

HEARING AND REMEMBERING THE VOICES OF WOMEN  
IN THE TURKISH NATION BUILDING PROCESS:  
*KADINLAR DÜNYASI AND TÜRK KADIN YOLU*

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## ABSTRACT

### HEARING AND REMEMBERING THE VOICES OF WOMEN IN THE TURKISH NATION BUILDING PROCESS: *KADINLAR DÜNYASI* AND *TÜRK KADIN YOLU*

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This thesis examines the relationship between nationalism and gender with a particular focus on the making of Turkish nationalism and women, based on the analysis of two women's periodicals: *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu*. While the former was published in the latest stage of the Ottoman period between 1913 and 1921, coinciding with the emergence and rise of Turkish nationalism, the latter was published after the foundation of the Republic between 1925 and 1927. Accordingly, this thesis tries to understand the relationship between women/women's movement and the nationalist movement. The comparison of these two periodicals at two different stages of the making of Turkish nationalism allows to see the evolution of the relationship between the Turkish nationalist movement and women, which is characterized by a shift from an identification of women with nationalism based on the latter's promise of equality to an increasing disillusionment of women, as the nationalist movement adopted traditional gender roles for women. Thus, one could observe the gradual exclusion of many pioneering women from the public sphere and their eventual erasing from the collective memory.

**Keywords:** Turkish Nationalism, Women's Movement in Early Republican Period, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, *Türk Kadın Yolu*

## ÖZ

### TÜRK ULUS İNŞA SÜRECİNDE KADINLARIN SESİNİ DUYSK VE HATIRLAMAK: KADINLAR DÜNYASI VE TÜRK KADIN YOLU

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Özellikle inşa edilen Türk milliyetçiliğı ve kadınına odaklanan bu tez, milliyetçilik ve toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkisini iki kadın dergisinin analizinden hareketle incelemektedir: *Kadınlar Dünyası* ve *Türk Kadın Yolu*. İlki Türk milliyetçiliğinin ortaya çıkış ve yükselişine tekabül eden geç Osmanlı döneminde, 1913 ve 1921 yılları arasında yayımlanırken, diğeri Cumhuriyet’in ilanından sonra, 1925-1927 yılları arasında yayımlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda, tez kadın/kadın hareketi ve milliyetçi hareketin ilişkisini anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Türk milliyetçiliğinin iki farklı evresinde yayımlanan iki derginin karşılaştırılması, başlangıçta milliyetçiliğın eşitlik vaadiyle gelişen ancak geleneksel toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin benimsenmesi sonucu kadınların artan hayal kırıklığı ile tanımlanan milliyetçilik – kadın ilişkisinin evrimini görmeye olanak tanımaktadır. Böylece, öncü kadınların nasıl zamanla kamusal alanın dışına itildiğı ve nihayetinde toplumun kolektif hafızasından silindiğı gözlemlenebilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türk Milliyetçiliğı, Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Kadın Hareketi, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, *Türk Kadın Yolu*

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

What I knew for sure, at the very beginning, was that this research would be about nationalism. However, the rest, every principal aspect of this thesis came together in time along the way. Nationalism has great importance, as it was the shaping force of most historical events that took place in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Today nationalism preserves its existence as one of the cornerstones of most countries' constituent elements and as an effective tool of social mobilization. Therefore, even though nationalism began to be perceived as losing its attractiveness as a subject of inquiry, I believe it is a phenomenon still waiting to be understood thoroughly and analyzed in its various dimensions.

The problem that led to this research is seeing the tendency of perceiving nations as societies, which only consist of men, in the nationalism literature. This issue simply has gone unnoticed until the rise of criticisms about gender-bias in the field. Women rarely took place in the analyses. When they did, women were either depicted as subsidiary figures or appeared as the carriers of specific roles that nationalism attributed to them. In accordance with this realization, I have decided to study nationalism from a gender perspective in order to tell nationalism's story from women's angle.

In this connection, the main research question goes as follows: What is the position of women in the nationalist movements? Several other supportive questions follow this one: How women experience nation-building processes? This question specifically concerns the distinctive nature of women and men's experiences of nationalism. In which ways women establish a bond with nationalist movements? What are the roles attributed to women by nationalism? What happens after nationalists attribute these roles to women?

Last two questions are clearly interrelating and complete each other. Yet, to me, the second question is rather more important than the first one, since now there are various studies focus on the roles attributed to women by nationalism, whereas there are less discussions about what happens after, whether women embrace or refuse these roles.

There are five major claims of this research. First, nationalism often uses gender stereotypes during nation building process, especially for social mobilization purposes. Second, although nations are represented as homogenous entities, some identities are affirmed and positioned hegemonic, whereas others are oppressed and marginalized within. In other words, different forms of womanhood and manhood tend to be neglected in the preferred presence of hegemonic prototype of woman and man, which in these specific circumstances refers to ideal national woman and man.

Third, women cannot be neglected by nationalism since they represent half of the society and any negligence may cause a failure in terms of social mobilization objectives, which eventually grant women an important position through certain roles within the nationalist movements. In fact, the last two claims combined form the biggest claim of the study. Although they were commonly depicted as passive figures, women utilized nationalism for their own emancipation. Precisely, women were active figures, who had their own demands, targets and strategies from and within the nationalist movements.

### **1.1.Methodology**

The main method used in this thesis is document analysis, because documents are quite useful for understanding both the people who produced them and the historical circumstances in which those particular documents were produced. In addition to this one, secondary data analysis is also another important method used during this research. It helped overcoming certain constraints deriving from document analysis. Moreover, secondary data allows developing intellectual hinterland of the research as

it brings the richness of different perspectives and accumulation of knowledge into the study.

As this thesis tries to see the story of nationalism from women's angle and make their voices to be heard loud and clearly, two women's periodicals were analyzed in connection with the historical conditions that surround them, that is, the emerging Turkish nationalism. The first one of these periodicals is *Kadınlar Dünyası*, which began to be published in 1913 and continued until 1921, even though there were some interruptions in the process of publication. The first hundred issues of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, which originally published in Arabic alphabet, were republished in Latin alphabet with the initiative of *Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı*, and this became one of the main sources of the research. The rest of the issues, the articles within and the subjects discussed were found and assessed through secondary sources. In fact, the aim of this study to hear the voice of women in time, when Turkish nationalism was on the rise, brought me to realize a women's movement, whose existence I was unaware of. This women's movement that is discussed in great length in the following chapters actually had a great impact, so it shifted the focal point of the research towards itself more than nationalism. And, the claim that positions women as active figures, who had their own demands and strategies, was in reality shaped after this discovery.

The second women's periodical, *Türk Kadın Yolu*, which did not live as long as *Kadınlar Dünyası*, began its life in 1925 shortly after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey and continued its journey until 1927. In this particular time period, Turkish nationalism had entered a new phase, especially with the foundation of a new republic. From this point on, Turkish nationalism was not just a social movement rising from within a disintegrating Empire, but an ideology that founded a new state and busy with building a nation. Considering these developments, women's relationship with nationalism was also changing accordingly. Similar to *Kadınlar Dünyası*, the issues of *Türk Kadın Yolu* were also republished in Latin alphabet as part of *Kadın Belleği* series, which reflects the diligent work of *Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı*. Nevertheless, seven issues of this

periodical are lost. And, since *Türk Kadın Yolu* is short-lived compared to *Kadınlar Dünyası*, these seven issues mean a lot. It was especially important, because these issues were the ones published during the time when the Civil Law was adopted, and of close concern for women. For this specific circumstance, some reasonable interpretations are generated relying on different works and analyses of various researchers. Consequently, it is claimed that women experienced a dilemma, where the feeling of appreciation, gratefulness, disappointment and opposition inhabited their world simultaneously.

There were some other factors like these lost issues of the periodicals that became challenges for the research. For instance, although this is very fortunate, only the first hundred issues of *Kadınlar Dünyası* were republished in Latin alphabet. It was possible to find rest of the issues, but even if I could find them, I would unfortunately be unable to read them. At this point, Serpil Çakır's *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (2013), in which *Kadınlar Dünyası* analyzed in detail, became one of the main sources used in this thesis, and helped considerably overcoming this specific constraint. Another challenge worth mentioning is the difficulty to read the articles in *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu*. Despite the fact that Turkish language was getting simpler in accordance with the literature and linguistic trends of the time, and under the effect of rising nationalism, it was still highly influenced by Arabic and Persian languages. This was not only making hard to read and comprehend the essence of the articles, but also represents a major difficulty for a thesis to be written in English.

## **1.2.Outline of the Thesis**

The chapter follows this introduction aims to present a theoretical approach to the literature formed around the intersection of two main concepts, nationalism and gender, which lie at the root of this dissertation. One of the primary concerns of the second chapter is to give a general idea about how gender issue got involved into nationalism literature and to familiarize with the relevant studies in the field. In this regard, this chapter focuses on the studies of different researchers that work on nationalism and gender while also trying to create an understanding for the readers

through brief analysis of patriarchy, distinctive states of woman and manhood accompanied by thoughts on gender roles and stereotypes. At the end of this chapter, there is a part, linking these processes and discussions to the case of Turkish nationalism.

After this chapter, in which theoretical framework of the study laid out, comes the Chapter 3, where *Kadınlar Dünyası* is analyzed. As it is not possible to assess periodical apart from the historical conditions that surround it, initially the social construction of the Ottoman Empire and women's status within that society is examined, alongside with other developments that helped the rise of Turkish nationalism at that particular time. In addition to these, what this chapter specifically deals is to determine the demands of women, the path they followed to realize those demands and the dynamics of their relationship with newly emerging and rising nationalism. In this connection, there is an effort to understand what the cooperation, which emerged between women and nationalism within historically unique conditions, meant both for women and nationalist elite. In this chapter, the dynamics of this relationship is analyzed through some of women's most pressing demands in the late Ottoman era such as right to education and work, rearrangement of family life, the institution of marriage, and dress code, also increasing the consumption of locally produced goods.

The fourth chapter examines *Türk Kadın Yolu*. Similar to the previous chapter, first historical background is analyzed. This chapter discusses how the transition from Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey affected the nationalism and women's movement, and consequently how and in which direction the alleged cooperation between these two social movements changed. But distinctively from the third chapter, in which the analysis of *Kadınlar Dünyası* is built on the demands of women, this chapter's dominating theme is different forms of womanhood, in other words, the varied reflections of being woman. Especially the struggle of women, who could not fit into nationalism's ideal woman mold, for their political rights and the impact of this struggle on women's relationship with nationalism are discussed heavily.

The fifth chapter is designed as a comparison chapter based on the data gathered from the analyses of *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu*. This comparative analysis chapter is envisaged as two main parts. First part centers on the legitimation sources of periodicals and the demands brought forward in relation to the necessities of time. While the first part positions Islam and nationalism as two sources of legitimation and explores how much influence these have on periodicals and to which extent this influence maintains, the second part shifts its focus to the tight position of women in between modernity and traditions. In this regard, second part questioned how women's position in the society have changed through time, in connection of whether their demands were fulfilled or not, and how all these factors reflected on women's relationship with Turkish nationalism. In addition to these two main parts, the last section of the fifth chapter represents an effort to understand how women of this region were connected to other women around the world and to international women's movement again through rereading of the articles from *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu*. This section is quite significant in terms of seeing how close can women get to define "us" deriving from their womanhood beyond the distinction of their nations' definition of "us" and "other" especially over their relationship with women from different nations, and/or how much they were restrained due to their nationalist reflexes.

The conclusion chapter can be read as a general assessment of the whole thesis. This last chapter, which basically summarizes the research from every aspect, questions whether initial assumptions are verified or not, and mentions which answers produced to the research questions comply, conflict and/or exceed the major claims. In this connection, it concludes with an attitude to understand how the subject of inquiry affected the social structure and women's status within that society in the light of what is learnt how important it is to look at the elements that we define ourselves with new and questioning eyes.



## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This dissertation deals with the relationship between nationalism and gender. To that end, I will briefly mention how gender became part of the nationalism studies. This section will be followed by the evaluation of the nationalism from the aspect of gender, in order to understand how these two concepts relate and interact with each other, first on the theoretical level, then in the case of Turkish nationalism.

#### 2.1.From Classical Debates to New Approaches: Gender in Nationalism Studies

The idea of nationalism was born in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries; and, it only became a subject of academic inquiry at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, or more precisely after the World War I. Distinct from conventional classification of nationalism studies, which assesses theoretical debates in two different periods, referring respectively the time between 1918-1945 and 1945 to the present, Umut Özkırmılı claims it is possible to define a new stage starting from the early 1990s.<sup>1</sup> Until 1989, primarily primordialism, modernism, ethnosymbolism and the discussions between these interpretations dominated the field. This new stage however differs from the previous one, as we witness the “attempts to transcend the classical debate”.<sup>2</sup> In this new stage, scholars, who study nationalism, began to question and criticize the main assumptions of the classical debate, and introduce novel perspectives to understand nations and nationalism, as they focus on hitherto overlooked issues among which gender also takes place.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, even though major interpretations and the debates between them were encouraging to think nationalism from different perspectives, gender was still not part of the discussion until serious criticisms began to target

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<sup>1</sup> Umut Özkırmılı, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, (China: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 169.

primordialism, modernism, ethnosymbolism and classical debates in the literature, which accordingly pave the way for new approaches.

Özkırımlı refers to the “cultural turn” in social sciences, as an influencing force in terms of emergence and rise of these new approaches. In this connection, he notes that towards the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, new social movements led to a questioning of the so-called “homogeneity of national cultures and identities in the West”. As a result of this questioning, the perception of culture shifted to a more dynamic understanding. According to this new and dynamic perception, culture is a notion, which acquires its meaning through a negotiation process between different groups that are composed on distinctions such as “class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, place in the life cycle”; therefore, it cannot be understood apart from “hierarchies of power”.<sup>4</sup> Considering all these developments, nationalism studies reached to a new level of interdisciplinarity, as new methods of analysis and new epistemological perspectives such as feminism, post-colonialism, and post-modernism have introduced into the field. New approaches have criticized the classical debate for only focusing on particular issues like determining the origins of nations and nationalism, and hence, failing to see that they produce mostly Euro-centric and gender-blind analyses.<sup>5</sup> Among the new approaches, gender sensitivity has gained prominence.

As Özkırımlı notes, even though the members of national communities come from different social groups, and there are various analyses that examine how these social backgrounds, such as different classes and education levels, affect national projects, it is not possible to mention any analysis that systematically focuses on different integration ways of women and men to these nationalist projects, until the rise of new approaches in the field. Indeed, this is the case, as women had/have a central role in the nationalist discourse, yet they have still largely been neglected in the theories of nationalism, even in the ones, which are produced by women such as Liah

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 170.

Greenfeld. This is why mainstream theories have become the target of criticisms due to their gender-blindness starting from the mid-1980s.<sup>6</sup>

In fact, starting from the 1960s, one could see an increasingly critical perspective on social sciences. According to Amy S. Wharton, women, and the activities that women do were not seen as worthy research subjects. However, as she notes, the “male-bias” of academic disciplines began to change, especially with growing effect of the second wave of women’s movement.<sup>7</sup> Within time, with the rather slow but determined transformation in social sciences, which is combined with the interest of feminist scholars in nationalism, the relationship between gender and nationalism has become an important subject of inquiry in the field; and consequently, attempts for producing a gendered understanding of nations and nationalism have increased. Scholars like Kumari Jayawardena, Cynthia Enloe, Sylvia Walby, Nira Yuval-Davis, and Floya Anthias have made these pioneering attempts, and the interest in the subject is growing since.

## **2.2. Historical and Theoretical Reflections on the Connection of Nationalism and Gender**

Gender is a “system of social practices”, which has an important role in “the creation of both differences *and* inequalities”.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, it is “one of the organizing principles of the social life” as it has the power of determining the identities and conducts of people, the social interaction between these people, and even the social institutions.<sup>9</sup> Wharton observes that there is an increasing interest in understanding the relationship between gender and other distinguishing social indicators like “age, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, or social class” in gender studies. As she explicitly underlines, although all these indicators are related to different aspects of

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>7</sup> Amy S. Wharton, *The Sociology of Gender: An Introduction to Theory and Research*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 4.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

life, they are actually intertwined.<sup>10</sup> Her determination is also relevant in terms of the relation between gender and nationalism. Indeed, Anne McClintock argues that nationalism is a gendered discourse since its emergence; and therefore, it can only be understood in the light of a “theory of gender power”.<sup>11</sup>

However, before diving into theoretical discussions about this matter, it is crucial to understand how gender and nationalism historically connected, in order to see, what these theoretical assumptions are based on. In her article, where she examines the relation between gender and nationalism throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Jennifer Heuer deduces from the image of Marianne, the symbol of the French nation, that gender has an important place in “the iconography of revolutionary nationalism”.<sup>12</sup> There are other national symbols like “Britannia and John Bull in the United Kingdom, Uncle Sam of the United States, Mother Russia, and Germania”, similar to Marianne, which is mostly an iconic women, and rarely a man.<sup>13</sup> According to Heuer, most of the national symbols were women, firstly because of a linguistic reason, as “most country names and associated terms were grammatically feminine”. However, she says that it cannot just be explained with language.<sup>14</sup> For instance, Joan Landes emphasize the nation's depiction as a desirable female body, especially in the time of the French Revolution. She claims that this depiction has “eroticized patriotism”, and therefore, helped men to connect with the nation-state.<sup>15</sup> Heuer mentions an alternative approach to this one, in which historians underline the maternal representation of nation instead of desirable female body image. This maternal representation was especially used for social mobilization during the

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>11</sup> Anne McClintock, “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family”, *Feminist Review* Summer / 44 (1993), 63.

<sup>12</sup> Jennifer Heuer, “Gender and Nationalism” in *Nations and Nationalism: A Global Historical Overview Volume I 1770 to 1880*, ed. Guntram H. Herb and David H. Kaplan, ( Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 43.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>15</sup> Joan Landes quoted in Jennifer Heuer, “Gender and Nationalism” in *Nations and Nationalism: A Global Historical Overview Volume I 1770 to 1880*, ed. Guntram H. Herb and David H. Kaplan, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 49.

wartime, in order to motivate “sons of the country” to make sacrifices for the “mother-country”.<sup>16</sup>

As Heuer argues, the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were indeed important times in terms of nationalism considering all these developments such as the independence of United States of America, followed by many Latin American countries, and the foundation of Italy and Germany. But this period was also important since the perception about gender roles transformed parallel to these developments. According to Heuer, this period did not only promote a national thinking, but also created certain distinctions between women and men, which also moved women away from political life. More precisely, the distinction, which finds its reflections in the “middle-class model of a male breadwinner and female housewife” were produced in this period in accordance with an understanding that envisages “separate spheres” for women and men.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, despite the strong image of heroines as national symbols, the real women of the nation were weak, or rather weakened. “Marianne may well carry a pike or Germania donned armor, but individual French and German women were rarely supposed to carry arms or be able to vote to determine the nation's future”.<sup>18</sup> Instead, it is expected from women to promote national culture<sup>19</sup> and transmit them to the future generations.

Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias in *Woman-Nation-State* (1989) lay out various roles of women within the nationalist projects. They mention five major ways through which women participate in ethnic and national processes:

As biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities, as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups, as participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture, as signifiers of ethnic/national differences – as a focus and symbol in ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction and transformation of

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<sup>16</sup> Jennifer Heuer, “Gender and Nationalism”, 49.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 53.

ethnic/national categories, as participants in national, economic, political, and military struggles.<sup>20</sup>

As noted by these scholars, certain forms of population control such as limiting the number of people from “undesirable groups”, “controlling the reproductive capacity and activity of women” from particular ethnic groups through forced sterilization or birth control methods, encouraging the production of the “right kind” and “physical expulsion of certain groups” in some cases, are directly related to women’s role as biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities.<sup>21</sup> There is only a fine line between these population policies and eugenic practices, which are actually one of the crimes against humanity according to international law.

Yuval-Davis and Anthias note that it is possible to encounter certain restricting practices on women’s sexuality and marital relationships in connection with the second role of women as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups.<sup>22</sup> And, about the role of women as ideological reproducers, they argue that women are perceived as “cultural carriers”, who are supposed to teach future generations the “ethnic symbols” and “ways of life” of that particular community.<sup>23</sup> The fourth role that is attributed to women within nationalist/ethnic projects is to be the signifiers of the ethnic/national differences. According to Yuval-Davis and Anthias, this role suggests that women are not only active in terms of reproduction and transfer of cultural and ideological traditions, but they are also real symbolic figures of ethnic/national groups.<sup>24</sup> Within this context, they determine that nation is usually represented as “a loved woman in danger” or “a mother who lost her sons in battle” in the nationalist discourse, especially during the times of national conflict, in order to mobilize men to fight for women, children, and for protecting their honour.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, “Introduction”, in *Woman-Nation-State*, ed. Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, (London: Macmillan, 1989), 7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

Lastly, women are participants in national, economic, political, and military struggles. As this role is quite self-explanatory, Yuval-Davis and Anthias add that women undertake only supportive roles in national liberation struggles compared to men, who take full responsibility.<sup>26</sup>

In relation to five major roles through which women participate in ethnic and national processes, they further detect that these roles are not always imposed on women. According to Yuval-Davis and Anthias, in fact, women reproduce and modify these roles while they also establish control over other women<sup>27</sup>, which shows how women –ironically– internalize patriarchy, and patriarchal values. Deniz Kandiyoti defines similar processes as “bargaining with patriarchy”.<sup>28</sup> According to Sylvia Walby, there are some cases, where women indeed have been mobilized to protect traditional gender regime, even though it promotes inequality between women and men. According to Walby, these cases are mostly products of “right-wing nationalisms”.<sup>29</sup>

For Sylvia Walby, “nations and nationalism are gendered in complex and varied ways”.<sup>30</sup> She argues that the interaction between gender relations and ethnicity and nation leads to a different form of gender relations, yet this new form is not fixed. As mentioned before, right wing nationalisms are prone to embrace traditional gender relations, which positions men over women. But with a different preference of gender relations, women can be a symbol of nation,<sup>31</sup> and their experience of nationalism can be more emancipating and equalizing on the ground of citizenship. Moreover, at the level of individuals, since men and women have different

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>28</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, “Bargaining with Patriarchy”, *Gender and Society*, 2/3 (1988), 274-290.

<sup>29</sup> Sylvia Walby, “Gender Approaches to Nations and Nationalism” in *The SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism*, ed. Gerard Delanty and Krishan Kumar, (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2006), 122.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 120.

preferences, their connection with nationalism and nationalist projects also differs. Walby argues that this difference between women and men in terms of nationalism might be arising from their distinct perception on militarism.<sup>32</sup> She claims that women are commonly, though not universally, more pacifist and less militaristic compared to men, and therefore, they are less supportive of nationalist projects that are heavily associated with militarism.<sup>33</sup> In this connection, she further claims that the political activities of women are more local and less nationalist compared to men.<sup>34</sup>

About women's being the symbol of the nation, even though Walby acknowledges Yuval-Davis and Anthias' five major ways through which women participate in nationalist projects, she still raises some questions. Walby claims that there are some other ways, which are not included their analysis, but which bond women to nationalism. In this sense, she especially criticizes the absence of a "division of labor" in their analysis.<sup>35</sup>

I believe that the struggle of Sylvia Walby for theorizing patriarchy is crucial in order to make sense of gendered nature of nationalism. She defines patriarchy as a "system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women".<sup>36</sup> According to her, there are different forms and degrees of patriarchy. To put it simply, she claims that different compositions of household production, paid employment, state, violence, sexuality, and culture generate two types of patriarchy: private and public. In the private patriarchy, exploitation of women is an individual practice performed by her husband or father. Distinctively, exploitation of women is collective in the public patriarchy. Moreover, private

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<sup>32</sup> Sylvia Walby, "Woman and Nation" / "Kadın ve Ulus" in *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 33/1-2 (1992), ed. Ayşe Gül Altınay, *Vatan Millet Kadınlar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013), 54.

<sup>33</sup> Sylvia Walby, "Gender Approaches to Nations and Nationalism", 123.

<sup>34</sup> Sylvia Walby, "Kadın ve Ulus", 56.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 40-41.

<sup>36</sup> Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 20.



patriarchy is exclusivist, as it forces women to stay in the private sphere. In contrast, public patriarchy permits women's participation in the public sphere. However, in that case, women become subject to discrimination. Therefore, public patriarchy is identified with its discriminatory practices.<sup>37</sup> As indicated in her analysis, private patriarchy represents the pre-modern era, whereas public patriarchy represents the modern.<sup>38</sup> Thereby, her work provides clues that enable us to deduce the synchronized character of the transition from traditional to modern, from feudal societies to national societies, and finally from private patriarchy to public patriarchy. This synchronized transition implies continuity, and this is an explanation on how patriarchy – one of the greatest inequalities of human history – survived in the national societies that supposedly rely on egalitarianism.

Similarly, Partha Chatterjee also deals with how women issue has been handled in nationalist projects and how patriarchy has maintained its salience. Accordingly, she claims that this new/public form of patriarchy, which is intertwined with nationalism, honored women by giving them a new social responsibility. Chatterjee argues that with this new responsibility, women's emancipation struggle has melted in the historical objective of national sovereignty. Thus, women have found themselves in a so-called legitimate, but also the secondary position in the national society.<sup>39</sup> Her arguments require a better understanding of the relation between feminism and nationalism. Kumari Jayawardena studies this particular subject that is the connection between feminism and nationalism, in her book *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (1986), where she analyses various countries namely Egypt, Iran, Turkey, India, Sri Lanka, China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia. According to her, the “struggles for women’s emancipation were an essential and integral part of national resistance movements”.<sup>40</sup> Even though these

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<sup>37</sup> Sylvia Walby, “Kadın ve Ulus”, 49.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>39</sup> Partha Chatterjee, “The Nationalist Resolution of the Women’s Question” / “Kadın Sorununa Milliyetçi Çözüm” in *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, ed. K. Sangari and S. Vaid, *Vatan Millet Kadınlar*, ed. Ayşe Gül Altınay (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013), 121.

<sup>40</sup> Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1986), 8.

countries differ from each other historically, culturally and ideologically, Jayawardena underlines their similarity: these countries were either colonized by the imperialists, or under oppression to fulfill their needs.<sup>41</sup>

Colonialism is, in fact, a highly gendered composition. As Jennifer Heuer underlines, the discourse, which reflects the power relations between imperialists and anti-imperialists, is based on certain “gender and family imagery”. For instance, one common image depicts colonialists as parents while portraying colonized countries people as children, who need protection and guidance.<sup>42</sup> Obviously, this imagery eases the pressure of justifying the colonialism. In another common and stronger image, colonized people were depicted as women.<sup>43</sup> This depiction suggests perceiving imperialist powers as men, who are entitled to exercise power over women depending on the hierarchy that derives from patriarchy, in this case over colonized countries. There were also some cases, where colonies and colonized people were illustrated as male. But, in those cases, they were always described as “irrational, savage, and threatening to European women”.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, when these countries started to pursue national struggles against the imperial powers, their nationalist projects were gendered and the nationalist discourses were aiming to change the power relations between imperialists and themselves through transforming the gender relations in the society.

To listen to the story of colonialism from colonized people's perspective is as important as listening to it from the perspective of imperialist powers. In this regard, Kumari Jayawardena argues that understanding the encounter of men from colonized countries with the European civilization is crucial in terms of woman question. According to Jayawardena, the most striking part of the European civilization for those men was seeing women as free and respected individuals of the society.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>42</sup> Jennifer Heuer, “Gender and Nationalism”, 54.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 55.

Starting from this realization, women's status started to be seen as the level of civilization of society, and intelligentsia began to promote certain measures that would improve women's status. In this regard, Jayawardena underlines how "education and freedom of movement for women, and monogamy" gradually turned into the symbols of "modernity, development and civilization". She further notes that these were adapted to the political agenda of the reformers of those colonized societies, who converted their wives and daughters to the representatives of these new ideals.<sup>45</sup> The shift in the mindset of these men, who mostly took education in the West or Western institutions and embraced their social norms, evoked a demand for the enlightened woman according to Jayawardena. Accordingly, the "new woman", who was freed from all three seen as reasons of their backwardness namely seclusion, veil and illiteracy, was supposed to be the partner of men as "educated in the relevant foreign language, dressed in the new styles and attuned to Western ways" although their primary duty is at home.<sup>46</sup> In other words, these women have become the carriers of the modernization process in their societies. Partha Chatterjee also mentions this role of women as carriers of modernity while she refers to "new responsibility" attributed to women within the nationalist projects. Chatterjee claims that this 'new woman' image of nationalist reformation was acutely adopted by the first generation of educated women as it both included the idea of emancipating women, and let them emancipate themselves.<sup>47</sup>

In fact, this new responsibility and new woman themes are acknowledged by many scholars and integrated into their analyses too. For instance, in her study, where she explores Russia, Italy, Greece, Czech territory, and the Ottoman Empire from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Jitka Maleckova also emphasizes the responsibility that is attributed to women, and defines it as a duty, which exceeds the capability of standard human being. With this new responsibility, it is expected from women to "defend national honour", "prove the maturity of nation", and "carry

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<sup>45</sup> Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism*, 10-12.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>47</sup> Partha Chatterjee, "Kadın Sorununa Milliyetçi Çözüm", 119.

out the necessary alterations in the society”.<sup>48</sup> Even though Maleckova accepts that these cases have very different types of nationalism, her analysis reveals the similarities between them in regard to the woman issue, especially during the emergence of nationalism.<sup>49</sup> In order to determine similarities of their approaches to the women’s question, she examines the representation of woman in the nationalist literature. Consequently, Maleckova detects a common understanding, seeing men as the only agent who can solve the women’s question. Men can plant national consciousness into women, and women can transmit this to the future generations.<sup>50</sup> This understanding of nationalist men is clearly in tune with women’s role as “transmitters and producers of national culture” as conceptualized by Yuval-Davis and Anthias. But, maybe the most intriguing part of Maleckova's work is seeing how the same nationalism, which gives crucial responsibilities to women, actually and paradoxically can declare men as the saviors of women.<sup>51</sup> It is possible to argue that this is one of the most prominent indicators of the complexity of the relation between women and nationalism.

### **2.3. Gender Relations in Turkish Nationalism**

Fatmagül Berktaş studies the similar complexity of women’s position within nationalist projects particularly in the case of Ottoman Empire and Turkey. In order to make sense of this paradox, she makes a distinction between the “ideal woman” and “existing women”.<sup>52</sup> In this connection, she argues that women, who were represented as the carriers of the Westernization and modernization movements – these are also integral parts of the Turkish nation building process–, did not actually exist (yet). And, from the perspective of men, existing women were in need of

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<sup>48</sup> Jitka Maleckova, “Kadın ve Bir Milletin Kaderi: Milli Uyanışın İlk Dönemlerinde Kadınlara Bıçılan Rol” (paper presented at the 2nd International History Congress, İstanbul, 8-10 June, 1995) in *Tarih Eğitimi ve Tarihte “Öteki” Sorunu*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), 201.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>52</sup> Fatmagül Berktaş, “Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Feminizm”, *Tarihin Cinsiyeti*, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2012), 106.

constant attention and guidance of men before they turn into the ideal woman. Clearly, this complex approach in terms of woman issue helped men maintain the patriarchal order where they can preserve their superiority and control over women in the nation state. According to Berkday, nationalism is a gendered ideology and national states are patriarchal in nature. She defines the nation state system as “the regime of brothers”, and that the transition from Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey can be interpreted as a transition from the absolute potency of the father to the republic of brothers.<sup>53</sup> About the women's movement growing alongside nationalism, women first asked for the right to education. Yet, according to Berkday, these pioneering women were aware of the fact that they needed the support of men in order to acquire this right and for others in the future. In this sense, as a strategy, women began to use patriotic arguments such as being the “mothers of nation”, who are destined to raise loyal boys that are loyal to the nation state.<sup>54</sup> Accordingly, in the following chapters the issue of how women used nationalist arguments to legitimize their own demands will be studied in depth, as this also creates an opportunity to see the interaction between women's movement and nationalism.

To understand the nature of Turkish nationalism and how gender played a role in the Turkish nation-building process, its origins should be traced back to modernization movement of the Ottoman Empire because, as Kumari Jayawardena argues, “women's emancipation in Turkey was closely integrated with successive waves of modernization and secularization and with the ideology of Westernization and social reform”.<sup>55</sup>

The modernization of the Ottoman Empire was, in fact, an obligation rather than a choice considering the drastic decline of the Empire's power in the realms like the military, the administrative structure, and economy. According to Jayawardena, certain factors such as the pressures of Western countries, who want to become more

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 105-106.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>55</sup> Kumari Jayawardena, “‘Civilization’ Through Women's Emancipation in Turkey”, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1986), 25.

active in the Middle East, nationalist upheavals among the non-Turkish subjects and the need for modernization and democratic institutions among Turks consequently led to the disintegration process of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>56</sup> Even though Mahmud II (1808-1839) implemented reforms during his reign like sending naval and military students to Europe for training, or establishing modern educational institutions,<sup>57</sup> the set of reforms that introduced under the *Tanzimat* Edict in 1839 is widely seen as the true beginning of the Ottoman modernization process. Niyazi Berkes notes that the most important concern of *Tanzimat* reformers was to overcome the economic challenge of West to the Ottoman Empire in addition to several other concerns such as rearranging legal system while ensure it is based on the principles of freedom and equality, switching to modern state structure and developing modern cultural institutions.<sup>58</sup> Jayawardena claims, that this was the fundamental change, which heralded the transition “from theocratic Sultanate to the beginnings of a modern state”.<sup>59</sup> Although “the personal status code affecting women directly had been untouched by new legislation”, Deniz Kandiyoti notes that some modest legal improvements concerning women were introduced during the *Tanzimat* period (1839-1876). For instance, the Land Law of 1856, granted equal rights of inheritance to daughters. Also, a treaty, which repeals slavery and concubinage, was ratified during this time period.<sup>60</sup> Obviously, *Tanzimat* period did not resolve the woman’s question once and for all, but it helped women’s status and family relations within the society to become an important part of discussions.

Nükhet Sirman puts a great emphasis on the developments of *Tanzimat* period, as this time represented a turning point that initiated considerable changes in the Ottoman society. In this connection, Sirman claims that *Tanzimat* period created the division between public and private realms for the first time, which were intertwined

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>58</sup> Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (London: Hurst&Company, 1998), 137.

<sup>59</sup> Kumari Jayawardena, “Women’s Emancipation in Turkey”, 27.

<sup>60</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, “Women and the Turkish State: Political Actors or Symbolic Pawns?” in *Woman-Nation-State*, ed. Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, (London: Macmillan, 1989), 130.

before, by transforming the extended family structure representing smallest version of traditional power relations. Accordingly, this transformation led to the emergence of a new group, which Sirman refers as the middle class,<sup>61</sup> as it resembled the middle classes of European societies in terms of its potential. This new group, which also goes by the name of Young Ottomans, consisted of liberal reformers of the time, such as İbrahim Şinasi, Ziya Pasha and Namık Kemal.<sup>62</sup> As Deniz Kandiyoti notes, the ideology of Young Ottomans “involved a complex blend of Ottoman nationalism, Islamism, and constitutionalism”. Indeed, what the Young Ottomans were intended to do was creating a unique understanding that balances the Western ideals of modernization and development while protecting the essence –the Islamic character– of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>63</sup> In fact, Young Ottomans were raised to become part of bureaucracy one day, but new system expelled them. In these unexpected circumstances, Young Ottomans positioned press as a place for self-expression, reassessment and construction. They were also the ones, who helped the simplification of written Ottoman language and make it accessible for everyone.<sup>64</sup>

Sirman draws our attention to the newspapers, periodicals, and, especially to the novels, as mediums through which these intentions were manifested and try to be realized.<sup>65</sup> The novels mostly depicted men in various situations, where they had to show necessary courage to stand up against the traditional power structure and prove their willingness to be the leader of their own families. The women, who supposed to assist these young men in their journeys, were also depicted as in the possession of certain traits. As it is noted, this was a new type of woman positioned as far as possible from the selfishness of coquette women and the ignorance of traditional women. Accordingly, she is an educated and altruistic woman, who would use her

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<sup>61</sup> Nükhet Sirman, “Kadınların Milliyeti” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekinil, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), 233 and 236.

<sup>62</sup> Kumari Jayawardena, “Women’s Emancipation in Turkey”, 28.

<sup>63</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, “End of Empire: İslam, Nationalism and Women in Turkey” in *Women, İslam and the State*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 25.

<sup>64</sup> Elif Ekin Akşit, “Hanımlara Mahsus Milliyetçilik: Fatma Aliye ve Erken Milliyetçi Stratejiler”, *Kebikeç –İnsan Bilimleri İçin Kaynak Araştırmaları Dergisi*, No:30 (2010), 57-74.

<sup>65</sup> Nükhet Sirman, “Kadınların Milliyeti”, 236.

knowledge for her family and nation. And, what was expected from these well-behaved women was to raise patriotic children.<sup>66</sup>

Due to these new roles and meanings attributed to women, Young Ottomans are usually accepted as the pioneers defending the women's rights; however, according to Kandiyoti, this perception is quite misleading. First of all, she notes that these reformists, who advocated the women's emancipation, were also known for their serious criticisms of westernization tendency of *the Tanzimat* period.<sup>67</sup> And, secondly, Kandiyoti claims that woman argument was a useful channel for the male reformers to express their own uneasiness with the old social composition. "'Modern' men often felt alienated from Ottoman patriarchal structures which curtailed their own freedom considerably, even though women were the more obvious victims of the system".<sup>68</sup> As it will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 4, the Turkish national movement was, in fact, a revolt against the authority of the father, or in other words, against the traditional patriarchal order of the Ottoman Empire. This is also one of the main reasons that clarify how the overlap between women's movement and national struggle became possible in the Turkish case.

Women's education became an important issue in accordance with all these developments and ongoing discussions about women's emancipation. It is possible to mention some initiatives of Sultan Abdul Aziz like opening middle-level schools and a teachers' training college in 1863; yet, as Jayawardena underlines, these schools were educating women to suit the image of traditional woman of the Ottoman society, that is "good Muslim wives and mothers".<sup>69</sup> There was also another group of women, mostly upper class, who had the chance to have modern education at home provided by foreign governesses, or attending foreign schools. Later on, some of these women played crucial roles in the Ottoman women's movement and national

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 236-237.

<sup>67</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, "End of Empire: Turkey", 25.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>69</sup> Kumari Jayawardena, "Women's Emancipation in Turkey", 28.



liberation struggle. Halide Edib, who is a well-known novelist and nationalist that graduated from the American College for Girls in 1871, is one of them.<sup>70</sup>

Although there were some developments during the reign of Abdulhamit II, no major change took place in women's status under his thirty years long reign. Therefore, the declaration of constitutional monarchy for the second time in 1908 by the Young Turks<sup>71</sup> became the turning point for a transition to more modern and emancipated society. As Kandiyoti notes, 1908 revolution gave women a hope that "they would also benefit from the new principles of liberty and equality". Maybe this did not come true exactly as women anticipated, but indeed women began to use the existing education opportunities more effectively while there was a considerable increase in the number of women's periodicals and associations and also in the number of activist women in the Second Constitutional period.<sup>72</sup>

According to Jayawardena, nine women's periodicals were published between 1908 and 1919. Moreover, "in their advocacy of women's emancipation in Turkey, these papers were motivated by their Western bias and knowledge of European feminist movements".<sup>73</sup> In her analysis, Kandiyoti refers to new women's periodicals like *Mahasin*, *Kadın* (Woman) and *Kadınlar Dünyası* (Women's World) as important mediums that helped to mold public opinion.<sup>74</sup> But before these periodicals, there was *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* that was published between 1895 and 1908. So, it is possible to dig further. It has a central place in the analysis of Akşit, since it was one of the longest published periodicals in the Ottoman Empire. Akşit notes that *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* carried the dual responsibility of nationalism and feminism. And, more importantly, it reflected a new feminist understanding that represented an alternative to Western feminism.<sup>75</sup> So, the finding of Akşit provides

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>71</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, "End of Empire: Turkey", 28.

<sup>72</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, "Woman and the Turkish State", 135.

<sup>73</sup> Kumari Jayawardena, "Women's Emancipation in Turkey", 32.

<sup>74</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, "End of Empire: Turkey", 29.

<sup>75</sup> Elif Ekin Akşit, "Hanımlara Mahsus Milliyetçilik", 60-61.

an additional support to Jayawardena's claims. In addition to women's periodicals, Kandiyoti mentions associations founded by women like *Teali-i Nisvan Cemiyeti* (The Society for the Elevation of Women) and *Müdafaa-i Hukuk-ı Nisvan Cemiyeti* (The Society for the Defence of Women's Rights) in the Second Constitutional era.<sup>76</sup> These are certainly crucial improvements in terms of Ottoman women's movement in particular, and for women's rights in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey in general.

Kandiyoti notes three new developments in this period, which closely affected the women's rights issue closely: "the rise of Turkism as a dominant ideology among the intellectual currents of the Second Constitutional period, the requirements of a war economy spanning the period from the Balkan War (1912) to the end of World War I, and their joint effects on the social and economic policies of the CUP".<sup>77</sup> In regard to first development, as it is known, Ziya Gökalp formulated Turkish nationalism in his *Principles of Turkism* (1923). For Kandiyoti, "Gökalp's search for authentic national-cultural patterns led him to an eclectic examination of myth, legend, archeological and anthropological evidence on pre-Islamic Turkic patterns".<sup>78</sup> Gökalp described Turks as a democratic and feminist community where women and men were equals, "children belong to both parents, women could control their own independent property and, interestingly were excellent warriors".<sup>79</sup> Gökalp's writing were interpreted by some as an incentive for social mobilization and justification for women's new status on grounds of nationalism.<sup>80</sup>

Another important factor that affected women's social status, in general, was the requirements of the war economy. Especially starting from the Balkan Wars, women increasingly engaged in welfare activities. In addition to these, they began to be

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>78</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, "Woman and the Turkish State", 140.

<sup>79</sup> Ziya Gökalp quoted in Deniz Kandiyoti, "Woman and the Turkish State: Political Actors or Symbolic Pawns?" in *Woman-Nation-State*, ed. Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, (London: Macmillan, 1989), 141.

<sup>80</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, "Woman and the Turkish State", 141.

trained to become nurses by the women's branch of the Red Crescent Society. In the light of these facts, Kandiyoti argues that "women's 'patriotic' activities legitimized both their greater mobility and their visibility".<sup>81</sup> Indeed, Tanıl Bora also claims that Balkan Wars had special importance in terms of radicalization of Ottoman feminists. According to him, this was the occasion, in which women turned into agents rather than remaining passive figures. From another perspective, Balkan Wars was crucial as it represented the threshold passed in terms of feminist discourses engagement with nationalism.<sup>82</sup>

If Balkan Wars initiated the process, it was the World War I, which made the greatest impact in terms of women's social status. Similar to almost every country in war, women replaced men, who now fight for their country in the front, as the new alternative workforce. Social and economic policies of the Committee of the Union and Progress were also affected by these developments and became a significant factor for woman issue. In her analysis, Kandiyoti mentions of a policy that was issued by the Ministry of Trade in 1915, which introduced the mandatory employment.<sup>83</sup> The number of working women tremendously increased as a result of this law. In this regard, the foundation of the Islamic Association for the Employment of Ottoman Women in 1916 is also crucial. The association mainly aimed to help women enter into business life and let them support themselves. Accordingly, Muslim Ottoman women, who lost the one that provides for the family like their father, husband, son, or brother, would be able to live with their 'honour' since they have a job.<sup>84</sup> However, as Yavuz Selim Karakışla argues, the association did not limit itself with this aim. According to him, the association was aware that its support was temporary; therefore, they believed that women were supposed to get

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<sup>81</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, "End of Empire: Turkey", 30.

<sup>82</sup> Tanıl Bora, *Cereyanlar: Türkiye'de Siyasi İdeolojiler*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017), 746-747.

<sup>83</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, "End of Empire: Turkey", 30.

<sup>84</sup> Yavuz Selim Karakışla, "Kadın İşçileri Evlendirme Kampanyası", *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Savaş Yılları ve Çalışan Kadınlar: Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti (1916-1923)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015), 189.

married to have a permanent support and protection.<sup>85</sup> This is why the association declared its new regulation in 1917, which requires from all workers that work under the association to get married by the time they turn 21 at most, for women, and 25, for men.<sup>86</sup> The association even prescribed that women in need will be supported with her trousseau, and will have a raise for each child that they will conceive.<sup>87</sup> With this regulation, as Kandiyoti claims, Unionists also had the opportunity to realize their vision for nuclear and monogamous “national family”, in contrast to the traditional and patriarchal Ottoman family structure.<sup>88</sup> Yet, this does not mean that the new national family was envisaged less patriarchal.

As the Ottoman territory was occupied by the allied powers, the national liberation struggle followed the World War I. These occupations engendered great protests throughout the country, which women also joined, “not merely as anonymous participants but as public speakers in open-air meetings where they made impassioned calls for the defence of the motherland”.<sup>89</sup> Kandiyoti notes that both local middle-class women and peasant women in Anatolia played an irreplaceable role in the war of National Liberation.<sup>90</sup> Despite women’s great efforts during the war and constant emphasis of Kemalists on women’s emancipation, especially as a leverage against religious reactionism, the 1924 Constitution of the Turkish Republic did not grant women political rights.<sup>91</sup> The introduction of a new civil code in 1926, which declared polygamy and marriage by proxy as illegal, and gave equal rights to women in terms of divorce, custody of children and inheritance, was certainly the most crucial step for women’s rights.<sup>92</sup> Yet, women had to wait to be able to vote in local elections until 1930, and until 1934 for general elections. The timing of these

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>88</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, “End of Empire: Turkey”, 36.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 38-39.

<sup>92</sup> Kumari Jayawardena, “Women’s Emancipation in Turkey”, 37.

rights will be further discussed in Chapter 4, in addition to the issues that concern how the foundation of Women's People Party in 1923 was not allowed, and how feminist movement was oppressed in the early Republican era.

Kandiyoti explains these developments with “the authoritarian nature of the single-party state and its attempt to harness the ‘new woman’ to the creation and reproduction of a uniform citizenry aborted the possibility for autonomous women’s movement”.<sup>93</sup> Due to this fact, the overlap between women’s movement and nationalism that was initiated and strengthened by the women’s usage of nationalist arguments to support their own demands came to an end. Hence, the real women’s movement was replaced with a “state-sponsored feminism”.<sup>94</sup> However, Kandiyoti also argues that this situation was “in no way specific to Turkey, but quite typical of many post-independence and post-revolutionary Third World states”.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, “End of Empire: Turkey”, 43.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 42.

## CHAPTER 3

### *KADINLAR DÜNYASI*

This chapter examines a women's periodical called *Kadınlar Dünyası*. Given *Kadınlar Dünyası*'s importance in Ottoman women's movement, there has been various analyses of this periodical.<sup>96</sup> Serpil Çakır's book, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*<sup>97</sup> (2013) undoubtedly has a foremost place among similar works. Therefore, followed by the periodical itself, this book serves as an important source for the chapter, while it is aimed to introduce a novel perspective to the overall analysis of the periodical.

In the introduction of her book, Serpil Çakır deliberately states her work on women's movement is not established on concepts such as modernization and nationalism, and does not include state's perception of the woman. In fact, she argues that she avoids these on purpose, in order to comprehend the dynamics of women's movement exclusively.<sup>98</sup> However, what is intended here is exactly the opposite of this understanding. In this chapter, women's movement, and more precisely the formation of woman identity will be analyzed in the context of modernization, nation building, and feminism, which is a process that can be interpreted where women become conscious about their own identity as woman. As mentioned in the previous chapter, certain roles are attributed to women in all these processes. The aim in analyzing this periodical is to reveal what those roles are by examining women's own statements instead of those by the ones who attributed these roles to the women in the first place. Thus, one could discover whether women embraced those roles or

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<sup>96</sup> Elif Ekin Akşit, "İkinci Meşrutiyet Döneminde Kadın ve Çocuk Dergileri, in *Kızların Sessizliği: Kız Enstitülerinin Uzun Tarihi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015); Serpil Sancar, "Osmanlı-Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyet Rejimi: Asrılık ile Millilik Arasında", in *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti: Erkekler Devlet Kadınlar Aile Kurar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014); Fatmagül Berktaş, "Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Feminizm", in *Tarihin Cinsiyeti* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2012); and Ceren Aygöl, "Change in the Status of Turkish Women During the Ottoman Modernization and Self-Evaluation of Women in *Kadınlar Dünyası* of 1913" (Master's Thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2010)

<sup>97</sup> Ottoman Women's Movement.

<sup>98</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 25.

not, and see where they overlap and/or collide with the demands of women themselves.

### **3.1.Ottoman Modernization and Women's Periodicals**

*Kadınlar Dünyası* started first to be published in 1913 under the leadership of Ulviye Mevlan. Even though the publication was interrupted for several times, it was continued until 1921. There was definitely a spontaneous parallelism between the time period when *Kadınlar Dünyası* was published and centralization, secularization, and liberation processes, which began to prevail in the Ottoman Empire as a result of the declaration of Second Constitutional era in 1908. As one can expect, these processes became propulsive forces that initiated major transformations in the Ottoman society. And, these transformations were also closely related to the status of Ottoman women. As a consequence of ongoing alternations women began to demand to be able to go beyond the limitations of traditional roles that imprisoned them in the private sphere as mother and wife. In relation to this, since it was provided a platform where women can give voice to their demands, the press was an important mechanism. Women's periodicals were indeed crucial, because they created a common ground, which brought women together from every walk of life. Thus, women discovered their similarities, which also canalized them to solidarity. In other words, women's movement started to be constituted incrementally. In this sense, the role of women's periodicals is undeniable. Beyond that, Ottoman women, who brought new momentum and dimension to the social transformation in the society, held conferences and found associations alongside periodicals for self-expression.<sup>99</sup>

*Kadınlar Dünyası* has its own distinctive features, but being the first women's periodical is not one of them. In fact, publishing women's periodicals were initiated by the intellectual men of the modernization period, in order to determine the role and responsibilities of women at the time of social transformation.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, in a short span of time, Ottoman modernization gained an ideological aspect, and

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 60.

intertwined with nationalism due to the course of events, leading eventually to the disintegration of the Empire. Consequently, there were intense efforts for self-definition. At first, men were writing most of the articles in the women's periodicals. However, in the course of time, the articles written by women increased in number. What made *Kadınlar Dünyası* different from other women's periodicals were their advocacy of women's rights movement, and their decisive stance to preserve periodical's writer cadre solely composed of women.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, unlike the other women's periodicals, *Kadınlar Dünyası* published not only the articles written by the intellectual women of that era, but also those by women from different backgrounds.<sup>102</sup> As a matter of fact, everything that ensures the distinctiveness of *Kadınlar Dünyası* drew accusations of radicalism as well as support for it.<sup>103</sup>

Women's periodicals whose writers were mostly men took on the task of describing and shaping women's identity from the perspective of men. That is to say, they were working on creating a certain image of the woman, according to their understanding of how the woman is supposed to be, or in other words, the ideal woman as the nationalist intelligentsia usually refers.<sup>104</sup> But, there was clearly a contradiction between the existing women and the ideal woman, as it is underlined in the previous chapter. In fact, contradictory woman image of nationalism is not peculiar to it. Actually, women's dualistic representation as the Mary or a whore, as an angel or a demon, continues to exist since the Antiquity.<sup>105</sup> Therefore, men and not women are the main agents of history. History always highlights the interests, attitude, and conduct of men while neglecting women. So, as mentioned above, dualistic representation of nationalism as a form of distinction between ideal woman and existing woman is a characteristic feature of nationalism, but not intrinsic to it. In

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 81. By contrast, *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (1895-1908), for instance, another women's periodical from the same era, was only publishing the articles of the intellectual women.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 35.



fact, this is mainly the idiosyncrasy of the patriarchy. This is why Anne McClintock refers to nationalism as a “gendered ideology”, as it represents the internalization of patriarchal norms.<sup>106</sup> In the patriarchal societies, including nations, women are usually being congratulated for their altruism, diligence, and devotion to their families. However, women are also represented as all-possible threats targeting the household and the state, especially at the time of a crisis.<sup>107</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti’s work on this very duality in the representation of women in the early Turkish novel is striking to see its reflections in the national literature.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, at this very point where we realize the discipline of history is not objective as we predicted, and actually tells the story of men, hearing the voices of oppressed women seems even more important.

With the modernization period, especially after the onset of the Second Constitutional era, equality and liberty became prevailing ideals in the Ottoman Empire. However, women soon realized that these are not applicable to them, and detected this as a contradiction through their daily life experiences.<sup>109</sup> A similar contradiction was also in place after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. In that case, women realized that the Republic did not fulfill its fundamental promise of equality among citizens. In both cases, women were in need of a channel where they can voice their demands. In this connection, periodicals became a prominent medium for women. Making these demands acceptable in a male dominated society like the Ottoman/Turkish society was also as important as finding a platform to articulate them. Women, who were highly influenced by the political and ideological atmosphere of the era, began to use nationalist statement in order to justify their demands for equal rights. Most particularly, women preferred to underline their role

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<sup>106</sup> Anne McClintock, “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism, and the Family”, *Feminist Review* No 44, (Summer 1993), 61.

<sup>107</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 35.

<sup>108</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, “Cariyeler, Fattan Kadınlar ve Yoldaşlar: Türk Romanında Kadın İmgeleri”, in *Cariyeler, Bacılar, Yurttaşlar: Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dönüşümler* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 146-161.

<sup>109</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 405.

as a “cultivator of generations” for acquiring rights and to enhance their status in society.<sup>110</sup> What is implied with the “cultivator of generations” is simply the motherhood; the same role that Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias also refer to as the cultural reproduction role of women within nationalist projects.<sup>111</sup> In this regard, women have claimed that modernization of the society and the formation of the “national families” are only possible by enhancing the situation of women. Mostly, the demand for equality of rights was legitimized by nationalist arguments. Women could be soldiers as well if necessary. But more importantly, they are mothers of the humankind and the foundation of civilizations. Mother’s bosom is where children learn manners.<sup>112</sup>

At this point, it is possible mention that there was a certain historical overlap, perhaps some sort of cooperation or bargaining between nationalism and the demands of women. On the one hand, nationalist discourse was used in the women’s movement as a justification in order to gain equal rights for women. On the other hand, nationalism was aiming to build a national identity and to create a social mobilization by making promise of equality and rights for women. This overlap helped preserve the existence of women’s movement and nationalism at the same time for a while, and both of the processes nurtured each other from several aspects. This situation is not peculiar to the case of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. In many societies experiencing modernization and nation-building processes, the course of events have great similarities in terms of the issue of woman and nationalism.<sup>113</sup> However, as Serpil Çakır already notes, women’s struggle for

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>111</sup> Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, introduction to *Woman-Nation-State*, ed. Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, (London: The Macmillan Press, 1989), 9.

<sup>112</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 409.

<sup>113</sup> As previously mentioned in the second chapter, in her article, where she embraces the comparative analysis method, Jitka Maleckova analyzes indeed very different countries such as Russia, Italy, Greece, Czech territory, and the Ottoman Empire from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in order to show the similarities between these cases in terms of woman and nationalism. For further information: Jitka Malečková, “Kadın ve Bir Milletın Kaderi: Milli Uyanışın İlk Dönemlerinde Kadınlara Bıçılan Rol” (paper presented at the 2nd International History Congress, İstanbul, 8-10 June, 1995.)

emancipation and their experiences faded away due to processes such as modernization, nation-building, socialism, and human rights argument of liberalism.<sup>114</sup> Once a new order is established, women's movement seems like it never existed in men's narrative of male order.

Especially in the case of the Ottoman Empire, the overlap of women's movement and nationalism is not surprising. The Ottoman Empire was a theocratic state, as the Sultans were not only the head of the Empire and ruler of the subjects in its territory but also the leader of all Muslim communities as the carrier of the caliphate title. In this sense, religion was determining the limits of women's way of living from every aspect, such as their behaviours, clothes and relationships. Therefore, women's emancipation and having equal rights with men were requiring a fundamental transformation in the Ottoman society. This transformation became possible only through nationalism, which was intertwined with secularization. However, with the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, Islamic patriarchy was replaced with the nation state patriarchy.<sup>115</sup> In other words, patriarchy did not end. It only changed its form and continued to exist. This continuity led to a claim, which implies that men give rights to women without they ask or fight for it. Actually, this claim reflects an understanding, which simply neglects the existence of women's movement, and women's struggle for their own rights. Hence, the new regime, as part of their grand strategy, allowed women's movement to slide into oblivion on purpose like they also did for other movements and ideologies, while positioning nationalism as the dominant ideology, which is patriarchal in nature. To put it differently, the new Republic was already ready to oppress every opposition as much as possible if necessary, in order to ensure a concrete ground for nationalist movement. Not surprisingly, women's movement was also perceived as an opposition that threatens the new regime, and oppressed in the early Republican era. After this incident, which

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 410.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 411.

we will see the details in the next chapter, women's movement slowly faded away as it had never existed, until its rise again in the 1980s.<sup>116</sup>

### 3.2.The Demands of Ottoman Women

The demands of the Ottoman women became evident especially in the liberation atmosphere of the Second Constitutional era. Unfortunately, women could not find the chance to experience this liberation atmosphere in the same way like men did. Women's complaints in regard to this situation, and their demands in order to enhance women's status in general, were the main subjects of the articles published or letters sent to *Kadınlar Dünyası*.

As it is known, there was not a standardized legal system in the Ottoman Empire until the Tanzimat era (1839-1876). There were different laws in relation to people's feature, sex, religion, and sect. And, as one can predict, these different rules often led to unequal treatment. The sharia, which was also regulating the issues related to family, was the main source that determines the status of women within society.<sup>117</sup> For this reason, as we will see later in the detailed analysis of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, women usually chose to show the compatibility of their demands with Islam, since they were aware of the fact that any demand discordant with the fundamental principles of Islam, would never be accepted, despite the ongoing modernization and liberation processes.

The edicts of the Sultan, the *Kanun*, alongside the Quran were also another source that regulated the lives of women. The woman was restricted to the private sphere. As Serpil Çakır states, the places that women can go, which vehicles they can use, where they can do shopping, and in which mosques they can pray were strictly regulated according to the edicts of the Sultans.<sup>118</sup> For instance, according to Elif

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 412-414.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 227.

Ekin Akşit's analysis, a document from 1820 states that the permission, which lets women go to mosques, picnic areas, neighborhood of the palace, is temporarily suspended as some irregularities began to place in those places.<sup>119</sup> As a result of this understanding, there were different realms for women and men in society, which consequently excluded women from the public sphere that was the domain of men.<sup>120</sup> This feature of the society started to change in accordance with the structural transformations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>121</sup> However, women achieved equal legal status in terms of social rights only after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, with the adoption of the Civil Code in 1926. Naturally, legal equality does not reflect an actual equality between women and men neither in Turkey nor in the rest of the world. In fact, this is also the reason why feminist movement's struggle still continues today.

### **3.2.1.The Requirements**

As reflected in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, some issues clearly have higher priority for women. These are the demands related to education, employment, rearrangement of the attire, family life and the institution of marriage, and incentive efforts for the consumption of domestic goods. In this sense, following section initially focuses on the demands of women in terms of education.

### **3.2.2.Education**

A fundamental transformation in the educational system of the Ottoman Empire was initiated in the Tanzimat era. In this regard, the religious content of the Ottoman education would be replaced with the Western principles. The reformation of the system of education was parallel to the core transition processes in the society, which was mainly composed of secularization, centralization, and systematization.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Elif Ekin Akşit, *Kızların Sessizliği*, 53.

<sup>120</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 204.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 297.

The Muslim Ottoman girls were eligible to attend only the primary school, which can be seen as the only sexual discrimination-free schools in the Ottoman society. Due to the religious obligation to distinguish physically the realms of the women and men after the puberty, there had to be separate post primary schools, which girls can attend.<sup>123</sup> In this connection, first Ottoman Junior High School for girls was opened in 1858. However, this school did not have the same facilities of the middle school for boys. Moreover, the curriculum of the first junior high school for girls reflects the Ottoman society's expectation from women. Major lessons that girls were supposed to attend were related to housekeeping, morality, sanitation, and handcraft. In other words, what was aimed at the education of girls was to raise good housewives. Furthermore, junior high schools for girls were only established in Istanbul, so they did not become widespread throughout the Empire. Then again, the number of these schools was inadequate even for Istanbul.<sup>124</sup> The transformations in the education system in the Second Constitutional era were very similar to the ideology of the Republican Turkey. These transformations were the expansion of education, which must be now compulsory and free at the primary level, and the integration of education.<sup>125</sup> In this regard, on 15 September 1913, the law on primary education, *Tedrisât-ı İbtidaiye* entered into force. According to this law, which introduced compulsory primary education, the junior high school for girls became elementary schools, which girls were supposed to attend for 6 years. Again, according to this law, it was planned to expand these schools also in the rural areas.<sup>126</sup> Of course, considering all these circumstances, these developments and shortcomings in the area of education, women rightfully had some demands related to educational matters.

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 297.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 298.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 301.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 302.

Women had many reasons for demanding education. And, they justified their demand in various ways in order to present them acceptable to the society. We can easily say that starting from the first issue of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, women's level of education was an important subject of discussion. For instance, Emine Seher Ali, who was the chief editor of the *Kadınlar Dünyası* for a long time, complains from the ignorance of women and underlines the scarcity of educated women. She claims that this is the main reason of poorly raised kids.<sup>127</sup> As already noted in the previous chapter, the demand for education is commonly the first demand in most women's movements. In order to obtain certain rights including the right to education, women usually get the necessary support from men by referring to the role of women as mothers, and by bringing the concern of raising children into the forefront.<sup>128</sup> Again, as it is already noted, one of the main roles that attributed to women in terms of nationalist projects in their roles as biological and cultural reproducers of the nation or the ethnic community. As these arguments also show, even though there is a certain overlap between women's movement and nationalism, their respective motivations seemed to largely differ.

In another article by Emine Seher Ali, it is possible to see that women are depicted as the carrier of the modernization process. In the same article, Ali draws our attention to the connection between women's level of education and the progress of the nation. She also supports her claim by underlining the role of women as mothers, who raise future generations. The following from her article reflects her view on the importance of education in terms of nation's improvement: "There is no ground for doubt or hesitation that without education nations cannot progress, but they regress, cannot live, but they decline and disappear." In this connection, women's role is

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<sup>127</sup> Emine Seher Ali, "Kadınlıkta Seviye-i İrfan" April 4, 1329 No:1, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 4-6.

<sup>128</sup> Fatmagül Berktaş, "Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Feminizm", 90-91.

stated with these words: "But woman devoted to lore and science would be a real woman and real mother. Her husband, child, even humanity can benefit from this."<sup>129</sup>

There is another article, which was signed as S. L., that one also emphasizes the necessity of women's education. In this article, it is noted that women have the power to determine the destiny of nations simply for being a mother who raises children. Therefore, women's education is not an issue that can be neglected. "Science and education are necessary for women even more than it is for men. Because women have a significant status in the world of civilization. Today all human beings grow up in our arms from poet to philosopher, from inventor to monarch, also criminal and ignorant." In addition to women's role as mothers, this article also mentions problems that arise from men's increasing level of education, and how women cannot keep up with it. Naturally, this situation is presented as another justification for women's demand for education. "The progression of a nation always depends on women. If a woman is not well educated, she can neither teach manners to her child nor can get on well with her highly educated husband. The children, who can possibly serve to their nation will also be the victims of ignorance like their mothers." Moreover, the education problem was clearly perceived as an issue of national service: "Every Ottoman who has a fondness for the nation, does not want to keep his family members in ignorance. On the contrary, he/she leads his/her family to enlightenment and to learning in order to fulfill his/her national duty."<sup>130</sup>

Indeed, as it is seen, women did not hesitate to use nationalist arguments when their demands were at stake. They even presented these nationalist arguments as sources for legitimacy. For example, education was not only crucial in terms of raising children but also necessary to take a stance against foreigners, as children learn national feeling from their mothers. Belkıs Fırat describes this situation in her article

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<sup>129</sup> Emine Seher Ali, "Ahlâk – Maarif", April 5, 1329, No:2, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 15-16.

<sup>130</sup> Şamlı: S(in). L., "Hayat-ı Nisviyemizde Fikdan-ı Maarif", April 11, 1329 No:8, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 80-81.



with these words: “There it is ladies, today’s tragedies –if it is necessary to tell it openly– are related to women. How can our children have an education when we do not have it? ...‘Mothers are the real auxiliaries of the teachers.’ A child will learn first manners, and the national and soldiery feelings in his/her mother’s bosom. This means that the progression and the development of our homeland completely depend on women.”<sup>131</sup> It is possible to see the similarities of the arguments of this passage with the main nationalist arguments. For instance, there is a dualistic representation of women, which depicts them as both the reason of underdevelopment and as a hope for progress. Furthermore, women were also described as the carriers of culture, who plant national feelings in children's minds.

Apart from these, certain articles even point out the correlation between the liberation of the nation and the emancipation of women. For example, in her letter to *Kadınlar Dünyası*, İsmet Nazan underlines the necessity to improve women's level of education and continues: “Then only then, both women and nation will be freed. And we can shout out these words: ‘we also have right to live, and we will get our share of life as well.’”<sup>132</sup>

Another aspect that women support their demand for education is related to marriage. Azize Haydar, in one of her articles, states that marital conflicts between newly wedded couples occur because of the ignorance of women. As she draws our attention, men refuse to permit their daughters' attendance to school, but they also ask for wives that are equivalent with themselves in terms of the level of education. Naturally, Haydar says, they cannot have it both. "Our men always find fault with women, they bring forward the argument ‘Yes, our women are ignorant!’ in every case. Our women are ignorant, indeed they are, this we cannot deny. However, who

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<sup>131</sup> Belkıs Fırat, “Tahsilimiz”, April 12, 1329 No: 9, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 89-90.

<sup>132</sup> Eyüp Sultan: İsmet Nazan, “Evrak-ı Varide: Muhterem Hanımefendi,” April 14, 1329 No:11, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 108-109.

keeps them in ignorance? Isn't it the fathers who object to the education of their own daughters at most after they got 12 years-old?"<sup>133</sup>

The women's demand for education was not solely a demand for attending school. In addition to that, women were generally expressing their own thoughts about the content of education, and the transformations that they wanted to see in the educational system in their articles. In this connection, there were important subjects of discussion in *Kadınlar Dünyası* such as how to raise children and what should parents teach them, or which lessons should be in schools. Women were emphasizing the necessity to preserve national values and to pass these on children through education. In her article, in which she depicts children raising methods of old Turkish women, Azize Şadi says: "Because, those mothers, whose children just begin to say 'mom, dad', imbue them love and fondness for the nation. And the time where little ideas grow, those indoctrinations would also develop. In short, when they were just kids, parents were teaching them firstly the fondness for nation as part of their primary education. Those were the kids that thanks to them, Turkishness found the majesty and strength."<sup>134</sup> Another article, which was written by Nazife Mehmet Ali, has parallelism with the article of Azize Şadi, and has nationalist connotations. Accordingly, she implies that there is a responsibility of women in terms of problems related to children's education, and certain consequences that derive from these problems, like the general situation of the nation. "None of us could embed national sentiments to our children's hearts, insert national emotions into their ears. None of us thought that the women of those countries prepared the improvement and enhancement of those nations, which we envy today. None of us

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<sup>133</sup> Azize Haydar, "Bizde Kız Evlâtların Tahsili", April 16, 1329 No:13, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 127-129.

<sup>134</sup> Fatih: Azize Şadi, "Terbiye-i İbtidaiye", April 22, 1329 No:19, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 195.

knew that those prodigies, profound minds that pave the way for today's developed nations were raised by mothers just like us."<sup>135</sup>

Women did not articulate these demands in regard to education only through women's periodicals. There were also some initiatives, though mostly on an individual basis to enhance and make a contribution to the educational system. One of the most significant of these initiatives was *Ana Mektebi*, which was established by Azize Haydar. However, women were aware of the fact that they need to unite, instead of acting individually. Therefore, they were acknowledging that they should form associations in order to get favorable results. Actually, there were some women's associations, but they were commonly aiming to make women participate in public sphere through employment. And, from a different perspective, women's employment was related to their demand for education. In other words, women were struggling to acquire a place in the public sphere for themselves by demanding education and employment. In this sense, maybe the most prevailing theme of the *Kadınlar Dünyası* was shaped by women's demand for employment.

### 3.2.3 Work

In a predominantly rural Ottoman society, women in the rural areas, in this case, Anatolian women, were responsible for farming, sometimes even more responsible than men, as much as they were responsible for housekeeping and child raising. But beyond that, in urban life, especially in Istanbul, a credible and highly regarded job mostly seen equal to civil service. And, not surprisingly women were not welcome in that area yet. Those women who had jobs in the city were either merchandise or working in the factories, which were also not that widespread.<sup>136</sup> Consequently, the number of women that were employed was very low.

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<sup>135</sup> Kasımpaşa: Nazife Mehmet Ali, "Muhterem Osmanlı Kadınlarına," April 25, 1329, No:22, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 227.

<sup>136</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 343.

There were plenty of reasons and justifications that underlie the demand for work. According to Aynur Demirdirek, mainly the desires of women led to the emergence of women's demand for work. And, these desires were respectively making women's existence accepted, changing the perception that positions women as second-class citizens, entering to the realms that thought as closed to women and having jobs besides what is considered as women's work.<sup>137</sup> Demirdirek claims that the demand for work initially emerged in order to justify certain situations in which women, whose primary duties defined predominantly as mother and wife, were obliged to earn their livelihood outside the domestic realm, like misery and poverty, and the death of the man who earns a living for the family. Besides these, women were also asking for jobs in order to contribute to the development of their country.<sup>138</sup>

According to Ottoman women, their active participation in economic life was one of the crucial aspects of women's revolution, as it would free women from economic dependency. There are plenty of articles, which were published in *Kadınlar Dünyası* that can verify these arguments. For instance, there is an article that is titled “It Is Our Right to Work”. This article is not only defending women’s right to work, but also justifies this demand by referring to Islam: “It is asked if it is permissible to give women freedom, and let them work where men work. [However,] it is not thought that women are not an exception for the commandment of working; it includes women too.” In the same article, it is also noted that keeping women out of the educational system and working life, or basically keeping them away from public life, can create undesirable results, considering the role of women as mothers who raise future generations. As it is seen, the traditional role of women as mothers was used as a justification just like Islam also in this case where women demand to be part of work life.

We are mothers, mothers of the civilization! We are responsible for upbringing our children. Breeding that we pass on our children will only create good results if it is built on science. If we, women are insensible to economic, social, and

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<sup>137</sup> Aynur Demirdirek, “In Pursuit of the Ottoman Women’s Movement” in *Deconstructing Images of “The Turkish Woman”*, ed. Zehra F. Arat (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 69-70.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 69.

communal life, this would end up throwing our children into the turmoil of life, blind and idealess; that means leaving them in great miseries of the fight of life whether they are boys or girls.<sup>139</sup>

Similar to education, women were also justifying participation in work life by referring to the improvement of nation. The article of Fahire İclâl represents an important example of this argument.

My venerable and esteemed sisters! That is to say that we are the measurement of nation's progress and development, level of predisposition and capability. So why should we not work? Today, the advancement of the nation depends on our efforts; the happiness of our nation depends on our wonderful labor. Everyone who feels fondness for nation that raised them, with patriotism and blessing in their hearts, should work on accomplishing their tasks as much as they can.<sup>140</sup>

Another article that is related to women's demand for employment in terms of nation's development is the leading article in the 20<sup>th</sup> issue of *Kadınlar Dünyası*. In this article, women's demand for work is supported by giving examples from the miserable lives of women and their families after the death of a man who is in charge of family's livelihood. More interestingly, in the same article, it is also stated that women are not requiring this freedom in order to enjoy themselves like men usually do.

Yes, we want freedom! However, the freedom that we ask for is not the same freedom that simple-minded people envision. We even do not consider it necessary to state that the freedom we asked for will not be like the freedom of men. We do not mean that we want to run wild and have a good time like they do. The freedom that we asked is the freedom of labor. Ottoman women definitely need the freedom of labor in order to get rid of the misery in their social lives. This is one of our legitimate rights...<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Çalışmak Hakkımızdır", April 22, 1329 No: 19, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcrci Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 187-188.

<sup>140</sup> Hırka-i Şerif: Fahire İclâl, "Vatan Bizim Sevgili Anamızdır", April 22, 1329 No: 19, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcrci Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 192-193.

<sup>141</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Hürriyet İsteriz!", April 23, 1329 No:20, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcrci Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 197-198.

Then, the author cites the possible positive implications of freedom of work for women. "If women could get their freedom of labor, business and labor will rise up, and money will also increase. Those who work and want to work will find jobs; they can earn their own keep and can up bring their children. In fact, even inventive ideas can be developed by women; industry will increase and escalate in number."<sup>142</sup>

The lead article in the 22<sup>nd</sup> issue of *Kadınlar Dünyası* is also important in terms of women and work. It supports women's demand in reference to the equality of woman and man. Furthermore, it also emphasizes the importance of women's special status as mothers and its relation to the nation's progress. According to this article, the plight of the Ottoman Empire is linked to the gender segregation, which strictly separates men and women socially. "Since Ottoman women cannot be a part of nation's social order, since they are not allowed to collaborate with men in jobs, in labor, since they are always obliged to live separate lives, this nation was devoid of improvement and advancement." It is clearly stated that providing proper education to women and encouraging them to have professions, in other words, investing in women and girls is a necessary step for progress. "If we think of now, future, and want to preserve and improve our nation, we need to educate our girls according to the necessities of the time, stir and invigorate industry and labor within womanhood. The reality, the strength of a nation is womanhood, the development of its womanhood."<sup>143</sup>

As it is seen, women were constantly emphasizing their potential contributions to the nation. Women seemed like embracing traditional gender roles attributed to them in nationalist projects in order to find a necessary support for their own struggle. This attitude makes sense considering the equality narrative of nationalism, which appears as a promise of new opportunities for women. "We need to have a special status by claiming our rights, strive to obtain rights. This is also one of our rights, a legitimate

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>143</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Hakkımızı Arayalım", April 25, 1329 No:22, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 219.

and civil right. Like there is no nation without women, national movement cannot be a national development unless women provide support.”<sup>144</sup>

In terms of women’s employment, one of the most important incidents that echoed through *Kadınlar Dünyası* is the anecdote of a rude treatment that women faced, who applied to Telephone Company for a job. Women conveyed this subject to the periodical. As we learn from the related articles, the people that the Telephone Company would employ were supposed to know French or Greek.<sup>145</sup> The articles interpreted this request as an insult to their national sentiments. Since so many women wrote articles about this, *Kadınlar Dünyası* undertook the responsibility of following the aftermath of this issue. At last, thanks to the public opinion that molded by the efforts of the *Kadınlar Dünyası*, it became possible to get a favorable result. As it is stated in the 36<sup>th</sup> issue of the periodical, the Telephone Company got in contact with the administration of *Kadınlar Dünyası* and announced that three or four women would be employed.<sup>146</sup> The official telegram that is sent by the Telephone Company, which states that three or four women will be employed even though they do not know French or Greek, is also published and shared with the readers of the periodical in the 37<sup>th</sup> issue.<sup>147</sup> This development is highly important because as a result of their concrete struggle, women acquired an implicit acceptance of their demand for work.

Women's demand was not limited to asking jobs for themselves. They had several demands in regard to work, such as the improvement of bad working conditions, and raise for the inadequate salaries. Women were pointing out the lack of regulations in

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>145</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, “Telefon İdaresi” and Bedra Osman, “Aynen”, April 26, 1329 No:23, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 229-230.

<sup>146</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, “Efkar-ı Umumiye-i Nisvan da Var İmiş”, May 9, 1329 No: 36, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 362-363.

<sup>147</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, “Matbuat Müdüriyet-i Aliyesinden Tebliğ Olunmuştur!”, May 10, 1329 No:37, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 372-373.

working life as the reason for these problems. "Why? Because working life, like any other lives in our country, is unregulated. There is no profit equivalent to the effort. We tire our bodies for nothing, we toil, but still, cannot earn a thing." Furthermore, women were claiming that the importance of workers was not properly appreciated. "In our country, both men and women do not attach to workers and craftsmen the importance that they deserve. We cannot understand that our country's life depends on their efforts, their constant efforts."<sup>148</sup>

Beyond all these things, maybe the biggest obstacle that holds women back from working life is the religious structure of the Ottoman society. As aforementioned, religious rules were the main source that regulated every aspect of life in Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, women and men were not allowed to share the same social environment. However, women were demanding to attend school, and participating working life, which requires a change in existing circumstances. Besides these demands, there were certain daily situations like shopping, where creating separate realms for women and men was almost impossible. In such situations, according to the religious rules, women were supposed to obey strict regulations of attire and obliged to wear *tesettür*.<sup>149</sup> Clearly, regulations in regard to attire, which will be analyzed in the next section, were decreasing the probability of women's employment, especially where they should be working with men.

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<sup>148</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "İşçilere, İş İsteyenlere Müzaheret Lâzımdır", May 14, 1329 No:41, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 412-413.

<sup>149</sup> Tesettür is an umbrella term I prefer using instead of hijab, which only connotes a form of a veil that women use to cover their head and chest while referring to the outdoor attire of the Ottoman women, even though these two terms are used interchangeably in these days. Etymologically Arabic, tesettür means to cover oneself, therefore provides more inclusive notion in terms of Ottoman women's public garment. This dress traditionally has three main parts namely entari, ferace, and yashmak, which aim to cover women's body parts in presence of men other than their family members. Of course, within time, and according to the social transformations, women made alterations on their outdoor attire in terms of shape, color, fabric, and transparency. However, because of the uneasiness of the society in regard to the unsuitability of women's attire to the religious rules, women were obliged to wear chador (çarşaf) instead of ferace, which again eventually altered by women in order to adapt novel social conditions. With these changes once again outdoor attire became fashionable element, something completely different from its initial aim. For further information: Jennifer Scarce, *Women's Costume of the Near and Middle East* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003); Muhaddere Taşcıoğlu, *Türk Osmanlı Cemiyetinde Kadının Sosyal Durumu ve Kadın Kıyafetleri* (Ankara: Akın Matbaası, 1958); Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).



#### 3.2.4. Dress Code

The women's demands in regard to the rearrangement of the attire are in fact diverse. In this part, firstly the regulations and common practices of the era in terms of women's attire will be examined. Then, women's demands will be assessed in conjunction with the women's movement and nationalism by examining *Kadınlar Dünyası*.

*Tesettür* was a religious obligation for Muslim women in the Ottoman society. Women were being forced to obey this by their husbands and the state. According to Serpil Çakır, *tesettür* was one of the main reasons of women's isolation from the public sphere. By imposing *tesettür* for women, it was aimed to cover the body parts that were associated with sexuality and also to preserve social order.<sup>150</sup>

There were, in fact, two different forms of attire, one for wearing inside the house and one for the public place. The former were mostly grandiose and represented family's financial status. The latter, however, was covering the dressiness of the housedresses. Through certain restrictions on women's attire in the public place, it was thought that men's, even state's honour could be protected.<sup>151</sup>

Women's demands in regard to rearrangement of the attire emerged in parallel with the women's gradually changing social status. Accordingly, the attire of women was an important obstacle on the way to the realization of their demands. Furthermore, in accordance with the increasing participation of women in the public sphere, women's attire was becoming more of a fashion issue rather than a religious obligation. As Serpil Çakır argues, the clothing of the Ottoman women represents their isolation from social life. In addition to that, it determines women's status and the transformation of it. As women gradually became part of social life as workforce and by having professions, their clothes also took more suitable shape for their new

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<sup>150</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 244-245.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 245.

status. As a result of social mobility, individuality turned into an important issue, which eventually led certain pieces of *tesettür* like *ferace* and *yashmak* become materials of fashion.<sup>152</sup> So, what exactly women were demanding in regard to attire?

In fact, as it is previously noted, women were demanding different things as they were all from different backgrounds. For instance, some women were accepting *tesettür* as a religious obligation. Others asked for more nationalized attire, still some others refused to see it as a religious obligation and thus suggested to put *tesettür* away altogether. Even then, in certain cases when *tesettür* and relevant issues were argued in reference to Islam, values of men prevailed as Aynur Demirdirek also underlines. While women had demands, they were also still aware of the fact that the evolution of the social structures takes place in accordance with masculine value.<sup>153</sup>

The head article of the 25<sup>th</sup> issue of *Kadınlar Dünyası* is important in this sense. In fact, this article is actually about proving that women's employment did not contradict with the religious tenets. At the same time, challenged the patriarchal order by suggesting to ask, "how much is it a religious obligation to wear *tesettür*" to the house of fatwa. "Yes, today we are against the attire in Istanbul, which is so-called *tesettür*. Is this type of *tesettür* religious? Who with courage can say yes to this? Let's ask. We have got a house of fatwa, let's benefit from it. Let them inform all Muslims, all Ottomans clearly on how *tesettür* should be and in what sense religion obliges *tesettür*?"<sup>154</sup> Even though there are some important criticisms like this one, there are also other articles that were sent to *Kadınlar Dünyası*, in which *tesettür* was described as a religious obligation.

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 249. Ferace is a long dark coat that women wear over their entari. It resembles the entari in terms of its form, however it is more voluminous and black in order to avoid drawing any unnecessary attention. Obviously, within time women started use ferace in different colors according to their taste, and in a way that compliments the hourglass shape of a woman body. Yashmak, on the other hand, is a headdress that women use, which consists of two separate veils. One covers the head, and the other covers the face from nose to chin. For further information: Jennifer Scarce, "The Ottoman's at Home – Mainly Istanbul", *Women's Costume of Near and Middle East* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 38-89.

<sup>153</sup> Aynur Demirdirek, "In Pursuit of the Ottoman Women's Movement", 72.

<sup>154</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Su-i Telâkki", April 28, 1329 No:25, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 251.

For instance, Emine Seher Ali, in her article, represents tesettür as a religious obligation. Still, she brings a different aspect to the argument of attire. According to her, it is not required from women to cover up their bodies so strictly. Ali claims that the strict *tesettür* practice of the day was actually part of Iranian tradition. “Because religion does not command us to cover up this drastically. Today’s type of *tesettür* came to us with many other bad things from Iran. The public attire (stre-i harici) of Arabs is not like that. They do not cover up as strictly as we do; further, in Yemen and in nomad societies of Arabs, women are busy with trade and industry.”<sup>155</sup>

However, others come up with nationalist arguments. Nebile Kamuran criticized certain attitudes of women like embracing the European attire over the Ottoman. For instance, she suggested women pick out proper clothes that are compatible with their nationality.<sup>156</sup> Indeed, it is possible to find various articles with a similar theme in *Kadınlar Dünyası*. As this quote also shows, women’s attire is clearly not an issue that can be explained only with a reference to religion, in this case, to Islam. It is beyond that; it is also an issue of nationalism, which is quite closely related to the values of the nation. In her article, *Dressing for the Revolution*, Palmira Brummett also draws our attention to this nationalism aspect of the issue, where she assesses Ottoman women’s attire through the satirical cartoons of the Ottoman press. In this connection, Brummett notes that a woman who dressed up according to the European fashion cannot be seen as entirely subversive, neither can she be described as a victim, as her dress choice is a reflection of her conscious act. This woman image represents a woman who chooses to participate in the Europeanization of the Empire; she is a consumer, who underestimates her own nation culturally and economically.

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<sup>155</sup> Emine Seher Ali, “Tesettür Meselesi”, May 12, 1329 No:39, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 394-395.

<sup>156</sup> Fındıklı: Nebile Kamuran, “Kıyafetimiz”, April 23, 1329 No:20, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 203.

And, obviously what underlines her consumer identity is exactly the dress that she wears.<sup>157</sup>

Zeliha Osman writes an interesting article on this issue. According to her, the underlying reason of women's fondness for fashion is men's expectation from women to be dressed beautifully. Ironically, men are also the ones who criticize women's attire and their fondness for fashion constantly and seriously. Therefore, Zeliha Osman states that the decision of wearing *tesettür* or not should only belong to women.

Instead of accusing men, who constantly promote fashion for women and allow their most revealing evening gowns, inculcating the weight of this sin to the shoulders of women, holding women responsible for every harsh strike that our nation faces, is actually making these souls intolerant that are overwhelmed with life... Turkish women need to put an end to this! Either by saying 'Explicitly we want this!' women have to be freed from being responsible for this, or acknowledging the unsuitability of foreign attires with our type of attire and forbid families with a firm and tenacious national determination.<sup>158</sup>

Aziz Haydar's article is also significant as it reflects the thoughts of ordinary Ottoman women in regard to the issue of the rearrangement of the attire. In this article, Aziz Haydar quotes a conversation of women who talk about *Kadınlar Dünyası* that she overheard on a boat trip. According to her, those women were complaining of the absence of the articles about fashion and visual fashion plates in *Kadınlar Dünyası*. Accordingly, there is a note from periodical's editorial under this article that heralds soon enough that there will be articles in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, related to national fashion, and these articles will be supported by visuals. Women just need to be a little bit more patient.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Palmira Brummett, "Dressing for Revolution: Mother, Nation, Citizen and Subversive in the Ottoman Satirical Press, 1908-1911" in *Constructing Images of "The Turkish Woman"*, ed. Zehra F. Arat (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 53.

<sup>158</sup> Zeliha Osman, "Türk Kadınları", May 26, 1329 No: 53, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 30-31.

<sup>159</sup> Aziz Haydar, "Vapurda", May 4, 1329 No:31, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 314-315.

Hence, creating national attire was highly significant subject on women's agenda. In this sense, women were not just sending articles to *Kadınlar Dünyası*. As women always state, also with regard to their different demands, forming an association that will strive for the cause of creating national attire was crucial. Accordingly, the head article in the 54<sup>th</sup> issue of *Kadınlar Dünyası* mentions an association that will be established precisely for this purpose. The aims of the association go as follows: creating national attire, vitalizing the work life, founding a work place, and employing widows, desperate ones, and young girls who are growing up, and founding schools.<sup>160</sup> In the next issue of the periodical, the name of the association is announced as Ottoman Association to Defend the Rights of Women (*Osmanlı Müdafaa-i Hukuk-ı Nisvan Cemiyeti*) and its program is shared with the readers. In this connection, association aims "to regulate women's social life and increase employment within Ottoman womanhood, and preparing educated women who will raise future generations; [it will work] firstly on the regulation of women's public attire, secondly on the establishment of work places, where women and girls will be employed, thirdly on the enhancement of women's level of education."<sup>161</sup>

From the beginning of the establishment of the Ottoman Association to Defend the Rights of Women, women's demand for the rearrangement of the attire and the debate over it became even more intense. According to Aziz Haydar, this is such a subject that is hard to have a consensus on as everyone has different taste and opinion. Therefore, she suggests thinking carefully about this issue in order to create attire that is compatible with Islam, and that appeals to women's taste at the same time.<sup>162</sup> We can also see that the thoughts of Aziz Haydar are not only widely

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<sup>160</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Faaliyet Başlıyor", May 27, 1329 No:54, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 34.

<sup>161</sup> "Osmanlı Müdafaa-i Hukuk-ı Nisvan Cemiyeti Programı", May 28, 1329 No:55, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 44.

<sup>162</sup> Aziz Haydar, "Çok Düşünmeli", May 29, 1329 No:56, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 56-57.

accepted by *Kadınlar Dünyası*, but they are also carried one step further. Accordingly, in the head article of the 57<sup>th</sup> issue of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, readers' attention is drawn to the importance of getting everyone's opinion from cities to villages, from women to men, through the efforts of the association in order to decide the necessary changes in the attire of Muslim Ottoman women.<sup>163</sup> According to Aliye Hanım, in the Muslim lands, there are different rules and practices rather than a uniform practice in terms of women's attire. Thus, the best thing to do is embracing new attire that is compatible with our traditions, after a careful examination of our history.<sup>164</sup>

Among all these arguments, İsmet Refi has a distinct and relatively more secular position. She reveals her thoughts in her article in the 91<sup>st</sup> issue of *Kadınlar Dünyası*. According to her, the struggles for creating national attire and the enthusiasm in order to make people wear uniform-like clothes are nonsensical. Instead of working on national attire, what needed to be done is working on a liberal environment where people can wear what they really like.<sup>165</sup>

Compared to İsmet Refi, the assessment of Mükerrerrem Belkıs is much more moderate, though still novel. She perceives the rearrangement of the attire as a necessity for progress. In this connection, she states that there might be a possible conflict between conservatives and reformers. However, she articulates that she believes modernity will prevail eventually. Beyond that, she strongly hopes that they could get rid of the veil, which affects women's existence in social life horribly.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Kıyafetimizin Islahı", May 30, 1329 No: 57, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 66.

<sup>164</sup> Moda: Aliye, "Kıyafet-i Nisvan Hakkında", June 2, 1329 No:60, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 101-102.

<sup>165</sup> Şişli: İsmet Refi, "Memleketimizde Kadınlığın Yegâne Penah ve İlticagâhı Olan Muhterem Kadınlar Dünyası İdarehanesine," July 3, 1329 No:91, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 431-432.

<sup>166</sup> Aksaray: Mükerrerrem Belkıs, "Kıyafet-i Hariciye-i Nisvan", June 12, 1329 No:70, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 204-205.

The *tesettür* was indeed important as an issue. In her article, Mahmure Fuat notes that the resolution of this issue has a key role in the resolution of other problems like arranged marriages, reaching to the standards of European education, increasing attendance to university, participation in business life.<sup>167</sup> In this regard, the rearrangement of the attire issue is also closely linked with the consumption of local goods, since women's fondness for European goods and luxurious items, and their excessive consumption habits led to criticisms.

### 3.2.5 Consuming Local Goods

The consumption of local goods is also one of the most prevailing themes in *Kadınlar Dünyası*. This issue is connected to nationalism, and women's movement deeply, as it, in fact, reflects an organized struggle to change women's consumption habits while contributing to the nation's economy.

*Kadınlar Dünyası* also reflected the political and economic difficulties of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ottoman Empire crushed under the burden of war, women believed the consumption of local goods will be a solution to the current situation of the state by reducing the dependency on foreign sources, enhancing economic life, and increasing employment.

One important thought on this issue is the speech of Nezihe Muhlis, later will be known as Nezihe Muhiddin, at the Conference of the Ottoman Association for the Protection of Turkish Women (*Osmanlı Türk Hanımları Esirgeme Derneği*), which is also published in the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of *Kadınlar Dünyası*. Her speech can be perceived as a summary of the economic situation of the Ottoman Empire. According to Nezihe Muhlis, the real strength of a country lies in its economic power. And, what makes a

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<sup>167</sup> Üsküdar – Nuhkapısı: Mahmure Fuat, “Maksada Vusul Tevhid-i Hedef”, July 10, 1329 No:98, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 498.

state economically powerful is its economic independence. She describes a state, which is suffering from an economic dependence with these words:

Because that nation is not active, does not have the freedom of action. Its acts and moves depend on the interests of foreigners, on the pleasure and wishes of the strangers. More precisely, that nation is a weak-willed toy in the hands of other enemy-nations whose people and country are different and not interested in the aftermath of that weak nation.<sup>168</sup>

One of the most enduring economic difficulties was capitulations.<sup>169</sup> And, to overcome this problem, women believed that they need to get rid of their financial chains and gain their economic independence back. At this point, these words of Nezihe Muhlis reveal that there is an important role attributed to women.

We have to take our rights back from those who are not willing to give them to us, with our persistence and steadiness. And for this, we, women as an important element of great Ottomans, as mothers of now and future should fight against Europeans, yes Christian and bigoted Europeans, with unceasing determination and everlasting persistence. If necessary, we should sacrifice part of our feeling of tog up, which is demanded by our nature. We should wear our own products, local goods even though they are roughly made. If this also not possible, we should only buy what we need from Muslims. The peace, the future of the country, happiness and the prosperity of the nation lie within.<sup>170</sup>

Surely, this issue about the consumption of local goods is closely related to other demands of women. For instance, in the article that she wrote as a response to the speech of Nezihe Muhlis, Emine Seher Ali states that every problem including the economic ones derives from the lack of education. She, therefore, claims that every problem can be solved if the education issue can be solved. She notes that the European supremacy does not originate from the products or weapons that they

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<sup>168</sup> Nezihe Muhlis, “Konferans”, April 6, 1329 No:3, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 27-31.

<sup>169</sup> Capitulations basically refer to contracts, which grant foreigners some privileges in terms of trading in the Ottoman Empire such as being safe from local taxation and prosecution. For more information: Maurits H. Van Den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls and Beraths in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2005)

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 30.



produce but from ideas. "The development of nations depends on the excess of their army of ideas and their level of enlightenment. What makes Europe that we oppose with our every word, every article, superior to us, what makes them rule over is ideas, idea bombs, idea weapons."<sup>171</sup>

In general, the perception of the consumption of local goods primarily as a matter of national service was very common. In her letter to *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Bergüzar Hanım states that women can serve their nation by using local goods with these following words:

Every Ottoman woman should draw a lesson from this newspaper; do not hesitate to write that what they should wear is local goods. To avoid Turks or Ottomans without persistence buying European goods by forgetting this pain in ten days, so I ask you to add this to your daily publication. At least, we, as long as we live, should wear local goods; maybe with this, what we do will be a humble service to our nation.<sup>172</sup>

Other women were also aware of the fact that consuming foreign goods had far worse results than the economic ones. Especially, due to their most recent experience in the Balkan Wars, they did not only receive help from Europeans, but they have also been betrayed and lost their loved ones due to Europeans' collaboration with the enemy. Zehra Hanım describes this situation as follows: "We should work too; because before our eyes there is nothing nicer or more durable than local goods, and consuming them is a huge service to the nation. Otherwise, we see and understand that our own money turns into weapons and riddle bodies of our children with holes."<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Emine Seher Ali, "İktisat", April 7, 1329 No:4, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 34-35.

<sup>172</sup> Aksaray Muratpaşa Sofular Caddesi numara 5: Bergüzar, "Muhterem Hanımefendi Hazretleri!", April 9, 1329 No:6, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 59-60.

<sup>173</sup> Firuzağa: Zehra Hacı, "Sevgili Hamiyet-perver Hemşirelerim,", April 19, 1329 No:16, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 161-162.

Whether this is actually an issue of national service or not, the consumption of local goods is clearly linked to nationalism. In her article, Ulviye Macit underlines the role of women in nationalism, in relation to the economic problems of the country. This article is crucial as it reflects the overlap between women's movement and nationalism. The following statement reveals that women use certain roles that have been attributed to them by nationalist projects, like being biological and cultural reproducers of the nation, in order to underline their own importance, as we see the examples earlier. "As we, women are the ones who most concerned of country's sadness and happiness, economists should grow out of our bosoms. Womanhood is the cradle of the nation and bravery. Every nation is born in the arms of women."<sup>174</sup> The indicators of this overlap were not just limited to the role of being a mother. Women were propagating the national ideas also in order to show that they are important elements of the nation as much as men and that therefore should have the same rights with them. In encouraging women to consume local goods, Ulviye Macit embraces nationalism:

Army, battleship, castle cannot develop us. They cannot save us from defeat because they are all material. Material powers are always defeated after a fight with the ones who are more powerful than they are. However, the national feeling in the heart, the love of country in the soul is an undefeatable castle. Let's love our nation, and be proud what is made by our nation. Let's put those things to the most admirable, decorated and gorgeous part of our living room. Let's love craftsmen who agonize. Let's buy the nice, graceful, and durable products that they produce, and make them happy. Because when it is time for defending the honor and dignity, they will be the ones who sacrifice their properties and lives. Did we benefit from those foreign institutions in the Balkan catastrophe, which took our gold by handfuls? Never! Aren't we?<sup>175</sup>

There are some articles, which built on nationalist sensibilities and therefore include radical approaches regarding consumption of local goods. For instance, in one of these articles, it is suggested not to have any European good in the houses. However,

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<sup>174</sup> Ulviye Macit, "Yurt Hemşirelerime", April 11, 1329 No:8, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 78.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 79.

Atiye Şükran criticizes this. In her assessment, she argues that clearly everyone owns non-Ottoman goods, one way or another. According to her, the articles that promote the consumption of local goods need to be interpreted as an incentive that aims to change the consumption habits of people prospectively. On the contrary, suggesting people to get rid of foreign goods that they already have would also be an exaggerated attitude that needs to be avoided.<sup>176</sup>

There are different solutions that are suggested to save Ottoman Empire from this position, which it was currently in, in relation to the issue of increasing the consumption of local goods. For example, in her article, Fatimatüzzehra argues that every successful nation tends to protect its own wealth. However, the Ottoman Empire tends towards aperty, and this is why they suffer now.

Look at once the path that most powerful nations pursue today. Firstly they protect their own nation; later on they burn the midnight oil. They both repair their possessions and acquire wealth for themselves. They are keen on their nation, but also know how to protect it. They use the products that are produced in their country and are proud of wearing those. They encourage the manufacturers and the merchants in order to let them make goods as they wish to have.<sup>177</sup>

In a different article, which is written in response to the argument that defines Ottoman Empire as the sick man of Europe, the writer, Behice Mehmet suggests avoiding European fabrics and jewels as the treatment of the sickness. Furthermore, she notes that raising children with patriotism will also contribute to this healing process.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Kadıköyü: Atiye Şükran, “Hiçbir Şey Birdenbire Olmaz Birbirimizi Muahaze Etmeyelim!”, May 5, 1329 No:32, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 323-324.

<sup>177</sup> Fatimatüzzehra, “Teali-i Millet, Fıkr-i Milliyi Takip ile Olur”, May 9, 1329 No:36, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 367-368.

<sup>178</sup> Anadoluhisarı: Behice Mehmet, “Osmanlı Hanımlarını İntibaha Davet”, May 8, 1329 No:35, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 357-358.

Not every article about this issue has critical and didactic tone. There are also some articles, which reveal that there are some improvements in the consumption of local goods as a result of the persistence of women and the articles that they constantly wrote. For example, in her letter that she sent to *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Sernamis Emin states that thanks to the articles that have been published in the magazine, the inhabitants of Beşiktaş begin to use local goods for a while now, and the shopkeepers who realize that there is a demand for local goods also begin to sell more of locally produced goods.<sup>179</sup> Even though there is an increase in the consumption of local goods, it was unable to reach the expected levels, as most women do not know where to find local goods. Therefore, in some of the articles, women call the shopkeepers for more advertising.<sup>180</sup>

In fact, a major debate on the issue began with the article of Nazife İclâl. In the article, İclâl mentions what happened to one of her acquaintances. The woman in question goes to a store of Hereke textile mill, which only sells locally produced goods, in order to buy a fabric for a chador. However, she states that she faced a rude treatment when she asked for a bargaining. Thus, on her way back home, she buys a foreign fabric for a much cheaper price. Based on this anecdote, Nazife İclâl comments that the expensive prices and rude attitudes of salesmen do not help the struggle for increasing the consumption of local goods. Thereupon, some other women wrote critical articles as a response, which basically implies that the rudeness of salesman cannot be a valid reason for buying foreign goods<sup>181</sup>, whereas some women mention the politeness of foreign salesmen, which encourage them to buy

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<sup>179</sup> Beşiktaş Kılıçalı: Sernamis Emin, “Aziz Hemşirelerim,” May 11, 1329 No:38, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 390-391.

<sup>180</sup> Kadıköy: Atiye Şükrân, “Çalışmayı, Çalıştırmayı Bilelim,” May 13, 1329 No:40, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 406-407.

<sup>181</sup> Erenköy: Emine Saîr, “Kadınlar Dünyası Gazete-i Muhteremesi İdare-i Behiyesine,” May 16, 1329 No:43, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 439.

their products instead of local products.<sup>182</sup> As a result, the store manager İrfan Bey had sent a letter to *Kadınlar Dünyası*, and made an explanation about this incident. However neither content nor the wording was polite according to the taste of *Kadınlar Dünyası* and fell short of satisfying women.<sup>183</sup>

The issue of the consumption of local goods is so important that eventually an association was formed in order to encourage the consumption of local goods and to employ women as well. According to the declaration of the Women's Organization for the Consumption of Local Products (*Mamulât-ı Dahiliye İstihlâki Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi*) that is published in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, the aim of the association goes as follows: "Our aim is serving the country, the nation. Poor girls and women will sew for a fee and will be raised as excellent seamstresses in the tailor shop, which planned to be opened. At the same time, the association will work on the development and advancement of womanhood, on enlightenment and improvement of women's knowledge."<sup>184</sup>

Finally, maybe the biggest attempt in regard to the consumption of local goods was also made by the Women's Organization for the Consumption of Local Products. According to the declaration of the association that is published in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 1329, they will open a store and tailor shop where they will employ girls and women in need for a fee. Furthermore, they declare that there will be an exhibition for 6 days –open 3 days for women and 3 days for men– where they

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<sup>182</sup> Mehmet Paşa Yokuşu: Sıdika Ali Rıza, "Ticarette Nezaket Elzemdir", May 19, 1329 No:46, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 470-471.

<sup>183</sup> Hereke Fabrikası Müdürü İrfan, "*Kadınlar Dünyası* Müdürlüğüne", May 17, 1329 No:44, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 447-448.

<sup>184</sup> "Mamulât-ı Dahiliye İstihlâki Kadınlar Cemiyeti Hayriyesi'nin Beyan-namesi", April 7, 1329 No:4, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 41-42.

can see what they produce and order themselves.<sup>185</sup> As we learn later from the head article of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, the man who is responsible for selling fabrics at the exhibition is actually an administrator of Hereke textile mill, called Akif Bey. The seamstresses at the exhibition sew the locally produced fabrics that Akif Bey sells, according to the models that women wish to wear. As it is seen, the previous problem between the salesman of Hereke textile mill store and women in general, where *Kadınlar Dünyası* also got involved, is resolved with the enterprise of the Women's Organization for the Consumption of Local Products and replaced with cooperation eventually.<sup>186</sup>

### 3.2.6 The Organization of the Family Life and the Institution of Marriage

Women's demand for the rearrangement of the family life and institution of marriage is also one of the fundamental demands. It is possible to find plenty of articles in *Kadınlar Dünyası* solely devoted to this issue. As a matter of fact, these articles are our main sources about family life as it takes place within the borders of the private sphere.

In the Ottoman Empire, marriage was the pre-condition of starting a family. As Serpil Çakır also notes, the real purpose of the marriage is reproducing and generating future generations, since population growth is significant for the warrior societies like the Ottoman one. The institution of marriage, which is also greatly supported by religion, was perceived as a necessary element of the social order and for its continuity. Beyond that, marriage is the most important factor that determines the social status of women. In order to be valued, to earn respect, and to secure their future, women were supposed to be married; further they needed to be a mother. A woman without children is perceived as worthless. If a woman cannot give birth to a

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<sup>185</sup> "Mamulât-ı Dahiliye İstihlâki Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi'nden", June 19, 1329 No:77, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 287-288.

<sup>186</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Erkeklerle İştirak", June 22, 1329 No:80, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 313-314.

child, she was either sent to her father's house, or she had to face her husband taking in a second wife. Moreover, if a woman dies before she got married, it is accepted that she failed to fulfill her duty of womanhood.<sup>187</sup> These were the reflections of society's general feelings about marriage.

Based on *Kadınlar Dünyası*, it seems that women have so many different demands regarding marriage and family life. The first one of these demands, and maybe the most important one, since it is seen as the main reason for all other problems, is about how marriage takes shape. In the Ottoman Empire, the concept of arranged marriage was so widespread that most of the families had started as a result of this understanding. However, the families that were started through arranged marriages can hardly be interpreted as happy families. And, since the families are the corner stone of the societies, this complaint on arranged marriages provides us with an explanation about the source of all social dysfunctions. And, as future generations were born and raised in these families, problems were becoming chronic.

As Aynur Demirdirek also states, women prefer “the desired marriage”, where woman and man choose each other to spend the rest of their lives together, instead of arranged marriage.<sup>188</sup> Unfortunately, especially women have no or little right to state an opinion about her own marriage. In her article, Muhterem Fahri describes this situation with these following words: “When they [men] will marry [they want] captivating, polite, honorable [woman]... in short they look for a completely lyrical wife, whereas when it comes to miserable us [women]—how poor— they give us to a man they want, sometimes they even give us to a man's skeleton. The flawless, perfect thoughts of men, who criticize every situation of ours by saying ‘Long hair, short mind.’” Muhterem Fahri also describes how bad it is for a woman to have an obligation to prove her honour in a case where she rejects to marry someone. “Girls, yes we are like prisoners. If a brave sister of ours says that ‘I won't marry him!’

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<sup>187</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 261-262.

<sup>188</sup> Aynur Demirdirek, “In Pursuit of the Ottoman Women's Movement”, 70.

regardless of the consequences, has to prove her chastity and no one see this humiliating thing as an insult!”<sup>189</sup>

In another article from *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Fatma Zerrin not only criticizes the understanding that positions women as prisoners of men, like Muhterem Fahri did, but also criticizes families’ right to decide whom their daughter will marry and the understanding where it is seen normal to marry little girls with old men.<sup>190</sup> This issue of “child-bride”, as we know it today, is also an important subject of the article series named *Family*. The writer of this article series, Aliye Cevat, makes a comparison with Europe and underlines that there is no such thing in Europe like child-bride, because unlike the Ottoman Empire, they regulate everything by law.<sup>191</sup>

While women opposed arranged marriage, they were using the bond between the family and nation, in addition to the women’s role within families. Mükerrerrem Belkıs refers to this link between family and nation as following:

A nation is composed of families and families are composed of individuals. The happiness of individuals leads to the happiness of families, and the happiness of families leads to the happiness of nation. Otherwise, a society that consists of miserable and immoral individuals and families cannot be happy. In order to restore nation and direct it to a happy life, individuals and the families that compose the nation need to be regenerated. And family bosom is the procreator of the individuals and the soul of the nation; primarily these bosoms need to be regenerated. In that case, we can say only a nation that composed of happy families can be happy.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Gedikpaşa: Muhterem Fahri, “El Aman!...”, April 13, 1329 No:10, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 97-98.

<sup>190</sup> Kadıköy: Fatma Zerrin, “Dertlerimiz”, May 21, 1329 No:48, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 487-489.

<sup>191</sup> Kabataş: Aliye Cevat, “Aile -2-”, May 13, 1329 No: 40, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 407-409.

<sup>192</sup> Mükerrerrem Belkıs, “Görücülük”, May 31, 1329 No:58, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 82-84.



In another article, Mükerrerrem Belkıs suggests that the woman and man who are supposed to be married should see each other before they got married under the supervision of their parents. She acknowledges that her suggestion will possibly be challenged. However, she reminds us that no revolution happens without a noise.<sup>193</sup>

Another discussion subject in regard to marriage is about trousseau. In one of her assessments, Aziz Haydar states that the trousseau of a woman was mainly composed of handicrafts in earlier times; however, now it means vast sums spent on unnecessary things. She further notes that newly wedded couples do not actually need many housewares as they already settle into their parents' houses.<sup>194</sup> Indeed, the traditional Ottoman family was an extended family, where at least two generations live together. But, as Aynur Demirdirek underlines, women gradually started to demand to have nuclear families.<sup>195</sup> In fact, it is possible to find articles in *Kadınlar Dünyası* that imply women's demand for nuclear families. For instance, again in one of Aziz Haydar's articles about trousseau, her statements can be interpreted in that connection. Accordingly, she suggests to women and their parents to buy a house or a shop instead of spending so much money on housewares as trousseau, and give this house or shop to their daughters. In this way, women can have constant financial support by renting it out, or simply can live in that house without wondering about their mother and sister-in-law.<sup>196</sup>

Besides arranged marriage and trousseau, another argument about marriage arises from the difference between women and men's education level, which can also be assessed under women's demand for education, as we already did. According to this,

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<sup>193</sup> Aksaray: Mükerrerrem Belkıs, "Görücülüğün Yerine", June 4, 1329 No:62, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 124-126.

<sup>194</sup> Aziz Haydar, "Çeyiz", June 5, 1329 No: 63, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 130-132.

<sup>195</sup> Aynur Demirdirek, "In Pursuit of the Ottoman Women's Movement", 70.

<sup>196</sup> Aziz Haydar, "Yine Çeyiz", June 7, 1329 No:65, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 153-54.

simply the couples that had widely distinctive worldview were eventually not getting along and were seeking out divorce. But, apparently, there is a far greater danger than the break down of the unity of family that women did realize: men's increasing choice for marrying with foreign women. In her article, Fatma Zerrin argues that Turkish men gradually prefer marrying foreign women, because, according to her, Turkish women do not know how to “manipulate” men. From this perspective, she underlines the importance of having some particular lessons in schools like housekeeping and child raising.<sup>197</sup> Perihan Arif also mentions that young men who received education in Europe indeed choose foreign women as their wife. However, she describes the results of these marriages as an even bigger danger than the marriage itself. The children who come into the world within these families sadly have no idea about their nation, which is a great danger for the future of the nation.<sup>198</sup>

Besides criticisms or expectations about how marriage takes shape, there were also expectations about family life. Naturally, we learn women's demand in regard to family life again from the articles that they have sent to *Kadınlar Dünyası*. While the family is considered as a cornerstone of the society, women, in turn, are the cornerstones of families. From this respect, women could create a concrete ground to support their arguments in which they ask for a status that women really deserve. Mademoiselle Eliz describes this situation in her article where she underlines the necessity of revolution in the realm of womanhood with these words: "The pillar of a society is family. If this constitution is firm and in good order, without a doubt that the society will also be in good order...The essence of the family is the woman. Women should be considered, they should have a position, further, they should have the knowledge so that there can be ordered both in family and society."<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Kadıköy: Fatma Zerrin, “Tehlikenin Büyüğü”, June 5, 1329 No:63, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 132-136.

<sup>198</sup> Sarıgözel: Perihan Arif, “Halazadem Mukadder İrfan Hanımefendi'ye”, June 22, 1329 No:80, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 320-321.

<sup>199</sup> Matmazel Eliz, “Kadınlık Âleminde İhtiyac-ı İnkılâb -1-”, April 16, 1329 No:13, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 124-125.

Similar opinions are also expressed in the article of Memnune bint-i Hasan. In her article, there is a reference to women's special position in the family in general, and specifically to their role of being a mother. As next quote will also reveal, women were using their crucial position in the patriarchal family structure, which basically against them, in order to enhance family life and their position within.

Woman and womanhood are crucial qualifications and exalted title. Because the woman is the one who forms the family and generates its happiness. Just like a man who tries to understand his reason for being, increase his pride and glory, and educate and get educated for this cause, woman also undoubtedly have to be educated in order to know her duty for keeping her house in order, for teaching good manners to her children, and for upbringing children that will be beneficial to their nation and country. Therefore this woman is supposed to have knowledge and ability as much as men do. Because women's duty is much important and supreme than men's.<sup>200</sup>

Often women were seen responsible for problems in family life. Actually, this general understanding is quite similar to the stance, which holds women responsible for the underdevelopment of the nation. Clearly, women were not pleased with this approach. In one of her articles, Aziz Haydar states that men are as much in fault and responsible as women: "For instance, the responsibility of the disarray of the society, which worries our intellectuals today, is especially attributed to women. [Accordingly] women are lazy, mischievous, gossip-lover, incompetent, ignorant, in other words, women are evil... Pure evil! But what about our men?" However, the accusatory tone of the article of Aziz Haydar is definitely different from the accusations of men that target women. Haydar was not rejecting the responsibility of women completely. Her statements obviously show that she prefers to share the responsibility between women and men. "Do not presume that I am only defending my fellow woman friends. I am only wishing to express my thoughts, which implies

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<sup>200</sup> Eskişehir: Memnune bint-i Hasan, "Muhterem Büyük Hemşirelerim," June 25, 1329 No: 22, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 226-227.

that I know and accept the faults of women, but at the same time knowing that our men are not flawless either and they also need to be reformed as much as women.”<sup>201</sup>

As we have previously mentioned in the part where we examine women's demand for employment, men were spending most of their time at coffee houses and doing nothing productive. So, before we put an end to this part, finally we will examine the traits of men like laziness and debauchery, which cause problems in family life according to women. First of all, men's perception of the woman was problematic. Due to this perception, women were referring to their different demands as a solution when actually the rearrangement of the family life was at stake and embracing a feminist stance. The head article of the 29<sup>th</sup> issue of *Kadınlar Dünyası* is one of the important examples of this argument. "We presume that not a single woman is happy with this life, this stagnancy. The family life or business life is not in the shape that can make us happy. Our family life, business life are in disorder and worthless. This disorder and absence are why men see us despicable. Neither our rights are valid, nor our lives worth a thing. Women are fruit, some sort of fun for them. Neither men know and understand women, nor do we know and appreciate men." Clearly women who live under the oppression of men, which starts in the families and dominates every aspect of life, were sensing that their emancipation depends on achieving to the right to work and education, as this statement also shows: "If our women seek comfort, happiness in family life today, first there should be a union and they should hold on to education and work life."<sup>202</sup>

There are some bad habits of men that women criticize such as alcohol addiction, domestic violence, coming home late at night, and not spending quality time with

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<sup>201</sup> Aziz Haydar, "Bizde Hayat-ı Aile", June 30, 1329 No:27, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 274-275.

<sup>202</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Lüzum-ı İttihad Teşrik-i Mesai", May 2, 1329 No:29, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 292.

family.<sup>203</sup> In some cases, women resented so much to men that they did not hesitate to speak their minds. For instance, in her article, Nesrin Salih states that women addressing their husbands as “effendi” is a typical indicator of the hierarchy between women and men. “The ones who say that the manners are from family and school should understand that by considering that we have neither of them, women are not a fad, not a machine, or not just simply a medium to give birth to children.”<sup>204</sup>

Indeed, the family is the smallest representation of the hierarchy between women and men. As Süreyya Tevfik notes in her article, women are perceived as petticoats that are doomed to men. But, she argues that it is possible to be free of this situation by having a job, raising patriotic children and by reading instead of wasting time with nonsensical things.<sup>205</sup>

There is also another issue, which makes women ask for an immediate regulation in family life. This issue is basically about men taking second wife or concubine over his wife. For instance, there was a common understanding in the Ottoman society that allows men to live separately from their wives if they are financially available to set up a separate house. However, there is also a restriction that orders men who cannot take care of a large family to live with only one woman.<sup>206</sup> Even so, this does not mean that the polygamy is finished for good. In another example, in one of her articles about concubine issue, Meliha Cenan defines this situation as a humiliation of women and she opposes this from several aspects like moral, material, ethical, and sanitary. In fact, as it is noted in the article, with the introduction of *Kanun-i Esasi*, the first constitution of the Ottoman Empire, cohabitation with a concubine is

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<sup>203</sup> Kadıköy: Atiye Şükran, “Kocalara İnsaf!”, May 17, 1329 No:44, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcrcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 445-446.

<sup>204</sup> Cihangir: Nesrin Salih, “Türk Kızları”, May 20, 1329 No:47, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcrcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 479-480.

<sup>205</sup> Haydarpaşa: Süreyya Tevfik, “Dinleyiniz, Usanmayınız Azizelerim!”, April 28, 1329 No:25, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcrcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 252-254.

<sup>206</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 262.

prohibited. However, obviously, its extinction in practice would take much more time than that. Meliha Cenan articulates this with these words:

Having a concubine, whom we shockingly see that it still exists in Islamic nations, is not in tune with the real civilization. The issue of concubinage lowers women to the level of derogation and naught and literally –not literally exactly– positions women as prisoners and animals. It is known that in developed and civilized Europe, and also in America that represents the highest level of civilization, this custom evokes hate and imprecation, moreover, in America, those who follow this certainly will face a punishment according to law.<sup>207</sup>

Finally, rarely, there are some articles that represent a total rebellion, or unconditional struggle for gaining rights for women. Of course, similar understanding, a more feminist tone in the writings of women will become widespread only after some time. For example, at this point, right to vote and to be voted for was not a popular demand among Ottoman women, unlike Europe or America. The right to vote will be demanded seriously only after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. As we see in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, women say that they do not demand right to vote “for now”.<sup>208</sup> Even so, there are so many articles that were published in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, which mention the rights, the struggles, the meetings and the conferences of European women.<sup>209</sup> So, as this chapter proves, it is certain that there was a women’s movement in the Ottoman Empire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, where it also overlapped with nationalism. In order to see the gains and the losses of this overlap from the point of women’s movement, we need to wait the first years of the Republic of Turkey.

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<sup>207</sup> Fatih: Meliha Cenan, “Cariye Meselesi”, May 5, 1329 No:32, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcrcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 324-326.

<sup>208</sup> Sultanahmet’te Üçler’de: Y. Naciye, “Erkekler Hakikaten Hürriyet-Perver Midirler? Kadınlar Ne İstiyor?”, April 10, 1329 No:7, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcrcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 67-68.

<sup>209</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, “Hakkımızı Arayalım”, April 25, 1329 No: 22, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcrcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 219; Şehzadebaşı: Sabiha Muammer, “Kadınlarda Terakki”, May 20, 1329 No:47, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcrcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 480-481; Çingiraklıbostan: Pakize Sadri, “Feminizm”, June 13, 1329 No:71, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükcrcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 218-221.

## CHAPTER 4

### *TÜRK KADIN YOLU*

This chapter examines the main themes of *Türk Kadın Yolu* in conjunction with the historical content of the early Republican era, which was closely linked with feminism and nationalism. Before analyzing the periodical in detail, the conditions will be analyzed in order to go back to 1925, the year where the periodical started to be published for the first time.

In the previous chapter, *Kadınlar Dünyası*, which was published between 1913 and 1921 under the leadership of Ulviye Mevlan, had been examined. As the analysis of that periodical shows, the liberation atmosphere of the Second Constitutional era (1908-1918), a period that was succeeded by such important incidents as the Balkan Wars, World War I, armistice period and the Turkish War of Independence, played a crucial role in the emergence of Ottoman women's movement. And, all these incidents were, in fact, affecting the nature and the characteristics of the women's movement. So, it was against the background of such a historically tumultuous period that *Kadınlar Dünyası* was being published.

After the Balkan Wars, the ideal of Ottomanism was gradually being replaced by the ideas of Turkism, which was increasingly seen as an alternative to the altered circumstances of the Ottoman Empire. Hence, many developments can be interpreted as the first signs of a nation building process. In this connection, the intellectuals of the Second Constitutional era<sup>210</sup>, who think of women as carriers of modernization, were aiming to create a social mobilization that will accompany nationalist construction by using women. From a different perspective, this argument shows that somehow the paths of nationalist movement and women's movement did cross each

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<sup>210</sup> For instance, some of these intellectual men such as Abdullah Cevdet, A. Ulvi, Abdülhak Hamid, Mehmet Emin, Celal Sahir, and Kazım Nami were writing about politics and literature in one of the most important women's periodical of the time called *Kadın* (1908-1909). Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 79.

other. Moreover, apparently women were so preoccupied with the idea of equality among all individuals that nationalism promised to provide; they did not hesitate to refer to nationalist arguments in articulating their own demands in the name of womanhood. Even though *Kadınlar Dünyası* was the most critical, progressive and feminist women's periodical of its time, it is still possible to find similar nationalist arguments within that as well. Therefore, it is crucial to understand exactly how the paths of nationalism and feminism overlapped.

It will be argued that there were two main reasons that paved the way for this overlap between nationalism and feminism. The first one is the revolt against patriarchy, and the second is the maternal feminist nature of women's movement in general. The revolt against patriarchy is a general feature of all women's movements around the world that aims to change structural elements, which oppress women and imprison them to the private sphere, which is also referred as male dominance.<sup>211</sup> According to Deniz Kandiyoti, women's movement and nationalism meet each other on their common resistance against patriarchy.<sup>212</sup> While this might seem paradoxical given the patriarchal nature of nationalism itself, as discussed earlier, in fact, Fatmagül Berktaş demonstrates that while nationalism is against patriarchy, this patriarchy is narrowly defined to connote the father authority, formulated as traditional patriarchy. This was mainly seen as manifested in the perception of Sultan as "the father of all his subjects".<sup>213</sup> In other words, this shows us how cooperation between these two social movements, which can easily be positioned in opposite poles, emerged.

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<sup>211</sup> It should be remembered that patriarchy is, in fact, a controversial concept in the literature. Here, I interpret everything that functions as a control mechanism over as part of the Patriarchy. These mechanisms may differ from one society to another. They can also take different forms in the same society within time. And, even women can become part of these oppressive mechanisms unintentionally. For further information: Deniz Kandiyoti, "Ataerkil Örutüler: Türk Toplumunda Erkek Egemenliğinin Çözümlemesine Yönelik Notlar" in *Cariyeler, Bacılar, Yurttaşlar: Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dönüşümler* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 185-197.

<sup>212</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, "Erkeklik Paradoksları: Ayrımcılığın Yaşandığı Toplumlar Üzerine Bazı Düşünceler" in *Cariyeler, Bacılar, Yurttaşlar: Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dönüşümler* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 199.

<sup>213</sup> Fatmagül Berktaş, "Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Feminizm" in *Tarihin Cinsiyeti* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2012), 106.



The second argument refers to the maternal characteristic of Ottoman women's movement in order to understand this unusual overlap. Serpil Sancar claims that Ottoman women's movement can be seen as a maternal feminist movement, by which she means an understanding of women supporting their demands by underlining the importance of woman as mother.<sup>214</sup> Indeed, as the analysis of *Kadınlar Dünyası* showed us, women were underlining their important role as mothers, in order to justify their demands such as the right to education and having jobs. No doubt the connection that second argument suggests is much clearer than the first one. As Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias also state, there are two main roles that connect women to nationalism, which we can directly relate to motherhood. The first one of these is women's role as biological reproducers of national or ethnic community.<sup>215</sup> Whether we see nationalism as a primordial bond or a modern ideology, a common feature of nationalist ideology is a belief in they has a common past and a common future. In this regard, nationalism attributes special importance to women due to their biological reproduction role, which simply signifies the creation of those future generations in the narrative. This is also the reason why women become objects of population policies within nation-states<sup>216</sup>, which also allows for ruling elites to control women's sexuality.

The second role that can directly be linked to motherhood is women's role as a cultural reproducer of the national or ethnic community. In this case, motherhood is not just about giving birth to a child, but also to raise him/her properly. At this point, women are both carriers and transmitters of the national language, values, and social culture.<sup>217</sup> The first education that children take is the one that they take from their mothers. This also explains why nation states put a great emphasis on compulsory

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<sup>214</sup> Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti: Erkekler Devlet, Kadınlar Aile Kurar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 77.

<sup>215</sup> Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, introduction to *Woman-Nation-State*, ed. Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (London: The Macmillan Press, 1989), 8.

<sup>216</sup> For further information on how women become part of population policies due to nationalist aims: Nira Yuval-Davis, "Milletin Biyolojik Yeniden Üretimi ve Kadınlar" in *Cinsiyet ve Millet* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010)

<sup>217</sup> Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, "Introduction", 9.

primary education and especially underlines the necessity of the education of girls. After all, these girls are possible future mothers, who will raise future generations. Thus, it is possible to say that the maternal nature of women's movement and the biological and cultural reproducer roles that nationalism attributes to women did complete each other like puzzle pieces, and this created a fertile platform, which these two distinct social movements both be nurtured from.

*Türk Kadın Yolu* began to be published at a time when this cooperation between nationalist movement and women's movement started to fade away slowly but certainly. In the period that follows the Independence War, all these differences, once suppressed began to come to the surface. Women firmly believed that the young Turkish Republic would emancipate them. Ultimately, that was the right time for nationalism to ensure the equality between woman and man, as it was expected by the women's movement. However, the Constitution of 1924 did not give the right to vote and to be voted for to women, while securing men's political rights. In fact, women waited until 1934 in order to have exactly the same political rights with men. But, did actually women sit and wait for someone to give these rights to them?

According to Yeşim Arat, this is exactly what women did. In her article, where she examines the obstacles to women's participation in political life, she makes the argument, which is quite popular among the Republican founding elite, and says that men granted civil and political rights to women, even though they have never asked for it. According to Arat's statement, there was no women's movement in Turkey. Especially after women got full political rights by 1935, Arat argues that they did not struggle to enhance woman's life and status within society.<sup>218</sup> While the latter argument is not entirely wrong, the reason was not women's lack of consciousness to fight for their own rights, as Arat implies. The underlying reasons why women were mostly inactive after 1935, which are mainly related to the tension between ruling elites and feminists that led to the oppression of feminist movement by the government, will soon be discussed in detail. As for the former argument, as the

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<sup>218</sup> Yeşim Arat, "Obstacles to Political Careers: Perceptions of Turkish Women", *International Political Science Review*, 6/3 (1985), pp. 355-366.

previous chapter discussed, even in the late Ottoman era, women were coming together, speaking their minds through the women's periodicals, and working on realizing their ideas and demands by establishing women organizations. They also used certain arguments from time to time to get men's support, which, in fact, sometimes can be controversial from a feminist perspective, a method that can be assessed under the concept of "bargaining with patriarchy".<sup>219</sup>

As this chapter will also show us, there was indeed a Turkish women's movement that needed to be taken seriously. Those women were declaring their thoughts through *Türk Kadın Yolu* and openly demanding political rights for women. In fact, it was because the founding elite took the movement seriously that Turkish women's movement was oppressed. So, the overlap between nationalism and feminism was terminated in this period.

#### **4.1.Nezihe Muhiddin, Turkish Women's Union and *Türk Kadın Yolu***

In her short presenting piece in *Kadınsız İnkılap* (2013), Şirin Tekeli describes Nezihe Muhiddin as a woman, who passed beyond the limitations of being an ordinary woman to become a progressive figure with her own thoughts. Accordingly, Muhiddin even "dares to work at an unexpected and undesired level of boldness in the foundation period of the Republic".<sup>220</sup> Certainly, this statement echoes many important initiatives on the part of women. But one of the most remarkable is the establishment of *Kadınlar Halk Fırkası* (Women's People Party). As we will examine in details later, as a result of not permitting women to form a political party, this initiative evolved into an organization, *Türk Kadın Birliği* (Turkish Women's Union). Nezihe Muhiddin was the head of Turkish Women's Union from 1924 to

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<sup>219</sup> In this context, "bargaining with patriarchy" basically refers to one of the women's opposition strategies to protect or enhance their social status. This strategy might be interpreted wrongly at first glance as in some cases women embrace conservatism to fight back to classic patriarchy. For further information about the concept: Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy", *Gender and Society*, 2/3 (1988), 274-290.

<sup>220</sup> Şirin Tekeli, foreword to *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği* by Yaprak Zihnioğlu (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 10.

1927.<sup>221</sup> *Kadın Yolu*, which started to be published in 1925, was the official publication of Turkish Women's Union, which became an important platform to voice women's demands, especially for having equal political rights with men. Unfortunately, as Tekeli also underlines, defending women's claim to equal political rights led to a disagreement between the government and Nezihe Muhiddin. Consequently, Nezihe Muhiddin was not only ruptured from women's movement, to which she devoted her life, but she was also erased from the memories of people. She continued to be a forgotten figure until the 1980s when the history of women's movement became a crucial subject of discussion.<sup>222</sup>

After the national independence war, which came to an end in the last months of 1922, some pioneering women began to generate distinctively egalitarian ideas, which also included establishing a political party for women.<sup>223</sup> The victory of the War of Independence and the establishment of a new republic gave the impression and hope to women in women's movement that their political rights will be realized. They had an image of the egalitarian and fair system, where there is no sexual discrimination on any ground. Moreover, the ongoing developments in terms of women's rights in different republics reinforced this hope.<sup>224</sup> So, we can assess women's attempt to establish a Women's People Party in this connection.

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<sup>221</sup> We have already examined one of her articles in the previous chapter, which was about the economic situation of the Ottoman Empire, only that time she was using her husband's name and signed the article as Nezihe Muhlis.

<sup>222</sup> Şirin Tekeli, "Foreword", 11-12. As we will see later in this chapter, not even the ones, who had the chance to work with Nezihe Muhiddin, did ever mentioned her as a pioneering women's rights activist in their works in the followings years after she got discredited by the government.

<sup>223</sup> These pioneering women, who were in the administrative committee are: Nezihe Muhiddin (president), Nimet Rumejde (vice president), Şükûfe Nihal (secretary general), Latife Bekir (accountant), Seniye İzzeddin (bookkeeper), Muhsine Salih (secretary), and Matlube Ömer (treasurer). Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 130.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 120.

Indeed, establishing a political party, which consists of women, was definitely one of the most striking developments of the 1922-1923 period.<sup>225</sup> Not only was it solely a women's initiative, but also when the Women's People Party established on 16 June 1923, Republican People's Party was not even founded yet.<sup>226</sup> Furthermore, while Nezihe Muhiddin and other pioneering women were working for the establishment of Women's People Party, sexist perspectives continued to dominate the National Assembly. In April 1923, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey was working on a law draft, which proposed amendments to the electoral law.<sup>227</sup> Accordingly, it was planned to increase the representation percentage of the male population. At the same time, there was a common belief, suggesting that women do not have the necessary qualification to participate in elections and that they should be represented through the head of the family. In other words, it was accepted that women are voting for the head of the family. Tunalı Hilmi Bey, who was a member of the parliament stood against this practice of sexual discrimination, only to be overrun by the majority of deputies who supported the draft law.<sup>228</sup>

On 30 May 1923, thirteen women including Nezihe Muhiddin declared that they have started their struggle for women's rights. This eventually led to the idea of establishing a political party.<sup>229</sup> Zihnioğlu concludes that these women had five principals/goals. First one is "gaining political rights for women". Secondly, they accept the "participatory method", aiming to include every "enlightened and pro-women's rights" woman in order to empower the movement, which fights for political rights. The third principle is about how and in which scale to establish the organization. In this connection, this organization would be founded through a "congress" in which "young, educated, interested, and all women and women's

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>226</sup> Nevin Yurdsever Ateş quoted in the introduction to *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu (1925-1927)* (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 35.

<sup>227</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 120.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 121-122.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 122.

organizations, who are willing to participate" come together. Fourth, the pioneering women were anticipating that "women will participate in a strong and decisive movement for women's political rights". And lastly, as the name Women's People Party also suggests, they were planning to establish a "political women's party".<sup>230</sup> Even though women thought this is the right time to fight for the social and political rights of women, they were not so naïve to not expect an opposition. For defending themselves in case of encountering such opposition, "the women in the initiative committee" presented their political tendencies as avoiding to pose direct opposition to Mustafa Kemal and other founding leaders in their public statement by clearly stating that "they have supported the War of Independence in times of national defence, and they are supporters of *Müdafaa-i Hukuk*".<sup>231</sup> After the final decision of the women's congress, which was held on 15 June 1923, suggesting establishing Women's People Party, they began to wait for an approval for their political party.<sup>232</sup> In the meantime, the press continued to publish statements and articles of Nezihe Muhiddin, Nimet Remide Hanım, who was the vice president, and an interview with Şükufe Nihal, the secretary general.<sup>233</sup>

While women were waiting to get an approval for the Women's People Party, they had already started to arrange some events.<sup>234</sup> For instance, they organized a discipline and education congress, where women would discuss and determine the problems of the education system, and propose ideas to fix it. This congress was supposed to be on 26 June 1923.<sup>235</sup> However, apparently, Nezihe Muhiddin failed to

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 124. As an expression "*müdafaa-i hukuk*" means the defence of law/rights. But in this case, it refers to resistance organizations, which were established during the Turkish War of Independence, and therefore reflects a political stance.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>233</sup> Nevin Yurdsever Ateş, introduction to *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu (1925-1927)*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 38-39.

<sup>234</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 139.

<sup>235</sup> Nevin Yurdsever Ateş, "Introduction", 39.

see the function of education as regime propaganda when she made this call for the congress. For the ruling elite, education cannot be a subject of bargaining.<sup>236</sup> In this regard, the government invited every woman, who was supposed to attend this congress, to Ankara, right after the establishment of Turkish Education Board.<sup>237</sup> Hence, the government, without any direct opposition or prohibition, prevented women's education congress. Yet, the government also seemed to accept that the congress might generate some valuable ideas, which explains why women did receive an invitation for the event in Ankara. This way, the government took the credit for innovative and progressive ideas of women about education issues. While all these incidents were going on, women's approval for the charter of the Women's People Party was still pending.

The fall of 1923 passed by the unanswered waiting of women, who were eager to become more active.<sup>238</sup> This waiting only came to an end after eight months from their application for establishing Women's People Party. And the answer of the government was negative, because of certain anticipations, which never got clarified in the eyes of women. Consequently, Nezihe Muhiddin and other pioneering women established Turkish Women's Union instead of Women's People Party by changing specific articles in the Charter, which were considered to be inappropriate. Because, even though the government justified its disapproval by saying that women are not entitled to establish a political party considering that they even do not have political rights, Nezihe Muhiddin was aware that it was much more than this. Women's People Party could not become fully functioning organization due to its overreaching articles in the Charter, which were obviously way ahead of the limitations that women should have stayed in.<sup>239</sup> To put it more clearly, the initiative to establish

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<sup>236</sup> Mete Tunçay quoted in Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 140.

<sup>237</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 140.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 147-148.

Women's People Party was a "dividing" activity targeting Republican People's Party, which was "a project planned to involve whole nation".<sup>240</sup>

Yaprak Zihnioğlu claims that there are two underlying reasons, which led to the prevention of the establishment of Women's People Party. According to this, one of these reasons is the keenness of founding leaders to determine the limits of the freedom of women, although women rights are one of the most powerful indicators of modernization. And the second reason is the wish of Kemalists to show that they give "the rights to women". Therefore, women's initiative was an intervention to the women's rights agenda of founding leaders, both from aspects of timing and content. With their initiative, women were simply demanding to "share social and political power", which men were unwilling to share, in order to designate their own rights and become decisive about issues related to nation building.<sup>241</sup>

The founding committee of Women's People Party decided to establish an organization, which was named as Turkish Women's Union after they failed to get an approval for a political party. The Charter of the Women's People Party completely changed; all "demands for rights and law" had been removed in order to get necessary approval for the Union this time. They even added a new article to the Charter, clarifying that this Union would not pursue political goals, for not leaving anything to chance. Women made a new application for their newly arranged charter and asked for an approval to establish a women's union instead of a political party. And, they got an approval on 7 February 1924. Hence, Turkish Women's Union was officially established.<sup>242</sup> From that point on, women seemed to give up on their undesirable demands and embraced an agreeable stance. However, as we will discover the details later, actually women did not give up on anything at all as the

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<sup>240</sup> Zafer Toprak quoted in Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 148.

<sup>241</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 149.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 150.



actions of the Turkish Women's Union and the general themes of *Türk Kadın Yolu* periodical showed.

The first year meant gaining strength and expanding for Turkish Women's Union. Through the end of their first year, where the Union expanded in Anatolia in addition to Istanbul, they also gave the first signals that they did not actually give up on their struggle for women's political rights. In January 1925, in a gathering, which arranged for the transfer of the headquarters of Turkish Women's Union, Vasıf Bey (Çınar), a member of a parliament, articulated that he thinks women are also entitled to the right to vote and to be voted for, and he will strive for women to get their political rights.<sup>243</sup> Only a month after this gathering, in February 1925, Women's Union attempted to nominate a woman as a candidate for a vacancy in the National Assembly, and consequently wanted to bring women's political rights issue to the attention of the public. But, unfortunately, the timing cannot be more wrong, considering the Sheikh Said Rebellion, which started on 13 February 1925.<sup>244</sup> Even though the attempt of the Union, presenting women as candidates for being a member of the parliament did not reach a favorable result, women continued to show highly decisive stance about this issue. In this regard, *Türk Kadın Yolu*, which began to be published in July 1925, became an important medium for women to articulate their thoughts and demands. Even at the very beginning of the publication of the periodical, women wrote uncompromising articles about women's political rights. So, it is crucial to examine *Türk Kadın Yolu* in details, in order to add a new dimension to our discussion.

#### **4.2.The Periodical and Its Different Women**

At first, the owner of the periodical was Nezihe Muhiddin. And, in fact, the first two issues were published under the name of *Kadın Yolu*. With the third issue, the periodical got the name *Türk Kadın Yolu*, and with the fourth, it became the official

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>244</sup> Utkan Kocatürk quoted in Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 157.

publication of Turkish Women's Union. It was published between 16 June 1925 and 1 August 1927 as 30 issues. Unfortunately, only 23 of them can be found today.<sup>245</sup> After certain developments, which led to the resignation of Nezihe Muhiddin from the Union, the publication of *Türk Kadın Yolu* was also stopped.

Even though most of the authors were women, there were also articles by young men, who supported the cause of fighting for women's rights. From this aspect, *Türk Kadın Yolu* differs from *Kadınlar Dünyası*, in which writers were only women. With some rare exceptions, Nezihe Muhiddin mostly wrote all of the head articles. These articles reflected the problems, needs, wishes and strategies of modern women, and of Women Union as an organization. Even though the Union did not include political rights to its Charter, *Türk Kadın Yolu* had distinct signs of willingness to fight for women's social and political rights from the beginning. In this connection, there are articles in the periodical, which are explicitly about women's political rights. Beyond this, motherhood, womanhood, feminism, democracy, economy, woman's health and community healthcare are the most prevailing subjects of the articles. This periodical, which was an important platform for the educated women of the early Republican era, also shows that women had a great interest in women's movement within different countries, and in that gradually developing international woman solidarity.

The general theme of the periodical reveals one thing for certain: Women had an ambivalent relationship with the Republic. Women presumed that they finally had equal rights with men, as they had long demanded. However, according to the first constitution of the Republic, which was adopted in 1924, women were not accepted as equal citizens; therefore they did not have the same political rights with men. This was a deal breaker for women, but instead of becoming direct opponents of the regime, they developed an ambivalent relationship with it. Because, for women, who were born in the late Ottoman Empire, it was also true that the Republic was quite emancipatory compared to the Empire. For instance, with the adoption of the new Civil Code on 17 February 1926, women had some civil rights that they never had

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<sup>245</sup> Nevin Yurdsever Ateş, "Introduction", 42.

before. This Civil Code outlawed the polygyny and the right of men to one-sided divorce.<sup>246</sup>

In addition to these novelties, after the foundation of the Republic, segregation based on sex, which was a common characteristic of the Ottoman Empire, began to fade away, and women started to enter into the public sphere. As Yaprak Zihnioğlu cites from a news of Times periodical, before, women were sitting on the first two rows of the seats in the public transportation, such as tramway, which was separated from rest of the seats with a red curtain. With the new regulations, red curtains were removed. Women no longer had to sit separately from men.<sup>247</sup> Furthermore, one of the most fundamental principles of this new Republic was secularity. So, the dress reforms also followed the same principle, such as the famous Hat Law, and freed women from the obligation of wearing veil and charsaf.<sup>248</sup> As we can recall articles from *Kadınlar Dünyası*, this was one of the most important demands of women, and the new government created a solution for it. On the one hand, women were experiencing emancipation, seeing that their demands come true, and therefore they were thankful. On the other hand, they were still feeling secondary, disposable, and the promise of equality was failing on their side.

As Yaprak Zihnioğlu claims, men put obstacles targeting women, who wished to be equal to them in every aspect of life. For instance, men were declaring that women should have political rights before they have any professional occupation or job. But unfortunately, women cannot have political rights, because this would be a violation of the Constitution.<sup>249</sup> In other words, since the war was over, women could turn back home, where they actually belonged and fulfill their most prior duties, which were forming a family, and being a good wife and mother. The rest should be left to

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<sup>246</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 181.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 166.

the men, who really are competent for the task. Considering all these arguments, women were swinging between the feeling of appreciation and objection. After all, what was expected from the ideal republican woman was to believe that the Republic will give her rights when ruling men would deem the time is right for it. Until then, she should be thankful for the rights that she already has, and stay in the lines that men draw, without asking and/or struggling for more rights.

#### **4.2.1. Suffragettes: A Political Rights Discussion**

Even in the first issue of the periodical, Nezihe Muhiddin brought up the subject of women's political rights in the head article. In this article, she mentions that primary education is compulsory for both boys and girls, and there is not even an obligation to be literate to have the right to vote. In accordance with this statement, she makes a clear distinction between women and men, and asks why women do not have political rights: "Can this right, which was given to the ones, who smoke pot in the coffee shops, be withheld from a self aware woman with great education". She underlines that just like in the rest of the world, Turkish women are also progressing, and they will finally get their political rights that they are destined to. Because this issue is not only related to women's competence, but also to the equality. "But today we are aware that who does not have the right to vote is a parasite, not an individual of the nation that is included in the registry. Turkish women, without doubt, will not stay as a worthless amount and will prove their existence".<sup>250</sup>

Again, in the first issue of *Türk Kadın Yolu*, there is an interview with the Minister of Justice, in which he mentions his thoughts and feelings about women's political rights. His statements prove that indeed men were creating obstacles for the woman, as we previously mentioned. He's been asked whether women could be judges or not. He answers that women who have a graduate degree in law should be encouraged to

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<sup>250</sup> Nezihe Muhiddin, "Kadın Yolunun Şiârı" July 16, 1341 No:1 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 64-65.

be lawyers. And they can only be judges when they have their political rights. When it is asked him what he feels about women's political rights, he replies that he can support this only under certain circumstances. He underlines that women have many prior and urgent problems to handle such as polygyny and one-sided divorce. After solving these issues, he says, it would be nice to see educated women participating in elections.<sup>251</sup> As this interview also shows, there were obstacles that women needed to overcome, and responsibilities to fulfill before they could have equal rights with men. There were no such requirements when the rights of men were at stake. However, from men's perspective, women's behaviours, responsibilities, and rights are subject to men's attention and approval. As this understanding indicates, there was definitely a double standard between woman and man.

In the head article of the second issue, Nezihe Muhiddin criticizes the reactionary state of mind in conjunction with Sheikh Sait insurgency and underlines how women are underdeveloped due to conservative nature of the old system. Then she makes a comparative analysis between two systems, and by referring to the egalitarian aspect of the Republic, she skillfully brings subject to women's political rights. "And oppression first haunts the weak. In those times, where enslavement of the ideas was prevailing, the biggest part of the oppression hit the women, who were considered as the weakest. Turkish women could not develop".<sup>252</sup> According to Muhiddin, women were highly oppressed in the conservative environment of the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, she articulates what women's expectations are from this new Republic, which is opposite of the old regime by its nature. "Republic is a system, which gives the right to the weak, or more precisely a fair system where there is no distinction between weak and strong, woman and man. From this point on, there is no obstacle in Turkey that can hold back Turkish woman to benefit from citizenship and law just like all Turkish man. The Republic, as a principle, does not recognize a

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<sup>251</sup> "Muhterem Adliye Vekilimizle Mülakat" July 16, 1341 No:1 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 66-67.

<sup>252</sup> Nezihe Muhiddin, "Cumhuriyet'in Türk Kadınlığı Üzerinde Feyzi" July 23, 1341 No:2 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 90-91.

distinction between woman and man in terms of citizenship”.<sup>253</sup> These words are clear enough to make no room for any other implications. Women were sincerely wishing to have equal rights with men in every aspect of life, including political life.

Women were also very well aware of the fact that they can be accused of being "suffragettes".<sup>254</sup> In this regard, apparently, Nezihe Muhiddin felt the urge to clear things up by saying: "Our aim is not being meaningless and extremist suffragettes. [Our aim] is to see that Turkish woman reaches to a level of full citizenship".<sup>255</sup> While men were supporting their opposition to the women's political rights with sexist arguments, women were struggling to argue through the concept of citizenship. Furthermore, the section of *Dünya Kadın Postası*, from the second issue of the periodical, centers upon the issue of women's political rights and informs readers about in which countries women already have right to vote and to be voted for. According to their information, there were 138 million women in the world, from 30 different countries who have political rights in that time. It is also noted that women's participation did change the political arena positively in those countries by bringing order and calmness, which also led to finding more proper solutions to social issues.<sup>256</sup>

Women did not only discuss their demand for political rights in terms of egalitarian and fair nature of the Republic, and/or the notion of full citizenship. From time to time, they also apply to some other arguments, which can be summarized as equal responsibility for equal rights. We can see the reflections of this argument in the head article of the third issue of the periodical. In fact, this article is about how women can contribute to fulfilling country's need for aircraft. But on the side, this article also aims to break men's prejudice about women, and show that their demands

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>254</sup> The way we used in here, being a suffragette has a bad connotation, referring to women in West, who embraced violent methods to have the right to suffrage.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>256</sup> “Dünya Kadın Postası: Bugün Kaç Memlekette Kaç Kadın Hakk-ı Siyyâsiyesine Mâliktir?” July 23, 1341 No:2 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 105.

are not just partly wishes, by using the equal responsibility for equal rights argument. These words of Nezihe Muhiddin reflect this perfectly: "The aim of the Turkish woman is to become a Turkish citizen. Naturally, citizenship has its responsibilities as much as it has rights. Proving that we are ready to fulfill those responsibilities is an important debt for us as women, just like it is our great aim to have every right of being citizens. Now, we should pay some of those debts and fulfill some of those responsibilities, so that we could ask for our rights".<sup>257</sup>

Women's demand for political rights also got some support from few men. Enver Behnan (Şapolyo) is one of these men, who support women's rights. In his article, which actually he wrote as a critical response to another article, from the ninth issue of the periodical, he evaluates women's demand for political rights in terms of equality and democracy. "When nations enter into democracy they declare equality. When equality becomes a principle, women are also right for asking equality just like men. Not only Turkish women, but also every modern woman around the world asks for this right. They exclaim for having the rights".<sup>258</sup> Behnan claims since we are a society now, which democracy roots in, women will eventually have their rights. But he also underlines that this will take some time and a lot of fight. "A women's movement in order to get involved in political rights is the necessity of democracy. Democracy personally presented and praised this right. Hence, it [democracy] cannot get rid of it [that right]. Today, if this right cannot be provided, it will be ready for tomorrow. Women will take it. However, it will be taken slowly. It will be gained after certain steps".<sup>259</sup>

In 1925, in the first year of *Türk Kadın Yolu*'s publication, it became a crucial platform, where women's demand for political rights could be discussed. In 1926,

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<sup>257</sup> Nezihe Muhiddin, "Kadınlar ve Tayyare İânisi: Türk Kadınının Gayesi", July 30, 1341 No:3 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 114-116.

<sup>258</sup> Enver Behnan, "Kadınlarımıza Hukuk-ı Siyasiye" October 6, 1341 No:9 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 250-253.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 252.

however, women moved beyond just writing about political rights, and started to take some action, which certainly provided a new momentum to this issue. Of course, these actions came into being as a result of the efforts of Nezihe Muhiddin and Turkish Women's Union. But, Yaprak Zihnioğlu prefers to define women's opposition in 1926 as "moderate" due to "intimidating effect" of 1925.<sup>260</sup> There are two major developments in 1926 that is worth mentioning. First is the women's application to the Republican People's Party for membership. With this, they were aiming to keep women's demand for political rights current on the agenda. Male dominated press, like the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, interpreted this attempt within a sexist context.<sup>261</sup> Zihnioğlu adds this news to her analysis including a cartoon, which was published right under the original text in the newspaper. This cartoon depicts a woman, who hypothetically is a member of the parliament, objecting to high taxes on luxury items while she is giving a speech on the stand in front of other members of the parliament.<sup>262</sup> As this cartoon also implies, women are just consumers with a great fondness for foreign luxury items. And, what women think as important and serious issues are highly trivial subjects, and unnecessary to discuss from the eyes of men. This also explains why men thought women were not mature enough to have political rights.

Second important development from 1926 is the adoption of the Civil Code on 17 February. But, unfortunately, the issues of *Türk Kadın Yolu* from January to April are missing. Therefore, we have little if any clue on how women in the Turkish Women's Union feel about the adoption of the Civil Code.<sup>263</sup> The adoption of the Civil Code certainly created some positive transformations like outlawing polygyny and implementing equality on divorce and the custody of children. In fact, there is one more important attempt in December 1926, which is the promotion of Turkish Women's Union for women's participation in the municipality elections. We learn

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<sup>260</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 177.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 183.



about this attempt from a section within periodical's 23<sup>rd</sup> issue, which is called *Kadın Birliđi Havadisleri*. In this connection, they applied to General Directorate of Republican People's Party in Istanbul with a demand of permission to let women have right to vote in municipality elections. And, they got a promise from the General Director, İsmail Tali Bey that he will work for women's wish to happen.<sup>264</sup> In the 24<sup>th</sup> issue, there is an article that is supposed to be read in the light of these developments. In his article, which is titled "Republican Women in Municipality Elections", Enver Behnan seriously criticizes women's lack of political rights. "... It is clear that today woman has status in social life. There is no difference between the woman and man of the Republic. However, as this is also the case in other countries, women did not receive their political rights. Women are deprived from right to vote".<sup>265</sup> Yet again, Enver Behnan still believes that women will get their political rights. "You too [referring to women] will become part of the process of making a law that would affect your future just like men. Be sure, a close look at near past will prove you that. The enlightened Turkish women will not watch the ballot box from behind a cage while all men execute their right to sovereignty! The ones who raise children for the nation, you will reach forth to a box with your clean hands, which people vote in, and [you will] make use of the regime!"<sup>266</sup> But, as it is widely known, women had to wait until 1930, even for voting in the municipality elections.

In the words of Yaprak Zihniođlu, in 1927 "Turkish Women's Union reached the peak of its actions for social and political rights", and "big falls and disappointments" also started at the same time.<sup>267</sup> Turkish Women's Union was planning to hold a congress on 15 March 1927. But, they did not have the necessary

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<sup>264</sup> "Türk Kadın Birliđi Havâdisleri", November 15, 1926 No: 23 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 381.

<sup>265</sup> Enver Behnan, "Belediye İntihâbâtında Cumhuriyet Kadını", December 15, 1926 No:24 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 389-390.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 390.

<sup>267</sup> Yaprak Zihniođlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 188.

majority. So, they delayed the congress to 25 March 1927.<sup>268</sup> With this congress, Women's Union began to be more explicit about their demands and aims, and they started to work on these more directly afterward. In this Congress, seven commissions were established according to the Charter of the Union. These are respectively the Education Commission, Press Screening/Examination Commission, Health Commission, Social and Legal Commission, the Communication Commission of the International Women's Association, Children's Literature Commission, and Charity Work Commission.<sup>269</sup> There were also some other changes that have been introduced in the Congress. Most importantly, it was suggested to change the 2<sup>nd</sup> article of the Charter, which defines the duty and aim of the Women's Union. With this change, Turkish Women's Union could directly put efforts to get women's political rights, and could have a legal basis to do so.<sup>270</sup>

As the suggested alteration in the 2<sup>nd</sup> article reveals, women never ever gave up on their ideal for political rights. Apparently, they have just put it away from the eyes in order to avoid any objection to their existence and/or cause. And until this congress, it remained as their cleverly hidden-agenda. By 1927, these ideas, which have already been started to appear in the articles of *Türk Kadın Yolu* became out-there again. There is a detailed documentation of this congress in the 29<sup>th</sup> issue of *Türk Kadın Yolu*, which was published and released on 15 June 1927. Accordingly, Nezihe Muhiddin was elected as the head of the congress, and therefore she read the report of the board of administration.<sup>271</sup> The report was mainly about the aims and achievements of the Union.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>271</sup> "Türk Kadın Birliği Kongresi", June 15, 1927 No:29 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 465-466.

<sup>272</sup> "Kongre Reisi Nezihe Muhiddin Hanım Tarafından Okunan Türk Kadın Birliği Hey'et-i İdaresi'nin Raporu" June 15, 1927 No:29 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 466-469.

Adding the statement of “working on gaining political rights” to the 2<sup>nd</sup> article proved to be not so easy. There were some people like Emin Ali Bey, who think the political lust could lead *Turkish Women’s Union* to lose sight of what they really striving for, hence object to this amendment, whereas others like Şadiye Hanım, who remained neutral about the amendment until they understood which strategy they would embrace for gaining these rights.<sup>273</sup> However, it is clear from the words of Nezihe Muhiddin that she was determined to move things one step ahead now. “We are also citizens; we also have rights in this country. We also want to make use of political rights that have already been given to men. They tell us that only the ones who fight and shed blood on the battlefield could ask for this right. However, who provides that blood? Besides isn't participation to the election the subject of politics today? The purpose and aim of our activities tend towards having the citizenship right”.<sup>274</sup>

Furthermore, Muhiddin declares that this cannot be seen as a deviation from the real aim of the Union. On the contrary, she believes that this amendment is an important move that they should do to be more on track with their initial aim. “The member, who joins here [to the Union], does join with the idea of defending his/her right. (She reads the first article once again.) According to this article, our aim is not just leaving a charitable woman behind us, but to provide them all rights and responsibilities of a citizen”.<sup>275</sup> As this statement also shows, women were not comfortable with apolitical –or political within certain limitations– and benefactress identity that was attributed to them. Their aim was to become full citizens with all its rights and responsibilities.

Enver Behnan also supports the proposed amendment: “Some friends have hesitations about these articles. Not every idea that has been born depends on a

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<sup>273</sup> “Kadın Birliği Kongresi Zabıtnâme Müzakeratı” June 15, 1927 No:29 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 469-473.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 470-471.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 471.

principle. We are a nation that accepted democracy. Nations, who accept democracy, do not have different rights for man and woman. Both of them have the same rights. In democracies, National Assembly decides on nation's future. Within that future, [there] also lies the future of women. Why should not women become the agent, who decides on her own future? Therefore, women are right to ask for the real citizen rights like men did. Today we have much more enlightened women than some of the men".<sup>276</sup> Moreover, he underlines that women cannot be deprived of certain rights by the underdevelopment argument and says: "Why cannot they have the same right while they attend the same school and get the same education [with men]?"<sup>277</sup> At last, after all these discussions, the amendment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> article was accepted in the congress.<sup>278</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> article after the alteration goes as follows: "Women's Union will work for Turkish women to reach a level where she could prove her responsibility and interest in terms of social and political rights".<sup>279</sup>

However, right after the congress, some members including Latife Bekir, who will be the head of Women's Union later, claimed that there was an irregularity in the election of the board of administration, and corruption on the accounts. Therefore, they said that Turkish Women's Union must be declared illegal in their statements that they made to a daily newspaper.<sup>280</sup> This was the first major step aiming to discredit Nezihe Muhiddin and her reputation. Apparently, she crossed a fundamental line, by insisting and struggling for women's political rights. She was not one of the ideal republican women as she refused to stay within the lines, which determines the limits of woman's behaviours. This also the reason why she lost her reputation, faced trials, forced to resign from Turkish Women's Union, imprisoned in silence, and left alone to be forgotten.

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<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 471.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 471.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid., 472.

<sup>279</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 200.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid., 202.

#### 4.2.2. Republican Women: A Discussion on “Ideal Woman”

Especially with the national independence period, women gradually became part of the public sphere by filling the positions of men, who went to war. Even though the conditions were far from being ideal, the demands of the women, which they articulated in the late Ottoman era, were coming true. However as Serpil Sancar argues, after the war, women were not participating in nation building process as the equals of men, based on two arguments: First argument is “women’s inexperience and unpreparedness to exercise political rights”. The second one is “women’s important role as mothers, who will raise children and soldier to the nation”.<sup>281</sup> Sancar also mentions a different type of woman that began to emerge after 1924. She depicts this type as “woman who worship the leader”. She further claims that there was a woman image, “a child woman” imagery, which was designed to be a role model for every woman in the nation. And, Afet Inan is the perfect representation of this “child woman” image.<sup>282</sup>

Afet Inan was the foster child of Mustafa Kemal, and she was usually known as the architect of women’s right to vote and to be voted for. Afet Inan believed and claimed that she was the one who was persuaded Mustafa Kemal about women’s political rights.<sup>283</sup> The statement of Afet Inan, which is quoted by Serpil Sancar, is worth examining in this sense: “The woman organizations founded in Turkey, unlike in the other countries, did not choose the path of struggling for having political rights. However, the positive side of these organizations is that they brought our intellectual women together, and provided an opportunity to work altogether within communities especially in Kızılay and some other charity organizations... During the War of Independence, again there was no demand for political rights that was put forward by women. Therefore, we will take 1930 as a beginning of our right to

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<sup>281</sup> Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 172.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 173.

vote”.<sup>284</sup> First of all, claiming that women organizations did not ever attempt to fight for political right overlooks a significant movement by the Turkish Women’s Union and Nezihe Muhiddin. Moreover, even though most women were indeed members of charity organizations, their activities cannot be reduced to just charity. On 25 March 1927, during the Union’s congress, Nezihe Muhiddin unequivocally states that the Women’s Union cannot be seen solely as a charity organization, as this organization is very much interested in women’s political rights.<sup>285</sup> As for Afet Inan’s other argument about the absence of any demand for political rights for women during the time of War of Independence, it is possible to say that the War of Independence was the worst possible environment and time for demanding political rights, considering that there was a total war going on, and the biggest challenge was to survive. Besides, right after the war, at the very first favorable conditions, women immediately took action on this issue, as the initiative to establish the Women's People Party, even before the Republican People's Party was founded, proves us.

As Sancar claims, from that point on, an understanding began to prevail, which basically suggests that "the rights were not achieved after a fight like in other countries, but on the contrary, without any struggle, they are given to women by the government". Thus, women can do politics with men by being "participant, but [as long as they are] quite and well behaved”.<sup>286</sup> This hegemonic understanding of the era, according to Sancar, was built on “the necessity of limiting the rights of women in order to prevent any possible excessiveness”. From this point of view, the main duties of women are to be a good wife and a good mother. And, in accordance with their main duties, the place that they should be is home.<sup>287</sup> In this sense, Afet Inan was the female face of the government; she was the declaration of men’s thoughts about women, and limitations that were envisioned for them.

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<sup>284</sup> Afet Inan quoted in Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti: Erkekler Devlet, Kadınlar Aile Kurar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 173-174.

<sup>285</sup> “Kadın Birliği Kongresi Zabıtname Müzakerâtı”, 471.

<sup>286</sup> Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 177.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 177.

From a nationalist perspective, republican woman was depicted as modern, well educated, and progressive. But at the same time, it was expected from her to embrace the values and traditions of the nation. And in fact, the most demanding task of a woman is to be mother and wife, as we see similarly in different nationalist narratives. If a woman could raise children and soldiers, which nation could benefit from, that means she is a good citizen/national and that she fulfilled her patriotic duty. In this connection, women were free to do anything, unless they do not disregard their houses and families. In order to make a comparison, it is important to know Nezihe Muhiddin's projection of ideal woman. As Yaprak Zihnioğlu notes, according to Nezihe Hanım, the ideal woman is someone who "works, produces, is rational, educated, has an occupation, and participates fully in social and political life".<sup>288</sup> Muhiddin's definition of ideal woman has much in common with the definition of the founding elites, except for one thing: women's full participation in social and political life. And, it was this disagreement, which became the deal breaker of the cooperation between nationalism and the feminist movement.

From the very first issue of the *Türk Kadın Yolu*, Nezihe Muhiddin was on women's side in their struggle to have the right to vote and to be voted for. In one of her articles, she shows that the controversy between two distinct ideas in terms of motherhood can be resolved. "My precious sisters! There is one important and main thing that our country waits from us for today and tomorrow, and that is to raise skillful children both materially and morally for this beloved country. Do not think of me as an extremist woman who lost all her connection with motherhood after reading the head article. My most powerful opinion and wish for the womanhood is women to be good mothers, who will answer the needs of this country. In fact, before fulfilling primary and real duties, others would be just a vanity, and show off. I will never give up on repeating this idea at every opportunity".<sup>289</sup> As it is clearly seen, motherhood was not something to disregard also for Nezihe Muhiddin. On the

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<sup>288</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 75.

<sup>289</sup> Nezihe Muhiddin, "Çocuklarımızı Nasıl Büyütmeliyiz?" July 16, 1341 No:1 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 72-73.

contrary, her ideas about being a mother look quite well blended with the nationalist arguments.

#### 4.2.2.1. Good Wife, Good Mother

Even though *Türk Kadın Yolu* was the most critical women's periodical of its time, and had great importance in terms of women's rights struggle, it still had some articles, which are in line with nationalism, especially in terms of motherhood issue. There are also some other articles, which were written by those who endorsed the "ideal woman" definition of the Republican elite. And, since they believe that they should wait for men to give their rights, their articles reflect nationalist ideals perfectly.

For instance, in her articles, which are about being a good wife and mother, Hatice Refik depicts a republican woman and she personally becomes a crucial example of the internalization of roles that were attributed to them by men. In her article from the 4<sup>th</sup> issue, it is possible to see how much attention she pays to women's role as the carriers of the modernization. However, she thinks that this crucial role was given to women because of their role as mothers.

Today all world of civilization understands that the one who governs the humanity on the globe and owns it, are women. The reason why such an important position was given to the woman is that she is also responsible for motherhood, being wife, and being mistress of the family, also important duties, which are relevant to the life of the whole nation. Without a doubt, the most important one among these three duties, and the essential one is motherhood, as everyone will agree on motherhood does not only consist of giving birth to a child. A child is not a property of his/her mother and father. He/she is the future of the whole nation. A child, who will be left to the hands of an ignorant woman, either will be blind, lame, impudent, immoral, or in other words, will be a harmful creature for the society or will depart this life in a very young age. Bringing up a child, or more precisely raising a person for the country is such a duty, biggest and active service to humanity, fulfilled by the woman so that all developed and civilized nations pay attention to the education and discipline of women more than usual.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Hatice Refik, "Kadın – Valide" August 6, 1341 No:4 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 143-144.



Indeed, the education of the girls and women was highly important for the newly established Turkish Republic. In this regard, Sancar claims that the government determined its relationship to women through education policies. Especially from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which Sancar defines as the early modernization period, strategies that were used to regulate women's lives shifted. From this point on, instead of strict restrictions on clothing and space of existence, woman life is constructed with education.<sup>291</sup> Even though the education process seems like including women to the public sphere fully, it was actually designed to teach women about modernity, make them adopt this modern understanding to their houses, families, and their everyday lives. Women were indeed being involved in the public sphere like they never did before. However, they were not included in the construction of the modern society as equals of men.<sup>292</sup>

In another article, where she focuses on being good wife and mother again, Hatice Refik underlines the necessity of good education. "Women definitely needs to have an education on various lore and science, if she wants to fulfill her womanhood, be a good mother, and a good and smart wife. If the woman is an important medium for the development of the nation due to her affection for her family, then first of all women's development is necessary. And the development of the woman can only be possible through her right to make use of education and knowledge".<sup>293</sup>

In this period, it was a common thing to make an analogy between family and the nation. After all, nation is the biggest family, which consisted of small families. Therefore, for having a healthy nation, first healthy families needed to be constructed. And, at this point, there was an important responsibility for women. Hatice Refik discusses this situation in one of her articles. "The heart and home is the main exemplification of the society, and also a small image of humanity. Since the

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<sup>291</sup> Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 218.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 222.

<sup>293</sup> Hatice Refik, "Kadın – Zevce" August 13, 1341 No:5 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 175-178.

biggest and active responsibility of upbringing children, the health, happiness, and joy are almost always the work of the woman. As woman generates the family's happiness or misery, she has a lot of impact on nation's progress or stillness".<sup>294</sup> She further claims that woman can be helpful to the country and nation only by fulfilling her domestic duties at home. Her arguments reflected exactly what was expected from an ideal republican woman. "[Woman] knowing that she is also part of the country like the other in the house, [she] does not have to leave the house and her duty at home in order to show that she cares about her country. For her, being a patriotic woman, or duly thinking about her country means fulfilling her duty properly as a wife and mother that responding to the orders of the nation, and any woman who made use of education can appreciate this".<sup>295</sup> But clearly not every woman was sharing the same ideas with Hatice Refik.

Nezihe Muhiddin's article from the 2<sup>nd</sup> issue of *Türk Kadın Yolu* can be an important example in this sense. This article is actually about children's attendance to school and providing a healthy environment for children. Nezihe Muhiddin underlines the importance of building kindergartens and daycare centers just to make sure that children of working mother can also get the same attention while growing up.<sup>296</sup> As we understand from this, Nezihe Hanım refuses to see working women as negligent mothers, and instead, she defends the idea of creating helping mechanisms for these women. It can also be deduced that she finds it hard to accept the idea, which suggests that women should stay at home to fulfill their duty to their country, especially considering the struggle that she was leading for women's political rights, and make them reach a level of full citizenship.

Similar to Nezihe Muhiddin, Pakize Ahmed also accepts the fact that women can have other interests or occupations besides their families and kids, but on one

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<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>296</sup> Nezihe Muhiddin, "Çocuklarımız Bakımsızdır", July 23, 1341 No:2 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 94-96.

condition. Accordingly, whatever women will do, it should be compatible with their natural tendency. “If a woman wants to have an occupation besides her family and children, [besides] their guidance and upbringing, one of the most appropriate occupations to her sex, soul and status is social affairs.”<sup>297</sup> And, she proceeds to define what she means by "social affairs". "In our country, we need people who have a grasp of scientific methods, agriculturists, machinists, mining engineers and all kinds of craftsmen as much as mentors, preachers, doctors for social diseases. Some of them especially need to be women”.<sup>298</sup>

Not every man thought women only belonged to home. There were also some men, who perceived women's participation in business life as a necessity and accept it as natural. In his article, where he discusses the importance of industrialization and becoming Westernized in terms of economy, Ali Sami notes that women should be employed in this new field of work, referring to the industry. Because, newly emerging needs, which derive from gradual adoption of a middle-class lifestyle, cannot be afforded only one person's income.

Women were already working from the least conservative times of the history to the recent past; they were dividing labor with men according to their own strength, and earning their livelihood and health with that. They even showed miracles such as actually participating in the fight, raising commanders and emperors. Then, for some reason through the last centuries, women entered into a period of lethargy. But with the 20<sup>th</sup> century, woman labor, which became part of the old days, gradually began to come to the cities, and in every work like factories, banks, and commerce houses, the presence of women's hands started to be felt. Besides, with the increase of modern needs, middle-class families realized that providing the vital needs, which is quite an important issue, cannot be achieved with only one hand, and women's employment became unavoidable.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Pakize Ahmed, “İslâhât-ı İctimâiye ve Kadınlar” October 1, 1926 No:20 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 327-328.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., 328.

<sup>299</sup> Ali Sâmî, “Sanayi ve Ticaret Âleminde Kadınlarımız” June 15, 1927 No:29 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 474-476.

Lots of different dynamics such as modernization, nationalism, industrialization, and the emergence of middle class added a new aspect to woman image, which is being a producer outside the house. But, another aspect of women identity, which creates a contrast with producer aspect, evokes important discussion, and it is women's consumer identity.

#### **4.2.2.2. Family Woman vs. Coquette Woman**

Enver Behnan, in one of his articles, made the first distinction between family woman and coquette woman. His article can be read as an assessment of true features of the ideal republican woman, and the behaviours that they should avoid. Since he was a male figure, who supported women's rights, he mostly tried to empathize with women. According to him, there were two types of woman in the society, namely, the family woman and coquette woman. The family woman is depicted as a woman, who is keen on her husband and children, whereas a coquette woman is described as a woman "who is occupied with frivolous things like fashion and dancing". As coquette women "do not like marriage, or raising children", they not only do not make any valuable contribution to the society but also harm the society. Moreover, they are usually disrespectful to moral values. "[On the contrary] family and country want moral human, decent citizen, [and] honorable mother. A girl, who is seized with sexual desires, can never raise a child to the country. Before everything else, there is a responsibility of motherhood in the country. Marriage is perpetuity of the society".<sup>300</sup>

In the following part of his article, Behnan deepens his analysis, and become more precise about distinctive features of these two types of woman. Accordingly, the woman clearly should be a family woman, but the nature of the family is also equally important. "Then what family woman is like? The family woman is the woman of the society that she lives in. She has a mission. And that [mission] is raising children for

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<sup>300</sup> Enver Behnan, "Aile Kadını, Süs Kadını", September 15, 1926 No:19 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 310-312.

the country and inhaling the joyful air of the family life. But families have to be *harsî*".<sup>301</sup> Behnan explains what he meant by *harsî* with these words: "Being *harsî* means being a national family. If families are not compatible with the *hars* of that nation, and being imitations of other nations, again there will be a trouble. Again, [in that case] family is not a real family. It is a foreign entity for the nation. The family is supposed to be national".<sup>302</sup> In accordance with this definition of the family, "family woman is a national woman of the society where she belongs. The National woman is a family woman. They are the ones, who raise self-sacrificing soldiers, teachers, writers, and civil servants to the country."<sup>303</sup> As all these arguments show, woman identity and what woman represents or not are closely related with national identity construction. At this point, it is also clear that the ideal woman of nationalists finds its reflections in the description of Behnan's family woman. However, women were not just passive objects of this identity production process, as it was expected from them. Since identity construction affected their lives directly, they also had things to say and ideas to articulate.

The thoughts of women sometimes overlapped with the ideal republican woman image and sometimes they challenged and redefined it by changing its entire context and the meaning. They did this redefinition for Enver Behnan's distinction between family woman and coquette woman too. For instance, in the head article of the 20<sup>th</sup> issue, Nezihe Muhiddin criticizes "coquette woman" from an economic aspect. According to this, women have a great role in terms of country's economic development. And, in connection with the observation of Muhiddin, women, by working in the fields in rural areas and by entering into business life in the cities, started to increase their humble contribution to the country's economy. However, there was also another type of woman, which Nezihe Muhiddin calls "fashion conscious coquette woman". "This class, who spends hundreds of thousand liras to fantasy clothes [in the name of] evil of fashion that [reflects] the instability of

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<sup>301</sup> Ibid., 311. *Harsî* derives from the word *hars*, which means to protect in Ottoman. Behnan uses this word *harsî* for referring to the cultural essence of a nation that is preserved.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., 311.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid., 312.

pleasure and caprice, and led our money flow like a flood to foreign countries, does not only extinguish wealth of Turkey, but also cause moral and familial disasters by being a role model for young poor womanhood in terms of make up and fashion”.<sup>304</sup>

In another article, again Nezihe Muhiddin criticizes women's fondness for fashion and claims that they are wasting the national capital on luxuries. She discusses women's dresses for the ball. "We find applauding those grandiose dresses, which drag our national capital into extravagancy, difficult in our hearts despite their beauty when considering the economic situation of ours".<sup>305</sup> This statement actually reflects an identity crisis, which is frequently seen in the modernization/nation-building processes. Despite the great importance and inevitability of modernization, protecting traditions and peculiarity from becoming corrupted by the Western ideals was as much as crucial in that process. In this scenario, where a woman has this role of being the symbol of the modernization, she was also seen as a possible threat, in cooperation with the enemy. So, this situation requires the exact identification of the ideal woman.

There are other articles in *Türk Kadın Yolu* on being modern without losing her authenticity. In his article, Yaşar Nabi evaluates the results of the tension between modernization and conservatism. "Even though the laws, customs, orders, and social principles of the West are adopted in our country, still our old customs and traditions are being pursued by a vast majority. Hence, from this social perspective, our country presents a very confusing view."<sup>306</sup> In the same article, Nabi also underlines that turning their back on the West and Western civilization cost them a lot in

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<sup>304</sup> Nezihe Muhiddin, "Türk Kadınlığı ve İktisadiyatımız" October 1, 1926 No:20 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 322-323.

<sup>305</sup> Nezihe Muhiddin, "Balolarda Kadın Kıyafeti" January 15, 1927 No:25 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 404-405.

<sup>306</sup> Yaşar Nabi, "Bugünkü İctimaî ve Ahlâki Vaziyetimiz" December 15, 1926 No:24 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 391-393.

history.<sup>307</sup> So, he clearly supports modernization, but he is also very much against reducing modernization to appearance.

But there is one thing that poses threat to our moral values, and it is increasing the number of a new class, which interprets civilization highly wrongly. These people, who forget the civilization is not about the looks, but especially is about ideas, think civilization as well dressing, carousing, and dancing. Their depiction of civilization with sports, dancing, fashion, and drinks with a cosmopolite language is ridiculous, but also a gross situation. No civilization can be perfect, but these people only adopt imperfect sides of the Western civilization.<sup>308</sup>

Enver Behnan also tries to understand the limits of the modernization in one of his articles, in which he actually discusses the importance of having national music. Accordingly, Turkish people, who were part of the Islamic civilization until the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, transferred to the Western civilization after that incident. “[And] passing to a civilization means, adopting the knowledge, values, gadgets, and methods in an exact same way”.<sup>309</sup> However, he argues that being part of a civilization does not mean to melt away in it. A nation is supposed to protect its essence. “... Civilization is a common property of all humanity; it is international. On the other hand, *hars* [culture] is not international. It only belongs to nations. Every individual nation has its own *hars* [culture]; in other words, different ethics, economy, language, religion, law and [other] indicators. So, in case of becoming a part of a civilization, methods and science of that civilization will be taken, but the culture of that civilization will absolutely not be adopted”.<sup>310</sup> Over-Westernization was opposed since it may cause severe corruption of national identity. But it was not the only threat to the identity construction process of the Republic.

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<sup>307</sup> Ibid., 392.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 392.

<sup>309</sup> Enver Behnan, “Millî Musiki, Asrî Musiki”, November 1, 1926 No:22 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 355-358.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid., 356.

Yaşar Nabi claims that there are two threats targeting the society. "One of these is narrow-minded religious bias stuck to the past, and the other is contemporary mind, who wants to take just bad and harmful sides of the European civilization". Again Nabi, in one of his articles, where he assesses the bad results that conservative minds could generate for women, draws our attention especially to those women, who live in rural areas with little or no education background. Those women, who built their lives on religious tenets, are "unable to even think that they are [in fact] equals of men".<sup>311</sup> But he also underlines that with every new generation, the level of education among women increases, and women will eventually and hopefully get their political rights. As it is seen, he clearly links women's political rights to the education issue, without seeing this as an obstacle to women's right to have political rights. Yaşar Nabi was not the only one, who pointed out the problematic aspects of religion and conservatism. Enver Behnan also claims that some bad traditions, which came alongside with Islam, affected the lives of Turkish women negatively.

After Turks became Muslim, they also took bad traditions from the Arabs and Persians. These bad customs put Turkish women's lives into an awkward shape. One of the most extraordinary and primary customs among these is *tesettür*. In other words, women were avoiding men and feeling as segregated creature in the world. *Tesettür* led to a quite interesting woman life in our country. It locked up women in their houses and tied their lives up with some sort of longing, which would normally give great joy. The woman only gets in touch with family members and finalizes her life. When she is going out, she wears jet black mourning clothes [and put on] a thick veil that makes her see the world darkly while she dreadingly wonders around the streets.<sup>312</sup>

Enver Behnan makes another distinction in terms of the effect of religion on women's identity, similar to his distinction between family woman and coquette woman. Accordingly, there are two types of woman, namely the "village woman"

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<sup>311</sup> Yaşar Nabi, "Bugünkü ve Yarınki Kadınlığımız" June 15, 1927 No:29 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 479-481.

<sup>312</sup> Enver Behnan, "Türk Japon, Çin Kadını", October 15, 1926, No:21 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 341-344.



and “*yörük* woman”,<sup>313</sup> based on popular trend, which followed the establishment of the republic, and can be interpreted as the rediscovery of the ancient history of the nation. He claims that traditions that came along with Islam put women in a secondary position, whereas women were in fact much more free in the old Turkish tradition. “There she is, Turkish woman, [who] lost her freedom and her rights after [embracing] Arab tradition, which came through Islam, and under the impact of Byzantine. However, in *Turan*<sup>314</sup> within Turkish community, the woman was completely free. If there are feminist nations in the world, Turks were the most feminists of all”.<sup>315</sup> To support this argument, Behnan continues to his analysis with the social structure of the *Yörük* Turks. “The social life of *Yörük* Turks completely depends on democratic principles. They are mobile republican administrations. Every individual is equal to each other within the tribe. The principle of equality is accepted. There are no classes. Everyone has the same rights. In addition to this, the rights of woman and man are also equal”.<sup>316</sup> Hence, Behnan thinks it is up to women to stand up against restrictions on dress and where she should belong, and get their rights. “...Today, if Turkish woman would not break up her cage, which is for animals in the Western traditions, and tear apart her mourning clothes, she will always have to live miserably. Turkish feminists should look deeply into our social life for this, and the fundamental rights of Turkish women will come to light. This is the responsibility of feminists”.<sup>317</sup>

#### 4.2.3. Feminists

Beyond distinctions such as ideal republican woman, family woman, coquette woman, village woman, and *yörük* woman, there was a group of feminist women

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<sup>313</sup> Enver Behnan, “Kasaba Kadını, Yörük Kadını”, September 15, 1341 No:8 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadını Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 232-234.

<sup>314</sup> Old saying for the Turkish lands in Central Asia.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid., 233. His ideas clearly impressed by the thoughts of Ziya Gökalp, which we briefly mentioned in Chapter 2.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid., 234.

who fought for women's rights. And those women, along with a couple of young men, pursued a bargaining procedure with the state, in which they sometimes compromised with the state, but often opposed it. The struggle of women for political rights was one typical component of this bargaining process. These women were also aware of other women in other parts of the world, who fought for women's rights. Turkish feminists followed their activities closely and got in touch with them intensely. The section *Dünya Kadın Postası* in *Türk Kadın Yolu* and the articles with feminist tone or about feminism could be seen as indicators of this feminist awareness.

*Türk Kadın Yolu* was crucial for several aspects. On the one hand, it was an important platform, where women could discuss feminism and articulate their ideas about women's rights. On the other hand, it was also an important medium between Turkish women and international community of feminists. In the first issue of *Türk Kadın Yolu*, under the section of *Dünya Kadın Postası*, the history of women's movement is told. Accordingly, the first country that women had political rights is Australia. Other countries following it were also mentioned. The article talked about how women's presence in the parliament creates good results in politics.<sup>318</sup> Obviously, this passage was aiming to generate a public opinion for Turkish women's political rights. Again, under this section, an important letter, which was sent to Nezihe Muhiddin, was shared with the readers of the periodical. The letter is written by Katherine Bompas, who was the copy editor and head writer of *Juse Suffrage* periodical, which was the publication of International Alliance of Women. In the letter, Bompas mentions that relevant articles from *Juse Suffrage* could be published in *Kadın Yolu*. Furthermore, she noted that they wish they can exchange the periodicals every month, so they will also have up-to-date information about Turkish women's movement.<sup>319</sup> This exchange can be seen as indicative of the recognition of a feminist movement in Turkey by its international counterparts.

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<sup>318</sup> "Dünya Kadın Postası: Kadın Hareketinin Tarihçesi" July 16, 1341 No:1 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 74-76.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid., 76.

Again, in the second issue, under the same section, the main issue was also women's political rights. A list of countries, where women have political rights is shared with the readers.<sup>320</sup> And, in the following part of this section, there are letters from important figures such as woman's rights activists, which were sent to Nezihe Hanım personally. In other words, women were not only interested in the status of women in their own societies, but also considered the situation of other women in different countries. Moreover, they were interpreting every development as an achievement in terms of women's rights on an international scale. The letter of A. Maude Royden summarizes this situation transparently. "The news of the publication of a women's periodical in Turkey generated happiness and evoked interest. Women's movement acquired a new dimension with pioneering activities that will encourage every country. Now a movement in one country affects the others. We are following the development of your periodical with great interest and wish you a good luck with all our heart".<sup>321</sup>

There is another important letter in the same part, which is signed by E.F. Rieder and sent to Nezihe Hanım on 27 June 1925. The letter heralds that Turkish women will be invited to join the International Alliance of Women with a letter from Corbett Ashby.<sup>322</sup> We also see that letter of Corbett Ashby, which is published in the periodical. In this letter, Ashby, as the president of the Alliance, invites Nezihe Hanım to a congress, which will take place in Paris, in May 1926. Moreover, Ashby draws our attention to the importance of cooperation between women and participation of women in the public sphere. Her letter, in fact, reveals the similarity of women's daily lives from different countries. For instance, women's confinement to home is an essential problem for every woman around the world, including the Turkish women.

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<sup>320</sup> "Dünya Kadın Postası: Bugün Kaç Memlekette Kaç Kadın Hakk-i Siyâsiyyesine Mâliktir?", 105-107.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid., 106.

Everywhere most women are left all alone in their houses. Like our organization's periodical, which provides valuable ideas to women in 40 countries, your periodical will do the same for the women in your country. We can mention each other our draft law projects, our social attempts, and useful experiences. I assure you, the women, who got right to vote, continue to be a woman, raise girl and boy children, and paying attention to cleaning, education, and moral consistence. With only one word, today's woman all around the world offers her loyalty and love to all her country, which she offered to her house until now.<sup>323</sup>

In the following issues, from *Dünya Kadın Postası* and *Kadın Birliği Havadisleri* sections, we learn that the relationship between International Alliance of Women and Turkish Women's Union got deeper and closer. For instance, according to a letter from the 23rd issue, the flags of the countries that are in the congress room have been checked. Accordingly, it has noticed that Turkey has no flag in the congress room. So, if they want their country also be represented, they can send their flag to Geneva Women's Suffragette Union. Furthermore, we learn that Nezihe Muhiddin made an offer to International Alliance of Women to hold the congress in Istanbul that is planned for 1929. President M. C. Ashby has written an answer to Nezihe Hanım, where she says that they will evaluate this gentle invitation, and she very much wants to meet with her in person”.<sup>324</sup>

Enver Behnan discusses the similar issue within his article with Corbett Ashby's letter, which is titled as "Static Life, Dynamic Life". According to him, the main difference between women and men derives from their different lifestyles. Men have very dynamic life style, whereas women's lives are static. In other words, women are spending their lives in their houses, as prisoners in the private sphere, while men are literally living and enjoying their lives in the public sphere. Behnan claims that this distinction was created by the ambitions of men and by the religious tenets, which oppress women. "Today which causes women's weakness and helplessness, comparing to men is their lifestyle. A woman always stayed in a very narrow field.

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<sup>323</sup> "Misis Corbett Ashby'nin Nezihe Hanım'a gönderdiği mektub" July 30, 1341 No:3 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 122-123.

<sup>324</sup> Marguerite Corbett Ashby, "Nezihe Muhiddin Hanımefendi'ye", December 15, 1926 No:24 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 396-397.

So woman's life passed as *static* and men's life as *dynamic*. This difference between their lifestyles was seen as the biggest obstacle to the equality between women and men. Women always suppressed under the oppression of men. The existing matters of law ended up in favour of men, and to the detriment of women”.<sup>325</sup> For Behnan, women, who in fact have the same conditions and opportunities with men could actually be equals of men. "If women could be freed from their static lives, and given the social and political rights of men, there would be no difference between women and men. They [women] will think in the same way, and make scientific and scholarly inventions”.<sup>326</sup>

Interestingly enough, there was a signature of men under some of the most powerful feminist articles in the periodical. In one of his articles, again Enver Behnan supports women's rights by examining the history of feminism and its status within the democracy. "Democracy is a regime that gives equality to the individuals of the nation. It depends on people's sovereignty. Every individual in the country is equal and same before the law. Unfortunately again today equality is just for male individuals”.<sup>327</sup> He continues his argument by saying that we cannot interpret equality as something peculiar to men, and this understanding is actually inconsistent with democracy. “Rights are given to men, and silence to women. Where all humanity is some sort of being, masculinity, femininity cannot be an issue of concern. Today in democracy, the rights of women should be same as the rights of men. Otherwise, in this age, it is nonsensical to split equality into two. Women’s rights should be exactly same with men’s. Law is law; equality is equality”.<sup>328</sup> As he thinks that inequality cannot be justified on any ground, Behnan proceeds as follows: “Today some rights given to men, should be given to women too. Now is time. The

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<sup>325</sup> Enver Behnan, “Statik Hayat, Dinamik Hayat” August 13, 1341 No:5 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 173-175.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>327</sup> Enver Behnan, “Demokraside Feminizm”, August 6, 1341 No:6 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 140-142.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 141.

chains that fetter women's freedom are broken up; women did get her freedom. She studies in high schools, universities, [and] medical faculties like men. She can embark upon life. And, [women] have no difference than men in terms of intelligence and willpower. Therefore, all rights of women should be acknowledged".<sup>329</sup>

In the 4<sup>th</sup> issue of the periodical, the section of *Dünya Kadın Postası* informs us about a decision of Turkish Women's Union on what women should do before and after having the right to vote. According to their decision, they were aiming to develop solidarity and cooperation between women, improving women and children's health, and taking the necessary measures to increase woman employment before having political rights. And once they have the political rights, they want to handle issues like the regulation of marriage, equality on divorce, equality on inheritance, building factories and giving jobs to women, fighting against prostitution, alcohol and other types of addictions.<sup>330</sup>

Efzayiş Yusuf openly states in an article that she wants to contribute the feminist movement in the country, which is recently emerging. For this, she depicts different feminists from different countries that she had happened to meet. She mentions six different women in total. One of them is as Dutch feminist, one German feminist, one young British suffragette, one American woman, who was raised as a preacher for the church and has a university education, one passionate French feminist, and one Italian novelist, who was exposed to maltreatment by a man. After analyzing all these women, Yusuf concludes as follows: "Long story short, the fact I came to realize after these various portraits: Now there are two different movements within feminism: one mild and one extremist feminism. Mild feminism is a positive

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<sup>329</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>330</sup> "Dünya Kadın Postası: İntihâbâta İştiraki Müteakib Türk Kadınının Programı", August 6, 1341 No:4 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 151-152.

movement that is capable to understand the differences between women and men”<sup>331</sup>. Accordingly, mild feminism is a moderate movement, but extremist feminism is a movement that women should keep away from.

And, extremist feminism is a movement that wants to create a third sex, contradictory to nature from every aspect and bound to failure. Because in that [understanding] woman sees an enemy in man, which is her life partner. She wants to cut her relationship with him. Ignoring to see woman’s main duty – duty of being wife and mother– wants to put the woman in the alone and barren position. Regardless of how much she is improved in science, how much hardworking and entrepreneur that they are, expecting emancipation from those women who support this movement is not permissible, because the road that they take is a dead end street, the perspective that they have accepted is wrong, disabled understanding.<sup>332</sup>

Clearly, as it seems, there was nothing wrong to be a feminist and defending the rights of women. However, claiming that there is no difference between women and men in order to support the equality between them is like changing the woman into something different than the woman. Of course, the main indicator of that difference is what is also coded as women's primary duties, namely being wife and mother.

Similar ideas of Efzayîş Yusuf are also presented in the article of Kemalettin Şükrü, which was published in the 18<sup>th</sup> issue of *Türk Kadın Yolu*. In the article, he evaluates feminism from man’s perspective and tries to determine a useful aim that women should work on. For Şükrü, woman and man are not equals. On the contrary, women’s status is superior compared to men’s. “Women should perceive equal rights demand with men and the hope of having political rights not as the [principal] aim, but as a medium to achieve that aim, and they should work accordingly. Woman and man are not equals and they cannot be. If a woman makes such claim, she will lose herself. Her position is not equal but superior”.<sup>333</sup> He reminds women to avoid

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<sup>331</sup> Efzayîş Yusuf, “Feminizm ve Feminizm Sahasında Bazı Ma’rûf Simalar”, August 13, 1341 No:5 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 169-173.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>333</sup> Kemaleddin Şükrü, “Kadınlık Cereyanı Hangi Gayeyi Takib Etmelidir? Ben “Feminizmi” Nasıl Anlarım?”, May 15, 1926 No: 18 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 290-297.

becoming masculinized and warns them that their demand for being equal with men may put them in a more challenging position. Women should ask social and political rights, not in order to be equaled for the rest of their lives. They should ask them for creating necessary conditions to make their lives easier, sometimes even for having conditions that will grant them superiority over men. He gives an important example to clarify his actual point.

A mother who carries her child in her tummy and while she is giving birth, [she] works and endure the pain in the name of humanity. Doesn't she have the right to ask for repayment for her service to humanity, for the pain she endured, like she gets daily wage for her work in a factory? How could humanity withhold this right from her? I know a teacher, who continued her lessons until two days left to her due date. The poor woman was writhingly going to school in the mornings, and she was getting prepared for tomorrow's lessons in the nights while she was in great pain. She only had one week off for the birth with great difficulty. There it is, the great unfairness that working women experience while she got equal rights with men, whether it is private or public sector.<sup>334</sup>

All these arguments and developments aside, shortly after, the famous congress of Turkish Women's Union took place on 25 March 1927. This congress was the climax of Turkish feminism at the time, but also the beginning of its downfall. Especially in this process, where the reputation of Nezihe Muhiddin and Turkish Women's Union were under attack, articles in *Türk Kadın Yolu* gradually became more defensive and harsher in terms of their tone. In his article from the last issue, Enver Behnan reminds women that they are in a new world, and encourages them to take action.

Turkish women, a new ideal is born; 1300 years old chains of your destiny are broken. Raise your head, look at the road of freedom and life that savior Gazi Pasha opened for you! Now, the bad beliefs that the Sultanate system was built on got vanished with the revolution of the Republic. Turkish women are also about to meet with free and humane life like women of the world. Break, tear apart, throw away the black charsaf that makes your life miserable, [and] the cage, which is jealous of you from the light of the sun!.. Move towards life! There is an ideal going on in the Turkish society. There is revolution. Why are you sleeping? You too get involved to the vitalizing excitements of the revolution! There was no revolution this big has ever been made in our social life. Realize the greatness of this. Free your mind from old dogmas of the

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<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 293.



Sultanate regime. Like the women of the world, you too walk all over the life with men!<sup>335</sup>

As it seen, Enver Behnan interprets this new system just the way it is supposed to be understood: egalitarian, fair, and emancipating. Therefore, when Behnan says, “Why should rights of women and men be separated!”, he means that there can be no difference between them in terms of rights and responsibilities.<sup>336</sup> In his article, he keeps reminding women that everything has changed, and within this new system women have competence for demanding rights because the structure of this system is built on such understanding, which allows everyone to ask/demand rights. “...In this time period, where new and young ideas are prevailing, why are you hesitant! Unite!. You too [should] demand your rights like every other citizen. Why the ideal, which was born by saying ‘sovereignty belongs to the nation’ would not give the right to sovereignty to women too... Why should not women demand this from the revolutionists of the country!..”<sup>337</sup> However, as it appears, from this point on, the agenda of feminists and nationalists were drawn apart irrecoverably. The compromise of nationalism and women's movement, which emerged in the late Ottoman era, ended up shortly after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, with the marginalization of feminist movement within the new regime. Obviously, women's movement was not the biggest and most dangerous threat to the regime. Yet again, in the world of one party's absolute potency, women's movement also got its share from government's rage.

Another article from the last issue of the periodical is written by Hatice Ahmed, and addressing to a group of people, who is against the Women’s Union. She also criticizes the construction of men’s superiority with a harsh language.

I bet that the ones, who see a *phystologique* difference between women and men only heard the name of this field. Moreover, man is strong... The woman is

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<sup>335</sup> Enver Behnan, “Türk Kadınlığı Birleşiniz!” August 1, 1927 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 494-495.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid., 494.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid., 495.

weak...Is that what you are going to say? How a woman cannot be weak considering that she was imprisoned in the cages until recently, where her only preoccupation was to obey blindly to every desire of her husband, cooking well, and keeping her house clean? Or in other words how come she did not consider as weak? How can some selfish-heads, who are used to this, change these ideas?<sup>338</sup>

Hatice Ahmed gives an important answer to a claim, which drives from an old understanding and implies women are not smart, with a careful analysis of new circumstances in the society. "As the last word, I say to the ones who say, 'women's hair is long, the mind is short': There you will be fruitless again... Because even though the hair of women is getting shorter in these days, our men become very interested in hair. If you will measure patience and will power with hair, you will lose again."<sup>339</sup> In the same article, she also criticizes the unfair attacks against the Women's Union and Nezihe Muhiddin. The deal between nationalism and women's movement is clearly over.

I can't understand? On what ground do you still want to see us [women] as your prisoners –even though it is a new way, which is changed according to the necessities of time–? You do not want to acknowledge the rights of enlightened Turkish women, who expand, rise, and even walk as equals of men in various aspects. You attack where instead we, all women and men, should appreciate the Turkish Women's Union, an organization, which works in its humble corner by resisting so many troubles, and which will drag Turkish women to the light. But be sure of this, Turkish women will make you acknowledge their rights no matter what, and they will get to the status that did not want to be given to her, in a short span of time.<sup>340</sup>

On 1 August 1927, 30<sup>th</sup> and last issue of *Türk Kadın Yolu* was published. At the same time, Nezihe Muhiddin was defending herself and refusing corruption accusations by reminding the fact that the congress was open to the press from beginning until the end, and that she had personally proposed to audit.<sup>341</sup> As it got clearer within time,

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<sup>338</sup> Hatice Ahmed, "Kadın Aleyhdarlarına Açık Mektub" August 1, 1927 No:30 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 500-501.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid., 501.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid., 500.

<sup>341</sup> For further information about corruption accusations: Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği*, (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 202-203.

there was an antagonism among the members of the Turkish Women's Union. Zihnioğlu argues that those people who criticize the activities of the Union and do not approve the aims of Nezihe Muhiddin, had allies within the Women's Union. For instance, Latife Bekir (Çeyrekbaşı), who had become the president of the Union after the forced resignation of Nezihe Muhiddin, made a speech in January 1928, where she accused Nezihe Hanım of corruption, and talked about her opposition to her all along. Moreover, in the same speech, she defines pursuing political rights as “chasing a dream”.<sup>342</sup>

According to Zihnioğlu's claim, from this point on to 1935, where Turkish Women's Union was closed, there was no demand with regard to political rights. At least they were not as active as they were between the 1924 and 1927. “Turkish Women's Union and its members showed their loyalty to Atatürk at every opportunity. Latife Bekir (Çeyrekbaşı) and her friends became the pioneers of women, who pledge loyalty to Atatürk, were grateful for the rights that ‘he granted’, and did not embrace a critical perspective”.<sup>343</sup>

At the same time, Nezihe Muhiddin faced lawsuits in relation to both Turkish Women's Union and Governorate pursue against her, on grounds of fraud and misappropriation. The lawsuits were dismissed on 13 May 1929, after the National assembly adopted the repentance law.<sup>344</sup> After these developments, Nezihe Muhiddin slowly turned into a privacy of her life. She wrote a book, *Türk Kadını*, in 1931. According to Zihnioğlu, she auto-censored herself, which made this book a failed defense against the government.<sup>345</sup> And, Turkish Women's Union without Nezihe Muhiddin became more of a charity organization. Throughout the years, 1930, in which women had the right to vote in municipality elections, and 1934, when they had right to vote in general elections, the Union became more and more inactive.

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<sup>342</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 205.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid., 248.

One of the most puzzling questions here is: if they were planning to give women their political rights, why did they marginalize women, who fought for it? Sancar claims that there might be two possible reasons for this. As she also notes, one of them includes justification. Accordingly, in 1924, where founding elites were working on a new constitution, there was a strong conservative opposition in the parliament, which did not want to acknowledge women's political rights. And, when we got to 1934, the National Assembly was cleared up from this conservative opposition. So, the obstacle for women's political rights has been removed. On the other hand, second arguments suggest that Turkey perceived women's rights issue as a necessary step to show its democratic position, where fascism was growing up throughout the Europe in the 1930s.<sup>346</sup> Either way, Sancar claims that it is hardly satisfying for feminists to have political rights in an autocratic one party regime, which limited their contribution to the decision making the process considerably.<sup>347</sup>

The last big step of Turkish Women's Union was hosting the International Woman Congress in April 1935. There were almost 500 women from 32 countries attending this event. However, there were no representatives of Italy and Germany, as they did not have women's organizations at that time. And, the representative of the Japan could not make it to the Congress in last minute.<sup>348</sup> The main themes were feminism and peace, and the congress was reflecting the polarization of the big powers right before the World War II in general. Moreover, Turkish Women's Union was unprepared to see peace as one of the main issues of the congress. With this, Turkey unintentionally became part of the peace propaganda of the Allies, despite the work of the government to maintain its impartiality for so long.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 167.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>348</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 256.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., 257.

In the following days after the congress, Turkish Women's Union decided to close the union by saying that "women have the exact same rights with the Turkish men". Of course, the oppression of the Republican People's Party was very effective on their decision.<sup>350</sup> Turkish Women's Union was shut down in 1935, just like Nezihe Muhiddin left to be forgotten. As Zihnioğlu argues, neither Enver Behnan, who strongly defended women's rights in his article nor Yaşar Nabi, whose first articles were published in *Türk Kadın Yolu*, did mention the name of Nezihe Muhiddin in the following years. Those pioneering women remained forgotten in the dusty pages of history, especially after the death of people who knew them, and got excluded from official history writings, until the day they will be rediscovered.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid., 259.

## CHAPTER 5

### FROM *KADINLAR DÜNYASI* TO *TÜRK KADIN YOLU*: WOMEN'S CHANGING SOCIAL STATUS AND RELATIONSHIP WITH NATIONALISM

As it is noted in Chapter 3, *Kadınlar Dünyası* began to be published in 1913 and continued its journey until 1921, although there were several interruptions. Only four years later, did *Türk Kadın Yolu* start to be issued with the initiative of Nezihe Muhiddin. The 30<sup>th</sup> and the last issue of the periodical, was published in 1927. However, the continuity between *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu* is not just limited to the aspect of time. The significant number of women's rights activists of the late Ottoman era continued their feminist struggle also in the early Republican era.<sup>352</sup> In this connection, there is also continuity in terms of the main actors. As it has especially become clear in the figure of Nezihe Muhiddin herself, this continuity makes possible to come across similar names, who were active in both time periods, where these periodicals were being published.

Despite similarities and continuities, the historical conditions that surrounded the periodicals were quite different. *Kadınlar Dünyası* took shape within the conditions of the late Ottoman Empire, whereas *Türk Kadın Yolu* was shaped by the conditions of the early Republican era. Therefore, these two periodicals also differ from each other severely in some other respects. Considering both the continuities and ruptures, this chapter is devoted to determining the similarities and differences between *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu*, and what these similarities and differences actually imply in terms of the relationship between nationalism and gender.

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<sup>352</sup> For instance, Nezihe Muhiddin was in the administrative committee of Ottoman Association for the Protection of Turkish Women before the foundation of Turkish Women's Union in the early Republican era. Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 59-60.

### 5.1. *Kadınlar Dünyası vs. Türk Kadın Yolu*

Young and educated women, who were members of recently emerging middle-class families, mostly pioneered the Ottoman women's movement, which especially became significant with the Second Constitutional era. These new middle-class families, which gradually distinguished themselves from the conservative atmosphere of the Ottoman society, were relatively more libertarian and open-minded. Hence, the intellectuals of the day grew out of them.<sup>353</sup> In this connection, we actually refer to a very small group of people within society. These pioneering women were aware that they needed more of educated women in order to be able to expand their struggle for women's rights. Therefore, right to education was one of the first rights that were demanded by women. Also, as they knew the support of men was absolutely necessary to have this right, they justified their demand with an argument of being a good mother and wife. In addition to this argument, they also backed up their demands with nationalist claims, and suggested a reinterpretation of religion, as it was perceived as one of the biggest obstacles for women's rights.

Those women, who fought for the rights of women during the early years of the Republic, were also mostly educated similar to their earlier counterparts. However, in the early Republican period, the education right was not such a vital issue in the women's agenda, as it once used to be. Of course, it was still strongly defended that women should have the same opportunities with men in terms of education. After all, it was unimaginable for the ideal new woman of the Republic to be ignorant. As the founding elite of the Republic was encouraging all citizens to make use of education system regardless of their gender, clearly education of women stopped being a subject of discussion. On the contrary, women's education within the national education system had a special importance in terms of Republic's nationalist

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<sup>353</sup> In fact, the necessary socioeconomic conditions that could lead to the emergence of middle class in the Ottoman Empire were missing. And, this was also one of the reasons that paved the way for the dissolution of the Empire. So, in here I use the term middle class in order to refer elite families, whose members were gradually adopting a similar lifestyle with the European middle class families. Consequently, they have contributed to the transformation process of the society with their new Western way of living. For further analysis on Turkish modernization and its dynamics also see: Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti: Erkekler Devlet, Kadınlar Aile Kurar* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 81 and the following.

ideology, since women were supposed to raise future generations with patriotic feelings. With the foundation of Republic, religion, which was seen as the main obstacle for women's education in the Ottoman society, had been replaced with a more secular understanding. This also led to one of the main differences between *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu*.

## **5.2. Mediums of Legitimation: Religion and Nationalism**

*Kadınlar Dünyası* began its life in a society whose routes were deeply embedded in religion. The publication of the periodical also coincided with a liberation atmosphere that characterized the second constitutional era, as well as with the rise of nationalist ideas and movements within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. Although this liberation atmosphere provided women with a suitable ground to work on women's rights, it was not solid enough to carry the entire struggle of women. Therefore, pioneers of the Ottoman women's movement embraced two things as their source of legitimation, which will consequently strengthen this ground: religion and nationalism.

### **5.2.1. Religion**

Sharia was the single most important source that regulated private life and women's social status in the Ottoman society. This fact constrained women from direct opposition targeting religious tenets. Instead of this strategy, which was destined to fail, these women discovered that they could use the reinterpretation of religion, as long as it is true to its essence, as a support for their demands. They started by showing that Islam was actually misunderstood. In some cases, women supported this claim by referring to the Holy Scripture itself and hadiths. And, in some other cases, they criticized the understanding, which caused women's backwardness, emphasizing that these are in fact Arab and Persian traditions that were adopted alongside the Islam. Since these traditions are not religious, there is no reason to insist on preserving them.



There was a series of articles titled “Bedia’s Exam” in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, which may be very useful to see how women for their on demands used religion as a medium of legitimation. These articles tell the story of a young girl, Bedia, who takes anatomy lessons from her big brother, Rauf, who studied medicine. Articles are formed as a dialogue between these two, in which Rauf mainly tests his sister’s knowledge and progress with different questions.<sup>354</sup> In one of his articles, Rauf tells Bedia that most people think it is unnecessary to teach anatomy to a woman, and instead that they believe women should learn how to cook. Accordingly, Rauf asks what Bedia thinks about this and she replies: “Dear Brother! They did not understand what they say. As you know, our women are obliged to cover themselves [in the presence] of a man. Why would they [women] have to show themselves, and in some cases literally all of their bodies to a man when they got sick? If us, girls, could raise and learn medicine as much as men, or maybe more comprehensively, I believe this would be a better service for both religion and humanity”.<sup>355</sup> As these ideas that channeled through Bedia’s assessment shows, women were trying to overcome the restriction, which prevented them from studying medicine by using the obligation of *tesettür*. In other words, it would be religiously more appropriate if women could get their medical treatment from woman doctors. This is one powerful example on how women transformed something that put them in a disadvantageous position into an indisputable support for their demand.

Another article from *Kadınlar Dünyası* compares the conditions of Arab society before and after the emergence of Islam. The improvement of women’s social status after the acceptance of Islam is particularly underlined in this article. For instance, it is noted that according to a common understanding, before Islam, having a daughter was disgraceful for Arab men. However, after the acceptance of Islam, this understanding shifted. From that point on, daughters began to be seen as the symbol

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<sup>354</sup> The articles of this series can be found in the first 11 and 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> issues of *Kadınlar Dünyası*.

<sup>355</sup> “Bedia’nın İmtihanı”, April 14, 1329 No: 11, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 111.

of “honour and god’s mercy and grace”.<sup>356</sup> Beyond this, it is also noted that Islam actually restricted the number of woman a man can marry and regulated the relations between husband and wife. Despite these novelties and improvement, women in the Islamic world did not have a respectful status in the society. Accordingly, two reasons caused this outcome: men’s disobedience to the requirements of religion and women’s ignorance about their rights.<sup>357</sup> Women, by declaring that the misinterpreted version of Islam was prevailing in society, showed that their demand did not actually contradict with religion, but merely challenged the arbitrary rules that men had adopted. Positioning religion as a reliable partner and using it as a supporting argument, women developed a preventive system against a possible accusation of infidelity.

The issue of using religion as a supportive and legitimating argument is one of the main differences between *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu* periodicals. Even though modernization gained momentum through the late Ottoman era and created a relatively secular environment, Ottoman society was, in fact, a society that was divided along *millets*, that is religious communities, and ruled by a Sultan, who was also holding the title of Caliph as the leader of all Muslims.<sup>358</sup> In contrast, secularism was one of the founding principles of the new Republic. The new order of the society, which was being shaped by various nationalist policies, was imagined as a secular construction. Indeed, developments such as the abolishment of the Sultanate on 1 November 1922,<sup>359</sup> followed by the abolishment of Caliphate on 3 March 1924,<sup>360</sup> ending the monopoly of religion in the field education with the Law

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<sup>356</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, “Hukuk-ı Nisvan -12-: Araplar İndinde Hayat ve Hukuk-ı Nisvan”, April 15, 1329 No: 12, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 114-115.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>358</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 201; and Kemal H. Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 225 and 401- 402.

<sup>359</sup> Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (London: Hurst&Company, 1998), 450.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid., 460.

on Unification of National Education,<sup>361</sup> and the closure of religious orders and dervish lodges<sup>362</sup> on 30 November 1925, prove that. All these secularizing measures followed and were crowned with the elimination of 2<sup>nd</sup> article in 1928,<sup>363</sup> which declared Islam as the official religion of the Republic. These steps truly helped the new Republic to distinguish itself from its Ottoman heritage. Taken all these circumstances into account, *Türk Kadın Yolu* was still careful about the criticisms in the periodical; but there was definitely no need to use religion as a legitimation factor in any way, anymore. There was no such need simply because, as Deniz Kandiyoti also argues, the religious reaction was the archenemy of the Kemalist regime.<sup>364</sup>

It is likely to see the effects of these new social conditions in the articles that were published in *Türk Kadın Yolu*. For instance, Nezihe Muhiddin perceived the Sheikh Said Rebellion as the death agony of religious reaction in one of her articles. In the same article, she claimed that even though it is possible to detect liberation to some extent in the Second Constitutional era, neither society nor institutions threw religious reaction off out of their systems. Therefore, she concluded that this liberation atmosphere only insignificantly affected the lives of women, and continued: “it is out of place to mention women’s emancipation in a system, which is dominated by the religious reaction.”<sup>365</sup> In this connection, Muhiddin understood and represented the Republic as a regime that put an end to this understanding, paving the way for progress, which can only mean that women and men can equally exercise their rights, deriving from citizenship.<sup>366</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> Ibid., 477.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid., 461.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid., 495.

<sup>364</sup> Deniz Kandiyoti, “End of Empire: Islam, Nationalism and Women in Turkey” in *Women, Islam and the State*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 39.

<sup>365</sup> Nezihe Muhiddin, “Cumhuriyet’in Türk Kadınlığı Üzerine Feyzi”, July 23, 1341 No: 2, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 90.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid., 91.

In one of his articles published in *Türk Kadın Yolu*, Yaşar Nabi described "narrow-minded religious fanaticism, which hangs up on the past" as some sort of illness in the society. According to him, the effects of this mindset, which dragged society to lethargy, alongside the thoughts of "ignorant fanatics", who confused people's minds, still made its presence felt in the society.<sup>367</sup> In another article, Yaşar Nabi criticizes the periodical itself for its inability to represent all women.<sup>368</sup> As aforementioned, both periodicals were the creations of educated women. Although these educated, pioneering women did not neglect the existence of uneducated women, and unexceptionally defended the right to education for everyone, sometimes this distinction among women brought certain constraints to periodicals. For instance, it was unlikely to expect these women, who mostly live in the cities, to comprehend the problems and needs of rural women. Within this connection, Yaşar Nabi draws our attention to the existence of those uneducated women, who were raised by the strict implementation of religious tenets, and how they even could not imagine they could be equals to men. "Conservative women, whose number decreases day by day in the cities, but still constitute the majority in the rest of the country, accept their captivity with good faith, as it is something natural. Since they are under huge impact of hypocritical inculcation of ignorant clergymen and bigoted preachers, you can insist as much as you want, and you may still fail to make them [women] believe that women and men are equals, and women also have right to freedom as much as men. They used to see men's oppression and tyranny as their natural rights. Because they believe that religion said so."<sup>369</sup>

Social conditions have changed radically with the foundation of the Republic, which transformed religious reaction into an enemy that the Republic needed to fight against. This also affected the position of religion within the society. Religion was

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<sup>367</sup> Yaşar Nabi, "İctimâî Hastalıklarımız", January 15, 1927 No:25, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 405.

<sup>368</sup> Yaşar Nabi, "Bugünkü ve Yarınki Kadınlığımız", June 15, 1927 No: 29, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 479.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid., 480.

removed from being a legitimation source, and its influence area was narrowed down to the private sphere. Instead, the main motivation of the recently founded Republic was reaching the standards of Western civilization. However, Westernization was not the strategy that will be followed at the expense of national values. Nation's value was above all things, and the aim was to create a balanced harmony between national and Western ideals. This discussion brings us back to the issue of nationalism, which is the other legitimation source used in the periodicals.

### 5.2.2. Nationalism

Unlike religion, which was a legitimation source for *Kadınlar Dünyası* only, nationalism is used both in *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu*. However, despite this similarity, there is a need to mention two fundamental differences between these periodicals in terms of use of nationalism as a legitimation medium: First of all, although women in both cases adopted nationalism and nationalist claims, and included them into their justifying arguments set, the demands of women varied immensely as these were highly sensitive and determined by the conditions of their specific time period. In the following part of this chapter, there will be a section, which inquiries this issues in more depth. Secondly, the relationship of women and women's movement with nationalism changed through time. Therefore, women's interaction with nationalism and nationalist policies differ from each other in these two time periods, which also consequently affected the nature of women's movement.

The time, when Ottoman women's movement finally gained some relevance, coincided with the emergence and rise of Turkish nationalism. This time overlap of nationalism and women's movement, as it was discussed in detail in Chapter 3, in which *Kadınlar Dünyası* was analyzed, created a common ground that enabled interaction between these two major transforming forces. Nationalism pioneered a structural transformation in the society by introducing modernization and secularization. The restoration of the constitutional monarchy in 1908 provided a suitable environment for this transformation. Unfortunately, these structural

transformative processes were not radical enough to generate the necessary conditions for women's emancipation. Even so, they introduced certain channels through which women can express themselves.

Especially with the end of thirty yearlong absolutist rule of Sultan Abdulhamit II, we witnessed the publication of numerous women's periodicals in conjunction with the revival of the press. Moreover, those women, who wanted to take further step in order to realize their demands, began to establish associations in addition to the publication of periodicals. These new organizations did not limit their purposes to charity alone, as it was usually the case before for women's organizations. Women gradually stepped out of the boundaries, which positioned them in an apolitical territory for so long, and began to develop a political stance and political identity. Yet, as we mentioned before, the realization of their demands was strongly linked with how men perceived these demands. Therefore, women built a strategy, which included nationalist arguments, like they did with religious arguments. In fact, it won't be wrong to claim that a symbiotic relationship was formed between nationalism and women's movement during this period. Nationalism was attributing certain roles to women during the nation-building process. Those roles, such as being the carrier of modernization, reproducing the nation biologically and culturally, symbolizing the nation and its borders were determining the space of maneuver while also providing men an opportunity to maintain their control over women. However, at this point, the most important thing for the success of nationalism was to initiate social mobilization. In this regard, women had special importance for nationalists.

From the perspective of women, nationalism represented a projection for the new social order, which possibly can emancipate them. Nationalism's hand-in-hand progress with modernization and its promise of equality engrained in the conceptualization of citizenship, seemed way beyond women's current conditions and consequently appealed to them. In this sense, motherhood, which nationalists emphasized in terms of nation's biological and cultural reproduction, became the most prevailing legitimation source of these women's periodicals. In addition to

some other reasons, this nationalist argument was adopted easily and widely due to the maternal feminist character of the Ottoman women's movement, as it was comprehensively mentioned in Chapter 3.<sup>370</sup> While women were articulating and justifying their demands such as right to education, right to work, change of attire, marriage and family life, they commonly referred to certain arguments like being a mother of the nation, raising soldiers for the country, or being the first person from whom children learn manners and national values.<sup>371</sup>

Apart from the emphasis on maternity of Ottoman women's movement, the historic conditions of this particular time period were factors that facilitated women's cooperation with nationalist movement. Because of the revolts of ethnic minorities with nationalist claims and ongoing wars in the empire, women finally began to find a place in the public sphere, whose primary duties were always imagined as being a wife and mother that limited them to the private sphere. After entering public life, whether to provide logistic support for the battlefield, or substituting men in the workplace, women came out of their shelves and refused to turn back into women's traditional boundaries from that point on. In this connection, nationalism seemed like opening the doors of the public sphere for women. And, indeed, women, who could only exist in the private sphere in Ottoman Empire, finally had the chance to be part of the public sphere more freely with the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. However, in this new social order, while public sphere was more open to women, there were still limits to how women should behave, which continued to be determined by men. And, in general, this was also the reason why the dynamics between the nationalist movement and women's movement have shifted through time.

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<sup>370</sup> Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 75-77.

<sup>371</sup> Here is some examples to the articles, which emphasize motherhood in relation to their demands: Emine Seher Ali, "Kadınlıkta Seviye-i İrfan", April 4, 1329 No:1, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 4-6; Nezihe Muhlis, "Mektup", April 9, 1329 No:6, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 54-57; Kadınlar Dünyası, "Çalışmak Hakkımızdır", April 22, 1329 No:19, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 187-188. For further analysis see Chapter 3 and Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013)

The victory of the nationalist struggle eventually evolved into a new Turkish nation-state, that is, the Republic of Turkey. However, the foundation of the Republic did not imply the end of the struggle, as one may expect. On the contrary, it was only a beginning, as now they reached a point, where nationalism literally had to build the nation. Through this process, in which nation was imagined as consisting of modern and educated individuals, who were raised according to the values of Western civilization, women and men had to work in cooperation in order to realize this imagery. When the division of labor is required in this sense to build a nation, nationalists referred to gender stereotypes. Accordingly, young and strong men were depicted as soldiers, who defended their country and protected women and children, and their honor, whereas women took the role of mother, who raised those soldiers, and/or the role of wife, who supported their husbands and took care of their families.

<sup>372</sup> In other words, it was expected from women, who had to chance to enter into public life due to war conditions, to return their home, where they traditionally belonged and to fulfill their primary household duties. Women were responsible for forming the family, while men were responsible of constituting a state, as Serpil Sancar argues. <sup>373</sup>

Although the doors of public sphere were no longer entirely closed to women, their entrance was not unconditional. First of all, if a woman wanted to enter into the public sphere, she has to be stripped off from her sexual identity. In fact, this understanding was not new; it dominated from the beginning of the nationalist struggle for all women, who wanted to take part in it. <sup>374</sup> Secondly, it is possible to mention a state of womanhood, which Serpil Sancar describes as being a "child-woman". <sup>375</sup> The adoption of the "child-woman" argument made easier to create the perception, which implied women's weakness, immaturity and their dependence on

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<sup>372</sup> Barbara Einhorn, "Insiders and Outsiders: Within and Beyond the Gendered Nation", *Handbook of Gender and Women's Studies*, ed. Kathy Davis et al. (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 200.

<sup>373</sup> Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 191-192.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.



man's guidance. And, in fact, the idea of women's immaturity was so dominant in the minds of men that they even debarred women from certain rights, deriving from their citizenship status like political rights.

Moreover, nationalism managed to turn traditional patriarchy into a new, modern form of patriarchy, or in Fatmagül Berktaş's words, into a "regime of brothers".<sup>376</sup> The limits of women's behaviour continued to be determined by men, who replaced the religious norms with nationalist arguments as a source. For instance, women's sexuality, which was considered as an issue under the control of religion, had now become a subject that required supervision provided by nationalism. According to Barbara Einhorn, women's sexuality is always perceived as a danger from a nationalist standpoint.<sup>377</sup> Nationalists constantly used the image of a woman, who is a traitor, as she gets sexually involved with other nations' men, as a proof of the unreliability of women. From a nationalist perspective, woman's sexuality can only be discussed in terms of reproduction. Women's sexual pleasure was a taboo, or was often associated with the immorality of other nations' women, which was depicted to create a contrast with the purity of national women. Again, as Einhorn notes, the only appropriate and acceptable form of sexuality was "heterosexuality".<sup>378</sup> In this connection, it is possible to say that not only women but also different forms of manhood were suppressed by the hegemonic manhood of the national project.

Then why did women continue to use nationalist arguments as legitimation medium, and, even, at times, why did they truly exalt the Republic, as we see the examples also in *Türk Kadın Yolu*? Despite some restrictions on women, the transition from Empire to the Republic was, for the most part, a radical improvement for women. As a result of this transition, women gained significant rights and opportunities and reached a better social status. Thinking women's previous conditions in the Ottoman Empire and the weights that were dragging them down, it is not surprising to see

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<sup>376</sup> Fatmagül Berktaş, *Tarihin Cinsiyeti* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2012), 106.

<sup>377</sup> Barbara Einhorn, "Insiders and Outsiders", 204.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid., 201-202.

these women experiencing some sort of elevation and liberation. Besides, it was not just an improvement on paper. Women made use of these rights, which were granted to them in every way they can. As a matter of fact, they were using their new rights so effectively as it is seen where women attempted to establish Women's People Party that, in a way, at the end, they started to disturb male elites, who strongly believed that there should be strict rules in order to limit women's behavior. Without getting further involved in this discussion, we can say that these women, who had new rights and consequently new demands now, were also talented observant and analysts of their society and its current conditions. Even though they were highly emancipated, they were aware that their prospective and future acquisitions were still highly dependent on their reconciliation with men. In this sense, nationalism can be seen as the common language, which women preferred using for this reconciliation.

Similar to *Kadınlar Dünyası*, the theme of motherhood in tune with its nationalist sense had also a considerable weight in *Türk Kadın Yolu*. There is an article quite relevant to this issue in *Türk Kadın Yolu*, which is quite distinct compared to other articles on motherhood. This article was written by Doctor Cemal Zeki and published in the 19<sup>th</sup> issue of the periodical. In this article, Cemal Zeki harshly criticized the Malthusian understanding<sup>379</sup> and consequently considered abortion as murder. He supports this claim simply by saying that "we need to reproduce".<sup>380</sup> This article shows how women and woman body can be used for the purposes of population policies, which are in fact related to nationalism. This article and women's implicit acceptance of these ideas may evoke some doubts about the feminist identity of these pioneering woman; but each time period requires an individual assessment of its own historical conditions.

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<sup>379</sup> According to Thomas Malthus's famous work *Principle of Population*, at some point production will not be enough to cover the needs of existing world population due to rapid population growth. Hence, he suggests controlling the population growth and lowering it if necessary. For further analysis of population policies in terms of nationalism and gender relations, see Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation* (London: Sage Publications, 2008)

<sup>380</sup> Dr. Cemal Zeki, "Tıbbî Musâhebe: Çocuk Düşürtmek Hakkındaki Maltus Nazariyesinin İflâsı", September 15, 1926 No: 19, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 306-308.

Considering those times, naturally, neither in *Kadınlar Dünyası* nor in *Türk Kadın Yolu*, were there discussions about women's reproductive rights yet. On the contrary, according to the necessities of that time period, they had to explicitly state that their entrance to public sphere did not mean neglecting motherhood duties and that in fact there is no greater duty for women than motherhood. Again, in this connection, they internalized to be a "family woman", an ideal woman shaped according to the expectations of the nationalists, while criticizing "coquette woman" figure, who was not maternal and was depicted as living her sexuality rather freely.<sup>381</sup> In other words, women were compromising to men in order to gain certain rights, which will eventually help them in their fight to become equals. Therefore, evaluating women's stance on this issue as submissiveness might risk falling into anachronism. This is where we should remind ourselves that the fundamental principles of feminism evolved and took its current form through time and many struggles.

To sum up, nationalism, unlike religion, was a legitimation medium in both periodicals. Even though the articles with nationalist arguments in *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu* resemble each other considerably, they also differ significantly in what they were legitimizing. This difference derives from the distinct demands of women in these two periodicals, which were mainly shaped by the peculiar conditions of their historical context. Some demands can be found in both periodicals, although their intensities varied. At the same time, there was a dynamism to the themes as new ones replaced old demands. This issue about demands is equally important with the issue of the legitimation mediums for our comparative analysis between *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu*.

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<sup>381</sup> Enver Behnan, "Aile Kadını, Süs Kadını", September 15, 1926 No: 19, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 310-312.

### **5.3.Dreams and Disillusionments: Turkish Women Between Modernity and Traditions**

There was hardly ever a decent place in the society for women in the Ottoman society, even at time, when *Kadınlar Dünyası* was being published. Hence, women mainly aimed to create a legitimate social status for themselves through their demands. They were striving to make a bold statement, which will show men that women existed. At this point, they started working by uncovering social structures, which pushed them outside the public sphere. They intended to abolish these obstacles eventually. However, the reasons, which led to the isolation of women, were diverse. Accordingly, the demands of women were equally various.

After careful observations of women, main problems were designated as ignorance, traditional roles that imprison women into the private sphere, restrictive dress code limiting their physical and social abilities, arranged marriages, which also caused unhappiness in family life, and excessive consumption of foreign goods. In this connection, their demands were shaped in a particular way, which allowed them to overcome these problems.

In *Türk Kadın Yolu*, the most pressing demand was political rights. Therefore, while the analysis built on different states of being a woman, women's struggle for political rights became the background, which holds the story together. The swinging in between different states of womanhood, which derives from suffragette to coquette woman, was a crucial reason of tension not only for women's existence but also for their relationship with nationalism. For the purpose of comparison, those different states of womanhood from *Türk Kadın Yolu* are narrowed down to two and associated with the respective demands of women from both periodicals. In this connection, woman had two distinct but equally demanding tasks: being a modern woman in public life and protecting the traditions – the essence of the nation at home; two places, where the dreams and disillusionments of women lie.

### 5.3.1. Modern Woman in Public Life: Educated, Working and Well-Dressed

Prior to everything, modern woman had to be educated. However, the literacy rate in Ottoman society was very low<sup>382</sup> in general, even after decades of modernization of education. The literacy rate among women was even lower. The common belief in the society perceived girls' education unnecessary. The girls could only attend school before they reach puberty, and it was considered sufficient for them to learn to read the Quran enough to perform their daily prayers.<sup>383</sup> Even though some girls had the chance to continue their education at home after they reached puberty, the content of that education was mostly designed to prepare them to be a good wife and mother and to teach them how to manage the house works and family life. Only a few, who commonly belonged to the upper-class families, had the opportunity to have proper education, mostly in schools established by foreign missionaries. However, these few educated women were also feeling constrained, since the opportunities, which they could prove their potential to create change, was awfully limited, if not non-existent.

Especially, starting from the Tanzimat era, it is possible to mention certain developments in the area of education as a result of increasing modernization efforts. For instance, as aforementioned, first middle school for girls was opened in 1858. Although Serpil Çakır argues that these schools primarily aimed to prepare girls to their duties at home, it was still an important step forward.<sup>384</sup> In addition to this, Yedikule Industrial School for Girls (Yedikule Kız Sanayi Mektebi) was founded in 1869, the first school that was providing vocational education for girls.<sup>385</sup> Yedikule Industrial School for Girls and the others, which followed this first one, replaced by the Girls' Institutes, which also helped women to have professional qualifications,

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<sup>382</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History*, 268 and 578.

<sup>383</sup> Memnune bint-i Hasan: Eskişehir, "Muhterem Büyük Hemşirelerim", April 25, 1329 No:22, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 226-227.

<sup>384</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 297-298.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

after the foundation of the Republic. In fact, these institutions made great contributions to the formation of “Republican woman” figure.<sup>386</sup>

According to Akşit, Industrial Schools for Girls, which was established to help proliferating education among lower class women, gradually increased the number of educated women especially considering the limited number of women graduates of private schools from earlier times.<sup>387</sup> The prominent women of the women’s movement such as Sabiha Sertel and Semiha Ayverdi graduated from these schools.<sup>388</sup> Then again, despite these developments, women’s level of education was significantly low: There were only 334 schools outside Istanbul between 1905 and 1908, which girls could attend, compared to 3329 for the boys.<sup>389</sup>

Considering all the above, women’s persistent demand for education right in their articles in *Kadınlar Dünyası* become more meaningful. This demand, which basically reflected women’s struggle to acquire a decent place in society, also has a key role in the construction of new/modern woman. This “new woman” was supposed to be the carrier of modernization according to the nationalist imagery, as nationalist movements predominantly accompanied modernization in most cases. According to this imagery, “new woman” was required to be educated with no exception.<sup>390</sup> This argument provides another useful insight, which can help understand why women used nationalist arguments in their articles. After all, they believed that women’s education could stop the rot and downfall of the society: The vicious cycle of ignorant generations raised by uneducated women, and girls, who were deprived of their education right because of the prejudices of ignorant people, must come to an end. Women could only defend themselves and open up a place, where they can breathe under the oppression of men if the problem of education can

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<sup>386</sup> Elif Ekin Akşit, *Kızların Sessizliği: Kız Enstitülerinin Uzun Tarihi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015), 143-144.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>390</sup> Fatmagül Berktaş, *Tarihin Cinsiyeti*, 108-109.

be resolved. The efforts, which were aiming to modernize education system, unintentionally deepened the duality between secular and religious education, which in fact supposed to resolve this problem.<sup>391</sup> In addition to this duality in the education system, there was also the case of foreign schools in the Ottoman Empire, in which the education was far from being relevant with the customs of the society. In fact, some of these schools even engaged with missionary activities.<sup>392</sup> After the transition from Empire to Republic, these problems started to be handled slowly and firmly within the bounds of possibility.

Due to all these factors, education was one of the most prevailing themes in *Kadınlar Dünyası*. However, this theme did not have an equally central place in *Türk Kadın Yolu*. The underlying reason for this difference is not that women had now reached the expected standards of education. On the contrary, the newly founded Republic was, in fact, struggling with the material inadequacies after long lasted and devastating battles, which consumed almost all sources of the country. Then again, even in these poor conditions, the founding elite did not see education as an issue that they could afford to neglect. Especially Mustafa Kemal was emphasizing the importance of establishing a national and modern education system in terms of their fight against ignorance.<sup>393</sup> Although it was not likely to overcome prejudice about girls education at once, and the content of the education was also questionable since its promotion of division of labor heavily depended on gender stereotypes, all citizens including women were encouraged to make use of education opportunities provided by the government. And, this is one of the most fundamental distinctions between the understanding of the Empire and the Republic.

The most concrete step in terms of education issue was the adoption of the Law on the Unification of Education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat*) on 3 March 1924. With this law, all

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<sup>391</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>393</sup> Mehmet Okur refers to Mustafa Kemal's keynote speech that he gave in Education Congress, which held in Ankara, on 15 July 1921 in addition to his several other public speeches. These can be found in Mehmet Okur, "Milli Mücadele ve Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarında Milli ve Modern Bir Eğitim Sistemi Oluşturma Çabaları" *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* IV/11 (2005), 199-217.

educational institutions were unified and came under the Ministry of National Education. This law made possible to develop a national culture, to pursue same goals through children's education without any conflicting values and to realize the main aims of the Republic.<sup>394</sup> In other words, education was a crucial tool of the state, which they could use for nation building. Furthermore, the same law opened the way to the establishment a Faculty of Theology, which indeed established in 1924 as part of the Istanbul University.<sup>395</sup> This was a crucial step, as the education of clergymen was taken under control of the government. Beyond these measures, various specialists in the area of education were invited to Turkey for analyzing the current education system. The reports of those specialists became primary sources to take necessary actions in order to improve education standards in Turkey.<sup>396</sup> These developments were followed by the Law on Adoption and Implementation of the Turkish Alphabet on 1 November 1928, which had a significant impact on easing the learning process and tuning with the West.<sup>397</sup>

To sum up, in light of these developments, it is possible to think that women's demand for education was considerably fulfilled after the transition to the Republican system. From that point on, women were encouraged by the state to have education, which was actually an uncommon practice in the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, inadequate material conditions and the quality of education programs continued to be relevant subjects that had a crucial place in women's agenda. After all, as we discussed earlier, pioneering women, who applied for establishing Women's People Party, initially organized an education congress, which the government took over soon after, while women were still waiting for an approval. This shows that education was still a vital subject for women. Yet, clearly, a comparison between the two periodicals demonstrates that women's discussions about education related subjects had changed.

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<sup>394</sup> Ibid., 208-209.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., 214; and Temuçin Faik Ertan et al., *Başlangıcından Günümüze Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi*, ed. Temuçin Faik Ertan (Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 2012) 198-199.



Last but not least, a brief analysis of girls' education in the early Republican period shows that the main aim of this process was to create the "ideal woman" of the nationalist project. As Akşit describes it, "... in the education of the first generation of Republican girls, it is important to make [them] embrace the ideology of the Republic, proliferate it as much as possible and raise new generations accordingly rather than finding jobs for them".<sup>398</sup> So, in a sense, finally having education right did not mean that women were fully and unconditionally accepted in the public sphere. For instance, again according to Akşit, lessons such as cooking, needlecraft and home economics, which were part of curriculum of Girls' Institutes "was addressing the girls that were mothers, who will give birth and raise a new nation".<sup>399</sup> Again, women's primary duty, which was/is also one of the strongest control mechanisms that government had over women's body, was women's role of being the biological reproducer of the nation. "Mothers, who were raised regardless of their class and ethnic identities, were seen as the representatives of the state at home".<sup>400</sup> In this connection, this new responsibility that was attributed to women in terms of modernization was a product of this perception, which considered women as potential threats that need to be controlled, rather than that of the men's high respect for women. Akşit also underlines that the place of Turkish girls, who graduated from these Institutes was seen primarily as home.<sup>401</sup> With respect to all these mentioned above, it could be concluded that women's demand for education was fulfilled. But this was not exactly a dream has come true. In fact, from certain angles it was disappointing.

Apart from that, modern woman had to be working as well as educated. But, just like education, working issue had a dual effect in women's lives. Therefore, it needs to be analyzed with caution. Women were vital but also hidden figures of business life in

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<sup>398</sup> Elif Ekin Akşit, *Kızların Sessizliği*, 144.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid., 144.

the Ottoman Empire. Women were always there as agricultural laborers in rural areas and responsible for household production. They also gradually became industrial workers by the time when historical developments were leading rapidly towards the World War I. However, women were still being excluded from civil service. Moreover, as Serpil Çakır argues, the working conditions of women were worse, and their salary was much lower than men.<sup>402</sup> Simply, woman was seen as cheap labor in the Ottoman Empire like the rest of the world. As Cynthia Enloe would prefer to say, they represented “the labor made cheap”.<sup>403</sup>

There were various articles in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, mainly aiming to eliminate the obstacles, which restrain women from entering into work life, to open new areas within work life for themselves, and to enhance their current working conditions. Also, knowing that the vocational education opportunities of women were gradually increasing in addition to their right to work demand in this period, it would have been unrealistic to expect women to stay home. Acquiring the right to work signified a crucial chance for women since they could finally have economic freedom and put an end to their financial dependency on men.

Hence, it can be assumed that nationalists did, in fact, support women's entrance to work life, as it meant an increase in country's labor force and help the realization of economic independence.<sup>404</sup> Yet, this support certainly did not mean that women could neglect their traditional roles. This "new woman" had to prove that she is strong and capable enough to balance her traditional roles with her new social duties if she really wants to make use of these new opportunities that were provided for her. As it was discussed in relation to *Kadınlar Dünyası*, the persistent struggle of women paid off. For the first time in this period, women were employed in the public sector,

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<sup>402</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 343-345.

<sup>403</sup> Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2004), 2.

<sup>404</sup> As it is discussed previously, the Islamic Association for the Employment of Ottoman Women, which established by the CUP in 1916, reflected this understanding perfectly. For further information: Yavuz Selim Karakışla, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Savaş Yılları ve Çalışan Kadınlar: Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti (1916-1923)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015).

more precisely in the Telephone Company.<sup>405</sup> Women also established certain associations like the Ottoman Association to Defend the Rights of Women,<sup>406</sup> Ottoman Association for the Protection of Turkish Women,<sup>407</sup> and Women's Organization for the Consumption of Local Products,<sup>408</sup> and, although the main objectives of these associations varied, they all created new job opportunities for women with their initiatives.

Despite the determination about women's right to work and relevant developments in this sense, current circumstances did not reflect a complete achievement for women, as there were contradicting perspectives in terms of their participation to work life. Encouraging women to have jobs was mostly accompanied by a reminder that indicates women actually belonged to home, where their primary duties such as taking care of the family await. Serpil Sancar argues that family policies of the state and the traditional roles attached to women in this regard actually deprived them of their right to equal citizenship. She further claims that men excluded women from political sphere by creating a public sphere only for themselves. If not excluded they put women in a secondary position or silenced them.<sup>409</sup> Therefore, *Türk Kadın Yolu* now sought to achieve a fine equilibrium between the newly achieved public role and the traditional role as housewives and mothers.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Efkâr-ı Umumiye-i Nisvan da Var İmiş", May 9, 1329 No:36, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 362-363; and Kadınlar Dünyası, "Matbuat Müdüriyet-i Aliyesinden Tebliğ Olunmuştur!", May 10, 1329 No:37, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 372-373.

<sup>406</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 107.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>409</sup> Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 125.

<sup>410</sup> Some articles that reflects this effort: Nezihe Muhiddin, "Analık Vazifeleri: Çocuklarımızı Nasıl Büyütmeliyiz?", July 16, 1341 No: 1, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 72-73; Hatice Refik, "Kadın-Valide", August 6, 1341 No:4, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 143-144; and M. Şevki, "Kadınlık ve Askerlik", February 15, 1927 No:27, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 432-434.

Further inquiry about the duality in women's argument reveals that there were actually two dimensions to women's entrance to work life. One of them can be described as gendering jobs and professions, while the other is unsexing women. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 4, there was an interview with the Minister of Justice in *Türk Kadın Yolu*, in which he says that women, who have studied law should be encouraged to be lawyers, and women can only be judges when they have their political rights.<sup>411</sup> On the one hand, this shows signs of improvement as women now have the opportunity to study and practice law, which was indeed a significant step forward compared to the general social status of Ottoman women. On the other hand, the answer of the Minister of Justice indicates that being a judge was perceived as a male profession, while women's deprivation from political rights, which was again men's decision, was stated as an obstacle for them to become a judge. This is an important example how jobs had specific gender connotations and consequently affected women's right to work.

The second dimension of this duality regarding women's right to work was unsexing women, that is, alienating them from their sexual identity in order to make their existence in public life, which naturally includes their participation to workforce, acceptable. With this strategy, it became possible to see women having jobs, which were traditionally associated with men because there was no longer sexual identity attributed to women. In this connection, Sabiha Gökçen, one of the adopted daughters of Mustafa Kemal, can be an appropriate example. She was a great role model for women, as she became the first Turkish female combat pilot. Despite her tremendous achievements, which made her one of the symbols for ideal/modern Republican woman, the reality for average Turkish woman was quite different. As Akşit argues, this average woman, in general, was only attending school to become educated housewife, who was destined to spend rest of their lives at home.<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>411</sup> "Muhterem Adliye Vekilimizle Mülakat", July 16, 1329 No:1, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 66-67.

<sup>412</sup> Elif Ekin Akşit, *Kızların Sessizliği, 153-154 and 189*.

Moreover, Serpil Sancar defines this process where women were sent back home as modernization became conservative.<sup>413</sup> In conclusion, women have moved forward in terms of their right to work within time and as a result of their tenacious struggle. Yet, this subject did not resolve for good; this is why women all around the world fight for having equal working conditions and payment with men, even today.

It is also expected from women to be the representation of modernity with their appearances too. In the Ottoman society *tesettür* was indirectly leading to the separation of living spaces of women and men. This religious tenet obliges women to maintain an isolated life within the borders of the private sphere, whereas opening the public sphere as the domain of men, in which they were allowed to act freely.

Indeed, women were facing very different, conflicting and almost equally disturbing practices regarding their attire.<sup>414</sup> Although there were various ideas among women about the resolution of this problem, they agreed on the idea that there should be a decent regulation, which could end the incoherence, hopefully in a way that enhances women's social status. As it was discussed in Chapter 3, there were several leading ideas about this issue, which were articulated by women through their articles in *Kadınlar Dünyası*. Some were suggesting that the new clothes should be determined according to the necessities of Islam, whereas others defending a new national attire, which would reflect the long history and traditions of the Turkish people.<sup>415</sup> In very rare cases, women objected to these opinions while insisting that this should be a personal matter, as forcing people to wear a uniform like clothes is nonsensical.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 229.

<sup>414</sup> For further information about the regulation of attire such as relevant edicts of the Sultan's: Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 247; Elif Ekin Akşit, *Kızların Sessizliği*, 56.

<sup>415</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 249-250 and 259.

<sup>416</sup> Şişli: İsmet Refi, "Memleketimizde Kadınlığın Yegâne Penah ve İlticagâhı Olan Muhterem Kadınlar Dünyası İdarehanesine," July 3, 1329 No:91, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 431-432.

Another issue, which was highly relevant to the regulation of the attire, was encouraging and consequently proliferating the consumption of local goods. All women, without any exception, fiercely defended the consumption of local goods instead of spending money on foreign fashion and luxury items, as they justifiably believed this economic dependency was one of the major factors that put the country into its current miserable state.<sup>417</sup> The articles of women, which were published in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, alongside modernization and war conditions that opened the public space to women, eventually led to a change in women's attire mainly depending on the necessities of new conditions. In this regard, the one thing that women unequivocally rejected was wearing a veil, which was seen as degrading women. These articles from *Kadınlar Dünyası* could not have changed everything throughout the society in terms of women's social status; however, as our observations also show, primarily affected the lives of women in big cities significantly.<sup>418</sup> Besides, these articles are also very helpful in terms of seeing how women felt about relevant common practices.

The main changes about the dress code occurred after the foundation of the Republic. As it is known, the Republic was built on principles such as modernization, Westernization, and secularization. In this regard, the clothing of women and men was perceived as an issue, which required a new regulation in terms of the republican principles. As the dress code reflected the level of civilization of nation by being a visual representation of its development, this issue was one of the primary concerns of the republican elite. In this regard, it is possible to mention two important legal developments: One of them is the famous Hat Law of 1925. This law, which was adopted on 25 November 1925,<sup>419</sup> made it compulsory for civil servants to wear hat and actually represented the triumph of modernization.

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<sup>417</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 252-253.

<sup>418</sup> As it can be understood from this analysis, Istanbul, the place of publication of the periodical was also the center of almost every single development. The associations were primarily established, conferences held and meetings organized in Istanbul. Where suitable some of the associations opened branches in different cities and organized similar events there. So these information support the claim that immediate and intense effects of the articles were in fact seen in the lives of women from big cities.

<sup>419</sup> Temuçin Faik Ertan, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi*, 210.

The second development was another law that was enacted in 1934, regulating the clothes of the clergymen. This law prohibited clergymen to wear religious clothing outside the sanctuary, the house of prayer and cemetery.<sup>420</sup> The adoption of this particular law was especially crucial in terms of secularization. Although it is not possible to refer any law that directly regulated the attires of women, one can see that their clothes also began to be changed as a result of the transforming effect of the modernization and secularization processes. This argument can be supported by the image and the dresses of the republican women, who were presented as inspiring role models for women.<sup>421</sup> Despite this fact, one must not forget that the Anatolian women did not give up their traditional and conservative clothing right away.<sup>422</sup> Then again, the general picture reflects the problems about this issue, which led women's demands from *Kadınlar Dünyası* reaching considerable solutions thanks to the republican principles, even though there was no particular regulation concerning this subject. As this issue was somehow resolved, it found a place in the articles in *Türk Kadın Yolu* with reference to criticisms targeting the stereotype of 'coquette woman', that is associated with the fondness for fashion alongside the lavishness.<sup>423</sup> Considering the economic needs of the young Republic, which went through a series of wars, and its ongoing dependence on the efforts of citizens at that time, women's criticisms about wastefulness make much more sense.

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<sup>420</sup> Ibid., 211.

<sup>421</sup> Christine Peltre, *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Kadınlar: Bir Kartpostal Koleksiyonu (1880-1930)*, trans. Gümüş Arsoy (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2015), 120. In this connection, Republic Balls were also very important events in the Early Republican era, especially in terms of seeing contemporary clothing that women embraced. For further information: Oylum Öktem İşözen, "The Image of Woman and Fashion in Turkish Paintings of the Republic Period", *International E-Journal of Advances in Social Sciences* 2/5 (August 2016), 581-590.

<sup>422</sup> Liz Behmoaras, epilogue to *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Kadınlar: Bir Kartpostal Koleksiyonu (1880-1930)*, by Christine Peltre, trans. Gümüş Arsoy (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2015), 135-137.

<sup>423</sup> Enver Behnan, "Aile Kadını, Süs Kadını", September 15, 1926 No:19 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 310-312; Nezihe Muhiddin, "Türk Kadınlığı ve İktisadiyatımız", October 1, 1926 No: 20, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 322- 323; Nezihe Muhiddin, "Balolarda Kadın Kıyafeti", January 15, 1927 No: 25, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 404-405.

### 5.3.2. Traditional Woman at Home: Frugal Family Woman Voting through the Head of Family

As the previous section also shows, modern woman had to be in touch with her traditional side, especially when it comes to family relations, since men still believed that women belonged to home although now public sphere was open to them. In this sense, rearrangement of family and the institution of marriage have a particular place in this discussion. As it was discussed earlier, religion determined also this part of social life. Since this issue had roots in religion, it was a hard subject to open to discussion. However, women's restlessness regarding these problems eventually made the discussion inevitable. Apart from that, young men were also not happy with the organization of the family life, especially because they felt oppressed under the authority of their fathers and were desperately in need of change of this traditional patriarchal institution.<sup>424</sup> The discomfort of men became another supporting argument, and a crucial one, for women to bring their demand about this issue to the agenda.<sup>425</sup>

In this regard, the primary problem was actually about the process that initiated marriage. Arranged marriages were a common practice in the Ottoman society, and it meant that the bride and the groom had no chance to get to know each other before the marriage. This type of marriage more than often led to situation, in which two people, who drastically had different conceptions of the world ending up together. These differences and disagreements between the bride and groom were, in fact, the main reasons of the lack of harmony in family life. Furthermore, women had no chance to object and almost never had an opportunity to express their opinion about their conception of marriage, as this objection or confronting opinion may

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<sup>424</sup> Fatmagül Berktaş, *Tarihin Cinsiyeti*, 106.

<sup>425</sup> According to Kandiyoti, it was modern Turkish men, who opened up traditional marriage and family life into discussion initially, whereas they were not as oppressed as women within this system. For more information: Deniz Kandiyoti, "Women and the Turkish State: Political Actors or Symbolic Pawns?" in *Woman-Nation-State*, ed. Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, (London: Macmillan, 1989), 132-133.



immediately raise questions about her chastity.<sup>426</sup> Similar to woman's incompetence to interfere in the decision of her own marriage before it happens, she also did not have the right to decide to end the marriage. The divorce was a single sided right that was only granted to men in the Ottoman society.

After getting married, newlywed couples were often moving in with grooms' families, as the Ottoman family was typically extended, in which age hierarchy prevailed. In this connection, another subject, which was frequently discussed in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, is trousseau.<sup>427</sup> There are several articles about trousseau evaluating the issue from different aspects, and all of them basically conclude that trousseau is an unnecessary expense, especially considering that newlyweds live with their parents and have most of their needs in the existing house order.<sup>428</sup> Besides trousseau, another issue, which was disturbing for women, is the irresponsibility of men regarding family matters. For instance, women constantly wrote articles, in which they complained how late their husbands came home and how they did not spend quality time with their family.<sup>429</sup>

Beyond all these discussions, family indisputably had a sensitive position for the social order. The relevance of this argument gets clear when thinking of the roles attributed to women within family life in accordance with the rise of Turkish nationalism in the Ottoman Empire. In this sense, while women focused on the rearrangement of marriage and family life and advanced certain demands, they also aimed to strengthen their hand for supporting other demands by associating their role as wife and mother with nationalist arguments. For instance, they defended their

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<sup>426</sup> Gedikpaşa: Muhterem Fahri, "El Aman!...", April 13, 1329 No:10, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcrcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 97-98.

<sup>427</sup> The word trousseau is used in here to define the possessions of a bride, which she takes her new house after the wedding. It may include a wide range of stuff such as furniture or kitchen utensils that could help newly weds in their efforts to build a new life together, or it may be hand-made decorative crafts that valued in culture.

<sup>428</sup> Aziz Haydar, "Çeyiz", June 5, 1329 No: 63, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükcrcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 130-132.

<sup>429</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 292.

education right in the context of the necessity of being educated in order to raise children while imbuing national values.<sup>430</sup>

With the transition from Empire to the Republic, the relevance of family did not fade away; on the contrary, it became even more important. In this early republican period, the analogies between the family and the nation were abundant and the emphasis on ‘national family’ also increased accordingly. The articles in *Türk Kadın Yolu* became more concerned to prove that their newly acquired rights will not affect women's motherhood responsibilities and primary duties in family, whereas the articles in *Kadınlar Dünyası* merely used women's position within the family as leverage to acquire those rights, which women finally had with the establishment of the republican regime.

Adoption of the Civil Code on 17 February 1926 was the most significant step in terms of rearrangement of marriage and family life. The Turkish Civil Code was prepared based on a model of the Swiss Civil Code and regulated “individual rights, the composition of the family, the execution of marriage and divorce, debt/credit relationship, inheritance procedure”.<sup>431</sup> Accordingly, with this law, “government took official marriage and divorce in hand, polygamy was prohibited while the right to divorce was granted to women [too]”. In addition to these developments, daughters and sons finally reached equal rights in terms of inheritance.<sup>432</sup>

This law was not only an answer to women's demands, which had a great place in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, with regard to the rearrangement of marriage and family life, but it also represented an important progress towards gender equality. But, as

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<sup>430</sup> Şamlı: S(in). L., “Hayat-ı Nisvîyemizde Fikdan-ı Maarif”, April 11, 1329 No:8, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 80-81; Belkıs Fırat, “Tahsilimiz”, April 12, 1329 No: 9, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 89-90; Kadıköy: Atiye Şükran, “Anne Beni de Götür”, April 18, 1329 No:15, *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 146-147.

<sup>431</sup> Temuçin Faik Ertan, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi*, 192.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid., 193.

aforementioned, unfortunately some issues of *Türk Kadın Yolu*, which were published at the time of adoption of the Civil Code, are unavailable. Therefore, there is no precise information in hand that allows evaluating how women perceived this law. Despite the lack of information, however, assuming that they received it as a positive and progressive development cannot be totally wrong considering women's previous social status in the Ottoman Empire. Yet, despite this improvement, Serpil Çakır argues that the Civil Code failed to ensure real equality between women and men, by positioning man as the head of the family. In this connection, as Çakır claims, "women were responsible for carrying out the domestic works".<sup>433</sup> Her objections further reveal that there were some objections to positioning of men as the head of the family. One of these articles, which rejected this asymmetric understanding in family, was in fact written by the very founder of the *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Ulviye Mevlan, and was published in the 166<sup>th</sup> issue of the periodical, on 22 March 1918. In that article, Ulviye Mevlan objected to that provision: "If the head of the family is the man, then it means there is no family life. You see feminism wants to knock down this wrong understanding, which got settled in men's mind for centuries. This is the aim. It requires the equality of women and men in every matter".<sup>434</sup> Moreover, it is possible to see a similar criticism also in the analysis of Yaprak Zihnioğlu. According to Zihnioğlu, a particular section of the Civil Code that regulated mutual rights and duties of married women and men, established a legal basis for the institutionalization of gender hierarchy in the family.<sup>435</sup> Although this claim does not decrease the significance of the Civil Code, it is a provocation to reconsider the extent of the improvement from a feminist perspective.

As the quote from Ulviye Mevlan's article also proves, feminist ideals had begun to affect Ottoman society. In this connection, as it is known that these ideals maintained their significance in the early Republican era, especially among women, there might be some criticisms targeting the Civil Code in the articles of women from *Türk*

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<sup>433</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 296.

<sup>434</sup> Ulviye Mevlan quoted in Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 294.

<sup>435</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadinsız İnkılap*, 181-182.

*Kadın Yolu* periodical's missing issues, though, it is not possible to know it for sure. As Çakır further argues, the gender hierarchy in the Civil Code only faced serious criticisms at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She notes that petitions and protests finally paid off, when the amendment of the Civil Code that "assures equality between women and men in terms of responsibilities between husband and wife, representation of the union of marriage and equitable distribution" was accepted on 1 January 2002.<sup>436</sup>

Being a family woman was not enough. This new woman, who apparently had to fulfill two opposite roles at the same time, also needed to be an economical one. And this expectation was met by women's diligent efforts to increase the consumption of local goods. These efforts emerged naturally due to economic conditions of that particular time period that accompanied the growing nationalism. This was important and occupied a significant place in both *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu*, since the fragility and struggle of the national economy continued in the early Republican era as well as in the late Ottoman period.

The publication of *Kadınlar Dünyası* coincided with a particularly bad financial situation. The economy got even worse due to the constant state of war. From women's perspective, who aimed at reducing economic dependency and invigorating business life, incentivizing the consumption of local goods seemed as a possible solution, as their ideas were influenced by the nationalist arguments. Women sent articles to *Kadınlar Dünyası*, suggesting avoiding shopping from the stores and tailors of foreigners and non-Muslims by depicting horrible consequences of their action in the long run. In this connection, finding stores that only sold locally produced goods and encouraging women to shop from these stores were frequent themes in a considerable number of articles.<sup>437</sup> In addition to these, some of the

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<sup>436</sup> Ibid., 296.

<sup>437</sup> Emine Seher Ali, "İstihlâke Doğru!", April 11, 1329 No: 8, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 74-75; Hayriye Nuri: Muratpaşa, "Muhterem Hanımefendiler," April 15, 1329 No: 12, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 121-122; and, Fatma Mükerrrem: Makrıköy, "Bir Millet İktisadiyatın Servet ve Haşmetiyle Yükselir ve Mamulât-ı Dahiliye İstihlâki

articles criticized coquette women for being unpatriotic as they continued their extravagant consumption in foreign fashion and luxury items.<sup>438</sup>

In line with the significance of this issue, women took another and more concrete step than writing articles. They established an association, Women's Organization for the Consumption of Local Products, with the initiative of Melek Hanım in 1913.<sup>439</sup> This association, which primarily intended to contribute to the improvement of Ottoman economic life, embraced increasing consumption of local goods as its number-one strategy for their struggle, as its name also suggested. Çakır notes that the association decided to open a tailor shop "which will only provide a various number of locally produced materials and clothes". Çakır further notes that young girls and women were employed in this tailor shop to sew in exchange for a salary.<sup>440</sup> Clearly, opening a tailor shop became a symbol of women's effort for the improvement of Ottoman economy. But, more importantly, it played a crucial role towards women's emancipation by providing them job opportunities, which eventually helped women become financially independent and secure. Beyond these, it is also known that several ateliers of the association in Istanbul took responsibility of producing underwear for soldiers in 1916.<sup>441</sup> This fact shows once again how war conditions unintentionally created an environment for women to become part of public life, and how nationalism and women's movement strangely intertwined in this particular historical context.

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Kadınlar Cemiyeti Hayriyesi", July 10, 1329 No:98, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 501-502.

<sup>438</sup> Semiha Nihal, "Moda Nedir?", April 4, 1329 No:1, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 7-8; Sıdika Ali Rıza: Mehmet Paşa Yokuşu, "Ben de Aynı Fikirdeyim", April 27, 1329 No: 24, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 245-246; and, Hikmet Hıfzı: Süleymaniye, "Bizde Modacılık", April 28, 1329 No: 25, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 259-260.

<sup>439</sup> Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 100.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid., 100-101.

Women's demand for increasing consumption of local goods preserved its significance also in the early times of the Republic and became part of the articles in *Türk Kadın Yolu*. Having survived a series of war and consequently established a new nation state, almost everything had to be built up from scratch. This young Republic had to develop a well designed plan in order to grow economically while solving vital problems such as improving people's standard of living, easing the access to proper education and health services and increasing employment throughout the country. Similar to *Kadınlar Dünyası*, women, who sent articles to *Türk Kadın Yolu*, came to a realization that they should take responsibility regarding economic matters. Presenting self-sacrificing and economizer women as the real ideal Republican woman while harshly criticizing coquette women because of their insensitivity and negligence, is another similarity between the articles in *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu*.

In addition to their articles, which aimed to raise awareness among women about this issue, they began organizing fund raising campaigns for more tangible contribution. One of the most important of these fund raising organizations was aiming to provide planes to the Turkish army, and women gladly took part in this campaign. There is an article in *Türk Kadın Yolu*, which was written by Nezihe Muhiddin that urged women to avoid spending their money excessively on fashion and to save money instead, in order to put it to good use for the needs of the nation. She states: "With a little sacrifice from our expenses and with the contribution of all women, it is possible to accumulate a great sum. The [amount of the] banknotes that fills the vaults of clothes and evening dress stores in Istanbul in one day by [the spending of] women is not just enough to buy one plane, but several of them".<sup>442</sup> In addition to this article, which smartly links the consumption of local goods issue with a campaign fueled with nationalist honoring of self-sacrifice, there was also an announcement of the Women's Union that they will throw a ballroom party in order

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<sup>442</sup> Nezihe Muhiddin, "Kadınlar ve Tayyare İlanesi: Türk Kadınının Gayesi", July 30, 1341 No:3, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 114-116.

to raise money for donating to the Airplane Association (*Tayyare Cemiyeti*).<sup>443</sup> All these initiatives were not only important for increasing the consumption of local goods, but they were also strategically chosen as women wanted to prove that they could take equal responsibility with men to serve the nation. With this line of argument, women believed that they could claim equal rights with men.

However, soon enough their belief were proven to be wrong. It is accepted that women were voting through their head of family, who might be their fathers, brothers or husbands. Therefore, they were deprived from their political rights, which showed that they were not seen as equals of men in reality. As it is clearly articulated in an article from *Kadınlar Dünyası*, women did not demand political rights yet,<sup>444</sup> as they had been waiting for the right time, in which both women and social conditions would get ready. Women concluded that these necessary social conditions finally emerged after the wars with the eventual foundation of the Republic. In this connection, they decided to establish the Women's People Party on 15 June 1923.<sup>445</sup> As it was discussed in Chapter 4 at great length, Women's People Party failed to get an approval from the state on the grounds of women's deprivation of political rights. Simply, women had no right to establish a political party, since the constitution did not grant them political rights. Accordingly, Turkish Women's Union was officially established with the initiative of Nezihe Muhiddin and the rest of founding cadre of Women's People Party after the amendment of the initial Charter. In this context, the article of the Charter, which regulated women's demand for political rights, was also left out.<sup>446</sup> According to their new Charter, the primary goal of Turkish Women's Union was to contribute to the efforts of creating enlightened and modern women.

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<sup>443</sup> “Kadın Birliği Havadisi”, August 20, 1341 No: 6, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 206.

<sup>444</sup> Y. Naciye: Sultanahmet'te Üçler'de, “Erkekler Hakikaten Hürriyet-perver midirler? Kadınlar Ne İstiyor?”, April 10, 1329 No:7, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 67-68; and, Meliha Cenani: Fatih, “Düşündüklerimden”, April 30, 1329 No: 27, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 277-278.

<sup>445</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 127.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid., 150.

Although this gives the impression of women taking a step back in terms of their demand for political rights upon government's rejection of the establishment of Women's People Party, it was actually a shift to a new strategy in order to reduce reactions, as the following steps of women would soon reveal.

The most relevant development for the current aspect of this analysis is the start of publication of *Kadın Yolu* periodical with the initiative of Nezihe Muhiddin in 1925. This periodical, which became the official publication of Turkish Women's Union and renamed as *Türk Kadın Yolu* after a short time, defended women's demand for political rights from its first issue to the very last and legitimized it in several ways, although at times not very explicitly. In this regard, democracy and the egalitarian nature of the Republican regime, where there should not be sexual discrimination on any ground, and equal rights for equal responsibility were some of these legitimization arguments in the articles in *Türk Kadın Yolu*.<sup>447</sup> Even though women were doubtlessly fighting for their political rights, they were extremely careful not to define themselves as suffragettes, as a suffragette had a bad connotation due to violent methods embraced by some of the Western suffragettes. In addition to this, women also had to show that they would carry on fulfilling their primary duty, raising children as mothers, after they had their political rights at some point.

The demand for political rights, became a real matter of struggle, especially after the congress of Women's Union on 25 March 1927, where they proved their intention to fight for women's political rights by including a separate article back into their Charter.<sup>448</sup> However, this bold move also drew the reaction of the ruling elite and led to a process, which eventually culminated in the untimely oppression of women's movement like other opposition movements, which believed to be posing a threat to

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<sup>447</sup> Nezihe Muhiddin, "Cumhuriyet'in Türk Kadınlığı Üzerinde Feyzi" July 23, 1341 No:2 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 90-91; and, Enver Behnan, "Demokraside Feminizm", August 6, 1341 No:6 in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 140-142.

<sup>448</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 196-197.



the integration of newly founded Republic.<sup>449</sup> In this process, Nezihe Muhiddin lost prestige mainly because of lawsuits against her and she had to resign from the presidency of the Women's Union.<sup>450</sup> Consequently, the publication of *Türk Kadın Yolu* also ended in the following months.<sup>451</sup>

Shortly after these developments, women acquired the right to vote in local elections for the first time in 1930 and in general elections in 1934.<sup>452</sup> There may be various reasons to explain why the government did not give women's political rights and oppressed the women's movement if it was already planning to give women their political rights in a short period of time. As aforementioned, Serpil Sancar mentions two different explanations in this regard. The first one suggests that there was a strong opposition in the parliament to give political rights to women; and the parliament was cleared up from that opposition only in 1934. Sancar interprets this one as a justifying claim.<sup>453</sup> The second argument sees giving women political rights as a symbolic act, which tried to convey the image of a democratic country, especially at a time, when the world was rapidly dragging to another world war.<sup>454</sup>

Zihniöğlu also makes a similar argument in relation to the prohibition of the establishment of Women's People Party and points out two different reasons in this sense: The first one is the government's appreciation of women's rights as part of modernization, yet, still their wish to determine the limits of those rights and actions of woman.<sup>455</sup> In other words, giving these rights as a result of women's struggle may have been a challenge for the authority of government in terms of limiting the freedom of women, which is also closely linked to the next argument. According to

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<sup>449</sup> Ibid., 219 and 223-225.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid., 250; and, Temuçin Faik Ertan, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi*, 194-195.

<sup>453</sup> Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 167.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>455</sup> Yaprak Zihniöğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 149.

her second argument, Kemalists were determined “not to let anyone receive the credit for the acquisitions of women” other than themselves, by representing those rights as their favour.<sup>456</sup> Either way, Sancar thinks the timing about giving women their political rights was rather not random as it was given in a particular time when the country was under the rule of single party regime, where women's potential to affect decision-making process was decreased to almost nothing.<sup>457</sup> With this remark, Sancar invites us to rethink this development from a novel and more critical perspective, as its timing put this acquisition in a shadow.

Maybe the worst outcome of these incidents that followed the oppression of women’s movement was the exclusion of these important woman figures from the historical memory, which eventually ended with the desperate waiting of them to be rediscovered in the dusty pages of history that at least lasted for several decades. Consequently, as previously mentioned, independent and challenging women’s movement switched to “state feminism”, while the Republican women, who were convinced that they owed everything to men, replaced pioneering feminists.<sup>458</sup> This, in fact, is the hidden dimension of the story of the modern Turkish woman, who indeed had her rights sooner than most of the women in the world. It is only possible to speculate as to what it would have been like if women were encouraged to fight for their own rights, and were not restricted with the imposition of limits. In such an alternative scenario, there may have been solutions found to fundamental problems such as sexual discrimination, sexual assault, rape, domestic abuse, honour killing, and child marriage, which currently continue to affect social life and women’s status in society. While it is impossible to know for sure, one could argue that if women's movement were not oppressed or that at least, new generations had the chance to know about those feminist pioneers, an awareness of collective woman identity and women’s solidarity could have been achieved in Turkey way earlier than the 1980s.

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<sup>456</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>457</sup> Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 167-168.

<sup>458</sup> Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 249-250.

#### 5.4.Connection with International Women's Movement

Although women from the late Ottoman and early Republican era, who have fought for women's rights, had refrained from defining themselves as feminists, they were surely pioneering figures and contributed to the emancipation of Turkish women in many ways. This first generation of Ottoman-Turkish feminists, who were mostly educated women, had the sense of belonging to a greater cause, as they closely followed the developments of the international women's movement. In this connection, there were relevant articles in both *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu* periodicals, which showed that pioneering Turkish women were in fact in touch with the significant names that led the international feminist struggle and that there was an interaction between them.

However, this connection with international women's movement appeared differently in *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu*. For instance, in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, there was more observation and less interaction whereas there was an intense interactive communication in *Türk Kadın Yolu*. In *Kadınlar Dünyası*, articles about international women's movement had great importance in terms of guiding and inspiring Ottoman women's movement. And, as these were spread through the periodical, there was no repeating pattern or fixed frequency of publication of such articles. Distinctively, in *Türk Kadın Yolu*, there was a section solely for this purpose called *Dünya Kadın Postası*, in which relevant news and correspondences were shared with readers.

As it is noted, in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, the news about international women's movement and the articles about the struggle and accomplishments of foreign women were commonly used to inspire women to take action, to encourage them to demand rights while supporting their cause with these examples. For instance, this strategy is applicable in terms of women's demand for the right to work. In this regard, they wrote many articles, in which they mentioned relevant matters such as professions of

European Queens<sup>459</sup> or workshops and trade schools that are opened for girls in England, France, and Germany and supported by their governments.<sup>460</sup> With all these articles about women's right to work, they aimed to show the contrast between the rapid progress in Europe, on the one hand which was built on women and men working together, and backwardness of the Ottoman Empire, on the other, which neglected the potential of women. Besides the right to work, there were also comparisons in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, in terms of women's education right and the quality of education. As an example, in one of her articles, Nebile Kamuran noted that there were only two girls' schools in Istanbul compared to twenty in London alone.<sup>461</sup> She further claimed that the quality of education between these schools differed severely. And, in fact, this difference was the reason why Ottoman women were undereducated and why English women could be modern, well-educated and visionary.<sup>462</sup>

In contrast with the seriousness of these comparisons, women also shared inspiring success stories of foreign women. In one of these articles, the story of a Japanese woman, who studied medicine in Germany and how she became a leading figure for women in Japan, is told.<sup>463</sup> In another, Madam Hörn's story is shared. Accordingly, she captains a ship named *Heram*, where all crewmembers were also women. It was noted in the article that she influenced the American society deeply with her unique

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<sup>459</sup> Safiye Faik, "Asalette Sanat", April 18, 1329 No: 15, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 149-150.

<sup>460</sup> Pakize Nihat: Beşiktaş Haseki Tarlası, "Sanayi-i Nisvan", May 3, 1329 No:30, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 307-308.

<sup>461</sup> Nebile Kâmuran: Fındıklı, "Maarif", April 27, 1329 No:24, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 246-247.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>463</sup> Pakize Nihat, "Sanayi-i Nisvan", 307.

achievements. In this connection, the article encouraged women to do the jobs, which had been hitherto thought as suitable only for men.<sup>464</sup>

Another dimension of Ottoman women's connection with international women's movement appears as translations of foreign writer's articles on feminism in *Kadınlar Dünyası*. For instance, Pakize Sadri translated an article titled as "Two Feminisms", which was written by Ivon Sersey. In "Two Feminisms", Ivon Sersey claimed that there were two types of feminisms, which were distinct from each other in terms of their fighting strategy. According to her, one of them accepted more violence-prone methods as part of their struggle whereas another type of feminists refused to embrace anything but peaceful tools. This distinction, which led Sersey to develop this argument, emerged with the inclusion of violent acts such as bombing and assassination into feminism.<sup>465</sup> This, unfortunately, gave men opportunity to denigrate feminism and feminists altogether. This turning point, which evoked further prejudices against feminism, was the reason why most women around the world refrained from defining themselves as feminist both then and now. Despite this, Ottoman women continued to follow women's struggle and shared their acquisitions in *Kadınlar Dünyası* with pride that is peculiar to women's solidarity. With such influential examples, it is aimed to remind women of the greatness of their own capability to achieve anything they wanted, if only they could get united.

Indeed, as the articles from *Kadınlar Dünyası* reveal, women were closely following international developments and accepting them as guiding examples for their own struggle. This quotation from the leading article of 67<sup>th</sup> issue proves it: "Today, even among women, who live in the most isolated parts of the world, an awakening has begun. It took entirely a different course in Europe [and it] predisposed [women] to have every civil and social right. In Sweden, in England, in France, in short, all over

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<sup>464</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Kadınlar da Gemici Olabilir", May 7, 1329 No:34, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 342-343.

<sup>465</sup> Ivon Sersey, "İki Feminizm", trans. Pakize Sadri, June 13, 1329 No:71, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 218-221.

Europe, women are establishing armies to defend [women's] natural and civil rights by gathering them under the banner of humanity. Naturally, Ottoman women will not stay out of this social movement of women and unavoidably will become part of [this] civilization movement".<sup>466</sup> Soon enough, Ottoman women and their efforts started to be acknowledged both in the domestic and international arena. And, this acknowledgment initiated a change into a more interactive process in terms of relations between Ottoman women and women from different countries.

In this respect, the conference about the Ottoman women that was held in France by Monsieur Alfred Doran was quite important. According to the article in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, which mentioned this conference, Ottoman women's gradual entrance to economic life attracted the attention of Europeans; and this conference could be seen as a reflection of currently emerging interest in Ottoman women.<sup>467</sup> Through the declaration of the conference, French women and young ladies expressed their appreciation for determined and heroic Ottoman women, struggling to help the development of the Ottoman Empire, although these women experienced the catastrophic effects of the Balkan War.<sup>468</sup> The writer of the article was humbled with this declaration on behalf of Ottoman women. However, she noted that not every Ottoman woman deserved such compliments yet, as there were some women, who still could not appreciate their struggle, let alone contribute to it. Then again, she stated that she was hopeful for the future of woman solidarity.<sup>469</sup> This article is crucial as it proved that Ottoman women and their movement began to be truly acknowledged in the international arena.

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<sup>466</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Cesaret-i Medeniye", June 9, 1329 No:67, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 173.

<sup>467</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Terakki Adımları", April 19, 1329 No:16, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 154.

<sup>468</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Suret-i Karar", April 19, 1329 No:16, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. I*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk and Fatma Büyükarıcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 154-155.

<sup>469</sup> Ibid., 155.

This international acknowledgment also drew attention in the domestic arena, which consequently led to a process that women's movement started to be taken seriously and appreciated by a male-dominated press. There is an article from the 59<sup>th</sup> issue of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, which referred to a lead article published in *İkdam* newspaper. That lead article from *İkdam* was about the International Women's Congress that took place in Paris.<sup>470</sup> Accordingly, he remarks how sincerely sad he found the lack of a delegate from their country in the International Women's Congress. He underlined the importance of sending delegates to such events for both creating a positive impression in the international arena and having the chance to learn from the experiences of Europeans, as the level of countries' development is tightly linked to women's status in those societies.<sup>471</sup> In this connection, considering this and other similar developments, Ottoman women declare their heartfelt appreciation to the organization of International Women's Congress, as this congress led to the emergence of a new interest in woman issue in the Istanbul press. Men could be indifferent about woman issue for a long time if it wasn't for the congress.<sup>472</sup>

When it comes to *Türk Kadın Yolu*, as mentioned earlier, things were quite different in terms of links with international women's movement. In this period, women had more direct interaction and established various channels of communication in order to be part of international developments rather than just observing them. This difference between *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu* makes more sense considering the transformation of the social structure as a result of processes like modernization, secularization and nation building with the establishment of the Republic. After all, Turkish women's movement also transformed in accordance with these processes, in addition to the transformative effect of the maturity that women reached through time in terms of their struggle. The connection of Turkish women

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<sup>470</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Erkekler Matbuatı, Hukukumuzu Teslime Başladı", June 1, 1329 No.59, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 88-90.

<sup>471</sup> Ibid., 89. The attempts to find the identity of the writer of lead article in *İkdam* unfortunately ended up in failure.

<sup>472</sup> Kadınlar Dünyası, "Gazeteler ve Kadınlık", June 2, 1329 No:60, in *Kadınlar Dünyası Vol. II*, prepared by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu and Fatma Büyükcı Yılmaz (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 99.

with the outside world was reflected in several different ways in *Türk Kadın Yolu*. In some articles, it was a brief history of women's movement<sup>473</sup> whereas in others, letters from an important women's rights activist like Corbett Ashby,<sup>474</sup> a discussion about the first women in parliament<sup>475</sup> or future plans of the Turkish Women's Union, which they would put into practice as soon as women get their political rights.<sup>476</sup>

The most pressing demand of Turkish women during that period was having political rights. And, given the intensity of the struggle for women's suffrage in the Western countries at the time, there are plenty of articles about this issue in *Türk Kadın Yolu*. For instance, under the section of *Dünya Kadın Postası*, there was an article, which talked about how Australian women were the first ones to get the right to vote. The article mainly focused on their struggle to have this right. In this connection, a telegram of Australian Senate from 1910 was also shared, which explicitly defined giving women right to vote as brilliant and efficient act in terms of state's interests, especially in long term.<sup>477</sup> With this article, effective ways to continue political rights struggle were introduced to Turkish women, while also giving a message to men that this is not something to be afraid of, and that, on the contrary, how important and useful it was for the development of the country.

Besides taking Western women and their women's rights movement as a model and sharing these valuable experiences with readers in order to inspire Turkish women to take action, the distinctive feature of *Türk Kadın Yolu* from *Kadınlar Dünyası* is its direct connection with international women's movement. This connection found its

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<sup>473</sup> "Kadın Hareketinin Tarihçesi", July 16, 1341 No:1, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 74-75.

<sup>474</sup> "Kadın Birliği Havâdisi", July 30, 1341 No:3, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 122-123.

<sup>475</sup> "Dünya Kadın Postası", July 30, 1341 No:3, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 120-121.

<sup>476</sup> "İntihâbâta İştiraki Müteakib Türk Kadınının Programı", August 6, 1341 No:4, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 151-152.

<sup>477</sup> "Kadın Hareketinin Tarihçesi", 74-75.



best reflection in the letters that were sent to the administration of the Turkish Women's Union. First of all, just like Turkish women looking upon other women, observe them and influenced by them, foreign women were also closely following the Turkish women and their efforts. In fact, as Turkish women rapidly passed to a modern lifestyle, learned from and shared their experiences with other women, their remarkable accomplishments created a delighted astonishment in the international arena. Madame André Riedel expressed her astonishment in the letter that she sent to Nezihe Muhiddin from London: "We wouldn't know about the women in Constantinople if it wasn't for the recently emerging strength as a result of the foundation of the Republic. Thanks to the Republic and freedom of thought, the doors in front of Turkish women's movement get opened. It is quite interesting [to see] how [these women] get used to this free life so fast and effortlessly. Now they walk around the streets and travel freely through tramways like they used to this from the beginning of time. The people, once never thought this situation could ever happen, accept women's free behaviours with respect and without rudeness and bad intentions".<sup>478</sup> As Riedel's letter shows, Turkish women's movement seemed to be accelerated by the nation building process according to the perception of feminists, and therefore it was drawing serious attention in the international sphere.

There are similar letters to Madame Riedel's that prove the international interest in Turkish women's movement and particularly in the publication of *Türk Kadın Yolu*. For instance, there is a letter from A. Maude Royden, which congratulated them for both the publication of the periodical and other progressive steps they had taken.<sup>479</sup> In a different letter that E. F. Rieder sent, which congratulated Turkish women for their achievements, it is also heralded that soon Turkish women will be invited to be members of International Woman Alliance personally by Corbett Ashby, who was the president of the organization. In fact, Rieder's letter is very important from an entirely different perspective too. As she was very knowledgeable about women in

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<sup>478</sup> "Dünya Kadın Postası", August 20, 1341 No:6, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 205-206.

<sup>479</sup> "Dünya Kadın Postası", July 23, 1341 No:2, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 105-107.

the Middle East, in the letter she claimed that women from Syria and Iraq would leap forward in order to share public sphere equally with men, as women in Turkey did.<sup>480</sup> In this sense, her argument can be interpreted as an implication that Turkish women had a pioneering role for the women in the region.

These letters are also crucial to understand the nature of the feminist struggle, and also, to see how Turkish women got involved with international women's movement. In this regard, the letter of Corbett Ashby is quite relevant. In her letter, Ashby invited Nezihe Muhiddin to a congress, which was going to be held in Paris, on May 1926. Nezihe Hanım was also invited to lead one of the commissions established and specialized in order to solve fundamental problems of womanhood.<sup>481</sup> First of all, this invitation is extremely remarkable as it reflected the respectability and reputation of pioneering figures of Turkish women's movement and it showed its international dimension of it. Secondly, the commissions that Ashby mentions are helpful in terms of seeing main demands of women in the international scale. Some of these commissions are the commission of moral unity, commission for the nationality of married women, commission for illegitimate children, commission for providing women equality in salary, job and education opportunities, and commission for family law.<sup>482</sup>

The relationship that Turkish women developed with international women's movement was indeed quite significant. However, there is one other factor that was affecting the nature of this interaction: nationalism. There was an obvious stagger in good relations and constructive attitude of Turkish women deriving from nationalist sensitivities when Greek women were involved. Of course, this stagger never turned into discourteousness, but it is appropriate to say that in such cases the feeling of the need to guard against the “enemy” of the nation overcame.

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<sup>480</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>481</sup> “Kadın Birliği Havâdisi”, 122-123.

<sup>482</sup> Ibid., 122.

In this regard, there are some articles in *Türk Kadın Yolu*, which reflected this inner conflict of women on this matter. For instance, there is an article of Nezihe Muhiddin, which was written to encourage women to step forward and get involved in national matters. In this connection, Muhiddin underlined the importance of associations. She continued her argument by expressing her disappointment with the little support that the Turkish Women's Union received, which was established more than a year ago now. With a sincere realism, she admits that five hundred people were not enough to represent Turkish women altogether. But, she further noted that there was no longer an obstacle that is holding back women from joining the Turkish Women's Union.<sup>483</sup> According to Nezihe Hanım, to avoid providing support to an organization, which worked for the happiness, prosperity, and respectability of all women, was an unforgivable negligence.<sup>484</sup> At this point, she introduced a comparison to clarify the auspices they expected, as she likened this conflict to rivalry or competition between other similar organizations: "I like to turn a deaf ear to the vastness [to the number of associations] and friendship and cooperation between [these] women's associations that were established with the same purpose and aim in Europe, and especially to [the fact that] an organization founded by the Athenian women, who we even ashamed to give citizenship to, having thousands of members. We are the women of a nation, which created the brightest and preeminent example of alliance and unity!"<sup>485</sup>

A similar example to this one, in which again Turkish and Greek women confronted each other, can be found in an article that was signed as *Kadın Yolu*. It is actually about the conference of the International Woman Alliance and the decisions made in this conference. In this regard, it is mentioned that women decided to cooperate with

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<sup>483</sup> Nezihe Muhiddin, "Memleketin İşlerinde Vahdet", August 13, 1341 No:5, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 168-169.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid., 169.

the League of Nations in order to contribute restoring and maintaining peace.<sup>486</sup> Although Turkish women defended women's efforts for this great cause, they felt the urge to remind that women could only come together for the purpose of peace, if there were no vindictive attitudes targeting one another. An anecdote about one of Turkish women's negative experiences was shared while also using this opportunity to answer those who are responsible for this experience. Accordingly, the leader of the Greek Women's Association claimed that Christian women in Anatolia were held captive as slaves in *harem*. Obviously, this claim was strongly refused: "Especially, one of the first grand acts of the national government was to annul slavery. We need to think the level of comprehensiveness of the peace idea while seeing one's efforts, as recently as last year, to gather enemies around us with vulgar claims based on a disgusting lie, in a women's congress, which should be free from grudge and malice".<sup>487</sup> From this respect, the dissolution of the Turkish Women's Union in the following years due to a women's congress in Istanbul, in which peace was one of the main themes, seems like a sad historical irony.

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<sup>486</sup> Kadın Yolu, "Kadınlık Cereyanları", October 15, 1926 No:21, in *Kadın Yolu / Türk Kadın Yolu*, prepared by Nevin Yurdsever Ateş (Istanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 347-348.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid., 348.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

An examination of *Kadınlar Dünyası* and *Türk Kadın Yolu* are crucial as they demonstrate the interaction between nationalism and gender. Yet, the precision and importance of this dissertation cannot be degraded to this result only. Thanks to the analyses of both periodicals, the nature of women's relationship with nationalism, its multidimensional feature, and its relation to the historical context are also revealed. At the same time, this inquiry allows us to see that women were not passive figures, whose identities determined by nationalist arguments built on gender stereotypes, but that they were active agents, who had their own ideas, needs, and demands and capability to fight for expressing themselves despite many challenges.

One important finding is about the interaction and common ground between nationalism and women's movement. As a result of careful examination of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, *Türk Kadın Yolu* and particular conditions of their respective historical period, circumstances that led to the emergence of the relationship between nationalism and women's movement become clear. Nationalism needed woman because they were considered important for the success of the nationalist project. As for women, it is possible to say that women needed legitimacy source if they want their demands to be accepted in those particular social conditions. In *Kadınlar Dünyası*, these demands of women represented the minimum conditions to ensure a respectable status for women in the society. Specifically women's right to education and work, necessary change in clothing regulations, which was an important obstacle for women's participation in public life, rearrangement of marriage and family life in accordance with the necessities of time and efforts to proliferate the consumption of local goods, which showed women's sensitivity to social matters, were prevailing themes from the periodical. In time, especially with the transition from Empire to the Republic, women's social status and the rights also changed. In this regard, the prevailing themes and major demands of women as expressed in *Türk Kadın Yolu*

differed from the ones in *Kadınlar Dünyası*. However, despite these transformations, women's need for legitimizing their demands remained the same. In this connection, it is shown that women presented their demands in a way that those demands could get the support of men. Sometimes they referred to Islam, as in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, and sometimes to nationalist arguments, this was valid in both late Ottoman era and early Republican era, to justify their demands. At this point, women especially adopted the role of being biological and cultural reproducer of the nation, a role that was attributed to them within the nationalist project and justified their demands with motherhood argument in many cases. This claim also brings us to another precondition. The "maternal feminist" nature of women's movement was the reason why women could adopt this role that nationalism attributed to them so easily. This feminist approach, in which emphasis on motherhood prevailed, was very important in terms of women's internalization of the role of being nation's biological and cultural reproducer and development of the relationship between women's movement and nationalism.

Another factor, which played an important role in the emergence of the relationship between nationalism and women's movement, was the common ground that nationalism and women's movement found from the respect of revolt against patriarchy. As it was discussed earlier, nationalism was actually targeting patriarchy in certain ways. Although this was not an opposition to the system altogether as in the case of women's movement, it was a revolt that targeted father's authority, which found its reflections in the traditional family structure of Ottoman Empire. Men even expressed their uneasiness with this system in the name of modernization by problematizing women's oppressed and secondary position within family and society instead of mentioning their personal problems and discomforts.

Last ones that were effective in the emergence of connection between these two phenomena were historical conditions. The developments in the last years of Ottoman Empire had become an accelerating factor in terms of the emergence and rise of Turkish nationalism. In this connection, nationalism can be interpreted as the way chosen for the solution of all problems. These historical conditions, particularly

the state of war and rising nationalism paved the way for women's entrance to the public sphere. For this reason, it can be said that women formed a bond with nationalism more easily and this also helped strengthen their connection in time.

Specifically, the time, when *Kadınlar Dünyası* began to its publication life, was a period, where all these preparatory conditions that have been mentioned above, came together and in that connection, the interaction between nationalism and women's movement could be followed by an examination of women's articles. When it comes to *Türk Kadın Yolu* and the early Republican period, those preparatory conditions began to lose their influence and disappear. Eventually, the differences between these phenomena, which did not become an issue before, started to surface. It is observed that the relationship between nationalism and women shifted to a competitive, and even to a hostile ground. Therefore, in order to evaluate the findings of this dissertation, the reason(s), which led to these developments, needs to be assessed as carefully as the preparatory conditions.

It is possible to define the main reason, which led to the end of this cooperative relationship with mutual interests as the difference between the role and status that nationalism attributed to women in the nation-building project and women's everyday experience. In this regard, there was a fundamental contradiction, or a duality, in terms of women's status. This duality is conceptualized as the distinction between “ideal woman” and “actual woman” in this dissertation. This means that although nationalism appears to be exalting women, inviting them into the public sphere and providing new opportunities by giving them new responsibilities, it, in fact, continue to insist on determining the limits of women's place, role and actions. From this perspective, the “ideal woman”, who has more freedom in terms of her behaviours and choices, was yet a fictive figure in the nationalist imagination. In this sense, the “actual woman” was depicted as a pitiful figure that was in need of men's constant supervision and guidance. This is also a crucial argument, which allowed men to maintain their superiority over women. Accordingly, nationalism could even determine the rules of women's marriage decision, as it is thought that they also represent the borders of the nation symbolically, and impose restrictions on women's

choice of life partner, which was in fact supposed to be a rather personal decision. As this example also shows, nationalism had a patriarchal tone from its emergence, since it maintains control over women. Patriarchy transformed through time, as mentioned before, Sylvia Walby defined this transformation as a transition from private patriarchy to public patriarchy.<sup>488</sup> So, although the Republic was, in fact, a revolt against traditional patriarchy and its institutions, it was built as a new patriarchal formation, or in Fatmagül Berktaş's words as "the regime of brothers".<sup>489</sup>

Then, how did this relationship become strained? It can be said that the will of men to maintain control over women while defending women's emancipation only in their statements and undeniably maintained existence of historical hierarchy between women and men despite the new regime's equality claim gave rise to conflict between women and the founding elites. This situation found its reflections on women's demand for political rights. This demand, which was not one of the immediate demands of women in the Ottoman Empire as they were even deprived of fundamental social rights, became the most pressing demand of women's movement in the early Republican era. The republican regime embodied a promise of equality and the exalted ideal of democracy was signaling a proper environment for women in which they could demand their political rights. Unfortunately, this demand disturbed the founding elite, which is why women's struggle for this right began to face certain challenges. The prevention of the establishment of Women's People Party was a typical example of this uneasiness.

In addition to other findings of this dissertation, this narrative about the struggle, which women carried out implies that there was actually a well-founded women's movement during the late Ottoman and the early Republican era. As it is mentioned earlier, the existence of such movement was mostly erased from collective historical memory after the cooperation between nationalism and women's movement came to

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<sup>488</sup> Sylvia Walby, "Woman and Nation" / "Kadın ve Ulus" in *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 33/1-2 (1992), ed. Ayşe Gül Altınay, *Vatan Millet Kadınlar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013), 49.

<sup>489</sup> Fatmagül Berktaş, "Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Feminizm", *Tarihin Cinsiyeti*, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2012), 106.



an end; and, it is only rediscovered with the turn of women's movement in Turkey after 1980, which also brought a fresh interest in women's history.

The Ottoman-Turkish women's movement was indeed an important struggle with an undeniable effectiveness. Women's demands, organization skills, and their gradually increasing activeness as they published periodicals and established associations became critical findings of the thesis. It is observed that those pioneering Turkish women were in contact with international women's movement more so in *Türk Kadın Yolu* than in *Kadınlar Dünyası* and that they were following relevant conferences, meetings, and marches aside from women's periodicals. Again similarly, the correspondences, which were shared with the readers of *Türk Kadın Yolu*, showed that the leading names of the international women's movement also closely followed and supported Turkish women's movement, expressing their willingness for any possible cooperation. The interaction of pioneering Turkish women with international women's movement was crucial as it reflects that women did not share the exclusionary and close understanding of nationalism build on the distinction between 'we' and 'others', and how on the contrary, they were open and able to develop a different definition of 'we' deriving from their womanhood.

To sum up, it is possible to say that the transition from Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey represents a breakup or more of a rupture. This transition from Empire to the Republic had changed the social life from various different aspects including gender structure. With the foundation of the Republic, women, who were prisoners enclosed in the private realm in the Ottoman society and deprived of even their most basic human rights, witnessed many improvements in their lives. The public sphere is now opened to women and they had rights, which they cannot imagine before. However, the most fundamental problem in terms of women issue emerged due to a connection that managed to maintain its existence between the Empire and Republic. As it is also underlined as one of the reasons why the cooperation between nationalism and women's movement ended, this connection was the continuity of patriarchy in the new system, which in this sense also prevented the emergence of full equality between women and men. So, it can be said

that although women became more visible and freer, they were still a secondary position in society after the transition from Empire to the Republic. Further research is needed to inquire into investigating the complex relationship between gender and nationalism, in general, and its manifestation in the Turkish case, in particular.

For a final assessment, the significance of all these findings is that it challenges the presuppositions and classical narrative of nationalism studies. By questioning the hegemonic position of nationalism, it also shows that nationalism is open to be influenced by gender relations and women's movement as much as it has the potential to affect them.

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## APPENDICIES

### A.TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Milliyetçilik alanında üretilen çalışmaların büyük bir kısmı, bugüne dek milliyetçiliği yalnızca erkeklerin deneyimlediği yönüyle analiz ederken bunun tüm toplumun deneyimi gibi yansıtılmasına yol açmak hatasına düştü. Üstelik 90'lı yılların başında milliyetçilik çalışmalarının klasik yaklaşımlarını eleştiren yeni yaklaşımlar yükseldiği ve toplumsal cinsiyet meselesinin gündeme getirildiği döneme dek içine düşülen bu hata konusunda bir farkındalık bulunduğundan bahsetmek de oldukça zor görünüyor. Elinizdeki bu tez bu durumun bir eleştirisi olarak okunabilir. Hedeflenen, hikayeyi bu kez kadınların deneyimlerinden ve söylemlerinden hareketle yeniden okumaktır. Türk milliyetçiliği ve milli inşa süreci çalışmanın temel örnekleme olarak belirlenmiştir.

Çalışmanın temel sorusu milliyetçi hareketler içinde kadının konumunun ne olduğudur. Bunun yanı sıra destekleyici bazı sorularla araştırmanın derinliğinin artırılmasına çabalanmıştır. Örneğin, kadınların milli inşa süreçlerini nasıl deneyimlediği sorusu, kadınların ve erkeklerin milliyetçilik deneyimlerinin doğasının birbirinden farklı olduğunun altını çizmektedir. Diğer bir soru kadınların milliyetçilikle hangi şekillerde bağ kurduğudur. Milliyetçilik kadınlara hangi rolleri atfetmektedir? Daha da önemlisi, kadınlara bu roller atfedildikten sonra ne olur? Toplumsal cinsiyet meselesi milliyetçiliğin bir boyutu olarak ele alınmaya başlandıktan sonra milliyetçiliğin kadına verdiği rolleri konu edinen çok sayıda çalışma yapılmışken, bundan sonra ne olduğu, kadınların bu rolleri benimsemiş mi yoksa reddetmiş mi olduğu yeterince tartışılmamıştır.

Bu tezin beş temel varsayımı bulunur. Bunlardan ilki, milliyetçiliğin milli inşa sürecinde, özellikle de mobilizasyon hedefleri doğrultusunda, toplumsal cinsiyet stereotiplerini kullanıyor olduğudur. İkincisi, milletlerin içinde bazı kimlikler

olumlanıp hegemonik konumlanırken bazılarının baskı altına alındığı ve marjinalleştirildiği ve buna rağmen millet denen yapının dışarıya homojen bir yapı olarak yansıtılmaya çalışıldığını ifade etmektedir. Daha açık bir ifadeyle bu varsayım farklı kadınlık ve erkekliklerin, ideal kadın ve erkek prototipi karşısında görmezden gelinme eğiliminde olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Üçüncü varsayıma göre toplumun yarısını oluşturan kadınların milliyetçilik tarafından yok sayılması, toplumsal mobilizasyon hedefleri açısından başarısızlık riski oluşturacağı için mümkün değildir. Bu durum belli roller aracılığı ile kadınlara milliyetçi hareketler içinde önemli bir pozisyon elde etme olanağı sağlamıştır. Son iki varsayım birbiriyle yakından ilişkilidir ve birbirini tamamlar. Buna göre, kadınlar çoğunlukla pasif figürler olarak resmedilse de milliyetçiliği kendi özgürleşme hedefleri için kullanmışlardır. Yani aksine, kadınlar kendi hedefleri, talepleri ve stratejileri olan aktif figürlerdir.

Çalışmanın temel hedefi milliyetçiliği kadınların deneyimleri ve söylemleri üzerinden okumak olduğundan biri Türk milliyetçiliğinin ortaya çıktığı evrede, diğeri ise milli inşa sürecinin en yoğun olduğu süreçte yayımlanan iki kadın dergisi analiz edilmiştir. Bunlardan ilki Kadınlar Dünyası, ikincisi Türk Kadın Yolu dergileridir. Birincil kaynak analizi, hem bu dergileri çıkaran kadınları hem de bu dergilerin çıkarıldığı ortamın tarihsel koşullarını anlamak açısından oldukça faydalı bir araştırma yöntemi olduğundan bu çalışmanın merkezinde yer almaktadır. Ancak tarihsel kaynakları analiz etmenin güçlükleri düşünüldüğünde ikincil kaynakların analizine de başvurulmuştur. Özellikle dergilerin eski tarihli olmaları sebebiyle bazı sayılarının bulunamayışı ve elimizde bulunan sayıların da Arap alfabesi kullanılarak basılmış olması karşılaşılan en temel güçlüklerdir. Bu noktada, ikincil kaynakların kullanımı çalışmaya farklı bakış açıları ve bilgi birikimlerini getirerek tezin entelektüel derinliğinin artmasına olanak sağladığından oldukça faydalıdır.

Kadınlar Dünyası ilk kez 1913 yılında Ulviye Mevlan öncülüğünde çıkarılmaya başlanmıştır. İçinde bulunulan tarihsel koşullar nedeniyle yayımlanma süreci birkaç kez kesintiye uğrasa da 1921 yılına dek çıkarılmaya devam etmiştir. Dergi yayımlanmaya başladığında, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, 1908’de ilan edilen İkinci

Meşrutiyet'in de etkisiyle, merkezileşme, sekülerleşme ve özgürleşme süreçlerini deneyimlemekteydi. Toplumu dönüştürmekte olan bu süreçler, basın hayatındaki yenilikler ve gelişmelerle birleşince kadınlara kendi taleplerini dile getirme olanağı sağlayan bir fırsat yaratılmasına yaradı. Kadınlar Dünyası aynı dönemde çıkmaya başlayan diğer kadın dergilerinden farklıydı; çünkü, kadın dergilerinin büyük bir çoğunluğunun dönemin entelektüel erkekleri tarafından çıkarıldığı bir ortamda yazar kadrosu yalnızca kadınlardan oluşan tek dergiydi. Üstelik dergiye yazılarını gönderen kadınlar toplumun farklı kesimlerinden geliyordu. Bu haliyle Kadınlar Dünyası, erkeklerin kafasındaki ideal kadın imgesini değil, kadınların kendi düşüncelerini, görüş ve taleplerini yansıtıyordu, bu yüzden de oldukça önemliydi.

Kadınlar Dünyası dergisinin ve geç Osmanlı dönemi koşullarının detaylı bir incelemesi sonucu çalışmanın belki de en önemli bulgularından birine ulaşıldığı söylenebilir. Buna göre, Osmanlı toplumunda Türk milliyetçiliğine paralel olarak gelişim gösteren bir kadın hareketi söz konusudur. Üçüncü dünya feminizmine ilişkin çalışmalarda sıklıkla karşılaşıldığı üzere sömürgeci yönetim deneyimine sahip ya da bu tehdit altındaki toplumlarda genel olarak milliyetçilik ve kadın hareketi yan yana yürümektedir. Türk milliyetçiliği için de bu savın bir anlamda doğrulandığı söylenebilir. Bu bağlamda, temel kaygısı kadınların milliyetçi hareketler içindeki konumunun tespit edilmesi olan bu tez için Osmanlı kadın hareketi ve Türk milliyetçi hareketinin birbirleriyle nasıl bir etkileşimde olduğunun tespiti önemli bir mesele haline gelmiştir. Ve bu etkileşimin doğası da ancak kadınların Kadınlar Dünyası'nda dile getirdiği, eğitim, iş, giyim, evlilik ve aile yapısı, yerel malların tüketimi gibi konulara yönelik taleplerinin analiz edilmesiyle ortaya konabilmiştir.

Bu bilgiler ışığında, Kadınlar Dünyası'nın analizi neticesinde ulaşılan bulgulara bakılacak olursa, bunlardan ilki yukarıda da bahsedildiği üzere milliyetçilik ve kadın hareketi arasında tarihsel bir kesişim olduğudur. Bu noktada kadınların taleplerinin söz konusu kesişimin oluşumunda belirleyici bir yere sahip olduğunu söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır. Bununla ilişkili olarak, ikinci tespit kadın hareketinin, eşit hak elde etme mücadelesinde milliyetçi söylemleri meşrulaştırıcı olarak kullandığına işaret etmektedir. Üçüncü tespite göre milliyetçilik, bir milli kimlik inşa etmek ve



toplumsal mobilizasyon hedeflerini gerçekleştirmek için kadınlara eşit haklar vaadinde bulunmaktadır. Son olarak kadın hareketi ve milliyetçilik arasındaki bu tarihsel kesişim, her iki toplumsal hareketin de farklı açılardan beslenebileceği elverişli bir zemin yaratmıştır.

Milliyetçilik ve kadın hareketi arasındaki etkileşimin ortaya çıkışına olanak sağlayan iki faktör bulunmaktadır. Bunlardan biri ataerkilliğe karşı başkaldırı unsuru, diğeri kadın hareketinin maternal niteliğidir. Her ne kadar ilk iddia milliyetçiliğin kuruluşu itibariyle ataerkil bir ideoloji olmasından ötürü çelişkili gözükse de öyle değildir. Gerçekten de milliyetçi hareket ve kadın hareketi arasında ataerkilliğe yönelik direnişten ileri gelen bir ortaklaşama olduğu söylenebilir. Tabii buradaki ataerkillik milliyetçilik perspektifinden yalnızca baba otoritesini, yani geleneksel ataerkilliği çağrıştırmak üzere dar bir biçimde tanımlanmıştır. Buradan hareketle, Türk milliyetçiliği esasında Sultan'ın geleneksel ataerkil rejimine bir başkaldırı hareketidir.

İkinci kolaylaştırıcı faktör yukarıda da bahsedildiği üzere Türk kadın hareketinin özü itibariyle maternal bir niteliğe sahip olmasıdır. Bununla kastedilen kadınların kendi taleplerini dile getirir ve onları desteklerken kadının bunu hakkedişini ve önemini sahip olduğu annelik rolüne atıfla meşrulaştırma eğiliminde olmasıdır. Milliyetçi hareketler içerisinde kadına atfedilen en önemli rollerin söz konusu etnik/milli topluluğun biyolojik ve kültürel yeniden üretimi olduğu düşünüldüğünde, bu aslında birbirinden çok farklı ve uzlaşmaz görünen iki hareketin nasıl bir araya gelebildiğine dair bir açıklama da sunmaktadır.

Türk Kadın Yolu dergisi milliyetçilik ve kadın hareketi arasındaki bu ortaklığın yavaş ancak kesin bir şekilde sonlanmaya başladığı 1925 yılında yayımlanmaya başladı. Kurtuluş Savaşı'ndan sonra, daha öncesinde bastırılmış olan farklılıklar kademeli olarak yüzeye çıkmaya başladı. Kadınlar genç cumhuriyet yönetiminin erkekler ve kadınlar arasında eşitliği sağlayacağına yönelik bir beklentiye sahipti, ancak bu beklentileri karşılanmadı. 1924 anayasası erkeklerin siyasi haklarını güvence altına alırken kadınları bu haktan mahrum bırakarak milliyetçi hareketin

daha önceki dönemlerde kadınları hedef alan eşitlik vaadini yerine getirmemiş oldu. Bu sebeple kadınlar, kadın ve erkeğin vatandaşlıktan kaynaklanan hak ve ödevleri bakımından eşit olması gerektiğine inançla, kendi mücadelelerini yürütmeye başladılar.

Gerçekten de, siyasi hak talebi, Türk Kadın Yolu'nun açık ara en öne çıkan temasıydı. Zaten Türk Kadın Yolu dergisinin, Nezihe Muhiddin liderliğindeki öncü kadınların başlangıçta Kadınlar Halk Fırkası olarak kurmayı planladığı, ancak kadınların siyasi hakları bulunmadığı gerekçesiyle çeşitli engellemelerle karşılaşarak siyasi olmayan bir örgütlenmeye dönüştürülen Türk Kadınlar Birliği'yle yakından ilişkisi bulunuyordu. Bunun yanı sıra derginin analizi kadınlığın ideal kadından süfajetliğe, feministlikten anneliğe kadar değişen farklı hallerini ve aynı kadınların bu farklı haller arasındaki salınımının kendi içlerinde yarattığı gerilimi görmek açısından da oldukça önemliydi.

Türk Kadın Yolu'nun analizinden çıkan en önemli sonuçlardan biri kadınların cumhuriyetle kurdukları ilişkiye dair çelişik hislere sahip olduğudur. Daha kesin bir biçimde ifade edilecek olursa, cumhuriyetin ilanı ile değişen sisteme ve elverişli koşullara rağmen kadınların erkeklerin tam eşiti olarak kabul edilmediğinin açık işaretleri bulunuyordu. Bu durum kadınların milliyetçilikle kurdukları ilişkinin ve ortaklığın bozulması için yeter sebepken, kadınlar doğrudan yeni sistemin muhalifleri haline gelmek yerine onunla karmaşık bir ilişki geliştirdiler. Durum bu şekilde gelişti; çünkü kadınlar eşitlik vaadinin yerine getirilmemesinden kaynaklanan bir hayal kırıklığı yaşarken aynı zamanda geleneksel ve muhafazakar Osmanlı toplumundaki yaşantılarına kıyasla, 1926 yılında Medeni Kanun'un kabul edilmesi gibi gelişmeler sayesinde hatırı sayılır bir özgürleşme ortamını deneyimliyorlardı.

Bu özgürleşme ortamına ve tüm farklılıklarına rağmen, içine girilen bu yeni dünya yine bir ataerkil sistemin devamı olarak kadının davranışları etrafındaki sınırların erkekler tarafından belirlenmesi gerektiğine dair yerleşik inancı yansıtıyordu. Yani Türk Kadın Yolu'ndan çıkarılan bir diğer sonuç milliyetçiliğin her ne kadar kadınların, özellikle de savaş dönemlerinde, kamusal alana girişini kolaylaştırıcı ve

meşrulaştırıcı bir rol üstlense de cumhuriyetin kurulmasıyla birlikte kadınlardan geleneksel olarak ait oldukları eve dönmelerini beklediği idi. Derginin analiziyle ulaşılan diğer bulgular da aslında bununla yakından ilişkiliydi. Buna göre idealize edilen milli kadının vatanına karşı en büyük görevi eşi ve ailesiyle ilgilenmek, ve bu aile ortamında millete faydalı olması beklenen vatansever çocuklar yetiştirmekti. Ancak kadın hareketinin öncüleri doğrudan muhalif bir tavır göstermeseler de kendilerine dayatılan sınırlar içerisinde kalmayı reddediyordu. Doğal olarak bu durum kadınlar ve yönetici elit arasında bir gerilimin ortaya çıkmasına yol açtı. Söz konusu gerilim ise kadın hareketi ve milliyetçilik arasındaki etkileşimin yapıcı doğasını zaman içerisinde değiştirerek bir karşıtlığa dönüştürdü. Nihayetinde tüm bu değişimler kadın hareketinin bastırılması, öncü kadınların marjinalleştirilerek toplum dışına itilmesi ve devlet güdümünde bir kadın hareketinin teşvik edilmesi sonucunu verdi.

Tüm bunların işaret ettiği büyük resmi görebilmek için yapılması gereken Kadınlar Dünyası ve Türk Kadın Yolu dergilerini ve bunların analizlerinden elde edilen bulguları bir karşılaştırma düzleminde bir araya getirmektir. Tezin sonuç kısmından önceki bölüm buna ayrılmıştır. Karşılaştırma, çok basitçe ifade edilecek olursa iki düzlemde gerçekleştirilir. İlki dergilerde kullanılan meşruyet kaynaklarının karşılaştırıldığı ikincisi ise kadınların taleplerinin farklı kadınlık halleriyle ilişkilendirilerek değişiminin gözlemlendiği düzlemdir.

Kadınlar kendi taleplerini erkeklerin gözünde kabul edilebilir kılmak için iki meşruyet aracından faydalanmıştır: din ve milliyetçilik. Daha öncede bahsedildiği üzere Kadınlar Dünyası'nın çıkarılmaya başlandığı dönemde Osmanlı toplumuna bir tür özgürleşme atmosferi hakimdi. Ancak, yine aynı dönemde, şeriat kuralları hala toplumun özel yaşantısını düzenleyen en önemli kaynak olarak karşımıza çıkar. Dolayısıyla kadınların taleplerini dile getirirken dini görmezden gelemeyeceği oldukça açıktır. Kadınlar kısa sürede dinin özüne uygun olmak kaydıyla yeniden yorumlanarak kendi taleplerini destekleyici olarak kullanılmasının, mahrum kaldıkları hak ve özgürlüklerin sorumlusu olarak dini hedef almaktan daha etkili olabileceğini fark etmiştir. Bu sayede kadınlar hem taleplerine tartışmaya açık

olmayan bir destek bulurken hem de kendilerine yönelebilecek olan kafirlik suçlamalarını başından önlemeyi başarmışlardır.

Kadınlar Dünyası'ndaki durumdan farklı olarak, din Türk Kadın Yolu dergisindeki makalelerde bir meşruiyet aracı olarak yer almaz. Bu durum iki dergi arasındaki en önemli farklardan birine işaret etmektedir. Yeni cumhuriyet başından itibaren seküler bir yapı olarak hayal edilmiştir ve bunun için gerekli adımlar da kademeli olarak atılmıştır. Daha da önemlisi, irticanın Kemalist rejimin düşmanı olduğunu saptamasıdır. Koşullar böyleyken kadınların dini meşrulaştırıcı bir argüman olarak kullanmayı bırakmış olması şaşırtıcı değildir. Aksi durum taleplerinin gerçekleşmesine yardım etmek şöyle dursun, onların gerçekleşmesinin önünde fazladan bir engel oluşturabilirdi.

Dinden farklı olarak milliyetçilik, milli argümanların kullanımı hem Kadınlar Dünyası hem de Türk Kadın Yolu dergisinde yer alan makalelerde kadınların başvurduğu bir meşruiyet kaynağı olarak karşımıza çıkar. Ancak bu ortak nokta değerlendirilirken de dikkate alınması gereken iki önemli unsur bulunur. Buna göre Kadınlar Dünyası'nın çıkarıldığı dönemden Türk Kadın Yolu'nun çıkarıldığı döneme dek –ki arada uzun yıllar bulunmamakla birlikte geçen yıllarda yaşanan gelişmelerin dönüştürücü etkisi dikkate alındığında– kadınların talepleri farklılaşan toplumsal koşullara göre oldukça değişmiştir. Bu taleplerden bazılarının karşılandığı, bazılarının hala varlığını koruduğu, ve bazı yeni taleplerin de geliştiğini söylemek olanaklıdır. Bir diğer unsur ise tüm bunların kadınların milliyetçilikle kurmuş oldukları ilişkiyi de değiştirmiş olduğudur.

Karşılaştırma bölümünün bundan sonraki kısmı farklı kadınlık hallerinin ve taleplerinin kesişimine bakar. Kadınların farklı kadınlık halleri arasındaki salınımı, milliyetçilikle kurdukları ilişki açısından bir gerilim unsurudur denebilir. Bu bağlamda kadınların birbirinden oldukça farklı fakat aynı ölçüde belirleyici iki rolü vardır: kamusal alanda modern bir kadın olmak, özel alanda milletin özü olan geleneklerin koruyucusu olmak.

Kamusal alandaki modern kadın her şeyden önce eğitilmiş bir kadındır. Bilindiği üzere eğitim konusu kadınlar için oldukça önemlidir. Özellikle Osmanlı toplumunda kız çocukların eğitimi teşvik edilmediği için Kadınlar Dünyası'nda oldukça fazla yer tutmuştur. Ancak bu konu Türk Kadın Yolu'nda eşit ölçüde merkezi bir konuma sahip değildir. Bunun nedeni kısa bir sürede istenen eğitim standartlarının elde edilmesi ya da kadınların eğitime yönelik önyargıların bir anda yok olmuş olmasıyla açıklanamayacağı açıktır. Bu yeni kurulmuş olan cumhuriyetin eğitimi önemli bir araç görmesiyle yakından ilişkilidir. Yeni sistem kadınların da erkekler kadar eğitim olanaklarından faydalanmasını teşvik etmiştir. Ancak eğitimin niteliği ve içeriği toplumsal cinsiyet normlarını yerleştirmeye çalışması bakımından sorgulanabilir. Eğitim hakkıyla birlikte her ne kadar kamusal alanda kadına daha fazla yer açılıyor görünse de, aslında kızların eğitimiyle hedeflenen ileride çocuk dünyaya getirecek ve onları milli duygularla büyütecek annelerin yetiştirilmesiydi. Yani, kadının var olduğu esas alanın ev olduğu fikri hala korunuyordu.

Modern kadın eğitilmiş olmasının yanı sıra iş hayatında erkekle birlikte var olmaya başlamış bir kadına da işaret ediyordu. Kadınların çalışma hayatına girişinin, kadının erkeğe olan ekonomik bağımlılığını azaltması sebebiyle önemi çok büyüktü. Milliyetçiliğin yükseldiği süreçte, özellikle savaş koşullarının hakim olduğu bir toplumda kadınlar savaşa giden erkeğin yerine geçerek işgücünün bir parçası haline gelmişlerdi. Ancak bazı işler kadınlara uygun bulunmadığından, kadının her alanda işgücü olarak bulunduğunu söylemek olanaksızdı. Savaşın bittiği ve cumhuriyetin kurulduğu dönemde de kadınların çalışabilecekleri iş alanlarının etrafındaki sınırlar eskiye kıyasla gevşemiş olmakla birlikte varlığını sürdürdü. Ve hatta, yönetici elit hiçbir zaman kadınların ailelerinin mutluluğu pahasına kadınların kariyer hedeflerini gerçekleştirmelerini teşvik etmedi. Artık savaş bittiğine göre, kadınlar asıl görevlerinin bulunduğu yere, eve dönerek aileleriyle ilgilenebilirdi. Türk Kadın Yolu'nda erkeklerin kadınların iş yaşamına katılması halinde ailelerine karşı görevlerini ihmal edebileceklerini ima eden yorumlarına karşı eleştiriler getiren çok sayıda makale bulunuyordu. Haliyle kadınlar geleneksel sorumluluklarını ihmal etmeden kamusal alanda ve ancak kendileri için çizilmiş olan sınırlar içerisinde kalacaklarını kanıtlamak zorunda hissediyorlardı.

Bunların yanı sıra kadınların dış görünüşleri ve kılık kıyafetleriyle de kamusal alanda modernliği yansıtır olmaları bekleniyordu. Bilindiği gibi Osmanlı toplumu oldukça muhafazakardı ve kadınların uyması beklenen sıkı kılık kıyafet kuralları söz konusuydu. Bu kurallar kadınların toplumsal hayatın bir parçası olmasının ve Osmanlı'nın 1908 sonrası özgürleşme atmosferini deneyimlemesinin önündeki en görünür engellerden biriydi. Bu konu, yani kadınların değişen koşullara göre giyimlerinin nasıl yeniden düzenlenmesi gerektiği Kadınlar Dünyası'nda en çok tartışılan konulardan biriydi. Ve bu konuya ilişkin kadınların birbirinden oldukça farklı görünen fikirleri olsa da hepsi peçe giymeyi açık bir şekilde reddetme noktasında buluşuyordu. Cumhuriyet'in ilanından sonra, Türk Kadın Yolu'nun çıkarılmaya başladığı dönemlere gelindiğindeyse bu konuyla ilgili fikirler ve uygulamalar büyük değişikliklere uğramıştı. Artık, kadınları küçük düşüren bu eski kıyafetleri giymekte ısrar edenlerin Türk Kadın Yolu'nda yer alan makalelerde sertçe eleştirildiği bir noktaya gelinmişti. Cumhuriyet'in prensipleri, özellikle de modernlik ve sekülerleşme doğrultusunda, kadın ve erkeklerin giyinişi cumhuriyetin Osmanlı mirasından farklılığını ortaya koyan sembollere dönüştüğünü söylemek mümkün.

Kadınların modernleşmedeki taşıyıcı rolüne ek olarak özellikle ev ve aile yaşantısında milli değerler olarak kabul edilen geleneksel rolleri de sürdürmesi bekleniyordu. Bu noktada zaman içerisinde evlilik kurumu ve aile yaşantısının nasıl dönüştüğüne bakmak, bu değişimlerin kadınların hayatlarına yansımalarını görmek açısından oldukça önemlidir. Osmanlı'da görücü usulü evlilikler ve geniş aileler birer toplumsal norm halini almıştı. Ancak hem kadınlar hem de erkekler bu geleneksel düzenden memnun değildi. Erkeklerin baba otoritesi altında ezilmiş hissetmekten gelen huzursuzlukları, kadınların bu konuyu tartışmaya açmasını kolaylaştıran etkenlerden biri olmuştu. Özellikle geç Osmanlı döneminden itibaren milliyetçiler çekirdek aile yapısını teşvik ediyordu. Bu ailelerin aynı zamanda milletin özünün taşıyıcısı olması bekleniyordu. Toplum içindeki anlayış zamanla dönüşmeye başlasa da evlilik ve aile düzenine ilişkin yasal adım ancak cumhuriyetin ilanından sonra, 1926 yılında Medeni Kanun'un kabulüyle gerçekleşmiştir. Bu yasayla birlikte kadınlar birçok hakkın yanında evlenme, boşanma ve çocukların

velayeti konusunda erkeklerle aynı haklara kavuşmuştur. Tüm bu gelişmelere rağmen Medeni Kanun erkeği ailenin reisi olarak konumlamıştır ve kadınların buna karşı yürüttüğü mücadele ancak 2002 yılında sonuç vermiştir.

Bu modernlik ve geleneksellik arasında salınan yeni aile kadını aynı zamanda tutumluluk yönüyle de öne çıkarılıyordu. Tüm savaş ve yıkımlar nedeniyle toplumun içinde bulunduğu kötü maddi koşullar düşünüldüğünde tutumluluk zaten kadınların doğal olarak yöneldiği bir özellikti. Bunun en tipik göstergelerinden biri hem Kadınlar Dünyası hem de Türk Kadın Yolu'nda yerli üretim mamullerin tüketimini artırmayı hedefleyen yazılardı. Süs kadını olarak anılan, moda ve aşırılıklara düşkünlükle tasvir edilen kadın tipi, Türk Kadın Yolu'nda sıklıkla eleştirilirken bunun karşısına vatani için çalışan, eşi ve çocuklarına düşkün, tutumlu aile kadını konuyordu. Hatta öyle ki tutumluluk vatansever bir davranış olarak görüldüğünden kadınların eşit haklar için eşit sorumluluk argümanı da ilişkilendirilerek kullanılıyordu. Buna göre kadınlar erkeklerle eşit haklara sahip olmak için en az onlar kadar sorumluluk alabileceklerini ve millete faydalı olabileceklerini göstermeye uğraşıyordu.

Ancak kadınların bu varsayımının erkeklerde çok da yankı uyandırmadığını haliyle kadınların hayal kırıklığına uğradığını söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır. Kadınlar kamusal hayatta daha görünür bir yer kazanmış olsa da gerçekte hala erkeklerin eşiti olarak kabul edilmiyordu. Bunun en tipik göstergesi de kadınların hali hazırda ailenin reisine, ki bu baba, koca ya da erkek kardeşe tekabül ediyordu, oy vermiş sayılacağı kabulünden hareketle seçme ve seçilme hakkından mahrum bırakılmış olmasıydı. Osmanlı'da ne toplumsal koşullar ne de savaşlar kadınların siyasi haklar için bir mücadele yürütmesini teşvik edici nitelikteydi. Ancak cumhuriyetin kurulmasıyla birlikte kadınlar artık bu yönde bir talebi rahatlıkla dile getirebilecekleri koşulların oluştuğuna inanıyordu ki Türk Kadın Yolu dergisinde en öne çıkan tema kadınların siyasi haklar mücadelesiydi. Fakat kadınların bu konuyla ilgili yürüttükleri mücadele yönetici elit tarafından çizginin aşılması anlamına gelmişti. Onların gözünde kadınlar ancak kendilerinin belirlediği sınırlarda kalmalıydı. Yani kadınların kendi hakları için mücadele ederek bir şeyler elde

etmesi, kadınların erkeğe duyulan minnettarlık üstünden kontrol edilmeye devam edeceği senaryoya uymuyordu. Nihayetinde bu durum, milliyetçilik ve kadın hareketi arasındaki ortaklığın sonlanmasına, kadın hareketinin diğer tüm muhalif hareketler gibi bastırılmasına ve öncü kadınların da toplum dışına itilerek unutulmaya mahkum edilmesine neden oldu.

Tüm bu tartışmalar sonlandırılmadan önce değinilmesi gereken önemli bir diğer konu ise buradaki öncü kadınların uluslararası kadın hareketiyle kurdukları ilişkidir. Kadınlar Dünyası'nda genellikle uluslararası kadın hareketine ilişkin haberler ve makaleler yer alıyordu. Bu haber ve makaleler Osmanlı kadınına bilgilendirmek, yönlendirmek ve onlara ilham vermek amacını taşıyordu. Bu anlamda etkileşimin sınırlı olduğu bir dönemdi. Ancak Türk Kadın Yolu'na geldiğimizde etkileşimin arttığı, doğrudan iletişim kanallarının açıldığı ve sürecin artık iki yönlü işlemeye başladığı, kadın hakları mücadelesini uluslararası platformda sürdüren isimlerden dergiye ya da şahsi olarak Nezihe Muhiddin'e gönderilen mektuplar sayesinde de görülmektedir. Öncü kadınların diğer kadınlarla kurdukları ilişkiye bakmak, özellikle kadınların taleplerini dile getirirken milliyetçi argümanları destekleyici olarak kullansalar da kadınlıklarından yola çıkarak bir “biz” tanımına ne kadar yaklaşabildiklerini görmek bakımından çok önemlidir. Aynı şekilde, söz konusu milletin “öteki” olarak tanımladığı bir kimlik olduğunda, bu örnek için ötekinin Yunan kadınları olduğu söylenebilir, kadınların milliyetçi reflekslerinin ne ölçüde harekete geçerek bu “biz” tanımına engel olduğu da araştırılabilir.

Sonuç olarak, Türk milli inşa sürecini kadınların perspektifinden yeniden anlatmayı hedefleyen bu tezi önemli kılan milliyetçilik çalışmalarındaki ön kabulleri ve klasik anlatıyı sorgulamasıdır. Milliyetçi söylemlerin hegemonik pozisyonu tartışmaya açılarak milliyetçiliğin toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkileri ve kadın hareketini etkilediği ölçüde bunlardan etkilenmiş olduğu sonucuna ulaşmıştır. Ulaşılan sonuçların kendimizi tanımlarken verili kabul ettiğimiz kavramlara bakışımızı değiştirmesi ve eleştirel kimliğimizi öne çıkarması umut edilmektedir.



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