

THE ANTI-ALCOHOL MOVEMENT IN THE EARLY REPUBLICAN PERIOD  
IN TURKEY

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THE ANTI-ALCOHOL MOVEMENT IN THE EARLY REPUBLICAN PERIOD  
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“The Anti-Alcohol Movement in the Early Republican Period in Turkey”  
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Title: The Anti-Alcohol Movement in the Early Republican Period in Turkey

This thesis, which handles the period between 1920 and 1939, aims to show how opposition to a substance that is related to everyday life can be an essential part of a nation-building process. Anti-alcohol movements in numerous countries, such as the United States, Finland and Sweden, in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries constituted models for Turkey. However, in the case of Turkey, the anti alcohol-movement took a different dimension in the particular social and political atmosphere of the country. The leading figures of the anti-alcohol movement in the early Republican Period used alcohol opposition as a tool against the Christian populations of the country who had the control over alcohol business. Moreover, because of the fact that Turkey is a country in which Muslims are the majority, alcohol opposition had a religious dimension especially in the early 1920s. However, the religious concerns lost their power after the Second Group in the parliament was eliminated and the state started to be secularized. This secularization process, together with the rise of the eugenics idea in Europe caused the alcohol opposition in Turkey to take on a secular and scientific dimension. With this change, the movement changed its focus and targeted building a healthy and strong population.

Başlık: Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkiye'de Alkol Karşıtı Hareket

1920 ve 1939 yılları arasındaki dönemi ele alan bu tez, günlük hayatı ilgilendiren bir maddeye olan karşıtlığın, ulus inşası sürecinde nasıl önemli bir rol oynadığını göstermeyi amaçlıyor. Geç on dokuzuncu ve erken yirminci yüzyıllarda, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Finlandiya ve İsveç gibi birçok ülkedeki alkol karşıtı hareketler Türkiye için birer örnek teşkil etti. Fakat, Türkiye örneğinde, alkol karşıtı hareket, ülkenin kendine özgü sosyal ve politik atmosferinde farklı bir boyut kazandı. Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde alkol karşıtı hareketin öncüleri alkol karşıtlığını ülkedeki alkol ticaretini elinde tutan Hıristiyan halklara karşı bir araç olarak kullandılar. Dahası, Türkiye Müslümanların çoğunlukta olduğu bir ülke olduğu için, alkol karşıtlığının, özellikle 1920'li yılların başında, dini bir boyutu vardı. Buna rağmen, İkinci Grup'un meclisten tasfiye edilmesi ve devletin laikleştirilmeye başlamasıyla birlikte dini kaygılar etkisini yitirdi. Bu laikleştirilme süreci ve Avrupa'da öjeni düşüncesinin yükselişe geçmesi, Türkiye'deki alkol karşıtı hareketin seküler ve bilimsel bir boyut kazanmasına neden oldu. Bu değişimle birlikte, hareket, odak noktasını değiştirerek sağlıklı ve güçlü nesiller yetiştirmeyi hedef edindi.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization's Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2011, in 2003, 78.4 percent of people above 15 years were lifetime abstainers while 90.3 percent of them were abstainers who had not drunk in the 12 months previous to the research.<sup>1</sup> Although the amount of alcohol consumption is very low in Turkey, even today, it is interesting to know that there was a strong alcohol opposition in Turkey in the early Republican period. This thesis is about the alcohol opposition in Turkey between 1920 and 1939. Its aim is to find an answer to the question of how an opposition to a substance that is used in people's daily lives can be an essential part of a nation-building process.

The time period examined in this thesis is between 1920 and 1939. The reason why this interval has been chosen is that, first, there is a good deal of enthrusting historical material on this period. Second, being a Master's thesis, the period had to be limited in a way. The reason why I took 1920 as a start is obvious: 1920 was the year in which both the Grand National Assembly of Turkey was founded and the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* (the law banning alcohol that was in force between 1920 and 1924) was passed in the parliament. 1939 is harder to explain because the study could have included the 1940s as well, especially considering the fact that the anti-alcohol movement can be followed in the 1940s. However, a limit to the study had to be established and the beginning of World War II seemed a good

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, "Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2011", Accessed on 12 May 2012. Available [online]: <[http://www.who.int/substance\\_abuse/publications/global\\_alcohol\\_report/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/global_alcohol_report/en/index.html)>



point to stop because although the 1940s had similarities to the 1930s regarding the alcohol opposition, its social and political context was different than the 1930s.

Last but not least, studying the 1920s and the 1930s together gives a chance to make a comparison between the two decades. It is surprising to see the change in the mentality and the attitude of the alcohol opponents in the 1930s. While alcohol consumption was vilified by mostly religious concerns in the 1920s, it was attacked with secular and scientifically-based arguments in the 1930s. However, nationalistic themes were the common points of the both decades despite the fact that there was also a change in the concept of the term “nation.” In the first half of the 1920s, the term “nation” had a religious connotation: being a Muslim was more important than being a Turk. On the other hand, in the 1930s, the term “nation” acquired a secular and a racial connotation.

The most important reason why I chose this subject is that the alcohol issue in Turkey has not been discussed as a subject of social history. Due to the fact that alcohol is a substance people consume in their daily lives, it, most of the time, has been approached as a subject of cultural history and the history of everyday life in both Ottoman and Republican history. This thesis not only covers the story of alcohol opposition in the early Republican Period, it also is a social history work about a substance that is important for people both as individual human beings and as a part of social life. Another reason why I chose to work on this subject is the lack of a comprehensive study on the alcohol opposition in the early Republican Period. Although there are three important works about the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* and one significant study on the relation between eugenic thought and alcohol consumption in Turkey, they focus on either the law of prohibition or the eugenic aspect of the alcohol opposition. None of them provides a comparative and overall analysis.

Primary sources make up the basis of this thesis. Mostly journals and newspapers published in the 1920s and 1930s are used. Among them, *Sebilürreşad*, *Resimli Ay*, *Yeşilay Dergisi* (formerly *İçki Düşmanı Gazete*), *TheNew York Times* are of the greatest importance. Among other primary sources there are *Zabıt Cerideleri* (the minutes of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey), the reports of the Sixth and Seventh Turkish National Congress of Medicine and some statistical reports related to alcohol production and consumption. Moreover, some books and pamphlets published in the period in question are used in order to catch the reactions of people to the regulations and propaganda against alcohol. The other part of the research is based on secondary sources related to the issue. They can be divided into two groups: the first one consists of the studies that I used to form a historical framework, and the other one includes the studies that are directly related to the alcohol issue.

This thesis is divided into three chapters in addition to the introduction and conclusion chapters. The chapters are divided generally both chronologically and thematically. The second chapter covers a broad period starting from the first appearance of alcoholic beverages in world history and ends with the anti-alcohol movements and prohibitions that took place all around the world in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. The thesis would not have been complete without looking at the world context, which affected and inspired the alcohol opposition in Turkey, and thus helps us to better understand the case of Turkey. This chapter also focuses on the status of alcoholic beverages in Islam due to the fact that the anti-alcohol movement and the law of alcohol ban in Turkey are closely related to the Islamic orders.

The third chapter focuses on the 1920s as a time period. It scrutinizes the emergence of the anti-alcohol movement in Turkey and the story of the *Men-i*

*Müskirat Kanunu*. I think that it is important to first look at the position of alcohol in the Ottoman society and the way in which it was treated by the state. It can be said that the alcohol opposition in Turkey officially started with the foundation of the *Hilal-i Ahdar Cemiyeti* (Green Crescent Society) in March 1920. However, this is not to say that there was no alcohol opposition before 1920. With the passage of the alcohol ban in the newly founded parliament in Ankara, the alcohol opposition gained significance. Due to the fact that the law was passed in a chaotic period, it is difficult to evaluate. First of all, it is important to note that it was not passed in the parliament with a consensus. This is to say that the half of the parliament was against the law. Therefore, it is not safe to make overall generalizations about the main target of the law. However, there are various arguments to answer the question why a prohibition law was brought five days after the Grand National Assembly was opened and, more importantly, while the country was at war considering the fact that the amount of alcohol consumption was very low.

Among the numerous arguments, the most convincing is that the main target of the law was to weaken the economic power of the non-Muslims who had control over the alcohol business. The fact that not only the defenders of prohibition, but also its opponents supported that idea strengthens this argument. With the prohibition law, the state not only found a way to confiscate the tools of the alcohol producing non-Muslims, but also obtained the chance to eliminate the small producers and hence opened the path for standardization in alcohol production. Moreover, the defenders of the law refused the opponents' suggestion of increasing taxes on alcoholic beverages instead of prohibition because they wanted to weaken the economic power of the non-Muslims.

In addition to these economic rationales, another benefit of the prohibition would have been the decrease in the waste of the national wealth. The prohibition was aimed to cut prodigality during the period of war. Behind all these, there were the religious motifs. Especially in the first period of the 1920s the alcohol opposition found its strength in the precepts of Islam.

In the fourth chapter I will focus on the changing attitude of the anti-alcohol movement in the 1930s. The alcohol opposition took a secular and scientific approach in the 1930s together with the secularization of the state and the rise of the eugenics idea in the Europe. A group of doctors who were inspired by eugenics thought became the leaders of the alcohol opposition in the 1930s. They gathered around *Yeşilay* (the Green Crescent Society, formerly *Hilal-i Ahdar*) and published journals and books and organized various activities in order to keep people away from the evils of alcohol. It is interesting to see that in the journals and books published by the alcohol opponents in the 1930s there is almost nothing about Islam. The arguments against alcohol are only built on scientific and moral base. Alcohol was seen, by these group of doctors, as a threat to the Turkish nation because it damages the younger generations, reduces the capability of work, weakens the will and inclines people to crime. Not surprisingly, this discourse resonated very much with the emphasis of “degeneration”, an emphasis widespread around the world. Moreover, in *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* (later *Yeşilay Dergisi*), enmity towards alcohol was built on nationalistic themes such as patriotism, having a common ideal, protecting the republic, and respecting Atatürk and other warriors who fought for the nation.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE HISTORY OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AND ALCOHOL PROHIBITIONS

World civilizations have produced many inventions such as of fire, writing, and currency and others. However, history textbooks usually fail to mention the first appearance of alcoholic beverages. The reason might be that alcohol is seen as just a medium of entertainment and thus not taken seriously, or it may be that alcohol is a controversial substance in many societies and religious systems. However, alcohol has been an essential part of civilization from the beginning.

The story of alcohol in world history starts with beer and wine, which are difficult to separate chronologically.<sup>2</sup> The earliest botanical evidence of beer making was found at a site in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran and dated to around 3500 BC.<sup>3</sup> However, Hornsey claims that while the first clear evidence for beer was found in Mesopotamia, the story of beer actually began in Egypt where “the most conclusive and most abundant archaeological and art historical evidence” for beer can be found.<sup>4</sup> Evidence for the existence of beer in Egypt goes back to the Predynastic era (5500-3100 BC). Actually, according to the earliest information available from the Near and Middle East, there are indications that show humans knew how to make bread and beer by 6000 BC.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ian S. Hornsey, *A History of Beer and Brewing* (Cambridge: Royal Society of Chemistry, 2003), p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Richard W. Unger, *Beer in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Hornsey, p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

Although the ancient Egyptians had wine as well, beer had a special place. For them beer was a substitute for water and, in regions where wine was not available, it was an invaluable staple with bread. In addition, it was used to pay laborers.<sup>6</sup>

Wine, on the other hand, has a much more spiritual and poetic character. It was – and is – an inseparable part of legends, mythology and many religious systems. The word “vin” that is used in most European languages comes from *Vena*, which means “beloved” in Sanskrit. In Latin it is “*vinum*”, in Russian “*vino*”, in German “*wein*”, and in French “*vin*”.<sup>7</sup> The first evidence of grape cultivation was found in the Caucasus. There are traces of grapes in Mesopotamia from a later period. Around 3000 BC grapes were turned into wine that was used in funerals in Egypt. Although Egyptians are known to have been beer consumers, the most important findings about grapes and wine regarding to social life can be found in Egypt.<sup>8</sup>

In recorded history, alcoholic beverages have played various roles. One of the most important among them was that they have been a medium for socializing people and making them publicly seen and heard. In America, taverns gave birth to the physical representation of the “public sphere”. They gathered members of a wider public that could never be fully assembled. In taverns, hierarchy could be softened or suspended.<sup>9</sup> Also, in France taverns had an important role in society. According to Thomas Brennan, during the hundred years before the French Revolution, public

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 34, 35, 43.

<sup>7</sup> The Turkish version, “*şarap*”, comes from Arabic.

<sup>8</sup> François Gautier, *Şarabın Tarihi* (Ankara: Dost, 2005), pp. 10, 12, 16.

<sup>9</sup> David W. Conroy, “In the Public Sphere: Efforts to Curb the Consumption of Rum in Connecticut, 1760-1820,” *Alcohol: A Social and Cultural History*, ed. Mack P. Holt (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2006), p. 53.

drinking places assumed many new forms and became different kinds of public spaces, serving different kinds of publics. He writes that “In the process, the public drinking place helped to create and recreate, a number of different public spaces, in which these publics developed distinct patterns of sociability, of identity, and of political awareness.”<sup>10</sup>

The period between the French Revolution and the end of World War II was the golden age of public drinking in France. As a consequence of the unusual changes in commerce and communication brought about by the French and Industrial Revolutions, new types of spontaneous and organized political discussion and working-class solidarity developed. The French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution that followed laid the foundations for working-class drinking and political culture. What Habermas has described as a “proletarian public sphere” emerged not just during the French Revolution, but also developed throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries.<sup>11</sup>

In Europe, alcohol lost its place as a universal beverage with the ascendance of coffee and tea. Starting with the seventeenth century, drinking without limits came to have a repelling connotation for the bourgeoisie, who started to drink with limits and on special occasions. In England, during the Victorian era, going to a tavern was as bad as going to a brothel. On the other hand, the lower strata were not affected by the “sobriety of coffee” as were the middle and upper middle classes. They maintained the drinking habits of the Middle Ages. For the proletariat, alcohol was a

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas Brennan, “Taverns and the Public Sphere in the French Revolution,” *Alcohol: A Social and Cultural History*, ed. Mack P. Holt, (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2006), p. 107.

<sup>11</sup> W. Scott Haine, “Drink, Sociability, and Social Class in France, 1789-1945: The Emergence of a Proletarian Public Sphere,” *Alcohol: A Social and Cultural History*, ed. Mack P. Holt, (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2006), p. 121.

symbol that indicated the state of belonging to the same class. Moreover, for them alcohol was a means for forgetting the misery of their lives.<sup>12</sup>

The use of spirits<sup>13</sup> as a beverage opened a new chapter in the history of alcoholic beverages. Actually, spirits had been known to people, but they had been used as medicine until the sixteenth century. From the seventeenth century onwards, spirit started to be used as a daily beverage. Distilled beverages were firstly used by the army in Europe. They were given to soldiers as an ingredient of their daily rations in order to turn them into a benumbed – but not a drunk – and integrated part of the army’s mechanical discipline. The army experience of distilled beverages was the preliminary work of industrial discipline.<sup>14</sup>

According to Wolfgang Schivelbusch, distilled beverages killed the drinking culture. The traditional drinking culture was based on wine and beer which can be called organic alcoholic beverages. The amount of alcohol that wine and beer contain is equal to the amount of sugar that their essential substances have. On the other hand, spirits contain ten times more alcohol compared to traditional beer because of the distillation process. This difference has significant outcomes: While wine and beer make people inebriated slowly, spirits intoxicate almost instantly. Therefore, distilled beverages that accelerate the intoxication process have much in common with other acceleration processes of modern times. In this manner, spirits were the children of the Industrial Revolution: drinking was also industrialized with the Industrial Revolution.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Keyif Verici Maddelerin Tarihi: Cennet, Tat ve Mantık* (Ankara: Dost Kitabevi, 2000), pp. 144-145.

<sup>13</sup> Spirit, hard liquor or distilled beverage differs from undistilled fermented beverages such as beer and wine.

<sup>14</sup> Schivelbusch, pp. 145, 148.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.



## Islam and Alcohol

To-day is but a breathing space, quaff wine!  
Thou wilt not see again this life of thine;  
So, as the world becomes the spoil of time,  
Offer thyself to be the spoil of wine!<sup>16</sup>

Alcohol is forbidden in the holy book of Muslims. However, the fact that the word alcohol comes from Arabic “*el-küül*” or “*al-koh'l*”<sup>17</sup> is itself the biggest indicator of the ambiguous situation of alcohol in Islam. Wine is mentioned in six different suras in the Kur’an. Three of them concern its prohibition. The first verse related to the issue is the 43<sup>rd</sup> verse of the Nisa Sura. The story of this verse is as follows: Before this verse was sent, all of the people in Medina had been drinking wine and they had been performing *namaz* in mosques while they were drunk. One day, a drunken *imam* made a mistake while he was reciting the Kur’an out loud. He said “I worship those you worship” while he should have said “I do not.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, according to the Islamic belief, God forbade praying while in the state of drunkenness: “O you who believe, do not observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) while intoxicated, so that you know what you are saying...”<sup>19</sup>

Another verse about prohibition is the 219th verse of the Bakara Sura, which aimed to decrease the evil caused by people who were drinking and gambling: “They ask you about intoxicants and gambling: say, ‘In them there is a gross sin, and some

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<sup>16</sup>*The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, 20, (trans.) Edward Henry Whinfield, Accessed on 28 October 2011, Available [online]: <<http://www.therubaiyat.com>>.

<sup>17</sup> The first meaning of alcohol in the Oxford Dictionary is “the fine metallic powder used in the East to stain the eyelids” and third definition is “an essence, quintessence, or ‘spirit’ obtained by distillation or ‘rectification.’” J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 300-301.

<sup>18</sup> Kemal Sülker, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze İçki ve Toplum* (İstanbul: Süreç, 1985), pp. 22-23.

<sup>19</sup> Sura Nisâ [4:43], trans. Rashad Khalifa, Accessed on 27 October 2011, Available [online]: <[http://www.quran-islam.org/main\\_topics/quran/quran\\_in\\_english/sura\\_1\\_to\\_4\\_\(P1322\).html](http://www.quran-islam.org/main_topics/quran/quran_in_english/sura_1_to_4_(P1322).html)>.

benefits for the people. But their sinfulness far outweighs their benefit.’ ...’’<sup>20</sup>The 90<sup>th</sup> and 91<sup>st</sup> verses of the Maide Sura also describe drinking as a tool of the devil for keeping people away from their faith.<sup>21</sup> As can be seen, one of the main targets of the Kur’an is to keep the mind away from any impact of wine<sup>22</sup> that might cause faults in practicing the faith.<sup>23</sup>

In spite of these verses that prohibit wine, according to one interpretation of the Kur’an, Allah promises rivers of wine in paradise in the Muhammad Sura: “The allegory of Paradise that is promised for the righteous is this: it has rivers of unpolluted water, and rivers of fresh milk, and rivers of wine - delicious for the drinkers - and rivers of strained honey...’’<sup>24</sup> The ambivalent attitude of Islam toward alcoholic beverages is obvious in the abovementioned verse. In other words, on the one hand, Allah prohibits the drinking of wine; on the other hand, he promises his *kuls* (“creatures”) rivers of wine in paradise.

Actually, the origins of Islam stretch to the culture of the Middle East which has lauded wine since antiquity. Actual harm of wine is the drunkenness which may cause Allah’s devout to commit sin. Therefore, the believers have to wait for the afterlife where they can drink wine in gold and crystal cups from the hands of ageless, beautiful boys. According to Jean-Robert Pitte, this promise of heaven

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<sup>20</sup> Sura Bakara [2:219], trans. Rashad Khalifa, Accessed on 27 October 2011, Available [online]: <[http://www.quran-islam.org/main\\_topics/quran/quran\\_in\\_english/sura\\_1\\_to\\_4\\_\(P1322\).htm](http://www.quran-islam.org/main_topics/quran/quran_in_english/sura_1_to_4_(P1322).htm) l>.

<sup>21</sup> Muhammed Fuad Abdülbaki, *Konularına Göre Kur’an-ı Kerim*, trans. Bekir Karlığa (İstanbul: Şamil Yayınevi, 2008), pp. 537-538.

<sup>22</sup> The reason I use “wine” instead of a general term “alcohol” is that only wine is mentioned in the Kur’an.

<sup>23</sup> Sülker, pp. 24-25.

<sup>24</sup> Sura Muhammad [47:15], trans. Rashad Khalifa, Accessed on 27 October 2011, Available [online]: <[http://www.quran-islam.org/main\\_topics/quran/quran\\_in\\_english/sura\\_45\\_to\\_54\\_\(P1330\).html](http://www.quran-islam.org/main_topics/quran/quran_in_english/sura_45_to_54_(P1330).html)>

explains why many Muslims dream about wine and why Sufis glorify wine in poetry and in real life. It also explains why most Muslims drink alcohol although it is forbidden; because even in Saudi Arabia, where the prohibition is the strictest, alcohol is consumed secretly.<sup>25</sup>

In reality, the place of alcohol in Islam is much more complicated than looking at the verses of the Kur'an because the rules of Islam are open to interpretation. Therefore in practice, different sects of Islam have different attitudes toward alcohol consumption. The strictest order on this issue is the Sunni sect. For instance, Alevis and Bektaşis are more flexible with alcohol consumption. Alevis drink alcohol during their ceremonies.<sup>26</sup>

#### The Anti-Alcohol Movement in the World Context

It was Kasim Ahmedoff who'd struck oil.  
They all drove out to Gallipoli in secret.  
(Oil secrets are like state secrets.)  
They drilled a test well that night.  
The product came up plentiful and pure.  
(You have to act fast in the oil business.)  
The engineer rushed off a telegram:  
'Wire \$ 300,000. Stop. End.'  
He may have been a little drunk when he sent the telegram,  
maybe even during the drilling.  
Liquor was outlawed in America back then,  
and Ahmedoff had stocked his car with Johnnie Walker.<sup>27</sup>

Alcohol has played a crucial role throughout history. That is because it is a substance that affects humans on various levels. First of all, it has serious physical impacts that cause health problems, prevent productive skills, cause family crises and

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<sup>25</sup> Jean-Robert Pitte, *Şarap ve Din*, trans. Esra Özdoğan (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006), p. 32.

<sup>26</sup> This information is taken from the conference on "Osmanlı Devletinde ve Türkiye'de Alkol Üzerine" by Nicolas Elias and Nikos Sigalas at Institut Français d'Etudes Anatoliennes (IFEA), 20th October, 2011.

<sup>27</sup> Nazım Hikmet, *Human Landscapes from My Country*, trans. Randy Blasing, Mutlu Konuk (New York: Persea Books, 2002), p.130.

so on. In addition, alcohol has been a very controversial substance in many societies and political and religious systems. Due to its negative effects on the human body and behavior it is forbidden in some religions and it is seen as the mother of all evil by various societies. Because of its controversial situation it has become a tool in political arenas. Many nation-states have made – and make – regulations on its production and consumption, varying from the alcohol rates of alcoholic beverages to the age limits of consumption. Yet more, alcohol has brought people together and made communication easier. For instance, taverns have played important roles in many resistance movements and revolutions in history.

From the 1910s to the 1930s, the world witnessed a prohibition trend. Many countries including the United States, Canada, Norway, Iceland, Sweden, Finland, the Russian Empire (later the Soviet Union), Hungary and New Zealand passed laws to prohibit alcoholic beverages. Turkey represented just a single case among the others. Amid these countries, in Turkey the proponents of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* (Alcohol Prohibition Law) especially focused on the United States case. From the beginning of the prohibition story in Turkey, they saw the national prohibition in the U.S. as a model. Therefore, although all these countries are crucial in understanding the Turkish case, the prohibition in the United States is of the utmost importance. In this part, I will look closely at the American case and then touch upon measures against alcohol in some other countries in order to make comparison between them and the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu*.

In order to fully grasp the whole picture, it is necessary to understand the place of alcohol in people's lives until the twentieth century in the United States. In the U.S., alcohol consumption was two times the present rate of consumption in the eighteenth century and three times in the nineteenth century. Alcohol, especially rum

and cider, was part of every meal and consumed by people of all ages. In the first half of the nineteenth century, whiskey was cheaper than coffee, tea and milk and it was less hazardous than water, which was commonly polluted.<sup>28</sup>

Rorabaugh illustrates the importance of alcohol in daily life in the following sentences: “Liquor tended to be taken in small quantities throughout the day, often with meals. Instead of morning coffee break, Americans stopped work at 11:00 a.m. to drink. A lot of work went undone but in this slow paced, preindustrial age this was not always a problem.”<sup>29</sup>

The first temperance movement, at the end of the 1700s, was led by Dr. Benjamin Rush who argued that overuse of alcohol was unhealthy. Another attack against alcohol consumption came from Protestant ministers, who changed the direction of the attack from the issue of health to the question of sin.<sup>30</sup>

Beginning in 1907, a large number of state and local governments enacted laws or adopted constitutional provisions. With these measures, a substantial part of the United States was dried up. The anti-liquor forces, which were led by the Anti-Saloon League, became so successful that they were prepared to strike for a national prohibition constitutional amendment. This issue was decided in the 1916 Congressional elections. However, Congress did not pass the Amendment until December 22, 1917. A sufficient number of states ratified it by January 16, 1919, and it took effect one year later. However, prohibition actually began before January 1920. Together with the widespread local prohibition laws, the production and sale

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<sup>28</sup> W. J. Rorabaugh, “Alcohol in America,” *OAH Magazine of History* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1991) p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

of alcoholic beverages were restricted by federal laws, beginning in 1917, under the pretext of war legislation.<sup>31</sup>

Before the national constitutional prohibition went into effect in 1920, 70 per cent of the population of the United States and more than 95 per cent of the land area were already under prohibition legislation as a result of the operation of local option and state prohibitory measures.<sup>32</sup> Cherrington states that prohibition as a national legislative policy in the United States was the first of its kind among the great nations of the period. Moreover, except for a few countries, other nations did not even seriously consider prohibition as a tool to cope with the “evils” of alcohol.<sup>33</sup>

The Eighteenth Amendment prohibited the manufacture, sale, importation, or transportation of “intoxicating liquors.” However it did not forbid consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages although it was planned to exterminate the liquor business in general and the saloon in particular.<sup>34</sup>

As Burnham emphasizes, many writers, including James H. Timberlake, indicate that “the Eighteenth Amendment was an integral part of the reforms of the Progressive movement.”<sup>35</sup> The middle class Progressives’ support of prohibition aimed to democratize the government and to restrain Big Business. Timberlake goes on to state that the underlying purpose of democratization was the improvement of the lower classes and the Americanization of the immigrants.<sup>36</sup> For the Progressives,

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<sup>31</sup> J. C. Burnham, “New Perspectives on the Prohibition ‘Experiment’ of the 1920’s,” *Journal of Social History* 2, no. 1 (Autumn 1968) p. 55.

<sup>32</sup> Ernest H. Cherrington, “World-Wide Progress toward Prohibition Legislation,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 109, no. 1 (September 1923) p. 209.

<sup>33</sup> Cherrington, pp. 209-210.

<sup>34</sup> Burnham, p. 55.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>36</sup> James H. Timberlake in S. J. Mennell, “Prohibition: A Sociological View,” *Journal of American Studies* 3, no. 2 (December 1969) p. 166.

Burnham points out that prohibition was a vehicle for reform since it included the elements of moralism, social desirability, meliorism, and scientifically demonstrated need.<sup>37</sup> They saw prohibition as a means to change the personal habits of Americans in general for the benefit of both the nation and the individual.<sup>38</sup>

Temperance was owned by the middle class. It was seen as a medium of expression of their superiority over the lower classes, whose lives were associated with high alcohol consumption and frequent drunkenness. Hence, prohibition became a tool of the middle class to build approval of their lifestyle with the help of law.<sup>39</sup>

The political potency of the “drys” lay among middle class Progressives whose main target was to remove the saloon from American life.<sup>40</sup> The saloon had a negative image. Burnham colorfully relates how most saloons were disreputable places which were associated with prostitution, gambling, police corruption, and crime.<sup>41</sup> They were seen as the centers of political and moral corruption<sup>42</sup> although they served “social needs of the working class, especially the first generation immigrants.”<sup>43</sup>

In addition to the social engineering aspect of the issue, there was a less “altruistic” dimension. Businessmen were seeking their own benefits in defending the law. According to most businessmen, a sober, temperate worker was a more productive, a more stable, and a happier worker. Besides, they believed that sobriety

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<sup>37</sup> Burnham, p. 53.

<sup>38</sup> Timberlake, in Burnham, p. 53.

<sup>39</sup> Mennell, p. 168.

<sup>40</sup> Burnham, p. 56.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>42</sup> Mennell, p. 165.

<sup>43</sup> Burnham, p. 53.

and industrial safety were inseparable. Due to the fact that most businessmen were concerned with the increasing use of machinery in industry, the safety issue was a crucial problem for them. However, the issue was not that simple. There was a conflict among various groups of businessmen: Despite the fact that a wealthy segment of the business community supported temperance reform together with the Progressives, other segments of business, especially those who were based on the liquor industry, saw prohibition as a government interference with business and objected to it.<sup>44</sup>

There were also economic arguments that supported prohibition. It was possible to use the contemporary economic theory to defend the view that the liquor industry was not productive. Moreover, workers were used as a tool both by employers and union leaders during the course of prohibition. Employers, as noted above, were concerned about the negative effects of alcohol on the efficiency of workers. On the other hand, union leaders thought that drinking alleviated workers' misery and poverty and it obviated the need for getting organized.<sup>45</sup> Another aspect of the working class-prohibition relation was the argument that prohibition was beneficial for the working class because it prevented them from wasting their money on alcoholic beverages.<sup>46</sup>

In addition, prohibition had a scientific base. In the first decades of the twentieth century, scientific research disproved the old beliefs about the beneficial and medicinal effects of alcohol on the body. It was shown that inebriety in parents brought forth physical, mental and moral degradation in children. It was also argued

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>45</sup> Mennell, pp. 166-167.

<sup>46</sup> Burnham, p . 56.



that alcohol expedited the spread of venereal disease. Evolutionary and eugenic theories also were brought into the picture. All of these caused alcohol to be seen as a “racial poison.”<sup>47</sup>

Apart from the supporting factors mentioned above, there were other determinants in how prohibition came into effect. According to Mennell, there were two church-based organizations behind the success of prohibition: the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, formed in 1874, and the American Anti-Saloon League, founded in 1893.<sup>48</sup> The Women’s Christian Temperance Union deserves attention here. By the 1800s, in America, industrialization and the greater availability of alcohol contributed to a rising problem of male drunkenness,<sup>49</sup> which gave rise to the American temperance movement, arguably “the longest, most popular social cause of the nineteenth century.”<sup>50</sup> Women stood by the churches when they called on crusaders for the temperance movement. Among supporting women, there were wives and mothers made miserable by their husbands’ alcoholism. White, middle-class, Protestant women were the driving force of the crusade for temperance under the umbrella of the church. The temperance movement used the rhetoric of conventional morality: drinking was wicked and degrading; alcohol destroyed families and individual souls; alcohol ruined men and threatened women’s virtue. These women used prayer and the force of moral virtue to oppose the evils of

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<sup>47</sup> Mennell, p. 166.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>49</sup> Devon Jersild, *Happy Hours: Alcohol in a Woman's Life* (New York: Perennial, 2002), p. 43.

<sup>50</sup> Catherine Gilbert Murdock, *Domesticating Drink : Women, Men, and Alcohol in America, 1870-1940* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins, 2002), p. 4.

alcohol. However, they had to leave their homes and make political organizations and this gave them the skills they would need to fight for the right to vote.<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, some argue that the Eighteenth Amendment was passed because of the World War I, not because of women's groups.<sup>52</sup> The Conscription Act, which outlawed the sale of liquor near military bases in order to keep the soldiers sober, and the Lever Act, which prohibited the use of grain in brewing and distilling during the War, laid the foundation of the Eighteenth Amendment, which was passed late in 1917 and was sent to the states.<sup>53</sup> The war centralized authority in Washington and discredited German-American brewers and made the food issue crucial.<sup>54</sup>

In the 1920s, the rational justifications for prohibition started being debated. Not only did the social and political arguments begin to be discredited, but also its scientific base collapsed. Moreover, at the end of the decade, the Great Depression started to change the attitude toward liquor and the brewing industry. The liquor industry was now seen as a source of employment, not waste.<sup>55</sup> As Mennell points out, the 1920s was the beginning of the age of the middle class together with welfare capitalism. The middle class turned into a powerful and confident mass which no longer needed prohibition. Mennell further argues that just as the Eighteenth Amendment owed its existence to World War I, the Twenty-first Amendment was an outcome of the Great Depression. Restoring the brewing industry was a chance to employ thousands of workers. In addition, together with distilling, the brewing

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<sup>51</sup> Jersild, p. 43.

<sup>52</sup> Rorabaugh, p. 18.

<sup>53</sup> Mennell, pp. 161-162.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

industry could raise millions of dollars in taxation to compensate the Federal budget deficit.<sup>56</sup>

In 1933, the Twenty-first Amendment was passed and prohibition came to an end. However, the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment did not put an end to the anti-alcohol attitude of the states. Many states forbade sales of alcohol by the drink. The others took measures such as creating state liquor stores that restricted advertising, locations and business hours in order to preclude alcohol consumption. Additionally, high taxes were imposed on alcoholic beverages both by the federal government and the states. In addition, the saloon did not reemerge after the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment.<sup>57</sup> The Anti-Saloon League managed to destroy the old-fashioned saloon, and thus reached the explicit target of its campaign.<sup>58</sup>

There is a great debate among scholars on whether prohibition was successful in the United States. According to one point of view, prohibition failed to achieve its goals; on the opposite, it caused drinking level to increase. Mennell writes that

Drinking became more fashionable than ever before. Demand was met from many sources – smuggling from Canada and ‘Rum Row’, ‘needled’ beer, bathtub gin and bootleg liquor. Thirsts were quenched by criminal gangs who were at the same time large-scale entrepreneurs, whose turnover was large enough to buy the co-operation of the police. Courts became clogged with liquor cases, but were reluctant to impose harsh penalties.<sup>59</sup>

Even Burnham, who claims that prohibition was successful, agrees that enforcement was impossible in some areas due to the unsympathetic attitudes of prosecutors and judges and refusal of local juries to convict in bootlegging cases.<sup>60</sup> Mennell points

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 174-175.

<sup>57</sup> Rorabaugh, p. 18.

<sup>58</sup> Burnham, p. 64.

<sup>59</sup> Mennell, p. 171.

<sup>60</sup> Burnham, p. 57.

out that in spite of the difficulties in the enforcement of the law and millions of dollars spent for this purpose, large numbers of Americans maintained their support for prohibition. Some of them found excuses, such as corruption, for the “failure” of prohibition. They argued that prohibition did not fail, but it could not be enforced because of corruption.<sup>61</sup>

Burnham claims that prohibition was not a failure. In the early years of national prohibition, the amount of liquor consumed per capita decreased and liquor was difficult to access. However, in the second half of the 1920s, the amount of supply and consumption increased owing to well-organized bootleggers.<sup>62</sup> Burnham says that many people, relying on their memories, made generalizations from the later period of prohibition and concluded that prohibition had been neither real nor practical. Nevertheless, prohibition was successful, especially in the period between the end of the First World War and 1923.<sup>63</sup>

It is not the aim of this thesis to decide whether prohibition was successful or not. However, it can be argued that prohibition reached some of its targets in certain places for certain periods and it caused some changes in American society although it was repealed afterwards. In some areas the law was enforced successfully, but in places like New York and San Francisco it was not successful. The law caused consumption to decline and the drinking patterns of people to change. For instance, people started to drink in private places where they could stay out of trouble and as Rorabaugh writes “the all-male saloon disappeared and was replaced by the

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<sup>61</sup> Mennell, p. 172.

<sup>62</sup> Burnham, pp. 58-59.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

speakeasy, where men and women drank together out of teacups.”<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, due to various reasons such as corrupt and incompetent prohibition agents, bootlegging and public opposition, the Amendment could not be enforced completely.<sup>65</sup>

After looking at the American case in depth, now I will make a brief summary of some other countries’ measures against alcohol. Finland is one of the most striking cases among the others. In 1919, prohibition law was passed in Finland. The law prohibited the import, manufacture, sale and storage of beverages that contained more than 2% alcohol.<sup>66</sup> The prohibition story of Finland has many resemblances to the American case. It also started in the nineteenth century – specifically in the early eighteen-forties – with temperance propaganda. As Wuorinen indicates, the Finnish temperance movement was influenced by other temperance movements, especially the one in the United States. Both the temperance movement and prohibition in America were an “inspiration” and “guidance” for the Finnish case.<sup>67</sup>

Wuorinen claims that the enforcement process was not organized efficiently from the beginning of the prohibition experiment.<sup>68</sup> Even in the early years of prohibition, there were abuses.<sup>69</sup> According to Wuorinen, this was not a surprise for

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<sup>64</sup> Rorabaugh, p. 18.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>66</sup> John H. Wuorinen, “Finland’s Prohibition Experiment,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 163, (September 1932) p. 218.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 220.

the advocates of prohibition: The committee that dealt with the prohibition bill acknowledged that smuggling could never be eliminated entirely.<sup>70</sup>

Many countries in northern Europe took similar actions in order to decrease alcohol consumption. Some of these countries passed prohibition laws as a reaction to referendum results. For instance, in Norway, the prohibition of liquor that had been effective during the war years was made permanent after a referendum was held in 1919 in which the majority voted in favor of continuing prohibition.<sup>71</sup>

Latin American countries also stand out among other countries that took actions against alcohol consumption. For instance, in Mexico, the federal government strengthened the regulatory laws and reduced the traffic and sale of alcoholic beverages by provisions enacted in 1919. Moreover, as Cherrington writes “several states of Mexico ... followed the lead of the Educational Department of the federal government at Mexico City, by adopting a strong program providing for temperance instruction in the public schools.”<sup>72</sup> In Costa Rica, the “special recommendation” of the President in 1920 demonstrates the proclivity towards prohibition in Central America, according to Cherrington. The president of Costa Rica did not want any alcoholic person to be proposed for “an appointment as a civil or military employee.” Intoxication of any form was not tolerated in the office and anyone who did not obey was to be deprived of their offices. In other Latin American countries such as Panama, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Peru, Brazil, and Colombia there were either anti-liquor laws or certain measures taken by the state against production, sale and consumption of alcohol in the period between the 1910s and

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Cherrington, p. 213.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 210.

1920s. Among the measures taken by the state there were scientific temperance instruction in schools and license laws that aimed to decrease alcohol consumption in indirect ways.<sup>73</sup>

It is also possible to see the reflections in Turkey to this anti-alcohol trend in the world in contemporary journals. For instance Selim Sırrı, one of the writers of *Resimli Ay* magazine, wrote a column about the evils of alcohol in 1925 and he gave information on the other countries' solutions upon this issue. He described the measures taken by the U.S., Belgium, and Sweden against alcohol. He said that while the U.S. chose compulsion instead of gentleness, Belgium chose to put obstacle in front of drinkers. For instance, Belgian state increased liquor taxes and controlled the owners of bars and taverns strictly. By doing this they had managed to decrease the number of taverns from 250,000 to 141,000 in the period between 1919 and 1924. Selim Sırrı said that the working classes in the northern countries consumed bigger amount of liquor compared to other countries. He described the measures against alcohol consumption in Sweden. For instance, during the winter seasons, municipalities made sure that hot milk was sold cheaply and of a good quality in every street. Alcoholic beverages were exclusively sold in restaurants. There were no taverns. Moreover, it was forbidden to sell alcohol in glass in storages. Selim Sırrı also reported on a conversation he had had with the chief of the anti-alcohol community in Sweden. According to this conversation, the main target of the community was to keep the workers away from the taverns. The anti-alcohol community had been founded ten years before the interview was held. In the first years, community members had hired a hall on Sundays and arranged concerts there for workers and their families. In those gatherings, instead of liquor, they had sold

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 211-212.

tea, milk and cake in return for a small amount of money and had played national songs. In this way, they had achieved to empty taverns. The chief said that when they had achieved turning all of the taverns into these kinds of places, they would create a new state that had a superior quality of younger generations and civilization than other countries.<sup>74</sup>

To sum up, Turkey was influenced by this trend of alcohol opposition in numerous countries all over the world to a great extent. There are other countries in which alcohol was prohibited or different kinds of measures were taken in order to control its consumption. However, due to the limits of time and space, the rest of these countries could not be mentioned here.

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<sup>74</sup> Selim Sırrı, "İçki Belası," *Resimli Ay* 2, no. 6 (Temmuz 1341/1925) pp. 28-29.



## CHAPTER 3

### THE RELIGIOUS AND NATIONAL EPISODE OF THE ALCOHOL OPPOSITION: THE EMERGENCE OF THE ANTI- ALCOHOL MOVEMENT AND THE ALCOHOL PROHIBITION LAW

In this chapter the emergence of the anti-alcohol movement in Turkey and the law of alcohol prohibition which was passed in 1920 and remained in force until 1924 will be examined. The aim of this chapter is to show that the anti-alcohol movement was related closely to the nation-building process in Turkey. Before getting into the subject, it is useful to look at the Ottoman background.

It is not easy to gather information about alcohol consumption during the Ottoman rule because most of the secondary sources are the works of cultural history and focus only on Istanbul. The difficulty also stems from the fact that Ottoman Empire was a vast territory and it lasted for over six hundred years. Although it may be problematic to make generalizations about alcohol consumption in the Ottoman Empire, sources give a framework which, more or less, tells a story about the state's attitude toward alcohol.

Under Ottoman rule, alcohol was produced by small enterprises.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, the production of alcoholic beverages was restricted to non-Muslims. For instance, in a *ferman*(edict) sent to the *kadı*(judge) of Bursa dated 1560, it was ordered that during the time of grape harvest, no one except for non-Muslims could produce wine out of the yields. In addition, it was forbidden for Muslims to drink and buy alcohol from non-Muslims.<sup>76</sup> However, most of the times, Muslims found ways to consume

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<sup>75</sup> A. Suut Doğruel and Fatma Doğruel, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze: Tekel* (İstanbul: Tekel, 2000), pp. 123, 144.

<sup>76</sup> Ali İhsan Karataş, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Gayrimüslimlerin Toplum Hayatı: Bursa Örneği* (İstanbul: Gökkuşbuğu, 2009), pp. 196-197.

alcohol. Their consumption of alcoholic beverages depended on two factors which François Georgeon writes was “their proximity to regions in which grapes were grown, and their proximity to Christians and Jews.” Therefore, Istanbul and the large ports of the eastern Mediterranean were the places where Muslims drinkers were most common.<sup>77</sup>

Non-Muslims did not pay taxes on the wine they produced for their own consumption. They only paid tax on wine they sold. Another exception is the foreign ambassadors, who were allowed to import wine from other countries. However, selling wine publicly in the streets was not allowed. In certain places and certain periods, non-Muslims were prohibited from running taverns.<sup>78</sup> These bans were applied especially in quarters highly populated by Muslims. Where taverns were permitted, non-Muslims paid certain taxes.<sup>79</sup>

However, the rules about the production and consumption of alcohol were not applied strictly: Muslims bought alcohol from non-Muslims secretly. Another type of law breaking was wine smuggling. From time to time, non-Muslims smuggled wine usually with the help of *yeniçeris* (janissaries).<sup>80</sup> Ottoman rulers put some restrictions and penalties in order to prevent these kinds of illegal practices. For instance, according to the decrees of Selim I and Süleyman I, the taverns in Bursa were checked and only a certain amount of wine was left untouched and the rest was turned into vinegar. Again, in the same decrees, it was ordered that non-Muslims

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<sup>77</sup> François Georgeon, “Ottomans and Drinkers: The Consumption of Alcohol in İstanbul in the Nineteenth Century,” *Outside in: On the Margins of the Modern Middle East* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002), p. 9.

<sup>78</sup> In the Ottoman context, I use the word “tavern” in substitution for the word “*meyhane*” in Turkish.

<sup>79</sup> Yavuz Ercan, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Gayrimüslimler: Kuruluştan Tanzimat’a Kadar Sosyal, Ekonomik ve Hukukî Durumları* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 2001), pp. 221-222.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

who sold wine to Muslims would be punished with penal servitude. Muslims who drank wine were also to be punished. For example, a certain Ali, who asked wine from non-Muslims, was imprisoned. Restrictions on alcohol production were among other precautions. In various documents, the reason for the ban on production in a certain quarter was usually the presence of a mosque. In quarters without mosques production was allowed, but if a Muslim moved into the quarter or a mosque was built in the quarter, production was banned.<sup>81</sup> This measure was not limited to production. In certain conditions, the presence of a mosque in a quarter led to restrictions also on wine selling. For instance, in a *ferman* dated 1594, selling wine openly in İstinye was banned. The reason for this ban is explained as the following: In a village named Cedid in İstinye, the unbelievers turned their houses into taverns and thus the mosque of the village was surrounded by taverns. In addition, the unbelievers were selling wine to Muslims. Therefore, as the complainants claimed, it had become impossible to perform *namaz* in the mosque. In addition, when they entered to the court, they were dead drunk and they abused the *Kadı*(judge) and the prayer rug of the prophet with indecent words. After these incidents, some Muslims from the village complained and wanted some measures to be taken. Therefore, the sultan decided to prohibit selling wine openly in the aforementioned village.<sup>82</sup>

These examples can be multiplied with similar incidents in other cities of the empire. For instance, in 1573, the sultan ordered the taverns in Setbaşı, Bursa, to be closed down because of the fact that the non-Muslims who went to taverns were irritating the Muslims who were going to the mosque and that some of them were

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<sup>81</sup> Karataş, p. 197.

<sup>82</sup> Ahmed Refik, *İstanbul Hayatı 2* (İstanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1988), pp. 14-15.

raising their glasses to the muezzin while he was reciting the *ezan* (call to prayer).<sup>83</sup>

Most of the times, sultans had to write new *fermans* targeting the same issues, underlining the fact that their orders were not taken seriously.

Despite the religious and, sometimes, administrative prohibitions, alcoholic beverages were an essential part of the everyday life of İstanbul and *mey* (wine) was one of the main topics of Divan Literature. Certain sultans even Selim II and Selim III who put restrictions on alcohol consumption, although they themselves were drinkers wrote verses which praised alcohol. It is known that the addict sultans prepared special rooms reserved for drinking. The drinking tradition in İstanbul palace started, or manifested itself, with Bayezid II (1481-1512) and continued during the reigns of Selim I, Selim II, Murad IV, Mahmud I, Selim III, Mahmud II, Abdülhamid I, Murad V. Among them, Selim II, Murad III, Murad IV and Selim III were the ones who put the most severe restrictions on alcohol.<sup>84</sup>

It seems that the attitude toward alcohol in Ottoman Empire varied from one sultan to another. Süleyman I was the first sultan who placed the first extensive prohibition of alcohol in İstanbul.<sup>85</sup> He prohibited the consumption of wine to all Muslims and he ordered “all ships arriving in İstanbul loaded with wine to be burned.”<sup>86</sup> The prohibition was maintained under the rule of Selim II. In one of his *fermans* he said that although it had been ordered many times that taverns in İstanbul and Galata be closed, they were still open and therefore he once again ordered the *kadı*s of İstanbul and Galata to rule that all taverns be removed and wines to be

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<sup>83</sup> Karataş, p. 198.

<sup>84</sup> “İçki,” *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* 4 (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı; İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1993-1995), p. 132.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Georgeon, p. 9.

turned into vinegar by adding salt.<sup>87</sup> Despite the fact that Mustafa I and Osman II repealed the prohibition, Murad IV banned alcohol consumption during his reign. Not only did he order all shops selling alcohol, tobacco, coffee and opium to be shut down, but also he sentenced those who did not obey his orders to death.<sup>88</sup> Under the reign of Süleyman II (1687-1691), the prohibition was repealed due to deficits in the treasury, but it was reactivated later. The Tulip Period (1718-1730) was the era in which alcohol was liberated, taverns experienced their brightest years and drinking culture emerged. However, after Tanzimat, many restrictions were put against alcohol consumption.<sup>89</sup>

Although it seems that restrictions on alcohol depended on the sultan's will, we should not consider the sultan as the sole variable on this issue. It is problematic to think that production and consumption of alcohol was based on the arbitrary power of the sultan. As can be seen in *fermans*, the restrictions on alcohol had specific or general targets and they sometimes emerged out of certain conditions. François Georgeon relates these measures of repression with religious orthodoxy and the state's intention of reinforcing its Islamic character. Moreover, he argues that these measures were used as a tool for political order "to prevent public disorders, to avoid public assembly, to limit instances of promiscuity between social strata and different communities which might occur in taverns."<sup>90</sup>

Due to the foundation of the İrad-ı Cedid Treasury, the issue of alcohol production was taken into consideration once again in order to provide income for the treasury. After İrad-ı Cedid Treasury was founded, alcoholic beverages were

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<sup>87</sup> Sülker, p. 42.

<sup>88</sup> Georgeon, p. 9.

<sup>89</sup> "İçki", *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* 4, pp. 132-133.

<sup>90</sup> Georgeon, p. 9.

taken under the scope of “*Zecriyye Rüsûmu Nizâmı*” (the regulation of taxes on alcoholic liquors) on 4 April 1792 (11 Şaban 1207) in order to supply revenue to the treasury. *Zecriyye*<sup>91</sup> *resmi* was one of the most important taxes among the second group of incomes of the İrad-ı Cedid Treasury. *Zecriyye* was an old tax upon alcoholic beverages but it was rescinded due to the prohibitions of alcohol that were applied from time to time. According to the *Zecriyye Rüsûmu Nizâmı*, 2 paras were taken as tax from one kıyye (almost equal to 1282 gr) of wine and 4 paras were taken as tax from one kıyye of rakı and other beverages. According to Yavuz Cezar the taxpayer was the seller not the producer because it is known that non-Muslims could produce alcohol for their own consumption without paying the tax.<sup>92</sup>

The *Zecriyye resmi* was paid once in a year. It was applied with strict control so that the state could prevent alcohol and evasion.<sup>93</sup> Another target of the tax, as stated particularly in the *nizamnâme*(regulation), was to decrease the demand for the trade of alcoholic beverages and to prevent Muslims from drinking.

The İrad-ı Cedid Treasury earned 1,486,136 guruş from *zecriyye resmi* in the first budget year between 1792 and 1794. This amount was 36.60 percent of the treasury’s annual normal income and it means that *zecriyye resmi* was the most important contributor to total treasury revenues of the İrad-ı Cedid.<sup>94</sup> These numbers prove that alcohol was a crucial fiscal source for the state. This fact played a significant role in the failures of the prohibitions on alcohol. Nevertheless, one

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<sup>91</sup> *Zecriyye* means “tax on alcoholic liquor”. *Redhouse Türkçe/Osmanlıca-İngilizce Sözlük* (İstanbul: SEV, 1999), p. 1276.

<sup>92</sup> Yavuz Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım ve Değişim Dönemi: XVIII. yy’dan Tanzimat’a Mali Tarih* (İstanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1986), pp. 183-184.

<sup>93</sup> Further information about collection procedures of the tax can be found in Cezar, pp. 184-185.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 183-184.

should not assume that the only factor for the failures was fiscal; the resistance of drinkers was also effective in shortcomings in application of measures against alcohol.<sup>95</sup>

Although I do not have enough space to write on alcohol consumption in everyday life in the Ottoman Empire, it is useful to give some information on it. Evliya Çelebi mentioned about *arakçıyan esnafı* in his *Seyahatname* as a group of craftsman that produced and sold *arak* (rakı) in İstanbul.<sup>96</sup> If we consider the numbers Evliya Çelebi gave in *Seyahatname*, then in the first half of the seventeenth century there were 100 shops that sold rakı and 300 people that worked in these shops.<sup>97</sup>

The Ottomans' favorite beverage was wine for many years. After the nineteenth century rakı took wine's place as the most consumed beverage. Toward the end of the nineteenth century beer joined these.<sup>98</sup>

*Meyhanes*, or taverns, were the most important places for alcohol consumption in the Ottoman period. During the reign of Murad IV (1623-1640), when there was a strict prohibition of alcohol and tobacco, there were more than 600 barkeepers and around 300 *koltuk meyhanesi*(taverns with seats) in İstanbul.<sup>99</sup> *Meyhanes* were divided as "koltuk" and "gedikli"<sup>100</sup>. *Gedikli meyhanes*

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<sup>95</sup> Georgeon, p. 10.

<sup>96</sup> "Esnâf-ı arakçıyân: Dükkân:100, neferât:300. Her cins meyvadan gülsuyu gibi âlâ rakı çekilebilir amma gülefsen ve horilka rakısı hepsinden daha kattâldır [öldürücüdür]. Bunun dahi sarhoşluğu haramdır amma katresi [damlası] haram değildir." in Erol Üyepazarı, "Arakçıyan Esnafı", *Rakı Ansiklopedisi*, (İstanbul: Overteam Yayınları, 2011), p. 57.

<sup>97</sup> Erol Üyepazarı, "Arakçıyan Esnafı", *Rakı Ansiklopedisi*, eds. Çağatay Anadol, Erdir Zat, Fügen Basmacı (İstanbul: Overteam Yayınları, 2011), pp. 57-58.

<sup>98</sup> "İçki," *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* 4, p. 132.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

had licenses and their numbers were limited. On the other hand, *koltuk meyhanes* did not have licenses and they were run illegally. In time, another type of *meyhane*, “*ayaklı meyhane*” (taverns without seats) emerged. *Gedikli meyhanes* started to be called “*selatin meyhaneleri*”<sup>101</sup> after the reign of Abdülaziz (1861-1876). There were also “*küplü*” *meyhanes* (taverns with barrels), their position was in between *koltuk* and *gedikli meyhanes*. Usually wine was kept in big barrels but in *küplü meyhanes*, there were special barrels for wine and rakı. According to a story, rakı was called “lion’s milk” after the lion reliefs on rakı barrels in taverns.<sup>102</sup>

### The Law of Alcohol Ban: *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu*

The alcohol opposition and the law of alcohol ban did not come out of nowhere. As was mentioned earlier, alcohol was a problematic issue in both Islamic societies and in the multi-faith Ottoman Empire. The conditions of the period in question were also an important factor in the formation of an anti-alcohol movement<sup>103</sup> in Turkey. Because of the consecutive wars, forced migrations, and epidemics, the population in Turkey was very low in the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>104</sup> Apart from this danger in the population, there was another “threat” to the future of the unity of the homeland: the increasing level of alcohol consumption in Istanbul. In a

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<sup>100</sup> *Gedik* means “trade monopoly, license, the right to exclusive exercise of a trade in a particular area; place of business in a building held by patent or warrant.” *Redhouse Türkçe/Osmanlıca-İngilizce Sözlük* (İstanbul: SEV, 1999), p. 392.

<sup>101</sup> *Selâtin meyhane* is “name of a certain class of great wine shops.” *Redhouse Türkçe/Osmanlıca-İngilizce Sözlük* (İstanbul: SEV, 1999), p. 996.

<sup>102</sup> Vefa Zat, “Meyhaneler”, *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* 5, p. 435.

<sup>103</sup> By “anti-alcohol movement” I mean the alcohol opposition in Turkey that started to be formed around 1920. It involves the alcohol opponents who gathered around the *Hilal-i Ahdar Cemiyeti* (Green Crescent Society), the deputies in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey who supported the prohibition law, and doctors who were against alcohol consumption.

<sup>104</sup> Alemdaroğlu, “Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey,” *Body Society* 11, no. 3 (September 2005), p. 68.



period of war, when most of the strong men were sent to fronts the rest should not have been drunk. Under these circumstances, Doctor Milaşlı İsmail Hakkı wrote a booklet named *İçki Belyesi ve Kurtulmanın Çareleri* (The Evil of Alcohol and Solutions for Recovery) and it was printed by the *Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti*<sup>105</sup> (Society of Defence of the Nation) in 1917. The fact that it was printed by a society the aim of which was to save the country shows that the alcohol issue was seen as an important matter. In his book, Milaşlı İsmail Hakkı proposed that all taverns should be shut down and the sale of alcoholic beverages should be prohibited. He advocated the prohibition of all kinds of alcoholic beverages, including beer and wine. He noted that only rakı was in demand, but other alcoholic beverages were not demanded much. Therefore, he thought that if the production and importation of rakı, which was not needed for medical purposes, was banned officially, the ban of other drinks would be easier.<sup>106</sup>

The foundation of *Hilal-i Ahdar Cemiyeti*<sup>107</sup> (the Green Crescent Society) can be seen as the precursor of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* (the law banning alcohol). Its foundation is narrated like the following: At the close of the World War I, “our enemies”, who understood that they could not stop “our nation”’s struggle for independence with guns and cannonballs, they tried to destroy our nation from inside with the help of alcohol and drugs. The ships of enemy brought tons of liquors to our harbors and these liquors were covertly conveyed to our people. In a short period, alcohol and drug addiction spread like an epidemic. Some “patriotic intellectuals,”

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<sup>105</sup> *Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti* was founded in the early 1910s with the idea that the religion and the homeland were under threat and that there needed to be an organization which was free from any partisan feelings in order to save the homeland. Nazım H. Polat, *Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1991), pp. 23-24.

<sup>106</sup> Milaşlı İsmail Hakkı, *İçki Belyesi ve Kurtulmanın Çareleri* [The Evil of Alcohol and Solutions for Recovery], (İstanbul: Hilal Matbaası, 1333/1917), pp. 55-56.

<sup>107</sup> In a later period, the society’s name was changed to *Yeşil Hilal* and later *Yeşilay*.

such as Prof. Dr. Mazhar Osman (Uzman) and his friends, founded the Green Crescent Society on 5 March 1920 with the incentive and guardianship of the Şeyhülislam (the chief religious official) Haydarizâde İbrahim Efendi. The society's head office was in İstanbul.<sup>108</sup> Although this statement has some exaggeration, it has also some truth in it. According to *The New York Times*, at the end of World War I, alcohol consumption in Turkey increased because of the fact that there was a great supply of low quality liquor imported from the United States. The article stated that “an Anti-Alcohol Society was formed to obtain the passage of a law interdicting the use of intoxicating beverages. The recently deposed Caliph was the honorary head of that society.”<sup>109</sup>

The *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* was proposed on 28 April 1920, five days after the Grand National Assembly was opened, by the Trabzon deputy Ali Şükrü Bey. It was accepted on 14 September 1920 with Law no. 22. According to the law it was forbidden to produce, import, sell and consume any kind of alcoholic beverages in the Ottoman territories. Those who did not obey the law would be charged 50 liras per kiyye of the drinks and the drinks would be destroyed. Those who drank publicly and who were seen publicly drunk would be punished either according to *sharia* or a cash fine or a prison sentence. According to the fourth article, after the law was published all instruments related to the production of alcoholic beverages would be confiscated. Existing drinks would be sealed and allowed to be exported in two months. By the end of two months they would be destroyed.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Turkish Green Crescent Society, “Our History,” Accessed on 10 April 2012, Available [online]: <<http://www.yesilay.org.tr/Kurumsal/Yesilay-in-Tarihi>>.

<sup>109</sup> Louis Rich, “Alcohol Returns to Turkey after year of Prohibition,” *The New York Times*, 27 April 1924.

<sup>110</sup> TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, 14 September 1336/1920.

On 9 December 1923, the law was enforced in Istanbul for the first time. It was modified on 9 April 1924 with Law no. 470, which repealed the alcohol ban. And finally, it was totally repealed on 22 March 1926 with Law no. 790.

Before getting into detail, it is useful to look at the structure of the First Assembly in which *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* was passed. For Enver Behnan Şapolyo, the First Assembly was composed of “reformists” and “conservatives.”<sup>111</sup> Sadi Irmak claims that the conservatives were in the majority.<sup>112</sup> Although the First Assembly had a consensus over national liberation, there were divisions about internal political issues. In the beginning, the assembly acted as a unity. However, in time, it was divided into two groups: the First and Second Defense of Rights Groups.<sup>113</sup> This separation was derived from issues about the new regime’s fundamental features.<sup>114</sup>

There are three studies that handle the prohibition law. The first one is an article of Faruk Alpkaya, “Birinci Meclisin İçki Yasağı Men-i Müskirat Kanunu” (The Law Banning Alcohol of the First Assembly, *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu*). In his article, Alpkaya evaluates the law of alcohol ban from four different perspectives in order to situate it in its historical context. The first one focuses on the personal opposition between Mustafa Kemal Paşa – who drank alcoholic beverages – and his opponents. Alpkaya claims that this law was an outcome of this contestation considering the fact that the bill of law was given by the deputy of Trabzon Ali Şükrü Bey, who would be one of the leaders of the Second Group, and that Mustafa Kemal Paşa tried hard to prevent this bill from being enacted. After the army of the

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<sup>111</sup> Aytül Tamer, “Basın ve İktidar İlişkileri: Birinci Meclis’in Men-i Müskirat Kanunu Üzerine Tartışmalar,” *Kebikeç* 16, no. 31 (2011), p. 210.

<sup>112</sup> Sadi Irmak, *Devrim Tarihi* (İstanbul: İsmail Akgün Matbaası, 1967), p. 127.

<sup>113</sup> *Birinci Müdafaa-i Hukuk Grubu and İkinci Müdafaa-i Hukuk Grubu*.

<sup>114</sup> Ahmet Demirel, *Birinci Meclis’te Muhalefet: İkinci Grup* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1995), p. 9.

TBMM (the Grand National Assembly of Turkey) entered İzmir, Mustafa Kemal Paşa drank publicly. One year after Ali Şükrü Bey was killed by Topal Osman Ağa, the bodyguard of Mustafa Kemal, the law of alcohol ban was repealed.<sup>115</sup>

The second aspect of the ban was based on the argument that the law was an outcome of the power struggle between the two wings who agreed upon the subject of “saving the homeland” during the National Struggle. The two wings that were emerged during the discussions of the alcohol ban were the conservative and radical wings of the National Struggle. The conservatives wanted to strengthen the conservatism of the society by a law about alcohol consumption as soon as the TBMM was opened. On the other hand, the radicals tried to resist the efforts of the conservatives. However, the repeal of the law became possible only after the winning of the National Struggle when the radicals no longer needed the conservatives’ support.<sup>116</sup>

The third dimension of the law, according to Alp kaya, was about the fact that Turkish nationalism merged with Islam. Non-Muslims who wanted freedom were symbolized in the eyes of the Turkish people by their hats, alcoholic beverages and their publicly seen women. These objects and practices which symbolized the everyday life of non-Muslims were contradictory to Turkish nationalists’ conscience. The negative image of non-Muslims in the eyes of Turkish people was the reason why the law was applied severely in İstanbul after the city was taken by the TBMM, although, in those days, Mustafa Kemal had started drinking publicly and people who did not obey the law were being released. To put it another way, while the

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<sup>115</sup> Faruk Alp kaya, “Birinci Meclisin İçki Yasağı Men-i Müskirat Kanunu”, Mülkiye 32, no. 258 (2008), p. 162. This article was also published as the foreword of Onur Karahanoğulları’s book *Birinci Meclisin İçki Yasağı: Men-i Müskirat Kanunu*(Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, 2008).

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

Second Group was being eliminated in the parliament the law was used as a weapon and a tool for the suppression against the non-Muslims who inhabited in Istanbul.<sup>117</sup>

Finally, Alpkaya looks at the global context of the period in question. After World War I, he says, the globalist and libertarian mentality started to be replaced by conservatism. As an outcome, in countries such as the United States and Finland the prohibition of alcohol became a current issue with the efforts of conservative Christian foundations.<sup>118</sup> Alpkaya writes that the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* cannot be understood without taking all these different dimensions into account.

The most inclusive study on the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* is the book of Onur Karahanogulları, *Birinci Meclisin İçki Yasağı Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* (The Law Banning Alcohol of the First Assembly, *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu*). He supports Faruk Alpkaya's arguments by looking at *Zabıt Cerideleri* (the minutes of the Parliament) and memoirs related to the period in question. First of all, he notes that most of the deputies who were defending the law were members of the Second Group. He states that while conservative arguments were mostly based on Islamic thoughts, the ethical values of farmers, traders and lawyers were also effective. The proponents of the law had varied reasons, such as the precepts of Islam, conservatism, keeping society under control, saving the health of younger generations, strengthening the economic conditions of Muslims against the non-Muslim minorities, creating a spiritual bond between the Muslim people and the assembly. They emphasized the necessity of preventing the social destruction caused by alcohol. On the other hand, the opponents of the law argued that the prohibition of alcohol would cause tax losses. In addition, they claimed that there were more urgent tasks than passing such a law and trying to

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., pp. 163, 165.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., pp. 165-166.

apply it. Karahanoğulları also emphasizes the fact that the government did not support the law.<sup>119</sup>

Another study about the law is Aytül Tamer's article, "Basın ve İktidar İlişkileri: Birinci Meclis'in Men-i Müskirat Kanunu Üzerine Tartışmalar" (The Relations between the Media and the Government: Discussions on the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* of the First Assembly). In this article, Tamer looks at the discussions in newspapers and journals published in Ankara and Istanbul that dealt with *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* during its enforcement and repeal. She particularly focuses on the reflections of the opponents and supporters of the government.<sup>120</sup> At the center of her article there are political conflicts and power struggles. She argues that when the process of proposal and enactment of the prohibition law is put into its political and historical context, it can be seen that it was not proposed with the sole aim of struggling against alcohol<sup>121</sup>: She writes that "*Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* was much more than an alcohol ban; it was a political contestation, if not a showdown." Moreover, she emphasizes the religious aspect of the law. She claims that the alcohol ban was an idea that was brought forward during the first days of the War of Independence against the government in Istanbul that had the power of the Caliphate by the Islamists who supported total independence and the movement in Anatolia. This is because of the fact that religion was the strongest instrument in order to get support from the Muslim population in Anatolia for the struggle of freedom. She adds that the government in Istanbul was propagating against the newly emerging movements in Anatolia by accusing them of being "faithless." Therefore, by

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<sup>119</sup> Onur Karahanoğulları, *Birinci Meclisin İçki Yasağı: Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* (Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, 2008), pp. 16-18.

<sup>120</sup> Aytül Tamer, "Basın ve İktidar İlişkileri: Birinci Meclis'in Men-i Müskirat Kanunu Üzerine Tartışmalar," *Kebikeç* 16, no. 31 (2011), p. 210.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

prohibiting a substance that was already forbidden by religion, the Islamists attempted to prove that the aim of the movement in Anatolia, although it was in conflict with the Sultanate and the Caliphate, was to found an Islamic state.<sup>122</sup> However, it is important to note that the law was not passed with unanimity. There were 71 “yes”, 71 “no” and 3 abstentions in the voting. The law was passed with the yes vote of Vehbi Efendi, the deputy of Konya, because he was the moderator.<sup>123</sup> Thus, one should avoid making overall arguments about the target of the law.

Apart from the religious, political and class differences, the reaction against the power of Mustafa Kemal was also crucial in the division of the First Assembly into two groups. According to Tamer, the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* was the catalyst of this separation and the first step of the faction in the Grand National Assembly. Ahmet Demirel points out that it is common in Turkish historiography to define the First Group<sup>124</sup> as the gathering spot of “the progressives who wanted to demolish the Ottoman reign and found a secular state,” and the Second Group<sup>125</sup> as the gathering spot of “the conservatives who were loyal to the Ottoman order, reign and caliphate.” However, Yerasimos distinguishes the two groups on a class basis, and argues that while the First Group was constituted of civilian bureaucrats, soldiers and workers, the Second Group was composed of notables, landowners and religious functionaries.<sup>126</sup> This power struggle between the two groups came to an end in 1923. With an amendment in the *Hiyanet-i Vataniye Kanunu* (the High Treason Law)

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., pp. 227-228.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>124</sup> The First Group was founded on 10 May 1921 by Mustafa Kemal. Ahmet Demirel, *Ali Şükrü Bey'in Tan Gazetesi*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1996), p. 19.

<sup>125</sup> The Second Group was founded on July 1922. Ahmet Demirel, *Ali Şükrü Bey'in Tan Gazetesi*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1996), p. 24.

<sup>126</sup> Tamer, pp. 211, 229.

on 15 April 1923 political activities of the parties in the parliament other than the First Group were precluded. A short period later, the Second Group was eliminated with the election of 1923. Finally it was annihilated in 1926.<sup>127</sup>

In addition to the power struggle between the two groups in the parliament, a personal attack on Mustafa Kemal's powerful position can be seen as one of the targets of the opposition group in the parliament in defending prohibition. Ali Şükrü Bey, the deputy who proposed the alcohol ban and the leader and spokesman of the Second Group in the parliament, published booklets which supported the Caliphate.<sup>128</sup> Moreover, he was an opponent of the Committee of Union and Progress. It was also known that he was close to Saidi Nursi. He published a newspaper called *Tan*(Dawn) against *Hâkimiyet-i Milliye*(Sovereignty of the Nation), the newspaper in which Mustafa Kemal wrote. Especially he was on very bad terms with the government and Mustafa Kemal during the negotiations of the Treaty of Lausanne. Ali Şükrü Bey was killed in March 1923 by Topal Osman Ağa,<sup>129</sup> the bodyguard of Mustafa Kemal. It is claimed that Ali Şükrü Bey was killed on the command of Mustafa Kemal.<sup>130</sup>

Another argument might be that the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* had economic reasons. As Sadi Irmak indicates, in the early 1920s money was a crucial issue because it was needed to send to the front. The first law of the Grand National

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<sup>127</sup> Ahmet Demirel, *Ali Şükrü Bey'in Tan Gazetesi*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1996), pp. 29-31.

<sup>128</sup> Ayşe Hür, "Çağımızın Bir (Başka) Kahramanı: Topal Osman", *Birikim*, (January 2006 ). Accessed on 25 February 2012, Available [online]: <<http://www.birikimdergisi.com/birikim/makale.aspx?mid=92>>.

<sup>129</sup> The parliament decided to execute the murderer of Ali Şükrü, Topal Osman Ağa, by hanging at Ulus Square, Ankara. Osman Ağa's corpse was hung by its foot. Avni Özgürel, "Ali Şükrü ve Topal Osman," *Radikal*, 13 July 2003.

<sup>130</sup> Avni Özgürel, "Ali Şükrü ve Topal Osman," *Radikal*, 13 July 2003. Accessed on 19 February 2012, Available [online]: <<http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=81346>>.



Assembly was *Ağnam Resmi Kanunu* (the Law for Animal Tax), which was passed on 24 April 1920 and increased the animal tax four times.<sup>131</sup> According to Sadi Irmak, this law aimed to compensate the expenses of the state and the army.<sup>132</sup> Another law that was passed in the same year, *Düğünlerde Men'i İsrifat Kanunu* (the Law Banning Prodigality in Weddings), can be seen as a similar measure that the government took in order to prevent people from spending money. With this law, the government forbade unnecessary expenses for weddings such as feasts and entertainment that lasted more than one day and having more clothes made than necessary.<sup>133</sup>

One of the arguments that was made during the discussions of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* was that the importation of alcoholic beverages caused the national wealth to be wasted.<sup>134</sup> However, Ferit Bey, the minister of finance, remarked that the treasury received 20 million liras of revenues from alcoholic beverages.<sup>135</sup> He claimed that with a prohibition law, at least a million liras would be lost in the budget. He proposed a tax increase on alcoholic beverages in place of prohibition. He also criticized the proposal that the non-Muslims should be exempt from prohibition on the grounds that such an exemption would cause them to become richer than Muslims.<sup>136</sup> On the other hand, Ali Şükrü Bey, the deputy who proposed the prohibition law, objected to the minister of finance, claiming that alcohol consumption only helped to make the non-Muslims richer: “Hundred and twenty

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<sup>131</sup> TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, 24 April 1336/1920.

<sup>132</sup> Sadi Irmak, *Devrim Tarihi*, pp. 127-128.

<sup>133</sup> TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, 25 November 1336/1920.

<sup>134</sup> Karahanoğulları, p. 30.

<sup>135</sup> Erhan Afyoncu, “1 oy farkla içki yasağı”, *Bugün*, 23 January 2011.

<sup>136</sup> Karahanoğulları, pp. 43, 45.

million kilos of drinks are consumed in the country, the money the Greeks and the Armenians got from 120 million kilos of drinks...”<sup>137</sup>

At this point, it is important to ask whether the amount alcohol consumption was really high. Actually, there are some numbers which indicate that alcohol consumption in Turkey was low in the 1920s. According to reports of the *Sanayi Kongresi* (Industry Congress), held in Ankara on 22-23 April 1930, the amount of wine imported from abroad during the years between 1923 and 1928 was low: Turkey imported 131,293 kilos of wine per year and it cost 70,731 liras. Wine production in Turkey was 3 million kilos per year. The wine tax was 10 kuruş per kilo and total tax taken from wine was 300,000 liras per year. In this congress it was stated that wine consumption was low because of high prices. Moreover, tax reduction was suggested in order to lower the wine prices. It was also stated that 3 kuruş of export premium per kilo of wine was given to those who exported wine.<sup>138</sup> Considering the statistics that show the foreign trade of Istanbul in the first six months of 1923, the total importation of alcoholic beverages, spirituous water, vinegar and mineral water was 35,900 liras out of total importation of 38,474,991 liras and the total exportation of “alcoholic beverages and spirituous water” was 39.275 liras out of total exportation of 12.941,948 *liras*.<sup>139</sup> From these numbers it can be understood that the importation of alcoholic beverages was very low contrary to the arguments of the defenders of prohibition.

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>138</sup> *1930 Sanayi Kongresi: Raporlar, Kararlar, Zabıtlar* (Ankara: Milli İktisat ve Tasarruf Cemiyeti Umum Merkezi; Ankara Sanayi Odası, 2008), pp. 257-258. One of the aims of *Milli İktisat ve Tasarruf Cemiyeti* (The Society of National Economy and Savings) stated in its statute (nizamname) was to try to increase the amount of domestic production, to improve their quality and decrease their prices (p. IV).

<sup>139</sup> *İstanbul Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası Mecmuası*, no. 1, trans. Zekeriya Kurşun (İstanbul: İTO, 2007), pp. 12-13.

Another aspect of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* was religion. The fact that alcohol is forbidden in Islam was used as the strongest argument by the defenders of the prohibition law. For instance, some of the deputies claimed that it was not appropriate to drink and get drunk while the country was in trouble because, they argued, God would not bestow victory on those who did not obey his commands.<sup>140</sup> In addition, as Karahanoğulları points out, the defenders of prohibition thought that the state should have been sensitive to the religious values of society and it had to apply the necessities of the religion, implying Islam. Moreover, they shared the idea that some of the rulers of the nation were intellectuals and they were alienated from the people. Therefore, they claimed, there was a need for conservatism that would protect the religious values in order to commingle the people and the ruling class. Karahanoğulları claims that with the prohibition of alcohol, the state was expected to be the implementer of religion in social life. The religion-based arguments of the defenders of the prohibition law were so sharp that even one of the deputies claimed that it was not possible to defend something, implying alcohol, which was forbidden by the Kur'an just in order to collect taxes from it. In the minds of these people, the laws of the state could not be contradictory with the orders of Islam. In addition, Karahanoğulları claims that these religious concerns had an equivalent in social life, especially in the relations between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. During the discussions of the law one of the mostly underlined issues was the argument that the non-Muslims got rich because of the Muslims' addiction to alcohol. One of the deputies claimed that in the debt registers of the taverns, which were owned by the non-Muslims, there were only the names of Muslims.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup>Erhan Afyoncu, "1 oy farkla içki yasağı," *Bugün*, 23 January 2011.

<sup>141</sup> Karahanoğulları, pp. 62-63.

That the target of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* was the non-Muslim populations in Turkey is the most convincing answer to the question of why alcohol was forbidden although its consumption amount was law in Turkey. This fact is clear in the discussions in the Assembly, in the articles of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu*, and the enforcement of the law. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, there were numerous taverns that were run by non-Muslims in Istanbul. The taverns of Hacı Mardiros, Sarafin, Hacı Manolis and Ermeni Sarkis were just a few of them.<sup>142</sup> In the bill of law it was proposed that the equipment and implements which were used for producing alcoholic beverages be confiscated. Some of the deputies were against this proposal on the grounds that it was not acceptable to confiscate the capital of those who were in the alcohol business. However, this argument was severely criticized by Hasan Basri, the deputy of Karesi, who said, “Let their shops be closed down in return for what they have sucked in just like bloodsuckers for years.”<sup>143</sup> Considering the fact that, in Turkey, alcohol business was dominantly run by the Greeks and Armenians, these virulent expressions and the fourth article of the law were targeted at the non-Muslim population of the country.

A similar attitude toward the non-Muslims can be seen in the law about the Friday holiday. On 2 January 1924 with Law no. 394, it was decided that the holiday of the week would be Friday.<sup>144</sup> According to Murat Koraltürk, it was obvious that behind this law, there was a nationalistic attitude against the non-Muslim capital and labor force which played crucial roles in the economy of Turkey. He argues that the hostility and anger towards the non-Muslims turned into a struggle for making the

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<sup>142</sup> *Rakı Ansiklopedisi*, p. 26.

<sup>143</sup> Karahanoğulları, p. 80.

<sup>144</sup> TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, 2 January 1340/1924.

Muslim-Turks dominant in economic life, and, with this aim, Friday was chosen as the weekend. He shows a statement of Yusuf Akçura, the deputy of Istanbul, during the discussions about the law in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, “There are some shops in Istanbul, especially the shops that are not in *our*<sup>145</sup> hands...” as an indication of the nationalist attitude in the economy.<sup>146</sup>

In Istanbul, the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* started to be enforced on 9 December 1923 although it was decided to be enforced beginning from 1 March 1923. The government of Second Assembly forgave ten people who behaved against the law in the period between 9 December 1923 and 9 April 1924 and it postponed the removing of the alcoholic beverages that were collected on 21 February 1924 until the budget meetings. According to Aytül Tamer, these facts were the sings of the government’s reluctance to enforce the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* or its intent to repeal it. In spite of these signs, the government enforced the law strictly in Istanbul. Tamer claims that this inconsistent attitude of the government can be seen as a power play of the government in Ankara.<sup>147</sup> This attitude also shows that the government’s aim in Istanbul was to weaken the economic power of the non-Muslims.

During the discussions of the repeal of prohibition, Zeki Bey, the deputy of Gümüşhane, pointed out that the main target of the prohibition law in Istanbul could not be reached because the law was abused. He said that this new law had some obscurities and “Apustol”s and “Nikoli”s<sup>148</sup> would benefit from these obscurities

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<sup>145</sup> Italics belong to me.

<sup>146</sup> Murat Koraltürk, “Cumhuriyet’in İlk Yıllarına Ekonomide Milliyetçi Bir Tepki: Cuma Tatili,” *Kebikeç*, no. 31 (2011): 189-195. pp.191-193.

<sup>147</sup> Tamer, pp. 224-225.

<sup>148</sup> The names Apustol and Nikoli were used to imply non-Muslims.

again. Therefore he requested that the new law be clear.<sup>149</sup> In those sentences, it is obvious that the main targets of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* were the non-Muslim communities in Turkey.

With the Treaty of Lausanne, “the remainder of the Greek Orthodox population of Anatolia (but not that of Istanbul), about 900,000 people, were exchanged against the Muslims from Greece (except the community in western Thrace) who numbered about 400,000.”<sup>150</sup> Zürcher states that in 1923 Anatolia turned into a completely different place from what it had been in 1913. After the population changes, most of the Christian communities left and Anatolia, apart from Istanbul, became approximately 98 percent Muslim as opposed to 80 percent before the wars.<sup>151</sup> Falih Rıfkı (Atay) said that until 1923, the Christians had had all the assets and profitable sources of income of Ankara in their hands, just like they had in the other parts of the country. They had had hotels, restaurants and inns. He added that the Christians had acted as the masters of the Turks. In 1923, when he had arrived to Ankara, there had been left nothing from the Christian neighborhood except for the vineyard houses. He said that after the Armenians and the Greeks had left, there had remained neither prosperity nor life in Ankara. There had not been, he said, even a proper desk for dining or writing. He added that they – the founders of the new state – were the ones who would build Ankara, which was the symbol of Turkey in their eyes, and whole country from head to toe.<sup>152</sup> This description clearly illustrates the transformation that Anatolia experienced in the 1910s and 1920s. After

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<sup>149</sup> TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. 8, İ: 32, 8 April 1340/1924, c: 1, p. 419.

<sup>150</sup> Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), p. 164.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>152</sup> Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Çankaya: Atatürk Devri Hatıraları* [Çankaya: The Memoirs of the Atatürk Era], vol. 1, (İstanbul: Dünya Yayınları, 1961), p. 247.

the non-Muslims were gone, the country was left to be rebuilt economically and culturally as a Turkish nation-state.

Although it is not the aim of this chapter to scrutinize the failings in the enforcement of the law, it is important to know that the law could never be enforced properly. There were numerous remissions that were applied personally.<sup>153</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar's story *Meyhanede Kadınlar* (Women in Tavern), written in 1924, colorfully depicts the failing in the enforcement of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu*. In the story, which takes place in a Greek tavern that was run by a man named Apostol, it is stated that the government not only could not stop people from drinking, it caused the demand for alcohol to increase. The worst quality and harmful rakı were sold at high prices. Gürpınar says that the prohibition law was unclear and it was impossible to enforce. One of the characters in the story, Ferdi Bey, describes the law as "convenient to abuse and half-organized" and criticizes it due to the fact that it is interrupted by continuous remissions. Moreover, it is said that the streets are full of drunken people and that even policemen are drunk. One of the drunks says that despite the fact that tens of thousands people drink in a day, only a few were arrested, a few who act foolishly. Also, in the story, it is said that the prohibition law was made in order to sadden the drunks and increase the earnings of the barkeepers ten times more. No government pleased the barkeepers as much as the one in the period of prohibition.<sup>154</sup> Gürpınar also underlines the fact that, with the law, the number of women drinkers increased and women started going to taverns with their husbands and drinking together. A drunken man in the story says that before

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<sup>153</sup> See Karahanoğulları, pp. 105-112.

<sup>154</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, "Meyhanede Kadınlar" [Women in Tavern], *Nimetşinas; Hakk'a Sığındık; Meyhanede Kadınlar*, adapt. Kemal Bek (İstanbul: Özgür Yayınları, 1995), pp. 290-295.

prohibition it was impossible to make women sing in taverns. He adds: “Before, only fathers were drunk. Now also mothers have started to assuage their anxieties about life with alcohol.”<sup>155</sup>

The situation was not different in Ankara. In the late 1910s and the early 1920s, both Muslims and non-Muslims used to hold parties in the vineyard houses there. The non-Muslims used to produce their own vines. During the years of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* there were three taverns in Ankara which served alcoholic beverages covertly: *Kuyulu Kahve*, *Efe Haydar’ın Meyhanesi* and *Babo’nun Meyhanesi*.<sup>156</sup> Falih Rıfkı Atay narrates in his book *Çankaya* that although the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* was in force, they used to drink with Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk). He adds that, even if they were not invited by Mustafa Kemal for dinner, they used to get their drinks from the fellow men of a policeman, and drink together with friends in a corner of the restaurant which was located near the Assembly. Moreover, he says that some of the deputies who lived in vineyard houses had distilling apparatus.<sup>157</sup>

Karahanoğulları writes that in the discussions about the enforcement of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* criticism was launched against the administrators on the grounds that they neglected the law or even they violated it. He adds that, despite the fact that it was not stated explicitly, it is obvious that this kind of criticisms was aimed at Mustafa Kemal.<sup>158</sup>

The prohibition of alcohol was repealed with Law no. 470, which amended the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* to a great extent. With this law, to produce alcoholic beverages and to open taverns were allowed on the condition of having licenses.

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<sup>155</sup> Gürpınar, pp. 291, 293.

<sup>156</sup> Funda Şenol Cantek, “Ankara,” *Rakı Ansiklopedisi*, p. 44.

<sup>157</sup> Atay, p. 248.

<sup>158</sup> Karahanoğulları, p. 149.



However, public drinking and drunkenness were forbidden.<sup>159</sup> Karahanoğulları emphasizes that prohibition was repealed easily due to the fact that the opposition in the parliament had lost its power. During the discussions about the modification of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu*, even the statement of Naim Hâzım, the deputy of Konya, that they should not have let thousands of taverns and pubs be opened in a period when thousands of classrooms of 300 medreseshad been closed down did not gain much attention.<sup>160</sup>

The repeal of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* can be seen as the victory of the First Group in the Parliament and also an important part of the secularization process in Turkey. *The New York Times* interpreted the repeal of the law as follows: “The National Assembly in Angora (... ) wanted to demonstrate its interest in the welfare of the people and incidentally to accustom the Turks to recognizing the potency of a civil law as against the loose and voluntary observance of a religious injunction.” In *New York Times*, Rich wrote that the People’s Party abolished the Caliphate

because the leaders believed there was no need of a ruler of the faithful in the presence of a State machinery organized to perform that very function. It now has abolished prohibition because the Nationalists believed that the State had no business to enforce an article of religious faith, and because prohibition was economically unprofitable. It cost too much to enforce it and increased the burden of taxation borne by the people.<sup>161</sup>

The column stated that for the Turkish government the prohibition law meant the loss of an important source of revenue. In addition, it was argued that one of the disadvantages of the law for the Kemalists was its “religious precept with the Moslems” because the Kemalists aimed to teach people the difference between civil

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<sup>159</sup> TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, 9 April 1340/1924.

<sup>160</sup> Karahanoğulları, pp. 150, 153.

<sup>161</sup> Louis Rich, “Alcohol Returns to Turkey after year of Prohibition,” *The New York Times*, 27 April 1924.

and religious law. It was also stated that the prohibition was repealed in order not only to restore the revenues from alcoholic beverages, but also to show the Muslim world that Turkey wanted to “build her future on the foundation of modern ideas and practices, wholly uninfluenced by religious traditions [sic].”<sup>162</sup> This last sentence is crucial in order to see the fact that the state’s attitude toward the alcohol ban in particular and alcohol consumption in general was in parallel to the secularization attempts of the state.

The same thing can be seen in the process of the monopolization of alcohol: New York Times wrote that “Turkey’s plan to form a Government monopoly” over alcohol was “in line with the general split from Islamic rule which Kemal has been fostering for some time.”<sup>163</sup> It will be seen in the next chapter that this parallelism between secularization process and the state policies on the consumption of alcoholic beverages would divert the leading figures of the anti-alcohol movement to the arguments that had secular concerns at the center.

In order to see a bigger picture of the anti-alcohol movement of the 1920s, it is necessary to look at the group of alcohol opponents that were gathered around the *Hilal-i Ahdar Cemiyeti* (Green Crescent Society). At the first meeting of the *Hilal-i Ahdar Cemiyeti*, Mazhar Osman (Uzman) declared the duty of the Society to be “the struggle against alcohol which is an unfamiliar enemy to the homeland where religion dominates.” He said that alcohol was not quite known in Turkey; however some “imitators” and “characterless people” had taught the ill of alcohol to Turkish

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> *The New York Times*, 21 August 1927.

people,<sup>164</sup> even those who lived in villages. Alcohol was forbidden by religion, it was deleterious, devastating for younger generations, an economic disaster, and not a necessity of civilization but socially and morally graceless and shameful. Mazhar Osman said that those who made money out of the alcohol business at the expense of lives and the economy of the Turkish people were “foreigners”. He said that there were more than three million liras of alcohol revenues in the Ottoman Public Debt Administration but he offered other solutions for this problem by arguing that the Muslims were not obliged to pay it.<sup>165</sup>

Among the main arguments of the alcohol opponents were saving the youth, health concerns, especially mental health and the danger of syphilis in general. They saw alcoholics as a burden on society because they were put in hospitals, asylums or prisons of which expenses were imposed on the nation. Moreover, they thought, alcoholics spread tuberculosis to other people with their phlegm. They severely criticized the notion that alcohol was a necessity of modernity and civilization. The religious aspect of alcohol consumption was stressed and the reasons why alcohol was forbidden in Islam were explained. The fact that the chief religious official Haydarizâde İbrahim Efendi also gave a speech during the meeting shows the importance of Islam for the alcohol opponents. They showed the state measures taken against alcohol consumption in the United States and European countries as exemplary for Turkey. For them, there are four ways of struggle with alcohol: First, training and education; second, facilitating the ways in which people get engaged in occupations that would prevent them from drinking; third, limitation and/or regularization of production, consumption and sale of alcoholic beverages; and last,

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<sup>164</sup> I use the term “Turkish people” in substitution for “our people” in the original text. Actually the term “Turkish” is not present in related sentences of the text. By “our people” they mean Muslim-Turks; there is not a racial connotation.

<sup>165</sup> “Hilal-i Ahdar Cemiyeti”, *Sebilürreşad* 18, no. 462 (April 1336/1920), p. 235.

an official prohibition of alcohol. The last one is very significant considering the fact that almost a month later, the prohibition of alcohol was proposed in the Grand National Assembly.<sup>166</sup>

The Green Crescent Society maintained its anti-alcohol activities after the repeal of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu*. The anti-alcohol societies in the United States and Europe got in touch with the Green Crescent Society in Turkey, as is known from news in one of the issues of *Sebilürreşad* that was published in July 1924.<sup>167</sup> After the repeal of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu*, this group of alcohol opponents criticized the repeal by comparing the condition of the country before and after the repeal of the law. They claimed that during the years of prohibition all taverns in Anatolia had been closed and “the barrels of rakı, which devastated the most robust constituents of the nation”, had been broken. Therefore, they thought, the damages that had been caused by alcohol had decreased to a great extent and there were left almost none crime cases in the courts. However, they added, the Second Assembly “pulled down” the “beneficial” prohibition law and they gave freedom of drinking. With the repeal of the law, “everywhere became full of taverns”: Only in Istanbul, seven thousands of barkeepers applied to the police for permission to open taverns. It is indicated in the article that, after the repeal, fifteen or twenty thousand *okka*<sup>168</sup> of rakı were consumed in a day on average. According to a calculation, there were 160,000 drinkers in Istanbul. The most striking point is the claim that only the barkeeper Greeks benefited from the repeal. It is pointed out that thousands of drinkers got drunk everyday, and they made the Greeks rich instead of spending

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., pp. 235-237.

<sup>167</sup> “Hilal-i Ahdar’ın Faaliyeti” [The Activities of the Green Crescent Society], *Sebilürreşad* 24, no. 610 (July 1340/1924), p. 188.

<sup>168</sup> 1 *okka* equals to 1282 gram.

money for their families. For them it was a big mistake to liberate drinking just to be able to collect taxes on alcoholic beverages.<sup>169</sup>

In a congress on October 1924, the Green Crescent Society designated its demands as follows: (1) The Green Crescent supported an absolute prohibition. (2) For now, the Society wanted the enforcement of the law of alcohol ban and the absolute prohibition of beverages with high alcohol content, such as rakı and whisky. (3) The Society demanded that not more than two glasses of beer or one glass of wine should be given to anyone in restaurants. (4) Drunks should be punished severely and the taverns in which they got drunk should be punished with cash fines. (5) Alcohol should not be given to those who were younger than twenty. (6) People should not be allowed to drink without eating anything in the restaurants. (7) Taverns and bars should be closed down. (8) Carousals and sale of liquor should not be allowed in brothels.<sup>170</sup> From these demands, it is seen that the Society continued to support the prohibition of alcohol even after the repeal of the law of alcohol ban.

Mazhar Osman (Uzman) was one of the most ardent supporters of the prohibition and he criticized the government's decision of repeal. He claimed that during the years of prohibition, families had found peace and happiness owing to the fact that the fathers had stopped drinking and wasting their money on alcohol and had started using it for the benefit of their families. However, he said that some "self-interested people who got jealous of this happiness" had started propagating against prohibition. He said that after prohibition had been repealed, the number of drinkers had increased. Even the streets in which the Muslims lived in Istanbul were full of

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<sup>169</sup> "Hilal-i Ahdar'ın Faaliyeti" [The Activities of the Green Crescent Society], *Sebilürreşad* 24, no. 610 (July 1340/1924), p. 189.

<sup>170</sup> "Hilal-i Ahdar Kongresi" [The Congress of the Green Crescent Society] *Sebilürreşad* 24, no. 623 (October 1340/1924), p. 390.

taverns. He said that it was enough to see the situation of Istanbul to hate alcohol. He complained about the drunks by pointing out that it was not possible to walk on the streets after sunset without getting annoyed by drunks, who accosted anyone they came across. And the police, he said, did not do anything to prevent this “mummery.” Mazhar Osman added that, while alcohol had been banned, only the alcoholics had been able to find alcohol covertly and they had drunk it by themselves. However, after the ban had been repealed, people started making carousals in front of their children. They tempted people who had never drunk before. He added that even women had started to be alcoholics and children had learned drinking before they learned the alphabet. He also claimed that alcohol addiction in the villages had been brought about by state officials and policemen. Otherwise, for him, the religious training, customs and conventions were sufficient to frighten the people away from alcohol. He also said that in Turkey, it was not necessary to make propaganda against alcohol consumption due to the fact that people were totally against it: “Just because of a few alcoholics whole nation suffer”.<sup>171</sup>

Another figure who supported alcohol opposition in the 1920s was Abdülaziz Çaviş, who was an Egyptian interested in the anti-alcohol movement in Turkey. He wrote *Âsâru'l-hamr*, a book published in Arabic in Istanbul in 1923. Later it was translated by Mehmet Akif Ersoy<sup>172</sup> into Turkish as *İçkinin Zararları: İçkinin Hayat-ı Beşerde Açtığı Rahneler* (The Evils of Alcohol: The Wounds that Alcohol Causes in Human Life). Abdülaziz Çaviş wrote that the Muslim nations did nothing to prevent alcohol consumption and its negative effects on human beings except for the

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., pp. 391-393.

<sup>172</sup> Mehmet Akif was also one of the publishers of the journal *Sebilürreşad*.

government in Ankara. He complained about the fact that in Egypt alcohol consumption was on such a high level that it was not, according to him, appropriate for Muslim morality.<sup>173</sup> I think this statement is important because of the fact that it reflects the notion that Turkey was the only “Muslim” country that followed the “Christian” countries’ prohibition trend. And also we get a sense that the Muslim countries saw Turkey as a model. Çaviş also criticized people, claiming while they did not buy foreign products and tried to wear local fabric and save money they did not think about the money they were wasting in taverns. He said that while they were trying to escape from the “economic enslavement of the enemy,” and promote national industry, they did not think of saving some of their “heaps of wealth,” which they were wasting on alcohol, for the benefit of Muslims and “the land of Islam.”<sup>174</sup> He said that “the armies of alcohol” that laid an ambush all around the country were helping the enemies of the Muslims take away their property and clutter their communities. He categorized the harms of alcohol under five titles: harm to health, harm to family and marriage, adultery and prostitution, harm to trade, industry and means of transportation, and harm to the state treasury.<sup>175</sup>

### The Beginning of the State Monopoly Era: *Tekel*

Under the Ottoman rule, alcohol was produced by small enterprises. *The New York Times* wrote that “The Turk has long been accustomed to making his own rakı in his native village.”<sup>176</sup> Wine was usually produced near the vineyard. Alcohol

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<sup>173</sup> Abdülaziz Çaviş, *İçkinin Zararları: İçkinin Hayat-ı Beşerde Açtığı Rahneler* [The Evils of Alcohol: The Wounds that Alcohol Causes in Human Life], trans. Mehmet Akif Ersoy (Ankara: 1339-1341, İstanbul: Rağbet Yayınları, 2003), p. 16.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 29.

<sup>176</sup> *The New York Times*, 21 August 1927.

production was insufficient both in quantity and quality. There was a small number of beer factories that had been built with foreign investment, but wine and rakı were produced in small workshops. Some of the factories were closed because of the fact that they could not compete with imported liquors. At the beginning of the 1900s, two important beer companies were founded: *Bomonti Bira Şirketi* (Bomonti Beer Company) in 1905 and *Nektar Bira Şirketi* (Nektar Beer Company) in 1908. These two companies were merged in a later period. The factories which produced alcoholic beverages were mostly located in the western regions of today's boundaries of Turkey. According to the statistics of 1897, Aydın and Edirne were the most important provinces in this region. In the first years of the Republican period, the Aegean and Thrace regions became the first regions that were paid attention to, especially for wine production.<sup>177</sup> There were many different kinds of rakı before the state monopoly: *Ahali Rakısı*, *Ahenk Rakısı*, *Dimitrakopulo*, *Alaz Rakı*, *Albeni Rakısı*, *Bağyüzü*, *Aşık Rakısı*, *Neş'e*, *YeniNeş'e*, *AyvalıkRakısı*, are just some examples.<sup>178</sup>

The fact that alcoholic beverages were an important source of taxation for an economy of which target was national industrialization paved the way for monopolization in the field of ethyl alcohol and distilled alcoholic beverages. *Tekel*<sup>179</sup> Liquor Factories<sup>180</sup> were the places in which the monopolization of alcoholic beverages were put into practice. Some of these liquor factories were the only

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<sup>177</sup> A. Suut Doğruel and Fatma Doğruel, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Tekel* (İstanbul: Tekel, 2000), p. 123.

<sup>178</sup> *Rakı Ansiklopedisi*.

<sup>179</sup> *Tekel* means monopoly.

<sup>180</sup> *Tekel İçki Fabrikaları* were the production plants of alcoholic beverages in the years between 1930 and 2003. Fügen Basmacı, "Tekel İçki Fabrikaları", *Rakı Ansiklopedisi*, p. 529.



industrial establishment of the districts in which they were located. In such places, they were the pioneers of the industry.<sup>181</sup>

A little while after the law of prohibition was repealed *TheNew York Times* wrote: “Turkey does not produce enough alcohol to satisfy the country’s demand for drinks. She must rely on the importation of intoxicants from abroad. The new law leaves the manufacture and sale of alcoholic spirits in private hands, but provides for a rigid Government control of the trade”<sup>182</sup> Due to the fact that the alcohol production technology was in very bad condition, in alcohol production numerous regulations were implemented in the Republican period. The most prominent one among these was a ban on the production of liquors with high alcohol content for the private sector.<sup>183</sup>

Alcoholic beverages were monopolized by the state with Law no. 790, *İspirto ve Meşrubatı Küüliye İnhisarı Hakkında Kanun*<sup>184</sup> (The Law about the Monopoly of Spirits and Alcoholic Beverages), which was accepted on 22 March 1926. According to the first article of the law, production, importation and sale of all kinds of alcohol and alcoholic beverages (including wine, beer and all kinds of liquor) in the Republic of Turkey were taken under the government monopoly. With this law, the government was able to manage this monopoly by assigning it to a Turkish incorporated company. There was a special regulation for wine: While its trade was taken under the state monopoly, its production and exportation was liberated. Moreover, the government put some obligations on the monopoly administration of

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<sup>181</sup> Fügen Basmacı, “Tekel İçki Fabrikaları”, *Rakı Ansiklopedisi*, pp. 529-530.

<sup>182</sup> Louis Rich, “Alcohol Returns to Turkey after year of Prohibition”, *TheNew York Times*, 27 April 1924.

<sup>183</sup> Doğruel, p. 120.

<sup>184</sup> TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, 22 March 1926.

alcoholic beverages, different from the other monopoly administrations so that the administration would build factories in two years that would be able to produce three million kilos of alcohol per year and improve its production capacity so that, in five years, it could meet the demands of the whole country. In the law, it was also stated that production plants had to report their capacities and assets to the Bureau of State Monopolies in a month. Also, the Bureau of State Monopolies was given the right to allow the production of existing production plants. The building of new plants was also under the permission of the Bureau of State Monopolies.<sup>185</sup>

The most important target of the republican governments was to revive the economy, which was a heritage of a departed empire and had been weakened under the difficult conditions of the War of Independence. In the 1920s and 1930s, a certain amount of the monopoly revenues was allocated to the construction of railway, which was the most effective means of transportation and was seen as a “national matter.” Making the railways functional was crucial for facilitating trade, for the revival of the economy and for the power of the central government to reach a wider region.<sup>186</sup> The fact that 4.5 percent of the alcoholic beverages’ profit on sale, which was 180,000 liras per year, was allocated to *Türk Tayyare Cemiyeti* (Turkish Airplane Association)<sup>187</sup> shows that the Turkish state attempted to benefit from alcoholic beverages for national purposes.

With the monopoly, the state attempted to eliminate small enterprises and standardize alcohol production. By doing this, it prevented production in houses to a great extent. Moreover, alcohol factories played an important role in the

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<sup>185</sup> Doğruel, p. 144.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>187</sup> Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi, 9.10.1935.

industrialization process of Turkey. Rakı was produced by both the *İnhisarlar İdaresi* (Bureau of State Monopolies) and other producers until 1944. 1944, the year *Yeni Rakı* was released to the market by *İnhisarlar İdaresi* is also the year when rakı started be produced by only *İnhisarlar İdaresi*.<sup>188</sup>

Propaganda against the non-Muslims continued even after the alcohol ban was repealed and alcohol was taken under the state monopoly. For instance, the advertisements of *Baküs Rakısı*<sup>189</sup> were “extremely nationalist, even racist.” In an advertisement of *Baküs Rakısı* that was published on 17 July 1929 in *Milliyet* it was written:

Let us appreciate our Armenian citizens who live in our lands and draw a lesson from their help to their *ırkdaş*.<sup>190</sup> Pay attention: None of our Armenian citizens employs a Turk in their work if it is not necessary, none of them buys a good from anyone else except for their *ırkdaş*, they do encourage the others to buy goods of their *ırkdaş*. We, the Turks, who have to advance economically, let us appreciate and imitate our Armenian citizens. Let us prefer to buy any good that Turks sell from the Turks. To do the opposite is a deplorable strike to the Turkish economic life.<sup>191</sup>

Under the advertisement, it also wrote: “The beerhouses and most of the groceries in Beyoğlu do not give you *Baküs* except you want it insistently. The Greeks try to enrich the Greeks, the Armenians try to enrich the Armenians. And we, the Turks, run after them blindly.”<sup>192</sup>

To sum up, the fact that an anti-alcohol movement emerged in Turkey at the end of the 1910s and the beginning of 1920s had various reasons. First of all, there was a trend of prohibition in Europe and the United States, which had started in the

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<sup>188</sup> Fügen Basmacı, “Yeni Rakı”, *Rakı Ansiklopedisi*, p. 571.

<sup>189</sup> *Baküs Rakısı* was produced by Cemal Baküs. Its alcohol content was 50 percent and its 25cl bottle was sold for 75 kuruş, which was a high price at the time, in 1928. “Baküs Rakısı”, *Rakı Ansiklopedisi*, p. 81.

<sup>190</sup> *İrkdaş* means fellow race.

<sup>191</sup> “Baküs Rakısı”, *Rakı Ansiklopedisi*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

late nineteenth century and spread almost all over the world in the twentieth century. The movement in Turkey was influenced by this trend to a great extent. However, it differed on certain issues which were specific to Turkey. The impact of Islam was one of the biggest differences in the case of Turkey. It helped to shape the alcohol opposition in the country on a large scale. Another specificity of Turkey is the fact that alcohol was identified with the non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire brought a specific dimension to the anti-alcohol movement in Turkey. Together with the perception of alcohol addiction as a threat to the defense of the homeland and its religious and economic dimensions, the alcohol opposition in Turkey was turned into a national matter. Even the government that was against the alcohol ban law used the law as a weapon against the non-Muslims in Istanbul. Moreover, the hostility towards the non-Muslims in Turkey continued to exist after alcohol was taken under the state monopoly.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE SECULAR AND SCIENTIFIC EPISODE OF THE ALCOHOL OPPOSITION

As was stated in the previous chapter, the anti-alcohol movement in Turkey had a religious-based perspective in the early 1920s. However, in the 1930s, the attitudes and arguments of the leaders of the movement were expressed within a secular and scientific approach. This is not to say that in the 1920s there was not any scientific argument in the alcohol opposition; but the emphasis was mostly on religious and ethnical/national concerns. On the other hand, in the 1930s, it is almost impossible to see any reference to religion, except for some cultural aspects of it, in the alcohol opposition. It is interesting to note that although the leading figures of the movement, specifically Mazhar Osman (Uzman) and Fahreddin Kerim (Gökay), were the same people in both decades, the main perspective of the alcohol opposition changed from one decade to other.

The change in perspective can also be detected in the relation between the anti-alcohol movement and the nation-building process. While in the first half of the 1920s “nation” had a religious connotation for the alcohol opponents, it got rid of its religious connotations in the 1930s. This perception change in the term “nation” shows parallelism with the secularization process in Turkey and the change in the state’s definition of the “nation.” During the years of the National Struggle (1919-1923), Turkish nationality was defined by Islam and the criterion of the official political discourse was ethnic pluralism.<sup>193</sup> On the other hand, after 1924, nationalism in Turkey gained secular and civil characteristics.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Ahmet Yıldız, “Kemalist Milliyetçilik,” *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce 2* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002), p. 217.

<sup>194</sup> Yıldız, pp. 221-222.

This dramatic change between the early 1920s and the 1930s can be explained with both internal and external dynamics. Mete Tunçay underlines that during the single-party period in Turkey, religion was attempted to replace with science as a part of the secularization process.<sup>195</sup> Among the Kemalist policies, there were abolition of the caliphate, the Shariah, and the *medrese* system in 1924, banning of the folk Islamic brotherhoods, closing of their meeting halls, lodges, and sacred tombs and so on. According to Parla and Davison most of these measures “were undertaken with the objective of ‘establishing tranquility’ for the new regime by quieting some of its opposition”.<sup>196</sup>

Zafer Toprak points out that in the 1930s the notion of “enlightenment” in Turkey changed and thus archeology took the place of history while anthropology took the place of sociology. He also underlines that during the single-party period, the question of “race” had “anthropological” connotations instead of “ethnic” connotations.<sup>197</sup>

This chapter scrutinizes the period, starting from the end of the 1920s and stretching to the 1930s, when the anti-alcohol movement took a new form that had secular and scientific base. This new form had much to do with modern life, morality, family and childcare, work life and economy. However, it had one theme that preponderated over the others: Eugenics. Therefore, in this chapter most of the emphasis will be given to the impact of eugenics thought on the anti-alcohol movement in Turkey while the other themes complete the framework.

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<sup>195</sup> Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek-Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması(1923-1931)* (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1981), p. 325.

<sup>196</sup> Taha Parla and Andrew Davison, *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004), pp. 48, 50.

<sup>197</sup> Zafer Toprak, *Darwin'den Dersim'e Cumhuriyet ve Antropoloji* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2012), pp. 14-15.

## The Eugenics Thought

First of all, it is useful to give some general information on eugenics thought. The term “eugenics” comes from Greek word *eugenes* that means “wellborn” or “genetically noble.”<sup>198</sup> It was coined for the first time by Sir Francis Galton, who was a nineteenth century English scientist,<sup>199</sup> and a half-cousin of Charles Darwin. Very broadly, eugenicists emphasized that genetic diseases could not be cured and thus the health of the race could only be protected by controlling reproduction.<sup>200</sup>

Eugenics was used as a tool of the social reformist and progressive mentality in the United States and Western Europe in the early 1900s, and it spread to various countries around the world. As in different countries, in Turkey too, the eugenic discourse emerged as a part of the state’s hygienic and ethical regulation.<sup>201</sup>

According to Ayça Alemdaroğlu, eugenics was an outcome of a “conservative mindset” that perceived “foreign,” “unhealthy,” and poor people as a social burden.<sup>202</sup> The conservative dimension of eugenic thought also criticized modern life as having negative effects on younger generations.<sup>203</sup>

Eugenic thought was defended by both progressives and conservatives. On the one hand, the former focused on the improvement of the nation’s health and strength, on the other hand, the latter used eugenics policies as an instrument against

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<sup>198</sup> Ayça Alemdaroğlu, “Öjeni Düşüncesi,” *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce* 4 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2008), p. 417.

<sup>199</sup> Efe Atabay, “Eugenics, Modernity and the Rationalization of Morality in Early Republican Turkey” (MA thesis, McGill University, 2009), p. 1.

<sup>200</sup> Alemdaroğlu, “Öjeni Düşüncesi,” p. 417.

<sup>201</sup> Ayça Alemdaroğlu, “Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey,” *Body Society* 11, no. 3 (September 2005), pp. 67-68.

<sup>202</sup> Alemdaroğlu, “Öjeni Düşüncesi,” p. 418.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

the so-called “unfits,” namely the poor, the “unhealthy” or the “outsider” populations that, in their point of view, were morally degraded and caused an economic burden on society.<sup>204</sup> Below, we will see that these themes were repeated in Turkey.

Considering the numerous studies conducted in different countries, the eugenicists claimed that illnesses such as syphilis and alcoholism were actually social diseases and were usually seen among the poor and workers.<sup>205</sup>

Eugenics thought in Turkey had its origins in social Darwinism and the biological materialism of the Committee of Union and Progress.<sup>206</sup> Social Darwinism was widespread in Europe in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, in the same period in which the ideological and political environment of today’s Turkey was formed.<sup>207</sup> Social Darwinism attracted the attention of the Ottoman intellectuals in the later half of the nineteenth century. They thought that they could only survive among the powerful nations if they were strong.<sup>208</sup> According to Hasan Ünder, social Darwinism attracted the Ottoman and Turkish politicians, soldiers and intellectuals who had had to deal with the survival problem of the Ottoman Empire from the early eighteenth century into the first quarter of the twentieth century. This survival issue caused the Ottoman-Turkish intellectuals and statesmen to be attracted by the idea of social Darwinism that life is a struggle in which the weak were eliminated while the strong survived.<sup>209</sup> In social Darwinist thought, being fit was important not only for

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<sup>204</sup> Alemdaroğlu, “Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey,” p. 68.

<sup>205</sup> Alemdaroğlu, “Öjeni Düşüncesi,” pp. 417-418.

<sup>206</sup> Alemdaroğlu, “Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey,” p. 68.

<sup>207</sup> Hasan Ünder, “Türkiye’de Sosyal Darwinizm Düşüncesi,” *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünceler* 4 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2008), p. 428.

<sup>208</sup> Atabay, p. 16.

<sup>209</sup> Ünder, pp. 428-429.



the strong, but also for the weak. While the former tried to be fit in order to dominate, the latter had to be fit in order to survive.<sup>210</sup>

### Turkish Eugenists<sup>211</sup>

Eugenics thought became popular at the beginning of the twentieth century thanks to a scientific worldview that justified the nation-states' desire to control the human body. In Turkey, eugenics started to be discussed and applied as a part of the population policy of the state in the 1930s.<sup>212</sup> According to Alemdaroğlu, its rise in Turkey in the 1930s went along with the Republican regime's "consolidation of political power, and its rising authoritarianism."<sup>213</sup> Similarly, Murat Ergin argues that "the eugenics discourse was born in a context when Turkish nationalism was reinvented with racist, pseudo-scientific foundations through archeology and anthropometry."<sup>214</sup>

However, in Turkey, eugenics did not become institutionalized or politicized and eugenic research did not take place. This situation, according to Efe Atabay, resulted from the absence of a definition of the Turkish race or nation, and the limitations on scientific racism in Turkey.<sup>215</sup>

The strongest argument of the eugenists was that the human body was the state's most valuable capital which, at the same time, was a matter of the national

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid., p. 433.

<sup>211</sup> I use the term "eugenicist/eugenicist" with the same connotation that Efe Atabay gives in his thesis. See Atabay, p. 5.

<sup>212</sup> Alemdaroğlu, "Öjeni Düşüncesi," p. 414.

<sup>213</sup> Alemdaroğlu, "Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey," p. 73.

<sup>214</sup> Murat Ergin in Atabay, pp. 6-7.

<sup>215</sup> Atabay, p. 12.

economy and the national wealth. Therefore, this capital had to be protected and run.<sup>216</sup> Considering the fact that the population in Turkey was very low in the 1910s and 1920s, this idea makes sense. The population declined sharply at the beginning of the twentieth century because of wars, forced migrations, epidemics and high infant mortality.<sup>217</sup> The estimate number for population in 1923, after the population exchange, was around 13,100,000.<sup>218</sup> Even in 1950, the total population of the country was 20.9 million. This number is very low when it is compared to the 1880's population which was 13 million.<sup>219</sup> In addition, the deficit in male population, aged between 20 and 54, in 1923, was around one million.<sup>220</sup> The rural economy was overwhelmed and people suffered from various epidemics such as tuberculosis, malaria, trachoma and syphilis.<sup>221</sup> In this context, the population was regarded as a prominent source of political and economic power due to the fact that "more hands" were needed for the industrial development. Especially, male members of the population were seen as potential soldiers and good workers who had to be beneficial for the economic development of the country.<sup>222</sup> Therefore, one of the prominent targets of the new regime was to build a nation-state with a population that had declined after years of consecutive wars. In the first decades, the Republican

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<sup>216</sup> Alemdaroğlu, "Öjeni Düşüncesi", p. 416.

<sup>217</sup> Alemdaroğlu, "Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey", p. 68.

<sup>218</sup> *Türkiye'nin Fırsat Penceresi*, ed. Cem Behar (İstanbul: TÜSİAD, 1999), p. 22

<sup>219</sup> Şevket Pamuk, *Osmanlıdan Cumhuriyete Küreselleşme, İktisat Politikaları ve Büyüme: Seçme Eserler II* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 2009), p. 217.

<sup>220</sup> *Türkiye'nin Fırsat Penceresi*, p. 23.

<sup>221</sup> Frederic Shorter in Atabay, p. 33.

<sup>222</sup> Atabay, pp. 33, 36.

governments took incentive measures to increase the population as quickly as possible.<sup>223</sup>

The Italian pro-natalist policies became a model for Turkish political elite after 1930. They attempted to apply some of these laws, such as rewarding families that had more than five children. The contemporary political elite were inspired by Mussolini's population policy, which aimed to increase the birth rates while decreasing the death rates. In addition, Mussolini's criticism of urbanization gives some clues about the origins of Turkish eugenicists' negative attitude concerning the modern life. Moreover, his position against alcohol, defining it as a "racial poison" which negatively affected the population's quantity and quality, had similarities with Turkish eugenicists' anti-alcohol arguments.<sup>224</sup>

The health policies that were applied by the state in the early Republican period aimed to decrease/prevent infant mortality, and diseases like syphilis, malaria and tuberculosis. Among the initiators of these policies we can take into account the law about the prohibition and limitation of syphilis infection that was passed by the First Assembly in Ankara in March 1921 (1337).<sup>225</sup> One of the other prominent state policies concerning this issue was the Public Hygiene Law<sup>226</sup> (*Umumi Hıfzıssıhha Kanunu*) that was passed in 1930. Moreover, the Turkish Criminal Law of 1926

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<sup>223</sup> *Türkiye'nin Fırsat Penceresi*, p. 25.

<sup>224</sup> Adnan Güriz in Atabay, p. 35.

<sup>225</sup> "Frenginin men ve tahdidi sirayeti hakkında kanun", TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, 7 March 1337/1921.

<sup>226</sup> "The Public Hygiene Law", Article 122: Men and women are subject to medical examination before marriage, Article 123: It is forbidden for those who have syphilis, gonorrhoea, soft chancre, leprosy, mental diseases to marry. Adnan Güriz, *Türkiye'de Nüfus Politikası ve Hukuk Düzeni*, (Ankara: Türkiye Kalkınma Vakfı Yayınları, 1975), p. 153.

banned abortion in order to augment the population and the Public Health Law made it illegal to import, produce and sell contraceptives except condoms.<sup>227</sup>

In a similar fashion, Alemdaroğlu states that national sports served the purpose of creating “hundreds of thousands of sturdy bodies.” In 1938, the Body Discipline Law was passed in the parliament. The law, which aimed to regulate games, gymnastics and sports that would facilitate the advancement of the citizens’ physical and moral capabilities, was in the same line with the national and reformist principles of the state.<sup>228</sup>

As an initiator of modern Turkish sports and a significant figure for Republican policies on physical training, Selim Sırrı (Tarcan) thought that physical training was an important pedagogic and psychological instrument of the state. Selim Sırrı made a comparison between a nation that consisted of well-trained people and a well-equipped army.<sup>229</sup>

Apart from population and body policies, two basic targets of Mustafa Kemal and the state elite were Westernization and modernization. For these purposes they emphasized the importance of science and secular thought. According to Ayça Alemdaroğlu, “the creation of an independent nation-state, rapid industrialization and the construction of a modern secular national identity” were among their political, economic and ideological aims.<sup>230</sup> The nation-building project attempted to “remove

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<sup>227</sup> Alemdaroğlu, “Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey”, pp. 68-69.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

people away from religious and traditional affiliations and turn them into westward looking nationalist and modern citizens”.<sup>231</sup>

The Kemalist model of modernization aimed to reach the level of “civilization” as part of their “national duty.” For Kemalists, science was the only way to be successful in this duty. The Kemalist interpretation of scientism, which had elitist and nationalist aspects, saw science as a solution to social, economic and political problems.<sup>232</sup>

As Alemdaroğlu emphasizes, the Westernization process was interested not only in the transformation of daily practices, but also in the physical transformation of the human body.<sup>233</sup> The human body has always been an important concern of the nation-states, especially in periods of social, economic and military mobilization. Turkey was not an exception: The state attempted to utilize this valuable resource on behalf of modernization and nation building. In the course of the nation-building process, the Republican regime aimed to create “a large, healthy and civilized populace” by regulating the human body in terms of hygiene and morality. “Rationalization of the body was supposed to provide discipline and control, thereby increasing efficiency and marginal utility of the human body, and strengthening national order and harmony.”<sup>234</sup> The single-party regime

aspired to create a modern nation of fit, intelligent, moral and dutiful citizens out of the remnants of Ottoman society. (...) As part of its modernization agenda, the state aimed to discipline the human body using a discourse based on science, rationality and medicine.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Atabay, p. 37.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., pp. 28, 30.

<sup>233</sup> Alemdaroğlu, “Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey”, p. 64.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

For the Kemalists, citizenship was a crucial matter in the nation-building process. It was expected to “produce a moral and political identity, a ‘new Turk’”. They believed that the people needed a national discipline and a national consciousness in order to be considered citizens.<sup>236</sup>

It is important to mention the supporters of eugenics in Turkey. The most ardent supporters of eugenics in Turkey were composed of a group of doctors who had been educated in the medical or biological sciences in Europe. They shared similar features concerning their education, intellectual development and political career. Alemdaroğlu writes that they had important influence on various issues such as hygiene, reproduction, childcare, and city administration, which were closely related to the state’s policies and discourse.<sup>237</sup>

Turkish eugenicists did not define the term “race” clearly despite the fact that they made use of the radical language of eugenics. Most of the time, they used the terms “race,” “nation,” and “generation” interchangeably.<sup>238</sup> “Despite the introduction and rise of a racial vocabulary in the early Republican Period, the idea of race was usually synonymous with nation, based heavily on linguistic and cultural components, as a more accurate description.”<sup>239</sup>

In Turkey, eugenicists gave much attention to what Atabay says “the importance of the environment, hygiene, sanitation, pro-natalism, *puériculture*,<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Ayşe Kadioğlu in Alemdaroğlu, “Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey,” p. 63.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>239</sup> Soner Çağaptay in Atabay, p. 12.

<sup>240</sup> *Puériculture* broadly means “the health care of pregnancy,” “pre-conception,” and “infant care.” Atabay, p. 5.

child-care and body-discipline rather than elimination of hereditary diseases in improving ‘the race.’”<sup>241</sup> The most essential target of the eugenists in Turkey was to create a healthy and strong Turkish nation that would work for the service of national progress. Eugenics became a means in the process of building a national identity in the 1930s by defining the relationship between body, family and state on the basis of social order and national progress.<sup>242</sup>

In addition, Atabay notes that the medical elite in Turkey mostly dealt with cultural degeneration rather than racial degeneration. They used eugenic literature to express their ideas on cultural and social concerns such as family life and marriage and alcohol abuse under a “vague theory of biological degeneration”.<sup>243</sup>

Atabay adds that for Ottoman intellectuals, the quantity of the population was a key factor for becoming a powerful nation. This notion was shared by the Kemalists, who tried to increase the population. However, for the medical elite, the quality of the population was as crucial as its quantity.<sup>244</sup>

Turkish eugenists had a conservative leaning apart from their close relation with Kemalist progressivism. This was noticeable in their viewpoints about modern urban life. For instance, Fahreddin Kerim (Gökay), one of the pioneers of anti-alcohol movement in Turkey, claimed that modern life had negative effects on the mental health of individuals because it imposed numerous challenges on people’s lives. Similarly Sadi Irmak, who was a medical professor and prime minister in the

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<sup>241</sup> Atabay, pp. 4-5.

<sup>242</sup> Alemdaroğlu, “Öjeni Düşüncesi”, p. 420.

<sup>243</sup> Atabay, pp. 14-15.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

1970s, argued that the mechanization of production and the division of labor had harmful effects on people's physical and mental abilities.<sup>245</sup>

### Anti-Alcohol Movement in Turkey and Eugenics

It is certain that in the near future, we will be victorious in our fights and the flag of Yeşilay will be woven (...) at the corners of every tavern.<sup>246</sup>

Due to the fact that this chapter will focus on *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* (Anti-Alcohol Gazette), the media organ of the *Hilal-i Ahdar Cemiyeti* (Green Crescent Society), and two leading figures of the anti-alcohol movement, Mazhar Osman (Uzman) and Fahreddin Kerim (Gökay), first, it is beneficial to give some information on them. The Green Crescent temperance society was founded through the *Tababet-i Akliye ve Asabiye Cemiyeti* (Mental and Neural Medicine Society), which had been founded and directed by Mazhar Osman Uzman.<sup>247</sup> He was one of the founders and the first chairman of the Green Crescent Society.<sup>248</sup> He was inspired by the German study of hereditary psychiatry and degeneration. He founded the Bakırköy Hospital, the first modern mental hospital in Istanbul, in 1927 and became its chief doctor. He was also a member of the first parliament.<sup>249</sup>

As Atabay emphasizes and as can be seen in the primary sources, Mazhar Osman Uzman and Fahreddin Kerim Gökay were the most passionate defenders of the popularization of eugenics and degeneration that will be discussed in the

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<sup>245</sup> Alemdaroğlu, "Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey," p. 72.

<sup>246</sup> Süleyman Nehib Ulukut, "Hukuk ve Kanunlar karşısında içki ve sarhoşluk" [Alcohol and Drunkenness before the Legal System and Laws], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 6, no. 67 (July 1938), p. 11.

<sup>247</sup> Atabay, p. 88.

<sup>248</sup> Turkish Green Crescent Society, "Our History," Accessed on 10 April 2012, Available [online]: <<http://www.yesilay.org.tr/Kurumsal/Yesilay-in-Tarihi>>

<sup>249</sup> Atabay, pp. 83, 101.



following pages, not only among the medical elite, but also in the press. As Atabay emphasizes, Fahreddin Kerim Gökay was one of the foremost and earliest psychiatry and neurology experts in Turkey. He was also the co-founder and the general secretary of the Green Crescent Society.<sup>250</sup>

In one of the reports of the Green Crescent, Fahreddin Kerim stated that the essential aim of the Green Crescent was to strive to make the younger generations grow up “mentally and physically healthy” without getting addicted to alcohol and other “poisons.”<sup>251</sup> He stated that their aim was to teach the youth the dangers of alcohol and save them. They did not want a prohibition after they saw the aftermath of the prohibition experience of the United States.<sup>252</sup> Among the activities of the Green Crescent Society were publishing journals like *Sıhhi Sahifeler*, newspapers, books, and booklets, printing posters, giving conferences in schools, organizing parties without alcohol, organizing shows and feasts like *Yeşil Gün Bayramı*,<sup>253</sup> presenting statistics, striving for fruit consumption and so on.<sup>254</sup>

*İçki Düşmanı Gazete*(Anti-Alcohol Gazette / *Journal anti alcoolique Turc*), later its name changed *Yeşilay*(Green Crescent), was first published in January 1933. Its owner and editor was Fahreddin Kerim Gökay. It published the ideas of the *Yeşil Hilal* (Green Crescent) and the *İçki Aleyhdarı Gençler Cemiyeti* (Society of Anti-Alcohol Youth). The content of the journal that was indicated on the cover page

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid., pp. 82-84.

<sup>251</sup> *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 2, no. 24 (December 1934), p. 5.

<sup>252</sup> *Altıncı Ulusal Türk Tıp Kurultayı* [Sixth Turkish National Congress of Medicine], (İstanbul: Kader Basımevi, 1936), pp. 44-45.

<sup>253</sup> *Yeşil Gün Bayramı* was a feast that was celebrated on 15 June every year by *Yeşilay* (the Green Crescent Society) and *Türkiye İçki Aleyhdarları Cemiyeti* (the Society of Alcohol Opponents).

<sup>254</sup> Fahreddin Kerim Gökay, “Türkiye’de alkolizm meselesi” [Problem of Alcoholism in Turkey], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 6, no. 65 (May 1938), p. 11.

was the spreading of anti-alcohol thoughts, information on health and life, and scientific articles. It was published monthly and sold in other countries. Its executive office was the clinic of Fahreddin Kerim.<sup>255</sup>

The journal included news about the monthly activities of the anti-alcohol movement in Turkey, particularly of the Green Crescent Society. Among these activities there were shows and plays reflecting anti-alcohol sentiments as well as speeches on the dangers of alcohol. For instance, there is a slogan of the *Yeşilay* (Green Crescent Society) in the journal: “Citizen! If you want your own health and superiority of your homeland, be a member of *Yeşilay!*”<sup>256</sup>

The writers of the journal closely followed the anti-alcohol movements around the world, specifically focusing on Europe and the United States. One of the articles, translated by Dr. Kudsi from French, stated that alcohol had negative effects on the nerves and caused suicides, murders and mental diseases. Moreover, alcohol had a significant role in tuberculosis: In France, one-third of people who had tuberculosis used alcohol. A study on 764 children who had alcoholic fathers showed that 603 of them were ill: 322 were degenerate, 131 had epilepsy and 150 were mentally ill. The article also emphasizes the economic harms of alcohol. It argued that the consumption of alcohol affected people’s budgets negatively because alcohol caused illness and illnesses caused unemployment. Those unemployed alcoholics were seen as a burden on the state economy.<sup>257</sup> Therefore, the writer equates alcohol

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<sup>255</sup>*İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 1, no. 3 (March 1933).

<sup>256</sup>*İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 4, no. 43 (July 1936).

<sup>257</sup>*İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 1, no. 12 (December 1933), pp. 3-4.

to the sum of national decline, the catastrophe of the individual and the family, and economic deficit.<sup>258</sup>

Beyond the situation in Turkey, it is possible to get information about anti-alcohol movements in other countries via the journal. For instance, the Estonian anti-alcohol community consisted of 231 societies. In the Soviet Russia, there was an anti-alcohol committee that was aided and protected by the state. In Norway, psychology courses had included the harmful effects of alcohol since 1929. In Sweden, 230,000 people out of 6,000,000 were members of anti-alcohol societies.<sup>259</sup>

Moreover, the alcohol opponents in Turkey were in touch with the representatives of anti-alcohol movements in various countries. For instance, a letter from the World League Against Alcoholism (in US) to Fahreddin Kerim, who was the representative of Turkey, appreciated the efforts the Green Crescent and the youth against alcohol. In the letter, it was also stated that the failure of prohibition in the United States was an outcome of the Great Depression and despite the repeal of prohibition anti-alcohol awareness had increased.<sup>260</sup>

Before moving on to the anti-alcohol movement in Turkey, it is necessary to focus on the term “degeneracy” as it is the mostly emphasized subject among the alcohol opponents. The term “degeneracy”, or *tereddi* in Turkish, was mostly detailed by the French psychiatrist Bénédict Augustine Morel. Morel’s theory had three basic ideas. The last two of them are relevant here. One of them is about the impact of “outside stimuli,” especially alcohol, and other drugs, on generating “hereditary dispositions.” The other one is about the transformability of different

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<sup>258</sup> “*Alkol= millî inhitat + (şahsın + ailenin felâketi) + iktisadî açılma.*” *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 1, no. 12 (December 1933), p. 4.

<sup>259</sup> Safiye Hüseyin, “Beynelmilel içki düşmanlığı” [International Alcohol Opposition], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 2, no. 17 (May 1934), pp. 3-4.

<sup>260</sup> *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 1, no. 3 (March 1933), p. 8.

degenerative symptoms into one and another from one generation to other. For instance, if a man is alcoholic, his son could be epileptic while his grandson could be “feeble-minded.”<sup>261</sup> According to Morel’s theory, the “downward spiral of degeneracy would usually start with alcoholism and moral depravities, transforming into criminality and into insanity, and usually ending up with infertility, early mortality and the extinction of the stock.”<sup>262</sup>

Atabay reported that one of the most prominent psychiatrists who had views similar to those of Morel on degeneration and who had an important role in the birth of Turkish psychiatric medicine was Emil Kraepelin.<sup>263</sup> In his view, alcohol and syphilis were among the most detrimental “social ills.” He examined the patients in his clinic and thought that the increasing number of patients with paralysis and other mental symptoms was the result of degenerative effects of alcohol.<sup>264</sup> Moreover, “his textbooks hypothesized that alcohol played a significant role in the etiology of many mental disturbances, as well as facilitating the development of syphilitic paralysis because of its effects on the central nervous system.”<sup>265</sup>

Looking at the articles and books of the “medical community,” Sanem Güvenç states that there were different groups of people who were labeled as “degenerates.” She brings them under three categories which have their own subcategories. The first group was constituted by the urban poor that included prostitutes, alcoholics, young criminals, beggars and the immigrants coming to Istanbul for work. The second group included mentally ill people, epileptics and

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<sup>261</sup> Atabay, pp. 79-80.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., pp. 80, 82.

<sup>264</sup> Eric J. Engstrom in Atabay, p. 81.

<sup>265</sup> Wolfgang Jilek in Atabay, p. 81.

schizophrenics and so on. Here, Güvenç noted that alcoholics could have been added to the second group, as well as the first one, if the alcoholic had been in a mental asylum. This was because, she adds, the doctors thought that the act of excessive drinking derived from “a feeble mind and character, both of which are the result of deformed genes.”<sup>266</sup> The third group was constituted by *highdegenerates*, or the *psychopaths* as Mazhar Osman called them, the people from the aristocracy and nouveau riche. This group included criminals, people who were living on family inheritance, and also anarchists and some revolutionaries like Robespierre and Rousseau, and literary figures such as Edgar Allen Poe, Goethe and Dostoyevski.<sup>267</sup>

Among the first group of degenerates, the most dangerous ones for the younger generations of the Turkish race were alcoholics and prostitutes because they accelerated the spread of social diseases, especially syphilis and gonorrhea.<sup>268</sup>

Fahreddin Kerim repeatedly warned the young readers by emphasizing that people often contracted venereal diseases (*zührevi hastalık*) when they were drunk. Most of the young girls lose their *utanç* (shame) and *namus* (chastity) when they were drunk.<sup>269</sup>

The relationship between alcohol consumption and venereal diseases was very important for the alcohol opponents. There were numerous articles in the journal that touched upon this relationship. A poem about a girl whose father had died because of alcohol and mother had died because of syphilis is a good example. The poet portrays the girl as a skeleton who lacked intelligence. He blamed her

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<sup>266</sup> Sanem Guvenç-Salgırlı, “Eugenics as Science of the Social: A Case from 1930s Istanbul” (Ph.D. diss., Binghamton University, 2009), pp. 81-82.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., pp. 86-89.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., pp. 82-83.

<sup>269</sup> Fahreddin Kerim Gökay, *Sağlık Düşmanı Keyif Verici Maddeler* [Unhealthy Intoxicating Substances](Ankara: Milli Eğitim, 1948), p. 34.

parents for her bad situation and described the girl as a “yield of alcohol and syphilis.” He cursed the father because he had caused the destruction of three individuals of the nation. Finally, he ended the poem by saying that “alcohol is the mother of all evils.”<sup>270</sup>

In addition, for the Turkish medical elite, alcohol was a degenerative force that might not only worsen the germ plasm of humans, but also affect their offspring and fertility.<sup>271</sup> Atabay writes that

The literature on degeneration and alcohol sought to prove the destructive force that alcohol could have on the race/nation. Akalın, in his subsection on race hygiene for example, refers to alcoholism as a ‘national threat’ that ‘decays the health and mental and physical constitution of an individual, society and humanity at large.’<sup>272</sup>

In an interview with Besim Ömer Akalın, he said: “I do not think that any doctor who looks out for the health of our nation, for the strength of our race and for the future of our Republic may defend constant use of alcohol.”<sup>273</sup> He noted that not only doctors were against the evils of alcohol. Different aspects of alcohol – such as moral, economic, commercial, criminal, and pathological – had been studied so far. Looking from eugenics point of view, some countries practiced the German laws about the sterilization of alcoholics who posed a threat on the health of the race and

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<sup>270</sup> “İspirto ile frenginin mahsulü kızı,  
Gördükçe karşımda duyardım kalbimde sızı.  
Lânet sana ey baba bir dakika keyf için  
Düştüğün illet kemirdi nesli için, için  
Mahvoldu gitti koca iki ferdi milletin,  
Hayatta kalan da zebunu oldu illetin.  
Sarhoş olmayaydın kapmazdın bu çirkin marazı,  
Çocuğunda da bırakmazdın arazı.  
Dertli kişinin bütün nesli de dertli olur.  
Her fenalığı alkollü içkiler doğurur” in Mithat Salim, “Bir görüş”, *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 2, no. 17 (May 1934), p. 5.

<sup>271</sup> Atabay, p. 98.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>273</sup> Süleyman Nehib Ulukut, “General Prof. Dr. Besim Ömer Akalın’ın Fikirleri” [The ideas of Besim Ömer Akalın], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 4, no. 38 (February 1936), p. 4.

generation. It was seen that the children that were made in a state of inebriety are exposed to physical and spiritual degeneration. According to Akalın, the saying “strong like a Turk” had become famous in Western countries because of the self-control of “our ancestors” against alcohol. He added that our youth should know that alcohol deranged the health, demolished the body, caused crimes and immorality, and ruined order and security in society. They should stay away from alcoholism because it was a social evil just like syphilis, tuberculosis, malaria and cancer.<sup>274</sup>

Güvenç gave one of the psychiatrists of the Istanbul Mental Hospital, İsmail Ziya Tanrıku’s definition of alcoholics. He defined them as “descending from emotionally feeble, insane, half-insane, stupid and idiotic families.”<sup>275</sup> He also argued that alcoholics could be differentiated from normal infants by their constant crying and incorrigibility. Moreover,

he argued that such character showed itself later in life, when they became lazy students in school, naughty with their friends, and rebellious against the teachers. In short, they were almost like *barricades* in the way of humanity that desires nothing but *progress*.<sup>276</sup>

However, degeneration is not necessarily hereditary. Atabay pointed out that, for the Turkish eugenicists, degeneration from heredity and degeneration from the milieu were not exclusively different things. As Atabay emphasized, and as can be seen in *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* (Anti-Alcohol Gazette), they mostly blamed alcohol and venereal diseases, particularly syphilis, for environmental degeneration.<sup>277</sup>

The degenerative literature mostly focused on alcoholism because alcoholism was an easily detectable factor in degeneracy and could be remedied, unlike epilepsy

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Guvenç-Salgırlı, p. 84.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid. Italics belong to me.

<sup>277</sup> Atabay, p. 95.

or general paresis. During the time when degeneration theory was popular in Europe, people began to see alcohol consumption as the main cause of mental illnesses and therefore the number of inebriety clinics increased while the number of asylums decreased. The followers of degeneration theory in Turkey shared similar views with their European counterparts by referring alcohol as a “racial poison.”<sup>278</sup>

Atabay said that “temperance movement”<sup>279</sup> in Turkey had a mission to “transform degeneracy into something conquerable and controllable.” By this, he means that, Turkish medical elite aimed to win a battle against venereal diseases and alcohol while they did not have the necessary tools to take eugenic measures.<sup>280</sup>

It is interesting to note that although the medical elite were aware of the fact that the amount of alcohol consumption in Turkey was very low compared to European countries, they zealously fought against it. Fahreddin Kerim says that the problem of alcoholism was handled at *Altıncı Ulusal Türk Tıp Kurultayı* (the Sixth Turkish National Congress of Medicine) and they saw that the alcohol amount Turkish people consumed was very low, 230 g, and it meant that only 0.2% of the Turkish population consumed alcohol. In France, on the other hand, this rate was around 17%.<sup>281</sup>

Another statistics from *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* stated that per capita alcohol consumption amount in Turkey was 0.200 liters in 1927, 0.255 in 1928, 0.275 in 1929, 0.261 in 1930, 0.242 in 1931, 0.211 in 1932, 0.213 in 1933.<sup>282</sup> We can

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<sup>278</sup> Ibid., pp. 95-96.

<sup>279</sup> This term is used by Efe Atabay. Instead, I prefer to use the term “anti-alcohol movement” as I indicated in previous chapters.

<sup>280</sup> Atabay, pp. 97-98.

<sup>281</sup> Fahreddin Kerim Gökay, “Ülküye İnanış” [Believing the Ideal], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 4, no. 43 (July 1936), p. 1.

<sup>282</sup> *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 4, no. 42 (June 1936), p. 2.



compare these numbers with per capita alcohol consumption amounts in other countries. Here are some consumption amounts in liters during the years between 1906 and 1910: 22.93 in France, 17.29 in Italy, 13.71 in Switzerland, 9.67 in Great Britain, 7.75 in Austria-Hungary, 7.47 in Germany, 5.01 in Holland, 4.33 in Sweden, 2.37 in Norway, and 1.58 in Finland.<sup>283</sup> Although these numbers belonged to earlier years than of Turkey's, they give an important clue about the fact that alcohol consumption in Turkey was very low compared to the European countries. Considering the fact that alcohol consumption amounts in Europe fell during the war years and they rose to their pre-war level in the 1930s,<sup>284</sup> these numbers were more or less compatible to the numbers in Turkey.

Alcohol consumption in villages was another important issue for the alcohol opponents in Turkey. We get some useful information about this subject from the Sixth Turkish National Congress of Medicine. Refik Saydam, the minister of health and social services, reported that it was not true that alcohol consumption in the villages was a recent phenomenon. There were considerable numbers of villages in which people consumed alcohol. He admitted that there existed alcohol addiction in Turkey, particularly rakı addiction. However, recently, he added, wine and beer had started to take *rakı*'s place.<sup>285</sup> As Abdülkadir Noyan indicated, people in Turkey had a habit of drinking on an empty stomach and they usually consumed rakı which had a high level of alcohol content. Moreover, the appetizers they consumed with rakı caused the alcohol to mix with the blood quickly and in a great amount.<sup>286</sup> Fahreddin

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<sup>283</sup> John H. Wuorinen, "Finland's Prohibition Experiment," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 163 (September 1932) p. 218.

<sup>284</sup> Fahreddin Kerim Gökay, "Türkiye'de Alkolizm Meselesi" [Problem of Alcoholism in Turkey], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 4, no. 43 (July 1936), p. 10.

<sup>285</sup> *Altıncı Ulusal Türk Tıp Kurultayı*, (İstanbul: Kader Basımevi, 1936), pp. 39-40.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

Kerim reported that alcohol consumption was higher in the cities than in the villages. In villages alcohol was consumed especially at weddings and feasts in the villages. One of the basic principles of the government was to prevent the sale of alcohol in the villages. However, there were people who went to the cities to buy alcohol. There were a few people who drank habitually in the villages. In old days, state officials and intellectuals drank in great amounts. However, recently the number of drinkers among young people had declined.<sup>287</sup>

Similarly, Fahreddin Kerim noted that it was the policy of the *İnhisarlar İdaresi* (Bureau of State Monopolies) not to make beverages with high alcohol content widespread. He says that *akşamcılık* (the habitual drinking), which had been very common in earlier times in Turkey, had decreased and he added that, alcohol consumption in Turkey was low compared to other countries and did not show signs of increase.<sup>288</sup> He also stated that that alcohol was mostly consumed in big cities like Istanbul and Izmir and by the working class that lived in these cities. Besides, in the coastal cities, alcohol consumption is greater than the inland cities.<sup>289</sup>

Why were they so concerned about degeneracy although the rate of alcohol consumption was very low in Turkey? Atabay argues that the medical elite were “more concerned with cultural ‘degeneracy’ (...) rather than biologically understood racial degeneration”. This is because of the fact that, he claims, the medical elite had troubles with the changing patterns of their daily lives and, thus, they used the

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>288</sup> Fahreddin Kerim Gökay, “Türkiye’de Alkolizm Meselesi” [Problem of Alcoholism in Turkey], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 4, no. 43 (July 1936), p. 11.

<sup>289</sup> *Altıncı Ulusal Türk Tıp Kurultayı*, p. 58.

“seemingly-neutral language of a biological theory” to express their criticism of modern life instead of referring to “Islam and/or tradition and customs.”<sup>290</sup>

Atabay states that “the problem at least during the thirties when the majority of the eugenic literature was produced was an urban one.”<sup>291</sup> He also claims that the low amount of alcohol consumption indicates that alcohol was only “a small elite’s custom of pleasure” and the medical elite were only reacting to what they witnessed in their own circles. He also adds that the eugenic literature was a tool with a “scientific framework” for expressing their concerns about the immorality and indecency which they associated with alcohol.<sup>292</sup>

Moreover, Atabay claims, and the sources reveal, that opposition to alcoholism was in the same line with “being a nationalist, a good citizen as well as being scientific.”<sup>293</sup> In addition, it is interesting to note that it was closely related to other nationalistic themes, such as sharing the common ideal, protecting the Republic, venerating Atatürk and other warriors who had fought for the nation. In this regard, it can be argued that anti-alcohol movement had some kind of a mission to create an “imagined community.”

For instance, Fahreddin Kerim stated the “sole aim of the war against alcoholism that is fought by the nation hand in hand with the state” as “reproducing and growing our mighty nation, which created many civilizations and has its roots in the depths of history, as spiritually and physically strong in our beloved country.”<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Atabay, pp. 107-108.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>294</sup> Fahreddin Kerim Gökay, “Türkiye’de alkolizm meselesi” [Problem of Alcoholism in Turkey], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 6, no. 65 (May 1938), p. 12.

He also added that it was their duty to fight, with the tools of science and knowledge, against all dangers that could lead them to degeneracy, or decrease the efficiency of their work. Finally, he stated that Turkish doctors and “scholars” did and would fulfill their duty fondly.<sup>295</sup>

In addition, there is an “Atatürk’s generation” theme in the journal. Enver Gökşen states that “Atatürk’s generation” had been trained not with a pessimistic and scholastic discipline which raised a youth who gave up living, but it was trained with the “Republican discipline.” The cornerstone of the Republican discipline was a hope and liveliness that strengthen not only the soul, but also the physique.<sup>296</sup>

In addition, they handled the issue of alcoholism as a part of both a “eugenic/race hygiene” policy and the population policy.<sup>297</sup> During the annual congress of the Society of Mental Health of Turkey (*Akıl Hıfzısıhhası Cemiyeti*), Fahreddin Kerim read a report on race hygiene and announced that it was not the right time to demand a sterilization law, however marriage of the insane had to be prevented.<sup>298</sup>

Atabay states that the eugenists “wanted able bodies who could work efficiently to benefit the emerging economy and industry of the Republic.”<sup>299</sup> He adds that this aim of the eugenists was partly the Republican People’s Party’s official “population policy” and “frequently echoed by various leaders including Atatürk

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>296</sup> Enver N. Gökşen, “Cümhuriyet Gençliği” [The Youth of the Republic], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 6, no. 70 (October 1938), p. 1.

<sup>297</sup> Atabay, p. 98.

<sup>298</sup> *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 2, no. 17 (May 1934), p. 10.

<sup>299</sup> Atabay, p. 91.

since 1923.”<sup>300</sup> For instance, in a speech during the the Seventh Turkish National Congress of Medicine, while he was talking about health issues, Atatürk said that a strong and robust generation was their most prominent aim.<sup>301</sup> Similarly, the prime minister of the time, İsmet İnönü, said that it is one of the most prominent tasks of the scientists and politicians to do their best to save the communities and nations from the addiction of drugs and toxicomania that ruined the youth, their families and the community that consisted of those families.<sup>302</sup>

However, one should keep in mind that the state and the followers of the anti-alcohol movement were, most of the time, in different positions. After the repeal of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu*, the law of alcohol prohibition in Turkey, in 1924, and especially the state monopoly over alcohol in 1926, the government removed the restrictions over alcohol and started making profits off of it. Moreover, the government put some obligations on the monopoly administration of alcoholic beverages, different from the other monopoly administrations, in order to make the administration build factories in two years that were able to produce three million kilos of alcohol per year and improve its production capacity so that, in five years, it could meet the demand of whole country.<sup>303</sup> By doing this, the government intended to improve the quality of alcoholic beverages, especially those with high alcohol content.<sup>304</sup> There is also a striking instance about *Ankara Bira Fabrikası* (Ankara Beer Factory) which was built on *Atatürk Orman Çiftliği* (Atatürk Forest Farm) on

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid., pp. 91-92.

<sup>301</sup> *Yedinci Ulusal Türk Tıp Kurultayı* [Seventh Turkish National Congress of Medicine], (İstanbul: Kader Basımevi, 1939), p. 100.

<sup>302</sup> *Altıncı Ulusal Türk Tıp Kurultayı*, p. 29.

<sup>303</sup> A. Suut Doğruel and Fatma Doğruel, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze: Tekel*, (İstanbul: Tekel, 2000), p. 144.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

Atatürk's order in 1934. This factory was built in a period when nationalization attempts in the economy were common. Its construction was finished in one year (from 1933 to 1934) and, together with the Farm, it was connected to the treasury in 1937.<sup>305</sup> All of these incidents show that there was a contradiction between the government policies over alcohol and the attitude of the opponents of alcoholism.

Nevertheless, in certain instances the state took some measures to keep the alcohol issue under control. Among these, the prohibition of public drunkenness and the restrictions on the sale of alcoholic beverages in open places by the government, and measures taken by *İnhisarlar Vekaleti* (the Bureau of State Monopolies) to decrease alcohol content in liquors can be noted. In the eyes of the pioneers of the movement, the Republican government supported the "war against alcoholism" from the very first day onwards. Especially, the attitude of İsmet İnönü, the prime minister of Turkey in the years between 1925 and 1937, was appreciated by the supporters of the anti-alcohol movement. For instance, İnönü's statement that the government did not aim to increase the revenues from alcoholic beverages was seen as an obvious support for the "anti-alcohol ideal."<sup>306</sup>

Atabay writes that the Turkish eugenists dealt not only with the quantity side of the eugenic thought, but also with its quality side. He thinks that the presence of certain words in the eugenics literature in Turkey, such as *kavi* (strong), *sağlam* (fit), *gürbüz* (robust) which describe qualitative strength, supports his argument.<sup>307</sup>

There are some supportive articles for this argument in the journal. For instance, in a show, Fahreddin Kerim remarked that one of the targets of the Turkish

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<sup>305</sup>Fügen Basmacı, "Ankara İçki Fabrikası", *Rakı Ansiklopedisi*, (İstanbul: Overtteam Yayınları: 2011), p. 48.

<sup>306</sup> Fahreddin Kerim Gökay, "Türkiye'de alkolizm meselesi" [Problem of Alcoholism in Turkey], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 6, no. 65 (May 1938), p. 12.

<sup>307</sup> Atabay, p. 98.

government was to increase the population. However, just population increase was not enough for the well being of a nation. A nation also had to rise spiritually and physically. Therefore, he said that they saw their struggle as a matter of homeland.<sup>308</sup>

He said:

We want to hear jolly laughter of Turkish boys and girls; but not the laughter of their drunken heads. We generate numerous organizations that aim to glorify the Turkish youth. Yet, a drunk cannot fly. (...) The ideal of Turkish people in the war against alcohol will be victorious one day, just like their ideal had become true in *Sakarya* against billions of enemies.<sup>309</sup>

Moreover, M. Ali Salih wrote that it was wrong to see increasing the population just as a matter of quantity. The significance of the subject of quality in population policies could be seen as a matter of conserving the qualifications of the race, and transferring the strength and the character of the race to younger generations. He stated that the method of the Hitler government should not have been ignored as irrational because of humanistic sentiments. He mentioned a certain Doctor Hamit Bey and his solutions for preventing bad genes from transferring to younger generations. Hamit Bey had two solutions for this: Eugenics by the community and the government, plus eugenics applied by individuals. The former included various measures like forbidding marriages with “other races” or at least preventing Turkish girls from marrying foreign men, the elimination of “other races” within the country borders by letting their members marry each other or mating their girls with Turkish men. He also made a list of immediate actions that should have taken by the government. In this list there were striking precautions such as forbidding marriages between close relatives, preventing psychopaths from marrying or raising children, forbidding marriages of sick people, preventing substances that

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<sup>308</sup> Fahreddin Kerim Gökay, “Ülküye İnanış” [Believing the Ideal], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 4, no. 43 (July 1936), p. 1.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

spoiled the seed – for instance, prohibiting alcohol or limiting its diffusion area, avoiding contagious illnesses like syphilis and gonorrhea and restricting marriages of artisans that occupied with poisonous substances. At the end of the article, the writer emphasized that their aim was not racism, but it was to prevent younger generations from losing the characteristics of the race.<sup>310</sup>

For the alcohol opponents, there was also a close link between alcohol consumption and mental diseases and crimes. Gökay also promoted the idea that people who were mentally ill, or “valueless,” were a burden on the society.<sup>311</sup> For them, alcohol was one of the biggest causes of social destruction because it ruined the social order, increased the number of “creeps,” became a burden on the state budget via prisons and asylum subsidies and caused the state to lose its national wealth.<sup>312</sup>

Fahreddin Kerim indicated that the number of people that had been put into mental institutions because of alcohol addiction had declined thanks to the decrease in alcohol consumption during World War I. In one of the biggest mental hospitals in Prussia, before the war, 12-15% of the entries to the hospital had been constituted by alcoholics. However, in 1917, this amount had fallen to 2%. After the end of the war, in 1918, it rose again, to 9%.<sup>313</sup>

According to Fahreddin Kerim, the statistics kept in Turkey and various countries showed that most of the crimes were the outcome of drunkenness. Usually, crimes were committed in holidays/weekends, especially on Saturdays because of the

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<sup>310</sup>M. Ali Salih, “İrk mes’alesi ve neslin ıslahı” [Race Issue and Rehabilitation of the Generation], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 2, no. 21 (September 1934), pp. 2-3.

<sup>311</sup> Atabay, pp. 92-93.

<sup>312</sup> Fahreddin Kerim Gökay, *Sağlık Düşmanı Keyif Verici Maddeler*, p. 35.

<sup>313</sup> Fahreddin Kerim Gökay, “Türkiye’de Alkolizm Meselesi” [Problem of Alcoholism in Turkey], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 4, no. 43 (July 1936), p. 11.



fact that workers who received their weekly salaries on Saturdays, went to bars and got drunk. Therefore, on Saturdays, the number of crimes and entrances to asylums and prisons was high. He noted proudly that, in Turkey, the number of cases of madness caused by alcohol was low. He said that he had seen some instances in which 40-50 people had entered clinics on Sundays in Europe.<sup>314</sup>

They also related alcohol consumption to work life. Fahreddin Kerim stated that in a society, work efficiency decreased when the number of alcoholics increased. According to some studies on work life, some of the workers who drank on Sundays came late to work on Mondays and some of them did not go to work and therefore work capacity decreased. Besides, most alcoholics did not work due to various reasons and they could not afford to give a good life to their children. In this way, they become a burden on society and the state economy.<sup>315</sup>

There was also an emphasis on family. According to the alcohol opponents, only a good and healthy family could raise a healthy generation. The children of bad families grew up to be “public enemies” or useless “creatures.” In the villages, family members were more intimate compared to families in cities. Therefore, in the villages, the harmony among family members was more apparent and psychopathic manifestations in children were less common in comparison to families in cities. Due to the fact that the city life had more difficulties, the urbanites lived in less healthy conditions than villagers.<sup>316</sup>

Women were one of the most important subjects in the medical elite’s anti-alcohol struggle. Like other nationalisms, Turkish nationalism gave an importance to

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<sup>314</sup> Fahreddin Kerim Gökay, *Sağlık Düşmanı Keyif Verici Maddeler*, p. 34.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Hüseyin Kenan Tunakan, “Ailede akıl hıfzıssıhhası” [Mental Health in Family], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 6, no. 68 (August 1938), p. 4.

women and their roles in the society. While men were seen as the guardians of the Turkish nation, women were assigned the role of the “biological and symbolic reproducers” of it. Women were responsible of being “enlightened mothers” and “rationalized housekeepers.” The Girls’ Institutes (*Kız Enstitüleri*) which were set up by the state in 1928 served for this mission.<sup>317</sup>

In the journal, there is an interesting statistic about the rates of premarital sex among men and women, and its relation with alcohol consumption. According to this statistics, 96.32 percent of men and 96.55 of women lost their virginity before marriage.<sup>318</sup> Among these numbers, 48.63 percent of men and 78.56 of women lost their virginites when they were drunk.<sup>319</sup> It is difficult to argue that these numbers are correct, but they were given to show people one important thing: Women who had premarital sex were more likely to be drunk when doing it. Approximately, three women out of four who lose their virginity before marriage were the “victims” of alcohol. Similarly, in the same article, there were statistics that show the rate of people who got venereal diseases when they were drunk. According to a study that examined 182 people, 76.25% of the ones who had venereal diseases had contracted the disease in the course of inebriety.<sup>320</sup> In a similar fashion, Fahreddin Kerim claimed that most of the babies that wereconceived on the New Year’s Eve were unhealthy, idiot and epileptic.<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Alemdaroğlu, “Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey”, pp. 66-67.

<sup>318</sup> It is not stated in the article whether these statistics belong to Turkey or another country.

<sup>319</sup> *Yeşilay* 5, no. 53 (May 1937), p. 12.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

<sup>321</sup> Alemdaroğlu, “Öjeni Düşüncesi”, p. 421.

There is an article titled “Serhoş Kadın” (The Drunk Woman), written by Fahreddin Kerim Gökay. He wrote about a woman named Nedime, who killed her “gigolo” after she made him drunk. Gökay argued that this incident was not just another news in a newspaper. It should be considered carefully. He claimed that Turks did not have enemies in the motherland. Their duty was to increase the Turkish population and turn the country into an important part of the world. In order to do that, the Turkish people had to work more than any other nation. However, there was an important danger in this task: alcohol. He stressed that alcohol degraded the race, it decreased the capability to work, and it loosened the will. He criticized women who used alcohol by saying that while they were against men who drank, they were surprised to see women doing that.<sup>322</sup>

In one of the articles, it was stated that in the United States, all women associations demanded that the government prohibit alcohol consumption for women in taverns due to the fact that the number of women drinkers had increased after World War I and this situation, in their view, had caused a threat to the younger generations of the country. In the article, this incident was shown as an example to Turkish women. In addition, the article defined the term “modern woman” by emphasizing that being a modern woman did not necessitate drinking or imitating other bad behaviors of men.<sup>323</sup>

To conclude, the followers of the anti-alcohol movement saw themselves as a part of the building cadre of the new regime, and they, as doctors, tried to offer solutions to the “ills” of Turkish society. Although the followers of the anti-alcohol movement and the state elites were not, necessarily, the same actors, the anti-alcohol

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<sup>322</sup> “...biz, erkeklerimizin alkol suiistimaline alışmalarını isterken, kadınlarımızın bu vadiye sapmalarını hayretle, elemle karşıyoruz.” *Yeşilay* 5, no. 50 (February 1937), p. 5.

<sup>323</sup>E.N., “Kadın ve erkek hakları” [Rights of Women and Men], *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* 2, no. 21 (September 1934), pp. 4-5.

movement changed its position parallel to the state policies on the route of Westernization, modernization and secularization. The most striking indicator of this argument was that the secularization of the anti-alcohol movement along with the secularization of the state. Different from their positions in the 1920s, in the 1930s they generally tried to be on the same side with the government. Although on some issues, they demanded stricter measures from the government, they stopped, for instance, asking for a prohibition law.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

In this thesis, basically, there were two important findings. The first one was that the alcohol opposition in the early Republican period in Turkey was related closely to the nation-building process. The second one was that the anti-alcohol movement was transformed from being a religiously-based standpoint to a secular and scientifically-based vision parallel to the state's secularization process.

In the thesis, it was seen that the early alcohol opposition had religious, political and economic concerns. Inspired by the other anti-alcohol movements in other countries, especially by the United States and Northern European countries, such as Finland, Norway and Sweden, the alcohol opposition in Turkey took a different dimension in the specific historical context of the country. In a period when nationalism was merged with Islam, alcohol opposition gained a reactionary position towards the non-Muslim populations who had, according to the alcohol opponents, economic superiority over the Muslims. Together with the fact that the alcohol business was dominated by the non-Muslims, the law of alcohol ban was used as an economic weapon against them.

Apart from this reaction against the non-Muslims, the prohibition law became a struggle field between the groups of the parliament in Ankara. According to studies held on the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu* (Law Banning Alcohol), the law was the first step of the faction in the parliament. After the elimination of the Second Group by the government the prohibition was repealed. With the establishment of the single-party rule in the second half of the 1920s, nationalism in Turkey obtained a secular and scientific character. With this change the alcohol opposition in Turkey started to take on a secular position.

Another important point about the prohibition law was that it facilitated the attempts of the state to standardize alcohol production in the second half of the 1920s. With the fourth article of the *Men-i Müskirat Kanunu*, the state could confiscate the tools that were used in alcohol production. By doing this, it was easier to eliminate the small producers who had made alcoholic beverages of various qualities. With the monopolization over alcohol, the state both standardized alcohol production and made a contribution to the industrialization attempts by building alcohol factories in the country. To make a long story short, although the government was against the law of prohibition, it used it from time to time for its own benefits.

Finally, in the thesis it was found out that the anti-alcohol movement changed its focus and targeted at building healthy and strong generations in the 1930s. The religious concerns among the alcohol opponents left its place to population and eugenics concerns. In this period we see that the alcohol opposition was related closely to nationalism just like it had been in the 1920s. However, in the 1930s, the term “nation” lost its religious connotations to a great extent and it transformed into something that was close to the term “race”.

The medical elite in Turkey were influenced by the eugenics thought which was popular in Europe. However it is important to note that the political environment of Turkey at the period in question was very important in this position change of the alcohol opposition. Although they – except for some instances – did not demand strict eugenic measures from the state, they tried to eliminate the negative, both physical and moral, effects that alcohol cause on the Turkish nation. The arguments and aims of the alcohol opponents of the 1930s, who were mostly composed of the medical elite, had much to do with nation-building, population policies, industrialization, scientism, Westernization, modernization, and body politics.

However, despite the fact that they were the advocates of modernization and scientism, they had problems with the modern life and its practices in everyday life, such as alcohol consumption. Therefore they had to redefine modernization according to their own value judgments.

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