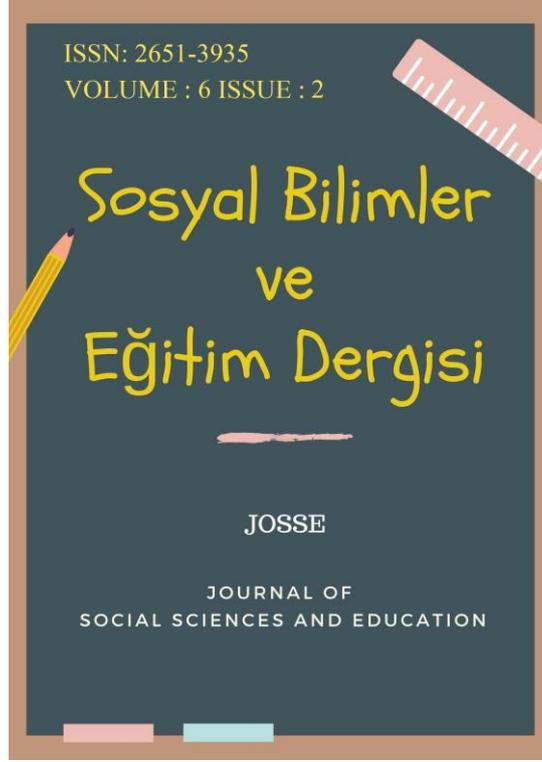


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Fighting with the Modern Plague: Temperance Movement, Degeneration and Education in Early Republican Türkiye

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Fighting with the Modern Plague: Temperance Movement, Degeneration and Education in Early Republican Türkiye

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Abstract

The temperance movement, which emerged in the 19th century with a scientific foundation, and the degeneration discourse found a place in the Ottoman Empire nearly simultaneously with Europe. The influence of doctors educated in Europe played a pivotal role in this process. While the temperance movement and the discourse on degeneration swiftly integrated into the Ottoman Empire's educational system, they assumed a more radical form in the Republic of Türkiye. This study explores how the temperance movement and the degeneration discourse were incorporated into Türkiye's education system during the single-party period. Commencing from the early years of the Republic's establishment, the Hilâl-i Ahdar Society, alongside a cadre of distinguished psychiatrists affiliated with the society, assumes a leading role in initiatives aimed at imparting anti-alcohol education to the youth. It has been seen that degeneration is addressed from two perspectives, especially in textbooks and magazines for the youth: biological and social. Biological degeneration was rooted in the belief that alcohol use would lead to a corrupt race. On the other hand, social degeneration viewed alcohol use as a problem capable of causing societal disarray, economic instability, and moral decay. In both dimensions, a connection was established between the anti-alcohol movement, the country's population policy, and notions of patriotism in the educational system.

Keywords: History of education, Hilâl-i Ahdar, Green Crescent, Anti-alcohol movement, health policy

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Introduction

By the turn of the 20th century, alcoholism was widely regarded as one of the day's "three greatest plagues", along with syphilis and tuberculosis (Snelders & Pieters, 2005, p. 87). Also, during this period, scientific thought posited that alcoholism was an inherited condition. The ideas of French psychiatrist Benedict-Augustin Morel were particularly influential in shaping this perspective. Morel proposed that acquired habits could be transmitted through familial lines and that when a harmful habit was inherited, it would do so with increasing severity across successive generations. He provided specific examples of this phenomenon, stating that individuals in the first generation with an anxious or alcoholic temperament were more likely to develop conditions such as cerebral haemorrhage, epilepsy, and hysteria in the second generation and that the third generation would be prone to insanity, characterised by eccentricity, disorderliness, and danger. Furthermore, Morel posited that these factors would double exponentially in the fourth generation, resulting in the extinction of the family line, as this generation would only produce imbeciles, idiots, or infertile offspring (Carlson, 1985, p. 122). In his book, Morel (1857, pp. 139-140) argued that children born to parents who are alcoholics would be idiotic. Morel also delved into the cultural aspects of this issue, stating that alcohol is a contributing factor to negative behaviours and moral degradation (Huertas, 1993, pp. 2-3). He extended his theory to clinical psychiatry three years later and published "Traité des maladies mentales" (1860). His books and works generated significant interest and widespread acceptance within psychiatry, especially in French psychiatry. Following Morel, Valentin Magnan, a prominent French psychiatrist, took the lead in further defining and establishing the clinical characteristics of alcoholism as a psychiatric disorder. Magnan included alcoholism in his psychiatric theory of hereditary degeneracy, arguing that alcoholism causes mental disorders and social problems due to hereditary degeneration. However, the initial literary connection between alcoholism and degeneration was often imbued with moral overtones, with alcohol use being blamed for various social problems and receiving negative press. Magnan further emphasised the detrimental effects of alcohol on society, stating that it not only bastardises race but also significantly contributes to poverty, crime, madness, and the overburden of institutions such as asylums, hospitals, correctional facilities, and prisons (Magnan, 1874; Prestwich, 1997, p. 116).

During that time, there was a rising and increasing backlash against alcohol consumption throughout various segments of society in Europe. Even Friedrich Engels, a prominent philosopher and social theorist, advocated for banning or restricting alcohol use. In his article written in 1876, "Prussians schnapps in the German Reichstag," Engels (1989, pp. 114-116) describes how the working-class population of the Berg region, particularly in Elberfeld-Barmen in the 1820s, fell victim to cheap, potent alcoholic beverages. He recalls his memory of large crowds of "soused men" staggering arm in arm, walking down the streets, loudly singing, and moving from one tavern to the next, ultimately returning home. Engels contends that this new form of drunkenness fundamentally differed from previous alcohol consumption, characterised by "good-natured tipsiness." He notes that this new type of drunkenness was associated with an increased frequency of knife wounds and fatal stabbings. Engels argues that heavy alcohol consumption led not only to criminal behaviour but also to a state of passivity, citing the lack of worker mobilisation during the 1830 events in northern Germany despite the connection between alcohol and rebellion. In contrast, successful uprisings occurred in German states that protected themselves from the proliferation of Schnaps.

Concerns about corruption and the negative impact of alcohol on society persisted throughout the 19th century. Besides, studies claiming alcohol causes degeneration and corrupts race continued to be accepted in the "scientific world". The temperance movement was scientifically organised during the last quarter of the 19th and mid-20th centuries. The inaugural congress against alcoholism was held in Antwerp, Belgium, in 1885. By the onset of the First World War, 14 scientific congresses had been held within the Western hemisphere (Edman, 2015, p. 22). The congresses addressed a broad range of topics, including the moral degradation associated with alcohol consumption, its negative impact on military readiness, the hindrance of industrial development, the production of criminals, degeneration, and demographic decline. Education was also a vital issue that was discussed at the congresses. Anti-alcohol advocates argued that anti-alcoholism education should be provided to children and youth to prevent future generations from becoming enslaved to alcohol and corrupting the race. Charles Wakely, General Secretary of the United Kingdom Band of Hope Union, which was established in 1855 to educate children and youth about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, stated in his presentation at the congress held in Christiania in 1890:

Save the children, and you will save the state. If the children of today are taught to grow up sober and intelligent, the manhood and womanhood of the future will be secure. If,

on the other hand, they remain unwarned and thus become intemperate and sensual, the national shame and degradation will grow with the lapse of years, and the thralldom of drink will restrain as with a hand of iron, every effort on behalf of social purity and peace. (Wakely, 1891, p. 126)

The anti-alcohol movement was treated as a national concern. Anti-alcohol advocates argue that to secure the country's future, children who would become parents and citizens must be educated to avoid alcohol consumption. To this end, organisations such as the Band of Hope in the United Kingdom and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in the United States authored textbooks. They worked to incorporate anti-alcohol education into the school curriculum. Wakely (1891, p. 127), for example, noted in his speech that over 20,000 children had read the textbook written by Benjamin Ward Richardson entitled "The Temperance Lesson Book" (1880) and served as a guide for schoolchildren and families. This textbook was studied in public schools in England as well as in schools and colleges in the United States (Thompson, 2013, pp. 214-215). Richardson (1887) also wrote another textbook for public schools. In the same period, scientific temperance textbooks and manuals began to be published in the United States, and the temperance movement was included in chapters on hygiene and health education in textbooks. Some notable manuals and books included those by Brown (1888; 1886), Colman (1880; 1885), Gow (1873), Guernsey (1888), Steele (1884), and Walker (1883), to mention but a few. The Scientific Temperance Instruction (STI), a WCTU department established in 1879 to address the use of alcohol and drugs, played a significant role in the publication of many textbooks on the temperance movement in the United States. The STI led to a contentious debate but ultimately resulted in the mandatory inclusion of alcohol education in the curriculum of public schools across the United States (Zimmerman, 1999).

The temperance movement gained a following not only in the United Kingdom and the United States but also in many countries of the world, supported by governments, and entered textbooks and school curricula such as Australia (Rodwell, 1998), Bulgaria (Kamenov, 2015; 2020), and Canada (Sheehan, 1980; 1984). Among these countries were the modern Turkish Republic and its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire.

Comprehensive and well-documented research on the temperance movement in both states is available. Arpacı's (2015) meticulous study delves into the evolution of Türkiye's temperance movement from 1910 to 1950. This analysis covers its historical backdrop, international context, and intellectual underpinnings, exploring biological and social

degeneration themes. In her dissertation, Balkan (2012) explored the timeframe from 1920 to 1939, investigating the integral role of the temperance movement in shaping the nation-building process. Biçer-Deveci (2021) illustrates how the burgeoning anti-alcohol movement in Istanbul found its inspiration in the worldwide anti-alcohol sentiment and Western nations. She highlights that the American prohibition model influenced the brief period of prohibition in 1920s Türkiye. Evered and Evered (2016) scrutinise the anti-alcohol movement during the early years of the Republican era, forging a connection between its historical context and contemporary issues faced by Türkiye. In his chapter, Georgeon (2002) delves into the Islamic prohibition of alcohol. He meticulously traces the evolution of drinking practices in 19th and 20th-century Istanbul, shedding light on the emergence of a distinct drinking culture that became synonymous with the middle class during the Kemalist era; in his book (2023), he delved comprehensively into the realm of wine and alcohol consumption, spanning from the days of the Ottoman Empire to the contemporary era.

Unlike the studies mentioned above, the present research aims to explore how the temperance movement and the concept of degeneration manifested and evolved within the educational paradigm during the Republic's single-party period. Despite the modern Turkish context witnessing more pronounced radicalisation of the temperance movement and apprehensions regarding degeneration, their origins are traced back to the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, the examination commences with the Ottoman Empire's scenario, followed by exploring the temperance movement, degeneration, and education within early Republican Türkiye, relying upon primary educational resources as a lens for analysis.

Method

Model

The current study uses historical research to examine the relationship between the temperance movement, degeneration discourse and educational paradigm during the Republic's early years. Historical research is a qualitative method that delves into studying and interpreting past events and phenomena. Historians seek to unravel historical developments, changes, and interactions that have shaped our world over time by employing a systematic and disciplined approach. Central to historical research is the use of primary sources, which are original materials from the specific period being investigated. These valuable sources provide an authentic glimpse into the past and serve as the foundation for

critical examination and analysis. The ultimate goal of historical researchers is to reconstruct events and gain a profound understanding of the motivations and contexts that drove historical actors. A fundamental aspect of historical research involves establishing a meticulous chronological order of events. This chronological framework clarifies historical narratives and helps researchers comprehend the interconnectedness and causality behind various occurrences (Gottschalk, 1969; Hexter, 1971; Mallick & Verma, 2005; Muratovski, 2022).

Data Collection Tools

The primary sources of the research are educational materials, magazines, The Board of Education and Discipline and archival sources from the early Republican Period. Some primary sources were received from the National Library of the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Moreover, relevant scholarly literature was carefully examined to understand better the relations of the temperance movement, degeneration and educational paradigm in the historical context.

Collection of Data and Analysis

After obtaining relevant primary sources and secondary literature, documents were reviewed and categorised, carefully considering the chronological sequence of events. The global evolution of this subject and its origins within the Ottoman Empire were included to understand the interplay between the temperance movement, degeneration discourse, and education during the early Republic period. Then, the relationship between the temperance movement, degeneration discourse and educational paradigm during the Republic's early years was analysed from a historical perspective.

Findings

The Temperance Movement, Education, and the Birth of Degeneration fear in the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire's relationship with alcohol consumption was complex and dynamic. Since the empire's beginning, Muslims had a history of indulging in alcohol consumption, necessitating implementing various measures based on the Qur'anic prohibition to counter this behaviour (Koyuncu, 2020, pp. 59-107). However, according to Ortaylı (1986,

p. 89), these prohibitionist measures were not exclusively motivated by religious doctrine but were frequently enacted to address concerns regarding the legitimacy of the state's authority. During the reign of Mahmud II, a pivotal figure in the modernisation of Türkiye, the use of alcohol was generally relaxed. This relaxation included the government's assumption of control over some taverns and the widespread consumption of champagne and wine in bureaucratic circles (Georgeon, 2002, p. 15; Koyuncu, 2020, p. 107). Alcohol consumption during the Tanzimat era, a critical phase of modernisation and reform in the Ottoman Empire, was associated with modernisation and a willingness to accept cultural progress within elite groups (Oğuz, 2021, p. 112). However, it is worth noting that Ottoman modernisation was primarily focused on the West and thus influenced by European attitudes towards alcohol consumption, particularly in France and America, during the late 19th century. As the Constitutionals gained power, transforming the Ottoman state into a nation-state, Western norms began shaping the health discourse. Consequently, a medical and psychiatric discourse against alcohol emerged towards the end of the 19th century, diverging from the religious discourse.

It is unsurprising that physicians, particularly psychiatrists, aligned themselves with the temperance movement in the Ottoman Empire. Given that most Ottoman doctors had trained in Europe during the era, they were exposed to the close association between mental illness, alcoholism, and degeneration. This exposure profoundly impacted the idealistic young physicians, who sought to implement the temperance movement they had encountered in Europe, in Ottoman territories. Besim Ömer Pasha [Akalin] was among these physicians. After obtaining his medical degree from the Mekteb-i Tıbbiyye-i Şâhâne (the Royal College of Medicine) in 1885, he travelled to Paris to continue his studies (Besim Ömer, 1932, p. 50). By the late 1880s, Besim Ömer had become a vocal advocate of the temperance movement and an ardent supporter of eugenics during the Republican era. He began publishing pamphlets to raise awareness about the harmful effects of alcohol on public health (Mazhar Osman, 1933, p. 779), and his pioneering book on the temperance movement in Ottoman literature soon followed (Besim Ömer, 1305 [1887]). In addition, Besim Ömer authored a *hıfzıssıhha* (sanitation) textbook for high school and teacher training programmes that provided extensive coverage of alcohol. In this textbook, he explained the nature of alcohol and examined the global rise in alcohol consumption. Furthermore, under the title of "da‘-i küül" (alcoholism), he presented a detailed analysis of the detrimental effects of alcohol on the human body and mind. He asserted that alcoholism is a societal issue. He contended that

the first step in combating alcoholism was to educate young people in schools and the public via books, believing alcoholism was a by-product of ignorance (Besim Ömer, 1330 [1914], pp. 256-289). In order to engage the students, he included images in his book (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Text Says: Before Alcoholism on the Left, After on the Right (Besim Ömer, 1330 [1914], p. 272).



The influence of two renowned psychiatrists of the time, Auguste Forel and Emil Kraepelin, significantly impacted Ottoman physicians. Mazhar Osman [Usman] reports (1933, p. 776) that Forel, seeking to establish an anti-alcohol movement in Istanbul "according to European tradition," dispatched letters to his former pupils, Haçig Boğosyan and Baha Bey, urging them to join him in his efforts. Towards the end of March 1910, Forel himself arrived in Istanbul, where he inaugurated a gild called "Byzance, Nr. 2" within the Greek Philological Society [Rum Filoloji Derneği] and delivered lectures at various institutions, including the Mekteb-i Tıbbiye [School of Medicine], Galatasaray Mekteb-i Sultânisi [Galatasaray High School], and other schools in Istanbul. In 1913, Haçig Boğosyan founded the Turkio Hagalkolagan Ingeragtsityun [Anti-Alcohol League of Türkiye] movement, which mainly targeted young people and established student branches in schools with the support of his mentor. Nevertheless, this movement remained primarily confined to the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire (Etker, 2020, pp. 224-225).

Mazhar Osman, Fahrettin Kerim [Gökay], and Raşit Tahsin [Tuğsavul] were prominent advocates of anti-alcoholism during this era. They were all trained under the guidance of Emil Kraepelin, a well-known proponent of the fight against alcoholism, who also contributed to the development of degeneration theory and eugenicist ideas (Engstrom, 2007; Engstrom & Crozier, 2018; Hoff, 2008). Kraepelin's philosophy had a significant influence on these physicians. Psychiatrist Raşit Tahsin, a student of Kraepelin, delivered lectures at the Mekteb-i Tıbbiye [School of Medicine] on the detrimental effects of alcoholism, which he viewed as one of the most significant foes of humanity. He also gave public lectures at Türk Ocağı [Türk Ocağı] (Mazhar Osman, 1933, p. 779).

Mazhar Osman and Fahrettin Kerim were among the founders of Hilâl-i Ahdar [the Green Crescent], established in 1920 to fight alcoholism. As stated in its first statute, one of the society's primary objectives was to promote hıfzıssihha (sanitation) education in schools, starting with the first grade (Hilâl-i Ahdar Cemiyeti Nizamnâmesi, 1336 [1920], p. 2). In the society's inaugural speech, Mazhar Osman emphasised that alcohol consumption destroys generations, and the society's goal was safeguarding future generations (Hilâl-i Ahdar Cemiyeti, 1338 [1920], p. 235). Dr. Milaslı İsmâîl Hakkı Bey, one of the society's founding members, espoused the view that alcohol caused degeneration. İsmâîl Hakkı Bey contended that despite his/her parent's good health, numerous children in Anatolia were born with disabilities or diseases. He attributed this occurrence to the influence of Greek physicians who promoted the consumption of raki and cognac. Like Mazhar Osman, İsmâîl Hakkı Bey believed that education represented a potent weapon in the battle against alcohol (Hilâl-i Ahdar Cemiyeti, 1338 [1920], p. 236). The same concerns were expressed in the Tarman Newspaper, which was started to be published by the Armenian Ettıba Society in Istanbul, the year the Green Crescent Society was founded. An article published in the magazine clearly stated that alcohol corrupts the breed. In addition, a report was prepared on the fight against alcohol, and it was requested to introduce anti-alcohol classes in schools. In other words, the anti-alcohol movement and fear of degeneration could be observed in Muslims and non-Muslims of society (Yarman, 2014, pp. 161-162).

The issue of alcohol and degeneration existed in textbooks even before the Hilâl-i Ahdar was established. While both subjects were handled at a much more detailed and scientific level at high school-like upper levels, like Besim Ömer Pasha's textbook, they were often told with small stories and suggestions at the primary school level. However, both subjects were included in primary school civics rather than science and health classes.

Because, in this period, when medical science was modernised, and the human body became the focal point of politics, the disease evolved into a social problem and began to affect the nation rather than the individual. As Foucault (2008) stated, in this period, the state and its institutions tried to regulate and control the biological and social lives of people and communities in that society. This approach, which emerged in Europe after the French Revolution and formed the basis of modern nations, was also adopted by the Ottoman intellectuals. Following the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy, students were encouraged to prioritise their physical and mental health as citizens. Maintaining physical well-being was a fundamental obligation towards oneself and the nation. In the case of alcohol, physical and mental health would be protected because, as stated in a textbook, alcohol would spoil the body and destroy the soul. The soul and morality would be just as perfect if the body were perfect. Therefore, avoiding such unpleasant habits as gluttony and drunkenness was necessary (Doktor Hazık, 1328 [1912], p. 50). Alcohol was also described in textbooks as one of the main factors that destroy social life. It was emphasised that alcoholics were murderers and insane people who had no idea what they were doing, could not work and died young from poverty. Students were advised not to drink even a single drop of alcohol because it was said that such people were banished from social life (A. Rıza, 1327 [1911], pp. 13-14; M. Asım & A. Cevad (1334 [1918], pp. 76-79). It was also stated in the textbooks that alcohol corrupted the race, and the children of drunkards were said to be weak, sickly, stupid, and clumsy, so the idea of degeneration was expressed in a simple way that children could understand (A. Rıza, 1327 [1911], p. 14).

As Arpacı (2015, p. 40) noted, the Ottoman Empire's temperance movement was based on the idea of degeneration. Like in textbooks, the discourses formed in the writings, especially in the *Hilâl-i Ahdar* Journal, were gathered on two lines as biological and social degradation issues. Similar discourses might be found in other periodicals at the time. For instance, an anonymous article in one of the preminent periodicals of the period, *Servet-i Fünun*, referred to experimental research conducted in Europe. This paper posited that alcohol consumption by parents led to intellectual impairment and imbecility in their offspring (İşrete Müptelâ, 1322 [1906], p. 103). The discourse regarding the management of degenerates (mütereddi) also included debates on whether to prioritise their protection or pursue sterilisation measures. While certain intellectuals advocated for sterilisation, others recognised the detrimental impact of degenerates on society but rejected sterilisation as a viable solution. Instead, they asserted that it was incumbent upon the government to safeguard

degenerates and provide them with education and training to promote societal benefit (Menfaâti Umûmiye, 1332 [1916], pp. 30-31).

The advent of the Balkan War sparked intense debates on degeneration among Ottoman intellectuals and educators. The loss of the Balkans and the casualties suffered in the war raised concerns about preserving the Ottoman race. As a result, topics such as degeneration, alcoholism, and even eugenics gained attention in publications. These journals presented solutions to enhance the quality of the race and outlined responsibilities for educators. An article titled "Eugenics; The Science of Breeding" was among the first to delve into these matters within an education journal. Authored by Münir Mazhar (1920, pp. 852-857), it explored the progression of eugenics, examined European studies and defined eugenics as "child training before birth." This definition closely resembled the definition of eugenics as presented in the "scientific literature" of that period. Münir Mazhar argued that the war had led to a selection process wherein only the weakest individuals of descent remained while losing those who were strongest. The term eugenics was first introduced into the scientific literature by Francis Galton. Galton (1904) defined eugenics as "the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also, with those that develop them to the utmost advantage." So, Galton's formulation was heavily influenced by Darwin's research on heredity and evolution. Galton believed that leveraging new scientific insights could enhance the quality of human reproduction, a notion that swiftly gained traction within the "scientific" community (Levine, 2017, p. 2). Mazhar, evidently influenced by this movement, emphasized in his article that allowing these degenerate individuals to persist would spell disaster for future generations. Mazhar criticised the population policies of the period. He advocated for controlling marriages to prevent degenerates from having children, citing the United States as an example where sterilisation was practised on degenerates. He suggested that propaganda should be employed in schools to dissuade alcoholism and bad marriages and argued that teachers were well-positioned to play a pivotal role in safeguarding race.

The need for a robust generation became increasingly apparent in an era where a healthy and numerous population represented a source of national strength. However, during the ten years that began with the Balkan Wars and ended with the establishment of the Republic, the physical condition of the Ottoman race was not encouraging. In an article titled "The Weak Race", published in *İdman Journal*, Burhaneddin Bey complained that Ottomans were setting an example for a weak race. He asserted that safeguarding the race was to engage

in physical exercise and refrain from entertainment, consuming alcohol, and smoking (Cora, 2013, p. 55). Such views gained even greater currency during and after World War I, especially given the prevalence of war neurosis among returning soldiers (Yanıkdağ, 2013) and the alarming levels of alcohol consumption in cities such as Istanbul during the war years (Özer, 2003, pp. 253-255; Toprak, 2017). Although the alcohol ban law [Men-i Müskirâat Kanûnu] was enacted in 1920, it proved ineffective in curbing alcohol consumption (Karahanoğulları, 2008; Üçüncü, 2012).

As the war drew to a close, the consumption of alcohol and the degeneration emerged as the preeminent concerns of the nascent Turkish Republic. The apprehension surrounding these issues comprised two primary dimensions. The first dimension pertained to the deleterious biological ramifications of alcohol and the attendant risk of degeneration, which had the potential to culminate in the corruption of the Turkish race. The second dimension of concern revolved around the possibility of social degeneration arising from moral and economic collapses that could be precipitated by alcohol consumption. Hilâl-i Ahdar first initiated the battle against these two dimensions of danger.

Reaching the Students: Hilâl-i Ahdar and its Activities for Young in the Republic's Early Years

The alcohol ban law [Men-i Müskirat Kanunu] was amended in 1924 -one year after the establishment of the Republic- and in 1926, its complete revocation transpired due to economic concerns, subsequently substituted by the "İspirto ve Meşrûbât-ı Küûliyye İnhisârı Hakkında Kanûn" [Law on the Monopoly on Alcohol and Alcoholic Beverages], which stipulates the release of alcohol, was introduced. With this law, the production and trade of alcoholic beverages was monopolised by the state (Biçer-Deveci, 2021, p. 37; Karahanoğulları, 2008, pp. 134-135).

Hilâl-i Ahdar members expressed dissatisfaction with the amended alcohol ban. However, they also acknowledged their inability to act on the matter. Some members believed that if the government banned alcohol, it might lead to illegal production, criminal activities, and even the spread of more dangerous drugs like morphine and heroin (Erdal et al., 2020, p. 97). So, instead of an outright ban on alcohol, they believed it would be better to educate and warn the public, especially young people. The steady involvement of educators within the Hilâl-i Ahdar can be seen not only as a coincidence but also as a reflection of the association's commitment to public awareness and education. For example, the appointment of Salih

Keramet and Ali Mahir, who taught at Robert College, as vice presidents, and the presence of two educators among the twelve elected members of Hilâl-i Ahdar at the 1923 congress reflect the association's education and awareness-raising mission (Hilâl-i Ahdar Heyet-i, 1339 [1923], p. 3). This tendency continued and gained momentum in the following years, with many educators taking part in Hilâl-i Ahdar. Besides, the Hilâl-i Ahdar included young people in time. Teachers and many students attended the congress held in 1924. At the same congress, with the permission of the Ministry of Education, it was decided to hold conferences in schools and Darülmualimât [Teacher Training School] to distribute pamphlets against alcohol and to increase the number of members by reaching more teachers and students. In addition, it was decided to publish a journal of Hilâl-i Ahdar that would be published every 15 days to reach young people and enlighten the public (Erdal et al., 2020, pp. 108-109).

In 1926 and 1927, Hilâl-i Ahdar began to organise various activities and initiatives to reach students more effectively. During this period, Hilâl-i Ahdar's activities attracted students' attention and provided them with more information about the ideals and goals of the organisation. In particular, prominent figures of the organisation, such as Mazhar Osman, Fahrettin Kerim, İhsan Şükrü, and Şükrü Hâzım, enlightened young people through conferences and events they organised in schools and conveyed the philosophy of Hilâl-i Ahdar. In 1926, many students from famous schools such as the Erkek Muallim Mektebi [Teacher Training School for Men], Adana Kız Muallim Mektebi [Adana Teacher Training School for Girls], Orman Mektebi [School of Forestry], Gelenbevî and İstiklâl High Schools chose to become members of Hilâl-i Ahdar. That was an essential sign of the effectiveness and popularity of the organisation among the student population. Following this success, the organisation focused on reaching more students and increasing the number of its members (Hilâl-i Ahdar Cemiyeti, 1927, p. 3). To this end, in line with the decisions taken by Hilâl-i Ahdar executives, the society aimed to organise more school conferences and plan various student activities, such as performances and excursions. These activities were intended to foster closer interaction with students, encourage their participation in the Hilâl-i Ahdar and make them more committed to its ideals. One of these activities was to organise celebrations on the first Friday of May every year under the name of Yeşilgün Bayramı [Green Day Festival] to attract more young people to society and to 'show them that it is always possible to have fun without drinking'. The first Green Day Festival was celebrated on May 6, 1927. The day before the celebrations, Mazhar Osman told Vakit newspaper that alcohol corrupts

the mind cells of the race and degenerates the human being away from nobility and that they aimed to raise the young generation against alcohol (Hilâl-i Ahdar günü, 1927, p. 1). The celebrations were attended by Hilâl-i Ahdar members, school principals, teachers, students and their families from essential schools in Istanbul, such as Darülfünûn [University], Erkek Muallim Mektebi [Teacher Training School for Men], İstiklâl High School. A ferry with the flag of the Hilâl-i Ahdar Society on its mast departed from the bridge and gathered participants from all the piers in the Bosphorus. The participants danced on the ferry, travelled to Kireçburnu and had dinner there, and the entertainment continued until late hours. The participating youth distributed badges on the streets with the inscription 'alcohol is the enemy of health and happiness' (İçki düşmanları, 1927, p. 2).

Hilâl-i Ahdar persisted in its efforts to extend its influence among the youth. By November 10, 1930 aiming to reach the youthful more systematically, they established the İçki Aleyhdarı Gençler Cemiyeti [Youngs Temperance Society], with Fahrettin Kerim Bey in the role of president¹. The association's administrative body predominantly consisted of seasoned educators; nevertheless, the intention was that the society would be managed by the young members under the guidance of the administrative committee (İçki Aleyhdarı Gençler, 1931, p. 3). The society conducted its activities in a highly disciplined and ceremonial ambience. Annual congresses were one of the central activities of the society. In these congresses, the activities to be carried out that year were planned, and important decisions were taken. During the congresses, the participation and contribution of young members were of great importance. A special oath ceremony was organised at each congress to emphasise the commitment to the society's purpose and reinforce the solidarity among the members (Figure 2). This oath, in which they pledged to abstain from consuming alcohol in any manner except under the guidance of a medical prescription and always work for the benefit of society (Dün Yapılan, 1934, p. 3), was a ritual in which new members were officially accepted into the society. Reciting this oath enabled the members to express their commitment to the society's values.

Figure 2

A photograph from the oath ceremony of the Green Crescent Youth Society (İçki düşmanı gençler, 1941, p. 2)

¹ On 8 November 1936, the society was renamed the Green Crescent Youth Society. (Yeşilay Gençler Birliği Nizamnamesi, 1938, p. 1).



These young people were not just members of society but also fervent advocates against alcohol consumption. Their role extended to propagating the society's ideals through various means. They planned compelling performances, theatrical presentations, enlightening conferences, and engaging outings, which took place in educational institutions and public spaces¹ (Figure 3). Their efforts included distributing badges and information leaflets and leaving behind cards containing anti-alcohol monologues on event tables. Among these cards were cautionary messages highlighting the detrimental effects of alcohol, exemplified by phrases like "the generation of the drunk will degenerate." (İçki düşmanlarının çayında, 1935, p. 6).

Figure 3

A group from the Türkiye Temperance Society, with Fahrettin Kerim and Bahattin Bey from Green Crescent, on a trip (Mükip Cevdet, 1934, p. 9).

¹ See for some of these activities, "İçki aleyhdarı gençler", 1936, p.6; "İçki aleyhdarı gençlerin", 1934, p. 4; "İçki aleyhtarları", 1933, p. 9; "İçki aleyhtarlarının gezintisi", 1936, p. 6; "İçki düşmanı gençler", 1932, p. 2; "İçki düşmanı gençler", 1933, p. 4; "İçki düşmanı gençler", 1941, p. 2; "İçki düşmanları bugün", 1932, p. 3; "İçki düşmanları", 1934, p. 2; "İçki düşmanlarının müsameresi", 1935, p. 3; "İçki düşmanlarının tenezzühü" 1934, p. 4; "İçki düşmanlığı faaliyeti", 1934, p. 7; "İçki düşmanlığı gününde", 1931, p. 3; "İçki ve zehirle mücadele", 1931, p. 1; "Yeşil Hilâl 23 Mart'ta", 1931, p. 2; "Yeşil Hilâl müsameresi", 1932, p. 3; "Yeşilay gezintisi", 1935, p. 3; "Yeşilay: İçki Düşmanları", 1931, p. 3.



A surge in similar cautionary notes can be observed from the mid-1930s onward. The discourse surrounding the potential of alcohol to induce biological degeneration gained considerable momentum and transitioned to a more "scientific" and "medical" context during the middle of the 1930s.

Saving the Breed: Alcohol, Biological Degeneration, and Education

The apex of this discourse of degeneration was embodied in the "scientific and medical" appearance at the sixth National Turkish Medical Congress held in 1935. Central to the congress was the exploration of toxicomania, which prominently featured alcohol in its discourse, with the inaugural session dedicated exclusively to this topic. Prominent figures of the time, notably Fahrettin Kerim Gökay, Mazhar Osman Usman, Tevfik Sağlam, and İbrahim Zati Öget, who held staunch anti-alcohol views, played pivotal roles in directing the congress and guiding its initial discussions. Fahrettin Kerim Gökay, in particular, presented an exhaustive report during the meeting, incorporating data derived from international medical and psychiatric experiments. Gökay (1935) emphatically underscored the correlation between alcohol consumption and degeneration, highlighting its detrimental impact on the race. Likewise, Mazhar Osman contributed a presentation that delved into the interplay between alcohol and heredity, focusing on imperative measures to safeguard the nation against degeneration (Gökay, 1935, p. 51). Among the proposed solutions, a central tenet involved public awareness propaganda, with an emphasis on educating both the general populace and the youth about the perils of alcohol consumption and its potential to undermine

the well-being of the nation (Altıncı Ulusal Tıp Kurultayı, 1936, pp. 46-60). That was predominantly conducted during state-sponsored scientific gatherings within newspapers, magazines, books, and educational materials. The primary focus of these publications centred around alcohol. They aimed to disseminate the perspective that alcohol wreaks havoc explicitly on human genetic structures, consequently jeopardising the biological continuity of the "race".

The most renowned and widely circulated among these publications was Hilâl-i Ahdar Magazine.¹ From its first issue, the magazine dedicated itself to portraying the adverse biological degeneration caused by alcohol consumption. The magazine's emblem was a strong hand strangling a snake emerging from a broken liquor bottle (Figure 4). In 1933, the magazine came under the control of Fahreddin Kerim Gökay. It was renamed İçki Düşmanı Gazete [the Enemy of Alcohol Gazette], aiming to reach young people, as Fahrettin Kerim (1933, p. 2) highlighted in the newspaper's inaugural edition. The National Board of Education also supported the gazette (Milli Talim ve Terbiye Dairesi, 1933).

Figure 4

Emblem of Green Crescent (Yeşilay, 1941, p. 1)



¹ *Hilâl-i Ahdar* was a journal of Hilâl-i Ahdar Society, which operated from 1925 to 1933 under the banner of *Hilâl-i Ahdar: Sıhhi ve İctimai İçki Düşmanı* (Green Crescent: The Enemy of Alcohol in Health and in Society). In 1933, it underwent a name change, becoming *İçki Düşmanı Gazete* (the Enemy of Alcohol Gazette), with a pronounced focus on engaging the youth. Since 1937 and up to the present day, it has persevered under the appellation *Yeşilay* (Green Crescent.)

Fahredden Kerim Gökay held a profound conviction that alcohol was a catalyst for degeneration and the erosion of societal integrity. He expressed that the newspaper's purpose was to safeguard the purity of the race from the perils of degeneration, and he regarded this endeavour as a patriotic obligation (Fahrettin Kerim, 1933, p. 2). The newspaper often underscored that a significant number of children with alcoholic parents exhibited various involuntary traits, such as anger, cognitive challenges, intellectual deficits, epilepsy, melancholy, and even homicidal tendencies. These assertions were supported by experiments and data gathered by experts from other countries, lending the information a more "scientific". For instance, a study conducted by a Swiss physician on 1086 children born to alcoholic fathers revealed terrifying outcomes: 17 of these infants succumbed shortly after birth, 256 passed away during their early years, 108 perished due to childhood tremors, 80 suffered from bone ailments and tuberculosis, 82 exhibited intellectual disabilities, 50 were diagnosed with epilepsy, and 301 were afflicted by alcoholism akin to their father's, while the remainder displayed moral and mental frailty (Dr. Kudsi, 1933, p. 2). On occasion, significantly more extensive statistical data was offered. During a presentation at Istanbul Boys' High School, Dr Kudsi Halkacı (1937, p. 3-4), a member of the Green Crescent central committee, remarked, "From the lineage of a Prussian woman plagued by alcoholism, 834 descendants yielded 181 individuals who turned to prostitution, 142 who resorted to begging, 83 who became murderers, and one who wandered as a vagrant." Doctor Kudsi asserted in his speech that no other malady played a more pronounced role in hereditary outcomes than alcoholism.

These concepts were also disseminated via the state school curriculum, adorned with a veneer of "scientific" credibility. The notion that parents grappling with alcoholism could not usher healthy offspring into the world was underscored throughout educational materials spanning all academic levels, ranging from elementary school to university. The narrative contended that progeny of alcoholics faced premature mortality, with the survivors often exhibiting tendencies toward violence, immorality, or mental instability (Ebulmuhsin Kemal, 1930, p. 86; Küley, 1938, p. 168; Muallim Abdalbaki, 1927-1928, p. 105). Sadrettin Celal (1930, p. 55), a prominent educator during that era, earnestly endeavoured to instil within his students the notion that alcohol contributes to the degeneration of the human race:

If we examine the children of the drunkards, we will see that these poor people are weak and frail; They are born with the disease. If they do not die young, they will be a fool, afflicted with diseases such as epilepsy and tuberculosis.

These views were not exclusive to textbook authors or radical educators; even education bureaucrats like Reşit Galip, who served as the education minister in 1932, held such beliefs. Reşit Galip's book, intended for village teachers, stated that "the child of a drunkard can only be stupid, degenerate, epileptic" (Reşit Galip, 1933, p. 72).

Some radical educators and psychiatrists recommended the idea of sterilisation to prevent alcoholics from contaminating the gene pool with their offspring. Among those advocating this view was Besim Ömer Akalın. At this point, it is worth remembering that sterilisation took a radical turn in Germany following World War I and on July 14, 1933, the German government enacted the "Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases" [Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses]. This legislation authorised the compulsory sterilisation of individuals afflicted with any of nine hereditary conditions, notably "severe alcoholism" (Lepicard, 2020, p. 141). This legal development engaged in heated discussions on sterilisation in the scientific community in Türkiye. Even one of the main topics of the Seventh National Turkish Medical Congress was eugenics (Biol, 1938). Akalın (1938, pp. 35-36) openly advocated sterilisation, stating that a child born to an alcoholic father was inherently destined for degeneracy. He wrote, "First of all, we should save the race and not show mercy to the bastardised". Akalın went a step further, proposing the creation of individual health records for students, documenting the physiological and pathological conditions of their family members spanning up to three generations. He suggested making marital decisions based on these health records. However, he acknowledged the practical challenges of implementing such a system at the time.

Gökay, while not as extreme as Akalın, shared a similar perspective. He advocated for a characterology health record system during the Second National Education Council [Maârif Şûrası] in 1943. Psychiatrist Şevket Aziz Kansu, who held closeness to eugenic discussions (see Kansu, 1939), supported Gökay's ideas and suggested expanding this concept into an anthropology health record (İkinci Maârif, 1943, pp. 137-138).

Although these aspirations remained unrealised, by 1943, abstaining from alcohol and safeguarding future generations from biological degeneration became incorporated into the "Principles of Turkish Ethics" and were included in textbooks (Taşkiran, 1943, pp. 5-6).

Indeed, the escalation of concerns about biological degeneration in Türkiye post-1935 was not coincidental. This development can be linked to the emergence of the Turkish History Thesis during the same period, along with the prevalence of the 'anthropological race' notion of the time. In this era, endeavours were undertaken to uplift the Turkish race disparaged by

the West through comprehensive anthropological and archaeological investigations. On the one hand, extensive studies delved into the migration of the Turks from Central Asia to Anatolia and their rich cultural heritage, while on the other, there was an ongoing exploration of the biological aspects of the Turkish race (see Toprak, 2015). Consequently, if scientific research suggested that alcohol consumption jeopardized the corruption of the race, it was deemed a matter of significant concern.

While the fear of biological degeneration continued, on the other hand, the aspect of alcohol causing societal problems and hindering order was being addressed. The incorporation of a tenet, such as abstinence from alcohol among the principles of Turkish ethics, was indicative of this heightened apprehension.

Saving the Nation: Alcohol, Social Degeneration, and Education

The temperance movement posited that the peril posed by alcohol extended beyond its biological impact to encompass a profound societal dimension. This assertion rested upon the fundamental belief that alcohol was the principal catalyst for social degeneration, moral decay, and socio-economic decline, as Arpacı (2015, p. 44) stated. Within this framework, social degeneration was perceived as intricately linked to, if not synonymous with, biological degeneration.

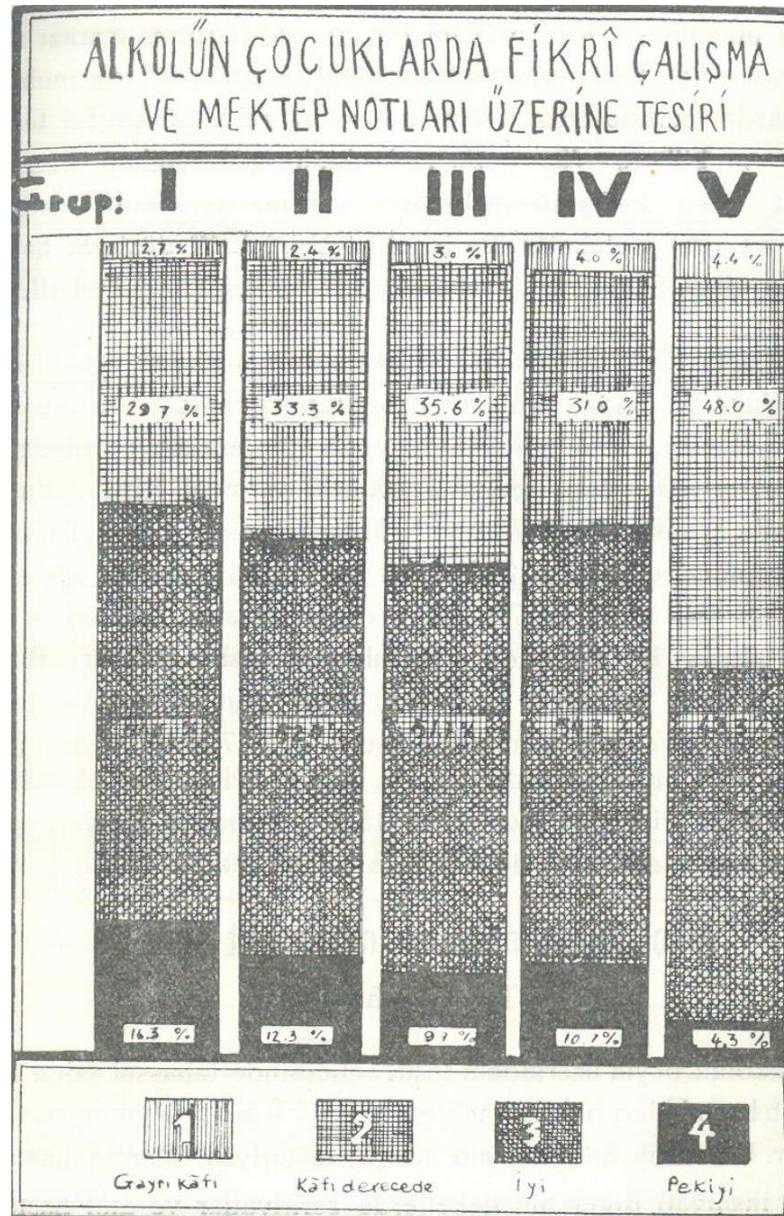
There were main arguments for social degeneration. Primarily and notably, the deleterious effects of alcohol consumption were identified as a primary factor contributing to demographic decline. Educational materials aimed at young individuals, such as textbooks and periodicals, frequently emphasised the pivotal role of population strength in bolstering the youthful Republic. This discourse underscored the detrimental consequences of alcohol-induced mortality and admonished students to abstain from its consumption. It was customary for this admonition to be reiterated regularly, given that the era emphasised population abundance as a symbol of the nation's vitality. In a textbook, it was written that those "who fell into the swamp of alcoholism were dragged to death by digging their graves every day" (Ali Kami, 1929, pp. 146-148). That sentence explicitly stated that these alcoholic individuals not only became bereft of personal utility but also failed to serve the interests of their families and the state at large. At this point, it is noteworthy that an attempt was made to establish a relationship between alcohol consumption and the understanding of desirable citizenship.

One of the prevailing arguments about the phenomenon of social degeneration centred on the assertion that alcohol consumption engendered a degradation of cognitive faculties, a

characteristic intimately tied to the notion of desirable citizenship. A noteworthy illustration of this discourse can be found in the proceedings of the sixth National Turkish Medical Congress held in 1935, during which Gökay (1935, p. 33) presented research findings belonging to Professor Hecker on children's mental development and school performance (Figure 5).

Figure 5

The Effect of Alcohol on Children's Mental Development and School Performance (Gökay, 1935, p. 33).



This recurring theme, extensively articulated in publications such as the *Enemy of Alcohol Gazette* and the *Green Crescent Magazine*, was grounded in the premise that alcohol gave rise to mental retardation in both adult and young populations. The consequences of this phenomenon were thought to extend beyond biological degeneration to include social and national consequences. Each child deemed unlikely to contribute to the nation's welfare was construed as a potential liability. Such individuals were perceived as incapable of rendering future service to the country, be it in defence or economic advancement, thereby impeding the nation's progress. Children were systematically educated about the far-reaching consequences of alcohol consumption on national productivity. According to data from *Green Crescent Magazine*, the Turkish state's annual expenditure on alcohol-related public expenses amounted to six million liras. Also underlined, the number was more extensive than this because those who drank alcohol did not go to work, did not pay taxes, and died prematurely, causing harm to the nation (Gökay, 1937, p. 13). The damage caused by alcohol to the country's economy is given as twenty million liras annually in a textbook (Ebulmuhsin Kemal, 1930, p. 86). Presumably, these numbers were not based on actual statistics. Nevertheless, it is plausible that such statistics were employed with the primary pedagogical intent of imparting to students a discernible comprehension of the adverse societal and national ramifications wrought by alcohol consumption.

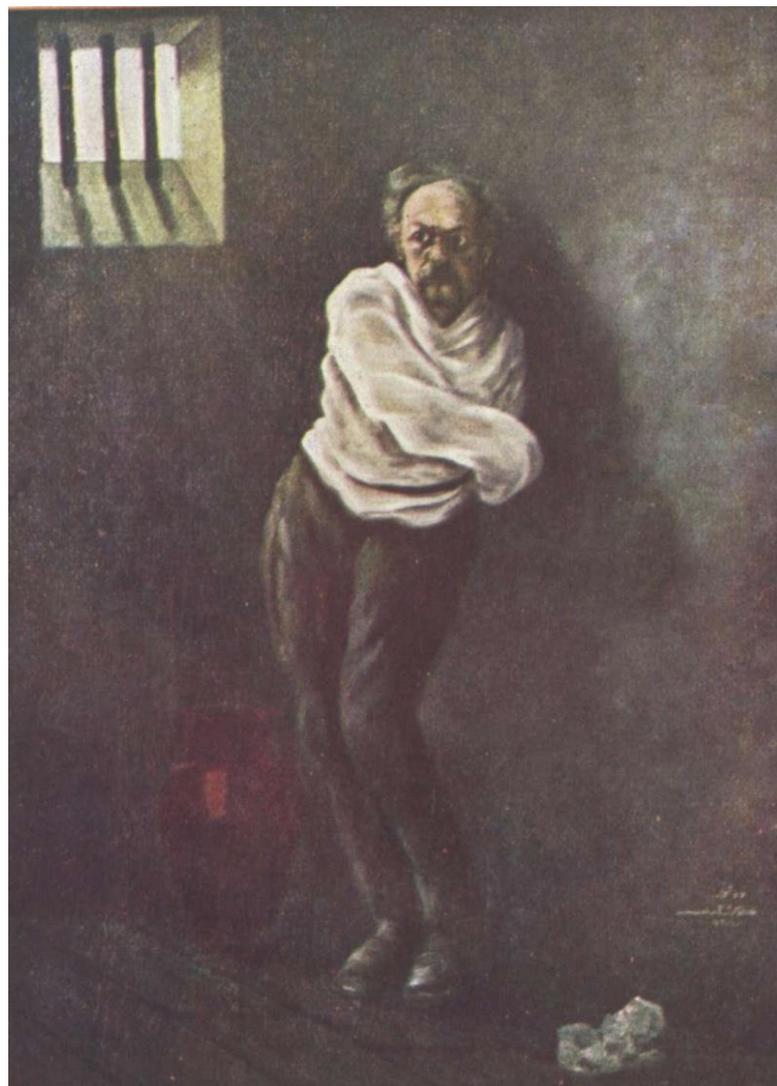
Furthermore, alcohol posed another economic detriment to the country by contributing to the overcrowding of mental institutions, thereby escalating state expenditures on these facilities. Gökay (1948, p. 35) regarded alcoholic beverages as the foremost catalyst of societal degeneration due to their strain on the state budget, particularly within the prison and asylum funds, ultimately depleting the nation's wealth. It is worth noting that educational materials frequently associate alcohol with mental instability and cognitive impairment. These materials often conveyed the message that prolonged alcohol consumption would inevitably lead to insanity. They included statements such as, "continuous alcohol consumption progressively deteriorates the brain and nerves, culminating in complete insanity and institutionalisation" (Tabiat Bilgisi, 1949, p. 33), and "alcoholics experience gradual physical and mental decline, eventually succumbing to diseases or losing their sanity" (Ermata & Ermata, 1945, p. 72).

Alcohol was depicted as a source of humiliation within society as well. In a fourth-grade textbook, there was a story of how an adult man became an object of ridicule in the

presence of children. The issue of alcoholism was illustrated for children with the story in which a drunk man was followed by children leaving school and got stuck among flies and animals in the barn (İbrahim Hilmi, 1934-1935, pp. 151-153). Some educational materials even featured illustrations depicting alcoholics in straitjackets (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Curse of Alcohol (Sıhhi Müze Atlası, 1926, 63).



Students were required to abstain from alcohol to secure a reputable standing in society and evade the risk of being ridiculed. The prevailing narratives consistently associated alignment with the temperance movement with achieving social standing and demonstrating

patriotism, thereby conveying to young individuals that they constituted integral components of a broader societal fabric.

Discussion and Results

In the 19th century, there was a shared recognition between states and scientists regarding the importance of cultivating a strong and disciplined populace, underscoring the imperative for societal control. This acknowledgement spurred the development of the temperance movement within scientific circles, effectively intertwining it with discussions on degeneration. As governmental bodies increasingly grasped the gravity of this matter, the temperance movement gained considerable traction, establishing a notable presence in scientific literature and achieving widespread popularity (Kühl, 2013).

The temperance movement and the discourse of degeneration, which notably captured the interest of psychiatrists, entered the Ottoman Empire almost concurrently with their appearance in Europe. Initially introduced by a fellow of educated physicians who had received their training in Europe, the anti-alcohol campaign swiftly transitioned from a religious emphasis to a more scientific viewpoint, as also highlighted by Arpacı (2015). An educational understanding to enlighten the public has emerged during this transformation. Shortly after, the anti-alcohol movement found its place within school curricula and textbooks. However, unlike in the United Kingdom and the United States, dedicated lessons or textbooks specifically for the temperance movement (Zimmerman, 1999) were never developed in both the Ottoman Empire and its successor, the Republic of Türkiye. Nevertheless, elements of the temperance movement and the degeneration discourse were incorporated into lessons like health science or civics within the educational structure.

Especially during the period following the Balkan Wars, concerns about degeneration grew prominently within both the educational and medical communities, fueled by the loss of a robust and youthful generation on the battlefronts. Boosting the population emerged as one of the pivotal policies of the early Republic era, thereby engrossing the ruling elite and the educated segments of society to foster a vigorous and industrious populace. Alcohol was considered a pressing public health concern, recognised for its detrimental impact on society and families, inflicting widespread suffering (Evered & Evered, 2016). It is evident that numerous doctors, including psychiatrists, attached considerable importance to this matter during the Early Republican Period. However, and still, it seems surprising that psychiatrists

are so heavily involved in the education system. Fahrettin Kerim Gökay's involvement in the 'moral principles commission' at the National Education Council can be considered a connection between the desired morality and the alcohol use that Gökay's expertise.

In that period, the temperance movement was closely associated with degeneration, which appeared to be considered from biological and societal dimensions (Arpacı, 2015). Besides its role in corrupting the racial fabric and jeopardising the Turkish generation, alcohol was also viewed as a factor contributing to societal disintegration. Within the educational framework, evident attempts were made to safeguard society against these twin threats. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, despite the dedicated efforts of a faction of psychiatrists, the anti-alcohol movement remained relatively passive compared to its European counterparts.

This study showed that educational resources, including textbooks, youth-oriented magazines, and journals, commonly portrayed the temperance movement and the concept of degeneration within a scientific framework, occasionally drawing on less empirical statistics. These materials frequently presented cautionary tales as illustrative narratives, advising students to avoid such behaviours. They also implied to young readers that they could achieve societal respect by adhering to the lifestyle promoted in the educational materials. Particularly evident in the narratives within textbooks, it can be inferred that Republican elites aimed to convey the message that a strong connection existed between the anti-alcohol movement and patriotism.

Nonetheless, the endeavours of Hilâl-i Ahdar, rooted in the Ottoman Empire, to bolster the temperance movement are commendable. It appears that Hilâl-i Ahdar effectively reached a significant number of young people. Regrettably, due to the absence of concrete statistical data, it remains challenging to ascertain the overall efficacy of these efforts in achieving their intended objectives. Nevertheless, it is plausible to infer the state's aspiration for an 'ideal lifestyle' or desirable citizens, which underscores the alignment of the temperance movement in the early republic period with the state's agenda of cultivating a robust population. It is visible that the imperative for a healthy and vigorous generation was incorporated into the education system, primarily through textbooks and state-supported initiatives like Hilâl-i Ahdar and its affiliated publications. Besides, the temperance movement within the educational structure supported shaping the desired social order and moral framework.

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