group of women in the province of Muğla in December 1934, for example, the women decided to remove their *çarşaf* by declaring that it was "the sign of backwardness" (*gerilik alameti*).[297] In their petition to the city council to issue a ban on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, members of the youth and sports clubs in Trabzon, led by the Trabzon Home for Adolescents (*Erginler Yurdu*), argued that these old types of clothing were not compatible with the new advanced lifestyle of the Turkish nation, and contrary to the progressive move Turkish women had just started to make.[298] In another newspaper in

[294] Libal, 2014. Libal presents a detailed discussion on the juxtaposition of old and new especially in popular culture and how it played a role in promoting unveiling.
[295] Cemal Rıza, "Peçe ve Çarşaf," *Halk*, 31 October 1935. See also Cemal Rıza, "Çarşaf," *Halk*, 12 November 1935.
[296] "Peçe ve Çarşaf, Şehrimizin sayın Bayanlarına," *Halk*, 19 December 1935.
[297] "Muğla Kadınları Çarşafları Kaldırıyor," *Halk*, 31 December 1934.
[298] "Kadın Peçe Çarşaflarının kaldırılması hakkında erginler yurdu belediye meclisine muracaat ediyor," *Halk*, 11 February 1935. See also, "Belediye meclisi genclerin tekliflerini kabul etti. Bugün meclisde kat'i karar verilecek," *Halk*, 14 February, 1935.

Trabzon, the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were characterized as the dress of those people who believe in fairies, ghosts and fortune telling, and therefore, incompatible with the revolution, the republic Atatürk had entrusted to the Turkish youth.[299]

Kadın Umacı Değildir

Çarşaf yasağı da başladı

Peçeleri seve seve atan kadınlarımız bugünden itibaren çarşafı da fırlatarak medenî kılığa büründüler. Hürriyetlerine kavuştular

10 Haziran ve 1 Temmuz günleri Mersin kadınlığı için hürriyet bayramı sayılabilir

Mersin Belediye meclisinin verdiği kararla çarşaf ve peçede belediye yasakları arasına alınmış ve on haziranda peçelerin bir temmuzda da çarşafların temamen kaldırılacağı ve giyenlerin cezaya çarpılacağı ilân edilmişti.

Bu mevzu üzerinde tevali eden birçok yazılarımızda dediğimiz gibi yasak konulurken

Figure 3.3. A clip from a local newspaper, *Yeni Mersin*, announcing the beginning of the ban on the *çarşaf* in Mersin. The caption reads "Woman is not an ogre. The ban on the çarşaf has also begun." *Yeni Mersin*, 1 July 1934.

The discourse on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was not solely concerned with their symbolic considerations, however. There were also some practical reasons and health concerns, it was underlined, that would make the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* beneficial for women. It would be easier for women

[299] "Trabzon Kadınları ve Çarşaf," *İkbal*, 29 October 1934.

to walk and to move around in the city, for example.[300] Women who removed these veils would also see sunlight, and thus they could get the necessary amount of vitamin D. Such health concerns were in fact used as the primary reasons for unveiling in some cities. In Sungurlu, for example, a district of the province of Çorum, the District Health Council (*Sağlık Kurulu*) was directly involved in the decision-making process at the municipality during the anti-veiling campaign.[301] The anti-veiling campaigns which included the banning of the lattice windows also did so out of deliberate concern for health.[302]

As much as it was identified with being new, modern, civilized and healthy, the removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* was also seen as a sign of a return to the national. In other words, there was also a deliberate effort in the discourse used during the anti-veiling campaigns to promote the idea that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were alien to the essence of Turkish culture. Thus the modern was always reconciled with the national; the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were not *millî* (national), while the modern clothing that was supposed to replace them perfectly was. Moreover, it was also quite frequently emphasized in the press that these veils were not Islamic either. This point was important not only to challenge resistance to the anti-veiling campaigns based on religious reasons but also to respond to a more general and perhaps stronger perception that linked the practice of veiling with morality. In fact, a counter discourse was utilized to break this link: the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in fact highlighted women's sexuality by covering their face and body. Thus they could not be seen as means to protect women's chastity; their use had never helped to eliminate such social ills as adultery, prostitution or sexual harassment. Some even argued that the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were contrary to "national morality" and in fact enabled these ills to survive. [303] Those who sought morality and chastity in the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* had to see the immoral acts that were in fact being concealed by these veils.[304] The "true" moral order would be established once these veils were removed; the anti-veiling campaigns were thus no offense to the male-dominated social structure.

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[300] Anecdotes were published in the press, for example, depicting the barriers the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* created to women's mobility. For the story of a woman who would fall into the sea while leaving the boat because she was unable to see properly because of the *peçe*, see "Çarşaf ve Peçe Yasak Olacak mı?," *Köroğlu*, 11 April 1934.

[301] "Sungurluda peçe ve çarşaflar kalktı," *Cumhuriyet*, 10 July 1935.

[302] See, for example, the anti-veiling campaign in Bursa. "Çarşaf ve peçeden sonra kafes!," *Hakkın Sesi*, 28 January 1935.

[303] For example, see Yusuf Ziya, "Çarşaf," *Cumhuriyet*, 28 June 1932; "Kafesler Kalkacak," *Hakkın Sesi*, 11 Fenruary 1935.

[304] See "Çarşaf," *Hakkın Sesi*, 30 July 1934.

III. c. The Legal Framework

As shown in the preceding section, in most of the anti-veiling campaigns in the 1930s, the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were issued by municipalities, more particularly, by a decision of the city councils. This was one important difference between them and the anti-veiling campaigns of the 1920s, which were predominantly organized by the provincial councils led by governors. As seen in the previous chapter, the provincial council of Eskişehir, for example, banned the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* by referring to the Law on the General Administration of Provinces (*İdare-i Umumiye-i Vilâyat Kanunu*). Enacted in 1913 as the Temporal Law on the General Administration of Provinces (*İdare-i Umumiye-i Vilâyat Kanunu Muvakkati*) and continued to be in force after the establishment of the republic, this law had increased the power of the provincial administrations.[305] The principle of decentralization and the separation of functions in provincial administration were in fact confirmed by the Ottoman Constitution of 1876. However, there was also a growing tendency on the part of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) towards a more centralized system. The law in 1913 had brought a two-fold system of provincial administration: "one general, as components of the national apparatus of government, the other special or local, as decentralized administrative entities, with a recognized legal personality."[306] While trying to maintain central authority's control, it allowed greater space on certain matters to the local administrators. Thus, the law has been interpreted in the literature as a decentralizing move.[307] Although governors continued to be the most significant local actors in the republican era, municipalities begun to play a more active role, especially in the 1930s.[308] The increase in the role the municipalities played in the anti-veiling campaigns should be analyzed as part

[305] For more on this law and the process leading towards its enactment, see Önen and Reyhan, 2011, pp. 311-344.
[306] Lewis, 1961, p. 391.
[307] Zürcher argues that decentralization policies of CUP in 1913-14 were primarily aimed at winning over the Arabs, but they remained only partly successful and could not prevent separatist Arab groups. See Zürcher, 2004, p. 121. Önen and Reyhan also suggest that this law cannot be seen as a retreat from the centralist tendencies of the CUP. It reflects the strategic policy of the Unionists to empower local administrations to a degree that would not harm political centralization. See Önen and Reyhan, 2011, p. 342.
[308] For example, some quite excessive governmental decisions can be seen in the 1930s. In Adana, the governor banned wondering around the government building and sitting in front of the stairs for those who did not have anything to do in the office. See "Valimizin yerinde bir yasağı," *Yeni Adana*, 7 November 1934.

of this general trend and the strengthened position of the municipalities as instruments of modernization.

Until 1930, municipal administration in the new republic was mainly based on the Ottoman municipal laws and regulations, which did not constitute an effective institutional tradition. Municipalities in the Ottoman Empire were weak in terms of both financial capacity and their position vis-à-vis other administrative structures, such as the governors or the *vakıf* system (charitable foundations).[309] Perhaps the case of Istanbul was a little different, since the municipal organization, known as the *Şehremaneti* (*Préfecture*) was subject to different legislation, and therefore relatively more effective compared to others. This legal structure changed over time, with major transformations occurring during the Second Constitutional Period. Equally important were the changes in practice, namely, in the actual workings of the municipalities despite the fact that the legal framework remained intact. As Serçe emphasized, based on the case of the Izmir Municipality between 1908 and 1913, practices that were in fact against or outside the scope of the law could become the norm, which had made the legacy of the Ottoman municipal administration more complicated than the legal regulations revealed on paper.[310]

The importance attributed to the municipalities by the new Kemalist regime revealed itself initially in a couple of legal regulations enacted in the first years of the republic. Tekeli characterizes this period (1923-1930) as a preparation period for the restructuring of the municipal administration in the 1930s, despite the fact that these early attempts remained loose and superficial.[311] The first regulation, in February 1924, concerned municipal taxes, reflecting the aim to make municipalities more active by increasing their financial capacities.[312] Also in February 1924, the Ankara *Şehremaneti* (*Préfecture*) was established; it was modeled on the Istanbul *Şehremaneti* to foster the urban development of the new capital. In March 1924, the Village Law (*Köy Kanunu*) was issued; this law was also concerned with reorganizing

[309] For more on municipal administration in the Ottoman Empire, see İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Yerel Yönetim Geleneği*, İstanbul: Hil Yayın, 1985.
[310] Erkan Serçe, *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e İzmir'de Belediye (1868-1945)*, Izmir: Dokuz Eylül Yayınları, 1998, p. 15.
[311] İlhan Tekeli, *Cumhuriyetin Belediyecilik Öyküsü (1923-1990)*, Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2009, pp. 32-42.
[312] For the full text of the law, see "Belediye Vergi ve Resimleri Kanunu," Law no. 423, 26 February 1924. However, shortly later, some of these financial sources allocated to municipal administrations were again transferred to the central authority. Tekeli, 2009, p. 38.

the municipal administration by clarifying the administrative divisions.[313] A few other legal regulations in the 1920s increased the capacity of the municipalities vis-à-vis other institutions, such as the *vakıf* administration. Introduction of the Civil Code in 1926 was one of these regulations, which crystallized the ideal of "modern life" and thus had an important impact on the decisions and workings of the municipalities.[314]

Perhaps the most crucial change in this period was the law regarding the punitive power of the municipalities, *Umur-u Belediyeye Müteallik Ahkam-ı Cezaiye Kanunu*,[315] which was issued in April 1924 and supported later by the articles regarding the municipal sanctions in the new Criminal Law in 1926.[316] The law was suggested to the parliament as an urgent need, since the decisions of the municipalities were considered ineffective because they were unable to issue any sanctions.[317] As Tekeli points out, empowering the municipalities with the right to impose penal sanctions was one major way in which the republican approach to municipal administration was different, since the lack of such a capacity was one of the main reasons for the weakness of municipalities in the Ottoman Empire.[318] The law entitled the municipalities to impose fines in cases of non-compliance with the municipal decisions and instructions, and to prohibit artisans and merchants from engaging in crafts and trade for up to fifteen days. The sanctions of the municipalities were final,

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313 Önen and Reyhan, 2011, p. 461.

314 Tekeli, 2009, p. 41.

315 For the full text of the law, see "Umur-u Belediyeye Müteallik Ahkam-ı Cezaiye Hakkında Kanun," Law no. 486, 16 April 1924.

316 Tekeli, 2009, p. 39; M. Ali Gökaçtı, *Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Belediyecilik*, Istanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık, 1996, p. 122.

317 For such arguments, see the parliamentary debate on the bill, *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi*, term II, 2nd legislative year, vol. 8/1, meeting no. 38, 15 April 1924 and meeting no 39, 16 April 1924.

318 Tekeli claims that this significantly increased the power of the municipalities on *esnaf* organizations (guilds), which were the center of Unionist opposition to the Kemalist regime in the early years of the republic. In fact, he argues that diminishing the influence of these highly politicized *esnaf* organizations, which were dominated by Unionist groups, was one of the main concerns of the new regime while trying to reform the municipal administration. These Unionist groups had been organized around the municipalities since the Ottoman period and secured their power during the national struggle in this way. However, he does not provide concrete examples that would reveal in more detail the Unionist opposition organized in the municipalities and the guilds. See Tekeli, 2009, p. 36-39. The US consul of the time in Ankara, Maynard B. Barnes, also claimed in one of his reports in 1923 that there was a strong Unionist presence within the RPP as well. For a discussion on this report, see Hakan Özoğlu, *From Caliphate to Secular State: Power Struggle in the Early Turkish Republic*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011, pp. 155-160.

and they were also entitled to imprison those who did not pay the fines.[319] In 1927, with an amendment in the law, persons fined by the municipalities were given the right of appeal.[320] Empowerment of the municipalities with punitive power contributed to their role in the anti-veiling campaigns only in the 1930s, however, since it was only after the strengthening of the municipal administration with a new legal framework in 1930 that municipalities could become more active actors at the local level.

The new Municipal Law was introduced in April 1930.[321] The law was modeled on the French and German municipal laws[322], and aimed at the reorganization of the local administrations in line with the aims of the new regime regarding social modernization and economic development. As Tekeli puts, the Municipal Law of 1930 marked a turning point in terms of the approach of the new regime to municipal administration. This understanding was particularly shaped by the principle of populism (*halkçılık*), which entailed acting "for the people despite the people" (*halka rağmen, halk için*); municipalities would become the agents that would create a civilized life in modern cities, even if this necessitated acting against the will of the people.[323] In other words, for the leaders of the republic, municipalities were not only concerned with building infrastructure for urban development; they were also promoters and implementers of modern visions of security, order, cleaning, culture and identity. This understanding had found its expression in the inauguration speech of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk for the legislative year in November 1935:

> It is one of our primary aims that within the Turkish land, all our cities, reaching far to the villages, would become a landscape of prosperity and development (*bayındırlık*). Any place that is home for a Turk will be an exemplary place for health, cleanness, beauty and modern culture.

[319] The fines were ranging from a hundred *kuruş* to twenty liras and would be issued by the city councils based on the records provided by the municipal police (*zabıta*). Municipalities were entitled to issue a day of imprisonment for every one lira.
[320] See "Umuru belediyeye aid ahkâmı cezaiye hakkındaki 16 nisan 1340 tarih ve 486 numaralı kanunun altıncı ve yedince maddelerini muaddil kanun," Law no. 959, 17 January 1927.
[321] For the full text of the law, see "Belediye Kanunu," Law no. 1580, 10 April 1930.
[322] Gökaçtı, 1996, p. 127.
[323] Tekeli, 2009, p. 51. Tekeli also mentions the Law on the Protection of Public Health (*Umumi Hıfzıssıhha Kanunu*) as a complementary law to the Municipal Law of 1930. Tekeli, 2009, p. 7.

> In addition to the state institutions, I want the municipalities, which are directly in charge of these tasks, work with this view and thinking.[324]

It should be mentioned that although the Municipal Law of 1930 aimed at strengthening the municipalities, it also was a sign of the increasingly authoritarian tendencies of the Kemalist regime, determined to centralize the bureaucratic apparatus and enhance the control of the central authority. In other words, the new law was not designed to expand the autonomy of the local administrations with the aim of sharing the political power. Accordingly, municipal administration was an extension of the central administration, and as such, municipalities would work under the coordination and control of Ankara. Because of these characteristics, Gökaçtı, for example, characterizes the Municipal Law of 1930 as a reflection of the single-party regime's turn towards statism, and argues that municipalities were seen only as useful instruments in the areas of urban development and progress.[325] Thus the law aimed at both increasing the control and regulative power of the central authority over the municipal bodies, and widening the scope of activity and financial capacities of these bodies to penetrate and regulate the daily life in the cities.

In addition, standardizing municipal administration all over the country was also a concern for the Kemalist regime. As Gökaçtı underscores, this standardization was not only secured by the new law, but also by the increased control of the central authority over municipalities, which found its manifestation in the circulars issued for the municipalities by the Ministry of Interior.[326] Through these control mechanisms, campaigns organized on certain matters could quite easily spread and become standard practice. The fact that Ankara was setting the example for the rest of the cities was also a factor contributing to the standardization efforts.[327] These efforts of course rarely guaranteed achieving same results in every city; however, municipalities were envisioned as the bridges that linked the aim of achieving contemporary level of civilization voiced by the central authority to the aim of creating civilized cities at the local level.

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[324] See *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi*, term V, 2nd legislative year, vol. 6, meeting 1, 1 November 1935.

[325] In this sense, Gökaçtı argues that the republican understanding of municipal administration was not very different than the one implied by the Ottoman legacy. See Gökaçtı, 1996, p. 128.

[326] Gökaçtı, 1996, p. 137.

[327] This was particularly visible in urban planning, reorganizing the public space in all cities with boulevards, town squares and Atatürk statues by following Ankara as the model of the new republican city. For more, see Bozdoğan, 2001.

Belediye meclisinde

Şehrin planı, Çarşaf ve Kafes Meseleleri görüşüldü.

Bundan sonra Pırasa kilo ile satılacak

Söz söyleyenlerden Saim Altok

Meclise Başkanlık eden Cemil Öz

söz söyleyenlerden Neyire

Evelki gün Belediye meclisimiz şubat toplantılarının birincisini yapmıştır. Meclise Belediye reisimiz Cemil Öz başkanlık etmiştir. Verilen kararlar arasında bilhassa şehrimizin müstakbel planı meselesi de vardır. Bu mesele görüşülmeden evel içeri işler bakanlığından gelen emir okunmuştur. Bu emirde eldeki planın Ankara imar müdürlüğünce tasdik edilmesi için bunun bir mütehassıs tarafından tetkik ve tadili lâzımgeleceği kaydolunmuştur.

Bunun üzerine yapılan mü

mek lâzımdır diye meseleyi izah etmiştir. Azadan Ali Sırrı Pırasa demetlerinin birer veya üçer kilo olarak yapılmasını teklif etmiş ve bu takdirde içine başka şeyler konarak demetlerin ağır gelmesine imkân olmadığını söylemiştir. Azadan Şehbaz Mehmet de Pırasanın yeşil kısmı kesilmek şartile ve kilo ile satılması muvafık olacağı teklifinde bulunmuştur. Avukat Tevfik yeşilin topuz kısmının kesilmesini, Kerestecı Mehmet Nuri de onun tazeliğini yeşil kısmı muhafaza ettiği için hiç kesilmemesini teklif etmiştir.

Azadan Mümtaz; yeşil kısmı üzerinde kalsa da kesilse esnaf bildiğini yapacak demiştir.

Reis Cemil Öz—desentze imam bildiğini okur! demiş ve müzakere kâfi görüldüğü sırada azadan Bayan Neyire: müşteri pırasayı alırken kesilsin teklifinde bulunmuştur.

Azadan Saraç Fuat da bu takdirde yeşil sebzelerden maselâ Patlıcanın da kilo ile satılması teklifi karşısında kalınacağını anlatmıştır.

Reis Cemil Öz—böyle bir teklif olursa bittabi müzakere ederiz. Cevabını vermiştir.

Netice le pırasanın kilo ile satılmasına ekseriyetle karar verilmiştir.

Kafeslerin kaldırılması hakkında beyanatta bulunan Belediye reis muavini Zehra

zakerede planın meşhur şehir mimarı Yansen tarafından tedkik ve icap ederse üzerin

Figure 3.4. A clip from a Bursa newspaper, reporting the meeting of the city council. The caption reads "At the City Council. The city plan and the issues of çarşaf and kafes were discussed." *Hakkın Sesi,* Bursa, 3 February 1935.

Limited by the laws issued by the central authority as well as by its tight control, municipalities were nevertheless allowed a certain degree of freedom of action. As it was mentioned in the first article of the Municipal Law of 1930, they were defined as entities in charge of organizing and satisfying the common and civilized needs of the city and city dwellers at the local level. Expanding the scope of duties for the municipalities was one of the aims of the law, since the previous law regulating municipal administration was considered inappropriate for the modernizing efforts of the new regime and as an obstacle to progress.[328] The law was quite detailed in specifying the duties of the municipalities, but it was also inclusive in the sense that these duties were framed in general terms, such as insuring the health, welfare and prosperity of the city dwellers. They were entitled to prevent anything that would harm the order, health and peace in the city. The first and second items of Article 19, in particular, entitled the municipalities with the power of enforcing measures to achieve these aims, as well as issuing orders and bans.

[328] Tekeli refers to the Minister of Interior's explanation on why a new municipal law was needed. See Tekeli, 2009, p. 60.

To enable municipalities to perform these newly assigned duties more effectively, the Municipal Law of 1930 also required all municipalities to issue a municipal police regulation (*zabıta talimatnamesi*). The municipal police would be responsible for the enforcement of all decisions of the municipalities, including the municipal bans and fines. With an additional law in May 1930 regulating the punitive powers of municipalities, municipalities were entitled to issue warnings (*tenbihname*) through which the city councils could announce the decisions and bans they issued, and the amount of fines that would be imposed in case of non-compliance.[329] In some of the anti-veiling campaigns, this law was used as a reference point to support the right of the municipalities to issue a ban. In Bergama, for example, a district of the province of Izmir, a committee formed by the city council prepared a new chapter for the municipal police regulation based on this law in order to include the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* in the regulation and the fines to be imposed in case of non-compliance.[330] As it can be seen in the case of anti-veiling campaigns, municipal warnings indicate that they were used by municipalities as a means to establish a modern urban life. A warning issued by the city council of Ankara, for example, prohibited hanging anything on buildings that would look ugly or throwing garbage onto empty lands.[331] Some of these warnings were shaped by circulars from Ankara. As mentioned earlier, these circulars played an important role in standardizing certain acts of municipalities. In April 1936, for example, Minister of Interior Şükrü Kaya sent a circular to all municipalities asking them to take measures to reduce street noise.[332]

The right to appeal the municipal sanctions, however, was an important factor limiting the effective implementation of municipal decisions in practice.[333] To overcome this limitation, the punitive power of the

[329] Tekeli, 2009, p. 87. For the full text of this law, see "Umuru belediyeye müteallik ahkâmı cezaiye hakkındaki 16 nisan 1340 tarih ve 486 numaralı kanunun bazı maddelerini muadil kanun," Law no. 1608, 20 May 1930.
[330] Thus, the bans had become part of the municipal police regulation (*zabıta talimatnamesi*). The city council of Bergama also banned *kıvrak*, a local veil. See "Bergama'da Çarşaf, Peçe ve Kıvraklar Kaldırılıyor," *Anadolu*, 6 December 1934.
[331] Tekeli, 2009, p. 87.
[332] Tekeli, 2009, p. 88. The ministry had in fact sent similar circulars before, thus the fight against street noise had been an issue on the agenda of the municipalities for a while. For example, see "Gürültü Mücadelesi," *Son Posta*, 28 July 1934; "Gürültü," *Son Posta*, 20 July 1934.
[333] Tekeli, 2009, p. 89.

municipalities was increased further with an amendment in June 1934.[334] It became mandatory to present a reason for an appeal; appeals not presenting a valid justification would not be accepted. In addition, mayors, deputy-mayors and department heads in the provinces, and mayors in the district capitals were empowered to issue fines (up to five liras in the provinces and three liras in the district capitals) when they themselves witnessed an action contrary to the municipal decisions. These sanctions were irrefutable, thus the amendment severely limited the right of appeal, especially for fines in relatively low amounts. By giving the mayors and other high-level municipal administrators the right to impose sanctions, without the need for a written record or an approval of the municipal committee (*belediye encümeni*), the new law expanded their power considerably. Press reports of the new amendment also emphasized the increasing power of mayors to impose municipal sanctions.[335] A columnist in a provincial newspaper claimed that with the new regulation, it would be easier to ensure that people would perform their duties for the city and the public, and municipalities would be able to fulfill their mission of satisfying the social and civil needs of the cities much more adequately.[336]

Thus, by the mid-1930s, first with the 1930 Municipal Law, and then with subsequent laws strengthening their punitive powers, municipalities were empowered and provided with the necessary legal framework entitling them to issue decisions and apply sanctions that would regulate the behavior of the people as part of their aim of creating a "civilized" urban life.[337] Municipalities intervened in daily conduct through their decisions concerning circumstances ranging from spitting in the streets to where to dry the clothes. Anti-veiling campaigns initiated by the city councils should be seen as part of the work of municipalities. The bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* must have been considered as "civilized needs" of people at the local level, as it was formulated in the Municipal Law.

[334] See "Umuru belediyeye müteallik ahkâmı cezaiye hakkındaki kanunu muadil 19-V-1930 tarih ve 1608 sayılı kanunun bazı maddelerini değiştiren ve yeniden madde ekleyen kanun," Law no. 2575, 15 July 1934.
[335] For example, see "Belediye Cezası," *Son Posta*, 8 August 1934.
[336] Rıza Atilâ, "Belediye Cezaları," *Yeni Mersin*, 23 June 1934.
[337] As Tekeli mentions, in promoting "civilized" life, municipalities and People's Houses mostly acted in coordination; People's Houses were the places of embodiment for the modern and civilized life style that municipalities were trying to create through their decisions. Tekeli, 2009, p. 52.

IV. Conclusion

Anti-veiling campaigns of the 1930s can be analyzed in their entirety only in relation to the consolidation of the Kemalist regime as an authoritarian single-party regime from 1931 onwards. With the severe impact of the Great Depression, Turkey turned towards statist economic policies. The principle of statism, however, marked the policies of the 1930s in all spheres and brought along a repressive atmosphere where the state not only suppressed all elements of opposition or expressions of social discontent, but also tried to transform the society through a radical project of cultural modernization. By initiating reforms that touched the daily manners of ordinary people and by institutions like the People's Houses, the Turkish state increased its penetration in all domains of social life.

In terms of the historical debates on women's rights and social role in Turkey, the anti-veiling campaigns can be seen as a chapter in women's emancipation as it was envisioned, propagated and put into practice by the Kemalist regime. The 1930s witnessed acceleration on the emphasis on women's participation in public life as modern citizens, their political mobilization, and on their significance as the visual representatives of the progress of Turkish society. Removal of the *peçe* and the *çarşaf*, stigmatized as backward and uncivilized attire alien to Turkish national culture, came to be perceived as an indispensable part of women's civilized status, and therefore, a *sine qua non* for the image of the new republic as a modern and civilized (read Western) regime.

The main wave of the anti-veiling campaigns began in 1934, a year that was characterized by the intensity of reforms initiated. Especially significant in terms of understanding the timing of the anti-veiling campaigns was women's gaining of their political rights in December 1934. Right after this reform, the anti-veiling campaigns increased in number and spread rapidly all over the country as part of a national propaganda for women's modernization and greater political roles. A large number of these campaigns resulted in the issuing of outright bans. The content of these bans varied in different cities, however, depending on the local dynamics as well as the composition of the actors involved.

A great majority of these bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* were issued by the municipal councils. Municipalities were equipped with the necessary legal provisions by the Municipal Law of 1930 and following regulations to act as the agents of modernization at the local level. The existence of this legal capacity, however, did not ensure in practice the compliance of all

municipalities in issuing a decision in a certain matter. In other words, the issuing of the municipal decisions and regulations concerning the behavior and daily conduct of people, albeit made easier with an authoritarian single-party regime in power, was very much depended on the intentions of the municipal administrators, from mayors to the members of the city councils. In fact, the process leading towards the municipal decisions like the bans on the *peçe* and the *çarşaf* often involved administrators, groups and actors going beyond the boundaries of the municipal organization. Governors, administrators and members of the local party branches, People's Houses, and local sports clubs and associations could all play a role in initiating and shaping these campaigns. The implementation of the bans was an even more complicated story, determined by the support as well as opposition coming from various local actors. Thus, one has to look at the local level to understand how the anti-veiling campaigns worked in practice, particularly to the role of the local elites and the interplay between the initiatives of the local actors and the efforts of Ankara to control and coordinate the situation in the provinces.