

FORMATION OF AUTHORITARIAN SECULARISM IN TURKEY:
RAMADANS IN THE EARLY REPUBLICAN ERA (1923-1938)

by
SEVGİ ADAK TURAN

Submitted to the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Sabanci University
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13.08.2004

Approval of the Institute of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Nakiye Boyacıgiller
Director

I certify that thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts

Prof. Dr. Ahmet Alkan
Dean

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts

Asso. Prof. Dr. Cemil Koçak
Supervisor

Examining committee Members

Name

Asst. Prof. Dr. Selçuk Akşin Somel

Name

Asst. Prof. Dr. Ayşe Gül Altınay

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To my sister, *Ezgi Adak*.

Acknowledgments

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Abstract

The aim of this study, which was inspired by François Georgeon's study of Ramadans in the late Ottoman Empire, is to analyze Ramadans in the early Republican era. By decoding the official attitude towards Ramadans, this research tries to discover to what extent the Kemalist regime regulated and transformed Ramadan, with which purposes and mechanisms it did so, and whether or not this process entailed a significant change in the publicness and socialness of Ramadan. Based on these analyses, this study attempts to answer the following question: What can be derived from the particular case of Republican Ramadans about the broader project of Kemalist secularization and about the conceptual framework of Kemalist authoritarian secularism? In addition, from a comparative perspective, it also aims to supplement the discussion on continuity and/or change between Ottoman and Republican periods. Lastly, this study tries to make a contribution to the debate on whether Republican secularization was a solid, determined project or a gradual process. The primary source of this study is the content and discourse analysis of the newspaper *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. In addition, the Prime Ministry Republican Archives (*Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi*) were also scrutinized. The main texts of Ottoman/Republican history were reviewed and some recent analyses, both theoretical and historical, also included to reflect the contemporary discussions on Republican secularism.

Based on the study of Republican Ramadans, it can be argued that the Kemalist regime regulated Ramadan and tried to transform its crucial position in the social and religious life of society. At the same time, it used the functional aspects of the Ramadan atmosphere and kept it under control in order to prevent it from being used as a possible means of social opposition or religious revival. While the Republican period exhibits similarities with the 1908 era in this sense, the former became much more authoritarian in its policies. The official attitude towards Ramadan changed gradually in response to particular problems that the new regime faced. Through an examination of Republican Ramadans, this thesis offers four main pillars in the way to conceptualize Kemalist authoritarian secularism: Diminishing the visibility of Islam; total control over the religious sphere, including limiting people's religiosity; a claim to true Islam; and nationalization of Islam.

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, François Georgeon'un geç dönem Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki Ramazanları konu alan araştırmasından esinlenerek, erken Cumhuriyet dönemi Ramazanlarını incelemektir. Ramazan karşısında siyasi otoritenin takındığı resmi tutum ve söylemi ele alarak, Ramazanın ne ölçüde dönüştürüldüğü ve düzenlediği, hangi amaçlar ve araçlarla kontrol edildiği ve Ramazanın kamusal görünürlüğünde ve toplumsallığında bir değişim olup olmadığı sergilenmeye çalışılmaktadır. Temel olarak bu çalışma şu soruya yanıt aramaktadır: Erken dönem Cumhuriyet Ramazanları incelendiğinde, Kemalist sekülerizasyon süreci ve Kemalist otoriter sekülerizmin kavramsal çerçevesi hakkında neler söylenebilir? Buna ek olarak, karşılaştırmalı bir analizle, Osmanlı ve Cumhuriyet dönemleri arasındaki süreklilikleri ve kırılmaları konu alan tartışmalara katkıda bulunmak amaçlanmış, böylelikle Kemalist sekülerizasyon sürecinin, önceden planlanmış ve stratejik olarak uygulanmış bir proje mi, yoksa koşullara göre şekillenen bir süreç mi olduğu sorusu da tartışılmıştır. Çalışmanın temel kaynağını Hakimiyeti Milliye gazetesinin içerik ve söylem analizi oluşturmaktadır. Bunun yanında Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi'nin ilgili katalogları taranmış, mevcut kaynaklardaki teorik ve tarihsel tartışmalardan da yararlanılmıştır.

Erken Cumhuriyet dönemi Ramazanları incelendiğinde görülmektedir ki, Kemalist rejim Ramazanı düzenlemeye ve denetlemeye çalışmış ve bu yolla onun toplumsal ve dini hayattaki etkisini azaltmayı amaçlamıştır. Bunun yanında, Ramazanın sağladığı kimi olanaklar kullanılmış, Ramazana özgü iletişim araçları olası bir muhalefetin ortaya çıkması ihtimaline karşı kontrol altında tutulmuştur. Bu anlamda, erken Cumhuriyet döneminin 1908 sonrası Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile benzerlikleri varsa da otoriter karakterinin sınırları bakımından farklılıklar göstermektedir. Ramazan karşısında tutunulan resmi tutum zaman içerisinde, siyasi iktidarın karşılaştığı sorunlara bağlı olarak değişmiştir. Çalışmanın vardığı sonuç, erken Cumhuriyet dönemi Ramazanlarının uğradığı değişimin, Kemalist otoriter sekülerizmin şu dört özelliğini belirgin kıldığıdır: İslam'ın kamusal görünürlüğünü azaltılması, dini alanın kontrol altına alınması, "doğru" İslam iddiası ve İslam'ın millileştirilmesi.

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INTRODUCTION

Secularism has been one of the most important components of Ottoman/Turkish modernization since the 19th century. Although its scope, character, and even conceptual framework are the subject of an ongoing discussion, as the structural and ideological base of the state and politics in Turkey since the establishment of the Republic, secularism is a crucial dimension to understanding the modern history of Turkey. Even today, much of the contemporary discussions revolving around the relationship between Islam and politics in Turkey, as well as the role of Islam in social life, have their roots in the earlier construction and institutionalization of secularism as an official ideology.

The initial motive of this thesis was to conduct a social history research focusing upon the literature on secularization in the early Republican era by means of a detailed case study analysis. The necessity for such a study is born out of the predominance of “state” centered works in comparison to the limited number of works focusing upon the social history of Republican Turkey. In other words, it would not be wrong to argue that the existing literature on the Republican era in general and on secularization in particular, both historical and theoretical, focuses predominantly upon the political history of the era and places the “state” at the heart of the discussion. Although this domination seems very normal and realistic when the authoritarian character of the Kemalist project is taken into consideration, it is possible to claim that studies and analyses of this type have reached a certain level, if not exhausted all the material. While explanatory, even hegemonic views and analyses of many topics relating to this era, including secularism, have appeared, very little research about the specific applications and reflections of these analyses in different domains of social life exists. To a large extent, the lack of such case studies is related to the academia’s particular emphasis upon the political history, as mentioned above. However, it is also related to the lack of sufficient interest in the social history of the Republic, a history that is crucial if we are to understand to what extent and with which mechanisms Kemalism as a project of social transformation could shape and regulate social life.

Based on this last point, this study seeks to explore the Ramadans of the early Republican period in order to analyze the reflections of official secularism in the social life of the time and to examine whether the existing theoretical and historical literature

on secularism with its dominant views is sufficient for explaining what was going on in social practice. In other words, this work, through the detailed analysis of Republican Ramadans, will try to examine the daily reflections of the general idea underlined in some of the existing literature, that general idea being that the Kemalist modernization project, in accordance with its intention to transform political, social, and cultural life in Turkey, officially adopted very strict secularization measures. According to the basic texts of the early Republican history, secularism as a dominant ideology had quite an impact on the policies of the Kemalist elite, such that, whether intentionally or not, religion lost its importance, at least at the official level and, of course, in public life. As this ideological shift also affected the power of religion to organize the social lives of ordinary people, due to the regulative intervention of the state religious events lost ground in terms of influence popularity, and public visibility. By the same token, Ramadan most likely should have come to play a much less important role in social life than it had played in the social life of Ottoman times.

The inspiration for this idea of using Ramadan as a case study to analyze early Republican secularization comes from François Georgeon's study of the Ramadans in Istanbul during the late Ottoman Empire in his work, *İmparatorlukta Cumhuriyete İstanbul'da Ramazan* (Ramadan in Istanbul: From The Empire to The Republic).¹ According to Georgeon, in the 19th century, Ramadan was a form of "socialness" in the empire. The most important characteristic of this socialness was people's high level of participation in the special social atmosphere in which Ramadan was an organizing element and religion had an apparent public appearance.

Mostly based on the memoirs of Westerners, Georgeon indicates that Ramadan in the late Ottoman Empire was a period during which religious life was intensified and more crucially gained "publicness"; that is, this period witnessed an increase in religious and cultural activities, changes in the appearance of Istanbul (illumination of the city during Ramadan, for example), and changes in the regular organization of public administration as well as social life. For Georgeon, this period of one month can be characterized as "Islamization of the city" despite the clear attempt at modernization in the Ottoman Empire.

Georgeon claims that Young Turk Revolution and WWI caused some changes in this picture with the rising influence of nationalism whereby Ramadan as a month of religious communication turned into a period of "nationalization" of religion. However,

¹François Georgeon, "İmparatorlukta Cumhuriyete İstanbul'da Ramazan", in François Georgeon and Paul Dumont (eds.), *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Yaşamak*, İletişim, İstanbul, 2000.

the basic turning point came with the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Ramadan in 20th century Republican Turkey became “ordinary”. It was adapted to secular Kemalist thought, existing as a private issue and thereby losing its public influence. Although he discusses the period until the Republican era in great detail, Georgeon is content with indicating the more obvious changes Ramadan underwent in the Republican period, leaving a detailed analysis to another research. Therefore, Ramadans in the early Republican era appeared to be an ideal research topic for examining the unavoidable effects of official secularism as Ramadan is one of the most important religious events in the Islamic world and thus a prime area for comparative analysis.

At the beginning of the research period, by analyzing simultaneously the existing evaluations of Republican secularism and Georgeon’s claims on Ramadans, this thesis aimed to examine the following hypothesis: Due to the strict policies of Kemalist secularism, Ramadan (like all religious events) should have become considerably less important and less publicly visible and also, supposedly having lost its widespread existence in social life, should have come to play a much lesser role in the socialness of the early Republican era. In this way, this study would provide the opportunity not only to reconstruct a new academic contribution to the overall social history of the early Republican era, but also to see whether theses of existing works concerning secularism are sufficient for explaining practical cases, or if they instead need to be revised based upon the new data.

However, it should be mentioned that this aim could not be realized to the extent that was desired. In other words, although designed to be a social history work, during the research period, this thesis could not avoid turning into a study centering around the state's regulatory role rather than its impact on social life. The first reason for this has to do with the sheer difficulty of conducting social history research into the early Republican era. While memoirs generally serve as the basic sources of such a project, they tend to be silent when it comes to Ramadans. Writers of memoirs prefer to relate the main political discussions of the time, rarely if ever mentioning changes in social life. Even the memoirs of the critical intellectuals of the time, such as Yahya Kemal Beyatlı and Münevver Ayaşlı, are limited in so far as they reflect the aspects of discontinuity between the Republican and Ottoman periods. Whenever mention is made of Ramadans, it is remembrance and nostalgia for the Ottoman Ramadans, which in and of itself comprises data reflecting their problematic relationships with the Republican Ramadans; due to lack of detailed knowledge, however, this must remain a hypothesis only. In other words, unlike the Ottoman period during which there were intellectuals

such as Servet Muhtar Alus or Ahmet Rasim to record narratives of daily life, the early Republican era lacked this intellectual tradition, probably due to the hegemonic Kemalist atmosphere.

Second, throughout the research, understanding the mechanism by which Ramadans were influenced by the official secularism first before elaborating upon the change in social life seemed to be a more meaningful approach. In other words, the data that was collected and reviewed gave the impression that without understanding the official attitude towards the Ramadans, it would be incomplete, if not meaningless, to deal only with the social life during the Republican Ramadans and compare it with the Ottoman equivalent.

Therefore, this study aims to decode the official attitude towards Ramadans in the early Republican era: To what extent did Republican elite regulate or transform Ramadans; for what purposes and with which mechanisms; and whether or not Ramadans in the Republican era totally lost their publicness and socialness. By taking Ramadans as an explanatory case, this work also aims to examine what can be derived from the particular case of Republican Ramadans to explain the broader project of Republican secularization. In this way, it will also attempt to provide a conceptual and theoretical analysis of secularism in Turkey by presenting its main components. It also attempts a discussion of the extent of state intervention in social and public life in the early Republican era by examining the state's role in the Ramadan atmosphere.

In addition, taking Georgeon's work on Ottoman Ramadans as a basic text, this thesis also aims to supplement the general discussion on the continuity and/or change between the Ottoman Empire and the Republican period by comparing the data collected during the research period about the Ramadans in the Republican era with those represented by Georgeon. From this point, it will be possible to reach not only a more theoretical and interpretive comparison of the characteristics of Ottoman and Republican modernizations in general, but also a better understanding of the role of the state in both of them, and of the difference that Republican secularist ideology created.

And lastly, by paying attention especially to the important developments during the early Republican period itself (1923-1938), such as the abolition of the caliphate, passing of the Law on the Maintenance of Order, and the Menemen uprising, this study will try to contribute to the discussion on whether Republican secularization was a gradual process or not. It will argue that, rather than a solid project the application of which was planned from the very beginning, Republican secularization followed a "gradual" path, or an evolution towards a more authoritarian character. However, it will

also not avoid the fact that secularism as an ideology was a very crucial part of Kemalist ideology and the Kemalist elite attempted to establish a secular state right at the beginning. The idea of this thesis is that, the extent and practical applications of this ideology as a process did find its form gradually, by adopting itself to the necessities of the context.

Conceptual Discussion

This study chooses to use the term “secularism” instead of “laicism”, which is a term that is of French origin and refers mostly to the French experience. The discussion of the difference between these two concepts is still an ongoing one and this discussion is so vital to characterize different experiences of secularization. There is no consensus among social scientists as to which one provides a more appropriate description as far as the Turkish experience is concerned. Most of the time, studies on the early Republican era use these concepts interchangeably without considering a difference between the two. In one of the most famous works on the history of modern Turkey, Bernard Lewis for example mainly uses “secularism”, but does not underline any difference of it from “laicism”.² Other main texts such as Daniel Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* also uses “secularism” instead of “laicism” without offering any conceptual differentiation.³ Şerif Mardin, Eric Zürcher, Feroz Ahmad and Ergun Özbudun also use “secularization” and “secularism”⁴ while describing the Turkish experience.⁵ On the other hand, there are those who prefer to use “laicism” instead of “secularism” for the Republican case, such as Tarık Zafer Tunaya and Mete Tunçay.⁶ However, it should be noted that these scholars do not attempt a

²See Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1968. In the Index of the book, laicism is used interchangeably with secularism.

³See Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1958.

⁴Here it should be noted that there is also a difference between the terms “secularism” and “secularization”. In the Turkish case, for example, secularism refers to an ideology while secularization echoes a process in which this ideology finds its practical applications in the hands of the political authority.

⁵See Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis Of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1962; Şerif Mardin, “Religion and Secularism in Turkey”, in Ali Kazancıgil & Ergun Özbudun (eds.), *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State*, C. Hurst&Company, London, 1981, reprint 1997, p. 191-210; Eric Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1993, reprint 1997; Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, Routledge, London; New York, 1993; Ergun Özbudun, “Turkey: Crises, Interruptions and Reequilibrations”, in Ergun Özbudun (ed.), *Perspectives on Democracy in Turkey*, Turkish Political Science Association, Ankara, 1988.

⁶Tarık Zafer Tunaya, “Atatürkçü Laiklik Politikası”, in Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Devrim Hareketleri İçinde Atatürk ve Atatürkçülük*, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002, p. 323-342; Mete

conceptual discussion or present the reasoning behind their choice either. It is thus safe to argue that, for a long period of time, differentiating between “secularism” and “laicism” in Turkish social science literature was not deemed necessary and that these terms therefore have often been used interchangeably.

Contemporary studies, however, pay more attention to the conceptualization of each of these terms and attempt to explain the particular reasoning behind why they choose one over the other in order to describe the Turkish case based upon their own conceptualization. The earliest examples of such attempts can be seen in relation to the rising conservative or Islamic criticisms directed at Kemalist official secularism with its strict applications, which were formulated after the 1960s, but especially after the 1980s.⁷ Rather than the French experience of “laicism”, which they think the Turkish case is actually based upon, these criticisms choose to refer to the secularization process of the Anglo-Saxon tradition which they believe holds a more “positive” attitude towards the role of religion in society. Therefore, they are not describing the Kemalist project as a project of secularism, but as a project of laicism because of its problematic and uneasy relationship with religion. They then propose an alternative way of modernization in which the relationship between religion and politics will be organized more like the Anglo-Saxon experience.

In fact, those who favors laicism also underline either the limitations of this term and therefore failure to accurately describe the uniqueness of the Turkish case, or Turkey's incompatibility with the original meaning of the term. For example, Tarık Zafer Tunaya, offering a narrower definition of laicism as the separation of religious affairs from state affairs, argues that this “static” definition is only valid for the French case, whereas according to him Turkey, with its definite control over religious affairs, goes far beyond this limited understanding of laicism, preferring instead a broader understanding which gives the state more opportunity to check and regulate.⁸ Sami Selçuk, on the other hand, defines laicism as follows: “Laicism means that the state and all public institutions are neutral, tolerant, and at an equal distance vis-à-vis all religious beliefs”.⁹ Based upon this definition, Selçuk emphasizes that the Turkish application is not compatible with laicism, as there is state control over religion through the Presidency of Religious Affairs. However, Andrew Davison for example, also indicates

Tunçay, T.C. 'nde Tek-Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması (1923-1931), Cem, İstanbul, 1992.

⁷Nuray Mert, “Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Laiklik ve Karşı Laikliğin Düşünsel Boyutu”, in Ahmet İnel (ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm*, İletişim, İstanbul, 2001, p. 197-209.

⁸Tunaya, 2002, p. 334.

⁹Sami Selçuk, “Laikliği Tanımlama Denemesi ve Tanım Işığında Türkiye'nin Konumu”, in Sami Selçuk, *Demokrasiye Doğru*, Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, Ankara, 1999, p.179-189.

that as state control over religion continued in Turkey even after the Republican reforms, one needs to include the concept “laicism” in order to better understand and interpret the Turkish experience.¹⁰

Although interpretations of the Turkish perception of “laicism” as a principle do vary, all of the definitions unarguably underline one main characteristic: laicism is about the position of the state and public institutions vis-à-vis religion. In other words, it is basically a legal term, an institutional principle which necessitates that legitimacy of the political authority should not be derived from any religious belief. Rather, the source of the political legitimacy must be irreligious. To use Ionna Kuçuradi's expression, it is only a negative concept which points out “what should not determine the structure and functioning of an institution, especially the institution of the modern state”.¹¹

On the other hand, secularization is a kind of temporalization closely associated in this age with modernization and therefore does not necessarily mean a denial of religion.¹² In this sense, secularization is referring to a sociological process directly related to the conditions of modernization and associated political changes.¹³ Considering the crucial role of positivism in Kemalist modernization, the Turkish experience should perhaps be described as a process of secularization that also included legal and political reforms to laicize the state apparatus. For the Turkish case, secularization starts with Westernization, but laicism could be realized only in the Republican era. Therefore, theoretically speaking, secularization/secularism and laicism are parallel terms, if not identical, and “it is necessary to talk about the laicism of the state, but secularization of the society”¹⁴.

However, although a sociological concept, secularization may not, and usually is not, a natural process. Nor is there only one form of it: “Some types of secularization may be flexible and tolerantly open to a broader spectrum of religious beliefs, while

¹⁰In fact, in some parts of his work (including the title) Davison uses “secularism”, but he also offers such a reasoning for the necessity of using the concept “laicism” while explaining the Turkish case. For a detailed analysis, see Andrew Davison, *Türkiye'de Sekülerizm ve Modernlik*, İletişim, İstanbul, 2002.

¹¹Ionna Kuçuradi, “Secularization and Human Rights”, in Bhuvan Chandel and Kuçuradi (eds.), *Cultural Traditions and the Idea of Secularization*, Centre for Studies in Civilizations, Delhi, 1988, p. 72-73.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 72-73.

¹³Ernest Gellner, “The Turkish Option in Comparative Perspective”, in Reşat Kasaba and Sibel Bozdoğan (eds.), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, University of Washington Press, Seattle; London, 1997, p. 233-244. Gellner summarizes the secularization thesis of sociology as follows: “Under conditions of modernization and industrialization, and associated political changes, which one can lump together as modernity, the hold of religion over society and over the hearts and minds of men diminishes”. Although Gellner indicates that the validity of this thesis is open to discussion, it is basically true for the Western world, not for the Islamic world, with the unique exception of Turkey.

¹⁴Nuray Mert, *Laiklik Tartışmasına Kavramsal Bir Bakış: Cumhuriyet Kurulurken Laik Düşünce*, Bağlam, İstanbul, 1994, p. 17.

others may be rigid and doctrinaire”.¹⁵ As far as the Turkish case is concerned, the latter seems more valid and appropriate because Kemalist secularist ideology did not only aim at an institutional secularization, but a mental secularization as well.¹⁶ This “mental” transformation was not a natural process, but a top-down project, ordered and applied by an authoritarian regime.

Therefore, in this thesis the concept “authoritarian secularism” is used in an attempt to better describe the total aim, scope, and mechanisms of the Kemalist secularization process. Taking “secularism” as a doctrine, the Kemalist elite “identified their own secularist ideology with the secularization process. They thought that their role was to deliver what had to occur anyway, thanks to the law of progress”.¹⁷ As a result,

“the Kemalist reforms extended far beyond the modernization of the state apparatus and the transition from a multiethnic Ottoman Empire to a secular republican nation-state in their attempt to penetrate into the lifestyles, manners, behaviors and daily customs of the people, and to change the self-conception of Turks”.¹⁸

Taking the case of the early Republican Ramadans into consideration, as this thesis does, serves to make this aim of Kemalist secularisation not to be limited to secularisation of the state institution, but to penetrate into the social life and to regulate the place of religion as it is experienced by the people as well, all the more obvious.

Methodology and Sources

Due to the reasons discussed above, this study does not have, or rather could not be based on a great variety of sources. The main source of this study is the newspaper *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* (later converted to *Ulus* in 1934), which was the main representative of the official ideology in the early Republican era. As there was no place for any critical, opposing idea or press organ because of the persistent policy of the

¹⁵Fred Dallmayr, “Rethinking secularism-with Raimon Panikkar”, in Fred Dallmayr, *Dialogue Among Civilizations*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2002, p. 185-200.

¹⁶Murat Belge, “Mustafa Kemal ve Kemalizm”, in Ahmet İnel (ed.), *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm*, İletişim, İstanbul, 2001, p. 29-43.

¹⁷Elizabeth Özdalga, *The Veiling Issue, Official secularism and Popular Islam in Modern Turkey*, Curzon Press, Richmond, p. 2. Özdalga uses the term “official secularism” in order to better reflect the authoritarian character of the Turkish experience.

¹⁸Nilüfer Göle, “Authoritarian secularism and Islamism Politics: The Case of Turkey”, in Augustus Richard Norton (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East: Volume II*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1996, p. 17-43. Göle uses the term “authoritarian secularism”. For the usage of “radical secularism” for the Turkish case see Mesut Yeğen, “Kemalizm ve Hegemonya?”, in Ahmet İnel (ed.), *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm*, İletişim, İstanbul, 2001, p. 56-74.

Kemalist elite to erase any source of opposition, especially after 1925 and the passing of the Law on the Maintenance of Order, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* appeared to be the best choice from among newspapers of that era as it reflects directly the official discourse.¹⁹ In addition, in order to make more sense of the official position regarding Ramadans and the mechanisms employed by the regime to control it, the Prime Ministry Republican Archives (*Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi*) were also scrutinized.²⁰ Three catalogues were searched to this end: The catalogue of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kataloğu*), the catalogue of the Prime Ministry General Administration of Transactions (*Başbakanlık Muamelât Genel Müdürlüğü Kataloğu*), and the catalogue of Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Kataloğu*).

In order to present a historical overview of secularism in Turkey starting with the Ottoman period, the main texts of Ottoman/Republican history were reviewed. In addition to these, some recent analyses, both theoretical and historical, were also included to reflect the contemporary discussions on Republican secularism. Examples from the publications of the era were also examined to show how secularism was perceived in that period. For the Ottoman Ramadans, as mentioned above, François Georgeon's work was the main source. However, it was also complemented by other sources where necessary.

The thesis will be composed of two parts. In the first part, there will be two chapters to provide a general background. The first chapter presents a historical overview of secularism in Turkey, starting with the 19th century Ottoman Empire, and also serves to summarize the existing literature. The second chapter will be on the Ramadans of the late Ottoman Empire. In the second part, the focus will be on the analysis of Republican Ramadans and it will be organized under three main chapter based on a chronological organization.

The basic methodology of the research, which will appear in the second part on Republican Ramadans, depends on the content and discourse analysis of the newspaper *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. It will be also supported with the archive documents. It should be noted that, as indicated before, Georgeon's and other sources' emphasis is on the Ramadans in Istanbul. However, because the main source of the second part is *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, the analysis of Republican Ramadans focuses primarily upon Ramadans in Ankara.

¹⁹During the early Republican era, especially in the 1930s, the Kemalist regime made deliberate efforts to increase the popularity of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* in order to use it as a means of public communication and political indoctrination. See PMRA 490.01/1.4.29

²⁰Abbreviated as PMRA in the text.

PART I

Chapter I

SECULARISM IN TURKEY: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

1.1. Secularism in the Ottoman Empire

Since the beginning of the literature on the issue of secularism, roots of secularism in the Ottoman Empire have been thought of as a chapter in the complicated history of Ottoman-Turkish modernization. To be more specific, for the non-Western societies, the history of secularization is nearly identical to the history of Westernization due to the fact that the transfer of secular ideas occurred almost entirely during the adoption of Western institutions and Western way of thinking. Therefore, according to most scholars, indications of secularism can be traced back as early as the 18th century. This is simply because of the fact that, as İlber Ortaylı mentions, the 18th century is the most important century of Turkish history in terms of the development of a “consciousness of change”.²¹ In the 18th century, earliest adoptions of Western institutions were realized in the form of military reforms. This process also had its impact on social life itself as well, resulting in the emergence of a new kind of life, *tarz-ı hayat*. However, modernization as a more comprehensive and radical process took place in the 19th century.

Apart from the official reform movement, the 19th century also witnessed an emergence of a new *intelligentsia* with strong relations to Western ideas. There was an attempt to transfer Western accumulation of knowledge and thought through what can be called *encyclopedism*, an initiative that manifested itself in the works of Şinasi who in turn had a significant influence upon the first Ottoman liberals, i.e. the Young Ottomans.²² This transfer of knowledge and thought not only influenced the Ottoman intellectuals’ world views, but also the way that they perceived themselves and their own society. In other words, what happened was not a simple one way relationship, but a more complicated ideological transformation by which Ottoman intellectuals started

²¹İlber Ortaylı, “Osmanlı'da 18. Yüzyıl Düşünce Dünyasına Dair Notlar”, in Mehmet Ö. Alkan (ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 1: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi*, İletişim, İstanbul, 2001, p. 37-41.

²²Şerif Mardin, “Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesi”, in Mehmet Ö. Alkan (ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 1: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi*, İletişim, İstanbul, 2001, p. 42-53.

to see their own society through Western eyes. This is a point which would also dominate much of the Turkish modernization in the coming periods.

This ideological transformation was both the reason for and the result of a more organized process of institutional modernization. As noted above, modernization in the Ottoman Empire manifested itself first in the area of the military, but did not stay limited to that. More important as far as the development of secularism is concerned, were undoubtedly those reforms affecting administrative, judicial, and educational issues. *Gülhâne Hatt-ı Hümayûnu* (Imperial Edict of Gülhane or *Tanzîmât* Edict of 1839), which marked the legal application of equality for people of all religions, can be interpreted as one of the most important steps in this regard. Although it used to be argued that *Gülhâne Hatt-ı Hümayûnu* was declared as a result of outside pressures on the part of the European countries, recent researches shows that there was also an inner dynamic within the Ottoman administration of the time.²³ For *Tanzîmât* reformers and intellectuals, following the necessities of the time was crucial to protecting the Ottoman state and ideas like “civilisation”, “progress”, “law”, “science”, “reason” and “liberty” gained their place in the political thought of the *Tanzîmât* period as well as in its major texts.²⁴ These ideas of *Tanzîmât* reformers and intellectuals were developed within the framework of Ottomanism rather than a clear aim of creating a “secular” state and society. However, it can be said that Ottomanism as the main ideology of the time at least opened a field for secularism through its emphasis on the necessity of coalescence among the people of the empire through elements other than religion and sect. Its agenda also contained an unavoidable change in the traditional Ottoman state ideology which was depending on the idea of compartmentalization among the different *millet*s of the empire; and therefore assisted in the development of a more democratic and secular state ideology in Ottoman-Turkish history.²⁵

In a similar fashion, The Reform Edict of 1856 (The Edict of *Islahat*) strengthened the secularization of the notion of sovereignty and the sultan-subject relationship. It included the reaffirmation of the rights given by *Gülhâne Hatt-ı Hümayûnu*; complete freedom of religious exercise for all *millet*s; equality among all subjects; and reforms, realizing this equality in fields like education and the

²³Selim Deringil, *İktidarın Sembolleri ve İdeoloji: II. Abdülhamit Dönemi (1876-1909)*, YKY, İstanbul, 2002, p. 54.

²⁴Gökhan Çetinsaya, “Kalemiye'den Mülkiye'ye Tanzimat Zihniyeti”, in Mehmet Ö. Alkan (ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 1: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi*, İletişim, İstanbul, 2001, p. 54-71.

²⁵For a detailed discussion of the Ottomanist ideology, see Selçuk Akşin Somel, “Osmanlı Refom Çağında Osmanlılık Düşüncesi (1839-1913)” in Mehmet Ö. Alkan (ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 1: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi*, İletişim, İstanbul, 2001, p. 88-116.

administration of justice.²⁶ Though the Reform Edict was declared mainly due to the pressures of Western countries, together with the *Tanzîmât* Edict, it became a part of the mentality which directed this particular reform period of the Ottoman Empire. While on the one hand there would be unity of particular laws for the whole Ottoman subjects, on the other hand there would be differentiations only when religion was concerned. In the words of Berkes, according to the *Tanzîmât* reformers:

“The Ottoman state could be secularized only when the millets became religious congregations (*cemaat*) and each Ottoman subject was individually responsible and equal before the laws. Then the *Şeriat* would cease to be the basic law. It would remain only as the private law of the Muslims while the state would be administrated according to newly enacted administrative, procedural, criminal, civil and commercial codes. There would be a rule of tolerance in the sense understood by Âli Paşa. Education would foster tolerance, equality, and common Ottoman citizenship. Finally, an end would be put to the political activities of the Ulema, the churches, and the missionaries”.²⁷

In practice, it can be argued that, despite their clear aim to modernize the empire, the modernization reforms of the 19th century remained limited in so far as these ideals are concerned. In the early reforms, there was no attempt to establish a separate legislative organ or a judiciary system other than the *Şeriat* and so few reforms were issued in that regard. With the *Tanzîmât* period, the Council of Judicial Ordinances was assigned some legislative and quasi-judicial functions and in 1847 mixed civil and criminal courts with an equal number of European and Ottoman judges were created and this new courts would act in accordance with the European rather than Islamic practice.²⁸ Following this reform, in 1850, the Commercial Code prepared by Reşid Paşa was issued. This change signaled “the first formal recognition in Turkey of a system of law and of judicature independent of the *ulema*, dealing with the matters outside the scope of the *Şeriat*”.²⁹

In the coming years there occurred new reforms in the field of commercial and maritime laws. However, one of the most important regulations was the new Land Law of 1858 which affected the land system of the Ottoman Empire. This law can be seen as an attempt to further spread Westernization to other fields. In 1858, a new Penal Code (*Ceza Kanunu*) was declared, an event followed by the establishment of secular (*nizami*)

²⁶Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, Hurst & Company, London, 1998, p. 152.

²⁷Ibid., p. 154.

²⁸Lewis, 1968, p. 114. For a more detailed discussion of the developments in the judicial sphere in the Ottoman Empire see Bülent Tanör, *Osmanlı-Türk Anayasal Gelişmeleri (1789-1980)*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul, 1996.

²⁹Ibid., p. 114.

courts in 1869, strengthening of the Ministry of Justice to better control these new secular courts, and the beginning of the profession of lawyer in the Ottoman Empire in 1879.³⁰ Creation of two bodies, the Divan of Judicial Ordinances (*Divan-ı Ahkâm-ı Adliye*) and the Council of State (*Şura-i Devlet*), came in 1868, followed by *Mecelle*, the new civil code, in 1876. Such reforms not only helped to change the existing judicial structure of the empire and to give it a more “secular” character, but also laid the appropriate groundwork and prepared the political and intellectual atmosphere for the future attempts as well.

A similar trend was observable in education. The first attempts that eventually gave way to a secular education system in the Ottoman Empire also occurred in the 19th century. In his *Hatt-ı Humayun* issued in 1845, Reşid Pasha said that the failure of his reforms in areas other than the military “should be remedied by the establishment of good schools throughout the Empire, so as to disseminate useful knowledge and thus make possible the introduction into other branches of the government of the improvements already tried in the Ministry of War”.³¹ Following this decision, secondary schools, called *Rüşdiyye*, were established. The Council of Public Instruction, whose establishment was proposed by the *Hatt-ı Humayun*, became a separate institution relatively outside the jurisdiction of the ulema. The number of *Rüşdiyye* schools remained limited at first and still focused predominantly upon religious education. However, according to Lewis, it could be interpreted as an important step, first in a series of measures that would eventually lead to the disappearance of the influence and hegemony of the ulema in the field of education. Although this argument goes too far while suggesting the “disappearance” of the influence of the ulema, it is still valid to talk about a relative decrease in this regard.

In addition to the newly established institutions of both secondary schools and professional schools, a new kind of educational ideology began to emerge in the *Tanzîmât* era as well. The utilitarian nature of the early modernization attempts that aimed to create the professional personnel necessary for the modernized army of the empire transformed into a new initiative having political, cultural, and economic concerns.³² There appeared curricular measures, standardized textbooks, and the introduction of the class-system in the *Rüşdiyye* schools, the aim of which was to discipline students and promote uniformity and efficiency in the education system; all

³⁰Deringil, 2002, p. 54.

³¹Lewis, 1968, p. 112.

³²Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in The Ottoman Empire 1839-1908: Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline*, Brill, Leiden; Boston; Köln, 2001, p. 16.

of these changes signaled the emergence of an educational ideology that was definitely modern in nature.

However, primary education was still religious in essence and dominated by the Quran schools (*Subyân Mektebi*). The most apparent reform attempt at modernizing this primary education system came in the form of the Regulation of Public Education in 1869. This document, Ottomanist and secular in content, integrated all existing schools under a single comprehensive law, initiated the establishment of government schools in the provinces, introduced the formation of foreign schools, promoted primary education for girls, and brought about a more centralized understanding in that schools now became supervised by the government. By minimizing the influence of ulema over Muslim education, “1869 text stressed the promotion of secular knowledge, leaving religion to a secondary position, and for the first time questioned the function of *subyân* schools as a necessary level of religious education”.³³ It should be noted, however, that this regulation could be applied only limitedly and that its Ottomanist pluralism ideal in the government schools could not be realized to the desired extent. This was partially realized in the foreign schools and in higher education schools like the Imperial Ottoman Lycée of Galatasaray (*Mekteb-i Sultânî*). These schools also added to the modernization of education in the empire and played an important role in the transfer of Western ideas among the educated people, thereby helping to create a new *intelligentsia* well-informed about the modern ideas like liberalism and nationalism.

The largest wave of the educational reforms was realized in the Hamidian era.³⁴ Thought to be initiators of modernization, the Hamidian regime established several new schools and added to the number of modern schools existing in the extended part of the empire as well as founding the first university, *Darülfünun*, in 1900. On the other hand, parallel to the general shift in the political position of the porte from Ottomanism to Islamism, curricular content and textbooks were influenced by the new emphasis on religious and authoritarian values, though this influence remained limited and did not give way to a radical return to an antipositivistic traditionalism. “It might even be claimed that the utilization of Islam remained mainly within the realm of political unity and formality, whereas the developments in curricular content in general followed non-Islamic lines”.³⁵

³³Ibid., p. 89.

³⁴For a more detailed analysis of the educational reforms in the Hamidian era see Bayram Kodaman, *Abdülhamit Devri Eğitim Sistemi*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 1991; see also Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, The State and The Education in The Late Ottoman Empire*, Oxford University Press, New York; Oxford, 2002.

³⁵Ibid., p. 167.

Parallel to all these institutional and, to some extent, intellectual modernization processes, it could also be argued that there was yet another process also occurring in the 19th century Ottoman Empire: “Islamization”. In the more classical studies of Ottoman-Turkish history (except the ones emphasizing the “differences” in accordance with the official discourse), the “continuity” between the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic is analyzed under the general heading of “Westernization”. Studies like *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* by Bernard Lewis and *The Passing of Traditional Societies* by Daniel Lerner are two examples of such studies that possess this framework of a “linear” modernization theory and that in fact approach the issue with a very pro-modernist, positive attitude. As they are focusing on the institutional and legal side of the phenomenon, there is nearly no way to see any kind of considerable difference or discrepancy in such a bureaucracy-oriented perspective.

However, in all phases of 19th century Ottoman modernization, the existence of “dualism” is in evidence, both factually and ideologically. As far as the settled place of Islam in Ottoman society is concerned, it is safe to argue that Islam was still a determining factor for the cultural and social setting in which modernization attempts were initiated. Although there were already some elements suitable for modernization and secularization present in the Ottoman order, like the existence of common law (*örfi hukuk*) and tradition of *kanunnâme*, Islam was still a main concern.³⁶ Therefore, while *Gülhâne Hatt-ı Hümayûnu*, for example, might have been emphasizing progress, science, and modern laws, it was also emphasizing how they were compatible with the orders of Islam.³⁷ As Somel argues, “in contrast to the conventional historiography, Islam as a culture and institution was not viewed by the early *tanzîmât*-reformers as a hindrance or burden to be overcome”.³⁸ The later reformers, Âli and Fuad Pashas, were also reaching the same conclusion, despite their attempts at more secular reforms: all reforms were for the protection of Islam; the state, and the nation of Islam.³⁹ It was what Berkes calls “separationist” or “dualist” secularism, a type of secularism that made possible the coexistence of the “religious” and the “temporal,” which dominated the *Tanzîmât* and subsequent periods.

During the Hamidian era, there emerged an attempt to transform this existing dualism into a kind of synthesis of modernization and Islamism. The aim was (as a

³⁶For a detailed discussion, see Niyazi Berkes, 1998 and Taha Akyol, *Medine'den Lozan'a: “Çok-Hukuklu” in Tarihteki Deneyleri*, Milliyet Yayınları, İstanbul, 1996.

³⁷Çetinsaya, 2002, p. 54-71.

³⁸Somel, 2001, p. 3.

³⁹For a detailed analysis, see Engin Deniz Akarlı, *Belgelerle Tanzimat: Osmanlı Sadrazamlarından Âli ve Fuad Paşaların Vasiyyetnâmeleri*, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 1978.

continuation of the *Tanzîmât* ideal) to discipline Ottoman subjects and to initiate a standardization process which would create loyal subjects possessing a religious identity and, at the same time, the training necessary for the further modernization of the empire.⁴⁰ However, the Hamidian regime was unsuccessful in reaching this aim. Rather, graduates of government schools of the Hamidian age -namely Young Turks- were oppositional to Islamism and in favor of more secular as well as nationalist policies, but at the same time very much in line with the uniformist, progressive, authoritarian elements of Ottoman educational reforms.⁴¹

The constitutional era ushered in a more radical phase for the development of secularism in the Ottoman Empire. It was a period when, for the first time, the strictly modernist/Westernist elite of the empire gained strong political power. Although at the beginning of this era it was still Ottomanism that was leading the discussions about the future of the state, Turkish nationalism garnered considerable attention, especially after the Balkan Wars, as the only remaining possibility. Young Turks adopting “Turkist” policies were aware of the fact that creating a *millet* meant a clear transformation of Ottoman society, the *ümmet*. Needless to say, this first of all necessitated secularism in sociological terms. However, Young Turks were not eliminating Islam from their future ideals of a Turkish nation. On the one hand, they were adopting the most radical secularist policies of the empire in education, administration, and law such as the elimination of *Şeyh-ül-Islâm* from politics, the *şeriat* courts, the administration of *evkaf* and education (based on a memorandum prepared by Ziya Gökalp for the Party of Union and Progress in 1916), codification of the Law of Family Rights in 1917, and adoption of the Western calendar.⁴²

On the other hand, however, Turkish nationalist intellectuals of the Constitutional era were including Islam in their texts as the moral foundation of the nation. Synthesizing the Islamist and Westernist positions, Turkism was aiming to modernize the state and society by separating Islam only from the political arena rather than eliminating it altogether. The most famous declaration of such an approach is seen in the thought of Ziya Gökalp, especially in his “Turkification, Islamization, Modernization”. The secularization propagated by these Young Turk intellectuals was a possible solution to the dualist secularism of the *Tanzîmât*, “secularization via Turkification”⁴³. According to them, Islam was not an obstacle on the road to

⁴⁰Somel, 2001, p. 4-7.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 276-277.

⁴²Berkes, 1998, p. 415-423.

⁴³Ibid., p. 366.

modernization, but rather was in fact a necessary element of Turkishness which would protect the Turkish nation from the negative influences of the West. Although to varying degrees and with different interpretations, the Young Turk intellectuals generally shared both this basic understanding with regard to Islam as well as a clear opposition to *ulema*.⁴⁴ While they helped to further the secularization of the Ottoman state and society, Islam still remained powerful, at least as a very strong cultural dimension.⁴⁵ Kemalist secularism, however, while clearly inheriting the secularism proposed by the Young Turks, also signaled a definite break with regard to many of its aspects, including the place of Islam in Turkish culture.

1.2. Secularism in the Republican Era

Although it has its roots in the Ottoman era, secularism in Turkey, both as an ideology and a political project, is basically an issue of the Republican period. Being one of the six founding principles of Turkish republicanism, it has always been of critical importance (perhaps together with nationalism one of the two most important principles) to understanding Kemalism and Republican history. Even contemporary discussions concerning the role of religion in Turkish society and some very critical political debates like the headscarf debate can be analyzed only by revisiting this secularization experience of the early Republican era. This is mostly because of the fact that, like other non-Western secularizations, Turkish secularization was also introduced by an elite initiative and then turned into an official ideology of the state. This process can first of all be traced via an analysis of the official discourse on secularism in the early Republican period.

1.2.1. Secularism in the Official Discourse

Sources of primary importance when tracing the official discourse on secularism are the regulations and the programs of the Republican People's Party since 1923, the year when the first regulation of the party was prepared and declared. Prior to the official party program and regulation, the party composed a declaration called *Dokuz Umde* (Nine Principles) before the elections in 1923. This first document included no open

⁴⁴Erik Jan Zürcher, "Kemalist Düşüncenin Osmanlı Kaynakları", *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm*, Ahmet İnel (ed.), İletişim, İstanbul, 2001, p. 44-55.

⁴⁵For example Somel indicates that the government primary schools (*ibtidâî*), alternatively founded against Quran schools from 1872 onwards, did not face a popular support from the Muslim population of the Ottoman society. See Somel, 2001, p. 272.

indications of secularism and secularist policies. Instead, Kemalists were still in favor of the *hilâfet* (the caliphate) as a high and respectable position the existence of which was safeguarded and legitimized by the first parliament.⁴⁶ After the official establishment of the party, the first regulation, the regulation of 1923, was declared; this regulation was a more specific and detailed explanation of both party principles and party organization. Different than the previous document, *Dokuz Umde*, the 1923 regulation lacked any mention of the office of *hilâfet*. Neither, however, did it include any explanation of the principle of secularism. Rather, the main stress was on a classless Turkish society as the only source of political sovereignty.⁴⁷ Although it can be said that the emphasis upon people as the only legitimate source of political sovereignty is directly related to the principle of secularism, the regulation contained no direct reference to it. Even the points stressed in the document by which party defines itself, like *Halkçılık* (Populism), *Milliyetçilik* (Nationalism), and *Cumhuriyetçilik* (Republicanism) were far from being formulated as the official principles.

The 1927 regulation was a turning point in this regard. In this regulation for the first time the party defined itself as republican, nationalist, and populist, thereby officially declaring three of the six principles of Kemalism. Even though secularism was still not declared as one of the defining principles of the party, the third article of the regulation included a very clear reference to secularist ideas. The party indicated that it would follow the path of “science” in order to catch up with the contemporary Western civilizations and would definitely separate religion from daily practices when political and national affairs were concerned.⁴⁸ In other words, it was a declaration that from then on, it would be “science” rather than “religion” that would guide the new political elite's ideological position, program, and administration. Parallel to this article, while defining the criteria that binds a nation together, party elites consciously excluded “religion” and emphasized the unity in terms of language, feelings and ideas only.⁴⁹ The

⁴⁶“İstinadgâhı Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi olan makam-ı hilâfet, beynelislâm bir makam-ı muallâdır”, *Dokuz Umde*, principle 2. Tunçay, 1992, p. 354-356.

⁴⁷“Halk Fırkası nazarında halk mefhumu, herhangi bir sınıfa münhasır değildir. Hiçbir imtiyaz iddiasında bulunmayan ve umumiyetle kanun nazarında mutlak bir müsavâtı kabul eden bütün fertler halktandır. Halkçılar, hiçbir ailenin, hiçbir sınıfın, hiçbir cemaatin, hiçbir ferdin imtiyazlarını kabul etmeyen ve kanunları vaz’etmekteki mutlak hürriyet ve istiklâlî tanıyan fertlerdir”, *Halk Fırkası 1923 Nizamnamesi*, article 2. Tunçay, 1992, p. 362-369.

⁴⁸“Fırka; itikadat ve vicdaniyatı siyasetten ve siyasetin mütenevvi ihtilâtatından kurtararak milletin, siyasi, içtimai, iktisadi bilecümle kavanin, teşkilât ve ihtiyacatını müsbet ve tecrübevi ilim ve fenlerin muasır medeniyete bahş ve temin ettiği esas ve eşkâle tevfikân tahakkuk ettirmeyi, yani devlet ve din işlerinde din ile dünyayı tamamen birbirinden ayırmayı en mühim esaslarından addeyleyler”, *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi 1927*, article 3. Tunçay, 1992, p. 382-394.

⁴⁹“Fırka; vatandaşlar arasında en kavi rabitanın dil birliği, his birliği, fikir birliği olduğuna kani olarak Türk dilini ve Türk kültürünü bihakkın tamim ve inkişaf ettirmeği ve bütün şubat-ı faaliyette bu esası

1927 regulation's emphasis on secularism together with the other principles summarized above were also declared as "unchanged" in the last article of the new regulation; thus was an important step towards formulating secularism as an official ideology taken.⁵⁰ This emphasis of the regulation became a state principle, before the official declaration of secularism, when the article declaring Islam as the official religion of Turkish Republic was eliminated from the constitution in 1928.

The official declaration and inclusion of the principle of secularism came in 1931, in the first program of the Republican People's Party. In this document, in addition to the three principles declared in 1927, the party added three more principles: *Devletçilik* (Etatism), *İnkılâpçılık* (Revolutionism), and *Layiklik* (Secularism). According to the official definition stated in the program, the party understood secularism to be the elimination of religious beliefs and thought as a source of any laws, regulations, and administrative rules. Instead, by emphasizing the regime's ultimate aim of "reaching the level of contemporary (Western) civilizations", they underlined "science" and the necessities of the modern civilization as the source or framework according to which all laws and administrative rules must be formulated. "As religious belief is something pertaining to the conscience, the party sees the separation of religious thought from state and daily affairs and politics as the primary factor enabling our nation to be successful in its modern progress".⁵¹ This was also the declaration of the main framework of the Kemalist Republic, that is, "positivism" not only in the area of politics, but also in "daily affairs". Positivism became the main pillar of secularism in the Turkish nation-state. The Kemalist elite believed that there was only one way for the Turkish society to progress, and that way was the elimination of religious ideology as well as those institutions of the Ottoman Empire which were the main reasons for its decline. This idea, having its origins in Ottoman modernization as well as the thought of Ottoman Westernists, gained a clear and open voice in Kemalist secularism and led to the replacement of religion by science under the influence of a very powerful positivist ideology.

Kemalism was declared the official state ideology in the party program of 1935.

mavki-i itibar ve metiyette bulundurmayı ve vaz'edilecek kanunların valâyet-i ammesini ve her ferde seyyanen tatbikini umde-i esasiye olarak takrir eder", *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi 1927*, article 5.

⁵⁰"İşbu umumî esaslar, hiçbir veçhile tebdil edilemez", *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi 1927*, article 7.

⁵¹"Din telakkisi vicdani olduğundan, Fırka, din fikirlerini Devlet ve dünya işlerinden ve siyasetten ayrı tutmayı milletimizin muasır terakkisinde başlıca muvaffikiyet amili görür", *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Programı 1931*, part II, article 1D. Tunçay, 1992, p. 447-454.

It was defined as the total of all principles represented in the previous two programs and it was underlined that this was not an ideology that would last only a few years, but rather the ideology that would define the basic framework for the future of the nation.⁵² The article of the program concerning secularism was the same as that in the 1931 program, reflecting again its positivist spirit. However, the implicit mentality reflected in the 1935 program was one aiming for a “cultural transformation” that included all of the equipment of modern life, such as public education, radio, and cinema. In article 48, titled “Training of the Masses and the People's Houses”, this aim is formulated as follows: “Apart from classical school training, we consider continuous education of the masses in a manner that is in accordance with Turkey's path of progress to be of utmost importance. The state will protect the People's Houses which are working to this end to the best of its ability”.⁵³ As a part of state ideology, secularism was one of the principles that would reach people of all classes through such an indoctrination project.

In Atatürk's speeches and declarations, it is also possible to see how secularism gradually evolved in his mind and how this evolution ran parallel to the secularist policies of the regime. First of all, it should be underlined that during the national struggle, Atatürk did not make any statements opposing the office of the Caliphate⁵⁴ and Islam as the official religion of the state. On the contrary, especially during the War of Liberation, he constantly used religious ideas supporting the Sultanate and Caliphate in order to mobilize people and to avoid awakening any opposition to the liberation movement. In the declarations of the Erzurum and Sivas Congresses, we see that there is a clear emphasis on the protection of the Caliphate and the Sultanate. This emphasis also continued during the era of the First Parliament until the abolition of the Sultanate in 1922, which created a contradictory situation as the parliament was also arguing for sovereignty based on popular consent.⁵⁵

However, even then, he was giving indications of his secularist ideas. While

⁵²“Yalnız bir kaç yıl için değil, geleceği de kapsayan tasarılarımızın ana hatları burada, toplu olarak yazılmıştır. Partinin güttüğü bütün esaslar, Kamâlizm prensipleridir”, *C.H.P. Programı 1935*, introduction, p. 2.

⁵³“Klâsik okul yetiştirilmesi dışında, yığına, devamlı ve Türkiye'nin ilerleyiş yollarına uygun bir halk eğitimi vermeyi önemli görüyoruz. Bu hizmet için çalışan Halkevlerini devlet imkân elverdiği ölçüde koruyacaktır”, *C.H.P. Programı 1935*, article 48, p. 40.

⁵⁴It should be noted that he criticised the existing caliph, for example in 1920 in the parliament. However, he constantly underlined that he always appreciated the Caliphate as a position to be maintained. For further information, see Kazım Öztürk, *Atatürk'ün TBMM Açık ve Gizli Oturumlardaki Konuşmaları*, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara, 1981.

⁵⁵For the details of this discussion, see Ahmet Demirel, *Birinci Meclis'te Muhalefet*, İletişim, İstanbul, 1994 and Tarık Zafer Tunaya, “Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Hükümeti'nin Kuruluşu ve Siyasi Karakteri”, in *Devrim Hareketleri İçinde Atatürk ve Atatürkçülük*, Tarık Zafer Tunaya, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002.

underlining the importance of protecting the Caliphate, he was nevertheless adamant that the Caliph not serve as the “master” of the nation: “Although we respectfully bless the sacredness of this high position, the person who will hold this position can never be the master; it is impossible to reconcile him with the brilliant law of Muhammad. There is no mastery for the nation. There is only duty”⁵⁶. He was also making references to the importance of science and scientific methodology, by comparing these with religion. For example, he insisted that even during war time, they should develop programs for national education which meet contemporary modern education standards: “I believe that the biggest reason underlying the backwardness of our nation was the traditional method of education. When I say national education, I mean education that has been cleansed of all traditional beliefs, all foreign influences coming either from the East or from the West, and that is suitable for our national character”⁵⁷.

According to Berkes, although Mustafa Kemal could not declare the components of his real project at first, the aforementioned “implicit” preparations were rooted in the revolutionary character of the movement he was leading.⁵⁸ Underlining the difference between Republican versus Ottoman modernization, Berkes argues that each step Mustafa Kemal took, whether it seemed secularist or not, contributed in some way to his primary goal: the formation of a totally new context free from the traditional, religious Ottoman past. Thus was the absence of any comments (positive or negative) about the Sultanate or Caliphate in *Teşkilat-ı Esasiye*, the constitution of 1921 in fact something revolutionary, and it also served to make subsequent radical steps easier to justify. Similarly, abolition of the Sultanate just before the peace meetings ironically helped to bring about the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 as opposing groups were arguing for the inseparable unity of the two.

In the speeches and declarations of Mustafa Kemal before the establishment of the republic, it is possible to see some other elements from which republican secularism was derived in the later years. One of these has to do with the education of the clerics. Extremely critical of the Ottoman ulema, Mustafa Kemal was arguing for new

⁵⁶“Bu yüksek makamın kutsallığını saygıyla kutsamış olmakla beraber bu makamda oturacak kişiyi, hiçbir zaman efendi yapmak söz konusu değildir; Muhammed'in parlak şeriatıyla uzlaştırmak mümkün değildir... Millete efendilik yoktur. Hizmet vardır”, 1 December 1921. See *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, v. I, edited by Nimet Arsan, Türk Inkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Yayınları, Ankara, 1964, p. 201.

⁵⁷“Benim inancıma göre milletimizin geri kalışında geleneksel eğitim yöntemleri en büyük etken olmuştur. Milli eğitimden söz ettiğim zaman bütün geleneksel inançlardan, Doğu'dan ya da Batı'dan gelen bütün yabancı etkilerden arınmış, milli niteliğimize uyan eğitimi anlıyorum”, June 1921. Quoted by Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*, Bilgi, Ankara, 1973, p. 524.

⁵⁸Berkes, 1973, p. 463.

institutions which would be designed to provide modern religious education. New clerics would analyze the philosophical realities of Islam and be real, elite intellectuals approaching issues from a scientific perspective.⁵⁹ Thus was he also underlining the fact that Islam does not contradict scientific methodology and blaming Ottoman ulema for interpreting Islam in a way that opposes the modernization of society. However, according to true Islam, he was saying, “It is the duty of Muslims to search for science ; this is the order of the religion”.⁶⁰ As it will be seen later, the first policy -modern education of clerics- was to become one of the basic aims of Republican secularism. It was carried out under the direct control and regulation of the state and for the purpose of creating a cadre of religious men imbued with the Kemalist principles. The second one -reconciling Islam with science- provided the background for the justification of the secularist policies of the regime, which aimed to secularize not only the political arena, but the social and cultural atmosphere of the new republic as well.

By 1923, Atatürk's criticisms became more apparent. He did not hesitate to indicate that “the happiest period of our history was the period when our sultans were lacking the title of the Caliphate”.⁶¹ He argued that in order for Islam to reach the high position it deserves, religion should not be used as an instrument of politics. Rather, for the benefit of Islam and for the happiness of the Muslim people, religion should be separated from the interest oriented world of politics.⁶² However, it should be noted that, these ideas of him basically referred to an institutional secularization which means that he had the idea of a secular state at the beginning. Kemalist secularization process as an authoritarian social transformation project would be shaped gradually.

After the establishment of the republic and abolition of the Caliphate, in his speeches as well as policies he made it clear that religion's place was within the “national” framework of the regime. One of the pillars of the newly created nation-state was national morality and, according to Mustafa Kemal, it can only be complemented by modern and liberal elements and ideas. The positivist nature of the Kemalist ideology emphasized science as the only source of knowledge, civilization, and culture. In such a picture, Islam can survive only if it becomes “national” in character and “limited” in the public life. Accordingly, there was no place for the *şeyhs*, *dervişs*, and *tarikats* in social life and those who insisted upon following them were to be labeled as

⁵⁹See *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, v. II, p. 90.

⁶⁰2 February 1923. Quoted in Sadi Borak, *Atatürk'ün Resmi Yayınlarına Girmemiş Söylev, Demeç, Yazışma ve Söyleşileri*, Kaynak, İstanbul, 1997, p. 177.

⁶¹29 October 1923. *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri* v. III, p. 69-70.

⁶²1 Mart 1924. *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, v.I, p. 330-331.

“primitive”: “I will never accept the existence of people in the civilized society of Turkey who are so primitive as to search for material and spiritual happiness by acting according to the warnings of this or that *şeyh* despite the vast light provided by science and civilization in this day and age”⁶³

The last step that should be taken according to Mustafa Kemal was declared again by himself during his famous speech which he read at the congress of the Republican People's Party in 1927. In this speech he openly confesses that he followed a rational strategy in order to protect the revolution and waited for the right time to declare all secularist policies in front of the public in order to secure the viability of those policies. He explains that even during the preparation of the 1924 constitution, he was unable to omit the articles declaring that the religion of the Turkish Republic is Islam (article 2) and that the parliament is responsible for the administration of religious affairs (article 26). He reasons that such an attitude is necessary because of the existence of those who intend to equate any claims for a “secular government” with an anti-religion stance and than use this to further their anti-regime interests. Therefore, these were necessary compensations: “The terms employed in the second and twenty sixth articles of the constitution, which are deem unnecessary and which are inappropriate for the modern character of the new Turkish state and republican administration, are the compensations which were not considered problematic for the state and republic at the time. The nation should remove these unnecessary terms from the constitution at the first feasible opportunity”⁶⁴.

As of the 1930s, it is safe to argue that Atatürk's position (and therefore the regime's position) with regard to secularism had become radicalized. Not only was the place of religion in different areas of life a topic of debate, but the religion itself was opened up to question. Atatürk himself did not hesitate to directly attack clerics for being opportunists and to even share ideas with the foreign public which could easily be interpreted as atheist.⁶⁵ His perception of religion in the 1930s -a perception which also formulated the regime's position vis-à-vis religion- was basically a sociological one, meaning that he viewed it as a social and cultural product. In one of his speeches in

⁶³“Bugün bilimin, fennin, bütün kapsamıyla uygarlığın ışığı karşısında, filan veya falan şeyhin uyarısıyla maddi ve manevi mutluluğu arayacak kadar ilkelinsanların Türkiye uygar topluluğunda varolmasını asla kabul etmiyorum”, 30 Ağustos 1925. *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, v.II, p. 215.

⁶⁴“Anayasanın ikinci ve yirmi altıncı maddelerinde gereksiz görünen ve yeni Türkiye Devleti ile cumhuriyet yönetiminin çağcıl niteliği ile bağdaşmayan terimler, devrim ve cumhuriyetçe, o zaman için sakınca görülmeyen ödünlendir. Ulus, Anayasamızdan gu gereksiz terimleri ilk elverişli zamanda kaldırmalıdır!” *Nutuk Söylev*, v. II, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 1999, p. 957.

⁶⁵Taha Parla, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları Cilt 2: Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, İletişim, İstanbul, 1997, p. 263.

1937, he advises everybody not to equate the principles of the People's Party (six principles) with the dogmas of the books which were thought to be sent from the sky.⁶⁶ According to Tanör, Mustafa Kemal himself despised all social control mechanisms inherited from the Ottoman-Islamic past, like *mahalle*, *camî* (mosque), and *kahvehâne* (coffee houses); he thought that this network was irrational and therefore needed to be transformed.⁶⁷ Reflections of this anti-religion position could also be seen in the basic texts of the period.⁶⁸ It was these ideas which created an atmosphere suitable to the implementation of radical secularist reforms.

In the speeches and writings of key elite members of the time, it is also possible to see how secularism was formulated in the official discourse when it came to the 1930s. Recep Peker should be pointed out as being one of the ideologists of Kemalism in this regard. Although he said little about the principle of secularism in his works such as *Course Notes on History of Revolution (İnkılâp Tarihi Ders Notları)*, Peker was generally shared the same ideas declared by Atatürk and he was also in position of defending the party principles as the Secretary General of the party. On the one hand, he was criticizing the historical position of religion as a part of political life and emphasizing its social and personal character.⁶⁹ On the other hand, he was defensive about the secularism of the new regime which, according to him, did not contain anything against religion: “Secularism never means being irreligious or wanting to be irreligious. It is under the approving authority of the constitution that everybody in Turkey is free to do perform acts of worship as s/he pleases. The citizen who is religious according to his/her own personal belief can simultaneously stay loyal to this belief and be a sincere secularist”.⁷⁰

It should be noted that this -to some extent- liberal interpretation of secularism contained in Peker's speech contradicts his general evaluation of the Kemalist revolution. According to his defensive position vis-à-vis Kemalist secularism quoted

⁶⁶“Bu (CHP programındaki) prensipleri, gökten indiği sanılan kitapların dogmalarıyla asla bir tutulmamalıdır. Biz ilhamımızı gökten ve gâipten değil, doğrudan doğruya hayattan almış oluyoruz”, 1 November 1937 in *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, v. I., p. 389. Quoted in Bülent Tanör, “Laikleş(tir)me, Kemalistler ve Din”, in Mete Tunçay (ed.), *75 Yılda Düşünceler Tartışmalar*, Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, İstanbul, 1999, p.183- 196.

⁶⁷Tanör, 1999, p. 184.

⁶⁸For example, see *Medenî Bilgiler ve M. Kemal Atatürk'ün El Yazıları*, A. Âfetinan, Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, Ankara, 2000 and *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları: Kemalist Yönetimin Resmi Tarih Tezi*, Kaynak Yayınları, İstanbul, 1999.

⁶⁹Recep Peker, *İnkılâp Derleri*, İletişim, İstanbul, 1984, p. 72.

⁷⁰Recep Peker, *C.H.F. Programının İzahı Mevzuu Üzerinde Konferans*, Hakimiyet-i Milliye Matbaası, Ankara, 1931. Quoted by Taha Parla, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları Cilt 3: Kemalist Tek-Parti İdeolojisi ve CHP'nin Altı Ok'u*, İletişim, İstanbul, 1995, p. 116.

above, religion belongs to social life and the conscience of the people, but it should be kept separate from the political arena that concerns the regime. However, while defining revolution and identifying the aim and scope of Turkish revolution (by which he means the Kemalist revolution), he underscores his interpretation of revolution as the replacement of all evil, backward, old, harmful parts of a social body with new, good, progressive, beneficial, and true ones. In this regard, he definitely differentiates the Turkish revolution from all other revolutions because of its deeper and wider scope: “The Turkish revolution is not a movement that changed the political or economic regime only. It is a revolution which equally influenced national, social, political, economic, and cultural life at all levels. Even habits in our daily life are being renewed under the impact of the Turkish revolution”.⁷¹ In accordance with this perspective, social life and even personal lives were open to transformation during the Kemalist era, which meant that religion itself, too, was subject to the same transformation. In this sense, it was not an exceptional occurrence when in 1934 Şükrü Kaya argued in the parliament that religions had lost their functions and that they were institutions which could not be actualized again.⁷² Therefore, secularist policies of the Kemalist regime should be interpreted as one of the basic tools for this social and cultural transformation. Apart from the official discourse, this understanding is evident in all other secondary literature of the time as well.

1.2.2. Secularism in the Non-official Literature

It is in fact very much doubtful whether there was any “non-official” literature in the early Republican era because, due to the very strict control measures of the regime, it was extremely difficult for anybody to write anything that was not in line with the regime's and party's principles and concerns. However, at least there were some sources which were not direct publications of the party, and these sources are still valuable as reflections of this “distorted”, “regulated” atmosphere of the time as well as the views of people who were sincerely following the new regime's path. It would be a complementary analysis then to trace how secularism was defined and expressed in some examples of these documents in order to get the complete picture of the perception of secularism in the early Republican era.

A book written by Mediha Muzaffer for the 10th anniversary of the Republic

⁷¹Peker, 1984, p. 18-19.

⁷²Quoted by Tanör, 1999, p. 184.

includes a brief summary of the past 15 years in accordance with the official discourse. The very apparent and critical perspective of the book is embodied in its clear emphasis on separating the new Republic from the “theocratic”, “non-national”, and “authoritarian” Ottoman Empire. We can see an example of such a characterization in the following sentence: “Republic does not mean only change in the type of the government for the new Turkey; with the abolished sultanate, it means that all the vain beliefs and traditions that poisoned the mind of the nation for centuries have been drowned, and that the right to live freely and in a modern manner in the family of humanity and civilization has been won”⁷³. Through this drastic change, the new regime adopted a secular administration which kept religious and daily affairs separate from the state and thereby provided the liberty of conscience.

Equally important is the parallelization of nationalism and secularism. In the book, there is a constant stress on the idea that a secular administration is possible only in a nation-state. It is so because, according to the author, only a state that depends on the consent of a nation and the spirit of a nation can make laws free from unquestionable sources like God. In the Ottoman Empire, the sultan was only bounded by God; therefore, old laws were always creating despotism in the lack of a nation. It is within this framework that religious men, intellectuals, and communities *-ulema, tekkes, tarikats-* are represented in the book as collaborators acting only to serve their own personal interests. Needless to say, such an interpretation has the function of explaining and justifying the republican reforms of abolishing *medreses, tekkes, zaviyes, tarikats,* and any kind of religious understanding belonging to the Ottoman past.

It is interesting that, in addition to the republican “revolutions” that we are so very familiar with, like the language revolution (*dil inkılâbı*), clothing revolution (*kıyafet inkılâbı*), and writing revolution (*yazı inkılâbı*), the book mentions two other revolutions: the history revolution (*tarih inkılâbı*) and the religion revolution (*din inkılâbı*).⁷⁴ As it is out of the scope of this work, the history revolution will not be taken up here. However, it is really very critical and striking that in the early Republican era, Republican reforms concerning secularization were perceived and declared to be a revolution, that is, an attempt to change the place and perception of religion.

According to the book, religion failed to thrive in the hands of the ignorant and

⁷³“Cumhuriyet Yeni Türkiye için yalnız hükümet şeklinin değişmesi değil, yıkılan bir saltanatla beraber, asırlarca milletin dimağını zehirleyen batıl itikatların, an'anelerin boğulması, insaniyet ve medeniyet ailesi içinde hür ve medeni bir sıfatla yaşamak hakkını kazanmasıdır”, Mediha Muzaffer, *İnkılâbın Ruhı*, Devlet Matbaası, İstanbul, 1933, p. 41.

⁷⁴Muzaffer, 1933, p. 49-79.

selfish *ulema* of the Ottoman Empire: “In the hands of the *kadis* and ignorant imams (called themselves the *ulema* class) who were educated by the *medreses* which were the enemy of reform and the source of fanaticism, national culture and national morality were being deflated each day”⁷⁵. They created a struggle between religion and science which, in reality, does not exist. The “religious revolution” of the new regime was aiming to free science from the *medrese* and to “secularize” and “nationalize” it within the programs of the national education system. “The men, *hocas*, fathers of the nation who have secular thoughts and strong feelings and who separate the world from *ahiret* (the next world according to Islam), run towards the victory of reality, rationality, reason, and judgment”.⁷⁶

As this quotation illustrates, the Republican attitude towards religion was so positivist that there was an open aim of creating a “national” religion through “national” religious men working under the control of the state. These “enlightened” religious men were thought to be the initiators of a “national” struggle with the religious fanaticism of the Ottoman times. In the words of the author, the revolution carried out by the new regime signaled the collapse of religious fanaticism: “This collapse was the clash of national spirit and the thought of revolution with religious fanaticism, and the resultant choking and killing of the latter”⁷⁷. Reading the treatment of this matter in this particular book, one could easily conclude that the Republican regime aimed at creating a new perception of religion in accordance with the needs of a newly formed nation-state. Such a religion should function more as a source of social and national morality, rather than a separate entity as the new regime perceived it to have been in Ottoman times.

Another example of non-official literature that illustrates how in the 1930s the secularist policies of the regime were perceived to be so deep and wide in scope that they should bring about the secularization of social and cultural life, is *Kemalism* by Tekin Alp. Written and published in 1936, with this book the author endeavors to summarize 15 years of Kemalist revolution. The year 1936 is crucial because as the author suggests, the main principles of the Kemalist revolution could only be discussed beginning in the second half of the 1930s after the regime had consolidated itself and

⁷⁵“Taasup kaynağı, yenilik düşmanı medreselerin yetiştirdiği (ulema sınıfı diye geçinen) cahil imamlar, ve kadıların elinde millî irfan, millî ahlâk hergün biraz daha sönüyordu”, Muzaffer, 1933, p. 59.

⁷⁶“Hayatla ahreti ayıran, lâik mefkûreli, sağlam hisli millet adamları, millet hocaları, millet babaları hakikatin, mantığın, aklın ve muhakemenin fezasına koştular”, Muzaffer, 1933, p. 60.

⁷⁷“Bu yıkılış, millî ruhun, inkılâp mefkûresinin taassupla çarpışması, onu boğması, öldürmesiydi”, Muzaffer, 1933, p. 60.

determined its unchangeable principles at the party's fourth congress in 1935.

Similar to the definition and perception of secularism represented by Media Muzaffer, Alp also underlines that Kemalist secularism was far beyond a simple regime change. Clearly shaped in the mind of Atatürk even before the establishment of the Republic, Kemalist secularism followed a gradual path, guaranteeing its safety with each step and waiting for the most appropriate time for each reform. According to Alp, that was why the article stating Islam as the religion of the Turkish state remained in the constitution until 1928 and that was why "religious laws inspired by desert life could not be totally abolished".⁷⁸

As illustrated in this quotation, Alp's way of explaining Atatürk's and the regime's attitude towards religion indicates that it was a negative one. Similar again to Muzaffer's interpretations, Alp also indicates that for the Kemalist regime religion with all of its accompanying aspects was the reason for the backwardness of the Turkish nation as well as its lack of any kind of national identity for centuries. Therefore, simply abolishing its visible institutions like *medreses* would prove insufficient. Instead, "it was necessary to find the source of evil; to change the reactionary and conservative mind as well as the mentality of the people who are so deeply dedicated to the *şeriat*".⁷⁹

Based upon these two examples of the non-official literature of the 1930s as well as the official discourse, it is safe to argue that at least by 1928 and its aftermath, the Kemalist regime had indicated that it would not be contented with secularizing the political arena. Instead, the ultimate goal of the secularist policies was a social and cultural transformation through which Turkish society would be redesigned by a positivist, rational, modern world view. At the root of this project lie a very strong belief that Islam should also be reshaped in a manner befitting a nation-state. In fact, questions about Islam and its role in the backwardness of Turkish society reached such a radical level in the early Republican era that some enlightened men of the Republic even saw converting to Christianity as the only way to be truly Western and modern.⁸⁰

In a book written by L.Lütfi in 1930, it is possible to see an example of this "local" or "self" Orientalism of the Republican period. The work in question was in fact

⁷⁸Tekin Alp, *Kemalizm*, Cumhuriyet Gazete ve Matbaası, İstanbul, 1936, p. 99.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 99.

⁸⁰See Ahmet Yıldız, "*Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene*": *Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları (1919-1938)*, İletişim, İstanbul, 2001 and see Düccane Cündioğlu, *Bir Siyasi Proje Olarak Türkçe İbadet I: Türkçe Namaz (1923-1950)*, Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1999.

a series of books entitled as “Modern Religious Thoughts” (*Asri Din Fikirleri*). The name of the series itself clearly reflects the main idea behind the books: to modernize the general perception of religion in the society. One book within this series of books is entitled “What is Religion?” (*Din Nedir?*). Here L. Lutfi defines religion as something related to moral concerns rather than any other practice or metaphysical belief. While listing wrong perceptions regarding religion, he underlines three points: 1) Understanding religion as something related solely to practice and therefore paying too much attention to religious practices and ceremonies; 2) Perceiving religion as something metaphysical and mystical and therefore appreciating being a member of a religious community; and 3) Overestimating the importance of religious knowledge and therefore appreciating religious men.⁸¹

Lutfi's negative interpretation of both religious communities and religious men is in line with the regime's attitude towards these two issues. For him, religion is something reserved for daily life and should be understood as something related to morality only, that is, basically to being a good person: “Listen to what the *hoca* says, but do not do what he does. the meaning of this is that religion is not only knowing what's right, but acting right by heart and living right. Religion is for life. Religion is to understand life and to follow the right path in life”⁸². While giving an example of this “right path”, the book always refers to Jesus Christ and his perception of religion rather than the prophet of Islam, Muhammad. Apparently, at least in the case of this series of books, the belief of some intellectuals that being modern necessitated being Christian did not remain in the realm of personal opinion, and was instead shared with the public. Although the regime itself did not go that far, secularist policies did reflect its attitude towards Islam, its aim of reshaping it, and finally its desire for a social and cultural transformation of Turkish society.

1.2.3. Secularist Policies in the Early Republican Era

Secularist policies of the Kemalist regime began to be instituted even before the declaration of secularism as an official principle of the state. They followed a gradual development that, as discussed in the previous sections, the Kemalist secularism attempted at the secularization of the legal system and state as an administrative body

⁸¹L. Lutfi, *Din Nedir?*, Asri Din Fikirleri Serisi 1, Selamet Matbaası, 1930, p. 5-11.

⁸²“Hocanın söylediğini dinle, yaptığını yapma! Demek ki, din, yalnız doğruyu bilmek değil, kalpten doğru olmak ve doğru yaşamaktır. Din hayat içindir. Din hayatı anlamak ve hayatta doğru yolu takip etmektir”, Lutfi, 1930, p. 11.

and then turned more towards policies of social and cultural transformation in response to the necessities of the context.

The first step, and one of the most important steps, when it came to reforms relating to the administrative and legal system was the declaration of *Teşkilât-ı Esâsî* (1921 Constitution). This document not only announced the legitimization of the congresses' (Erzurum and Sivas) principle of popular sovereignty as well as *Misak-ı Milli*, but by doing this, it also established the basis for the theoretical and practical transformation of the concept of sovereignty in Turkey, a transformation that would undoubtedly be a secular one.⁸³

The second development in this regard was the abolition of the Sultanate on 1 October 1922. This separated the political and religious authority and therefore stripped the Caliphate of any kind of political power. Secularization of the source of political sovereignty was complemented with the establishment of the Republic on 23 October 1923, and then finalized with the abolition of the Caliphate on 3 March 1924. This last step was one of the most radical of all simply because it openly pointed to a radical separation from the Islamic past. In the words of Karpat,

“The cultural and historical meaning of the decision to abolish the Caliphate was of much greater significance than its visible political aim. It meant the victory of a secularist-modernist group against a religious-conservative one in a struggle that had been continuing since the beginning of the 19th century. This victory could be possible only in the appropriate political situation led by a secularist-modernist group between the years 1920-1924, a period which would never repeat again”.⁸⁴

3 March 1924 in fact was a very important date in the history of Turkish secularism. Two additional reforms complementing the abolition of the Caliphate were issued: abolition of the Ministries of *Şeriat* and *Evkaf* and unification of education under the authority of the Ministry of Education. The first one included the dissolution of the office of *Şeyh-ül-Islâm* to be replaced by the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Reisliği*). In the process of doing so it of course strictly limited the authority of the new presidency and transferred much of the power of the old ministry and *Şeyh-ül-Islam* to the government. It also created the Directorate-General of Pious Foundations (*Evkaf*

⁸³Tanör, 1999, p. 185.

⁸⁴Kemal Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi*, İstanbul Matbaası, İstanbul, 1967, p. 43. In the case of the abolition of the Caliphate, Berkes names this struggle as one between secularists and Khilâfatists, see Berkes, 1998, p. 457.

Umum Müdürlüğü) as the body responsible for the administration of *evkaf*, thereby bringing it under a higher control of the state as well.

The second one, that is the unification of education under the authority of the Ministry of Education, meant a radical step in the area of public education. The new regime unified all the schools under the secular and homogeneous administration of the Ministry of Education, abolished the *medreses*, and instead opened new schools called Imams and Preachers (*İmam-Hatips*) and Faculty of Divinity (*İlahiyat Fakültesi*), for the sole purpose of training religious personnel. These schools would also be under the control of the Ministry of Education. Needless to say, this education reform of the Kemalists was something which would directly influence the social and cultural setting of the future Turkish society. Berkes explains the significance of this reform as follows:

“Among the various aspects of social life that felt, with particular intensity the impact of the secularization of government, of the family institution and certain cultural practices, was education. The Kemalist secularization of education followed a course diametrically opposed to that favoured by the Tanzimat and, to a lesser degree, Meşrutiyet reforms. The guiding principle was, as in law, unification and consolidation throughout the entire educational structure. This meant the elimination of the dichotomy between the religious and secular educational institutions and of the multiplicity in educational authority among the Muslim, non-Muslims, and foreigners. It meant, above all, the inclusion of primary education within the scope of public concern and authority and the focalization upon universal secular primary education as the basic education policy”.⁸⁵

This reform was strengthened further by the elimination of the religious aspects from foreign missionary schools, and by the removal of Arabic and Persian courses as well as religious courses from the curriculum of primary schools and high schools in 1929.

On 8 March 1924 *Şer'iye* courts (Religious courts) were abolished. This reform, related to the legal aspect of secularization, was part of the Kemalists' broader aim of attaining “unity” in the judiciary system, just like it did in the case of education. In accordance with this aim, secularization of law was realized through “taking” from outside, that is through the adoption of European examples. Many laws were taken directly from foreign countries, such as the adoption of the Civil Code (*Medeni Kanun*) from Switzerland and the Penal Code (*Ceza Kanunu*) from Italy in 1926. Article 163 of this Penal Code, it should be added, prohibited propaganda against the principle of

⁸⁵Berkes, 1998, p. 476.

secularism .⁸⁶

The year 1925 was a very severe turning point for the radicalization of all aspects of the Kemalist revolution. Due to the ethnic-religious uprising in southeast Turkey, the regime intensified its authoritarian character, a move which also directly influenced the secularization process. With the declaration of the Law for the Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu*) on 4 March 1925, it became practically impossible to oppose any reform policy of the regime, even within the legal framework. It brought a very rigid censorship policy granting the state authority to censor the press, or any kind of association or organization. This was followed by the closing of tombs (*türbe*), shrines of the saints (*yatır*), and *tarikâts*; a law on clothing which allowed *imams* and *hocas* to wear their religious cloths only when performing their duties; and lastly a law on the use of the hat which banned the *fez* and veiling in the same year. It may be argued that this project aimed at the homogenization of the society in all areas of the life. As an example of this, in the same year the regime also eliminated all traditional elements of measurement, like the calendar and the clock, and replaced them with their Western equivalents.

However, the final move in terms of the secularization of the state came in 1928. In that year, the second article of the 1921 and 1924 constitutions declaring Islam to be the religion of the state was abolished. Similarly, the religious duties of the parliament decreed by the article 26 were eliminated. In the same year, the oath taken by the members of parliament, also included in the constitution, was secularized as well (the phrase “*vallahi*” was removed). Through these last steps, secularization of the administrative and judicial areas were, to a great extent, completed. According to Tanör, this also marked the termination of a dual situation: on the one hand, there was the sociological fact that the laws of the revolution were going faster in terms of secularization, while on the other hand the religion of the state was determined by a clause in its constitution. Elimination of the second article put an end to this contradiction between the sociological reality and law.⁸⁷

As indicated above, Kemalist secularism became more authoritarian following the Law on the Maintenance of Order in 1925. With the achievement to a large extent of secularization in the judicial and administrative areas, Kemalist elite started a process of cultural and social secularization aiming to transform not only the place of Islam in

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 466.

⁸⁷Tanör, 1999, p. 186.

society, but Islam itself. In this respect, Kemalists owed much of their reforms to the ideas of the Young Turks in the second Constitutional era in terms of their common emphasis on the Turkishness and Turkification. From the reformists' perspective, the newly created nation-state necessitated that everything be national, including religion.

In fact, “nationalization of Islam” as the religion of the Turkish nation was not a new idea. This phrase as a title was first used by Yusuf Akçura in 1914 and there was already an ongoing discussion in the second constitutional era as to whether or not it would be possible to nationalize Islam.⁸⁸ The issue of the Turkish sermon (*hutbe*), for example, was discussed in this period and even partially applied. However, the application of “nationalization of Islam” as an organized project could be possible only under the umbrella of a nation-state. Since the beginning of the Republic, this was one of the concerns of the Kemalist elite that in 1923, for example, Hamdullah Suphi was arguing that creating a nation necessitates making a religious reform like the Reformation process of the West. According to him, the most important aspect of such a reform of Islam in Turkey would be the entrance of the Turkish language into the mosques and worship.⁸⁹

These ideas had their effect and in 1924 two translations of the Quo'ran were published; however, the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Reisliği*) could not allow them to be used in the mosques because their translation was too poor for use in religious worship. In 1926, a law draft making sermons in Turkish compulsory was accepted in the parliament, but could be applied only in 1927 once Ahmed Hamdi Akseki had prepared a Turkish sermon book in accordance with the orders of the *Diyanet İşleri Reisliği*.⁹⁰ This was followed by an unsuccessful attempt to perform *namaz* in Turkish in 1926 and Turkification of *ezan* in 1932. It is interesting to note that all of these changes intending to further the nationalization of Islam in 1924, 1926, and 1932 were put into practice during the month of Ramadan, a fact which serves as yet another indication that Ramadans possessed, above everything, a symbolical meaning for the secularization process of Ottoman-Turkish history, a point that will be discussed in detail in the coming chapters.

⁸⁸Cündioğlu, 1999, p. 15.

⁸⁹See Hamdullah Suphi, *Dağ Yolu*, Türk Ocakları Hars Medeniyeti Neşriyatları 6, İstanbul, 1929.

⁹⁰See Ahmed Hamdi Akseki, *Türkçe Hutbe*, Diyanet İşleri Neşriyatı 3, İstanbul, 1927. However, it should be noted that this book contains 51 sermons and thus only the *mev'iza* parts of the sermon could be read in Turkish. As Cündioğlu indicated, in 1932, Saadetin Kaynak read the whole Friday sermon in Turkish, but this was not repeated afterwards and the earlier practice was continued. For a detailed discussion see Dücane Cündioğlu, 1999, p. 39-40.

The Kemalist attempts to transform Islam and change the Islamic way of life was not limited to those aiming at Turkification. There were also those who clearly wanted to modernize religion through a kind of Westernization. One of the most obvious examples of such an attitude was that espoused in 1928 by the Faculty of Divinity in Istanbul University. Under the presidency of Fuat Köprülü, a group of faculty members prepared a report called the Declaration of Religious Reform in which they argued for some measures to modernize the type, language, content, and appearance of religious worship as well as religious places.⁹¹ For example, they suggested that in order for the mosques to be more modern, people should enter them with shoes and hats and women should perform *namaz* without veiling. In addition, religious worship should be accompanied by music like it is in churches, the congregation should sit on benches instead of carpets, and the sermons should be strictly limited to religious affairs, nothing else.⁹² This reform package was not accepted and never applied. According to Tunçay, the reason for the refusal of this program was the Kemalist elite's fear of a possible opposition through which clerics and religiously minded intellectual could gain considerable power in the new regime. They therefore decided to at least postpone this project until a more secure period.⁹³

Rather than making such radical changes, the Kemalist regime preferred to take other measures in order to both nationalize and modernize Islam and Islamic life and also in order to directly intervene in the cultural continuity as well as importance of Islam in Turkish society. In 1928, the regime abolished the usage of Ottoman script and replaced it with the Latin one. With the opening of the Institute of Turkish Language (*Türk Dil Kurumu*) in 1931, under the influence of an “essentialist” and nationalist approach, a purity policy was adopted in the Turkish language and based on this movement, an attempt was made to remove all words of Arabic or Persian origin from the Turkish language .

It is safe to argue in fact that, in its secularization process, the regime entered yet

⁹¹Tunçay, 1992, p. 220.

⁹²According to Cündioğlu, the aim of such an attempt was not the modernization of Islam but rather to make it “Protestant”. Cündioğlu stresses that this attempt was in fact directly related with the discussions on changing the religion of Turkish society into Christianity as Islam was believed to be incompatible with modernization. See Cündioğlu, 1999, p. 90.

⁹³Tunçay, 1992, p. 220. Tunçay quotes Osman Nuri Ergin as saying, “Why did Atatürk do this like this? Did he hesitate because he foresaw a negative reaction of the public opinion? Or did he not like the idea that the Faculty of Divinity performed the leadership in this reform as he did all the reforms personally?” See Osman Nuri Ergin, *Türk Maarif Tarihi*, c. 5, Istanbul, 1943, p. 1645. Adıvar also indicated that there was an intense feeling of discontent right after the public declaration of the reform package. See Halide Edip Adıvar, “Dictatorship and Reforms in Turkey”, *Yale Review*, Autumn 1929, p. 27-44.

another phase of radicalization in the 1930s with the consolidation of the authoritarian one-party rule. It closed down the religious schools (*Imam-Hatips*) and Istanbul University's Faculty of Divinity, thereby ushering in an approximately 15 year period of vagueness during which there was no official, legal religious education in Turkey. Moreover, the weekly holiday was changed from Friday to Sunday; some mosques were confiscated and assigned for mostly military affairs; through a strict censorship all religious publications were banned; and no foreign money was dedicated to the performance of the Islamic *hac* duty (i.e. the pilgrimage to Mekke). Finally, in 1937, secularism as an official principle and part of official ideology was included in the Constitution and therefore, together with its authoritarian mentality and practices (such as Kemalist clothing reforms), gained judicial and legislative protection impervious to removal or changes of any kind.

All of these reforms aiming to secularize the Turkish state, society, and culture together with many reforms not mentioned above reflected both a tendency of continuation of the mentality of the Young Turk era as well as a radical break with the Ottoman past. They helped not only to the personalize, nationalize and modernize religion in Turkish society but also to perpetuate, expand, and politicize discussions that had already been underway for the last two centuries of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, although the reforms listed above seem to be factual, their interpretation in particular and the evaluation of Republican secularism in general have been a topic of ongoing debate in Turkish social science literature.

1.3. Secularism in the Secondary Literature: A Short Review

Existing literature on the early Republican era, both historical and theoretical, generally united in evaluating secularism -together with nationalism- as one of the most important elements of Kemalism. Although there are important differences in the analyses with regard to their treatment of the aim and extent of secularism, most of the works underline the intention of the Kemalist elite to Westernize/modernize political, social, and cultural life and therefore the "official" adoption of strictly applied secularizing reforms.

In one of the most classical works dealing with the Republican history, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Bernard Lewis represents secularism as the basis of

Kemalism's religious policy.⁹⁴ For him, secularism in the form that the Kemalist elite applied it was not intended to “destroy” Islam, but to “disestablish” it. By having its power in political, social, and cultural affairs terminated, Lewis argues that Islam was reduced to a religion of a Western, modern nation-state; and that by means of their reforms, the Kemalists also gave it a more modern and more national form. Although he underlines that in the 1930s secularism took the form of intense pressure aiming to abolish organized Islam and break its holds on the minds and hearts of the Turkish people, he never interprets secularism in Turkey as an anti-Islamic policy and he emphasizes the existence of popular religion beneath the surface.

Like Lewis, Tunaya also emphasizes the importance of the principle of secularism for the Kemalist revolution and its positive, progressive influence for the modernization of Turkish society as well as for the maintenance of the newly created organism.⁹⁵ According to him, secularism simply means neutralization of politics, that is, politics becoming a separate discipline from religion and morality. In this sense, in its application during the Republican era, secularism aimed at three major achievements: elimination of the Ottoman order, total acceptance of Western civilization, and putting an end to theocracy. As a successful project that achieved all three of these aims, Kemalist secularism was a radical tool, a methodology that created a fundamental change in the society.

Tunaya's emphasis on the “functional” role of Kemalist secularism also includes evaluations of its scope and content. Tunaya was clear in stating that Kemalist secularism was something beyond the simple separation of religion and state. Rather, according to him, it was and should be very much more than that: it separated state from religion and constituted state power controlling religion, religious affairs, and religious men. In other words, Kemalist secularism created a hierarchy between state and religion in favor of the state apparatus and therefore strictly controlled the religious domain which became subject to regulation by the political authority. It is this character of Kemalist secularism, according to Tunaya, which made it the guarantor of Turkish progress and democracy.

Interestingly, both Lewis and Tunaya ascribed a very positive character to Republican secularism while shedding light upon some of its aspects which can easily be interpreted as being much too authoritarian. They are aware of the fact that Kemalist secularism was a top-down transformation project and evaluated this as a necessary,

⁹⁴Lewis, 1968, p. 401-442.

⁹⁵Tunaya, 2002, p. 323-342.

rational component of a successful modernization and a process of nation-state formation.

In another classical study, Berkes agrees with Lewis and Tunaya that secularism is the most crucial defining element of Turkish Westernization.⁹⁶ For him, secularism truly appeared in the Republican era, differentiating it from the previous reform periods in its clear aim to replace the Islamic base of the Ottoman empire with an independent, modern nation-state. Unlike the *Tanzimat* reforms and (to a lesser extent) the reforms of the Second Constitutional Period which were “dualist”, Republican reforms were “unionist” in all its homogenizing connotations. Therefore, Berkes characterizes Kemalist secularism as a “total revolution” aiming at the appropriation of Western civilization and describes the distinguishing characteristic of secularist reforms as follows:

“These were not measures for separating the traditional institutions from the secular institutions in order to keep them intact beyond the sway of change. The measures were not preludes to reforming these institutions, or replacing them with better ones of a like kind. They merely removed institutions that were incompatible with the basic principles of a secular state”.⁹⁷

Focusing primarily upon the legal reforms, he concludes that through secularism, religion was placed into the sphere of social and cultural life rather than the political sphere and therefore became open to revolutionary transformation. Social life in the Republican era, then, was influenced by the necessities of life itself, rather than religion and its rules.⁹⁸

Although Berkes dealt with the sociological aspect of Republican secularism much more than Lewis and Tunaya did, a more critical and detailed sociological analysis was undertaken by Şerif Mardin. According to Mardin, the Kemalist project had two main pillars: nation-building and Westernization.⁹⁹ Secularism in this picture plays the role of broadening the autonomy of the individual from the traditional community *-gemeinschaft-* and making him a member of a modern nation-state. The new Turk of the new Republic, Mardin contends, will not be ruled by corrupt sheikhs but according to the way set out by science. According to Mardin therefore, through secularism, Kemalism replaced religion with science as a source of identity building, but as it failed to provide the functions performed by Islam, Turkish society was left

⁹⁶Berkes, 1973, p. 461-489.

⁹⁷Berkes, 1998, p. 467.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 91-99.

⁹⁹Mardin, 1997, p. 191-210.

with a spiritual vacuum that needed to be filled. In his own words, “at a deeper level, it is obvious that since its establishment the secular Republic has faced difficulties in overcoming the personality and identity crises of the individuals in Turkey”.¹⁰⁰ The positivist and Jacobin Kemalist elite identified religion with the “old regime” it aimed to abolish, and therefore could not understand the role of religion in the formation of the moral base of social life.¹⁰¹ They tried to replace Islam by an alternative ideology but could not formulate an ideology powerful enough to realize this aim. It is because of this fact that, according to Mardin, Islam survived not only as an important component of cultural life, but it also formed the basis for a reactionary as well as soft ideology.¹⁰²

More recent studies on Republican secularism followed the path opened by Mardin and dealt with a more critical analysis of historical, political, and judicial aspects of the phenomenon. Mete Tunçay, for example, emphasizes the dichotomy between the secularism principle of the Kemalist revolution and the principle of populism.¹⁰³ According to him, although Kemalist secularism did not target the essence of Islam and did not deal with the elimination of its social roots, it attempted at and caused an unavoidable gap between the elite and the masses by strengthening alienation of the majority from the “high” culture of the few. This was, Tunçay indicates, a natural result of an authoritarian, top-down world view of Kemalism. Similarly, in his famous book *Turkey: A Modern History* Eric Zürcher points to the radical character of Kemalist secularism, as it carried the secularism and nationalism of the Young Turk ideology to their extremes in the 1930s.¹⁰⁴ Like Mardin suggests, Zürcher also claims that Kemalist secularism not only aimed to separate religion and politics in a narrow sense, but also to remove religion from public life and establish complete state control over the remaining religious institutions.

Tanör, on the other hand, underlines the “objective” bases of Kemalist secularism while accepting the criticisms of Mardin, Tunçay, and Zürcher concerning its authoritarian character.¹⁰⁵ According to him, there are distinguishing aspects of Kemalist secularism: it was widespread in scope, radical in content, favoring conflict in application, and aiming for nationalization in terms of ideological position. However, it should also be analyzed as part of a nationalization process and as a result of already

¹⁰⁰Şerif Mardin, *Din ve İdeoloji*, İletişim, İstanbul, 1992 (first printed in 1969), p. 38.

¹⁰¹Şerif Mardin, “Kollektif Bellek ve Meşruiyetlerin Çatışması”, in *Avrupa’da Etik, Din ve Laiklik*, Oliver Abel, Mohammed Arkoun, Şerif Mardin Metis, İstanbul, 1995, s. 7-14.

¹⁰²Mardin, 1992, p. 167.

¹⁰³Tunçay, 1992, p. 208-230.

¹⁰⁴Zürcher, 1997, p. 189.

¹⁰⁵Tanör, 1999.

existing social, cultural, and political circumstances. Here, Tanör's main concern are the aspects of the Ottoman order outside religion, such as the worldly authority of sultanate, existence of the common law (*örfi hukuk*), law codes (*kanunnâmes*), and folk culture, in addition to the achievements of the Ottoman reform period for about two centuries, especially those of the Second Constitutional Period. Tanör indicates that, taking its form based on these heritages of the past, Kemalist secularism added more to them and simultaneously used both persuasion and coercion during application.

After 1980, there emerged a new group of intellectuals who are outside the academic circles, but part of an ongoing intellectual discussion on Turkish secularism from within. Emphasizing their Muslim identity and their Islamic world view, these intellectuals are members of a group directly influenced by the authoritarian character of Kemalist secularism. They are also reactionary to its contemporary applications and trying to criticize the existing authoritarian tendencies through an analysis of the Early Republican period. İsmail Kara, for example, chooses to emphasize the Kemalist elite's functional approach to religion and their use of it as a tool of political and social legitimacy maneuvers.¹⁰⁶ He also opens a discussion on the idea that Kemalist secularism was the result of strategic planning based upon inner dynamics and argues that there were also possible outside factors like Lausanne that created an initiative for further secularization.

In her review of the existing literature on secularism in Turkey, Nuray Mert evaluates these "Islamist" intellectuals within the same framework of the "critical" literature that emerged in the early 1980s, with, however, one crucial difference: The main basis for their analyses of Kemalist secularism is the idea that people could successfully protect their religious life despite the strict secularist attitude of the regime.¹⁰⁷ Such an idea argues for the failure of the Kemalist secularist project, which is an argument open to severe criticisms according to Mert. She rather offers to look at the issue from a different perspective and suggests that social withdrawal of the Islamic world view (despite the public existence of the veil, for example) can be interpreted as a success on the part of the Republican secularist policies. Mert indicates that there should be more analyses of the mental influence of secularism rather than its application, and that such an analysis would be more beneficial in showing how, rather

¹⁰⁶İsmail Kara, "Bir Tür Laiklik: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Örneği", in Mete Tunçay (ed.), *75 Yılda Düşünceler Tartışmalar*, Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, İstanbul, 1999, p. 197-206. Dücane Cündioğlu and Ali Bulaç are other examples of this group of intellectuals. See Dücane Cündioğlu, 1999 and Ali Bulaç, *Çağdaş Kavramlar ve Düzenler*, İstanbul, 1992.

¹⁰⁷Mert, 1994.

than remaining the ideology of a small group of elite, Republican secularism actually had a mental and methodological influence upon even the “Islamist” intellectuals in contemporary Turkey. To evaluate this very critical discussion of Kemalist secularism, one needs more data about the practical applications of the secularist project in the Early Republican era, such as the direct influence of the project on Ramadan. However, it would be beneficial first of all to see the case of the Ramadan in the late Ottoman Empire, in order to apply a comparative perspective and therefore to map the changes appeared due to Kemalist secularization process more apparently.

Chapter II

RAMADANS IN THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The main source of inspiration for this research topic was François Georgeon's study of the Ramadans in Istanbul during the last period of the Ottoman Empire entitled *İmparatorluktan Cumhuriyete İstanbul'da Ramazan* (Ramadan in Istanbul: From The Empire to The Republic).¹⁰⁸ In this excellent example of social history research, Georgeon undertakes a detailed analysis of Ramadan; however, rather than limiting his subject to just a religious event, he also represents Ramadan as a social, cultural, and political phenomenon causing considerable change in the social and cultural life of all the people living in the city, including the non-Muslims.

Needless to say, Georgeon's study is not the only work focusing on the Ottoman Ramadans. Compared to studies on Republican social life in general and Ramadans in particular, the amount of literature on Ottoman social life and Ramadans is enormous. However, what makes Georgeon's study especially significant for the main objective of this thesis is that it is a well-organized academic analysis which provides the necessary background as well as tools for a comparative study of Ramadans in two different periods, the late Ottoman Empire and the early Republican Turkey. In other words, it provides the framework for determining the necessary questions that should be asked about the Republican Ramadans.

As mentioned above, Georgeon's study focuses upon Istanbul. He explains that his reason for this choice is Istanbul's importance as the capital city of the Ottoman Empire, a city where different and rich practices of "socialness" abound can be easily observed. One of the most important characteristics of the Ottoman Ramadans, Georgeon takes as his starting the idea that Ramadans were the most important and, in fact, only time when all of Ottoman society, regardless of any ethnic or religious differences, became "social" and that this socialness had its most apparent form in the life of Istanbul. In addition, it should be noted that because sources about Ramadans in the other parts of the empire are so limited, studying Istanbul's Ramadans is simply more feasible and therefore a reasonable choice.¹⁰⁹ In fact, this problem of a lack of

¹⁰⁸Georgeon, 2000, p. 41-136.

¹⁰⁹One source of Ramadans in the other districts of the Ottoman Empire can be memoirs which are again

sources is partially true for the Ramadans in Istanbul, too, due to the very limited academic research that has been conducted about them. There exists, of course, a large amount of literature about Ramadans, but the majority of such literature contains folkloric analyses rather than political and social ones. Therefore, Georgeon bases his arguments mainly on memoirs primarily concerned with describing life in Istanbul in general.

This chapter aims to examine Georgeon's findings regarding the Ramadans of the late Ottoman Empire. Instead of a brief, general summary, his study will be discussed according to topic under subheadings which reflect the main characteristics of the Ottoman Ramadans. The reason for this is simply that such a format lends itself more readily to a comparative evaluation of the Republican Ramadans, which will be taken up according to the same characteristics in the chapters of the next part.

2.1. Public Appearance

The phrase "late Ottoman Empire" generally brings to mind a period, a society, and a state which were under the direct influence of a mainstream process called "modernization". However, as discussed in the previous chapter, this period was also a period of "Islamization" and Georgeon's assessments of the Ottoman Ramadans until the beginning of the 20th century run more parallel to this second observation. He indicates that Ramadan in the late Ottoman Empire was a one month period during which religious life was intensified and, more crucially, gained "publicness". It brought about "the Islamization of the city", both for the society and the state. There was a considerable increase in religious and related cultural activities; a remarkable change in the physical appearance of the city making it more "Islamic"; and an attempt at reorganization of the regular public administration. Quoting from Jacques Jomier, Georgeon states that Ramadan was "the most important collective appearance of the belief in the lands of Islam".¹¹⁰ Islam becomes publicly more visible during the Ramadans and the cosmopolitan metropolis of Istanbul emerges as a Muslim city whose center shifts from its more "European" regions to the more "traditional" ones.

limited in number. For example, Yahya Kemal Beyatlı and Münevver Ayaşlı are two intellectuals experienced their childhood outside Istanbul and describe Ottoman Ramadans very similar to the way that Georgeon indicates. See Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, *Çocukluğum, Gençliğim, Siyâsi ve Edebi Hâtıralarım*, İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, İstanbul, 1976; Münevver Ayaşlı, *Geniş Ufuklara ve Yabancı İklimlere Doğru*, Timaş, İstanbul, 2003.

¹¹⁰Jacques Jomier and J. Corbon, "Le Ramadan, au Caire en 1956", *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales*, v.III, 1956, p. 1-74 quoted in François Georgeon, 2000, p. 43.

In so far as the physical appearance of the city is concerned, Georgeon states that Ramadan used to create a yearly revolution; a revolution in the geography, in the rhythm of the activities, and in the common psychology of the people living in the city. First of all, a continuous illumination of the city during this one month period differentiates this period from the rest of the “ordinary” year. Dark Istanbul turns into a city of light where night life becomes ordinary practice.

Public illumination also contributed to the visibility of Islam. During Ramadan, mosques became more apparent due to illumination specifically limited to this religious time period.¹¹¹ Minarets decorated with *mahya* create not only a religiously symbolical atmosphere, but also a social and even a political one due to the messages they carry. While these messages were usually religious in nature, celebrating the coming of Ramadan or informing of its end, they could also be pictures or written expressions related to the political and social agenda of the time. As Ünver mentions, the tradition of making *mahya* was one of the main components of the Ramadans in the Ottoman Empire, such that the number of the mosques with appropriate minarets increased over time and people of many districts organized to erect additional minarets on their central mosques so that they, too, could enjoy their own *mahya* entertainment.¹¹² It was common practice to go and see the newly created *mahya* each night, which is one reason why *mahya* became a means of “public communication”. Due to the popularity and influence of the *mahya*, they were used to convey political messages to the public, especially after the Young Turk revolution in 1908, which is another point that adds to the “political” nature of the Ramadans. For example, *mahya* related to the political atmosphere, with commentary on such matters as wars and migration, or slogans aiming to increase support for particular charity foundations, became commonplace.¹¹³

Georgeon maintains that during the Ramadan holiday, the noises of the city also differ in such a manner that serves to intensify the city’s Islamic atmosphere. Twice a day a single cannon is shot to remind the populace of the beginning and end of the fast

¹¹¹In addition to the Ramadans, illumination of the mosques was also available during the four religious feasts; *Mevlûd*, *Regaib*, *Berât*, *Mi’rac*. This tradition had its roots in the 17th century, since the era of Ahmed the First. For more information see Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza Bey, *Eski Zamanlarda İstanbul Hayatı*, edited by Ali Şükrü Çoruk, Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2001.

¹¹²Süheyl Ünver, *Bir Ramazan Binbir İstanbul*, Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1997, p. 44. For example, people of Üsküdar and Eyüp initiated the forming of a second minaret to their mosques just because it was only permitted and possible to make a *mahya* to the mosques with two minarets. See also Cenap Şahabettin, *İstanbul’da Bir Ramazan*, edited by Abdullah Uçman, İletişim, İstanbul, 1994.

¹¹³Ünver mentions the examples of *mahya* after the Young Turk revolution as follows: *Yaşasın İstiklaliyet* (Long live independence), *Hilal-i Ahmeri Unutma* (Do not forget the Turkish Red Cross), *Yaşasın Misak-ı Milli* (Long live the National Pact), *Muhacirine Yardım* (Help to your immigrant), *Muhacirini Unutma* (Do not forget your immigrant), *Tayyareyi Unutma* (Do not forget the plane), *Eytama Yardım* (Help to the orphans), *Yaşasın Gazilerimiz* (Long live our ghazis). Ünver, 1997, p. 48.

and the sounds of the Ramadan drums change the regular atmosphere in the city; they reorganize time according to the responsibilities of a Muslim. In addition to the five daily *ezan*, Ramadan brings *teravîh* (the supererogatory night service of the month of Ramadan), and every morning it is possible to hear the voice of the muezzin singing the *temcid* hymn. Reading the Quran is also a common practice performed during get-togethers in the houses of the elite.

In addition to these differences that are religious in nature, at the time Ramadan also signaled drastic changes in the daily life of the city. This change used to start even before the Ramadan as early preparations were made in the form of preparing food, cleaning, and getting clothes ready. In the daytime, Istanbul was an empty city. All the shops belonging to Muslims generally opened very late, and working hours became shorter. Even most of the schools and other official institutions like libraries were closed or open only between the noon worship and the afternoon worship. Life used to start with all its rhythm especially after the *iftar*. Ramadan, therefore, was so central to the organization of daily life in all of its aspects that it was impossible for one to be unaware of its existence and influence both in the private and the public spheres. In fact, it was a time period in which the private sphere also became “public” to a certain extent due to the regular meetings that took place at houses. During Ramadan some segments of society who were confined to the private sphere in ordinary times, such as women, were given greater opportunity to participate in public life and, therefore, to gain public visibility.

2.2. Socialness

In the 18th century, Moradgea d'Ohsson tells about how Ramadans served as a period of socialness for Ottoman society.¹¹⁴ According to Georgeon, when the importance of using the word “socialness” in the 18th century is taken into consideration, this observation is a very vital one and a good starting point for a discussion of the Ramadans in the 19th century. For him, during the 19th century Ramadans continued to occupy a central position with regard to the socialness of Ottoman society. The most important characteristics of this socialness was Ramadan’s widespread existence in social and cultural life, which means that, in addition to the increasing public visibility of the religion in general and Ramadan in particular, participation of different segments

¹¹⁴Mouradgea d'Ohsson, *Tablea Général de l'Empire Othoman*, v. III, Paris, 1761, p. 33 quoted in François Georgeon, 2000, p. 41.

of society in collective actions, meetings, and ceremonies was also considerably higher in comparison to what it was during other times of the year. A crucial aspect of these Ramadan festivities was that they were not exclusively religious, but rather a dynamic, significant social and cultural event for the population of Ottoman Empire in general.

Georgeon's evaluation of the "social" character of the Ramadans is based upon his observation that as an event which had an enormous influence on the atmosphere of the city, Ramadans also created a considerable change in the personal and common behaviors of the city dwellers. It was a time of collective action, participation, entertainment, help, and communication among the various different segments of the society. It created an apparent closeness between the poor and the rich, and helped to increase women's public visibility, albeit for a limited period of time.

There were different means of socialness during Ramadans in the late Ottoman Empire. One was the opportunity provided by the *iftar* meal, which used to turn into a social event, among both the ordinary people as well as at the official level. Ramadans were a time of hospitality according to Georgeon. It was even common to have an *iftar* meal in the house of a rich Ottoman elite with people who had never met each other before. After the *iftar*, visits were organized not only to public places but also to other houses where it was possible to observe traditional types of socialness. These Ramadan visits were also organized officially among the high ranking bureaucrats, including the Sultan. There were routine, official *iftar* visits where determined rules of hierarchy were followed. In addition, the Sultan also performed some special ceremonial visits, such as his visit to the *Hırka-i Şerif* (mantle of the Prophet kept as a relic in the *Topkapı* palace) on the fifteenth day of the Ramadan month. These opportunities to practice socialness were strengthened by the exchange of gifts which was an inevitable component of the Ramadan get-togethers. Practiced among all segments of society, from the common people to the elite, this tradition was another means of socialness in the late Ottoman Empire. In addition to assistance provided by high ranking officials of the bureaucracy (*diş kirası*) to the poor, it was an old tradition for the Sultan to be generous during Ramadans, especially to the members of the army.¹¹⁵

Another means of socialness during Ottoman Ramadans was entertainment. From small tours to Ramadan bazaars, from coffee houses to theaters, there were different types of entertainment that varied in level and form of socialness. Traditional ways of entertainment such as *Karagöz* and *ortaoyunu* were at the height of their popularity during Ramadans and dominated the traditional types of socialness in the 18th

¹¹⁵Georgeon, 2000, p. 70-77.

century Ottoman Empire. In the 19th century, especially for the “old” Istanbul, Ramadan was the period when new kinds of entertainment entered into the life of traditional segments of Ottoman society and started to coexist with the “old” ones. Georgeon underlines the examples of theater and cinema, which were first organized in *Beyazıt* and *Şehzadebaşı* in the second half of the 19th century, after having been established in Pera.¹¹⁶ While these activities, undertaken predominantly by non-Muslims, remained limited to the one month period of Ramadan for Istanbul, they had already become routine in Pera with the formation of separate theater and cinema halls. Theater and cinema reached other lands of the Ottoman Empire only through tours specially organized, again, during Ramadans.

Although entertainment was a primary component of Ramadans, it would be wrong to think that every part of Istanbul benefited from it to the same degree. Georgeon indicates that, in specific time periods, it was possible to observe the centralization of specific districts as entertainment places of the city. For example, during the Tanzimat period, Laleli-Aksaray was the main district for Ramadan entertainment. However, beginning in the last quarter of the 19th century, one place became so central that it began to symbolize the “socialness” of the Ramadan with its unique atmosphere open to both the old and the new: *Direklerarası*.

On the one hand, with its *Şehzadebaşı* mosque (which was one of the two mosques open to women) and various tombs, *Direklerarası* was a place known for its religious significance; on the other hand, however, it was also surrounded by the residences of high bureaucrats, ministries, and modern schools. This coexistence was also reflected in the spaces, entertainments, and those who participated in them. *Direklerarası* hosted all segments of the Ottoman society, regardless of ethnic origins or religious identities. It was possible to listen to Turkish classical music performed by *Handehane-i Osmani Kumpanyası* while a French orchestra was giving a concert in a European theater or a famous Ottoman expert of *Karagöz*, Salih Efendi, was entertaining a group of people gathered at a coffee house. The most famous authors, musicians, theater groups, and traditional entertainers were the main actors of *Direklerarası* during Ramadans. According to Georgeon, with its distinctive atmosphere, *Direklerarası* was a center of “culture”, a culture that was a synthesis of two cultures; that of the Ottoman palace and that of Europe. While the former was losing its attractiveness for the society of Istanbul in the late 19th century, the second one was still a foreign culture to be permitted only within certain limits and that most of

¹¹⁶Georgeon, 2000, p. 81-83.

the people hesitated to fully accept.

Direklerarası was truly a place of festivities. Every day during Ramadan, a huge crowd of people from all segments of society would gather in its famous main road in order to participate in the activities happening at the coffee houses, fairs, and theatres, or just to perform *piyasa* walks. Mahmut Yesari points out that the extraordinary crowds in *Direklerarası* during Ramadan tended to gather in the afternoons or evenings before the *iftar* (breaking one's fast) and especially after the *iftar* and *teravih*.¹¹⁷ As Georgeon mentions, these outside *piyasa* walks were usually possible during the summer Ramadans only. Therefore, it is safe to argue that the form and level of socialness that occurred during the Ottoman Ramadans varied according to the particular season with which Ramadan coincided each year. For example, crowds full of non-Muslims, women, and the poor were publicly more visible during summer Ramadans than they were during winter Ramadans when they tended to meet in closed spaces such as coffee houses. Similar to European saloons, coffee houses in the Ottoman Empire functioned as public spaces where all kinds of people from various classes and cultures could come together.

Although varying in terms of their specific functions, a large number of coffee houses existed in the late Ottoman Empire, some of which were specially established for the Ramadan period only. As Kaygılı records, during the winter Ramadans every district of Istanbul had its own coffee house called *çalgılı kahve* or *Semâî kahvesi*, although the most famous of these were concentrated, again, in *Direklerarası*.¹¹⁸ Before each Ramadan, people were informed as to who would be setting up a *Semâî* coffee house in which district and with which music group.¹¹⁸ The *Semâî* coffee house was a transformed type of *saz kahvesi* initiated by Aşık Dertli in the 19th century. They were generally places of traditional entertainment, like *Karagöz* and *meddah*, where it was also possible to attend performances by non-Muslims' music groups.¹¹⁹ Due to their “traditional” character, these coffee houses suffered a decrease in popularity in the first decade of the 20th century. In his memoirs, Kaygılı tells about how the most famous performers of these coffee houses, such as *Semâî* and *mani* (forms of Turkish folk poetry and music) artisans, died in poverty after the Young Turk revolution in 1908.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷Mahmut Yesari, “Direklerarası”, in Şemsettin Kutlu (ed.), *Bu Şehr-i İstanbul ki*, Milliyet Yayınları, İstanbul, 1972, p. 233-239.

¹¹⁸For the organization of these Semai coffee houses see Üsküdarlı Vasıf Hoca, “Çalgılı Kahveler”, in Şemsettin Kutlu (ed.), *Bu Şehr-i İstanbul ki*, Milliyet Yayınları, İstanbul, 1972, p. 226-232.

¹¹⁹Ahmet Refik, *Kafes ve Ferace Devrinde İstanbul*, Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1998, p. 75.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 225.

Similarly, there is a consensus among the different authors who have written about the Ottoman Ramadans in the late 19th century that *Direklerarası* began to become less popular and maintained its status as an entertainment center only until the establishment of the Turkish Republic. This argument runs parallel to Georgeon's point about the role of *Direklerarası* as a place of cultural synthesis that, once the balance began to change in favor of European culture and more radical modernization, turned into a place of the “traditional” that symbolized the Ottoman past and therefore became unpopular. Arpad, for example, mentions that during the late 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century, *Direklerarası* experienced its most famous and liveliest period.¹²¹ This means that up until 1925 –the beginning of the Republican era and, more significantly, the crystallization of its authoritarian stance following the declaration of the Law on Maintenance of Order- it was a center of entertainment for the people of Istanbul. He also adds, however, that “*Direklerarası* has not existed for forty years”. As he was writing in 1982, it is safe to conclude that, although it became much less popular during the early Republican period, *Direklerarası*, still existed, at least as a center of theater and opera (Europeanized forms of entertainment), up until 1940, at which time it ceased to exist.¹²²

According to Arpad, this drastic change in *Direklerarası*'s status in the cultural and social life of Istanbul was a byproduct of the fundamental transformation in the social structure of Republican Turkey. *Direklerarası* was also a center for the Ottoman intellectuals and elites while Istanbul was the capital city of the empire. When the new Republic chose Ankara as the new capital city, “old” Istanbul became less popular and turned into a place for the new settlers coming from rural Anatolia. New Turkish intellectuals staying in Istanbul chose to move to the *Beyoğlu* side of the city, where the more Western atmosphere of *Pera* predominated. Arpad explains this crucial social transformation as follows: “New Turkish intellectuals, increasing in number, were not patronizing the coffee houses Şule, Yıldız, or Şark in *Şehzadebaşı* anymore. Clubrooms like *Parisienne*, *Turkuaz*, *Petrograd*, and others in the *Beyoğlu* district were more attractive. Turkish businessmen, too, started to move their houses to the *Beyoğlu* side, especially after 1930”.¹²³ This was related to the more radical Westernization of the Republican Turkish society, a process which entailed the abandonment of its Islamic and Eastern past in the “old” Istanbul symbolized by *Direklerarası*.

¹²¹Burhan Arpad, *Bir İstanbul Var İdi...*, Doğan Kitapçılık, İstanbul, 2000, p. 47-53.

¹²²For example, Arpad mentions that for example during 1925, 1928 and 1929 Ramadans, there were still theater shows in *Direklerarası* which means it was still a place of enjoyment and cultural activities. This ended in 1940 onwards.

¹²³Arpad, 2000, p. 48-49.

Arpad emphasizes the importance of *Direklerarası* in the Ottoman Empire by underlining its role in the cultural life of the empire. Its symbolical role as such was so strong that even during the occupation period after WWI, *Direklerarası* continued to be the center of “joy” and “happiness”, even if this was limited to the Ramadan periods. That Ramadan was the only time of the year when Ottoman society experienced a greater degree of socialness and Ottoman culture and Islam became significantly more visible in the public sphere. The decrease in *Direklerarası's* popularity therefore meant a decrease in the symbolical significance of this socially visible and popular Ottoman Islamic culture.

2.3. Religious Life

Emphasizing the theocratic character of the Ottoman Empire and its incredibly rich atmosphere in terms of religious life, Van Millingen observes that Ramadans were the period when this religious life became more intensified.¹²⁴ For him, there is no religious ceremony in the world which is as impressive as the celebration of *Kadir Gecesi* (The Night of Power, 27th night of Ramadan) under the dome of the Hagia Sophia: “Like in the old days, under the gloomy light of hundreds of hanging oil lamps, the hearts of one thousand people come together in the mosque to perform the evening worship enthusiastically filled with the feeling of unity created by the sacred month”.¹²⁵

In actuality, Ramadan is first and foremost a religious period during which many events that are sacred for Muslims occur. Moreover, it is a period during which people carry out one of the five compulsory forms of worship in Islam, the *oruç* (fast), which was central to the organization of life during Ramadan in the late Ottoman Empire. Fasting had been something imperative in the Muslim society and even the non-Muslims were expected to obey the social rules specially created for the Ramadan (not eating in a place open to the public, for example). However, Georgeon also underlines the existence of a relative tolerance for not fasting during Ramadan, tolerance mostly influenced by the *Bektaşî* tradition. In addition, due to the modernization efforts, there emerged among the Ottoman elite of the late 19th and early 20th century a tendency to not fast, a tendency also observed among the students of the newly created foreign schools of Istanbul.¹²⁶ These tendencies were, of course, common in the private sphere but still dangerous to practice openly in the public sphere. Especially in periods of

¹²⁴Alexander Van Millingen, *Konstantinopolis İstanbul*, Alkım, Istanbul, 2003, p. 161-173.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 164.

¹²⁶Georgeon, 2000, p. 61.

social and political turmoil, such as the Balkan revolts, it was observed that religion became generally more pervasive, with religious feelings and activities becoming more intense and strict. Similarly, political authority was also careful about controlling people during Ramadan and punishing those who were disobedient, as neglecting to fast was equated with disobedience to the order created by the political authority.¹²⁷ Those who did not care about these punishments and who perceived not fasting as a sign of being European and modern were those belonging to the upper strata of the Ottoman society, which constituted a marginal number in the 19th century Ottoman Empire.

During Ramadan, people were much more willing to visit mosques and *mescids* (small mosques), to perform *namaz* together, to listen to sermons, and to read the Quran than they were during the rest of the year. All mosques were open the whole day as some Muslims chose to stay for the whole night and listen to the *hâfiz* reading the Quran specially for Ramadan. Together with the *teravîh namazı*, this tradition of reading the Quran each day (*mukabele*) in order to finish it by the end of the Ramadan (*hatim*) was one of the forms of worship unique to the Ramadan period. However, this intensification of religious life during Ramadan was not limited to the mosques. Other sacred spaces such as tombs (*türbe*), dervish lodges (*tekke*), and *tarikats* were also visited regularly and sometimes it was even common practice to stay there for the whole night, especially on *Kadir Gecesi*. Graveyard visits were another of Ramadan's traditional religious rituals.

Giving of alms (*sadaka*, *fitre*, *zekât*) was also another important religious responsibility prescribed by Islam to the Muslims during Ramadan. These acts of worship were also effective in encouraging socialness in the Ottoman society; it was common practice during Ramadan for most of the rich people to have the poor as guests each day and to share their meal with them. As Millingen observes, in 19th century Istanbul during the *iftar* meal, the houses of the rich were filled with crowds of poor people who had come to take their share of the meal and also receive gifts of money or cloth.¹²⁸ In fact, public kitchens (*imarethane*) organized by mosques or some other benevolent institutions also provided public support for the poor during Ramadan. The state also initiated regulations specific to the Ramadan period, such as permitting poor and disabled people to pass through the Galata bridge or travel with the steamships free of charge.

It is important to note that this intensification of religious worship in the Muslim

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 63.

¹²⁸Millingen, 2003, p. 165.

society was effective not only in solidifying Islam's centrality in social life, but also in helping religious men to reposition themselves more strongly as the main actors of this religious atmosphere. As Georgeon mentions, religious men, dervishes, and leaders of the *tarikats* were active and, more importantly, "visible" during the month of Ramadan, which contributed to their "legitimate" existence in Ottoman society. Higher ranking members of the ulema had the opportunity to motivate the Sultan and the bureaucracy religiously through organized meetings called *Huzur Dersleri*. They also benefited from their privileged position during Ramadan. Lower ranking members of the religious hierarchy were also active, traveling around the countryside to give speeches (*cerre çıkmak*) and collect money from the villagers in return. These special Ramadan sermons can be perceived as similar to the modern means of communication. The power of the religious establishment to influence and even to create public opinion increased during these religious activities. In this sense, according to Georgeon, Ramadan presented an unparalleled opportunity for those controlling the religious affairs of the Ottoman Empire to impose opinions and propagate their own beliefs. This particular characteristic of Ramadan created one of the most important problems in the eyes of the political authority, especially after the establishment of the Republic and the realization of its strict secularization reforms.

2.4. Official Attitude

The official attitude towards Ramadan during the late Ottoman Empire usually had two sides. On the one hand, the state was central to the apparent effect of the environment created by Ramadan. It was even an initiator of this change because of the fact that Ramadan also provided some opportunities to strengthen state power, to restore official control over social and personal life, and to communicate the political agenda. Therefore, the state usually adapted itself to the changed atmosphere. As Georgeon indicates, during Ramadan, official life slowed down and political discussions were moved to the night meetings.

This situation observed in the state mechanism, however, was not something desirable in terms of the modernization project, which aimed to create a modern, regular, and strong bureaucracy. Based on his analysis of the newspapers of the time, Georgeon underlines how the modernizing elite was discontented with the disorder the Ramadan holiday caused in the administrative system. In 1852, Mustafa Raşid Pasha tried to impose a continuation of the regular working hours during Ramadan, but most

of the officials reacted negatively to this new order. As Felek observes, despite these efforts on the part of the modernizing elite, official institutions remained half-closed or nearly completely closed during Ramadan, at least until the Young Turk revolution in 1908.¹²⁹

Similarly, nearly all of the schools in Istanbul were closed during Ramadan, making it one of the most significant holidays for students. The new regulation declared in 1869 considered Ramadan while determining the educational calendar in *rüşdiye*, *idadî* and *sultanî* schools. In the military schools, which were open to Muslim students only, all of the courses were completed at the end of *Recep* and examinations started at the end of *Şaban*, which left students free for the duration of Ramadan.¹³⁰ In the institutions of higher education, such as *Tıbbiye* and *Darülfünun*, Ramadan was also one of the annual holidays. Therefore, although Ramadan was a cause of debate and discontent among the modernizing elite, the official attitude towards Ramadan was overall a positive one and both administrative practice and the educational system were adapted to this “irregular”, “extraordinary” order imposed during Ramadan. This shows that the state itself was extremely protective of the crucial position of Ramadan as a religious, social, and political event. The “political” side of Ramadan can be best observed during the official celebrations, especially during the bairam at the end of Ramadan.

In the Ottoman Empire, all religious bairams had been celebrated by an official ceremony of the state. Like all other ceremonies, bairam ceremonies (*Muâyede*) were performed according to predetermined rules and regulations. In these official celebrations, Sultan performed the “Bairam *namaz*” (ritual worship) together with the Muslim subjects in the Sultan Ahmed mosque or at Hagia Sophia, after which he proceeded to accept the bairam visits of the ulema. Those outside of Istanbul, were obliged to send their greetings to the Sultan. According to Karateke, as participation in these bairam ceremonies was of the utmost importance and attendance strictly controlled, these *muâyede* ceremonies were not considered to be just simple religious celebrations.¹³¹ They were, like other equivalents such as *beyât*, rituals by which the hierarchy within the state administration once again became visible; all the bureaucrats were reminded of their places and, most importantly, loyalty to the sultan was strengthened.

¹²⁹Burhan Felek, *Yaşadığımız Günler*, Istanbul, 1974, p. 96.

¹³⁰Tevfik Sağlam, *Nasıl Okudum*, Istanbul, 1991, p. 36-37 quoted in Georgeon, 2000, p. 51.

¹³¹Hakan T. Karateke, *Padişahım Çok Yaşa! Osmanlı Devletinin Son Yüzyılında Merasimler*, Kitap Yayınevi, Istanbul, 2004, p. 76.

Bairam ceremonies in the Ottoman Empire also underwent many changes for several reasons, the main reason in the 18th and especially the 19th centuries being the modernization process. The first change in the way that these ceremonies were organized came in the era of Mahmud II during the Ramadan of 1829 when he totally rearranged the organization of the ceremony, starting with the clothes (every state official including the sultan attended the ceremony with *fez*) and the usage of the military band.¹³² After the signing of the Reform Edict (The Edict of *Islahat*) in 1956, representatives of the non-Muslim populations as well as the foreign ambassadors were allowed to participate in the ceremonies as audience.¹³³ In 1867, during the reign of Abdülmecid, the place of *muâyede* celebrations were transferred to *Dolmabahçe* palace where there was a special *muâyede* hall. Together with the Grand Vizier, the SheikhuIslam was one of the most important figures of these ceremonies, as the prayer recited by him signaled the beginning of the exchange of good wishes during the bairam.

This importance officially given to religious celebrations also influenced the general atmosphere of the city during the bairams. Firstly, before the bairam, the most important day during Ramadan was *Kadir Gecesi* (the 27th night of the Ramadan). In order to celebrate *Kadir Gecesi*, the anniversary of the day the Quran was revealed, an official regiment called *Kadir Gecesi Alayı* was formed. In such days, Hagia Sophia and Tophane Nusretiye were the mosques where the Sultan performed his *teravih* namaz. These mosques were illuminated and decorated and rocket shows were organized around them.¹³⁴ Twenty-one canon-shots were fired before each *namaz* in Istanbul on the day before bairam (*arife*) until the last day of the Ramadan bairam. The city was decorated with *kandil* (old-fashioned oil lamp) provided by the state to each mosque. In addition, all the waterside residences (*yalı*) owned by the Ottoman princes (*sultan efendi*) were illuminated by projectors. These illuminations, officially organized and known as *gece donanması*, were so popular in Ottoman society that it was common practice to try to establish different types of illuminations and dressing designs for every bairam. Sometimes newly invented illumination equipment and technical personnel to set up them up were even brought from Europe expressly for this purpose.¹³⁵

As Karateke mentions, official celebrations of religious festivals like Ramadan

¹³²Ibid., p. 78-79.

¹³³Ibid., p. 81.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 206.

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 92.

Bairam lost their magnificence after the era of Abdülhamit II.¹³⁶ The last sultan, Vahidettin, even attended a relatively ordinary mosque to perform the bairam *namaz*, and without the accompaniment of any regiment. This was mostly due to the changing political atmosphere of the empire after the Young Turk revolution in 1908. When the day of the revolution, the 10th of July, was declared a national holiday, official celebrations as well as those amongst the people in the city became livelier.¹³⁷ However, it is nevertheless possible to argue that *muâyede* celebrations continued to be of critical importance, especially during the last period of the Ottoman Empire. Although religious in content, their function during the modernization period was mostly a political one as they were used for the purpose of “visual” propaganda against the non-Muslim audience, *muâyede* being the only religious celebration that non-Muslim populations were allowed to attend. Karateke sees this change in the *muâyede* as a sign of its politically “functional” role in the eyes of the Ottoman state.¹³⁸ Therefore, once again it is easy to see how Ramadans (and of course Ramadan Bairams) not only occupied a privileged position religiously, socially, and culturally, but were politically important as well.

On the other hand, the positive attitude of the political authority was not enough to prevent its desire to increase state control during Ramadans. As discussed before, Ramadan was a period when socialness was at its peak in the Ottoman society and different groups of people gained “publicness”, in addition to increased public visibility of Islam. Ramadan entertainment in particular was treated by the state as potentially dangerous because it caused an extraordinary increase in people’s activeness in social life and was therefore difficult to regulate and keep under control. In this sense, the beginning of the modernization process in the state apparatus also signaled an increasing interest on the part of the political authority to deal with the Ramadan atmosphere, especially after the Tanzimat era. Ali Rıza Bey, minister of the central establishment for the marketing and taxation of fish (*balıkhane nazırı*), wrote in the 19th century about how Tanzimat reformers instituted certain laws in an attempt to regulate social life, the city space, and the relations of ordinary people with the elite and the Sultan.¹³⁹ For example, in one of the regular *tembihnames* of the Tanzimat era, Babiâli warned people to keep their streets clean, to treat respectfully during the visits of the

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 92.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 96.

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 97.

¹³⁹Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza Bey, 2001, p. 195-200.

Sultan, to obey to the security officials, and to not to disturb the public order.¹⁴⁰ On the one hand, these measures reflected the political authority's intent to "modernize" the appearance of the city and social relations, while on the other hand, they signified a modern, strong state which was trying to discipline and control public life. In this regard, there were rules to limit collective action and socialness, such as the ban on sitting in front of the coffee houses. Similarly, because in the eyes of the state women's visibility was also something to be regulated, women were forbidden to talk with tradesmen or to stay out in the streets too long.

The era of Abdülhamit II was more remarkable in terms of the increasing pressure on the Ramadan atmosphere. Ahmet Rasim, the famous author of the Ottoman Ramadans, indicates that outside meetings in particular changed considerably during the absolute rule of Abdülhamit II, as the sultan was extremely sceptical about any organized social activity.¹⁴¹ During his reign, even the number of *iftar* meals and Ramadan visits decreased. Theater plays and films were to be checked through a mechanism of censorship used even at the *Karagöz* shows in the coffee houses.

In fact, this suspiciousness and skepticism of the Ramadan entertainment arose from its contradictory nature that was inappropriate to the religious month. As Georgeon emphasizes, Ramadan as a month of Islam with an intensive religious atmosphere was also a time of entertainment that was both very irreligious and extremely potentially provocative for the Islamic order. The official attitude in the face of this situation was also influenced by the the ulema, which was usually restrictive and negative with regard to this matter. At the same time that *Direklerarası* was full of crowds participating in the Ramadan entertainments, it was possible to listen to an imam criticizing the theater, cinema, and music shows as well as the existence of women in the public sphere, all of which were thought to be sources of moral weakness increasingly observed in the late 19th century Ottoman society. In the rural areas, the attitude of the ulema was even stricter, such that they even banned theater groups from entering the city and town centers. However, it should also be underlined here that most of these attempts to restrict the Ramadan entertainment did not succeed in limiting the socialness and publicness experienced during this one month period. Such entertainment and its effects were tolerated to a certain extent even by some members of the ulema, and usually the reaction of the society and criticism of the elite were effective in

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 198-200. As Ali Şükrü Çoruk mentions in the footnote he wrote to this regulation, during the Tanzimat era these regulations were issued very Ramadan and the topics they underlined were usually similar. See also *Ramazan Kitabı*, edited by Özlem Olgun, Kitabevi, Istanbul, 2000.

¹⁴¹Ahmet Rasim, *Ramazan Karşılması*, Arba, Istanbul, 1990, p. 29.

allaying the pressure and skepticism of the political authority.¹⁴² In the final analysis, Ramadan did not become a month of carnival where all social and morel order turned upside down.¹⁴³

Ramadan's potential to cause disorder started to be taken into consideration not only because of entertainment activities, but also because of the atmosphere they created, an atmosphere suitable for political opposition. Because of this anxiety, coffee houses as meeting centers were always controlled secretly or openly by the state.¹⁴⁴ Especially after the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, Ramadan became politicized both in the hand of the political authority and of those who resisted the policies initiated by Committee of Union and Progress. Beginning with the first Ramadan of the revolution, the Young Turks began to use the communication methods specific to Ramadan in order to strengthen their authority both in the cities as well as in the periphery. They declared regulations dictating that Ramadan sermons should inform the public about the rights provided by the constitution and their harmony with the orders of Islam. In addition, with the rising influence of nationalism, Ramadan as a month of religious communication became a period of "nationalization" of religion.¹⁴⁵ This tradition was strengthened during the years of the Istanbul occupation when Ramadan's atmosphere provided the necessary environment to propagate ideas and organize for a possible resistance. Maurice Pernot, a teacher of French in the occupied Istanbul, tells about how mosques served as the only suitable place for people to come together and about how central politics was to these get-togethers during which Mustafa Kemal's photo was circulated from hand to hand.¹⁴⁶

2.5. General Evaluation and Additional Remarks Regarding the Republican Era

While addressing the evolution of Ottoman Ramadans for about one and a half century, Georgeon underlines three turning points: Elimination of the Janissary forces in 1826, which also removed the atmosphere of insecurity and disorder; the Crimean War in 1854-1856 which hurried the Westernization process in Istanbul; and lastly 1908 Young Turk revolution which both politicized and used Ramadan and therefore strengthened it

¹⁴²Georgeon gives the example of Fehmi Efendi, a *Karagöz* artisan, who was also a sheikh of a *tarikat* as the sign of ulema's relatively tolerable attitude; and Namık Kemal's criticisms about banning of the entertainments in the first 10 days of the Ramadan as a sign of intellectuals' influence on the official authority as this ban was removed in a very short period of time. See Georgeon, 2000, p. 84-86.

¹⁴³Georgeon, 2000, p. 87-96.

¹⁴⁴Ahmet Refik, 1998, p. 71.

¹⁴⁵Georgeon, 2000, p. 120.

¹⁴⁶Maurice Pernot, *La Question Turque*, Paris, 1923, p. 41 quoted in Georgeon, 2000, p. 119.

and also marked its loss of popularity due to increasing modernization. In this sense, the Young Turk era started in 1908 can be thought as a preparation period for the Republican era, as most of the debate revolving around Ramadan which took place during this period continued to be significant and became radicalized in the hands of the Republican elite. Blaming *Direkterarası* for being backwards because of its traditional atmosphere, questioning fasting as a form of worship antithetical to Westernization, and criticizing Ramadan drums for being banal had already started during the late Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, it was also a period when Islam and Muslim identity were forced to be personalized and limited to the private sphere. However, the basic turning point in this regard came with the establishment of the Turkish Republic through its authoritarian secularism.

Georgeon states that Ramadan in 20th century Republican Turkey became something “ordinary”. It was shaped by secular Kemalist thought; it became a private issue which lost its public influence. The extraordinary influence of Ramadan upon daily life was normalized, controlled, and regulated. The number of people choosing to fast decreased and Ramadan entertainment continued only in a Europeanized format in Pera. The Penal Code changes in 1926 abolished the punishment for non-fasting people. The voices of some intellectuals who missed the “old” Ramadans after the Young Turk revolution became more disappointed but hidden as well. What emerged from this revolution was a Republican Ramadan; truly modern in nature.

It should be noted that Georgeon' general evaluations of the Republican Ramadans are limited and lacking in detailed analysis despite his long discussions of Ottoman Ramadans in the 19th century until the Republican era, a discussion based upon wide variety of illuminating sources. To what extent the Republican elite succeeded in regulating and transforming Ramadans, with which purposes and mechanisms they did so, and whether or not Ramadans in the Republican era totally lost their publicness and socialness are still very important questions to be asked in order to understand the evolution of the process after 1923. It would also be beneficial to observe how the political authority of the Republic intervened in the social and public life during Ramadan in its “ideally” organized new capital, Ankara. Using the official newspaper *Hakimiyeti Milliye* as a primary source, the next three chapters will examine the unavoidable effects of official secularism upon the Ramadans of the early Republican era.

PART II

Chapter III

RAMADANS BETWEEN 1923 AND 1925: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

The scope of this research is limited to the early Republican era, namely the era of Atatürk, from 1923 to 1938. However, while the first Ramadan of this period, which started on 17 April 1923, took place before the formal declaration of the Turkish Republic and therefore technically may fall outside the analysis of this study in terms of date, it will be considered here. The reason to include this early Ramadan of 1923 in the analysis of Ramadans in the 1920s is that it is the most ideal starting point from which to trace the evolution of Ramadan in general and of the attitude represented by *Hakimiyeti Milliye* in particular over this period of time.

As discussed before in the first chapter, there is an ongoing discussion regarding the roots of Kemalist secularism and whether it was a planned project or a path determined according to the needs of the conjecture. In this regard, Kemalists' attitude towards Islam during the War of Independence appears to be very important when evaluating their later ideological positions. Although a detailed study of the point is lacking, existing data indicate that neither Mustafa Kemal himself nor any other of the members of the Kemalist cadre held a negative attitude vis-à-vis Islam during the War of Independence. Rather, they actually used the dominant religious atmosphere of the war era in their speeches to their own advantage, probably in order to further the mobilization of the society both mentally and materially. This was also related to the fact that the period from 1920 to the end of 1923 marked a period of transition away from the Ottoman Empire, in which religion was still crucial not only in the organization of social life, but in the existing system of public administration as well.¹⁴⁷ In addition, at the time, Kemalists lacked sufficient power to regulate this situation; only several years later would they gain the power to do so. In 1923, reflections of this “positive” atmosphere concerning the place of religion in public and social life can also

¹⁴⁷Until its abolition, between 1920 and 1924 the Ministry of Şeriat and Evkaf was in an active role although limited in rights and responsibilities compared to *Şeyh-ül-İslâm*. The parliamentarians with *ulema* origin were also participating in the first parliament very actively. See the lecture notes by İsmail Kara in “*Birarada Yaşama*”: *Türkiye’de Din-Devlet İlişkisi Sempozyum*, Helsinki Citizens Assembly, Istanbul, p. 56-61.

be traced in the pages of the newspaper *Hakimiyeti Milliye* and in the general attitude towards the Ramadan. The 1923 Ramadan, unlike the others following it, was still under the influence of this atmosphere created by the War of Independence and, therefore, was to a great extent free from the Kemalist secularism of the Republican era.

The most remarkable characteristic of the 1923 Ramadan was the great amount of attention it garnered in the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* and in the eyes of the political authority. On the first day of the Ramadan, special Ramadan news occupied the headlines together with a long celebration notice.¹⁴⁸ The content of this notice included some religious motifs, but mainly wished a successful future for the nation. It presented the War of Independence as a religious, sacred war under the protection of God and celebrated not only the Ramadan of the Turkish nation, but the Ramadan of the whole Muslim world as well. This emphasis on the sacredness of the war, which finds its expression in the *Gaza* ideology and the idea of “Muslim fraternity”, clearly reflect the level of militarization and Islamization of the society during the war period, a situation encouraged as well by the political authority. That is why, instead of the president of the parliament who was still the head of the political authority in 1923, Mustafa Kemal as the commander-in-chief of the army declared a celebration notice published on the first page of the newspaper and dedicated only to the armies. This celebration notice of Mustafa Kemal’s is especially significant for the topic of this study because it is the first and the last Ramadan message he declared after 1923 until his death in 1938. As it will be seen, for fourteen years he would prefer to remain silent throughout the month of Ramadan and to completely ignore its activities, with the exception of his meeting for the bairam celebration in 1924:

“The declaration of our commandant Gazi Pasha to the armies

To the armies:

This year, the month of compassion and forgiveness is upon us at a time when we are armed and on a mission. After the unique victories that have been ours by the grace of God, it is with self-esteem and peace of mind that we await the result of the state's peaceful attempts to provide our legal legitimacy. Should the results necessitate the restart of our actions, naturally we will continue with the

¹⁴⁸“Bugün ramazan-ı şerif ibtidası: Dün gece nisf-ül-leylde rü'yet-i hilâl tesbit olduğu bildirilmiştir: Mübarek ay bizi bu sene zaferimizi takib iden en mühim günler içinde karşılıyor. Bugünden itibaren idrak itdiğimiz bu otuz günün bizi tam bir bayram isal itmesini temenni iyeleriz. Bu kadar meşakkatlere dayanmakta allahın inayetine dayanan memleketimiz ve milletimizden eltaf-ı ilahiyenin temadisini en büyük bir safvet ile niyaz iylemek hakkını ihraz eylemiş bulunuyoruz. Cenab-ı hakdan bu mübarek ay hürmetine bizi saadet ve refaha erişdirmesini niyaz ve bütün müslüman kardeşlerimizi tebrik ederiz. Şanlı ordumuzun her an üzerinde bulunan vazife-i mukaddimesinde zafer-yâb olmasını ve aziz şehidlerinde ruhlarının şad olmasını her günkü dualarımızda tekrar eylemek vazifesiyle mükellef bulunmaktayız.”, 1 Ramazan 1341 (17 April 1923), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

same patriotic excitement along the path of courageousness and *Gaza*. I witness and am convinced that all my armed comrades are very willing in this regard. As I ask of the holy and benevolent God that he grant our patrie and all of us safety and happiness in honor of this sacred month, I present *Fatiha* for the spirit of our holy martyrs who passed away with the love of our sacred mission. The Commander-in-Chief Gazi Mustafa Kemal”¹⁴⁹

The positive official attitude towards Ramadan reflected above in Mustafa Kemal’s letter published on the first day of the bairam was in line with the Ottoman tradition. Another reflection of the continuation of Ottoman tradition in this respect was the declaration of a special Ramadan holiday for the parliament until the end of the bairam. On the second day of the Ramadan, a news item about this parliamentary decision also made reference to the fact that it had been regular practice in the Ottoman period as well.¹⁵⁰

The Ramadan of 1923 was quite visible in the pages of the newspaper throughout the entire month. Although this visibility was mostly in the form of advertisements for textiles and food, the general atmosphere of the newspaper as reflected in the articles again embodied a positive attitude towards religion. The agenda of the Ramadan of 1923 was mainly centered around the issue of the peace conference in Lausanne, but there were also other discussions which give indications of the coming political developments. For example, while arguing for the compatibility of the sovereignty of people with the Islamic tradition, articles were relatively explicit in their criticism of the position of caliphate.¹⁵¹ These discussions reflected the main debates

¹⁴⁹“Gazi paşa kumandanımızın ordulara beyannameleri

Ordulara:

Rahmet ve mağfiret ayı bu senede bizi silah ve vazife başında buluyor. İna-yet-i Rabbaniye ile kazandığımız bi-emsal muvaffakiyetlerden sonra hukuk-u meşruemizin temini için devletçe yapılmakta olan teşebbüsât-ı sulhperveranenin neticesine sükunet ve itimat ile intizar ediyoruz. Netice bizim tekrar harekete geçmemizi icab edecek bir şekilde zuhur iderse gaza ve şehâmet yolunda aynı şevk-i vatanperveri ile devam ideceğimiz tabiidir. Bu hususta bütün silah arkadaşlarımın pek âmil bulunduğuna şahid ve kaniyim. İdrakiyle bulunduğumuz bu mübarek ayın hürmetine eltaf-ı ilahiyeden vatanımız ve cümlemiz için selamet ve saadetler niyaz iderken dava-i mukaddisenin aşkıyla rahmet-i rahmana kavuşmuş olan aziz şehidlerimizin ruhlarına fatihalar ihda idiyorum.

Baş kumandan

Gazi Mustafa Kemal”, 1 Ramazan 1341 (17 April 1923), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰“Büyük millet meclisinin ramazan tatili”, 2 Ramazan 1341 (18 April 1923), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1. Fevkalade bir luzum olmazsa 21 mayısta açılacak: Dün büyük millet meclisi saat ikide reis-i sani Ali Fuad Paşa hazretlerinin riyasetinde içtima itmiş ise de ekseriyet olmadığı anlaşıldığından ve müzakere salonunda ancak yetmiş üç aza bulunduğundan celsenin küşadı kabil olmamıştır. Reis-i sani Ali Fuad Paşa bunun üzerine meclisi tatil iylemiş ve şu beyanatta bulunmuştur: Arkadaşlar her sene ramazan ve bayramlarda meclis-i ali azaları istirahat buyurlarlar. Bugün de ramazan olduğundan fevkalade bir luzum görüldüğünde tekrar içtima idilmek üzere bayram ertesi olan mayıs yirmibirinci pazar ertesi gününe kadar müzakeratı tatil idiyorum”, 2 Ramazan 1341 (18 April 1923), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

¹⁵¹For example see “İslamda Halk Hakimiyeti”, 3 Ramazan 1341 (19 April 1923), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3. The article was trying to prove that Islam necessitates the people's republic and it would be contrary to the general philosophy of Islam to be in favor of sultanate. It was also representing anecdotes from

started after the end of the War of Independence regarding the type of the regime to be established and the status of the caliphate, as well as the position of the dominant Kemalist group, since *Hakimiyeti Milliye* was their publishing organ.¹⁵² That they were arguing for the compatibility of the republic with Islam shows that Kemalists were not radically secular in their modernization project in 1923, although this was predominantly due to contextual reasons which led them to wait at least until 1925 before formulating the basic pillars of said project.

In 1924, the month of Ramadan started at the beginning of April, just one month after the abolition of the caliphate and the replacement of the Ministry of *Şeriat* and *Evkaf* with the Presidency of Religious Affairs. Such an important turning point also effected the treatment of Ramadan in the newspaper *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. For the first time, the beginning of the Ramadan month was declared by the official letter of the president of Religious Affairs, Refik Bey, on newspaper's front page.¹⁵³ This time there was no celebration notice composed by a political figure in honor of the beginning of Ramadan; the only notice was that of the newspaper itself, a notice which was shorter compared to the one it had published the previous year.¹⁵⁴ The notice also declared that the newspaper would be published in the evenings until the end of the bairam. The parliament declared that the holiday was to take place from the 23th of April until the 23th of October, a period which was not specially determined according to the Ramadan calendar.¹⁵⁵ Abolishing the Ottoman tradition of declaring a Ramadan holiday for parliament was one of the most important changes observed in the evolution of Ramadan between 1923 and 1925. With the declaration of the Constitution in 1924, this tradition was replaced by a routine policy of the parliament to take a six month holiday each year regardless of the start and end of Ramadan.

Advertisements hold important keys to understanding what was happening in social life during the Ramadan of 1924. Such advertisements show that stores were open until midnight, an indication of the existence of a lively night life unique to the

the life of prophet and four caliphates in order to support their populist position. According to this interpretation, only because of the future evolution of the caliphate, this position became corrupted and turned into an administration of ignorance.

¹⁵²For a detailed discussion of the events until the declaration of the Republic see Faruk Alpkaya, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin Kuruluşu (1923-1924)*, İletişim, İstanbul, 1998.

¹⁵³Determining the beginning day of the Ramadan had been historically a complicated issue. Until 1924, any local *müftü* who observed the change in the position of the moon did inform the public about the beginning of the Ramadan. This ancient practice led to regional discrepancies concerning the date of Ramadan. After the establishment of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, this job was centralized as its responsibility although it was still taking the information from various local religious authorities.

¹⁵⁴See "Mübarek Ramazan", 30 Şaban 1342 (4 April 1924), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p.1.

¹⁵⁵See "Meclis 23 teşrin-i evvel 340 tarihinde içtimaa etmek üzere tatil-i faaliyet itmişdir", 21 Ramazan 1342 (25 April 1924), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

Ramadan period. In addition, cinemas showing films specially brought for Ramadan were also holding screenings at night when the crowds in the streets of Ankara were probably largest. This point can also be interpreted as an indication of the continuation between the Ottoman Ramadans and the Republican Ramadans in the year 1924 with respect to “socialness”.

Similarly, the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* also indicate that the 1924 Ramadan was also rich in terms of public visibility. The most significant indication of this situation was the publication of the articles of Ahmet Rasim, who was a symbolic name for Ramadan in the late Ottoman Empire, under the title “Letters from Istanbul”. The new regime’s inclusion of Ahmed Rasim again signifies the relatively positive attitude of the political authority in 1924 still, even after the abolition of the caliphate. This is especially interesting considering the later attitude of the Kemalist regime to ignore anything associated with the Ottoman era.

The content of the articles by Ahmed Rasim usually dealt with the old Ramadans in Istanbul and old Ramadan traditions like *mahya*.¹⁵⁶ However, his tone was in no way critical towards the Republican administration since in 1924, it had not yet given any indications of its intention to change and regulate Ramadan. Rather, Rasim presented the changes observed in Ramadans as something natural and normal within the context of the general changes in social life that had been occurring since the 19th century. In this sense, while he regretted some of the effects that the Ottoman-Turkish modernization project had had upon Ramadan traditions, he did not blame any political agenda for this. It should also be noted that in his articles Ahmed Rasim dealt exclusively with life in Istanbul and did not write about life or Ramadan in Ankara.

Celebrations of the Ramadan bairam in 1924 are yet another indication of the political authority’s positive attitude towards Ramadan and Islam. On the 4th of May, the newspaper informed that the president of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal, would meet with those who wanted to exchange their bairam greetings at his residence at Çankaya with the following order: 1) The prime minister, the chairman of the parliament, the head of the General Staff, and the members of the Council of Ministers; 2) Parliamentarians who are in Ankara; 3) Commander-in-chief of the First Army; 4) the President of Religious Affairs, the Council of Finance and its members; 5) the governor of Ankara, the mayor, three people for the Municipal Corporation, and the Central

¹⁵⁶See “Eski Ramazan, Yeni Ramazan, Baharda Ramazan”, 11 Ramazan 1342 (15 April 1924), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3; “Mahyanın tarihi ve tasviri hakkında”, 18 Ramazan 1342 (22 April 1924), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3; “İstanbul Mektupları”, 24 Ramazan 1342 (28 April 1924), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

Council of the People's Party; 6) Under-secretaries of the Ministries, their general directors, department directors of the Ministry of National Defense, and the general directors of the department of General Staff and the commander of the eighth division; 7) Representatives of the Association for the Protection of Children and the Red Crescent, *Türk Ocağı*, press, and representatives of the Union of Turkish Teachers; and 8) individuals from among the population who wish to visit".¹⁵⁷ The President of Religious Affairs' rank as fourth in the list is an indication of his important position in the political hierarchy as well as the attention that was given to the institution.

There were other celebrations during the bairam as well, such as that of the *Türk Ocağı* which it organized for its own members. *Hakimiyeti Milliye* published a bairam message on the first day of the bairam, passed along the good wishes of its readers, and underlined the importance of the 1924 Ramadan as "the first Ramadan of the peace period".¹⁵⁸ Such an emphasis on the 1924 Ramadan was due to the fact that it was the first Ramadan of the Turkish Republic and therefore in the eyes of the people had the privilege of being the time during which they could celebrate their "sacred" victory and independence. Other organs of the press also adopted this same approach to the Ramadan of 1924 with headlines like "the first sacred Ramadan in the country escaped from the enemy boots".¹⁵⁹

The political authority also perceived Ramadan in this way and devoted much effort to strengthening its exalted position, both in terms of social life and religion. This perception was reflected in the official bairam celebrations as well. An article about the official bairam celebrations in Ankara published in the first issue of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* to come out after the bairam period clearly gave the impression that Republican celebrations in 1924 were very similar to the Ottoman celebrations in the late period of the empire. Before the official meeting held by Mustafa Kemal in his residence in Çankaya, he performed his bairam *namaz* in *Hacı Bayram Veli Camii* with the other important figures of the political authority and this was experienced not as an ordinary

¹⁵⁷“Reisi cumhur hazretleri

Bayram tebriklerini saat onda çankayadaki köşlerinde kabul buyuracaklardır.

Reisi cumhur hazretleri id-i said fitr tebrikatı bayramın birinci günü öğleden evvel saat onda çankayadaki köşlerinde aşağıdaki sıra ile kabul buyuracaklardır: 1) baş vekil, büyük millet meclisi resisi, erkan-ı harbiyeyi umumiye reisi, heyeti vekiliye azaları. 2) Ankarada mevcut büyük millet meclisi azası. 3) birinci ordu kumandanı. 4) Diyanet işleri reisi, divan-ı muhasebat reisi ve azaları. 5) vali, şehir emini, cemiyet-i umumiye belediyeden üç zat, halk fırkası heyeti merkeziyesi. 6) devair-i merkeziye müsteşarları, müdir-i umumiye, müdafai milliye devair rüessası ve erkan-ı harbiyeyi umumiye şube müdiranı, sekizinci fırka kumandanı. 7) Himayeyi etfal, hilali ahmer cemiyetleri, türk ocağı, matbuat, türkiye muallimler birliği mümessilleri. 8) halkdan arzu buyuran zevat.”, 30 Ramazan 1342 (2 May 1924), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸See “Hakimiyeti Milliye”, 1 Şevval 1342 (4 May 1924), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

¹⁵⁹For example the magazine *İleri* was using this title while announcing the beginning of the Ramadan in 1924. Quoted by Nuray Mert, “Cami Meselesi”, *Radikal*, 9 December 2003.

event but as an official ceremony similar to that held when an Ottoman sultan performed his bairam *namaz* worship: he was welcomed by the high members of the bureaucracy at the door of the mosque and greeted by the military band as well as the members of the police forces. On his return to his residence after the *namaz*, he was also escorted by an official ceremony.

According to the article, the most “essential” aspect of the Ramadan bairam found expression at the ceremony in Çankaya when Mustafa Kemal met with people in accordance with the aforementioned list of individuals. Most of the guests went to the presidency residence as part of a ceremonial parade, which included the participation of the citizens, in the direction of Çankaya. Although there is no proof that the crowd mentioned in the article actually did gather, there is also no reason to believe that such a crowd did not gather, seeing as there was nothing (aside from the abolition of the caliphate) about the atmosphere in 1924 that would have led to a reaction against the political authority for religious reasons, at least not in Ankara. The presidency orchestra gave a concert during the exchange of bairam wishes and the wife of Mustafa Kemal also participated in the ceremony. After this meeting, every ministry organized its own bairam meeting accompanied by an official ceremony. Participation of nearly all bureaucrats in the bairam celebrations and official organization of these meetings are additional proof of the regime’s positive attitude towards Ramadan and of their intention to maintain its importance without making any radical attempts to transform it into anything different from what it was in the late Ottoman Empire.

In addition to these characteristics which can be interpreted as a continuation, to some extent, of the late Ottoman period, other features of the 1924 Ramadan created a tradition unique to the Republican era. First of all, the Republican regime's permanent practice of regulating the collection of *fitre* and *zekat* during Ramadan was started in 1924 with the declaration that it was religiously legitimate to give *fitre* and *zekat* to the Association for the Protection of Children.¹⁶⁰ This declaration published by the

^{160c}Zekat ve sadaka-i fitrelerin himayeyi etfala verilmesi şerhiyyen caizdir

Her sene zekat ve sadaka-i fitr olarak bir çok paralar veriliyor. Bunları halkımız ekseriyetle tanıdığı bir fakire veyahud rast geldiği bir dilenciye virmektedir. Böyle gayri muntazam surette (?) idilen paralar ancak bir kaç fakirin (?) bir zaman için (?) ihtiyacına müdâr olmaktan başka bir işe yaramıyor. Şimdiye kadar bu ianelerin muntazam teşkilatı olan cemiyet-i hayriyelere virilmesi adet idinilmiş olsaydı şüphe yok ki daha (?) bağış ve daha (?) çok yardım bulurdu. Bu gibi cemiyet-i hayriyeler memleketimizde çok da değildir. Esaslı iki cemiyetimiz vardır ki birisi himayeyi etfaldır. (?) bu cemiyet bütün milletin yardımına muhtaçtır. Daha dün bizim huzur ve saadetimiz uğrunda can viren mübarek şehidlerimizin ruhlarını şad itmek için millete ve vatana bıraktıkları masum yavrularına yardım etmek en mühim vazife-i vataniye ve diniye olduğunu unutmayalım. Bu vazifemizi zekat ve sadaka-i fitrelerimizi yalnız onlar için virmek suretiyle kısmen ifaya çalışalım. Bu hususun şerhiyyen caiz olup olmadığında tereddüt itmeyiniz. Himayeyi etfal cemiyetinin diyanet işleri riyaseti aliyesinden almış olduğu (?) münderic cevaz kararı tereddütlerinizi derhal (?) idecektir. Binaen aleyh

President of Religious Affairs Rifat Bey was also complemented by a brief notice in the newspaper informing people of the benefits of having all of the *fitre* and *zekat* money collected by a single body that could organize long-term assistance for needy children. Interestingly, the notice underscored the idea that it was a national duty to give *fitre* and *zekat* to the Association for Protection of Children by arguing that those children who needed help from the nation were the children of the martyrs who had died during the national struggle. In this way a connection was drawn between “national” and “religious” duties in a move that would dominate the Kemalist policy of regulating the *fitre* and *zekat* worships during Ramadans in the coming years in a more strict and organized way. During the Ramadan of 1924, the Association for Protection of Children collected *fitre* and *zekat* by distributing special envelopes and then collecting them into special boxes of the association. This means of collecting *fitre* and *zekat* was announced to the public via notices in the newspaper.¹⁶¹

The second point that makes the 1924 Ramadan so significant to understanding the evolution of the Republican policy concerning Ramadans is the beginning of the discussions about the qualities of the preachers (*vaiz*) and the content of the sermons. These discussions were not critical of this tradition of having special Ramadan preachers per se, but rather raised questions about their functions or, more importantly, about what their functions should be. An article published on the first page of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* on the fourth day of Ramadan questioned whether the preachers were knowledgeable and capable enough to perform this very crucial duty, especially for the new regime:

“The sacred Ramadan has arrived. Now the preachers will disperse to the villages. The points of Islam that will help the people in terms of their religion and their world will be conveyed. I wonder if the preachers are equipped to the extent expected of them. What are the sermon books in their hands? Are the content of the books in harmony with the necessities? There exist very crucial, very big issues at hand for the nation to drive itself toward progress as soon as possible, issues which may have seemed little and unimportant. I wonder if the preacher will be able to act as a good guide and be a good spiritual teacher with regard to this issue. Were the preachers found and were the necessary orders given to them? These are very urgent, very patriotic measures”.¹⁶²

hepimiz zekat ve sadaka-i fitrelerimizi cemiyet-i mezkurenin kutularına atmayı ihmal etmeyelim.”, 19 Ramazan 1342 (23 April 1924), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

¹⁶¹See “Sadaka-i fitre ve zekat”, 21 Ramazan 1342 (25 April 1924), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3.

¹⁶²“Ramazan Vaizleri”, 4 Ramazan 1342 (7 April 1924), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1. Quoted paragraph: “Ramazan-ı şerif geldi çattı. Artık vaizler köylere yayılacak. Halka dinine,dünyasına yarayacak

The “very crucial” issues of the nation to which the author refers were of course related to the abolition of the caliphate, the establishment of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, and declaration of unity and centralism in the education system, all measures executed just one month earlier. The abolition of the caliphate in particular created a much tension both in the public sphere and within the parliament itself, and this process together with the debates concerning the Lausanne peace talks lead to the formation of an opposition party by the end of the year 1924.¹⁶³ It seems that this tension, which was potentially dangerous for the position of the Kemalist cadre, led them to come up with some measures in order to soften the atmosphere; the questions about the Ramadan sermons raised in the article quoted above were probably connected to this need on the part of the Kemalist cadre to offset the potential backlash that might be unleashed as a result of this tension. Although it was not suggested openly by the main actors of the political authority, it is important in and of itself that an article published in *Hakimiyeti Milliye* argued for the need of the regime to control the preachers and to train them so that they could “enlighten” the common people about the “necessary” measures that were taken one month before. In fact, after the abolition of the caliphate, some administrative units had already begun sending orders to the *müftü* offices under their control commanding them to add to their Ramazan sermons prayers for the future and happiness of the nation and the Republic.¹⁶⁴ This idea of using Ramadan sermons for public communication and political indoctrination by the regime and controlling those who disapproved of it would come into maturity later as secularism in Turkey became more authoritarian.

It is also very interesting that the author of the article made specific mention of the villages only, not the cities. For him, it was the sermons given in the villages that were more important, as the villages were the “store of national power”. This emphasis on the villagers and villages could be interpreted as the early reflection of the Kemalist ideology that would reach its most developed form in the 1930s. But, at the early date of 1924, the essential reason underlying this position was the simple fact that the political authority was expecting the greatest opposition to come from the villages. As discussed

mesail-i islamiyeyi anlatacak. Acaba bunlar matlub vechile mücehhez midirler. Ellerindeki vaaz kitapları nedir. Mündericat matlubeye muvafıkmıdırılar. Milletin bir an evvel kendisini terakki yolunda sevk idebilmesi için ufak ve ehhemmiyetsiz gibi görünen pek büyük pek mühim meseleler var. Acaba vaiz efendi o hususta halka eyi bir rehberlik eyi bir mürşidlik idebilecek mi. Vaizler temin idup onlara talimat-ı lazime verildimi. Bunlar pek acil pek hamiyetli tedbirlerdir”.

¹⁶³For the details of the discussions on the caliphate and the formation of the Progressive Republican Party (*Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*) see Tunçay, 1992, p. 99-109; Eric Zürcher, *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, Bağlam, İstanbul 1992.

¹⁶⁴PMRA document number: 051/2.1.30.

in the second chapter, in the Ottoman Empire Ramadan always coincided with periods of opposition and reaction. The social and political memory of the Republican authority was not only reminding them of this fact, but also guiding them to take measures against it. Therefore did Ramadan become an area of control and regulation for the Kemalist elite, who undertook stricter measures in this regard than the Ottoman administration had. The villages, “stores of the national power”, needed guidance in order to function in a way that would be beneficial to the new regime, and the Ramadan sermons appeared to be a good means by which to provide the necessary guidance.

As seen in the above analysis of the 1924 Ramadan, despite certain points which can be interpreted as the first signals of “change”, the general atmosphere still indicated more “continuity” with the Ottoman period overall, mostly due to the religious spirit formed during the War of Independence. In this sense, the year 1925 can be seen as the first threshold in the evolution of Republican Ramadans; a threshold which marks the beginning of an authoritarian attitude, both in all aspects of the Republican administration in general and in the experience of Republican Ramadans in particular.

At the beginning of 1925, the new Republic faced in the southeastern part of its territory the biggest rebellion it had encountered until that time. In a very short period of time, under the leadership of Sheikh Said, the rebels succeeded in occupying a considerably large area of land. Although the topic of an ongoing discussion, for the actors of the political authority at that time, the main characteristic of this rebellion was that it was believed to be a religious revolt targeting the new Republican regime and aiming to set up a religious order in its place.¹⁶⁵ This experience caused a discussion of the limits of the new regime and its ability to spread the Republican ideas. Considering the extent of the Sheikh Said revolt as well as its influence upon society, it is easy to understand why it would lead to a greater degree of authoritarianism in the attitude of the Kemalist elite in general, but especially with regard to religion as a part of social life. Normally, Ramadan was not an exception in this regard.

In fact, the general atmosphere of the Ramadan of 1925 as it was reflected on the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* was not a negative one. Ramadan was just as visible as it had been the previous year, with no noticeable change in the socialness aspect either.

¹⁶⁵According to Mete Tunçay, Sheikh Said revolt was reflecting the characteristics of both a religious and an ethnic revolt and the mind of the rebellions was mixed about it. However, he argues that in contrast to the official view reflecting it as a religious counter-revolution against the regime, the revolt was basically an ethnic movement, a national uprising for a Kurdish state which was covered by a religious agenda. Therefore he answers the question of why Mustafa Kemal, İsmet Pasha and some other members of the Kemalist elite interpreted and reflected it in the public as a religious uprising; because their general aim was to start a counter-regulation which would be applied everywhere in the country, not just in the Kurdish regions. For the detail of the discussion, see Tunçay, 1992, p. 129.

The first sign of continuity and positive attitude on the part of the regime was the newspaper's notice that it published on the first day of Ramadan. In the notice, entitled "The Sacred Ramadan", the newspaper announced the beginning of Ramadan, adding that Ramadan had gotten off to a problematic start this year because it was announced too late and so most of the districts did not receive word about it in time.¹⁶⁶ The newspaper also celebrated its readers' Ramadan and announced that the Council of Ministers had determined the special working hours for the duration of the Ramadan period. According to this decision, the departments would work from twelve thirty to six o'clock in the afternoon. This was parallel to the Ottoman tradition in which all the official units were open only in the afternoons. This formulation of the Republican regime to "legitimize" Ramadan's reorganization of social and public life was one of the best examples of its positive attitude towards Ramadan and its encouragement of the night life which was unique to this one month period and necessitated leaving mornings free for the Muslims. In addition, bus times were changed so that the regular system shifted to the evening and night, thereby allowing people enjoying the Ramadan activities at night to get back home more easily.

It seems that social life in Ankara during the 1925 Ramadan was also very lively. *Türk Ocağı* organized special cinema shows with late night screenings on the Ramadan nights. Moreover, the National Stage sponsored by the Association to Protect Turkish Theater was staying in Ankara for the whole Ramadan period in order to present special plays to entertain the people of Ankara.¹⁶⁷ The members of the political authority also attended these special Ramadan shows, and some of which were even announced to be under the protection of their names. This situation in which social life was organized according to the duties and traditions of Ramadan was such that *Hakimiyeti Milliye* was regularly publishing a chart showing all of the religiously important times, such as *sahur* and *iftar* as well as the *ezan* times. This practice was probably begun as a result of the centralization of religious issues under the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the new institution's policy of centralization and regulation of all religious activities in the country. As another reflection of the same policy, during the Ramadan of 1925, the Presidency of Religious Affairs started publishing the amount

^{166c}"Ramazan-ı Mübarek: Ramazan dün gece yarısı ani olarak ilan edildi. Fakat bir çok mahalleler davulları duymadıkları için ancak gündüz hatta öğleye doğru haberdar oldular. Bilhassa bağlarda oturub da şehre inmeyenlerin belkide alan haberi yoktur. Karilerimize bu mübarek ayı tebrik ederiz.", 1 Ramazan 1343 (24 March 1925), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1; "Ramazanda Mesai Saati: Ramazan münasebetiyle devairde saat yarımdan altıya kadar ifa-i vazife idilmesi dün geceki heyeti vekiliyece karargir olmuştur.", 1 Ramazan 1343 (24 March 1925), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p.1.

¹⁶⁷See "Milli sahnenin ramazan temsilleri", 6 Ramazan 1343 (29 March 1925), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

of *sadaka-ı fitr* and *zekat* based on the main products of Turkey in those years. However, as seen in the first day notice of the newspaper, it would take time for the Presidency of Religious Affairs to realize this policy of centralization completely and to take all local units under control.

On the other hand, the drastic change that the Sheikh Said rebellion caused in the general political atmosphere of Turkey was influencing Ramadan as well. The rebellion started on the 13th of February and could be repressed only in May. On the 3rd of March, the Law on the Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sükûn Kanunu*) was issued by the new government established under the leadership of İsmet Pasha. The process of enforcing this law, however, did not go unopposed and was the subject of much debate. There was a serious opposition to the severe measures of the government and to the removal of Ferit Bey (Okyar) from the prime ministry. As Ramadan began in 1925 on the 24th of March, it was just 20 days after the declaration of the Law on the Maintenance of Order and thus coincided with the period of the most heated discussions revolving around the new law. Therefore, throughout the month of Ramadan, numerous articles by people in favor of the government who were arguing for the further radicalization of the measures and supporting the new law were published.

In fact, the experience of the Sheikh Said rebellion opened up the path to ideological discussions for the first time in the new Republic and it was a turning point that would shape the future character of the regime. For the Kemalist elite, this event revealed the fact that the new Republic could not successfully impose its authority in every region of the country yet. By the same token, it was also unable to spread the basic principles of the new regime and to differentiate itself from the “old” regime of the Ottoman Empire. Members of the regime also became aware of the fact that the aforementioned principles were not clearly determined and formulated yet. In one his articles in *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, Yakub Kadri argued that the new Republic had been unable to shed itself of the bureaucratic and legal framework of the Ottoman period and that this situation had not only limit the influence of the new regime, but was also causing a continuous struggle between the new mentality and the “inferior” old one:

“It is impossible not to admit that within the present conditions, it is so difficult and -in fact sometimes- so impossible to follow a path exactly devoted to the principles of the revolution and to turn the wheels of the state machine in a way appropriate to the new necessities, new requirements, and new spirit that popular sovereignty entails. According to us, if the new administration failed to provide the results expected of and hoped for from its own power and beginning, the biggest reason for this should be sought not in the incapability

and inexperience of the new administrative actors, but in the wreckage heap which depressed and crushed us under its heaviness and density. This year, the duty of the Grand National Assembly will be first of all to abolish this wreckage and to carry out a true elimination of it in the administrative sphere”.¹⁶⁸

Similarly, Mahmud Bey also underlined the fact that the new state authority should be truly established all over the country and that it should be strengthened so as not to allow any kind of future disobedience.¹⁶⁹ According to him, such an increase in state control would also be in favor of the people. In another article of his, he states that in order to establish state control, the state should focus more on social and political measures than military ones, the latter being effective only in preventing the rebellion, but not eliminating its main causes: “The Republican government, too, will certainly perform its duty, a duty which is just as important as the suppression of the rebellion. This duty is composed of removing the elements of rebellion, the origins of reaction, the actors of confusion, and the economic and social reasons behind all of these throughout the country”.¹⁷⁰ In summary, what these articles reflecting the hegemonic state discourse of the time were arguing for was “authoritarianization” of the new regime through the silencing of all opposition and reaction without any objective evaluation.

Although the Sheikh Said rebellion occurred in the southeastern part of the country, this attitude of the regime to take measures throughout the country and in all areas of political and social life also influenced the state’s approach towards Ramadan. Preachers were controlled by the military authorities (the gendarme forces in each *vilayet*) and then they were appointed by the *müftüs* and given a document that legally authorized them to give Ramadan sermons.¹⁷¹ In addition to this strict control over the Ramadan preachers¹⁷², propaganda activities via Ramadan sermons, which had been tried after the abolition of the caliphate, were used again during the Ramadan of 1925 in

¹⁶⁸“Bu şerait dahilinde inkılap prensiplerine noktası noktasına sadık bir hat-ı hareket takib itmenin ve devlet makinesini yeni ihtiyaçlara, yeni zaruretlere, millet hakimiyetinin istilzam itdiği yeni ruha muvafık bir tarzda çevirmenin ne kadar müşkül -hatta bazı kere- ne kadar imkansız olduğunu teslim etmemek kabil değildir. Bizce yeni idare henüz kendi kudret ve vujudiyetinden ümid idilen ve beklenen semereleri viremediyse bunun en büyük sebebini yeni idare adamlarının ehliyetsizliğinden veya tecrübesizliğinden ziyade bizi siklet ve kesafet altında ezen ve bunaltan enkaz yığnında aramalıdır. Büyük millet meclisinin bu seneki vazifesi herşeyden evvel bu enkazı ortadan kaldırmak ve idare sahasında esaslı bir tasviye yapmak olacaktır.”, Yakub Kadri, “Eski esaslar ve yeni devlet”, 14 Ramazan 1343 (7 April 1925), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

¹⁶⁹“Devlet Nüfuzu”, 15 Ramazan 1343 (8 April 1925), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

¹⁷⁰“Cumhuriyet hükümeti isyanı teskin kadar mühim olan diğer vazifesini de behemehal yapacaktır. Bu vazife, memleketteki ihtilal unsurlarını, irtica mayalarını, şuriş amillerini ve bütün bunların muhit-i milliyede iktisadi ve içtimai sebeplerini izale itmekden ibarettir.”, “Yeni Islahat”, 20 Ramazan 1343 (13 April 1925), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

¹⁷¹PMRA doc.no: 051/13.114.21

¹⁷²These controls and registration processes were not only limited to Ramadan preachers. In any time, preachers, *imams*, *müftüs* were subjected to this mechanisms of the regime and these mechanisms became more strict as the regime became more authoritarian.

order to inform people about the importance of the airplane and encourage them to be members of the Airplane Association.¹⁷³ The regulation of *fitre* and *zekat* collection in order to provide support for the Association for Protection of Children continued into the Ramadan of 1925 as well, and some branches of the association required a *fetva* despite the declaration of the Presidency of Religious Affairs in 1924. For example, during the Ramadan of 1925, the Muğla branch of the Association for Protection of Children demanded that the *müftü* office of Muğla issue them a special *fetva* declaring the legitimacy of their collecting *fitre* and *zekat* which can be taken as an indication of people's resistance to or at least doubts about the appropriateness of the practice according to Islam.¹⁷⁴ In addition, the glittering bairam ceremony organized under the leadership of the president during the Ramadan of 1924 was transformed into a much simpler one in 1925. This change was announced to the readers of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* by the following notice:

“The honorable president will not perform an official reception on either the bairam and or the 23rd of April:

According to the information we have received, the honorable president will not hold an official reception either on the bairam or on the 23th of April. Only in the afternoon of the first day of the bairam will the president hold a special meeting with those persons in his personal office in the parliament building who desire to present their good wishes”.¹⁷⁵

It is interesting to note that the president, despite his reluctance to organize a special ceremony in his residence at Çankaya, chose to organize at least a simple reception in the parliament for the Ramadan bairam, while choosing not to do so for the 23rd of April, the anniversary of the establishment of the parliament. On the 24th of April, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* was full of news about 23 April celebrations from all over the country as well as its own notice to its readers in celebration of both bairams (the Ramadan bairam was on the 24th of April). According to the newspaper, the only person who organized an official celebration for the 23rd of April was the president of the parliament, Kâzım Pasha. In other words, Mustafa Kemal chose to celebrate the Ramadan bairam rather than the anniversary of the parliament, despite the fact that the country was under the direct influence of a “religious” rebellion in the east. In this respect, there appears to be continuity from the late Ottoman period in the official attitude towards Ramadan in 1925, a year which in a sense was a year of “coexistence”.

¹⁷³PMRA doc.no: 051/13.114.26

¹⁷⁴PMRA doc.no: 051/13.114.25

¹⁷⁵“Bayram merasimi”, 28 Ramazan 1343 (21 April 1925), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

On the 28th of April, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* announced that the atmosphere of the president's official bairam reception, which was performed in his office in the parliament, was simple but very sincere.¹⁷⁶ Even though it was simple, the reception was included the military band and a concert given by the presidency orchestra. An interesting point about the reception was the fact that the wife of Mustafa Kemal, Latife Hanım, organized a separate reception at Çankaya (like the Ramadan of 1924) at which she met with women only. Islamic in nature, this practice was another indication of the continuity of the positive atmosphere of 1923 and 1924 into 1925 as well. In addition, the president visited the President of Religious Affairs Rıfat Bey, in his house on the second day of the bairam to present his bairam wishes . On the third day, he authorized the major to visit the patients and pass candy out to them.¹⁷⁷

In short, for the first three years of the new Republic, Ramadan continued to include some very important characteristics of the Ottoman period Ramadan. More crucially, the general atmosphere in the country and the official attitude of the political authority were apparently less authoritarian and more positive concerning religious issues and the position of Islam in social life. Even Mustafa Kemal participated in the religious ceremonies of the Ramadan month and celebrated the Ramadan bairam in the way that an Ottoman sultan had done in the later periods of the Ottoman Empire. They encouraged the public to give *fitre* and *zekat* by developing a discourse which functioned through the simultaneous nationalization of these means of religious worship and Islamization of the national duties of the citizen. This positive, and even “insider” voice of the Kemalist elite was at such a level that on his trip to Istanbul during the Ramadan of 1924, Yakub Kadri wrote an article entitled “Letters from Istanbul” (in reference to the articles of Ahmed Rasim who was “positive” in his reflection upon Istanbul Ramadans) in which he criticized the “negative” and “alienated” atmosphere of Istanbul, an atmosphere that he claimed was not suitable to the Islamic order. With the Ramadan bairam and Christian Easter occurring at the same time, for him Istanbul was

¹⁷⁶“Bayram Merasimi

Bu sene pek sade, fakat pek samimi bir suretde icra idildi

Bayram merasimi, bu sene ve fakat çok samimi bir suretde icra idilmiştir. Bilhassa birden bire baharın ılık günlerine girmeliğimiz bayramı çok neşeli günlere kalb itmıştır. İlan idildiği üzere merasim hususi bir suretde icra idilmiş ve reis-i cumhur hazretleri saat üçten itibaren büyük millet meclisinde riyaset-i cumhur salonunda tebrikatı kabul buyurmuşlardır. Tebrikatı evvela büyük millet meclisi reisi Kazım paşa hazretleri, vekillerimiz ve mebuslarımız ifa iylemiş, ve bundan sonra vekaletler rüesa-i memurini ve halktan pek çok zevat iştirak itmıştır. Biraz sonra şehrimizde bulunan sefirler de arz-ı tebrikat iylemişlerdir. Merasim esnasında meclis bağçesinde askeri bando ve yukarı salonda riyaset-i cumhur orkestrası icra-i terennüm iylemekde idi. Cuma ertesi günü Latife Mustafa Kemal hanım hazretleri Çankaya köşkünde hanımları kabul iylemişlerdir. Büyük millet meclisi reisi Kazım paşa hazretleri de makamlarında tebrikatı kabul iylemişlerdir.”, 5 Şevval 1343 (28 April 1925), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

¹⁷⁷“Reis-i Cumhuremiz”, 6 Şevval 1343 (29 April 1925), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

a city of Easter, not Ramadan, and it lacked the “sensitivity” of Ankara :

“Since the day I came here, I have been surprised by the celebration of the two bairams at the same time, and a lot of curious and strange things like the mixture of the *ezan* with the noise of ringing bells. Inside my home, it is with a mature resignation that I am listen to the crashes of Easter and the drum of *Kadir Gecesi* together. And when I go outside in the morning and learn that all the shops along my way were closed in honor of the Sunday holiday, I do not show the stupidity of regarding my surroundings strange. I say to myself that this is Istanbul; Ankara mentality and Ankara sensitivity are either too rude or too naïve here and are considered to be something evil”.¹⁷⁸

However, the same author, who was truly hostile to Christianity and to the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Istanbul in 1924, in 1925 wrote articles arguing for the radicalization of the political administration of the new regime in order to eliminate everything belonging to the “wreckage” of the old Ottoman Empire, which, possible would have some influence on the “sensitive” attitude of Ankara concerning Ramadan and Islam. The first signs of this influence were seen in 1925 when the Ramadan bairam celebration was transformed into a simple reception in the parliament. However, this is not enough to prove a radical change in the official attitude as the president was also not celebrating the anniversary of the parliament, probably because of the sad atmosphere of the capital due to the rebellion. Instead, it can be argued that as the Ramadan of 1925 began on the 24th day of March, just twenty days after the declaration of Law of Maintenance of Order, it was not influenced yet from the authoritarian practices and policies of the regime. In order to observe the real effect of authoritarian secularism, beginning with the *Takrir-i Sükûn* in 1925, one should take the Ramadan of 1926 as the stating point of a “gradual” evolution culminating in the invisible and regulated Ramadans of the 1930s.

¹⁷⁸“Buraya geldiğim günden beri iki türlü bayramın bir anda tesid idilişi ve ezan sesleri ile çan gürültülerinin birbirine karışışı gibi zahiren acayib ve garib görünen bir çok hadiseler benim hayretime mucib oldu. Evimin içinden paskalya tırakkalarıyla kadir gecesinin davulunu birarada kemal-i tevekkülle dinliyorum. Ve sabah olub da sokağa çıktığım zaman yolumun üzerindeki dükkanların pazar şerefine kapanmış olduklarını öğrenince muhitimi yadırgamak hammallığını göstermiyorum. Burası İstanbul diyorum; Ankara mantığı, Ankara hassasiyeti burada ya çok kaba yahud çok safdır ve kötü bir şey olarak görülüyor.”, Yakub Kadri, “Kadir gecesi ve Paskalya şenlikleri”, 30 Ramazan 1342 (4 May 1924), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p.1.

Chapter IV
RAMADANS AFTER 1925: THE FORMATION OF
AUTHORITARIAN SECULARISM

Ramadans after 1925 became increasingly dominated by the shadow of the *Takrir-i Sükûn* period. In 1926, the pages of the *Hakimiyeti Milliye* were full of news about the show process of *İstiklal Mahkemeleri* (special courts that established for the express purpose of suppressing opposition groups in the country) and political discussions about topics like the Latin script and Turkish *namaz*. In addition, since the general attitude of the authors of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* -a reflection of the official discourse itself- that the state authority should be strengthened and the regime principles spread began to be put into practice after 1925, the dominant discussion was transformed into that of whether the measures taken after the *Sheikh Said* rebellion were sufficient or not. Due to severe bans and censorship, there was no room for any kind of criticism about the reforms nor any organizing in opposition to them. Religious life, too, became an area of state regulation when the tombs and *tarikats* were closed down in 1925.

Although 1925 marked a turning point in this regard, it should be noted that the regime's authoritarian tendencies subsequently began to follow a gradual evolution. In other words, the formation of authoritarian secularism started in 1925, but it did not take its final form all of a sudden in 1926. Rather, it was a gradual path, a process helped along by the changing political atmosphere as well as to the general policies of the Kemalist cadre. This path was apparent not only in the policies towards secularization, but in the policies towards nationalization as well. In 1926, for example, *Hakimiyeti Milliye's* discussions about the closing down of the tombs and other secular measures were going hand in hand with discussions about Turkish architecture, Turkish language, and Turkish culture. In this sense, the processes of secularization and formation of the nation-state progressed in relation to one another, and this close relationship between secularization and nationalization was also observable in the evolution of the Ramadans.

The most remarkable characteristic of the 1926 Ramadan with regard to its reflecting the influence of the official policy of secularism was the absence of any notice by either the political authority or the newspaper itself on the first day of the

Ramadan. On the one hand, this invisibility of the Ramadan (other than the small section of the newspaper giving the date, including the Islamic calendar) can be read as the implicit declaration on the part of the newspaper and the state that they were no more interested in this religious event. On the other hand, it marked a turning point in the sense that this invisibility of Ramadan on the first day of the month would become ordinary practice from 1926 onwards.

The visibility of Ramadan in 1926 was mostly in the form of advertisements, especially for food and clothing. Notices for the arrival of special Ramadan food or other products for the bairam shopping showed that there was a lively demand for them and that public's interest was still high in contrast to the official attitude. On the other hand, this interest was not appreciated by the newspaper, as tables showing the times of *iftar*, *sahur*, and *ezan*, which had been published in the newspaper's back page the previous year, were nonexistent in 1926.

One thing from the previous year that did continue during the Ramadan of 1926 was the articles of Ahmet Rasim under the title "Istanbul Letters". In most of his articles published during the Ramadan month, Rasim wrote about the "old" Ramadans of the Ottoman Empire but again, not in a comparative way with the Republican ones. Rather, his style and topics were mainly "apolitical", ignoring the very important secularization policies of the time. However, some of his articles were important for the problematic of this research as they focused upon the contemporary Ramadan celebrations in Istanbul and therefore present general keys to the unraveling of their evolution. In one of his articles, he gave the impression that Ramadan was still in 1926 a period of heightened socialness and entertainment for the people of Istanbul.¹⁷⁹ He explains this continuity and similarity by referring to both the "natural situation" of Ramadans in Istanbul, but with a very crucial "discontinuity" and change: Lack of dervishes and *sofu* people. The implicitly negative tone Rasim uses when writing about these religious people and institutions and his attributing their nonexistence to the "natural situation" of life in Istanbul during Ramadan can be interpreted as a reflection of Ahmet Rasim's parallelism with the Republican regime. Although he remained an Ottoman intellectual with some critical reservations about modernization, it seems that he did not oppose the Republican regime in the 1920s.

On the other hand, his emphasis on the socialness and public visibility of Istanbul Ramadans still in 1926 is a remarkable point underlining the different status of

¹⁷⁹Ahmed Rasim, "İstanbul'da havalar açdı", 13 Ramazan 1344 (26 March 1926), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

Istanbul versus Ankara in the 1920s. As the city of opposition, Istanbul had the opportunity to oppose the more “radical” atmosphere of the capital city and to protect some aspects of traditional Ottoman life, like Ramadans, whereas the atmosphere of Ankara remained strictly Republican, national, and “modern”. This distinctive situation of Ramadan in Istanbul was observable in another article as well, indicating that the Republican regime's authority to regulate and change social life in cities other than Ankara was still limited in 1926.¹⁸⁰

However, other than these articles about Ramadan in Istanbul, it is difficult to find any information related to Ramadans in cities other than Ankara. In a special section devoted to news about other cities entitled “*Memleket Mektupları*” (Letters from the Country), *Hakimiyeti Milliye* generally focused upon changes related to the infrastructure of the cities as well as other signifier of modernization, like concerts and meetings. It is interesting that during the whole Ramadan month, there was not a single word about Ramadan entertainments or related activities in any other cities in Turkey. Absence of news about Ramadan related activities should not be taken as proof of their nonexistence, but rather as an extension of the general attitude of the newspaper, which included deliberate measures to ignore Ramadan and limit its visibility in *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. The newspaper preferred to reflect the “modern” face of Republican life instead of the things that remained “unchanged”.

Similarly, the styles of the other articles and news in the newspaper also included the first “open” expressions of the policy of secularization. Such writings went beyond the attitude of “ignoring”, but underlined the idea of “regulation” as well. For example, while quoting the news of a foreign newspaper about the establishment of the Faculty of Law in Ankara, the headline that *Hakimiyeti Milliye* used was a reflection of the secularization policy of the political authority and its aim to abolish all religious codes still extant in social life: “Extension of our revolution from politics to the social area”.¹⁸¹ The article published in the foreign newspaper praised the formation of such a school as a way to Westernize the country, establish a secular law, and make social life “worldly”. Happy to receive such support and praise from Westerners, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*'s tone as it related these comments was one of approval, a tone which is obvious in the headline itself. Although the newspaper itself did not express these ideas as openly as they were expressed in the foreign press, by for example using such phrases as “making worldly”, there were other indications reflecting the newspaper's changing

¹⁸⁰Burhan Cahid, “İstanbul Mektupları”, 12 Ramazan 1344 (25 March 1926), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

¹⁸¹“İnkılabımızın siyasetten içtimai sahaya teşmili”, 16 Ramazan 1344 (29 March 1926), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p.2.

position with regard to Islam and the place of religion in social life. On the one hand, there were critical arguments about Islamic traditions, such as articles arguing that the tombs had a negative impact upon society¹⁸², while on the other hand there were articles claiming that the existing revolutionary measures were limited and demanding that such measures be extended both in scope and in effect. In his editorial entitled “*İnkılabın Hududu*” (The Limit of the Revolution), Mahmut Bey criticizes those who consider the revolution to have been sufficient in its scope and argues that the revolutionary spirit should be further propagated and spread in all areas of life: “It is only when all actions of each citizen are dominated by the law alone, the spirit of the revolution alone, and the problems of the country alone that we can conclude that the country has reached a stage of definite security”.¹⁸³

This idea of “insecurity” of the regime constantly emphasized by the political authority served to legitimize further measures in order to regulate and intervene in social life even more. As a part of the policy of silencing the opposition started in 1925, laws were passed in 1926 dictating that those who did not participate in the national struggle could be punished¹⁸⁴. Meanwhile, the *İstiklal Mahkemeleri* actively worked on prosecuting cases of organized opposition, such as the Progressive Republican Party.

Fitre and *zekat* collection for the benefit of the Association for Protection of Children continued during the Ramadan of 1926. However, while in 1926 collection of means of distributing envelopes was applied in Ankara only, according to *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, the Presidency of Religious Affairs began sending orders to the *müftü* offices that they should collect *fitre* and *zekat* in places other than Ankara as well, this time for the benefit of the Airplane Association.¹⁸⁵ In accordance with this order, *müftü* offices of the cities announced *fetva*, informing the local officers in smaller districts that this application was religiously legitimate according to the Islamic Sharia and stating that through their sermons they, too, should encourage people to give their *fitre* and *zekat* to the Airplane Association.¹⁸⁶ Once again, Ramadan sermons and their preachers were used as a means of communication, as the ability of the regime to reach rural areas by any means other than religious activities was still too limited in 1926. In addition, a local newspaper suggested that people should fast for the benefit of the Airplane

¹⁸²“Nasiret tekkesi”, 28 Ramazan 1344 (10 April 1926), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3.

¹⁸³Mahmut (Soydan), “İnkılabın hududu”, 22 Ramazan 1344 (4 April 1926), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1, quoted paragraph: “Her vatandaşın hareketinde yalnız kanun, yalnız inkılab ruhu, yalnız memleket endişeleri hakim olduğu gündür ki memleketin kat'i halas merhalesini bulduğuna hüküm idebiliriz”.

¹⁸⁴“Mücahedeye iştirak etmeyenler”, 17 Ramazan 1926 (30 March 1926), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

¹⁸⁵PMRA doc.no: 051/2.6.11

¹⁸⁶PMRA doc.no: 051/3.19.4

Association.¹⁸⁷ The newspaper named this fast “*Tayyare Orucu*” (Fast for Airplane) and offered to donate all money saved due to fasting to the association. Although there is no information on whether this idea became a suggestion of the association itself as well, it is important in that it shows how even a local newspaper was affected by the general attitude of the Kemalist authority.

At the time, the Airplane Association published a letter for the *Türk Ocağı*, addressed to the Turkish nationalists and calling them to work for the association with a “national consciousness” in order to form a nation out of “a wreckage”.¹⁸⁸ A reflection of the “nationalist” atmosphere dominant at this period, this letter written during the Ramadan can be interpreted as a demand on the part of the Airplane Association that the members of the *Türk Ocağı* direct the nationalists (who were also Muslims) to help the association during Ramadan. This same atmosphere also dominated the legal and political administration during the Ramadan of 1926, such that usage of the Turkish language was declared compulsory, especially for those people and companies working in commerce.¹⁸⁹ In the draft, the reason used to legitimize the law was that all modern countries set their own national language. According to this text, the Turkish state lacked such a policy because of the negative impacts of the past and, as a result of this, the revolutionary influence upon the area of commerce remained limited, thereby allowing foreigners to dominate this sector of the economy, which should be transformed into a national one. The matter at hand here was obviously the policy of “nationalization” of the economy, mainly in order to abolish the advantageous position that non-Muslims continued to hold in commerce. However, this nationalization policy emphasizing the usage of national language would not remain limited to the area of the economy as it would spread into the area of religion through Turkification of religious worship, as will be seen in the next section.

In 1926, the Ramadan bairam was in no way extraordinary in character when compared with the previous year's activities. Although there was no notice by the president of any official bairam celebration, he did publish a note thanking those who were outside Ankara and therefore only could send him their bairam wishes via telegraph.¹⁹⁰ It is understood from the notice that, reminiscent of the Ottoman tradition of sending the sultan bairam messages, representatives of nearly all levels of the bureaucracy, profession organizations, and civil society organizations either participated

¹⁸⁷“Tayyare Orucu”, 18 Ramazan 1344 (31 March 1926), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

¹⁸⁸“Tayyare cemiyetinin mühim bir tamimi”, 18 Ramazan 1344 (31 March 1926), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3.

¹⁸⁹“Türkçe mecburi”, 29 Ramazan 1344 (11 April 1926), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

¹⁹⁰“Reisi cumhur hazretlerinin teşekkürü”, 6 Şevval 1344 (19 April 1926), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

in the official meeting organized by the presidency or sent him telegraph messages. Similar to the meeting organized in the parliament in 1925, the official bairam celebration of the president in 1926 was probably a simple one. These simple celebrations were routine practice until the 1930s, when even they were discontinued.

One interesting point about the Ramadan bairam in 1926 was that for the first time, the bairam atmosphere of Ankara was reflected in the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. On the first day of the bairam, the newspaper not only celebrated its readers' bairam and announced that it would not be published during the bairam holiday, but it also provided information about the bairam entertainment offered by the people of Ankara and published photographs of the bairam square (*bayram yeri*).¹⁹¹ The photographs showed the people of Ankara participating in the bairam shopping and other entertainment activities especially organized for the children in an area specially organized for bairam entertainment a few days before the bairam. In addition to the bairam square, the newspaper was informed its readers that the streets of Ankara were full of crowds, too. These depictions illustrating people's interest in the bairam celebrations can be interpreted as a sign of the continuity of the main characteristics of Ramadan. Although the new Republic created its own “national” bairams, celebrations of which were strictly encouraged by the political authority, it seems that ordinary people still considered the Ramadan celebrations to be of utmost importance, and they went about their bairam activities, or at least those bairam activities which were not yet considered dangerous by the new regime in 1926. On the other hand, the newspaper also stated that most members of the bureaucracy, officials, and business men were leaving Ankara and going to Istanbul to spend their bairam holiday there.¹⁹² This shows that, despite the fairly lively bairam atmosphere of Ankara, Istanbul was still the center of the “old” style Ramadan as it was relatively free from the Republican influence that dominated Ankara in the 1920s.

It should be noted that, despite the lively character of the bairam entertainment and other activities like cinema or theatre shows specially organized for the Ramadan month in 1920s, the content and style of this “socialness” as well as “publicness” were fairly different than those seen in the traditional Ottoman Ramadans. In this sense, it is interesting to note that throughout the whole Ramadan period, there was not a single mention of *Karagöz*, *mahya* entertainments, or *ortaoyunu* in the pages of *Hakimiyeti*

¹⁹¹“Ankaranın her tarafında bayram istihzaratı devam idiyor”, 1 Şevval 1344 (14 April 1926), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

¹⁹²“Bayram münasebetiyle Ankara istasyonu”, 30 Ramazan 1344 (13 April 1926), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

Milliye. It therefore seems that in the 1920s, Ankara reflected more the atmosphere of a “Western” city than the traditional atmosphere of Ottoman *Direklerarası*. As discussed in the previous chapter, although the Ottoman Ramadans had also undergone a certain amount of change due to modernization, they still continued to include some level of religiousness which the Republican Ramadans lacked, at least in so far as can be discerned from the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. For sure, this does not mean that *teravih* or *Kadir gecesi* disappeared in the Republican era; but it does mean that they lost their public appearance due to the regulations of the new regime.

The Ramadan of 1927 offers the first examples of the new “irreligious” forms of entertainment of the Republican Ramadans. Advertisements announced special Ramadan celebrations in the form of “*Gazino ve Dansing*” (Casino and Dancing), a reflection of the Westernized atmosphere of Ramadans in the capital city of the new regime. These dancing programs and casinos, which became very popular after this time, also began at night and therefore continued the tradition of a lively night life during the Ramadan period. However, this new style of entertainment and night life also signaled a remarkable change in the way that Ramadans were experienced in the early Republican era. By the same token, it can be argued that Ramadan bairams, which were also celebrated by the political authority in the 1920s, began to be perceived not as a religious event celebrating the end of an intensely religious period, but as a period of festivities lacking any religious element. As in 1926, during the Ramadan of 1927, the people of Ankara participated activities taking place in the *bayram yeri*, shopped, or went to Istanbul for the bairam holiday. However, in its coverage of all this activity, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* chose to emphasize the “entertainment aspect” only, as if it were depicting a festival atmosphere.¹⁹³

In accordance with this transformation, mechanisms by which associations collected money for themselves during the Ramadan period were also changed. Adapting to this “Westernized” nature of Ramadan entertainment, the Airplane Association decided to organize small shows and auctions on Ramadan nights in two places: casinos and coffee houses.¹⁹⁴ In its reporting on the meeting of the administrative council of the Airplane Association, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* indicated that the council was also busy determining the names of casinos and coffee houses where they would be organizing these entertainments. The association also tried to provide for the participation of all students in Ankara in the ongoing shows of the Turkish Theater

¹⁹³“Bu sene bayram günleri yağmurlu geçti”, 3 Şevval 1345 (7 April 1927), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

¹⁹⁴“Tayyare Cemiyetinde: Heyeti idare içtimaasında ramazan münasebetiyle bazı yeni mukarrerat ittihaz edilmiştir”, 12 Ramazan 1345 (16 March 1927), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 4.

Group in *Türk Ocağı* scene, organized for the benefit of the association.

This way of collecting money for the association provided one important advantage: They could reach both ordinary people who were spending their Ramadan nights in coffee houses as well as the rich, elite people of Ankara who chose to entertain themselves in the casinos. Four days after the Airplane Association announced this decision of theirs, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* published a notice informing its readers of the first small show and auction organized by the association in a coffee house in *Samanpazarı* owned by *Habib Efendi*.¹⁹⁵ The notice praised Habib Efendi for donating all of the revenue from the entertainment as well as all the material sold in the auction that night to the association. Three days later, the newspaper included an article about a similar event organized by the Airplane Association, this time in a casino in *Cebeci*. Listing the names of the bureaucrats, traders, and businessmen who participated in the entertainment, the newspaper added that once again, all revenue was donated to the association.¹⁹⁶

On the other hand, the Association for Protection of Children was continuing to collect *fitre* and *zekat* by means of the previously established mechanisms as well as special notices regularly published in the newspaper calling for people to donate money for the poor children.¹⁹⁷ While writing about the “old” Ramadans and Republican Ramadans in Istanbul, which continued to reflect a level of socialness similar to that of the older ones, Ahmed Rasim also wrote articles encouraging the public to support the Airplane Association and the Association for Protection of Children.¹⁹⁸ It seems that the process of transformation initiated by the new Republican cadres was influencing all sectors of life, including Ramadan, and that this influence was most visible in Ankara, the “ideal” city in so far as it represented the Republican transformation. The only indication of the political authority's interest in Ramadan in 1927 was the official bairam celebrations of the president, the prime minister, and the president of the parliament, at which they met in their respective offices with the members of the bureaucracy. While continuing to celebrate its readers bairam, which had begun to be perceived as a festival, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* also continued its practice of not announcing the beginning of the Ramadan month.

By 1928, the entire month of Ramadan was dominated by discussions on

¹⁹⁵“Tayyare cemiyetinin faaliyeti”, 16 Ramazan 1345 (20 March 1927), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 4.

¹⁹⁶“Tayyare cemiyetinin faaliyeti”, 19 Ramazan 1345 (23 March 1927), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3.

¹⁹⁷“Bayramda yetim ve öksüz sevindirmek isteyenlere büyük fırsat”, 8 Ramazan 1345 (12 March 1927), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

¹⁹⁸Ahmed Rasim, “(Tayyare) bayram (himayeyi etfal) cemiyetleri”, 29 Ramazan 1345 (3 April 1927), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

nationalization of the Turkish language by means of adopting the Latin alphabet. Being one of the hottest topics of controversy among the elites since the beginning of 1900s, the alphabet reform also faced an opposition in the first years of the Republican era, which is why the regime leaders waited until 1928 to realize it. However, even after the Law on Maintenance of Order, by means of which the regime tried to erase all kinds of opposition throughout the country, in 1926 most of the intellectuals, for example, were still criticizing such the tentative language reform on the grounds that it would abolish Turkish society's cultural, intellectual, and social links with its past.¹⁹⁹ As the organ of the political authority, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* was publishing articles in favor of such a reform and arguing that it was only appropriate to the Turkish language and culture.²⁰⁰ The symbolical influence of this reform on the public visibility of Ramadan would first be seen in the Ramadan of 1929, as the reform was declared after the end of the Ramadan in 1928.

In 1928, Ramadan was still visible in the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. The newspaper started to publish a special section called “*Ramazan Fıkraları*” (Ramadan Anecdotes) each day for its readers. Besides the regular Republican Ramadan activities like concerts, theater, and cinema, a new form of Ramadan entertainment and type of socialness was adopted in 1928: balls. Organized by the Association for Protection of Children during the Ramadan month, balls reflected a very “Westernized” type of entertainment in which European artists and music groups as well as players from Istanbul participated and the guests could wear the masks sold in front of the dance hall. The association also organized a special bairam ball on the first day of the bairam, yet another example of the Westernization of the bairam entertainments and their loss of religiosity in the Republican era.²⁰¹ The same association collected money during the Ramadan by means of special concerts and the assistance of Turkish communities in various countries.²⁰² During the Ramadan of 1928, the place where bairam square would be established was declared by the *Ankara Evkaf Müdürlüğü* (Administration of Estates in Ankara).²⁰³ *Hakimiyeti Milliye* published news about how nice the bairam was in Ankara in 1928, especially for the children, and notices of the official meeting

¹⁹⁹In an interview that newspaper *Akşam* organized in 1926, only three of sixteen intellectuals told that they would agree with such a reform attempt. See *Türk Tarih Kurumunca Düzenlenen Yazı Devriminin 50. Yılı Sergisi*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara, 1979.

²⁰⁰See for example “Latin Harfleri”, 1 Ramazan 1346 (23 February 1928), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1 and “Türkçemizin millileştirilmesi”, 23 Ramazan 1346 (16 March 1928), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

²⁰¹“Bayram balosu”, 27 Ramazan 1346 (20 March 1928), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 4.

²⁰²Association published the name of the communities from countries like America and Italy, see “Himayeti etfal cemiyeti merkez-i umumiyesinden”, 28 Ramazan 1346 (21 March 1928), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 4.

²⁰³“Bayram yeri icarı”, 13 Ramazan 1346 (6 March 1928), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 5.

organized by the president, prime minister, and president of the parliament.²⁰⁴ In the announcement of the president's meeting in 1928, the name of the president of Religious Affairs is conspicuously absent, and attendees are informed that they should wear certain cloths approved by the *Teşrifat Müdüriyet-i Umumiye* (General Administration of Ceremonies).²⁰⁵

Despite these aspects of the Ramadan of 1928 which indicate the level of modernization in the Ramadan atmosphere, *Hakimiyeti Milliye's* celebration notice for bairam still called out to its readers as “coreligionists”.²⁰⁶ It also announced that for the first time it would be published during the bairam holiday, although in a smaller format with proceeds going to the Association for Protection of Children. In fact, it was a common practice in Istanbul for all newspapers to take a holiday during the bairam period, during which a special *Hilal-i Ahmer* newspaper (for the benefit of The Red Crescent) was published instead of them. This time, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* decided not to leave Ankara without a newspaper during the bairam period, and so they published abbreviated copies giving news from Ankara, Istanbul, and Europe, with proceeds going to the Association for Protection of Children.²⁰⁷

Another difference visible in the 1928 Ramadan had to do with the *fitre* and *zekat* collection. As noted before, it had been regulated in Ankara by the Association for Protection of Children since 1924. However, due to the decision of the Ankara Airplane Association in 1928, it began to be regulated by this association for the benefit of three associations: the Airplane Association, the Association for Protection of Children, and the Red Crescent.²⁰⁸ In other *vilayets*, the Presidency of Religious Affairs continued authorizing *müftü* offices to use their Ramadan sermons as a means to encourage people to give their *fitre* and *zekat* to the Airplane Association and become members of the

²⁰⁴“Bayram nasıl geçiyor”, 3 Şevval 1346 (25 March 1928), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

²⁰⁵“Reisi cumhur hazretleri” and “Bayram tebriği hakkında teşrifat müdür-i umumiyesinin tebliği”, 29 Ramazan 1346 (22 March 1928), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

²⁰⁶“Tebrik: Hakimiyeti milliye gazetesi aziz dindaşlarının bayramını hürmet ve samimiyetle tebrik eder”, 1 Şevval 1346 (23 March 1928), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

²⁰⁷“Hakimiyeti Milliye: Bayram günlerine mahsus olarak himayeyi etfal menfaatine küçük hacimde nüsha halinde intişar idecek ve bu nüsha şehir havadislerini, İstanbul havadislerini ve Avrupa telgraflarını haber verecektir. Gazetelerimizin bayram tatili yapmaları adettendir. İstanbulda bu tatil günleri bir hilal-i ahmer gazetesi çıkar ve şehri havadisiz bırakmaz. Biz de üç gün merkez-i hükümetin gazetesiz almasını tecviz itmedik ve üç gün küçük nüshalar neşr itmeye karar verdik. Bu nüshaların menfaati himayeyi etfal cemiyetine ait olacaktır. Bina'aleyh virdiğiniz beş güruşla yalnız günün harici ve dahili haberlerini öğrenmekle kalmayacaksınız, yavrularımızı himaye iden bir cemiyet-i hayriyeye yardımda itmiş olacaksınız”, 1 Şevval 1346 (23 March 1928), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

²⁰⁸“Ankara Tayyare Cemiyetinin içtimai”, 29 Şaban 1346 (21 February 1928), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2. As seen in 1926, collection of *fitre* and *zekat* by the Airplane Association already started in other vilayets through *müftü* offices but it is understood that this organization of distributing envelopes in Ankara was owned by Airplane Association in 1928. At least this is the idea that appeared while following the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye*.

association.²⁰⁹ Local administrations also sent orders to *müftü* offices demanding propaganda about the three associations and help for the officers of their local branches.²¹⁰ Meanwhile, the preachers continued to be controlled and their appropriateness for the job checked.²¹¹

It is interesting that the Red Crescent (*Hilal-i Ahmer*) was announced as one of the three main associations of the Republic and therefore got the opportunity to acquire a share of the money collected in Ankara during Ramadan after 1928.²¹² However, it should be noted that in another declaration made by the Airplane Association during the Ramadan of 1928, this was announced as if it was usual practice, not something happening for the first time.²¹³ In fact, , according to the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* at least, the Ramadan of 1928 was the first time that the Airplane Association regulated the *fitre* and *zekat* collection in Ankara. Before, only Association for Protection of Children was authorized to do so, and only for its own benefit. The Airplane Association also declared that it would be more strict in its methods of collection by listing the names of all those who take an envelope from the Council of Elders, the amount of money that each family gives, and asking for the signatures of those who donate when they return the envelope.²¹⁴ Moreover, it demanded the help of the Republican People's Party in order to increase the amount of money collected for the three associations during Ramadan.²¹⁵ The regime's use of so many means of its authority -party organization, administrative units, Presidency of Religious Affairs- to support and regulate this process in a very sensitive and organized manner shows that it took *fitre* and *zekat* collection as well as other forms of assistance during the Ramadan month seriously.

The Ramadan of 1929 held a unique place in the general attitude of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* to ignore Ramadan. The most important characteristic of the 1929 Ramadan was that it was the first Ramadan experienced with the new Latin alphabet adopted in 1928. An important example of the influence that this reform had upon how Ramadan was reflected on the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* was the newspaper's removal of the calendar showing the dates according to the Arabic months. In other words, this reform

²⁰⁹PMRA doc.no: 051/3.17.3 and 051/6.48.4.

²¹⁰PMRA doc.no: 051/13.112.19.

²¹¹PMRA doc.no: 051/2.14.12.

²¹²Again this is so for the collection of *fitre* and *zekat* in Ankara. However, there are indications that The Red Crescent sent orders to local müftü offices in 1927 for example to demand mobilization of people to help to the association in Ramadan bairam, if not for *fitre* and *zekat* collection. See PMRA doc.no: 051/14.118.11.

²¹³“Fitre ve zekat”, 14 Ramazan 1346 (7 March 1928), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

²¹⁴“Sadaka-i fitre ve zekat”, 26 Ramazan 1346, (19 March 1928), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 4.

²¹⁵PMRA doc.no: 490.01/1.1.22.

ushered in a period during which readers could no longer keep track of the beginning of the Ramadan by simply checking the calendar on the first page of the newspaper. Instead, one now had to watch for the notice of the Presidency of Religious Affairs published a few days before the beginning of Ramadan. This became so because, as indicated before, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* in 1926 adopted the policy of not announcing the beginning of the Ramadan and not publishing any celebration notice for its beginning, a practice that it had continued since. Therefore, symbolically speaking, it would not be wrong to say that the alphabet reform affected the public visibility of the Ramadan in a negative way, making it invisible on its first day as well as on its other days so long as there was not any news specifically related to it in *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. The first of the notices of the Presidency of Religious Affairs announcing the coming of Ramadan was published in 1929 on the 6th of February, five days before its beginning.²¹⁶ These notices were not even published on the first page, but rather on the third or fourth page of the newspaper in the form of an announcement so small that it could easily be overlooked.

On the other hand, a considerable increase in entertainment activities and in the number of people participating in Ankara's night life was apparent in the 1929 Ramadan. There were special concerts of Turkish music in *Kulüp* Cinema for the benefit of the Association for Protection of Children announced by the slogan, "for those who want to spend enjoyable Ramadan nights". In addition, special screenings were held at the cinemas for the Ramadan period as well. Bairam preparations in Ankara were similar to those of the previous years; bairam square was again organized for those who chose to stay in Ankara.²¹⁷ The president, the prime minister, and the president of the parliament organized official bairam meetings in their offices in the parliament.²¹⁸ Dates of the bairam and *Kadir Gecesi* as well as *namaz* time were also announced in *Hakimiyeti Milliye* in accordance with the dictates of the Presidency of Religious Affairs.²¹⁹ However, 1929 was the first year that *Hakimiyeti Milliye* failed to publish a bairam celebration notice for its readers in which it called out to them as

²¹⁶“Ramazan pazartesi günüdür: Diyanet İşleri Reisliğinden aldığımız malumata nazaran Subatın 11. pazartesi günü ramazandır”, 6 February 1929, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3.

²¹⁷“Gazi Hz. Bayra Tebrikâtını Hususî Surette Mecliste Kabul Buyurdular”, 17 March 1929, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1. One article was criticizing the poor appearance of Ankara's bairam square by comparing it with the festival areas of Western countries which can be seen as an example of perception of Ramadan bairam as a festival rather than a religious ceremony, see “Bayram yeri”, 18 March 1929, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

²¹⁸“Bayram tebrikâti”, 13 March 1929, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

²¹⁹“Bayram: Martın sekizinci cuma günü akşamı yani cumartesi gecesi Leylei Kadir, 13. çarşamba günü de bayram olduğu ve Ankarada vasatı saatle 6:35 ezanı saatle 12:36da Bayram namazı kılınacağı ilan olunur”, 7 March 1929, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3.

“coreligionists”, as it had just one year before in 1928.

The collection of *fitre* and *zekat* during the 1929 Ramadan followed the usual procedure of distributing envelopes to each district of Ankara, including even vineyards and hotels. Continuing to perform this job in 1929, as it had in 1928, the Airplane Association distributed the envelopes to the Council of Elders in each district. Each step of this process was announced in *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, showing just how systematic the regulation of *fitre* and *zekat* collection in Ankara in the hand of the three main associations of the Republic. These constant announcements also reminded citizens of their national duties.²²⁰ In addition, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* also contained separate notices of the Association for Protection of Children encouraging public support. The Presidency of Religious Affairs also continued to issue orders to the *müftü* offices that they use their Ramadan sermons to promote *fitre* and *zekat* collection for the benefit of the Airplane Association, as it had done prior to 1929 as well.²²¹

One interesting point about the 1929 Ramadan was the order of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (which was also given order by the association itself) to the *müftü* office of Orhaneli to organize Ramadan *mahya* and sermons propagating the newly established Association of National Economy and Saving (*Milli İktisat ve Tasarruf Cemiyeti*).²²² As noted above, when it came to news about life in the capital, traditional parts of Ramadan like *mahya* did not exist in the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye*; however, it is uncertain whether this was a true reflection of life in Ankara or a deliberate attempt on the part of the newspaper to make such events “invisible”. This situation can be explained to a large extent by the “Westernized” atmosphere of the regime’s “ideal” capital city over which it exercised greater political control than it did over any other

²²⁰For an example, see “Tayyare Cemiyetinde Fitre toplanması için faaliyete geçildi: Tayyare Cemiyeti tarafından fitrelerini cemiyet menfaatine verilmek için cemiyetçe zarflar dağıtıldığını daha önce yazmıştık. Gerek kaza ve mülhakata dağıtılacak zarflar ve gerek muhallât ve bağlara dağıdılacak zarfların tevziine başlanmıştır. Aldığımız malumata göre düne kadar şehrimizin kırk küsur mahallesine zarflar verilmiştir. Geçen sene olduğu gibi bu sene de zarflar mahallelere ihtihar hey'etlerinin imzaları ile verilmekte ve halkımıza da imza ile verilmektedir. İhtiyar hey'etlerimizimizin bu hususta gösterdiği alâka ve faaliyet bilhassa takdire şayandır. Halkımız, memleketimizin havalalarını koruyacak, yetim ve kimsesiz yavrularımıza bakacak, halkımızın en fena zamanlarında yardımına koşacak vesaiti tedarik için çalışan üç hayır cemiyetine muavenet etmek için toplanan bu fitreleri halkımız büyük bir hevesle cemiyete teberru etmekteydir. Bu sene geçen seneden daha fazla teberrüatta bulunulacağı şüphesizdir. Ankara bağlarda dahil olduğu halde yetmiş küsur mahalleden ibarettir. Buna nazaran şehrimizin nisfından fazlasına zarflar tevzii edilmiş demektir”, 17 February 1929, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2 and “Fitire sadakası: Tayyare Cemiyeti tarafından fitrelerin verilmesi için mahallelere dağıtılan zarflar bitmiştir. Halkımızın ve bilhassa hamiyetli ve vatanperver İhtiyar Heyetlerimizimizin bu hususta gösterdiği alâka ve faaliyet çok şayanı şükrandır. Bir çok mahallelerin İhtiyar Heyetleri geçen seneki miktardan fazla zarf almışlar ve dağıtmışlardır. Bu sene tevzi edilen miktar geçen seneden çok fazla bulunmaktadır. Cemiyet halen Otel, Han ve müessasatta bulunan halkımız için mezkûr yerlere tevzi etmektedir. Hamiyetli halkımızın fitrelerini vatan müdafası için çalışan cemiyete verecekleri şüphesizdir”, 4 March 1929, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 4.

²²¹PMRA doc.no: 051/3.17.21

²²²PMRA doc.no: 051/3.17.23

city in the country. In addition, it would not be wrong to argue that people living in Ankara, most of whom were members of the bureaucracy, were among the “modernized” segments of society favoring the new principles of the regime. However, in other places of the country, especially in rural areas, regardless of the existence of a city center or small administrative district, the authority of the regime was probably weaker and, more importantly, the people living there were still more tightly bound to the “old” traditions. Therefore, as seen in the example above, the regime did not hesitate to use “traditional” aspects of Ramadan like *mahya* as a means of public communication and political indoctrination since it lacked most of the more modern means to perform these tasks. Moreover, using these traditional practices was also safer practice for the regime in the sense that it allowed the regime to regulate religious and social life by manipulating these practices according to its own designs, rather than totally erasing them and thereby possibly provoking a backlash. However, as it will be discussed later, due to regime's radical reform attempts, social opposition during the Early Republican era was still powerful.

Documents indicate that, similar to *mahya*, the Ottoman tradition of illuminating the mosques during Ramadan and religiously important days also continued at least until the end of 1920s.²²³ However, this practice was not free from regulation and control. The Presidency of Religious Affairs only allowed illumination for a limited number of hours (most probably for economic reasons) and issued warnings to those local *müftü* offices that failed to keep mosques from exceeding these limits.²²⁴ In such cases, it was probably local administrative officials that alerted the authorities. In addition, the new regime took special care to promote the newly declared national bairams more aggressively than it did the religious ones and adopted the same traditional practices in its organization of national bairam celebrations.²²⁵ In 1928, for example, the *müftü* office in Kocaeli sent an order to all *imams* and *müezzins* working in its region that they should illuminate the minarets on the night of the Republic bairam.²²⁶

Based upon an interpretation of the contents of *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, it can be argued that in 1929, the nationalist discourse that was already a dominant part of the

²²³PMRA doc.no: 051/8.68.19

²²⁴GARASA doc.no: 051/14.118.3

²²⁵Starting with the year 1924, this attitude of the regime was also observable in an increasing fashion on the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. Needless to say, the national bairam celebrating the establishment of the Republic (Republic bairam) had more chance to appear publicly in the newspaper than the Ramadan bairam for example; and the gap between the two got bigger in 1930s where Ramadan became nearly invisible.

²²⁶PMRA doc.no: 051/8.69.15

new regime turned into a hegemonic ideology in Turkey. The new regime's agenda to purify the Turkish language, to reach the essence of Turkish culture, and to establish a national morality in the face of the negative impacts of the modernization process, found their place in its publishing organ as well. This final point -the attempt to establish a national morality- had a direct relation with Kemalist secularism in the sense that nationalization of moral codes meant devoiding them of their religious nature, which could only help to further secularization of social life. The interest in the national essence also led to an increased interest in peasant life, which began to be seen as the source of national purity, culture, and tradition. The establishment of associations like the Folklore Association was not only a result of this interest, but also a means of indoctrination to encourage public interest in Turkish peasantry. During the 1929 Ramadan, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* featured articles emphasizing the importance of folklore research and knowledge about peasants and villages.²²⁷ An ideologically more developed form of this emphasis –peasantism- would later dominate the politics of the Republican regime, especially in the 1930s.

The most remarkable characteristic of the political atmosphere of the 1929 Ramadan was the government's decision to abolish the Law on the Maintenance of Order, thereby putting an end to the *Takrir-i Sükûn* period. On the 5th of March, the first page of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* featured prime minister İsmet Pasha's speech, which included evaluations of the previous four years and points signaling the beginning of a new era.²²⁸ The main idea behind the speech was the permanent existence of opposition to the Republican regime and the necessity to establish and continue an administrative and legal system that would not allow such oppositional forces the opportunity to mobilize. He argued that during the four years of the *Takrir-i Sükûn* period, the Republican regime succeeded in establishing such a system and an understanding of "Republican citizenship"²²⁹ that aimed at homogenization of the regime's citizen profile around the core identity of being a secular Turk. While explaining the actions of the government administration over the previous four years, İsmet Pasha expressed their policy of secularism as follows:

"Removal of religion from politics and the state was also completed in the previous era. The citizen was left free in his temple to be with his belief and conscience; his pure and clean belief was freed from the complexities of this

²²⁷For example, see "Halk bilgisi" and "Köy bilgisi köy sevgisidir", 18 March 1929, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

²²⁸"Başvekil Pş. Hazretlerinin Nutku", 5 March 1929, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

²²⁹This was a general phrase frequently used by the political actors of that period. See for exp. Zeki Mesut, "Cumhuriyet Vatanşdalığı", 19 March 1929, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

world. As nobody will be able to disallow any citizen his religious belief and worship, neither will anybody be availed the opportunity to defame any law of the Grand National Assembly, or the security and honor of a citizen by using the gun of a believer. Above all, the door to any attempt at making a religious issue a means, a tool to be used in political aims was closed very tightly”.²³⁰

As these expressions show, the political authority shared the idea that a new era began with the removal of all sources of opposition to the regime and with the establishment of a strict order open to take more measures at any time against any action on the part of oppositional forces. Although the description presented by İsmet Pasha was more like a description of *laicism* than a description of secularism in that it emphasized the separation of politics and religion only, the social and political transformation that the new regime attempted did not rest at that point in terms of the place of Islam in social and public life. In the same speech, even İsmet Pasha used a very open expression in his reference to this main characteristic of the new Republic: “abolition of centuries-long traditions”. The end of the *Takrir-i Sükûn* period therefore marked the beginning of a new era under an authoritarian regime. This authoritarianization process also transformed the secularism policy of the Republic and so with the beginning of this new era, it can be argued, the formation of authoritarian secularism was complete. However, the further radical applications of this authoritarian secularism would be seen in the 1930s, especially after the religious uprising in Menemen in 1930, which doubtlessly marked a second threshold in the evolution of secularism in Turkey and in its influence on the evolution of Republican Ramadans.

^{230c}“Dinin devletten ve siyasetten uzaklaştırılması da geçen devirde tamalanmıştır. Vatandaş mabedinde kendi itikadı ve vicdanı ile serbest bırakılmış, onun arık ve temiz inanı bu dünyanın karışık işlerinden kurtarılmıştır. Hiç kimse bir vatandaşa dini inanından, ibadetinden ötürü bir engel çıkarmaya nasıl muktedir olamayacaksa, dindar silahı ile de hiç kimse Büyük Millet Meclisinin herhangi bir kanununa, bir vatandaşın emniyet ve haysiyetine dil uzatmaya imkan bulamayacaktır. Hele dini bir mevzu siyaset maksatları için tutak ve basamak yapmak kapısı sımsıkı kapatılmıştır”, from the speech of İsmet Pasha, 5 March 1929, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

Chapter V

RAMADANS IN THE 1930s: INVISIBILITY AND REGULATION

Mete Tunçay presents a periodization of the early Republican era in which he argues that from 1923 to 1931, the new Republic experienced the formation process of a one-party system.²³¹ In other words, he marks 1931 as the year when the authoritarian one-party system guided by the Kemalist elite consolidated, and interprets the period between 1931-1945 as a period relatively stronger and more compact in political terms, if not totally homogeneous and static. According to him, consolidation of the regime in 1931 was realized and “implicitly” declared by the political authority at the Republican People's Party's third congress, where the main characteristics of the regime were totally formulated and six principles constituting the official state ideology were announced.²³² The first program of the Republican People's Party underlined “science” as the essence of Turkey's progress and stressed “nationhood” rather than “religion” as the binding principle of Turkish society and identity. From then on, positivist mentality shaped Kemalist secularization and nationalism and tried to minimize the influence of Islam in the public (and sometimes also in the private) sphere.

Considering the speech of İsmet Pasha declaring the end of the *Takrir-i Sükûn* period and beginning of a new era in 1929 (referred to in the previous chapter), this periodization of Tunçay might sound contradictory. However, after public maintaining that it had abolished all opposition and succeeded in the formation of a strong, established order, the political authority suffered two unexpected blows to its self-esteem: The first was a surprising increase in the popularity of the Free Republican Party -an oppositional party established by order of Mustafa Kemal-, and the second was the religious uprising in Menemen in December of 1930.

The Free Republican Party is one of the most important topics of controversy in the literature on modern Turkish history. The reasons behind the establishment of the party have been a particularly hot point in attempts to interpret the general atmosphere of the 1930s and the essential character of the Kemalist regime. According to the official historiography as well as for those that run parallel to it, the Free Republican

²³¹Tunçay, 1992.

²³²Ibid, p. 308.

Party was in short the outcome of the Kemalists' ultimate belief in the necessity of establishing a democratic system. As they also felt comfortable concerning the security of the Republican regime, they initiated a “second” attempt at creating a more democratic, multi-party system.²³³ More critical works that question the ultimate aim of Kemalist authority to set up a democratic system, however, suggest that the regime's will to determine and control the remaining sectors of opposition, to offset the negative social effects of the 1929 economic crisis, and to represent Turkey as a Western, democratic country to the foreign public opinion were the real reasons behind the establishment of the party.²³⁴ Regardless of the reasons behind its formation, it is an unquestionable fact that the Free Republican Party became unexpectedly popular, especially amongst the lower socioeconomic segments of the society, which were especially discontented with some of the reforms instigated by the Republican regime as well as with the high level of poverty. The party meeting in Izmir turned into a protest against the government, and the party garnered a remarkably high number of votes in the local elections against the Republican People's Party, whose immutable president was Mustafa Kemal. These factors led to increased disapproval of the Free Republican Party in the eyes of the political authority, including Mustafa Kemal himself. More importantly, however, they clearly showed the existing potential of the opposition and revealed widespread discontent among the society.

The Menemen uprising was an even greater shock to the governors of the regime. In December 1930, supported in their efforts by a considerable number of people in the region, a group of six people in Menemen attempted to declare an Islamic order against the Republican administration. In his letter to Fevzi Pasha, Mustafa Kemal expressed his thoughts on this support as follows: “The approval shown by some members of the community of Menemen for the savageness displayed by the *mürteciler* (reactionary Islamists) is a source of shame for all the supporters of Republicanism and patriots”.²³⁵ This reaction of the political authority to the Menemen uprising was due to

²³³See for example Lewis, 1968 (1961); Karpas, 1967; Mahmut Golođlu, *Devrimler ve Tepkiler*, Başnur Matbaası, Ankara, 1972; Çetin Yetkin, *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası Olayı*, Karacan Yayınları, 1982; Wakter Weiker “The Free Party, 1930”, in Metin Heper and Jacob M. Landau (eds.), *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey*, I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, London, 1991; Şerafettin Turan, *Türk Devrim Tarihi 3: Yeni Türkiye'nin Oluşumu 1923-1938*, Bilgi, Ankara, 1995; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural-Shaw, *History of Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey II*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997.

²³⁴See for example İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *1929 Buhranında Türkiye'nin İktisadi Politika Arayışları*, METU Press, Ankara, 1983; Mete Tunçay, 1992; Zürcher, 1993.

²³⁵“Mürtecilerin gösterdiği vahşet karşısında Menemen'deki ahalden bazılarının alkışla tasvipkâr bulunmaları bütün cumhuriyetçi ve vatanperverler için utanılacak bir hadisedir”, 28 Kanunuevvel (December) 1930, *Vatan*, quoted in Tunçay, 1992, p. 293.

its crucial difference from the other rebellions that had occurred in Republican history, such as the Sheikh Said rebellion: It happened in a town of a Western city, materially and culturally more “developed” than those in the Eastern parts of Turkey, and which therefore should have been easily controlled by the Republican regime. Moreover, both the official investigation and the statements of those suspected of being involved in the uprising pointed to a relatively widespread Islamic organization, especially active in the coffee houses, which was mobilizing people against the new regime by criticising its secularist policies.

This event, with its violence and wide scope, had such an effect upon the political elite that it initiated a discussion similar to the one raised after the Sheikh Said rebellion. In addition to maintaining the ineffectiveness of the reforms that had been carried out thus far, some elite even criticized some of the “Westernized” practices of the new era, such as the beauty competitions, which only served to alienate the majority from the principles of the state.²³⁶ While some prefer to emphasize the socio-economic reasons behind this rebellion, it is undeniable that some “cultural” reasons directly related to the secularist policies of the regime also played an important role in motivating it.²³⁷ This reaction also had its roots in the early Republican years as the hat reform, for example, was also a source of discontent among the society; potential action resulting from this discontent, however, was suppressed by the strict attitude of the regime.²³⁸ The political authority's perception of the event also revealed its awareness of this existing discontent among the society, which was thought to have been erased during the four years of the *Takrir-i Sükûn* period. The President demanded an investigation into the political roots of the event, including the influence of Kazım Karabekir and other members of the Progressive People's Party; he argued that harsh suppression of the rebellions and all the people in the region who had been involved in them, compulsory migration of the people of Menemen, and strict control over the press were all necessary measures in the face of the oppositional uprising.²³⁹ In addition, İsmet Pasha was in favor of blaming the Free Republican Party because of their

²³⁶For the ideas of Yakup Kadri, Yunus Nadi and Ahmet Ağaoğlu see Nurşen Mazıcı, “Menemen Olayı'nın Sosyo-kültürel ve Sosyo-ekonomik Analizi”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 90, Fall 2001, p. 131- 146.

²³⁷Nurşen Mazıcı for example underlined the point that socio-economic problems after 1929 formed every part of Turkey as a potential for such an uprising which was not religious in terms of aim, but in term of means. However, such an argument seems to undermine the declarations of the accused people as well as the discontent that secularism project of the regime. In this sense, Mazıcı's argument indicating that Menemen event led more to the authoritarianization of the regime rather than radicalization of secularization seems also problematic as there is no controversy between the two. Instead, regime's coming of more authoritarian was directly resulted in the radicalization of the secularist policies. See Mazıcı, 2001.

²³⁸See Tunçay, 1992, p. 150.

²³⁹Tunçay, 1992, p. 294.

propaganda and Kazım and Fevzi Pashas suggested that Nakşibendi groups be abolished, as they subsequently were. In other words, at the beginning of 1931, the Republican regime evolved into a more authoritarian body, exercising its authority in all aspects of both social and political life, a process which also entailed further radicalization of secularism both in scope and in effect.

In terms of the evolution of Ramadan, indications of this transformation appeared before 1931, as noted in the previous section. In 1929, the effect of the alphabet reform in particular led to a considerable decrease in the public visibility of Ramadan. Moreover, some symbolical practices of the Ramadan period seen in the early 1920s, like the bairam celebration note published by the editors of *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, disappeared. However, because the end of the *Takrir-i Sükûn* period and beginning of the new era was declared during this Ramadan, the effects of this change were more observable in the Ramadan of 1930. The latter Ramadan can be seen as a turning point marking the transition to the Ramadan tradition of the 1930s, which assumed its full form in all aspects in 1931 after the consolidation of the authoritarian one-party regime.

5.1. The Invisibility of Ramadan in the 1930s.

The 1930s marked a breaking point in so far as the visibility and importance of Ramadan are concerned. News and information about Ramadan became rare in the pages of the newspaper *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. So determined was the regime to achieve its goal of making Ramadan virtually invisible that the policy of not publishing any notice about the beginning of Ramadan in the newspaper continued throughout the 1930s. As noted before, the only way for a believer to learn of the first day of Ramadan by reading *Hakimiyeti Milliye* was by means of the Presidency of Religious Affairs' notice usually published a few days before the beginning of Ramadan. In the year 1930, this notice was published on the 27th day of January as a small news item on the third page of the newspaper.²⁴⁰ On the 31st of January, the first day of Ramadan in 1930, there was neither any news about it, nor any change in the ordinary format of the newspaper. In fact, this policy of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* to consider and represent Ramadan as virtually nonexistent became routine practice throughout the 1930s.

The time table showing the times for *iftar*, *sahur*, and other important practices

²⁴⁰c. Diyanet İşleri Reisliğinden: 1348 senei Hicriyesi ramazanının iptidası önümüzdeki cuma gününden tespit edildiğine nazaran kanunusaninin 31inci cuma günü 'ramazan' olduğu ilan olunur", 27 Kanunusani (January) 1930, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3.

of the Ramadan month, which the newspaper published in the first years of the 1920s until its disappearance in 1926, was discontinued throughout the 1930s as well. Even the pages that served as a source of entertainment and information about goings on, called *Halk Sayfası*, failed to include anything related to Ramadan. Instead, throughout the month in 1930 for example, the newspaper published the texts of a number of conferences given by the main members of the Kemalist elite, such as Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, conferences which were entirely about the principles of the new Kemalist regime. Although they were not specifically organized for Ramadan, continuation of this indoctrination during this one month religious period is itself meaningful in that it illustrates the regime's negative attitude towards Ramadan.

Relatively more space was devoted, however, to the Ramadan bairam than to the fasting part of the Ramadan month. Especially, it became easier to observe the official attitude during the bairam period that even the political authority accepted it as something to be celebrated. The bairam period was the only period of Ramadan during which an official holiday was declared; however, all units of public administration, including the parliament, had remained open during the fasting period since 1924. Adjustment of working hours according to the hours of fasting, which occurred in the Ramadan of 1925, was also discontinued thereafter and such practices emphasizing Ramadan as a factor in social life ceased to exist.

In the 1930s, the most apparent characteristic of the bairam celebrations was Mustafa Kemal's absence from the general bairam atmosphere, as he no longer published an official letter of celebration to the public, nor did he participate in the official meetings organized for the exchange of bairam wishes. This attitude of Mustafa Kemal's first started in 1930 (in 1929, he organized a bairam meeting at his office in the parliament); in that and subsequent years, he kept his distance from anything remotely related to the Ramadan bairam and usually chose to be outside Ankara during the bairam celebrations. It was İsmet İnönü as the prime minister and Kâzım Özalp as the president of the parliament who organized official meetings to accept the good wishes for the bairam presented by the branches of the public administration as well as non-governmental organizations. The time and place of these official meetings were announced in *Hakimiyeti Milliye* before the bairam²⁴¹ and officials (including Fevzi Çakmak, the President of the General Staff) also authorized the *Anadolu Ajansı*

²⁴¹For such information see "Meclis Reisi ve Başvekil Paşa Hazretleri Tebrikâtı Mecliste Kabul Edeceklerdir: B.M. Meclisi Reisi Kazım Pş. Hz. Ve Başvekil İsmet Pş. Hz. Hususî bayramlaşmada bulunmak isteyen zevatı bayramın birinci günü saat 14-15 arasında B.M. Meclisindeki dairelerinde kabul buyuracaklardır.", 1 March 1930, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*.

(Anatolia News Agency) to issue statements of their gratitude to those who sent their good wishes by mail or telegraph²⁴². In this sense, it is safe to argue that there was a continuation of the tradition of sending bairam good wishes to the members of the political authority and organizing meetings for this practice, although totally different from the *muayede* tradition of the Ottoman period and lacking its large scope and official importance as a ritual. Even İsmet İnönü, Kazım Özalp, and Fevzi Çakmak did not publish any public message of bairam greetings; instead, their interest was limited to the aforementioned one hour official meetings. That said, it should be noted that from 1932 on, there were no notices regarding these bairam meetings organized by the prime minister, president of the parliament, and the president of General Staff either.

In the 1930s, compared to religious ceremonies, national holidays and bairams became considerably more visible, popular, and important. At least in the public sphere, and on the part of the political authority, the interest in the national bairams was so great that announcements as well as preparations for these bairams started even two or three months beforehand. In addition to the splendid celebrations held by the administration in the capital, local administrative units were also given directives to organize, promote, and celebrate national bairams.²⁴³ When New Year's Day coincided with Ramadan, according to the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* the former was appeared to be more popular in terms of public visibility, at least in Ankara. All members of the political authority, including Mustafa Kemal, participated in the New Year's balls organized in the capital city.

In addition to the political administration, various other actors of Ankara's political and social life also held celebrations. The only association that regularly organized meetings in celebration of the Ramadan bairam was *Türk Ocağı* until it was closed in 1931. They would inform their members about the time and place of the meetings which usually took place on the second day of the bairam. In 1930, the journals *Başlangıç* and *Havacılık ve Spor* celebrated their readers' Ramadan bairam via statements published in *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, while the latter journal also published a special edition for the bairam which featured an article by Ahmet Rasim in which he wrote of his own reminiscences of Ramadan.²⁴⁴

Hakimiyeti Milliye also failed to publish any message celebrating its readers'

²⁴²For an example see “Fevzi Paşa Hazretleri Bayram Tebrikâtına Anadolu Ajansıyla Mukabele Ediyor: Büyük Erkânı Harbiye Reisi Müşir Fevzi Pş. Hz. Muhtelif makamat ve müessesat ve zevat tarafından gönderilen bayram tebriklerine ayrı ayrı cevap vermek imkanı olmadığından kendilerine tebrikâti mahsusanın iblağına Anadolu Ajansı tasvit buyurmuşlardır.”, 6 March 1930, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*.

²⁴³PMRA 490.1/3.15.11.1

²⁴⁴See “Havacılık ve Spor Bayram Sayısı”, 6 March 1930, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 7.

Ramadan bairam in the 1930s. It only published the announcements of the Presidency of Religious Affairs informing readers of the date of *Kadir Gecesi*, the date of the bairam, and the time of the bairam *namaz*. During the Ramadan of 1930, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* announced that the newspaper *Hilal-i Ahmer* would publish during the bairam holiday, which became routine practice for that newspaper thereafter as well. The first of the two articles about the Ramadan bairam published in *Hakimiyeti Milliye* in all of the 1930s complained of the general tendency of people residing in Ankara to spend their bairam holiday in Istanbul. It was arguing for the abolition of the price discount for train tickets as it prevented many of the male residents of Ankara to bring their families from Istanbul and settle in Ankara.²⁴⁵ It is understood from the article that in 1930, the number of men living in Ankara was twice that of the number of women; most of the members of the bureaucracy and officials were still not settled in Ankara, and many were discontented with this low percentage of settlement. It seems that Istanbul, the centre of Ottoman Ramadans, was still the centre of Republican Ramadans in 1930, preferred even by the members of the Kemalist bureaucracy. The second article was of a more radical nature, with Yakup Kadri criticizing the tradition of making religious bairams official holidays because, he argued, this practice was incompatible with the principle of secularism.²⁴⁶

This attitude of the Kemalist regime which led them to make Ramadan, and especially the Islamic character thereof, invisible was intensified during the Ramadan of 1931 because of the religious uprising in Menemen. From the 1931 Ramadan onwards, it is possible to observe the radicalization of the Kemalist secularization project in general, as well as its tendency to take greater initiative in the regulation of social life. First of all, it should be noted that during the Ramadan of 1931, a generally negative atmosphere prevailed in the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, with discussions about the reasons behind the regime's vulnerability continuing every day; this state of vulnerability was usually blamed upon the general ignorance of the nation, especially in the rural areas, religiously active groups of the society, and lack of sufficient state

²⁴⁵“Bayram Yolcuları”, F.N., 2 March 1930, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1. The article is pointing the huge crowds going to Istanbul for the bairam holiday by using the phrase “emptying of Ankara”.

²⁴⁶Yakup Kadri argued that a country which declared a religious bairam as official holiday can not be a secular state. However this policy remained unchanged until today. See “Büyük Millet Meclisi bayram tatili yaptı. Fakat yıl başlarında hiç bir daire tatil etmek lüzumunu hissetmez. Şiarlarının en başında laiklik sıfatını taşıyan bir devletin resmi müessesatı dini bayramlarda tatil etmek hakkına haiz midir? Haiz olduğu takdirde Türkiye cümhuriyeti vasıflarının arasından *laikliği* çizmek icap eder. Yoksa işimiz sözümüzü tutmuyor demektir. Laikliğin dinsizlik demek olmadığını bin kere tekrar ettik. Hiç olmazsa bir kere de söylemek lazım gelir ki *laik rejimlerde* dini günler halk tarafından istenildiği gibi tesit edilmekle beraber devlet müesseselerince resmi gün sayılmazlar. Canım sayılıverse ne ehhemmiyeti olur? Hiç şüphesiz *rejimin* altı üstüne gelmez. Fakat, bu, inkılâpçının ruhunda belli başlı bir buhrana delâlet eder”, 19 February 1931, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

regulation of social life. Most intellectuals argued for a revolutionary period in this regard and some of them even argued that this period need not be a democratic one.²⁴⁷

In fact, both members of the political authority and the intellectuals were aware that the spiritual power of the revolution over the society was particularly fragile. Mustafa Kemal's leadership and charisma bound the majority of the people to the regime, but this was not considered enough after the shock caused by the Menemen uprising. This led the regime and its supporters to look for successful examples of mobilization of the masses around a political aim, which then led to an increasing interest in the totalitarian countries of the period, such as Italy and Soviet Russia. The necessity of a mental transformation in Turkish society started to be voiced by most of the elite, which signaled a further radicalization of the regime's authoritarian character.

It should be noted that this emphasis on the “mental” transformation added to the negative perception of religious and traditional institutions, practices, and values, which directly influenced the public visibility of Islam in Turkish society. Spurred on by the Menemen uprising, this negative attitude started to be voiced more openly in the public sphere and articles arguing for more strict control over religious life began to be published in *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. *Medreses*, *tarikats*, tombs, and even the mosques were pointed to as the source of counterrevolutionary opposition as well as the conservative mentality that prevented the consolidation of the regime.²⁴⁸ There was also a reaction against the existing cadre of religious men because the political elite thought that these religious men were propagating a “class” struggle, a struggle of existence against the regime.²⁴⁹ In order to overcome this threat, they argued, even the existing moral codes taking their source from religion and traditions should be transformed into a new morality in accordance with the necessities of the regime.²⁵⁰

On the other hand, although this negative attitude with respect to religion became greatly intensified after the Menemen event in particular, adding to the authoritarian character of Kemalist secularism and causing further invisibility of Islam, this is not enough to argue that the religious activities associated with Ramadan were totally erased from public life. It is impossible to determine within the scope of this research to what extent people continued to perform their religious practices despite the authoritarian secularism imposed from the top. The impression that both the articles and general atmosphere in *Hakimiyeti Milliye* and the archive documents give is that people,

²⁴⁷See for example Şevket Süreyya Bey, “İnkılâbın ideolojisi”, 23 January 1931, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 5.

²⁴⁸See for example Mahmut Bey, “Mefkûre İhtiyacı”, 15 February 1931, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

²⁴⁹See for example Zeki Bey, “Batıl İtikatlar”, 9 February 1931, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1. For another example see Falif Rıfki, “Köy Hocasının Yeri Boştur”, 27 January 1932, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

²⁵⁰See for example Zeki Bey, “Rejim Ahlâkı”, 2 February 1932, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p.1.

especially those in rural areas, remained loyal to their religious life.²⁵¹ However, religious practices were necessarily within the limits of the secularist policies of the regime and Ramadan in the Republican era was in no way comparable to that experienced during the Ottoman period, when Ramadan possessed a high degree of public visibility, was a time of numerous rituals, had the power to organize social life, and was supported and protected by the political authority. It is obvious that the positive attitude towards Islam that dominated the early 1920s, and even the tolerant attitude so prevalent in the second half of the 1920s, totally disappeared in the 1930s.²⁵²

The invisibility of Ramadan during the 1930s is true in the case of radio programs as well. It is quite remarkable that the onset of Ramadan was never cause for any change in the routine programs of the radio during this period. Nor was there anything on the radio related to the Ramadan bairams either. Rather, radio was used as another means of political indoctrination for the regime, as radio was thought to have greater influence on the public than the newspapers did.²⁵³ In 1931, when the *Türk Ocağı* decided to broadcast its regular conferences on the radio, its speakers complained about the limited means of public communication and difficulties of seriously following daily and weekly newspapers in the country. According to them, these factors led to society's ignorance of the intellectual and ideological atmosphere of the regime. They believed that their conferences could be instrumental in partially eliminating this ignorance and replacing it with the same consciousness dominating the center, Ankara.²⁵⁴

Conferences continued to be broadcast on the radio throughout the 1930s. In 1933, conferences of *Halkevleri*, which were mostly related to contemporary political

²⁵¹Even the complaints of the elite and the social opposition based on religious issues during the early Republican era can be taken as the signals of people's loyalty to Islam. However, in some articles and news in *Ulus*, there were arguments that presented Turkish society religiously less active. For example, Falih Rıfki in one of his articles in 1937 argued that it is a myth that Turkish society is religiously fanatic; rather his contact with people proved him the opposite. In another article, a writer claimed that the number of people fasting during Ramadan decreased in Turkey. See Falih Rıfki, "Taassub", 12 November 1937, *Ulus*, p. 1 and "Ramazan Keyfi", 25 November 1937, *Ulus*, p. 5. One "positive" attitude towards religion in this period can be the protection of the mosques which are historically important while new plans for urbanization were applied in the cities. See "Tarihi kıymeti olan camiilerin muhafazası için", 5 November 1937, *Ulus*, p. 8.

²⁵²Kemalist secularization process applied even very radical policies that in 1930s some mosques were used for other functions like as a military depot. See PMRA doc.no: 030.10/192.315.21, PMRA doc.no: 030.10/192.315.22. However, in 1936, the prime minister İsmat Pasha published a declaration in order to discharge those mosques who had historical value. See PMRA doc.no: 030.10/15.84.4.

²⁵³Perception of radio and radio broadcasting did not show a linear, singular path in Turkey since its establishment in 1927. According to Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, in the first years, the radio was perceived as a means of bourgeoisie entertainment and the programs were organized predominantly for this class, spending most of the program time for music. However, with the increasing influence of Soviet and fascist radio broadcasting in 1930s, this policy started to be criticized and radio began to be perceived as a means of political indoctrination and training of the masses. See Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna: TRT Öncesi Dönemde Radyonun Tarihsel Gelişimi ve Türk Siyasal Hayatı İçindeki Yeri*, Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, Ankara, 1980, p. 77-81.

²⁵⁴"Türk Ocağında: Radyo Neşriyatı Başlıyor", 2 February 1931, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

issues and some other topics like agriculture, also started to be broadcast on the radio. While there was no mention of Ramadan during the Ramadan period, much attention was devoted to the national bairams. For example, the week of national economy and saving received much attention and even a presidential speech on the issue was broadcasted on the radio.²⁵⁵ In 1935, *İnkılâp Dersleri*²⁵⁶ (Lectures on the Revolution), given mostly by Recep Peker and some other intellectuals like Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, were also broadcast on the radio. During the national bairams, all of the radio programs were reorganized accordingly in order to propagate and popularize the importance of these particular dates.²⁵⁷ In addition to the conferences that served as means of political indoctrination, there were also time slots reserved for some ministries, French lectures, and music programs, mostly of Western classical music. During the period between 1934 and 1936, broadcasting of Turkish music on the radio was banned, which included its broadcast during Ramadan as well.²⁵⁸

Articles published in *Hakimiyeti Milliye* during Ramadan did not voice any discontent over this complete denial of Ramadan in radio programs. One critical article published in *Halk Sayfası* about the content of the radio programs criticized the domination of the *alafranga* (Western, classical) music and underlined the importance of the “national” Turkish music -performed again by Western music instruments- for the strengthening of the national culture.²⁵⁹ However, these criticisms were of a nature considered safe and appropriate enough to be published in the newspaper. Even if there was no demand Ramadan related radio programs, it would be unrealistic to think that there was also no demand for the broadcast of *alaturka* (Turkish) music, especially during the prohibition period.²⁶⁰

Radio broadcasting was in fact not owned by the state in Turkey until 1936. Therefore, the state domination over the radio programs even before that year is difficult to explain. However, between 1927 and 1936, seventy percent of the radio was owned by *İş Bankası* and *Anadolu Ajansı*, two institutions which were under the control

²⁵⁵Burhan Asaf “Bir Yapının Dünü ve Bugünü”, 15 December 1933, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3.

²⁵⁶Lectures which were first given by Recep Peker, the General Secretary of the Republican People's Party and the ideolog of the one-party period, in Istanbul University Institute of History of the Revolution in 1934. See Ahmet Yıldız, “Recep Peker”, in Ahmet İnel (ed.), *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm, İletişim*, İstanbul, 2001, p. 58-63.

²⁵⁷“Cumhuriyet Bayramı dolayısıyla yapılacak neşriyat programı”, 27 October 1938, *Ulus*, p. 2.

²⁵⁸For a detailed discussion on the “music revolution”, see Kocabaşoğlu, 1980, p. 89-95.

²⁵⁹“Radyoların Islahı”, 5 February 1930, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

²⁶⁰Broadcasting of *alaturka* music in the radio programs were also very limited in the beginning of the 1930s due to the modernization process applied by the Kemalist cadre. After the official prohibition in 1934, radio owners began to listen Egyptian radio stations due to the similarity between Turkish music and Arabic music and according to Kocabaşoğlu, negative impacts of this was realized by the political authority and as a result the ban was abolished in 1936 with the order of the president. See Kocabaşoğlu, 1980, s. 94.

of an but were actually under the total control of the state. Thirty percent of the company was shared by three investors who were pro-regime and part of Atatürk's close circle. In 1934, the supervision and control of radio broadcasting was turned over to the *Matbuat Umum Müdürlüğü* (General Director of Press), which prepared a program that was to be adhered to by the radio stations. The main concern of the state in preparing this program was to propagate the activities of all administrative units and raise public awareness about certain issues.²⁶¹ Especially after 1936, when radio broadcasting came to be owned by the state, the perception of radio as a tool of the political authority strengthened and this perception started to be publicized as well. In one of the program drafts of Republican People's Party, it radio was declared one of the nation's most important instruments of cultural and political training.²⁶² Therefore, it can easily be argued that invisibility of Ramadan in the radio programs of the 1930s was a planned policy of the political authority as part of its general policy of decreasing the public visibility of religion and making a secular cultural transformation by emphasizing the modern and national components of the Turkish revolution.

5.2. Social Life during Ramadans in the 1930s

To the extent that it is reflected in *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, the social life of Ankara in the 1930s, too, appears to have been influenced by the official attitude of "ignoring" Ramadan. Generally speaking, one may argue that with the consolidation of the regime and with the acceleration of the Westernization process in the 1930s, life in Ankara started to lose its links to traditional ways of social organization, especially during periods like Ramadan in which traditional culture is usually expected to become more visible and influential. However, advertisements from the 1930s indicate that the lively night life of Ankara -dance programs, balls, dinners, etc.- in some particularly famous hotels continued in the usual format even during Ramadan. Most remarkably, there were even special lunch programs which were definitely inappropriate during Ramadan because of the fasting that was part of religious worship during that time. This practice of giving lunch in the *Lozan* and *Ankara Palas* hotels, and advertising it publicly and openly, was one of the most apparent differences between Ramadan in the Republican 1930s and the Ramadan atmosphere of Ottoman times. This signals a drastic change from an environment where it was socially unacceptable not to fast in the Ramadan, to

²⁶¹PMRA doc.no: 030.10/129.929.1

²⁶²*CHP Büyük Kurultayın Tetkine Sunulan Program Projesi*, Ulusal Matbaa, Ankara, 1939, p. 20 quoted in Kocabaşoğlu, 1980, p. 178.

another one in which fasting ceased to be a dominant factor in the organization of social life, although this was limited to the upper socio-economic strata. In the 1930s, in the ideally constructed city of the regime, the elite of Ankara formed its own environment, an environment that allowed no place for any religious activity.

However, it should be underlined that it is not easy to determine to what extent Republican Ramadans lost the “socialness” aspect of the Ottoman Ramadans discussed in the previous chapter. In other words, there is not sufficient evidence to safely argue that the majority actually lost interest in Ramadan activities. Rather, as far as the ordinary people and people of other cities are concerned, there are some indications in *Hakimiyeti Milliye* that people were still trying to participate in a social life that became more lively during Ramadan period, although within the limits set by the atmosphere which had already been distorted by the political authority. First of all, similar to the situation in the 1920s, based on the advertisements of dealers and stores, it seems safe to argue that Ramadan continued to be the month of shopping in the Republican period. The last page of the newspaper in particular was always full of advertisements informing people living in Ankara about new products (mostly food and textiles) specially brought in for Ramadan. There were also news items about the crowd on the streets of Ankara out getting ready for Ramadan before the start of the bairam. For example, on the newspaper’s special page entitled “*Resimlerimiz*” (Our Photographs), on which photographs from Ankara were regularly published²⁶³, there is a photograph of a popular main road in Ankara full of people doing their bairam shopping in 1930.²⁶⁴ A similar notice was also published during the Ramadan of 1932.²⁶⁵ These can be interpreted as indications of the popular interest in Ramadan shopping, which gives the impression that, unlike the elite, the majority of the people probably still cared about this religiously and traditionally important month in the 1930s and were trying to carry out Ramadan practices accordingly.

Another indication of a fairly lively social life unique to the Ramadan period is found in an article entitled *Kastamonu'da Ramadan* (Ramadan in Kastamonu), published in 1932 in *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. Interestingly, the author’s description of the Ramadan atmosphere in Kastamonu bares strong resemblance to the Ramadan

²⁶³Such a policy of the newspaper to publish the photographs of Ankara was related to the importance given to urbanism (*şehirçilik*) by the new Kemalist regime especially in the case of Ankara aiming to create the “ideal” modern secular city of the republic.

²⁶⁴Under each photograph, there is an explanation. See “Şeker Bayramı yaklaşıyor, Ankara çarşısında pek büyük mikyasta satış olmamakla beraber gene dükkanlar dolup boşalıyor.”, 20 February 1930, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*.

²⁶⁵“Ankara Resimleri”, 8 February 1932, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 4.

atmosphere of Ottoman times: a night life unique to month of Ramadan, the interest in *teravih*, streets and coffee houses full of crowds after *teravih* until the *namaz* time in *yatsı*, and theater and cinema shows organized specially for the Ramadan.²⁶⁶ In addition, during the Ramadan of 1934 there was a notice on the first page telling how joyful the bairam celebrations were and how crowded the celebrations and activities were in the bairam square of Ankara.²⁶⁷ It is also understood from some other news on *vilayets* that there bairam squares were established in other cities as well in the 1930s.²⁶⁸ Therefore, despite the limited number of Ramadan related news items in the newspaper, it is still safe to argue that at least in the first years of the 1930s, a lively social life during the Ramadan period was still the case in cities other than Ankara. While not true of the entire Ramadan month, a lively social life existed in Ankara, too, but only for the Ramadan bairam period. In fact, this lively socialness during Ramadan must have been a source of uneasiness for the political authority, since, for example, in 1933 they imposed some limitations upon night life in Istanbul. The mayor of Istanbul, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior Affairs, prohibited the coffee houses, theaters, and cinemas from being open after eleven o'clock at night, claiming that such a night life negatively impacts public health as well as the performance of the Republic in working life.²⁶⁹ Although no reasons related to Ramadan were put forth, it is interesting that such a decision was made at the beginning of the Ramadan month, and not at any other time.

On the other hand, the situation in Ankara during the Ramadan month was more complex, as the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* do not provide sufficient information to show that there was much of a difference in the social life of Ankara during Ramadans of the 1930s. There were of course advertisements for theater and cinema shows, but there is nothing to indicate that they were special showings in celebration of Ramadan. Two exceptions were a cinema show organized specifically for Ramadan and the plays of the *Türk Ocağı* theater in 1931. In addition, the Association for Protection of Children organized a special program called *Ankara Gecesi* during the Ramadan of

²⁶⁶“Kastamonu'da Ramazan: Ramazan Gece Hayatını Doğurdu”, 16 January 1932, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 6.

²⁶⁷“Bayramın birinci günü oldukça eğlenceli oldu”, 18 January 1934, *Ulus*, p. 1.

²⁶⁸For example, a news informs that there was a bairam square in Erzurum in 1931, see “Bayram Günlerinde”, 23 February 1931, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3.

²⁶⁹“Sinemalar ve Kahveler Onbirde Kapanacak: Türkiye Gibi Çok Çalışan ve Çok Çalışma İsteyen Bir Memleket İçin En İsbetli Karar”, 20 December 1933, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1; “Sinemalar ve Kahveler Tam 23te Kapatılmaya Başlandı”, 25 December 1933, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1; “Kahve ve Sinemaların Kapatılması”, 26 December 1933, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

1932 in which only folk music and folk dances of Ankara were represented.²⁷⁰ This event was praised for its purely “national” character and interestingly compared with the Ottoman period Ramadan programs in *Semai* coffee houses which also featured performances by folk poets.²⁷¹

However, appreciation of this program had more to do with its “national” character than its ability to conjure up memories of the Ottoman Ramadans. Parallel to the general nationalist atmosphere of the time, traditional ways of entertainment were deemed acceptable only if they were found to be appropriate to the essence of the Turkish culture that would serve as the basis of the national civilization.²⁷² In other words, even if Ramadan entertainment was able to find its place in Ankara in the 1930s, this was possible only through a nationalization process, which meant ignoring the main “religious” character of Ramadan itself. A similar characteristic can be seen in an article announcing a *Karagöz* show to take place in Ankara during the Ramadan of 1932. Describing *Karagöz* as “the joy, language, and morality hero of the Turk”, Aka Gündüz underlined how *Karagöz* was not only modernized, but also made revolutionist in the Republican period in order to remind the Turkish people of the duties they must carry out for the revolution.²⁷³

In the 1930s, all national days and bairams as well as New Year's celebrations were more popular and given more space in *Hakimiyeti Milliye* than Ramadan or any other religious bairam. There was a considerable interest in New Year activities, which created a difference in the social life of Ankara.²⁷⁴ Unlike the official silence when it came to the Ramadan bairam, a holiday of three days in celebration of New Year's celebrations was officially declared and Atatürk began to publish a celebration message in honor of the holiday. *Hilali Ahmer* organized New Year's balls in which members of the political authority participated. In 1933, there was even a special night to celebrate Christmas at the *Ankara Palas*.²⁷⁵ Among the national bairams, the Republic bairam held a special place, so that the regime was especially sensitive about the programs organized for its celebration. The news and notices about this bairam in *Hakimiyeti Milliye* usually appeared at least one month ahead of time, and each year commentary about the celebrations that year continued to be published for up to a month afterwards.

²⁷⁰Aka Gündüz, “Ankara Gecesi”, 23 January 1932, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

²⁷¹“Ankara Gecesi”, 30 January 1932, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

²⁷²For an example of this mentality see “Halk Sazı-Halk Oyunu”, 8 February 1932, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

²⁷³Aka Gündüz “Karagöz Ankara'da”, 25 December 1932, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3.

²⁷⁴“Yeni Yılın Eşiğinde”, 27 December 1933, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 4.

²⁷⁵“Ankara Palas'da Noel Gecesi”, 24 December 1933, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3.

In 1936, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* published the telegraph messages that the president and the president of Religious Affairs Rıfat Bey sent to each other in celebration of the Republic bairam²⁷⁶, which occurred just sixteen days before Ramadan, about which they would remain completely silent. In 1938, during the last Republic bairam that he would live to experience, Atatürk's celebration message to the armies was read by the prime minister, Celal Bayar.

However, especially after 1935, leaving alone any celebration messages issued by any political figures, even the *Kızılay* newspaper specially published during the Ramadan bairam period failed to include any notice about Ramadan bairam; instead, nearly the whole edition of it on the first day of the bairam was full of news on the anniversary of Atatürk's first coming to Ankara, an occasion which was described as a "bairam" in *Hakimiyeti Milliye*.²⁷⁷ This attitude was related to changes in how the Ramadan bairam began to be perceived. Such changes were reflected even in the name of the bairam, which, rather than using the Arabic word Ramadan with its Islamic connotations, began to be called *Şeker Bayramı* (Candy Bairam) in reference to an old tradition of consuming candies during bairam periods. In the same special bairam edition of the newspaper, one article argued that the Turkish Republic had been experiencing a continuous bairam since 30 August 1922, which erased all memories of "the old bairams" (i.e., Ramadan and *Kurban* bairams): "In Turkey, every bairam is now a national bairam; our essential bairam".²⁷⁸ Another article described *Şeker* bairam as the people's bairam (*Halk Bayramı*) which should be something less enthusiastic and is therefore more appropriate to resting than celebration.²⁷⁹ As illustrated by these examples, in the last half of the 1930s, even the Ramadan bairam was transformed into a holiday time during which newspapers usually published articles on the benefits of sugar and how the Republican regime's agricultural policies increased the production of it in Turkey.²⁸⁰ Purged of its religiosity, when Ramadan was visible, it was represented in a nationalized format. In this sense, it is far from coincidence that the most radical attempts of the Kemalist regime to nationalize Islam were applied during Ramadan periods.

²⁷⁶ *Ulus*, 1 November 1936, p. 1.

²⁷⁷ "Ankara büyük bayramını eşsiz gösterilerle kutladı: Halkevindeki müsamereler ve eğlenceler çok neşeli geçti. Şehir baştan başa donanmıştı", 28 December 1935, *Kızılay*, p. 1.

²⁷⁸ N. Bayar, "Eski Bayramlar Yeni Bayramlar", 28 December 1935, *Kızılay*, p. 3.

²⁷⁹ "Günün en önemli ödevi", 28 December 1935, *Kızılay*, p. 5.

²⁸⁰ See for example "Şeker İnsanı Gençleştirir", 24 November 1937, *Ulus*, p. 5.

5.3. Regulating Ramadan: The Nationalization of Islam

A detailed analysis of the process of the nationalization of Islam in the early Republican era is beyond the scope of this work. What is remarkable about this process for the specific topic of this research (leaving aside the ideological motive behind it), however, is that the regime's attempts to nationalize Islam were carried out during Ramadan. This important point has led Cündioğlu to call the project of making Turkish the language of Islamic worship in Turkey a “Ramadan Revolution”.²⁸¹ While the reason behind this choice of the political regime remains open to discussion, it seems safe to argue that this choice is an indication of the significance of Ramadans even in the eyes of the political authority as a traditionally and religiously crucial time period laden with symbolical meaning. That Ramadans were characteristically periods during which religious resistance in particular increased might also have been a factor encouraging the regime to carry out new reforms, thereby demonstrating its authority and power.

In fact, the idea of nationalizing Islam and making Turkish the language of worship (except for in *namaz*) emerged during the second constitutional era and was partially put into practice.²⁸² However, its transformation into a project in the hand of the political authority occurred in the Republican era. This transformation also took time, so that it was only after the appearance of two problematic translations of the Quran during Ramadan of 1924, for example, that the political authority finally decided to organize a legal, official translation in 1925.²⁸³ In an announcement published in *Hakimiyeti Milliye* during the Ramadan of 1924, the president of Religious Affairs stated that although translating the Quran into Turkish was a good idea, in a period of science the translation should be carried out by a special committee whose members possessed the necessary knowledge and authority.²⁸⁴ This was followed by the translation of *hutbe* into Turkish with a Turkish *hutbe* book being prepared in 1927 by the Presidency of Religious Affairs.²⁸⁵ Perceived as an important means of public communication²⁸⁶, the translation of *hutbe* gave the Republican regime another

²⁸¹Cündioğlu, 1999, p. 93.

²⁸²Ibid, p. 24.

²⁸³With the decision of the parliament in 1925, Mehmet Akif was authorized for this job, but due to his refusal, it was transferred to Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır. Düccane Cündioğlu, *Türkçe Kuran ve Cumhuriyet İdeolojisi*, Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1998, p. 20.

²⁸⁴See Rifat Bey, “Kur’ân çevirileri: Bir tercüme ve tefsir şeriat-ı lazimeye haiz bir heyet-i mahsusa tarafından yapılmak veyahud böyle bir heyetin nazar-ı tedkikinden geçmiş olmak lazımdır. En ufak şeyde bile ihtisas arandığı ilm asrında şunun bunun tarafından yazılan kur'an tercümelerinde endişeye düşenlere hak vermek lazımdır”, 24 Ramazan 1342 (28 April 1924), *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

²⁸⁵Cündioğlu, 1998, p. 48-52. In this *hutbe* book, there were interesting *hutbe* titles which can be interpreted as related to the regulation of Ramadans: help to the Airplane Association, national defense, honor of the army, protection of the orphans. Ibid, p. 53.

²⁸⁶Cündioğlu, referring to the speech of Mustafa Kemal in 1923 which is known as *Balıkesir Hutbesi*

opportunity to politically indoctrinate the people, and so the regime was careful to distribute the *hutbe* books to each *müftü* office and check the religious personnel's loyalty to the regime in the process.²⁸⁷ During the Ramadan of 1926, a *hoca* in Istanbul made another attempt at Turkish *namaz*, after which the Presidency of Religious Affairs had him removed from office.²⁸⁸ However, although this event does not seem to have been planned by the political authority, it caused a discussion in which those within the Kemalist circle criticized the decision of the President of Religious Affairs. In his article published during Ramadan of 1926, Aġaoġlu Ahmet argued that it was only normal to perform *namaz* in Turkish in a country that had experienced a national revolution.²⁸⁹ But these discussions did not result in a reversal of the decision and so the regime waited until 1932 before making another attempt to nationalize Islam, this time in a more organized way.

It is safe to argue that the coming of the next step in this regard during the Ramadan of 1932 was not a coincidence. Parallel to the periodization marking the early 1930s as the period of consolidation of the one-party regime in Turkey, it only seems logical that the political authority should attempt to carry out the project of nationalization of Islam in the 1930s, once it had more power to control and regulate. It was within this atmosphere that Dr. Reŝit Galip composed a thesis entitled "Islam: National Religion of the Turk" in which he argued for the Turkification of the language of worship: "Religion enters into a person's nationality through language. Here, religion is a national component. Therefore, religion is an inseparable part of nationality".²⁹⁰ Sharing the ideas put forth in this thesis, Mustafa Kemal himself ordered that a plan be drawn up for a project of the nationalization of worship. Before Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır had finished his translation of the Quran, a Turkish Quran had already been prepared based on Atatürk's order. However, this Quran was not translated from the original Arabic, but from a French translation.²⁹¹

The first step in realizing the project was the reading of the Turkish Quran in a mosque.²⁹² This was repeated in several mosques throughout the Ramadan month and,

(Hutbe of Balıkesir) also argues that Mustafa Kemal himself was also aware of the political power of the *hutbe* even in 1923 and had the idea to put it into Turkish. See Cündioġlu, 1998, p. 47-49.

²⁸⁷ See for example, PMRA doc.no: 051/2.7.16; 051/2.7.21; 051/3.15.24

²⁸⁸ Cündioġlu also argues that another reason of its failure was the lack of support by people and ulema, but he does not present any factual data. See Cündioġlu, 1999, p. 75-76.

²⁸⁹ Aġaoġlu Ahmet, "Türkçe harammıdır?", 28 Ramazan 1344 (11 April 1926), Hakimiyeti Milliye, p. 1.

²⁹⁰ Cündioġlu, 1998, p. 69. In his thesis, Reŝit Galip also argued that Muhammed and Ibrahim were from a Turkish origin. For him, Islam is a Turkish religion.

²⁹¹ For a detailed discussion of the process see Cündioġlu, 1998, p. 80-133.

²⁹² "Türkçe Kuran Hafız Yaŝar B. Tarafından: Riyaseticumhür orkestrası alaturka kısmı ŝefi Hafız Yaŝar B. Bu cuma günü Yerebatan camiiinde türkçe kuran okuyacaktır. Hafız Yaŝar Bey merhum Derviŝ

according to the contemporary press, people showed great interest in these activities.²⁹³ This was followed by the first Turkish *ezan* on the 30 January 1932. A special *Kadir Gecesi* celebration was organized and broadcast on the radio. For the first time ever, during the bairam *namaz* of the Ramadan of 1932, the *hutbe* and *tekbir* were also in Turkish. Therefore, the project of the nationalization of Islam which had been initiated with the discussions in 1924, was adopted with all its components in 1932, during the Ramadan month. Although widespread application of these reforms took time and could not be fully completed, the regime persistently began to take measures to control the attitude of the religious personnel and the Presidency of Religious Affairs needed to warn *müftü* offices to beware of any oppositional reactions.²⁹⁴ Due to the collaboration between the administrative units and the party organization, this control mechanism was not limited the efforts of the Presidency of Religious Affairs.²⁹⁵ Through the project of the nationalization of Islam, the Kemalist regime found another opportunity to regulate the religious activities during Ramadan, but this regulation did not stay limited to the Ramadan time either. Although the nature of the relationship between the nationalization of worship and Kemalist secularism is open to discussion, its existence is undeniable. The symbolical importance of Ramadan led to the development of a crucial policy of authoritarian secularism of the early Republican era: Secularization through nationalization. By the end of the 1930s, the nationalization of Islam turned into a general process of nationalization of the idea of religion by not referring to the “Turkish” origins of Islam so much as to the religious beliefs and life in Central Asia.²⁹⁶

Paşanın mezarı önünde türkçe bir mersiye okumuş ve bu mersiye merhumun defninde hazır bulunanlar üzerinde büyük bir tesir bırakmıştı. Bir dine mensup insanların o dinin kitabını bilmedikleri bir dilde okumalarının ne kadar mantıksız bir şey olduğunu takdir eden Hafız Yaşar B. Bu defa da türkçe kuran okumakla büyük bir yenilik göstermiş olacaktır”, 21 January 1932, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3.

²⁹³“Türkçe Kuran Okumasına Dveam Ediliyor”, 26 January 1932, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3.

²⁹⁴In 1933 Ramadan, one reaction against Turkish *ezan* occurred and then the president of Religious Affairs ordered a declaration about the issue. See Cündioğlu, 1998, p. 103-105.

²⁹⁵For example, in 1936, the president of the party organization in Maraş informed the general secretary in Ankara that as he heard some Arabic words in Turkish *selas* he warned the *müftü* of Maraş and sent orders to each mosque. See PMRA doc.no: 490.01/611.121.1

²⁹⁶In the special edition that *Ulus* published for children, there was an article entitled “Altıok Masalı” that identified the six principles of Republican People's Party with the Central Asian belief system in which sun had a central place. The article argued that these six principles of the Republican regime are reflections of the religion of Turks lived thousands of years before, and a brave man called Atatürk who is the son of sun did make their appearance above Turkey possible. See “Altıok Masalı”, *Ulus* (special edition for children), 5 October 1938, p. 2. Another article also argued that the reason of the popularity of eating candies in the Ramadan bairam despite the disinterest in fasting worship could be related to the old Turkish tradition of eating candies in the spring bairam. According to the article, this knowledge of the old Turkish tradition was transferred through a “racial memory” which is more powerful than things learned in childhood, meaning religious education. See “Bayramda Yiyeceğimiz Şeker”, 9 November 1938, *Ulus*, p. 5.

5.4. Regulating Ramadan: *Fitre* and *Zekat* Collection in the 1930s

Throughout the entire early Republican era, one of the most important means of regulating the Ramadan period was collection of *fitre* and *zekat*, a practice organized by the Airplane Association together with the Red Crescent and the Association for Protection of Children. As discussed earlier within the context of the Ramadans of the 1920s, the method of collecting *fitre* and *zekat* was determined earlier before being consolidated in the 1930s. Each year, notices were published to remind citizens of their duties and also to inform them about the distribution and collection dates of the envelopes. It should be noted that the section of the newspaper that *Hakimiyeti Milliye* devoted to the advertisement and announcements of these three associations was - together with the advertisement pages- one of the two sections in which Ramadan was visible in the 1930s. The new regime in general, and these associations in particular, were very sensitive about spending all of the money gathered for the prosperity of the nation and to further “national” aims under the guidance and organization of the state. Therefore, regular notices appeared in the newspaper, arguing that it is the primary responsibility of all citizens to help these associations, especially the Airplane Association, in order to strengthen national security, national welfare, and solidarity.

What is so remarkable in this regard is the style of this argumentation. Although predominantly nationalist in essence, one of these notices, published in 1930, was interestingly religious in nature. During the 1920s, the new secular regime did not hesitate to use these associations to mobilize people for attending some religious activities and to popularize these activities in order to make use of them for its national purposes. The Ramadan of 1930 continued this characteristic of the earlier period. The notice of the Airplane Association on the 12nd day of the Ramadan in 1930 is a good example of how the new regime continued to use religious identities, activities, and feelings to further its own cause when it felt the necessity to do so:

“From the Airplane Association, Ankara Branch: Dear Muslims! Preparing the branches of the defense of the patrie is a worship. The sacred month of Ramadan gives us a good opportunity to practice this worship. We benefit from this opportunity by giving our *fitre*, *zekat sadaka* as a free gift to the Airplane Association. Trusting in the sovereignty of religion in our great nation, our association has once again distributed the envelopes for *fitre* and *zekat* to the neighborhoods this year, as it has done in the previous years. Our association is expecting from the patriotism and devotion of our dear coreligionists' that they give their *fitre* and *zekat* by putting them in these envelopes which will be

delivered to their very houses. We are sure that it is with great pleasure that the respected people of Ankara will fulfill this religious and patriotic duty and that they will do all they can to facilitate this process as necessitated by the head men and councils of elders. Dear Muslims! Give your *fitre* and *zekat* as a gift to the Airplane Association that will prepare the nation's defense"²⁹⁷.

By calling out to the people as "Muslims" and "coreligionists"; by defining the act of giving *fitre* and *zekat* as something patriotic and a citizenship duty; by representing national defense as a form of religious worship; by pointing out and moreover praising the "sovereignty of religion" as the essential nature of the nation; and by organizing the practice of this form of religious worship through a state institution, the content of this notice undoubtedly contradicts the attitude of the Kemalist regime with regard to Islam in general and the attitude of the newspaper *Hakimiyeti Milliye* with regard to Ramadan in particular. This is an attitude that can be interpreted as a policy of the "nationalization of Islam" to further the "national" aims of the new regime and therefore has nothing in common with the secularization process aiming to make Islam invisible and powerless in the public sphere. It seems that the Kemalist regime applied these two policies parallel to each other without finding them to be contradictory, and that in time, it came to favor the second one.

Although this religious discourse was not repeated again in the 1930s and was replaced by a more nationalist discourse, promotion of these forms of worship continued unchanged. This practice allowed by the Presidency of Religious Affairs, which determined and published the value of *fitre* and *zekat* each year, to centralize its authority over the religious issues. Slight differences in practice occurred over times as a result of changes in the administrative system. For example, in 1934, the Airplane Association announced that since the Councils of Elders had been abolished, the envelopes should be given to the watchmen in each district.²⁹⁸ In addition, each of the associations continued throughout the 1930s to demand assistance in forms other than *fitre* and *zekat* as well. In 1931 for example, the Association for Protection of Children organized bairam events in order to help the poor children, and the first to participate in

²⁹⁷“Tayyare Cemiyeti Ankara Şubesinde: Aziz Müslümanlar! Vatan müdafaasının kollarını hazırlamak bir ibadettir. Mübarek ramazan ayı biz müslümanlara bu ibadetinde ifası için güzel bir fırsat veriyor. Bu fırsatı, fitre, zekat sadakalarımızı Tayyare Cemiyetine teberru etmekle ifa etmiş oluruz. Cemiyetimiz, büyük milletimizin hakimiyet-i diniyesine güvenerek diğer senelerde olduğu gibi bu sene de mahallelere fitre ve zekat zarfları dağıtmıştır. Cemiyetimiz evlere kadar getirilecek bu zarflara fitre ve zekatlarını koyarak teberru etmelerini aziz dindaşlarımızın hamiyet ve fedakarlığından beklemektedir. Muhterem Ankara halkınınbu dini ve vatani vazifeyi büyük bir istekle ifa ve muhtar ve ihtiyar heyetlerine lazım gelen kolaylığı ibraz edeceklerinden eminiz. Aziz Müslümanlar! Fitre ve zekatlarınızı vatan müdafaasını hazırlayacak olan tayyare cemiyetine hediye ediniz.”, 11 February 1930, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 3.

²⁹⁸See “Halk seve seve fitre ve zekatlarını Tayyare Cemiyetine veriyor”, 14 January 1934, *Ulus*, p. 4.

the campaign was the President of Religious Affairs.²⁹⁹ Members of the association were trying to sell bairam cards, flowers, and rosettes in order to collect money for their activities.³⁰⁰ With the further secularization of the regime, however, the associations abandoned the tradition of organizing special bairam events. The Association for Protection of Children could even demand from citizens that they cover all expenses for their celebrations and visits during religious bairams.³⁰¹ In other words, they suggested replacing bairam celebrations and visits, which were traditional practices of religious bairams, with assistance to the associations for the purpose of furthering national aims. Even the meanings of *fitre* and *zekat* started to be perceived and represented differently; instead of forms of religious worship, they became perceived as some kind of a social assistance mechanism by which citizens performed their citizenship duties. In an article published in *Kızılay* newspaper during the bairam holiday³⁰², it was argued that the new regime and the new life brought about by that regime transformed *fitre* into a social activity and, in this sense, it would be a sin to give it to a poor person as a simple *sadaka*.³⁰³ *Fitre* was no longer the *fitre* of fifteen years before. Instead, in Republican Turkey it had become a mechanism of social assistance, a way for the citizen to realize his/her duties towards national security and solidarity.

Another important point about the regulation of *fitre* and *zekat* collection is that, throughout the 1930s, the notices of the Airplane Association each year declared that the total amount of money collected was much higher in comparison to previous years.³⁰⁴ The frequent usage of the exact same sentences in this declaration makes one question its validity. In fact, the archive documents and the constant pressure on the part

²⁹⁹“Bayram geliyor: Kimsesiz Çocukları Düşününüz”, 5 February 1931, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

³⁰⁰The news about these matters were another sources to feel the existence of Ramadan in the newspaper. Usually, they were reminded in the format of short sentences at the bottom of the first page like “The first day of the bairam is the flower day of the Red Crescent”. See “Bayramın ilk günü Hilal-i Ahmer çiçek günüdür”, 24 February 1930, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

³⁰¹“Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu Genel Merkezi Şefkat Alanında Bayramlaşmayı Yurddaşlarından Diliyor: Din bayramlarında yapılan kutlama ve ziyaret masraflarını Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumuna vermenizi rica ederiz. Ricamızı kabul edenlerin adları bayramdan önce genel merkez tarafından gazetelerde neşrolunacak, bu surelle iyilik seven insanlar dostlarının kutlama ve ziyaretlerini kabul etmiş sayılacaklardır. Yurdumuzdaki yoksul yavrucuklar için çok değerli olacak bu usulün benimsenmesini ve yayılmasını diliyoruz. Ankarada bulunan genel merkez tarafından şimdiden para alınmağa başlanmıştır”, 16 December 1935, *Ulus*, p. 4.

³⁰²*Kızılay* was the Turkish name for *Hilal-i Ahmer* which was changed in 1934 due to policies of purifying the Turkish language from the words that have Arabic and Persian origin.

³⁰³“Günün en önemli ödevi”, 28 December 1935, *Kızılay*, p. 5.

³⁰⁴For an example of this discourse see “Tayyare Cemiyeti Zarfları İhtiyar Heyetlerin Verildi: Halkımız tarafından büyük bir hahiş ve zevkle Tayyare Cemiyeti menfaatine verilmekte olan fitre ve zekatlar için Ankara Şubesi tarafından dağıtılmakta olan zarfların teslimi dün bitmiştir. İhtiyar heyetleri bunları evlere dağıtacaklar ve her sene olduğu gibi bayramda zarflar içinde fitre ve zekat paraları konmuş olduğu halde ve kapalı olarak toplayacaklardır. Her sene bir evvelki seneye nazaran çok büyük bir fark gösteren ve memleketimizin en lüzumlu ve vatani bir ihtiyacını temin eden bu varidatın bu sene de diğer senelere nazaran fazla olacağına şüphe yoktur.”, 15 February 1930, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 2.

of both the administrative units and the associations indicate that, at least in the rural areas, there was still resistance to the regulation of *fitre* and *zekat* collection. There were people, and even *müftüs*, who criticized the regulation of *fitre* collection and even defied orders to hang up a special note on the door of the mosque encouraging people to give their *fitre* to the Airplane Association.³⁰⁵ Although these examples are from the Ramadans of 1929 and 1930, they are the only examples of social resistance specifically directed at the issue of *fitre* and *zekat* collection that are known. The persistence of the political authority in its efforts to ensure safe and secure collection for the Airplane Associations in the 1930s can be taken as an indication of the existence of resistance to this method, or at least an indication that people were still not very willing to give their *fitre* and *zekat* to these associations. In the 1930s, the Presidency of Religious Affairs continued to send orders to the local *müftü* offices in order to encourage collection of *fitre* and *zekat* for the benefit of the Airplane Association.³⁰⁶ The Ministry of Interior Affairs encouraged this practice.³⁰⁷ This attitude of the Ministry of Interior Affairs was even reflected in the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* in 1936, when the newspaper informed readers that the ministry had sent an order to all *vilayets* authorizing them to encourage people to give their *fitre* and *zekat* to the Airplane Association by expounding upon the benefits of doing so.³⁰⁸ Therefore, it is certain that the Republican regime's policy of regulating these forms of worship was a part of its general policy of regulating Ramadan, and that this regulation, like other policies of the early Republican period, was not free from social opposition.

5.5. Regulating Ramadan: Social Resistance and the Regime's Reaction in the 1930s

Necessarily the topic of a separate research study, the matter of social resistance in the early Republican era would be extremely difficult to cover with any semblance of thoroughness. Even if narrowed down to the social resistance during Ramadans of the 1930s and based largely on readings of *Hakimiyeti Milliye* and a limited archive search, as this thesis is, it can serve only as an introduction, a brief exploration leading to further questions to be asked. However, it nevertheless presents meaningful data that allow one to at least get a sense of the general picture in this regard.

³⁰⁵PMRA doc.no: 030.10/102.668.13; PMRA doc.no: 104.679.33

³⁰⁶PMRA doc.no: 051/12.101.11, PMRA doc.no: 051/12.101.19.

³⁰⁷PMRA doc.no: 030.10/178.233.19

³⁰⁸“Dahiliyenin bir tamimi”, 9 December 1936, *Ulus*, p. 2.

First of all, it should be noted that *Hakimiyeti Milliye* contains no news regarding any social resistance to the secularist policies of the regime, except for the big rebellions like Sheikh Said and the Menemen event, both of which would have been impossible not to cover. As indicated in the relevant sections about *fitre* and *zekat* collection, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* often represented the application of these policies as if they were easily and unquestionably accepted and internalized by the society. This was due to the simple fact that *Hakimiyeti Milliye* was the publishing organ of the political authority, which tried to silence any resistance to the regime while propagating its own policies.

In fact, as mentioned with the regard to the hat reform, at no time of its existence was the one-party period free from social opposition. Here what is meant by social resistance is simply oppositional reaction on the part of ordinary people, or lower ranking officials like *müftüs* or *imams*; social resistance at the time usually failed to take the form of an organized opposition as such organizing became extremely difficult after 1931. Official resistance was simply out of question, as all means of legal, official, and public opposition to the political authority were gradually removed since the establishment of the regime.

It can be argued that social resistance during the early Republican era increased in the periods immediately following the important radical reforms of the regime. For example, after the alphabet reform, people reacted in opposition to the usage of the new alphabet.³⁰⁹ In addition to such extraordinary periods, Ramadan continued to be a period of social resistance in the Republic, just as it had been in Ottoman times as well; the reason for this was that during Ramadan, the level of socialness increased and people started to spend more time together as a community, especially in the mosques.³¹⁰ Ramadan sermons could be employed as means of social resistance as preachers could easily influence and even mobilize the public against certain issues, like veiling, fasting, and the regime's perception of religion.³¹¹ Even in 1936, there was a *hoca* who in his sermons propagated against those who failed to fast during Ramadan.³¹²

The regime's reaction against the social opposition, which was based predominantly in the rural areas of the country where the center could exercise its

³⁰⁹See for example PMRA doc.no: 030.10/102.668.3

³¹⁰In a document sent by the Ministry of Interior Affairs to the General Secretary of the Republican People's Party and to the General Inspectors in 1930, it is also underlined that, as the experiences proved, the most popular time of reactionary resistance is the Ramadan period. See PMRA doc.no: 490.01/1.3.19

³¹¹See PMRA doc.no: 030.10/102.668.8; 030.10/102.668.9; 030.10/102.668.12; 030.10/104.679.24

³¹²See PMRA doc.no: 030.10/26.151.7

authority to only a limited degree, took the form of certain measures giving the political authority the power to suppress and regulate the local communities and to spread its own ideological concerns. However, these practical solutions were also combined with a very strong ideology that began to emerge in the second half of the 1920s before achieving full maturity in the 1930s: Peasantism. Between 1923 and 1930 this ideology, which in fact has its roots in the late Ottoman Empire, lived a relatively silent period. According to Karaömerlioğlu, the reason behind the political elite's interest in peasantism was that they tried to consolidate their power via the support of a more widespread and therefore stronger base.³¹³ While on the one hand emphasizing the "ideal" character of the village and peasant, on the other hand peasantism ironically tried to change the villages. This change was not a total one because total change would have potentially threatened the elite and city life; rather, it was a partial transformation project by which the political elite imposed a more nationalist and pro-Kemalist atmosphere. Hints of such a project can be detected to some extent in the debates about Ramadan that took place in the 1920s when political elite first awoke to the importance of the villages. Regulation of the Ramadan sermons and control over religious personnel are good examples of this. Such measures, however, remained limited in effect and could not prevent the increase in social discontent, as discussed above. That is why, with the help of the development of the peasantist ideology, the Kemalist regime adopted more organized measures in the 1930s.

It was within this context that perhaps the most remarkable step concerning Ramadan was initiated in 1931 at the general congress of the Ankara branch of the Republican People's Party. Şükrü Bey proposed before the congress several related measures which, he thought, were very relevant in terms of the propagandistic needs of the regime if it were to further its aims. In addition to the need to send newspapers and radios to the party's village branches and ensure the participation of an intellectual from the center in the village congresses each year, his proposal also included plans for Ramadan, which he explains as follows: "During each Ramadan, *hocas* that are sent to the villages should come together in the city centers of the party where they should be subject to inspirational talks based upon the party principles. I think that transforming them into means by which to spread party propaganda would be both important and beneficial".³¹⁴ Although the newspaper notice about this proposal does not make clear

³¹³Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "Türkiye'de Köycülük", in Ahmet İnel (ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm*, İletişim, İstanbul, 2001, p. 284-297.

³¹⁴"Vilayet Kongresinde: Şükrü Bey'in Takriri", 8 February 1931, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1. His whole proposition: "Halk fırkası inkılapçı bir fırkadır. Cumhuriyet'in korunması, halk tarafından

whether these measures were approved by the congress or not, just the proposal of such measures in and of itself is a crucial indication of how the Republican regime had begun to consider more authoritarian measures, especially after the Menemen uprising. The other comments on the centrality of the villages and peasants for the security of the regime and for the continuity of the revolution also show that there was a mental consensus on the necessity of taking measures that would impact village life.³¹⁵ In 1932, *Hakimiyeti Milliye* announced five days before the beginning of Ramadan that the Presidency of Religious Affairs had appointed the preachers and determined the topics of the Ramadan sermons.³¹⁶ Besides regulating the sermons, the regime maintained strictly enforced rules for the Ramadan preachers, allowing no room for disobedience.³¹⁷

Wider in scope, another measure taken by the regime in order to effect a broader influence on the public and more radical cultural change was the establishment of the *Halkevleri* (People's Houses) in 1932, after the abolition of *Türk Ocağı* and all other “independent” organizations. Totally under the control and guidance of the regime, the People's Houses were designed as a means of transformation of the existing traditional sectors of social life and defense against the potential opposition coming from the rural areas. In one of his articles published during the Ramadan of 1932, Falih Rıfki described this role of the People's Houses as the “trainers of the Turkish village” and defined the components of this training as follows: “to bind him (the people) to an organization and to keep him under the direction, guidance, and control of that organization each and every day”.³¹⁸ The People's Houses were to act as this organization, thereby replacing the village *hoca* and rendering him ineffective and his place “empty”.³¹⁹ In fact, by pointing out that the place of the *hoca*, who had been the

hazmedilmiş bir hale getirilmesi ve binnetice inkılap ve cumhuriyetin idamesi vazifelerini üzerine almıştır. Bilhassa fırkanın çekirdeğini köylü teşkil ettiği halde bunlar tamamen cehalet içindedir. Binaenaleyh köylünün tenviri, korunması, yükseltilmesi, fırkanın icraat programının esasını teşkil etmeli ve buna göre ameli tedbirler alınmalıdır kanaatındayım. Varidi hatır olan tedbirleri aşağıda arz ediyorum: 1- Fırkanın köy ocaklarına merkezden meccanen gazete gönderilmesi. 2- İmkânını bularak bu ocaklara birer radiyo ahizesi konulmalıdır. Merkezden köylünün en mübrem ihtiyaçlarına göre ve anlıyacıkları diller sıhhat, ziraat, inkılâp ve Cümhuriyet mevzularında konferanslar verilerek halka dinlettirilmeli. 3- Her sene toplanan köy ocakları kongrelerine merkezden birer münevver zat gönderilmeli ve ocak kongreleri bu zatlar tarafından idare edilmelidir. Bu suretle halkın tenviri ve fırka, inkılâp işlerini idrak eylemeleri kabil olur. 4- Her ramazanda köylere gönderilen hocalar fırkanın vilâyet merkezinde toplanarak kendilerine fırka noktai nazarına göre telkinatta bulunmalıdır. Bunların fırkanın birer propağanda uzvu haline getirilmesi mühim ve faideli olur kanaatındayım”.

³¹⁵See for example Zeki Mesut, “Batıl İtikatlar”, 9 February 1931, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

³¹⁶“Vaazların Mevzuu”, 4 January 1932, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1. The sermons were determined to be on national economy and saving, and importance of giving *fitre* and *zekat* to the Airplane Association.

³¹⁷PMRA do.no: 030.10/26.150.12

³¹⁸Falih Rıfki, “Halkevleri”, 28 January 1932, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1

³¹⁹Falih Rıfki, “Köy Hocasının Yeri Boştur”, 27 January 1932, *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, p. 1.

spiritual administrator of the village until then, was rendered “empty”, Falih Rıfki openly declared the result of the Republican secularization policies intended to erase the social role of religion as it was performed through the village *hoca*. This role was taken over by the People's Houses, which for him was the only way of protecting the revolution.

This ideological linkage between the People's Houses and peasantism was reflected in the organization itself. Each People's House had its own “peasantism branch” which was organized to deal not only with the daily practical problems of village life, but also to express the principles of the regime and revolution.³²⁰ The People's Houses organized events at which the people could come together and be mobilized around certain aims. In this regard, they tried to create an alternative means of socialness to the existing ones, such as coffee houses. This aim was also voiced during the discussions concerning peasantism, and some even argued that the coffee houses should be closed down, the reason being that they were the source of laziness in village life and therefore worked against the progress of Turkish society.³²¹ However, there was also an unvoiced fear of coffee houses as sources of opposition, especially during Ramadan, hence the measures already applied in order to control the coffee houses as well as to produce and spread counter propaganda under the collaboration of the party, the general inspectorships (*Umûmî Müfettişlikler*)³²², and the Ministry of Interior Affairs.³²³

Peasantism came to dominate the official ideology even more in the last half of the 1930s, during which it also spread into other fields like education.³²⁴ *Ulus* published special editions of the newspaper entitled “*Yurd*” for the village people, and neither the regular nor the special edition contained anything related to Ramadan. Although traditional means of communication continued to be used yet in 1932³²⁵, with the further consolidation of the power through new institutions and centralization, modern means of public communication and political control made Ramadans easier to regulate, and authoritarian secularism succeeded in establishing more effective mechanisms of

³²⁰“Halkevleri: Köycülük Şubesi”, 29 October 1938, *Ulus* (special edition for the 15th anniversary of the Republic), p. 20.

³²¹Selahattin Kandemir, “Köycülük”, 24 December 1934, *Ulus*, p. 9.

³²²For the role of the General Inspectorships in the control mechanisms of the one-party regime see Cemil Koçak, *Umûmî Müfettişlikler (1927-1952)*, İletişim, İstanbul, 2003.

³²³PMRA doc.no: 490.01/1.3.19

³²⁴One-party regime paid a considerable attention to the education of villages and especially to the education of village teachers. First by the courses for village trainers (see Falih Rıfki Atay, “Köy Terbiyecileri”, 19 November 1936, *Ulus*, p. 1; Yaşar Nabi, “Köy Öğretmenleri”, 21 November 1936, *Ulus*, p. 2) and then by a more institutionalized policy to establish the village institutes.

³²⁵In 1932, in some mosques, *mahya* was prepared special to the week of national economy and saving. See PMRA 030.10/192.315.10

cultural transformation by replacing the role of religion in social life. Ramadan, as the special period during which this role of religion was most apparently, became totally invisible in *Ulus* in 1938. Although it occurred during the Ramadan period, Atatürk's death was experienced in an entirely religious free atmosphere.

CONCLUSION

While describing the authoritarian character of the Kemalist one-party regime in the early Republican era, Binnaz Toprak makes a good summary of how this main feature of the regime influenced the secularization process and the attitude towards Islam: “The authoritarianism of the one-party period was put to use, first and foremost, to complete the cultural transformation of Turkey into a Westernized nation-state. The cornerstone of this cultural engineering was the concept of secularism and its translation into state policies. This translation centered around a strict state control of religious functionaries, sects, groups and movements. On the one hand, the religious functionaries became civil servants, and the *tarikats* were outlawed. On the other hand, the new generations of urban Turks were socialized to view Islam as a major threat to the Republic, progress and development”³²⁶. This cultural transformation -or mental secularization, as the preferred terminology used in this study- that Toprak underlines not only necessitated state control over religious sects, groups, and movements, but also tried to penetrate into social life and to transform the place of Islam as an organizing principle in that sphere as well as people's perception and ways of experiencing religious life. In this sense, the Kemalist one-party system adopted authoritarian secularism as a state ideology and applied it as a process of strict secularization. As the most important period of Islamic life in the Ottoman Empire, Ramadan serves as an ideal focal point for understanding how this process was realized in the early Republican era. In this study, an attempt was made to present the practical, daily reflections of Kemalist authoritarian secularism by analyzing the Republican Ramadans during Atatürk's period in comparison with the Ottoman experience of the same.

In the late Ottoman Empire, four basic characteristics of Ramadan distinguished this particular period from ordinary times: high level of public visibility of Ramadan - or, in general, Islam-; increased socialness in all sectors of Ottoman society; intensity of religious life; and the positive attitude of the political authority. Ramadan was central to the organization of daily life, and fasting as a form of worship was central to the

³²⁶Binnaz Toprak, “Islamist Intellectuals: Revolt against Industry and Technology”, Metin Heper, Ayşe Öncü, Heinz Kramer (eds.), *Turkey and the West: Changing Political and Cultural Identities*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1993, p. 237-257. For a detailed analysis see also Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1981.

organization of Ramadan. Through meetings, ceremonies, entertainment and official *iftars*, Ramadan was the only time when Ottoman society became so active and religious life acquired a high level of participation, variety, and influence. The state apparatus adapted itself to the Ramadan's organizing character and also took advantage of the opportunity to use it as a means to consolidate its own political power, both factually and ritually. During Ramadan, Istanbul's center shifted to *Direklerarası*, a special area where all the characteristics of the Ottoman Ramadan of the late 19th century became most apparent.

Ramadan in the Republican era, however, reflected a low level of continuity with the Ottoman era with regard to the aforementioned aspects, and even this continuity was maintained only until the beginning of the *Takrir-i Sükûn* period. Although lacking the magnificence of its Ottoman equivalents, there was still an official ceremony for the Ramadan bairam in 1924. Due to the “Islamic” atmosphere created during the War of Independence, in the very first years of the Republic, the political authority was more tolerable towards religious activities. In 1923, parliament declared a holiday during the entire Ramadan month, just like it had been in Ottoman times, and in 1925, the Republican regime adjusted working hours so that they were in accordance with the particular times important for fasting. Although a Republican institution, the President of Religious Affairs occupied a relatively important position within the state hierarchy, an indication of the regime’s relatively broad tolerance towards the place of Islam in public life.

However, in the final analysis, Ramadan in the Republican period serves predominantly as an explanatory case for the “change/discontinuity” thesis concerning the relation between the Ottoman and Republican eras. It is important to point out that the way that Ramadan was experienced and the power of Ramadan to organize social life had already started to undergo a change just after the 1908 Young Turk Revolution. As Georgeon discusses, Ramadan became more politicized in the hand of the Young Turk cadres, and they began to use some traditional components of Ramadan, like *mahya*, as a means of public communication. In addition, in this politicized atmosphere of the Young Turk regime, mosques and coffee houses began to function as places of social opposition during Ramadan. As the ideological influence of nationalism and modernization increased during the second constitutional era, it formed a transitional phase for the more authoritarian regime of the Republican period. Even Ramadan’s decline in popularity had already begun before the onset of the Republican era.

Therefore, as far as the late Ottoman period is concerned, it is safe to argue that the modern nation-state established by the Kemalist elite inherited the tradition of the modern state's trying to regulate social life, especially during such an active period as Ramadan inherited by the modern nation-state established by the Kemalist elite. To be more specific, the inspiration for some of the unique and authoritarian practices that would take place during Ramadan in the Republican period came from actions taken during the time interval between 1908 and the establishment of the Republic. However, Kemalist authoritarian secularism went far beyond anything the Young Turk modernization had imagined.

Analyzing the Republican Ramadan as a whole, the first and most apparent point that emerges is the “gradual” evolution of how Ramadan was experienced over the years. As made clear in the chronological organization and discussion in the second part of the study, Ramadan often changed in response to particular problems that the new regime faced, namely the Sheikh Said and Menemen uprisings. As the first turning point, the Law on the Maintenance of Order, issued after the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925, marked an end to the Republican regime's relatively tolerable attitude towards Islam. This led to the transformation of the existing modernizing and secular character of the Kemalist cadre into an official ideology and to the beginning of a process designed according to this ideology: the process of “authoritarian” secularization. Most of the Republican policies related to the Ramadan period, such as the regulation of the collection of *fitre* and *zekat*, had their roots in this formation period of Kemalist authoritarian secularism.

With the 1930s and the consolidation of the Kemalist one-party regime, it is possible to observe that authoritarian secularism reached maturity. Aiming not only to control the Ramadan atmosphere, but also to transform it, Kemalist secularism tried to modernize and nationalize the traditional Ramadan, but while still maintaining some of its “functional” aspects, like the *mahya*. Functional aspects of Ramadan like *mahya* were then used by the Republican regime as a means of public communication and political indoctrination since they lacked the modern means by which to carry out these actions otherwise. On the other hand, by the end of Atatürk's period, public visibility of Ramadan had decreased to such a degree that, as a result of the general policy of making Islam as invisible as possible, it had become almost nonexistent in the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. The same regime, however, continued to encourage its citizens to practice their worship in the form of giving *fitre* and *zekat*; while most certainly

religious in nature. The giving *fitre* and *zekat* would be manipulated in the hands of the regime according to its own ends. In time, even the few remaining religious aspects of Ramadan, such as the bairam ceremonies, began to change. First, Atatürk quit organizing celebratory meetings in honor of the bairam, then the announcements for the bairam celebrations issued by Prime Minister İsmet İnönü and President of the Parliament Kazım Özalp disappeared from the pages of *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, and, finally, articles arguing for the non-Islamic Turkish origins of the *Şeker bayramı* started to be published. At this point, Ramadan sermons became tools in the hands of the political authority, and the Kemalist bureaucracy, from the Presidency of Religious Affairs to the local party organizations, was mobilized in ensure the obedience of the religious men to the orders of the regime and the obedience of the masses to the strictly applied secularization policies.

It is within this context that this study poses the question: What can be derived from the case of Republican Ramadans about the conceptual framework, scope, and extent of Kemalist authoritarian secularism? Although helpful in explaining the phenomenon, an analysis of Republican Ramadans does not suffice to suggest a general and complete definition of the concept of “authoritarian secularism”. An examination of the Ramadans of the early Republican era does, however, reveal some very basic components of “authoritarian secularism”.

When the ideological and practical framework of the Kemalist one-party regime is taken into consideration, “authoritarian secularism” may be defined by emphasizing its four main pillars. First, the Kemalist secularization process aimed at diminishing the visibility of Islam. In other words, Kemalist secularism tried not only to shrink the public appearance of religion in general, but also desired to transform religion’s influence upon the organization of social life as well. These two aims of authoritarian secularism thus functioned together in an attempt to decrease the power of religion by making it “invisible” in the public sphere. The mechanisms by which the Kemalist secularizing policies tried to make Islam “invisible” during the early Republican era took various forms. More direct forms include intervention by means of legal amendments, such as the closing down of tombs (*türbe*), shrines of the saints (*zaviye*), and *tarikâts*; or the law on clothing which allowed only *imams* and *hocas* to wear religious clothes and only then while performing their religious duties. Alternatively, the mechanisms could also work more implicitly, through limiting the exposure of Islam in the mass media, as in the case of *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. This pillar of Kemalist

authoritarian secularism was directly related to the general aim of the Republican project to homogenize all aspects of public life, including the people participating in it, to effect a modern, Westernized appearance. This is the “invisibility” component of Kemalist authoritarian secularism.

Second, parallel to its general interest in the organization of social life in accordance with the regime's principles, Kemalist authoritarian secularism assumes total control over religion. In other words, it monopolizes all available means and opportunities to regulate religion and religious life, and determine the limits of people's religiosity. The most basic and significant manifestation of state regulation over religion in the Kemalist one-party era was the existence of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. Therefore, it would not be wrong to argue that the main regulative policies of Kemalist authoritarian secularization were applied via this “religious” institution, which was under the direct control of the political authority. However, the “regulation” aspect of Kemalist secularism was not limited to the establishment and activities of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. The Republican regime also used other institutions to regulate religious life, such as the monopolization of religious education in the hands of the Ministry of National Education. In addition to these institutional arrangements, the regulative character of Kemalist authoritarian secularism was so penetrative in its nature that it had two interrelated results concerning the official principle of laicism. On the one hand, this considerable penetration into the religious sphere left nearly no margin for even personal religious behavior. In other words, it tried to determine even the way that a person experiences his or her own religiosity. On the other hand, the regulation aspect of Kemalist authoritarian secularism was incompatible with the main characteristic of the principle of laicism that state affairs be kept separate from religious affairs. Therefore, instead of creating two distinct areas for politics and religion, the Kemalist regime preferred to regulate the religious sphere, despite the obvious threat of incompatibility with the principle of “laicism” that it adopted officially as a state ideology.

Thirdly, as an unavoidable result of the “regulation” aspect, Kemalist authoritarian secularism also laid claim to true Islam. This means that the regime positioned itself in such a way that it possessed the authority to determine what the correct Islamic life would be, including the forms of worship to be used and how. This pillar of Kemalist authoritarian secularism was basically built upon the criticism and denial of the Ottoman Islamic tradition. For example, in the early Republican era, the

main motive of the religious textbooks was to delegitimize and deinstitutionalize the traditional position of *ulema*, with the claim that there is no such legitimacy in the “true” Islam.³²⁷ Likewise, the Kemalist regime adopted a similar discourse when it attempted to close down the “corrupted”, “illegitimate” *tarikats* that remained from the Ottoman period. This aspect of Kemalist authoritarian secularism, that is, its “claiming true Islam”, is also visible in the last pillar, which appeared as a project of the nationalization of Islam.

In fact, this fourth pillar can be categorized under the second component, “regulation” of the religious sphere. The reason for taking it up as an independent component is that it was planned and applied as a separate project in the early Republican era. Therefore, the project of “nationalization of Islam” can justifiably be viewed as a distinctive character of Kemalist authoritarian secularism, which could be realized only in a nation-building process. In close relation with the hegemonic nationalist ideology of the period, underlying this project was the implicit idea that a “true” and “secure” Islam could only be the “national” Islam. In this sense, the policy of converting the language of worship into Turkish not only aimed to make Islam easier to understand for the people, as it was usually argued by the Kemalists, but instead, it also aimed to detach Islam from its Arabic roots. Therefore, from the perspective of the political authority, nationalized Islam would not only be unique to Turks, but would also be secularized through nationalization.

When we return to the reflections of these four components of Kemalist authoritarian secularism in the early Republican Ramadans, we find examples for the each of these pillars. As discussed in the third chapter, with the consolidation of Kemalist authoritarian secularism, Ramadan became quite “invisible” in the 1930s; there were no notices in the newspaper informing the people of its beginning, no extraordinary change in the daily life of Ankara, and no apparent official interest. Rather, through policies like determining the contents of Ramadan sermons or how and for whom *fitre* and *zekat* would be collected, the Kemalist regime tried to regulate the Ramadan atmosphere both to use it functionally for its own political aims and to keep it under control against a possible social opposition or religious revival. In order to better influence the social perception of religion, there was a constant claim that true Islam necessities working for the benefit of the national good, instead of the good of one single poor person. Thus was the regime able to maintain that giving *fitre* and *zekat* to

³²⁷Ergün Yıldırım, “Din Dersi Kitapları Deneyimi (1923-1950), in Stefanos Yerasimos (ed.), *Türkiye’de Sivil Toplum ve Milliyetçilik*, İletişim, İstanbul, 2001, p. 609-616.

the Airplane Association was “legitimate” according to the true Islam, although it was obviously contradictory to the mainstream, established Islamic belief. As a derivative of the same official attitude, it was not a coincidence that the project of the nationalization of Islam was initiated during the Ramadan period, especially after the consolidation of Kemalist authoritarian secularism at the beginning of the 1930s. When enforcing such a radical reform as making Turkish the language of worship and the *ezan*, the Kemalist regime's choice to do so during the month of Ramadan, which was symbolically important at least as a period of intensified Islam, was a result of Kemalist secularism's motive to prove its “authority” over the sphere of religion.

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