

## Analysis of the State Archives Republican Archives Documents on Tuberculosis and Fight Against Tuberculosis in the Early Republican Period in Türkiye

### Türkiye'de Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Verem ve Veremle Mücadele Konulu Devlet Arşivleri Cumhuriyet Arşivi Belgelerinin Analizi

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#### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** To share information obtained as a result of examination of archival documents related to tuberculosis and the fight against tuberculosis between 1923-1938.

**Method:** Study, which is a qualitative research, was designed as a document analysis. Previous publications on subject were examined. State Archives Republican Archives Catalogue was scanned. Documents found were analysed. Selected documents were included in study. Study covers the period of Atatürk (1923-1938).

**Results:** In early Republican period, Türkiye gave importance to fight against tuberculosis together with infectious diseases such as malaria, trachoma and syphilis. successful works initiated in Ottoman period were continued and additional works were initiated according to new practices and principles. Tuberculosis and fight against tuberculosis were discussed in "National Turkish Medical Congresses". In following period, main theme of the 11th Congress would be tuberculosis. The Ministry of Health has defined a concept for the fight against infectious diseases and implemented it. Guideline on fight against tuberculosis has started to be published. New dispensaries and sanatoriums were built. Efforts were made to increase existing bed capacity. use of BCG vaccine was introduced. New facilities were built at "Central Institute of Hygiene" to start vaccine production. Participation in international exhibitions and congresses was ensured. Arrangements were made regarding the staff and salaries of doctors and nurses, and new civil servant positions were created for the fight against tuberculosis.

**Conclusion:** It would not be wrong to say that works carried out in early Republican period were a stepping stone for the great successes to be achieved in the fight against tuberculosis in future.

**Keywords:** Tuberculosis, Fight against tuberculosis, Republic, Archive documents, History of medicine

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## Ö Z E T

**Amaç:** Bu çalışmada 1923-1938 yılları arasında tüberküloz ve tüberkülozla mücadele ile ilgili arşiv belgelerinin incelenmesi sonucu elde edilen bilgilerin paylaşılması amaçlanmaktadır.

**Yöntem:** Bir nitel araştırma olan çalışma doküman analizi olarak tasarlandı. Konuya dair önceki yayınlar incelendi. Devlet Arşivleri Cumhuriyet Arşivi Kataloğu tarandı. Bulunan belgelerin analizi yapıldı. Seçilen belgeler çalışmaya dâhil edildi. Çalışma Atatürk dönemi (1923-1938) kapsamaktadır.

**Bulgular:** Türkiye, Cumhuriyet'in ilk yıllarında sıtma, trahom ve frengi gibi bulaşıcı hastalıkla birlikte veremle mücadele konusuna önem vermiştir. Osmanlı döneminde başlatılan işlerden başarılı olanlar devam ettirilmiş, bunun yanında yeni uygulamalar ve prensiplere göre ilave çalışmalar başlatılmıştır. Verem ve veremle mücadele "Milli Türk Tıp Kongrelerinde" ele alınmıştır. Daha sonraki dönemde ise 11. Kongrenin ana teması verem olarak belirlenecekti. Sağlık Bakanlığı bulaşıcı hastalıklarla mücadele için bir konsept belirlemiş ve bunu hayata geçirmiştir. Veremle mücadele hakkında rehber yayımlanmaya başlanmıştır. Veremle mücadelede faaliyet gösteren cemiyetlere karşı pozitif ayrımcılık yapılmıştır. Yeni dispanserler ve sanatoryumlar inşa edilmiştir. Mevcut yatak kapasitesi artırılmaya çalışılmıştır. BCG aşısının kullanımına başlanmıştır. Aşı üretimine başlamak için Merkez Hıfzıssıhha Enstitüsüne yeni tesisler inşa edilmiştir. Uluslararası sergilere ve kongrelere katılım sağlanmıştır. Doktor ve hemşire kadroları ve maaşları ile ilgili düzenlemeler yapılmış, veremle mücadele için yeni memur kadroları ihdas edilmiştir.

**Sonuç:** Erken Cumhuriyet döneminde yapılan çalışmalar gelecekte tüberkülozla mücadelede elde edilecek büyük başarılar için adeta birer basamak olmuşlardır demek yanlış olmayacaktır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Verem, Veremle mücadele, Cumhuriyet, Arşiv belgeleri, Tıp tarihi



## 1. Introduction

Tuberculosis is caused by "mycobacterium tuberculosis" complex bacilli. It is transmitted by airway from a sick person to a healthy person [1]. The microbe "mycobacterium bovis" in cattle can be transmitted from animals to humans through breathing and unpasteurised milk [2]. Tuberculosis disease mostly affects the lungs. However, it is actually a dangerous disease that can involve all organs and systems. Symptoms may include physical examination, microbiology and radiological findings [1].

Patients with tuberculosis of the lungs or larynx, those whose sputum shows microbes on microscopic examination, those with cavities on chest X-Rays and those who cough are the most infectious patients. Small spaces, lack of ventilation or inadequate ventilation, being in the same environment with the patient for a long time are environmental issues that increase transmission [2].

Smear negative tuberculosis patients are less infectious. The risk of transmission is high for people who have close and long-term contact with the patient. These may be family members, friends sharing the same house, workplace colleagues. With effective treatment, the number of bacilli and cough frequency decrease rapidly within days. The infectiousness of patients practically ends in two to three weeks with effective treatment [1].

Tuberculosis is as old as human history. The first information about the disease dates back to 3000 BCs, when a girl died of bloody sputum in a place called Dra Abu-El Naga on the banks of the Nile River [3]. Especially as a result of the Industrial Revolution, the difficult working conditions and unfavourable

living conditions in which the workers who came to metropolises to work caused tuberculosis to increase and exacerbate in the 19th century [4].

In 1882, Robert Koch announced that he could isolate and produce the tubercle bacillus. By 1890, Koch had introduced tuberculin [5]. The Ottoman Empire was not indifferent to this development. Sultan Abdulhamid-II sent a medical delegation to Berlin to learn about this new medicine. In fact, Turkiye became one of the application centres of tuberculin. However, it was soon realised that the medicine did not cure tuberculosis [4].

The disease, called "white plague" in some sources, was known as "thin disease (in Turkish: ince hastalık) among the Turks. It is seen that the Ottoman Empire tried to take measures to prevent tuberculosis. However, tuberculosis was one of the crucial infectious diseases that took the most lives [5,6].

Founded in 1923, one of the biggest problems faced by the Young Republic was undoubtedly infectious diseases. With the "Vertical Organisation" model initiated during the period of Minister of Health Refik Saydam, separate organisations were established for each of the infectious diseases and the fight against these diseases was started [4].

The first sanatorium of the Republican period in Turkiye was opened in Burgazada. This private 50-bed sanatorium was founded by Dr. Musa Kazım. This was followed by private sanatoriums established in Burgazada and then in Yakacik. The Ministry of Health opened sanatoriums in Buyukada and Heybeliada [7].

Founded in 1923, the "Izmir Society for the Fight against Tuberculosis" could only be realised with the diligent efforts of Behcet Salih. Following this society, a "Fight against Tuberculosis Society" was also established in Balikesir [8].

Tuberculosis was one of the topics of the "National Turkish Medical Congresses". In following period, main theme of the 11th Congress would be tuberculosis. In addition to sanatoriums, dispensaries were also opened. In addition, the conditions for the fight against tuberculosis were determined by the "General Hygiene Law" [9].

In 1928, "League of Nations" recognised that a new vaccine developed in France could be used against tuberculosis. This was the BCG vaccine that Marie Camille Guerin and Albert Calmette had been trying to develop since the early 1900s. BCG stands for "Bacille Calmette-Guérin". Initially there was also the word "Bilie" after "Bacille", but this word was not used later [10].

BCG vaccine was introduced in Turkiye in 1931 in the children through the efforts of Refik Guran, Director of the "Bacteriological Department in Istanbul". In the same year, germ strains were brought to Turkiye and new units for vaccine production were constructed at the "Central Institute of Hygiene" in Ankara [7]. In 1932, the first "Guide for the Fight Against Tuberculosis" was published [1].

The fight against tuberculosis in Turkiye, which started with voluntary organisations and developed with the cooperation and coordination of state institutions, had come a long way. However, the real success in the fight would be achieved in the following years [7].

The purpose of this study is to share the information obtained by analysing archival documents related to tuberculosis and the fight against tuberculosis between 1923 and 1938.

## 2. Material and Method

This study, which is a document analysis study, was designed as qualitative research [11]. In this study, previously published articles, theses and books on the subject were utilised. Term publications and the catalogs of the Republican Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkiye Directorate of State Archives were scanned. The words (in Turkish) "verem", "tüberküloz", "sanatoryum", "dispanser", "prevantoryum", "aşı" were used as keywords in the searches. The study covers the period of Atatürk (1923-1938).

Publications on the period, and the selected 19 original documents on the subject shown in Table 1 in the Catalogue of the Republican Archives were analyzed and used in the study. It is possible to access the new Turkish letter transcriptions of the documents whose “figures” are shared in old-letter Turkish in the study from the location information given in the references section.

**Table 1:** Date and location information of archive documents.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Box-Folder-sequence</b>
29.04.1924	30-11-1-0/5-13-3
05.08.1925	30-18-1-1/15-49-12
06.01.1927	180-9-0-0/102-497-10
27.01.1927	30-18-1-1/22-84-20
05.03.1927	30.18.1.1/23.14.9
22.07.1928	30-18-1-1/29-44-18
27.02.1929	30-18-1-2/2-16-29
01.10.1930	30.18.1.2/14.62.15
01.07.1931	30-18-1-2/21-47-11
09.07.1932	30-18-1-2/29-50-18
13.07.1932	30-18-1-2/30-51-18
11.08.1932	30-18-1-2/30-59-8
19.01.1933	30-18-1-2/33-6-4
10.02.1934	30-18-1-2/42-6-16
20.06.1934	30-18-1-2/46-44-1
26.06.1935	30-18-1-2/56-55-3
07.04.1938	30-18-1-2/82-25-20
06.09.1938	30-18-1-2/84-79-18
08.10.1938	30-18-1-2/84-89-7

### 3. Results

The first document dated April 29, 1924 concerns the appointment of Dr. Resat Riza as the Chief Physician of the “Heybeliada Tuberculosis Dispensary” [12].

The Decree dated August 5, 1925, on the other hand, was about the inclusion of the "Society for the Fight against Tuberculosis" among the associations beneficial to the public. The document states that the "Society for the Fight Against Tuberculosis" was founded on February 17, 1923 (339) to explain to the public that tuberculosis is a terrible disease that destroys and destroys humanity, to prepare and publish publications for this purpose, to print them, to take care of the treatment of the patients who apply and to take care of the patients. Pursuant to Article 17 of the Law on Associations, this society was found to have the status of a public benefit association [13]. The original version of the document, the content of which was previously shared by Karayaman [8], is also included in this article [13].

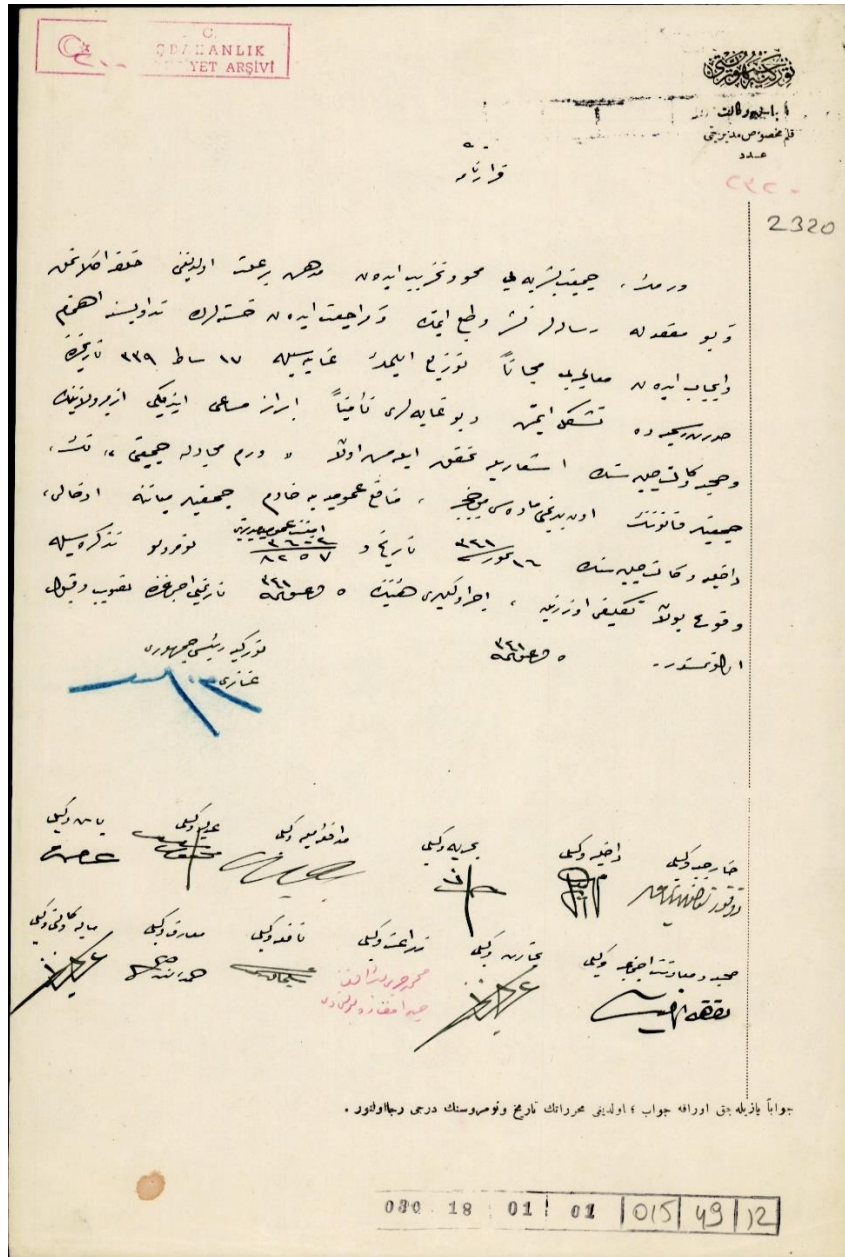


Figure 1: Archival document about the Society for the Fight against Tuberculosis [13].

Dated January 6, 1927, the document is about the granting of land to the "Izmir Society for the Fight against Tuberculosis" [14]. Another document related to this issue dated March 5, 1927 is the Decree on the sale of a plot of land in Izmir to the "Izmir Society for the Fight Against Tuberculosis". According to the Decree dated February 23, 1927 and numbered 1383, part of the land that was intended to be given to the "Izmir Society for the Fight Against Tuberculosis" for the construction of a precentorium and isolation houses belonged to a British subject. For this reason, it was deemed appropriate to sell the land to the "Society for the Fight Against Tuberculosis", which has the status of a public benefit association, at a price to be appraised [15].

The Decree dated January 27, 1927 is about the sale of the Lutfu Bey Masjid in Izmir to the "Izmir Society for the Fight Against Tuberculosis" for a price. In the decree, it was specifically stated that the Lutfu Bey Masjid, which was under the supervision of "the Foundations Administration", was in such a dilapidated and ruined condition that it could not be prayed in, and that the Hacı Mahmut Mosque was located nearby. It was deemed appropriate to leave it to the "Izmir Society for the Fight Against Tuberculosis" at a price of 800 liras for its restoration based on the need [16].



The Decree on participation in "the International Tuberculosis Exhibition" to be held in Rome is dated July 22, 1928. In the document, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs writes in the letter received from the Italian Embassy that an international conference for the fight against tuberculosis will be held in Rome between September 25-27 under the auspices of the King of Italy and the honorary presidency of the Prime Minister, that Türkiye has not participated before in this event, which will be organized for the sixth time in 1928, that an exhibition will be opened by a committee chaired by the director of the "Italian Red Cross" within the scope of the conference, and that the participation of institutions and industrialists from Türkiye who may be interested in this exhibition is desired, and that if there will be a participation from Türkiye, it is requested to inform them of their information. With the decree, Türkiye's participation in this exhibition was approved and deemed appropriate [17].

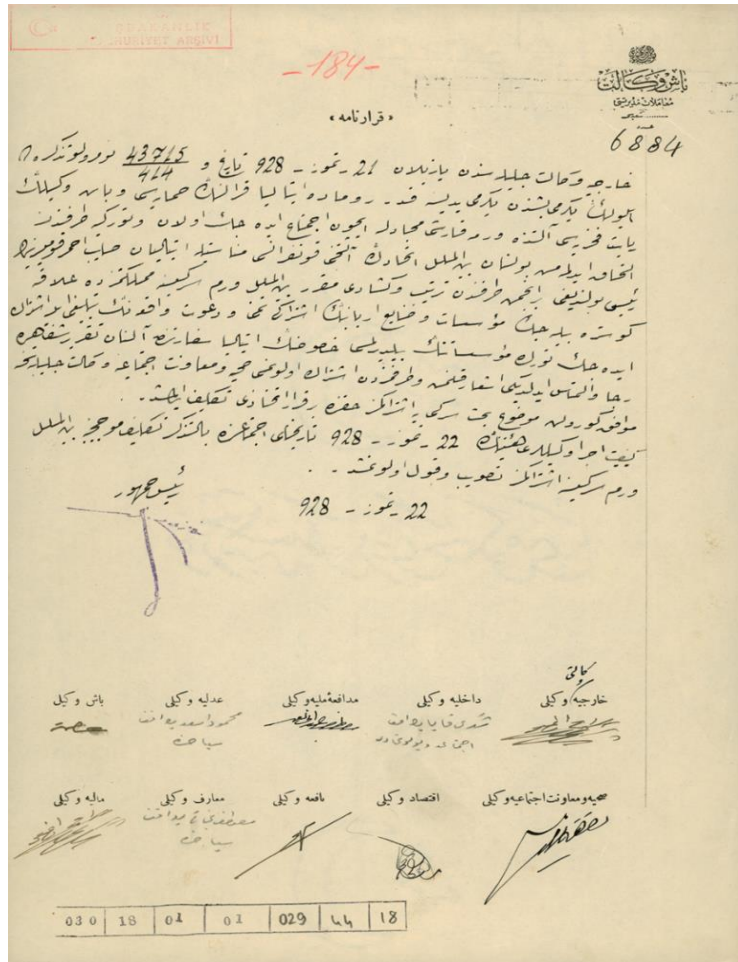


Figure 2: Archival document about the International Tuberculosis Exhibition [17].

The document dated February 27, 1929 is about the extension of the construction of the "Heybeliada Tuberculosis Sanatorium" until May 1929. The document states that the construction of the 15-bed pavilion for the tuberculosis sanatorium in Heybeliada was extended until May 1, 1929 due to the stony ground and the inability to continue the construction of the reinforced concrete parts due to prolonged snow and frost [18].

The Decree on the construction of an additional pavilion for the "Heybeliada Tuberculosis Sanatorium" is dated October 1, 1930 [19]. Accordingly, the 36-bed pavilion to be built as an addition to the tuberculosis sanatorium in Heybeliada was approved to be constructed for 48,337 liras (with and change) according to the cost of exploration [7,19].

The Decree on raising the salaries of the medical doctors of the "Istanbul Tuberculosis Dispensary" and the addition of two nurses to the dispensary staff is dated July 1, 1931. The document states that in the 1931 budget of the Istanbul Municipality, the monthly salary of the Chief Physician of the Tuberculosis

Dispensary was shown as 40 liras and the salary of the hygiene specialist as 45 liras, but this was not in accordance with the Law, so the monthly salaries of the aforementioned doctors were increased to 55 liras, which is the salary of a specialist doctor in the 7th degree, and it was also approved to add two nurses to the dispensary staff with a salary of 17 liras [20].

Decree dated July 9, 1932 on the approval of the staffing of the pavilion attached to the Tuberculosis sanatorium in Heybeliada [21].

With the Decree dated July 13, 1932, 45,000 liras were authorized to be spent for the technical pavilion to be built at the "Heybeliada Sanatorium" to cover the laboratory, operating room and X-Ray departments, as well as the kitchen and water tank [22].

The Decree on the granting of a political passport to Dr. Tevfik Salim Pasha, who will attend the "International Tuberculosis Conference" to be held in The Hague, is dated 11 August 1932. Tevfik Salim Pasha, who would attend the Conference to be held between 6-9 September to represent the Government of the Republic of Turkiye, would cover his own expenses [23]. The original version of the document, the contents of which were previously shared by Aksu [24], is included in this article [23].

**T. C.**  
**BASVEKALET**  
**MUHAZIRAT MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ**  
Sayı: 11251

**KARARNAME**

Eylülün altısından dokuzuna kadar (La Haye)de toplanacak Bey-nelmilel Verem Konferansına, masrafları kendilerine ait olmak kaydı ile Hükümetimizi temsil etmek üzere izama tensip kılınmış olan Mü-derris Dr. Tevfik Salim Pağaya siyasi pasaport verilmesi; S. f. M. Ve-kâletinin 10/8/932 tarih ve 151/10614 numaralı tezkeresiyle vukubulan teklifi üzerine İora Vekilleri Heyetince 11/8/932 tarihinde x tasvip ve kabul olunmuştur.

11/8/932

REİSİCUMHUR

*Gazi M. Kemal*

Bş.V. <i>[Signature]</i>	Ad.V. <i>[Signature]</i>	M.M.V.	Da.V.
Ha.V.	Ma.V. <i>[Signature]</i>	Me.V. <i>[Signature]</i>	Na.V. <i>[Signature]</i>
İ.V. <i>[Signature]</i>	S.M.V. <i>[Signature]</i>	G.V. <i>[Signature]</i>	Z.V. <i>[Signature]</i>

930 18 01 02 30 99 8

**Figure 3:** Archival document about the International Tuberculosis Conference [23].

The date of the Decree on Dr. Zühtü's appointment as a tuberculosis specialist at Heybeliada Tuberculosis Sanatorium is 19 January 1933. Dr. Zühtü was appointed with a basic salary of 55 liras [25].

Decree dated 10 February 1934 was approving the establishment of a doctor's staff to be employed at the Ankara Tuberculosis Dispensary, to be paid from Chapter 17 of the "E" Schedule of the 1933 budget. [26].



Ücreti 1933 senesi bütçesinin "E" cetveline dahil 454 üncü fasıldan verilmek üzere Ankara Verem Mücadele Dispanserinde çalıştırılacak bir tabibe ait ilişik kadronun, Muvazenei Umumiye Kanununun - 6 ıncı maddesine göre tasdiki; Sıhhat ve İçtimai Muavenet Vekillığının 30/1/934 tarih ve 8/1388 sayılı tezkeresiyle yapılan teklifi ve - Maliye Vekillığının 8/2/934 tarih ve 2512/73 sayılı mütaleanesi üzerine İcra Vekilleri Heyetince 10/2/934 te kabul olunmuştur.

10/2/934

REİSİCUMHUR

*Gazi M. Kemâl*

Bş. V.

*Janday*

Ad. V.

*S. Sarıoğlu*

M. M. V.

*Beccia*

Da. V.

*S. Köymen*

Ha. V. V.

*S. Köymen*

Ma. V.

*Ömer*

Mf. V.

*Ömer*

Na. V. V.

*Ömer*

İk. V.

*Ömer*

S. İ. M. V. V.

*Ömer*

G. İ. V.

*Ali Rıza A.*

Zr. V.

*Ömer*

03 18 01 02 42 6 16

Figure 4: Archival document about the Ankara Tuberculosis Dispensary [26].

The Decree dated 20 June 1934 is related to the approval of the staff to be employed for the fight against tuberculosis in 1934. The same decree also approved the staffing of the officers to be employed in the fight against trachoma, malaria, syphilis and other infectious diseases, in addition to tuberculosis [27].

The Decree dated 26 June 1935 is also related to the approval of the cadres of officers to be employed in the fight against tuberculosis, trachoma, malaria, syphilis and other infectious diseases [28].

Decree dated 7 April 1938 was regarding the three-month salary of a person to be employed as a surveyor in the construction of the "Heybeliada Sanatorium" [29].

The Decree dated 6 September 1938 is about Dr. Fahri Arel. Accordingly, it was decided that Fahri Arel, who was to be sent on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Türkiye to the International Brussels Congress of Tuberculosis Surgery, which was supposed to be held in Vienna under normal conditions, would be given foreign currency and a political passport according to the new conditions [30].



2  
9579

30/7/938 tarih ve 2/9369 sayılı kararnemeye ektir:  
Viyana'da toplanacak olan Vrem Cerrahisi kongresinin, bu kerre Brük-  
selde toplanacağı anlaşıldığından, Hükümetimiz namına iştirak ede-  
cek olan Dr. Fahri Arel'e verilecek siyasal pasaport ile istenilen  
dövizin , 1938 takvim yılı döviz cetvellerinin kongre ve konferans-  
lar fasline Maarif Vekâleti namına mevzu tahsisattan, Brüksel için  
verilmesi; Maarif Vekilliğinin 29/8/938 tarih ve 3225/41031/97 sa-  
yıyla teklifi ve Maliye Vekilliğinin 5/9/938 tarih ve 54247/2/13535  
sayılı mutaleenamesi üzerine İcra Vekilleri Heyetince 6/9/938 tari-  
hinde onanmıştır.

6/9/938

REİSİCUMHUR

*K. Atatürk*

Bş. V.

Ad. V.

M. M. V.

Da. V.

*C. Bey*

*S. Sarı*

*M. Özalp*

*S. Taş*

Ha. V.

Ma. V.

Mf. V.

Na. V.

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*M. Özalp*

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İk. V.

S. İ. M. V.

G. İ. V.

Zr. V.

*S. Sarı*

*H. A. Akın*

*Kama Sarı*

*F. İbrahim*

030 18 01 02 86 79 18

**Figure :** Archival document about the International Brussels Congress of Tuberculosis Surgery [30].

Decree dated 8 October 1938 is related to Dr. Talat Özkan. According to this decree, Talat Özkan, who was working as the chief physician at Heybeliada Sanatorium, was found appropriate to work for one more year in order to benefit more from his knowledge and experience due to his good health [31].

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The concept of tuberculosis control or the fight against tuberculosis is defined as the "war with the tuberculosis" in Türkiye [1].

In the early years of the Republic, dealing with infectious diseases and their devastation was a priority. These issues were discussed in detail at the "National Turkish Medical Congresses" [32].

The achievements in the fight against tuberculosis in Türkiye in the first years of the Republic are quite remarkable. As can be understood from the archival documents, even the appointments made to the chief physician of the Tuberculosis Dispensary were regulated by decree.

It can also be considered very important that the Society for the Fight against Tuberculosis was granted the status of publicly beneficial support and the space problems were tried to be solved.

In addition, sending doctors to congresses organised abroad on tuberculosis is another issue that is emphasised in order to enable them to improve themselves and to use their new knowledge in the service of the nation.

The investments made in the "Heybeliada Tuberculosis Sanatorium", the determination and approval of the cadres of those who would take part in the fight against tuberculosis, and the arrangement of doctors' salaries in their favour were indeed sincere activities.

Legislative arrangements on the subject were made through regulations such as "Law on Public Health", "Regulation on Tuberculosis Control Dispensaries", "Law on Private Hospitals", "Regulation on Private Hospitals", "Law on the Organisation and Officers of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare" [24].

Tuberculosis is still important today. The number of patients shows that the fight against tuberculosis still maintains its importance in Türkiye as in the whole world. It is known that 9 million new patients are detected every year all over the world. The number of deaths caused by tuberculosis is estimated to be 1,7 million people [33].

It is obvious that the activities carried out in the first years of the Republic in the fight against tuberculosis were remarkable. However, what is really important here is that these activities have been a stepping stone for the steps to be taken in the fight against tuberculosis in the future and have been important milestones in Türkiye's successful fight against tuberculosis.

According to 2021 data, there are 173 Tuberculosis Dispensaries in Türkiye. As of 2020, 8,925 tuberculosis patients were registered in dispensaries. This number was 11,401 in 2019. The decrease is considered to be due to the Covid-19 pandemic [34].

## Declaration of Ethical Code

This study does not require Ethics Committee Approval in terms of its content.

## Information

Turkish Presidency State Archives Republic Archive is written in the form of "BCA" in the reference section of the study, and the date, fond, box, folder, and sequence information of the documents are given respectively.

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