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STATE AND BODY: THE TREATMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION  
DURING THE SINGLE-PARTY PERIOD AS A CASE STUDY IN POLITICAL  
SOCIALIZATION

by

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## ABSTRACT

### State and Body: The Treatment of Physical Education during the Single-Party Period as a Case Study in Political Socialization

This study seeks to address the impact of the physical education policies in the formative years of the Turkish Republic for the process of nation building. Arguing that one-party systems possess a number of distinguishing features with respect to the formation of social life, the study then turns its focus to an analysis of the views of Ziya Gökalp, the prominent intellectual progenitor of Turkish sociology. In so doing, it draws important parallels on prevailing discourses during the Second Constitutional Period and early Republican era. The following chapter elaborates on the nature of the authoritarian regimes in Europe in the interbellum era that provides clues for a comparative analysis with that of the Turkish case. The Law on Physical Education promulgated in 1938, comes under scrutiny in this regard to find the peculiarities of the example of Turkey. Seen in this light, this law reveals the mentality prevailing among the Kemalist elite. The last part of this work expands on the successes and failures of the Law on Physical Education by way of looking at the implementation of this law. In this frame of mind, the inputs of the press and sport clubs are also under examination.

## ÖZET

Devlet ve Beden: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tek Parti Döneminde Bir Toplumsallaşma Aracı

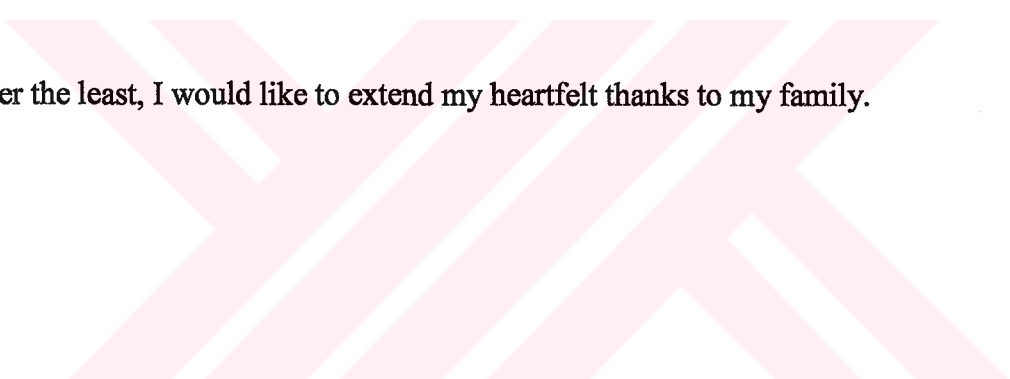
Olarak Beden Terbiyesi

Bu çalışma Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluş yıllarında uygulanan beden eğitimi politikalarından yola çıkarak tek parti rejiminin toplumu hangi eksen üzerinde şekillendirdiğini ele almaktadır. Tek parti sistemlerinin ana hatlarına ilişkin bir değerlendirme ile başlayan çalışma, Cumhuriyet döneminin kurucu ideologlarından Ziya Gökalp'in geliştirdiği bir dizi kavramsallaştırma ile "terbiye" fikrinin arasındaki nedensel bağlantıları kurarak ilerlemektedir. Böylece, İkinci Meşrutiyet döneminin egemen söylemi ile Cumhuriyet devrimlerinin niteliği arasındaki benzerliklere ışık tutmaya çalışılmaktadır. İzleyen bölümde dönemin doğasına ilişkin yorumlardan kalkarak Avrupa'daki rejimlerle Türkiye örneği arasında karşılaştırmalı bir değerlendirme yapılmıştır. Bu bağlamda Türkiye örneğini daha isabetli olarak değerlendirebilmek için 1938 yılında yürürlüğe konulan ve spor politikaları açısından önemli bir dönemeci ifade eden Beden Terbiyesi Kanunu ayrıntılı olarak incelenmektedir. Söz konusu kanun, yasa koyucunun hangi saiklerle hareket ettiğini anlamak bakımından önemli ipuçları sağlamaktadır. Çalışmanın son bölümü, Beden Terbiyesi Kanunu ile bütünüyle devletin müdahale alanına giren beden terbiyesi meselesinin söz konusu kanunun ilgasına değin ne ölçüde başarılı olduğunu tartışmaya açarak, kamuoyu ve klüplerin bu sürece katkısını saptamaya çalışmaktadır.

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Last, but never the least, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my family.



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## PREFACE

The purpose in making this study is to provide an overview of state involvement in sport activities during the formative years of the Turkish Republic. It examines the sport policies adopted by the single-party regime and seeks to address its repercussions on various spheres of social life. In this sense, the construction of an organized physical education system receives the lion's share of attention. The major aim is to examine the formation of Kemalist ideology as reflected through the prism of physical education and sports activities. This study picks up the story of sport activities in the pre-Republican period spanning from the Second Constitutional Period to the establishment of the single-party regime in Turkey. As two successive moments in Turkish history, in both periods, the state was motivated by the desire to increase centralization. As the Young Turk era progressed, security considerations, along with huge territorial loss, contributed to the growing propensity toward more authoritarianism. Indicative of this was the growing number of youth associations and increased emphasis on militaristic education.

The extent of the state involvement in the organization of sport activities continued in the same vein during the years of single-party period. The Kemalist cadres, who had grown accustomed to authoritarianism during the reign of Abdulhamid II, applied the same mode of thinking. Although most of the above-mentioned associations disappeared from the social scene with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the mentality continued to flourish. In a powerful drive to build up the country, the Kemalist elite conceived the Turkish nation as an imagined community in need of guidance. At this point, Ziya Gökalp's view of political socialization and the role he attributed to education enters into the picture. Contrary to popular belief, the legacy of the Second Constitutional Period is evident in the political

vocabulary of the early Republican era. The phrase *ictimai terbiye* (socialization), mainly advanced, contextualized and popularized by Gökbalp, came back into use during the Republican era. As noted, education, more than any other effort, contributed to the development of what is called political socialization.

In a broader sense, therefore, the subject matter of this thesis brings us to fundamental questions that lie at the very core of political socialization and this is where the ideas of Turkish nationalism come in. The founders of the Turkish Republic sought ways to form a Turkish nation. Seen in this light, a detailed consideration of the notion of political socialization will reveal important insights into the significance that nationalism engendered for the Kemalists. To this end, it will be argued that sport activities provide a fruitful field for an analysis of the degree to which the Republican People's Party achieved extension of the values of Turkish nationalism. For these goals to be met, the citizen's body literally had to be brought into the service of the state discipline. It was within this logic that physical education evolved into a national duty incumbent on all citizens within a defined age group.

One note about terminology may be helpful before introducing the key concept in this work. The word *terbiye* has no English equivalent, although "education" and "training" are close approximations. Yet "education" is neither accurate, as it hardly conveys the extensive connotations of the Turkish word, nor conceptually appropriate for the purpose of transmitting the meaning of this concept. It has a manifold meaning in Turkish, which is lost in translation. As if more confusion were necessary, *terbiye* is used in a very free way interchangeably with the term *ictimai terbiye* in most cases. For this reason, although it may not sound exact, "political socialization" is used in the study as it more accurately conveys the meaning of the notion of *terbiye*. In brief, as a term that covers a wide range of topics from education to film watching, the notion of political socialization is defined and interpreted in an expansive fashion throughout this work.



As a term embracing a broad range of dutiful values such as discipline, training, education, and progress, *terbiye* appears frequently in the writings of the prominent opinion-makers of the era under consideration. By that they meant, above all, a developed and westernized society. Despite the presence of a causal correlation between political socialization and the westernization project of the ruling elite, what is immediately striking here is that the Kemalist understanding of political socialization was based on the adoption of a western identity that was ironically deeply skeptical of the West.<sup>1</sup> This helps to explain, at least in part, why many opinion makers adopted a hesitant attitude *vis-à-vis* the West in their writings.

The historiographical corollary to this approach is that the single-party period has long come to be judged within the confines of a progressive historical narrative. It is worth stating at the outset that the present work seeks to go beyond this level of analysis. Proceeding from this premise, the contention is that any serious treatment of this domain must be aware of the fundamental shortcomings of this approach. In doing so, this study offers some useful guidelines to understanding the broader processes of change and continuity in the organization of social life in modern Turkey. Furthermore, it is to be hoped that this modest contribution will serve as a backdrop to discussions on the nature of the single-party regime in Turkey.

### The Realm of Social History in Turkey

Interest in the social life during the formative years of the Republic has been rising steadily in recent years. Until very recently, however, the lack of scholarly studies has left the field open to journalistic accounts, most of which have been written in a popular fashion.

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the contradictions inherent in Kemalist ideology, see Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye'de Toplum ve Siyaset*, brought to print by Mümtaz'er Türköne and Tuncay Önder (Istanbul: İletişim, 1990), *passim*.

These accounts provide useful additional angles on events, but they approach the question not from an academic point of view, but from the point of view of journalistic sensationalism. Although we do not ignore their work, it does not suffice to explain the nature of the regime in Turkey as it fails to treat the issues in a coherent fashion and anchors its discourse in popularity and sensationalism based on rumor and hearsay.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, there is a new drive to try to elaborate on the commonly-held views with respect to this period. Moreover, these changes are not solely limited to journalistic interest: they are indicative of a new academic approach in the making, one that neither confines its attention to elite institutions, nor seeks to understand Turkish history from above. In making their case, a new generation of historians addresses different levels of society during the single-party period in addition to probing the intended goals of the Kemalist regime.<sup>3</sup> Considered from that perspective, this approach fulfills a vital function by calling into question the divinity of the formative years of the Republic. It is thanks such new approaches to the Republican era that social history has gained academic credibility.

It is a pity that the consideration of social history in Turkey has been disregarded for so long. The debates surrounding the field have not been properly understood in Turkish historiography.<sup>4</sup> Zafer Toprak, who has supplied the very vocabulary with which so many of us have come to describe the domain, attributes this gap in part to being a society in transition. Pondering the reasons for this, Toprak argues that the following questions should be posed to overcome this impasse: “what is to be done in the field of social history in Turkey? What should be the agenda of social historiography? On what grounds should we

<sup>2</sup> Examples of this approach are to be found in Ergun Hiçyılmaz, *Türkiye’de Spor* (İstanbul: Yeni Yüzyıl, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> A number of examples will suffice to illustrate this important shift. See, for instance, Cemil Koçak, *Umumi Müfettişlikler(1927-1952)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003); Ahmet Yıldız, *Ne Mutlu Türk’üm Diyebilene* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2000); Füsün Üstel, *Türk Ocakları: İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1997). It should however be mentioned in passing that these examples are still not the rule.

<sup>4</sup> For a historiographical contextualization of this debate, see Zafer Toprak, “Sosyal Tarihin Alanı ve Türkiye Gerçeği,” *Toplum ve Bilim*, nos. 54-55 (Summer-Fall 1991), pp. 77-88.

address the relations between social and political history?”<sup>5</sup> In this regard, he maintains that the Turkish historiography has a long way to go.

Put this way, the value of this new approach becomes all the more remarkable. Its significance lies in the fact that it is directly grounded in the study of primary sources with a bent on critical analysis and historical perspective. Seen in this light, I will try to follow the same path and argue that the issue of physical education can provide useful guidelines for an elaboration on the impact of the regime on social life during the single-party period. As noted, leaving aside a number of journalistic accounts, the issue of physical education has not been adequately addressed in Turkish academia.<sup>6</sup> When viewed from this perspective, the present treatment of the subject is intended to analyze the political milieu in which these changes came into being. By examining the structure of the one-party system in the case of Turkey, I seek to address the general contours of Kemalism as a political ideology.

Chapter One describes the historical evolution of the single-party system in Turkey, beginning with a detailed treatment of its general contours. To gain better insight into the debate, the focus moves on to a theme that runs through much of this work, that is to say, the notion of political socialization. In the process of tracing the genesis of the political socialization discourse, the views of Ziya Gökalp are examined. Linked to Kemalist regime's *Weltanschauung*, the Chapter Two outlines both the differences and affinities of the Turkish case with other authoritarian regimes. Here, the Law on Physical Education cannot be grasped without probing the political underpinnings of this episode. As such, it is imperative to review the historical background of sport activities in Turkey to locate the debates revolving around physical education in their proper framework. To accomplish this goal, the second chapter also deals with how the Turkish way of political socialization fit into the world context. Chapter Three broadens the sociological frame of reference by dealing with certain themes in

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 87-8.

<sup>6</sup> Of course there are shining exceptions to this verdict. Zafer Toprak, more than any other scholar in this field has probed the realm of social history.

greater detail. To this end, it is devoted to a detailed analysis of the Law on Physical Education and the manifestations of this shift in the field of education, training and youth.



## CHAPTER I

### THE NOTION OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AND THE ONE-PARTY SYSTEM IN TURKEY

This chapter provides a historical overview of the evolution of the one-party system in Turkey and its impact on the transformation of Turkish society. The latter part of the chapter discusses the debates revolving around the concept of political socialization. This important topic calls for reference to the ideas of Ziya Gökalp. As *terbiye* was a phrase frequently used in all spheres of social life, there is a good deal to be learned from this concept about the mindset of Kemalist Turkey. Yet before proceeding to an examination of political socialization, a detailed treatment of the structure of single-party regimes and how they emerge is in order.

#### The Structure of One-Party Systems and the Case of Turkey

Authoritarian political systems have existed since the beginning of history. However, the form that each authoritarian system assumes has much to do with the level of development of a given society. In a revealing article, Samuel P. Huntington outlines the general contours of one-party systems as follows:

One-party systems are preeminently a twentieth-century political phenomenon, products of the convulsive processes of social, economic, and political change of that century: social revolution, world war, nationalist struggle. "The largest number of one-party systems are produced by social revolutions, and revolutions, in the grand sense, occur only at particular times in the process of modernization and development ... The conquest of formal authority by the revolutionary party inaugurates a phase in which the principal aim is the transformation of the society: the destruction of the old order and its replacement by new political institutions and social patterns appropriate for a

homogeneous rather than a bifurcated society. The nature and success of these efforts, in large part, depend on the level of social and political development achieved in the pre-revolutionary society.<sup>7</sup>

As the preceding analysis makes clear, each authoritarian one-party system has its own complexities, the establishment which require a large degree of sophistication. When dealing with social transformation, this question becomes all the more sensitive as one-party systems reflect the class structure of societies. They are primarily dedicated to the creation of a society of equals- or a classless society- which will forever end social cleavage.<sup>8</sup> Not surprisingly, the Turkish case is no exception to this rule.

Soon after the national struggle for independence came to an end, the new political regime in Turkey faced two fundamental challenges during the formative years of the single-party period: on the one hand, they felt duty bound to modernize a traditional society in which deep social and economic differences existed, and to bring a homogeneous nation-state into existence. The only way to accomplish this goal was to catch up with the contemporary civilization (read the West). Yet in the view of the Kemalists this was not an easy task in a society in which intense religious and ethnic differences existed. Nor was it easy to curb the polarization of the people and to unite them around a common cause. However, the Kemalists were very determined in their drive to accomplish everything in the way of modernization. They were of the opinion that in the context of Turkey the change had to come from above and not from below and did not hesitate to resort to authoritarian measures, believing that their method was justified in the pursuit of political modernization. In other words, as with any social revolution produced by a nationalist movement, the Turkish case, too, attempted to eradicate the bifurcation of society through the assimilation of the subordinate social forces.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "Social and Institutional Dynamics of One Party Systems," in S.P. Huntington and C.H. Moore, eds., *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society: The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), pp. 4, 12 and 25.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-17.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

The Kemalists' efforts to transform the political scene were rendered more stimulating since they coincided with the prevalent mode of ruling at the time. As is well known, the two decades spanning from the 1920s to 1940s were the heyday of the one-party system, which served as an inspiration, a pole of attraction, for the newly-established nation-states in Europe. In this regard, a one-party system found favorable soil in Turkey as in most of the countries of continental Europe. However, with a political regime which was at once modernist and backward, relatively free yet repressive, the Turkish case precludes one from reaching, simple, one-dimensional conclusions. Thus the evidence with regard to the organization of the Turkish one-party system should to be treated with special care.

#### Settling Accounts: The Law on the Maintenance of Order

A comprehensive history of the evolution of the one-party system in Turkey is beyond the scope of this study. Yet here, in retrospect, an important event that appears to have been centrally important for the consolidation of the regime. Over the course of the national struggle, unwilling to share power with other groups, the Kemalist elite resorted to many tactics.<sup>10</sup> During this period, their room for maneuvers was confined to the parameters established by wartime conditions, but the affair did not end there. The long awaited moment arrived in February 1925 when a revolt among the Kurdish population in the south-east led by Sheikh Said broke out. On 4 March 1925, the *Takrir-i Sükûn Kanunu* (Law on the Maintenance of Order), giving the government extraordinary dictatorial powers for the

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<sup>10</sup> For a detailed account of these tactics during the national struggle, see Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement, 1905-1926* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984).



duration of two years, was passed and *İstiklal Mahkemeleri* (Independence Tribunals) were resurrected.<sup>11</sup>

These changes provided the pretext for the Kemalists to drive the system toward more authoritarianism, proceeding to undermine and eliminate every rival in the way of the newly-established regime. From mid-1920s on, Turkey witnessed the emergence of a much more authoritarian political and social environment than that of the previous period. This episode of Turkish history provided the Kemalists with an unrivaled power-standing in the political scene and a suitable excuse for the acceleration of reforms on paper, paving the way for their practical realization. As noted, this new period was crystallized with the adoption of Law on the Maintenance of Order in 1925, which remained in force until 1929. Under this law, nearly 7,500 people were arrested and 660 executed for activities judged contrary to the principles of the Kemalist regime. The Kemalist elite set radical reforms into practice after the implementation of Law on the Maintenance of Order. For good or ill, the results of this event would set the course for Kemalist regime and determine the shape of the domestic politics for years to come.

Over the years, the primacy of the Republican People's Party became much more visible, as the state institutions were formalized and devoured by the party. This shift was reflected in the changing balance between the party and state institutions. In the interest of brevity, one example will suffice to illustrate this shift: from 1936 on, the governor of a province would automatically be the head of the RPP branch in his province. This new measure was aimed to retain all the political power in the hands of the party officials. As a result, by the end of the 1920s, the relatively democratic political environment of Turkey had been replaced by a regime overridden by an obsession for power. One might add to these the

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<sup>11</sup> For more on this, see Zürcher, *Unionist Factor*, pp. 140-142; see also Erik Jan Zürcher, *Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic: The Progressive Republican Party, 1924-1925* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991).



failure of the tutelary democratic experiences of the Progressive Republican Party and the Free Republican Party.

Over the course of the early 1920s, the first priority of the Kemalist elite was to set its own house and ensure the establishment of order throughout the country. As time advanced, however, Kemalists restricted their agenda to a new set of issues. In this respect, the reorganization of the social sphere became the first and foremost item on their agenda. After having liquidated the various centers of opposition, the government became engaged in a continuous struggle for control over all spheres of social life.<sup>12</sup> During this period, the groups that fell beyond the umbrella of the one-party system became matters of close concern for the Kemalist elite. Corporations, associations and political parties were either intimidated into silence by off-the-record directives or brought under the wings of the RPP.<sup>13</sup> Dissenting voices were forced underground. As the 1930s drew to a close, the one-party regime had already established a power monopoly on all spheres of social life.

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<sup>12</sup> The details of Law on the Maintenance of Order is widely available in Zürcher, *Unionist Factor*, pp. 142-68.

<sup>13</sup> The Turkish Freemasons' Lodges, Turkish Women's Union, and the Turkish Hearths are only three of the institutions that were closed down in the early 1930s. For a detailed account of Turkish masonry during this period, see Zafer Toprak, "Masonluk ve Tek Parti: Sütunların Yıkılması, Masonluk Uykuya Giriyor 1935," *Toplumsal Tarih* 6, no. 33 (September 1996), pp. 30-5.

### The Transformation of the Cultural Sphere

Every nation-state, at the moment of its creation, looks for historical roots on which to found its legitimacy. If it does not find them, it invents them.<sup>14</sup> This maxim holds for the Kemalist regime as well. Having consolidated their hold on all spheres of political and social life, from the early 1930s on, the Kemalist elites would shift their attention to cultural matters. Intent on creating a new form of social consciousness, they launched a set of cultural reforms, among which two of them call for further mention. It should be mentioned at the outset that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's personal efforts played a pivotal role in the organization of these reforms. He convened the first Turkish linguistic congress in 1932 for the purification of the Turkish language. To achieve this goal, the *Türk Dil Kurumu* (Society for the Study of the Turkish Language) was founded. The members of this society went a step further in 1935 by inventing the *Güneş Dil teorisi* (Sun-Language theory) in which they attempted to show that Turkish was the mother of all languages.<sup>15</sup>

The second reform was concerned with the creation of an imaginary Turkish history that relied exclusively on artifacts. To this end, the *Türk Tarih Kurumu* (Society for the Study of Turkish History) held its first congress in Ankara. The notorious "Turkish History Thesis" was propounded for the first time during this congress and received broad support from Mustafa Kemal. Taken together, these newly-adopted reforms are two testimonies to the growing need of the regime for a sense of pride and national myths.<sup>16</sup>

### An Uncomfortable Question and the Nature of the Turkish Regime

<sup>14</sup> For an elaboration of this point, see the masterful treatment in Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); see also Benedict Anderson, *Hayali Cemaatler*, trans. İskender Savaşır (Istanbul: Metis, 1993).

<sup>15</sup> On the matter of language, see Tuğrul Şavkay, *Dil Devrimi* (Istanbul: Gelenek, 2002); for an argument bordering on stupidity, see Cevat Abbas Gürer, "Güneş Dil Teorisine Göre Atlet ve Atletizm Kelimeleri Öz Türkçedir," *Top* (25 March 1936), p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> For a detailed assessment of the Turkish Historical Thesis and the first congress, see Büşra Ersanlı Behar, *Türk Tarih Tezi* (Istanbul: Afa, 1992), pp. 119-61.

Many scholars have called attention to the totalitarian tendencies of the RPP.<sup>17</sup> This perception largely stems from the dominant role of Recep Peker, an avowed nationalist and the party's long-serving secretary general, in the consolidation of the one-party system in Turkey. It has sometimes been asserted that Peker was interested in evolving the single-party regime to a fascist state devoured by the party. Indeed, at a time of vanishing certainties in the international milieu, Peker presented the remedy as a fascist single-party state. However, it seems unlikely that other party officials would have considered this a serious possibility. It is an open secret that Mustafa Kemal himself approached the offer with a great deal of skepticism and turned it down on the grounds that a fascist regime was contrary to the precepts of Kemalism.<sup>18</sup> It should also be mentioned that no trustworthy first-hand accounts exist as to the details of Recep Peker's offer. Rumors circulating in the newspapers regarding it could not be substantiated.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the evolution of the single-party regime into a fascist organization would have required a sophisticated degree of centralization. In any event, the level of coordination required for this task was beyond the capability of the RPP.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, it should be pointed out in all fairness that, for all their ruthlessness, the Kemalist elites were cautious figures who knew the limitations of their strength. For this reason Peker's attempts led to no substantial results since the RPP did not welcome the idea of turning the one-party system into a fascist party. Nevertheless, the state and the party overlapped with time in a manner that is reminiscent of the totalitarian regimes.

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<sup>17</sup> For an insightful study on this issue, see Taha Parla, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları: Kemalist Tek Parti İdeolojisi ve CHP'nin Altı Ok'u* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1992). It should be mentioned in passing that Parla is not alone in his assessment. See in this context, Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması (1923-1931)* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yay., Third Edition, 1999).

<sup>18</sup> For more on this, see Üstel, *Türk Ocakları*, pp. 285-321.

<sup>19</sup> To the best of the author's knowledge the most comprehensive treatment as to the details of Recep Peker's offer can be found in *ibid.*, pp. 209-12. Yet these scraps of information do not reveal much about how Peker planned to handle this new responsibility.

<sup>20</sup> For an elaborate argument conclusively demonstrating the shortcomings of the single-party regime in Turkey on the issue of centralization, see Ayhan Aktar, "Trakya Olaylarını 'Doğru' Yorumlamak," *Tarih ve Toplum*, no. 155 (November 1996), pp. 45-56.

As the years wore on, state and party were closely identified and evolved into a highly bureaucratized body. Therefore the congruency between the state apparatus and the party organization was declared official policy by İsmet İnönü at the congress of the party in 1936.<sup>21</sup> In 1937, the principles of the Republican People's Party were incorporated into the constitution. This event is an indication of the fact that the most significant feature of the politics of the Atatürk republic lay with the party, not with constitutional or parliamentary matters.<sup>22</sup> Seen in this light, it is fairly obvious that the state and party identification during the 1930s laid the foundations of a more authoritarian and uniform political environment. At a time when the emphasis on authoritarianism was so pronounced in many parts of the world, Kemalism's love affair with authoritarianism is not that hard to fathom. As for the charges of totalitarianism, however, one can barely level that criticism at the RPP. What is more, hardly any consensus exists among the scholars on this issue. The political reality is much more complicated than meets the eye and therefore the overall picture might often be misleading. In this context, Mete Tunçay, reputed to be the pre-eminent expert on the single-party period, frames the issue in a nutshell and makes the following observation:

Leaving aside the argument that Kemalism is superior to other ideologies, its nationalist character cannot be denied. On the other hand, as an ideology that is against both communism and liberalism, Kemalism bears alarming resemblance to fascism due to characteristics such as: the denial of class conflict, the single-party system, and personal leadership. Yet a discussion of fascism is unlikely to be fruitful, for the term "fascism" suffers from the absence of a clear definition and has negative and emotional connotations. It should, however, be mentioned in passing that there is no single element inherent in fascism; there is a combination of miscellaneous factors in it. While comparative case studies drawn from different countries may provide us with interesting conclusions during the inter-bellum era, it seems safer to state that there is hardly any trace of fascism in the case of Turkey during the single-party period.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> For more on this, see Hakkı Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Istanbul: Boyut, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> Clement H. Dodd, *Politics and Government in Turkey* (Manchester: Manchester: University Press, 1969), p. 42.

<sup>23</sup> *Kemalizmin başka akımlardan üstün olup olmadığı bir yana, çok milliyetçi bir nitelik taşıdığı doğru bir tanımlamadır. Aynı zamanda hem komünizme hem Liberalizme karşı koyuşu, sınıflarüstü olma savı, tek-parti örgütü, önderlik ilkesi gibi öteki özellikleriyle birlikte, bu nitelik, Kemalizm bir faşizm midir sorusunu akla getirmektedir. Fakat faşizm düşünsel içeriği bakımından olsun bilimsel bir tanıma kavuşturulamamış, (olumsuz) duygu yüklü bir terim halinde bulunduğundan, böyle bir tartışma, bize olanaklı ya da faydalı görünmüyor. Yalnızca kısaca belirteyim ki, faşizmi oluşturan hiçbir tek öge yoktur; bu bu modelde çeşitli öğelerin belirli ağırlıklardaki bir bileşimi söz konusudur. İki Dünya Savaşı arasında yaşanan pek çok başka deney gibi Türkiye*

Despite these considerations, however, it should also be mentioned that one that there was a visible shift toward more authoritarianism in the 1930s. To cite an example, during the 1920s Italian youth organizations were openly criticized, whereas in the 1930s the same organizations were welcomed with great enthusiasm.<sup>24</sup> However, one should bear in mind that this change of heart owed a great deal to the evolving political climate of Europe. In this regard, one should handle any data regarding the single-party period with a grain of salt. At this point it is essential to review the general contours of the Turkish case in the context of the official ideology (i.e. Kemalism) which would help to place the one-party regime in its true light among different cases.

### The General Contours of Kemalism As a Political Ideology

As Nazım İrem eloquently puts it, the term “Kemalism” is used to refer to a new political stand that interpreted the revolutionary practices that had taken place between 1923 and 1935 within the framework of the tradition of ideological positivism.<sup>25</sup> Considered from that perspective, it is an amalgam of the ideas associated with laicism, nationalism, solidarist positivism, political theory, and nineteenth-century scientism.<sup>26</sup> As is well known, the six basic principles of this official ideology were laid down in the party program of 1931. Under the Kemalist regime, national identity rested on these six points: republicanism, secularism, populism, nationalism, revolutionism, and etatism, which also formed the fundamental

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*için de, tek tek öğelerle yapılacak karşılaştırmalar ilginç sonuçlar verebilir olmakla birlikte, faşizmi tanımlayan özgül bileşimin tek-parti Türkiyesinde bulunma olasılığı olmadığı söylenebilir. Tunçay, Tek-Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması, p. 338. Emphasis in original. A great deal has been written about the one-party system in Turkey. In many respects, however, Mete Tunçay's remains the most comprehensive treatment since its first edition in 1981.*

<sup>24</sup> Üstel, *Türk Ocakları*, p. 212.

<sup>25</sup> Nazım İrem, “Turkish Conservative Modernism: Birth of a Nationalist Quest for Cultural Renewal”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 1 (February 2002), p. 87.

<sup>26</sup> Ali Kazancıgil, “The Ottoman Turkish State and Kemalism”, in *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern Turkey*, eds. Ali Kazancıgil and Ergun Özbudun (London: C. Hurst, 1981), p. 37.

components of Kemalism. As is the case in all nation-states emerging from a multi-ethnic structure, the Turkish case, too, concentrated first and foremost on building a national identity in line with the six arrows symbolized in the party emblem.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the issue of nationalism received the lion's share of attention compared to the other five arrows. This was clearly visible during the 1930s when the regime resorted to extreme ideas of nationalism for the creation of historical myths.

For the sake of historical analysis, each political ideology should be considered in the context of its times. In this respect, there is plenty to say about the general contours of Kemalism. First of all, as the earlier analysis makes clear, each one-party system reflects the class structure of its society. As an ideology in the preserve of the elites, Kemalism relied exclusively on a narrow circle of people. They tried to foster centralization and spread the values of the revolution to the best of their limited ability. In doing this, they received the support of the newly-emerging economic classes. In other words, the seeds of a bureaucracy-bourgeoisie alliance were sown in this period.<sup>28</sup>

The second point in the treatment of Kemalism, as one of the veteran historians of modern Turkey aptly argues, is that, "Kemalism can best be described as a set of attitudes and opinions which were never defined in detail."<sup>29</sup> It was this adaptive flexibility that enabled wide sectors of the intelligentsia to adopt Kemalism. In this frame of mind, as Feroz Ahmad repeatedly stresses, it is a flexible ideology to be interpreted in the light of changing circumstances.<sup>30</sup> Thus it is not for nothing that it derived support from political ideologies of all stripes. As noted above, the popularity of Kemalism in intellectual circles reinforces this fundamental fact. Another noteworthy point with respect to Kemalism is its hesitant and

<sup>27</sup> The literature dealing with Kemalism, pro and con, is vast. For a detailed and critical discussion of these principles, see Etyen Mahçupyan, *Osmanlı'dan Postmoderniteye* (Istanbul: Patika, 2000), pp. 49-73.

<sup>28</sup> For a forceful presentation of this point, see Cemil Koçak, *Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938-1945)* (Ankara: Yurt Yayınevi, 1986), pp. 18-28.

<sup>29</sup> Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), pp. 189-90.

<sup>30</sup> Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 109. See also Parla, *Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları*, passim.



contradictory stance toward the West. It is noteworthy that in concurrence with its efforts to define a Western identity, Kemalism pursued a policy that emphasized a skeptical attitude toward the West.<sup>31</sup> Here it should be conceded that, over the course of the years, Kemalism accomplished what it set out to do and created an inherently westernized society that is deeply skeptical of the West.<sup>32</sup>

As we now see, the core concern of Kemalism was to consolidate the values of the regime by way of creating a new man through a process of indoctrination. When it comes to promoting the values of the regime it would therefore not be unfair to argue that infallible belief that guided the Kemalist establishment was the matter of education. In the process, not surprisingly, this goal was entrusted to teachers, whose loyalty to the values of the regime was beyond question. This deep-rooted reliance on education went all the way back to the Second Constitutional Period.<sup>33</sup> In this context, one should note the elements of continuity between the Kemalist and Unionist cadres in terms of education, since the general contours of Kemalist ideology call for some reference to its political and social predecessors. This is certainly an important debate that deserves to be addressed more seriously but is beyond the scope of this work. Suffice it to say here that the official Turkish historiography draws a line between these two political movements and deems them two distinct political entities. Yet this line of argument is open to question in two respects.

In the first place, the Unionists were the intellectual forerunners of the Kemalist cadres. Moreover, most of the Kemalists had come out of the CUP. In the second place, the general contours of Kemalism were very much reminiscent of the Unionist ideology, to such a degree that, as M. Şükrü Hanioglu points out so eloquently, “the Young Turks who lived long

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<sup>31</sup> The single-party period in Turkey has been the object of intense scholar scrutiny. For a comprehensive and highly perceptive analysis of Kemalist ideology, see *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Kemalizm*, Vol. 2, ed. Ahmet İnsel (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001).

<sup>32</sup> For more on the debate of Westernization, see Şerif Mardin, *Türkiye’de Toplum ve Siyaset*, passim.

<sup>33</sup> For a useful introduction to this debate see, for instance, Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908* (Leiden: E.J Brill, 2001). See also Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

enough to witness the coming into being of the Turkish republic saw many of their dreams fulfilled” as the new regime was “based on a popular materialist-positivist ideology and nationalism.”<sup>34</sup> They indeed saw eye to eye on many issues with respect to the nature of state and society, and pursued similar policies designed to shape the general contours of social life.

Yet a comparison between the Kemalist and Unionist cadres is not merely a matter of similarities. One difference that sets Kemalists apart from their forerunners was that, contrary to Unionists, they were well aware of the urgent need to justify their policies in the eyes of the people. One root of this situation had to do with the fact that the devastating collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the disastrous policies of the CUP were still fresh in the minds of many people. It is from within this logic that the Kemalists assigned importance to demarcating themselves so clearly from the Unionists and threw the history into the dustbin. As noted, this is not to say, however that the reforms launched during the formative years of the Republic occurred in a void, nor were they necessarily original. Most of the reforms realized in the Republican era had a solid footing back in the Second Constitutional period. They provided a basis for the establishment of many social reforms and enabled the Kemalists to achieve their core goals. Given the huge importance of the Second Constitutional period in the construction of social life, it seems reasonable to outline the general contours of this period.

### The Great Transformation: The Second Constitutional Period

The transformation of social life during the Second Constitutional period has been an issue of a wide-ranging historical discussion. Obviously a detailed discussion about this drastic transformation is beyond the scope of the paper, but it is important to underline the fact that the Second Constitutional period lay the foundations of a relatively developing

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<sup>34</sup> A thorough and accurate understanding of the Unionist ideology can be found in M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 216.



political system based on participatory citizenship. Ottoman society entered a phase marked by a series of changes, which were reinforced by a number of developments in domestic politics that would continue until the end of the First World War. It is fairly obvious that the CUP played a pioneering role in the organization of social life, although it remained behind the scenes until 1913.

Yet the transformation of the social sphere was not trouble-free. At first, there was the problem of uniting a common cause around the different nationalities who had been touched by the appeal of seceding from the empire since the late nineteenth-century. Promoting political consciousness through the use of effective propaganda, the Unionists sought to unite different segments of society under a broadly defined Ottoman identity in which the several nationalisms were to be replaced by a common patriotism. To accomplish this goal, the Unionists launched an all-embracing social program and blended different ideologies. A revealing sample of their propaganda comes from a quote in M. Şükrü Hanioglu's book:

What is a nation? A nation is a people many of whom speak the same tongue, who have the same morals, and who are the subject to the laws of a government. For example, Turks and Arabs are nations, because each of them has a language, blood [ties], customs, and history. What does the Ottoman nation mean? The Ottoman nation is a body created by the incorporation of various peoples such as Turks, Arabs, Albanians, Kurds, Armenians, Greeks, Bulgarians, and Jews... who possess different religions and nationalities ... Although these people have different languages of their own their official language is the same. It is the Ottoman language.<sup>35</sup>

As quoted above, in the view of the Unionists, what was needed was a competent political and social opening, which went hand in hand with a social bond that could bring a new society into existence with respect for the Ottoman political system. Considered from that perspective, it is not merely coincidence that the term "new life" seized the popular imagination throughout this period. In the years that followed the revolution of 1908, the masses largely became acquainted with politics and assumed the skills required to internalize

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted in M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 301.

these values. To accomplish this goal, the Unionists embarked upon an extensive number of reforms in all spheres of life.<sup>36</sup> Foremost among these new reforms was the rise of a new attitude, especially in the organization of social life. In their view, it was only by so doing that they would succeed in putting the interests of the empire before those of any nation, group or class.

In this frame of mind, the Second Constitutional period gave currency to a new concept. A new phrase entered the language to indicate the social bond required: *ictimai terbiye* (political socialization) played a decisive role in shaping the general contours of the period. Within this framework, it would not be unfair to argue that the notion of *terbiye* became the cornerstone of Young Turks' *Weltanschauung*. During the early years of the Constitutional Period, this concept took the center-stage in discourses in many spheres of social life. This honeymoon did not last long, however, when the relatively tolerant social climate of the post-Hamidian era evaporated, especially after the defeat in the Balkan Wars and the Unionist seizure of power. It was in this new context that *ictimai terbiye* evolved into a catch phrase that masked the creation of a more authoritarian political environment.

### Leisure Time Activities

Up to this point, the general contours of the relationship between modernization and the Turkish way of political socialization have been discussed. As we have seen, the road to social transformation was littered with obstacles. Yet similar observations apply to other parts of the world as well. Thus, the task now is to chart the outlines of a more global trend that rose to prominence in the interwar years, that is to say, the organization of leisure time

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<sup>36</sup> Similar observations apply to the concept of "new family." For a detailed account of these changes, see Zafer Toprak, "The Family, Feminism and the State During the Young Turk Period, 1908-1918," in *Premiere Rencontre Internationale sur l'Empire Ottoman et la Turquie Moderne* (Istanbul-Paris: Editions ISIS, 1991) pp. 441-52. It is in this context that Ziya Gökalp's emphasis on new life has to be seen.

activities. The notion of leisure time apparently dates back to ancient times. However, the systematization and rationalization of this concept under the control of the state is relatively a new phenomenon. The remarkable shift in the treatment of leisure time activities has much to do with the achievements of nineteenth-century liberalism. Technological innovations and industrial developments were accompanied by a new and comprehensive range of social and welfare policies, aimed both at tying workers to the firm and at creating a work and new working-class family, suited to the new rationalized work.<sup>37</sup> This was so much so that over time the interpretation of leisure time activities became an integral duty of predominant economic classes so as to gain the workers fundamental attributes of being citizens.<sup>38</sup>

As the previous analysis suggests, the question of leisure time activities has much to do with the visible change in the organization of economic classes. Yet this transformation was not trouble-free. The onset of the First World War brought with it a new series of problems. In the years after the Great War, the economic troubles intensified as the values and institutions of liberal democracy disappeared, whereas fascism and its satellite authoritarian movements and regimes advanced.<sup>39</sup> Out of fear that they could not weather the present storm, the politicians and industrialists perceived the need to alleviate the concerns of the working classes and encourage them to overcome the economic impasse. In view of the economic and political turbulence, both groups had good reason to be apprehensive. Amidst all these concerns, sports and other leisure time activities grabbed all the attention among working classes, owing largely to the low level of employment. To put it in the words of a respected commentator of American sports, “a great deal of attention and interest are being given to the promotion of physical education and sports all over the world. The acute

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<sup>37</sup> Mary Nolan, “Women, Gender and Everyday Life: Reflections on Continuity, Normality and Agency in Twentieth-Century Germany,” in Moshe Lewin and Ian Kershaw (eds.) *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 321.

<sup>38</sup> See, in this context, Grant Jarvie and Joseph Maguire, *Sport and Leisure in Social Thought* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 86-104.

<sup>39</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes* (London: Abacus, 1994) p. 7. Hobsbawm’s account provides excellent clues for pondering this period.

economic difficulties in many parts of the world and the emphasis on the need for hard work and greater production seem to make it even more important that encouragement be given to all workers to gain fitness and refreshment in their leisure hours through physical education.”<sup>40</sup>

In a time of vanishing certainties, more and more countries gravitated towards this new trend. Here, as elsewhere, the Turkish regime sought to render leisure time activities a faithful expression of the state ideology. At this point, it would be useful to trace the roots of Turkish national leisure habits back to the Ottoman period.

Like many of its contemporaries, the Ottoman Empire, too, went through a major readjustment in national leisure habits. In the age of nationalism, the use of leisure time evolved into a growing national preoccupation.<sup>41</sup> It was of prime importance to control the habits of a nation. Here too, as in other matters, European patterns were followed. The extent of the state involvement in the organization of leisure time activities underwent profound changes over the years. The field of physical education is a noteworthy case in point. In a turbulent period marked by great economic changes, the impetus given to sports in school programs was coupled with attention given to sports in the use of leisure time during the depression years of 1930s.<sup>42</sup>

In the case of the Ottoman Empire, prominent pedagogues and thinkers such as Rıza Tevfik, İsmayıl Hakkı [Baltacıoğlu], and Selim Sırrı took a close interest in the matter at the dawn of the new century.<sup>43</sup> As might be expected, the issue of physical education received the lion’s share of attention in the organization of leisure time studies.

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<sup>40</sup> Frederick W. Cozens and Florence Scovi, *Sports in American Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> For a composite picture on the organization of leisure time activities during this period, see Eric Larrabee, “What’s Happening to Hobbies”, in Eric Larrabee and Wolf Meyerson eds., *Mass Leisure* (Illinois: Free Press, 1953), p. 273.

<sup>42</sup> Cozens and Scovi, *Sports in American Life*, p. 86.

<sup>43</sup> For a detailed treatment of their impact on Ottoman society, see Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye’de Çağdaşlaşma* (Istanbul: Doğu-Batı Yayınları, 1978), pp. 444-52.

Considering the overwhelming influence of the Unionists on the Kemalist cadres, it takes no great imagination to guess that the Kemalist elite applied the Unionist approach of political socialization in their social project. Along with İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıođlu, Gökbalp undoubtedly provided the most comprehensive treatment of *ictimai terbiye* of any scholar of his time. It did not take the Unionists too long to realize and adopt the views of Ziya Gökbalp. Gökbalp's views and his model of society earned respect and acclaim in both Unionist and Kemalist circles. Within this framework, I firmly believe that the issue of political socialization can be located in its proper context by reference to the views advanced in Gökbalp's work. A detailed analysis, therefore, of the Gökbalp's notion of political socialization provides a window into the thinking of the Kemalist elite. Moreover, this may be a fruitful point of departure for our discussion of Turkish sport activities.

### The Notion of *Terbiye*

As the analysis of the preceding pages indicates, political socialization served as the principal notion on which the Unionist and Kemalist cadres based their entire social project and political mission. After the CUP's coming to power in 1913, this tendency became much more manifest. Thus, when dealing with the question of political socialization, one is compelled to view it as inherent to the very ideological framework of both the Unionist and Kemalist ideologies. Seen in this light, the notion of political socialization also provides valuable clues regarding the political elite's vision of itself and its role in the society. Before proceeding further, in the interest of accuracy, it is essential to give a brief definition of the concept of political socialization. Koon describes it as follows:

Political socialization is the process through which the young acquire attitudes, values, and beliefs about their political system or the way they absorb a certain political orientation from their environment. The study of political socialization is the study of cultural transmission in a given society. The goal of political socialization is to

channel the behavior of the young into politically and socially acceptable forms, to make them into functioning members of the society in which they live.<sup>44</sup>

As this definition clearly demonstrates, the attention of the state-sponsored propaganda with respect to political socialization revolves around the youth. In doing this, education is to be the main theme of the political socialization process. Yet the political socialization of youth is not painless, as it is a segment of the population highly skeptical to the attitudes of the political elite.<sup>45</sup> Put in this way, it is quite reasonable that the social conditioning of youth is a principal source of concern and a daunting challenge for all political regimes. As seen in the case of the Second Constitutional Period, the Unionists, in line with their *Weltanschauung*, embarked upon an extensive program for the transformation of society. At a time when a new political vocabulary of social behavior was in the making, it should come as no surprise that the Turkish Hearths (*Türk Ocakları*), the hotbeds of the Unionist ideology, devoted considerable effort to the organization of speeches on how to convey the general contours of political socialization to future generations.<sup>46</sup>

This was all the more so in the case of Kemalism. With the enormous change in the political system of Turkey, changing the habits of the nation assumed further significance. More to the point, the fragility of the new political regime rendered this shift all the more agonizing for the Kemalist elite. The political reforms were not strong enough to stand independently. From that point on, it would be all the more incumbent on the regime to shape the general contours of social life. Rooted in a worldview according to which the values of enlightenment were considered to be of prime importance, it was not for nothing that the phrase *terakki* (progress) became a watchword in every field. In the process, the replacement of the old order by new social and political institutions were to be consolidated with new

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<sup>44</sup> Tracy H. Koon, *Believe, Obey and Fight: Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy, 1922-1943* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p.3.

<sup>45</sup> For more on this in the case of fascist regimes, see Gino Germani, "Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Regimes: Italy and Spain", in Huntington and Moore eds. *Authoritarian Politics*, pp. 339-379.

<sup>46</sup> Üstel, *Türk Ocakları*, p. 390.



social patterns appropriate for a homogeneous rather than a bifurcated society. Seen in this light, the importance of political socialization becomes much clearer. The Unionists, following this line of reasoning, brought about a dramatic change in many spheres of social life during the Second Constitutional Period. They transmitted the message of political socialization through compulsory associations or agencies such as the family, educational institutions, physical and military training and the like.<sup>47</sup>

As will be demonstrated through examples in the coming pages, this mentality continued to flourish in the same vein during the formative years of the Republic and the issue of political socialization continued to be a salient topic of discussion for Turkish intellectuals. Commentaries from the formative years of the Republic reveal the great intensity with which the opinion-makers approached this issue. It is noteworthy that a large part of these commentaries were written by the established opinion makers of Kemalist Turkey. More interestingly, the concept of political socialization occupied the attention of the Kemalist elite to such an extent that even the question of nourishment evolved into an issue of contention.<sup>48</sup> When dealing with political socialization, the opinion-makers mostly stressed the same themes and raise similar issues as if they had been coordinated in advance. The denominator that linked them together was their profound belief in the values of the regime. Not surprisingly, they repeatedly emphasized the importance of education, which was undoubtedly to be in line with the fundamental tenets of the Republic. In other words, it was a process through which the six arrows of the regime were cherished. The reverberations of this effort are particularly evident in the context of ties between nationalism and sports activities. Ali Rıza Seyfi's account, for instance, provides a significant example of this line of thinking:

<sup>47</sup> Toprak, "The Family, Feminism and the State", pp. 441-52.

<sup>48</sup> Seen in this light even a preliminary look at the titles of following articles will reveal the importance attached to the notion of *terbiye*. E. Talu, "Sinema Terbiyesi", *Son Posta*, 15 November 1937; A. Muhtar, "Musiki Terbiyesi", *Terbiye* 4, no. 19, (October 1929), pp. 49-56; Halil Fikret, "Tasarruf Terbiyesi", *Terbiye* 5 no. 25, (May 1930), pp. 44-51; Benal İtar, "Çocuk Terbiyesi", *Ulus*, 24 April 1935; Fethi Tahsin Başaran, "Spor Terbiyesi", *Son Posta*, 12 October 1936; Fazıl Ahmet, "Bedîî Terbiye", *Ülkü* 1 (March 1933), pp. 128-9.

“What could be more confidence boosting to national pride and national youth than a Turkish boy who puts an Englishman in his place by proudly contending that it was Turks who started the cherished game of football two to three millennia ago on the wide plains of Turkistan and in the squares of endless Chinese palaces with an iron resolve?”<sup>49</sup>

Another theme frequently echoed in the press relates to how to handle the “national burden” of sports activities. In an eye-catching sample, Rahmi Apak, an astute observer of Turkish sports activities, put it this way: “What is the national weight of sport activities? This is not solely to suggest the revival of old sports inherited from our fathers who have portrayed Turks as strong. But Turkish sport also consists of transforming the Turkish individual and Turkish citizen into swift, courageous, brave, vivacious, tolerant, and obedient in wars against the enemies during wartime.”<sup>50</sup>

Both accounts are testimony to the amount of attention devoted to reconciling the national character of the regime with the issue of political socialization. The huge dose of nationalism in the discourses on physical education is evident in the vast number of articles that appeared on the history of Turkish sport activities. Some commentators went so far as to trace the roots of Turkish sport activities back to Central Asia. Thus a large segment of them portrayed the physical attributes of the youth according to Turkish myths from ancient times.<sup>51</sup>

Over the years, the national discourse became a part of sport activities. Considering the amount of ink that has been spilled on this issue, it is therefore all the more imperative to shift attention to the commentaries of Turkish opinion-makers. As might be expected, it was

<sup>49</sup> Ali Rıza Seyfi, “Tarihte Türkler ve Spor”, *Ülkü*, Vol. 6, (July 1933), p. 476. For a thorough and clear understanding of the relationship between sport activities and six arrows, see Gül İnanç, “Bir Memleket Davası: Beden Terbiyesi”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol. 3, no. 14 (February 1995), pp. 59-63.

<sup>50</sup> Rahmi Apak, “Türk Sporunun Yeni Hükümleri”, *Ülkü*, no. 35, (January 1936), p. 346.

<sup>51</sup> See, for instance, Halim Baki Kunter, *Eski Türk Sporları Üzerine Araştırmalar* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası, 1938). See also W. Eberhard, “Çin Kaynaklarına Göre Türkler ve Komşularında Spor”, trans. N.H. Uluğtuğ, *Ülkü*, no. 87 (May 1940), 209-15; M. Sami Karayel, “Eski Türklerde spor ve spor meydanları”, *Açık Söz*, 9 January 1937; M. Turhan Tan, “Türkün asil bir sporu olan okçuluğun tarihi”, *Cumhuriyet*, 15 March 1937; Talat Onay Çankırlı, “Türklerde Boks”, *Ülkü* 4, no. 24 (February 1935), pp. 447-8.



the educators of the Second Constitutional Period, such as İsmayıl Hakkı [Baltacıoğlu], Selim Sırrı [Tarcan], and Edhem Nejad, who took the lead in this attempt. The vast body of their commentaries handles the Turkish way of political socialization in a dutiful manner. A pamphlet written by İsmayıl Hakkı [Baltacıoğlu] in 1942 is worth looking at in some detail at this point. Here, as elsewhere in his books, Baltacıoğlu emphasizes the significance of pedagogy. Notions such as childhood, the new man, and the idea of progress feature regularly in his writings. As for the importance of pedagogy, he gives a vivid description of how nationalism should interact with education. To him, “an additional duty of the school is to pass the religious, moral, customary, and philosophical values on to the child that lies at the heart of society, that is to say, to give him the conscience of the nation.”<sup>52</sup> The education of children lies at the center of his attention. At the time, when the modernization paradigm and the idea of progress had reached their zenith, this should come as no surprise. From this viewpoint, childhood is a period of time that societies should overcome in both social and personal terms.<sup>53</sup> For that vision to be achieved, a dutiful engagement in pedagogy was required. This would sooner or later surmount all the obstacles in the way of peoples and societies.

Needless to say, these views did not occur in a void. It drew strength from the advance of similar trends elsewhere in Europe. Interestingly, the translation and publication of a significant number of foreign books devoted to this issue accurately reflects the importance attached to this subject in Turkey. A preliminary look at the translations from the European languages demonstrates that the same mentality reigned there as well.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> For a longer discussion of Baltacıoğlu’s views on education, see İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, *Hayatım* (Istanbul: Dünya Yay., 1998).

<sup>53</sup> For a very useful exploration of Baltacıoğlu’s views on childhood, see Duygu Köksal, “İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, İnkılap ve Terbiye: Ulusun ‘Çocukluğu’”, *Toplumsal Tarih* 7, no. 40 (April 1997), pp. 7-12. See also Oya Dağlar, “İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu ve Türk Milli Eğitime Katkıları”, *Bilgi ve Bellek* 1, no 1 (Winter 2004), pp. 119-32.

<sup>54</sup> Particularly interesting in this regard is the following work by a Frenchman called Albert Malche, *Yeni Terbiyenin Prensipleri*, trans. Sabri Esat Siyavuşgil (Istanbul: Eminönü Halkevi Neşriyatı, 1939).

Yet despite the striking resemblance in their mode of thinking, not everybody necessarily offered the same routes to achieve this goal. An interesting definition of political socialization laden with nationalist overtones comes from Nihal Atsız: “A historical life of thousands of years gives nations a discipline (*terbiye*) that cannot be acquired, in a few years, or even a few centuries... Take a Turkish child and a Jewish child, born on the very same day and teach solely Esperanto to them both... It is evident that the Turkish child again will be courageous and the Jew a coward. The Turkish child will again grow up, be raised honest, whereas the Jew again will grow up dishonest.”<sup>55</sup>

Although Atsız’s offensive views on race were exceptional even in his time, these were not empty words. They gave us a foretaste of what lay ahead.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, he added a fascist touch of cruelty to his definition.

As these and countless other commentaries show, the established opinion-makers portrayed the notions of political socialization and education in an obliging and positive manner. Moreover, the militaristic spirit of the time provided a prolific milieu compelling them to rethink notions of physical strength and the nation.<sup>57</sup> On the whole, physical fitness, race and nation have never been easy to define independently of one another. In the final analysis, therefore, the overwhelming emphasis on education served as a justification often used by Kemalist elite to sell an authoritarian and militaristic rationale to the masses.

On a topic of critical importance such as political socialization, it is essential to analyze the intellectual setting in which these ideas came into being. To this end, what

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<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Güven Bakrezer, “Nihal Atsız’ın Düşüncesi”, *Toplumsal Tarih* 5, no. 29 (May 1996), p. 25.

<sup>56</sup> It should be pointed out that, unlike the popular belief, the Kemalist elite adopted a reserved approach toward the Turanist views of Turkish nationalism. The reasons for this are beyond the scope of the present work. It should, however, also be mentioned in passing that there are excessive similarities between official Turkish nationalism and Turanism in the context of political socialization. For a detailed assessment of Turanism during the single-party period, see Günay Göksu Özdoğan, *Turan’dan Bozkurt’a Tek Parti Döneminde Türkçülük*, trans. İsmail Kaplan (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001).

<sup>57</sup> Andrew Morris, ““To Make the Four Hundred Million Move”: The Late Qing Dynasty Origins of Modern Chinese Sport and Physical Culture,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 4 (October 2000), p. 878.

follows seeks to compare and contrast the views of Ziya Gökalp and İsmayıl Hakkı [Baltacıoğlu], who contributed immensely to the making of Turkish political socialization.

### The Conception of Political Socialization in the Republican Period:

#### The Social and Political Thoughts of Ziya Gökalp

Ziya Gökalp, one of the intellectual founders of Turkish nationalism, was among those who sensed the inevitable collapse of Ottoman society. The foreseeable dissolution of the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the nineteenth century provided a suitable atmosphere for the reception of his views. In the eyes of the CUP, Gökalp was of fundamental importance for the theorization of their ideas and harnessing them for specific political goals. Just like their predecessors, the views of Gökalp did not escape the notice of the Kemalist elite. After a decade marked by full-scale war and a national struggle for independence, these concepts moved quickly to center stage once again for the re-establishment of the ruined bond between state and society. Of course, Gökalp's views were not necessarily original, yet the social and political climate of Turkey at the time gave currency to them.<sup>58</sup>

The core concern of this part is to examine the main premises that Gökalp advanced about the notion of political socialization. Although he wrote extensively on a wide variety of topics, the issue of political socialization is recognized as a major concern in Gökalp's work. Thus Gökalp's definition of political socialization may be a good point for such a debate. Before jumping to conclusions it is important to note that Gökalp did not develop his theories in a coherent intellectual framework. He never made a precise definition of political socialization in his work, but rather considered it a set of principles agreed upon. As is well known, in an uncertain way, he rested most of his ideas on the eminent distinction between

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<sup>58</sup> Gökalp's views bear the deep stamp of French sociologists such as Emile Durkheim, Gustave Le Bon, Tönnies and the like. For more on this, see Taha Parla, *Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye'de Korporatizm*, brought to print by Füsün Üstel and Sabir Yücesoy (Istanbul: İletişim, 1989), pp. 44-53.

culture (*hars*) and civilization (*medeniyet*). One root of this situation, as Niyazi Berkes argues, is that his most active period of writing corresponded to the most unstable and critical periods of Turkish history, unfavorable to continuous, careful, and detailed book writing.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, there are three elements that stand out in Gökalp's assessment of political socialization.

Not surprisingly, first of all, it is a concept by which he primarily emphasizes national education. In an article published in 1922, Gökalp underscores the importance of education. His oft-cited article states that, "nation is not a racial, ethnic, geographical, political, or voluntary group or association. Nation is a group composed of men and women who have gone through the same education, who have received the same acquisitions in language, religion, morality, and aesthetics ...It is only shared education and ideals which are most essential to nationality."<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, in Gökalp's view, to accomplish the goal of political socialization in an all-embracing manner, the education of the individual should lean on social foundations that go beyond school, family and the like.<sup>61</sup> Gökalp maintained that an individual could succeed in doing so only if he relied heavily on his own culture and considered himself as an integral part of the nation. As noted, he saw this as a necessary prerequisite for national education. In line with this thinking, Gökalp held to the organic view of society that was a crucial attribute of his sociological framework. As an insightful article has recently shown, "the sole pillar of solidarity and unity is culture that can only be strengthened through political socialization."<sup>62</sup> As a person whose faith in sociology is beyond doubt,<sup>63</sup> Gökalp

<sup>59</sup> Ziya Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization (Selected Essays)*, trans. and ed. Niyazi Berkes (London: Ruskin House, 1959), p. 15. All Gökalp quotations in the present work are drawn from the translation made by Niyazi Berkes.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>61</sup> Hikmet Yıldırım Celkan, *Ziya Gökalp'in Eğitim Sosyolojisi* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1990), p. 50.

<sup>62</sup> Tanıl Bora and Seçil Deren, "Milli Eğitim Üzerine Muhafazakar Görüşler", in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Muhafazakârlık*, vol. 5, ed. Ahmet Çiğdem (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003), pp. 224-29.

<sup>63</sup> For a very recent and interesting account, see Murat Belge, "Hars ve Medeniyet", *Popüler Kültür*, 5 March 2004.

pushed his ideas to their logical conclusion and argued that “it is only when we discover culture, by the scientific methods of sociology, that we shall be in a position to enter a period of national education.”<sup>64</sup>

Another noteworthy case in point with respect to the realization of political socialization is the knotty relationship between the interests of the community and the individual. The prevailing view of what should come first is that the community should always prevail. This is where the third point, which grows out of the second, enters the picture. Gökalp defended the primacy of the values of culture over that of civilization without hesitation. In this frame of mind, in a polemical piece in *Muallim*, Gökalp severely attacked İsmayıl Hakkı [Baltacıoğlu] for his exceptional views in the conduct of education. His analysis had the merit of questioning the validity of psychology as a chief guide in education:

Until now our chief guide in education has been psychology. Psychology, however, is a mixed discipline because it studies organic-psychic phenomena, on the one hand, and socio-psychic ones on the other, failing to make a distinction between the two. ... Psychology can treat only phenomena which pertain exclusively to the individual. Because of the fundamental difference between these two groups of phenomena, we have to distinguish between them. ... The manifestations of the culture in individual minds can be studied only by sociology.<sup>65</sup>

It should be noted here in passing that both Gökalp and Baltacıoğlu sincerely believed in the socialization of individuals, yet they took different paths to get to it.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, both intellectuals worked together for the preparation of an extensive program of political socialization under the auspices of the Turkish Hearths to reconcile Turkish nationalism and populism.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, it may be fruitful to compare the differing views of these two men. Postulating that there is a distinction between education (*terbiye*) and training (*öğretim*), Gökalp wrote: “We call the sum total of the value judgments that constitute the ethos of a people its culture. Education simply means inculcating this culture in the habitual attitudes of

<sup>64</sup> Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism*, pp. 238-9.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>66</sup> Bora and Deren, “Milli Eğitim Üzerine”, p. 226.

<sup>67</sup> Üstel, *Türk Ocakları*, p. 127 and p. 225.

the individual members of that people. We call the sum total of all reality judgments current among a people its techniques. Training as opposed to education, therefore, consists of instructing individuals in these particular techniques.”<sup>68</sup>

As the analysis above revealed, Gökalp departed from Baltacıoğlu in that his views persistently focused on binary oppositions such as culture as opposed to civilization, education as opposed to training, whereas Baltacıoğlu placed considerable emphasis on the unity of culture, civilization, language and art. To put it another way, Baltacıoğlu’s conception of political socialization placed more emphasis on the psychological and spiritual motives of human beings. Yet both Gökalp and Baltacıoğlu subscribed to the view that the major goal of education was to assume the accepted norms and values of society.

In comparison to Gökalp, Baltacıoğlu is scarcely known to the public beyond the Turkish literati. Since the early days of the Second Constitutional Period, he clung to the hope of creating a “new man” (*Yeni İnsan*).<sup>69</sup> In a world of Darwinian competition, İsmayıl Hakkı Bey’s “new man” looked at the world through a combination of personal impulses, spiritual motives and psychological drives. The reflection of his attitude is clearly visible in a 1934 piece: “Turkish society has undergone dramatic changes in all spheres of social life. It had displayed a strong willingness to take a new step. Now the Turks are in charge of creating a sound youth who are competent enough to shoulder important responsibilities in the years to come. What can be done to achieve this goal? This can be accomplished by eliminating old-fashioned ideas and methods that should to be replaced with newly adopted techniques and bringing up new people.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism*, p. 235.

<sup>69</sup> The idea of “new man” is not unique to the case of Turkey. There is a striking similarity here with the way in which China was perceived by the Europeans in late nineteenth-century. Portrayed and ridiculed as the “Sick Man of Asia” by the Europeans, the Chinese rulers did their utmost to overthrow the bitter legacy of the past. In similar vein, the Turkish political elite tried to replace the “Sick Man of Europe”, with that of this “New Man”. For a case study in non-Western trends, see Andrew Morris, “Origins of Modern Chinese Sport”, p. 890.

<sup>70</sup> İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, *Pedagojide İhtilal* (Istanbul, 1964), p. 5.



Contrary to Gökcalp's notion of political socialization that was predicated on obedience and dutifulness, Baltacıoğlu adopted a more flexible and pedagogic approach by focusing on definite features of Turkish society. In this regard, his driving motive was the principle of practicality. Moreover, he rejected the conception of a pre-determined notion of political socialization and left room for the impulses of the individual. In that sense, unlike Baltacıoğlu, Gökcalp took a different path and put it as follows: "What is the object of education? Is it the individual or the nation? For psychologists it is the individual, for sociologists the nation ...Sociologically, the living members of a society are those who take part in national collective experiences....Only then will the educational institutions produce thoroughly national members of the nation."<sup>71</sup>

Not surprisingly, the reception of Baltacıoğlu's ideas was asymmetrical in comparison to that of Gökcalp's. Therefore one can confidently postulate that Gökcalp's conception of political socialization had a much more powerful influence on the views of the Kemalist elite. This reception had much to do with their comprehensive view of society. To recapitulate, the concept of political socialization, as conceived and employed by Gökcalp, had three major objectives: the first was to locate the issue of political socialization in a wide web of relations that went beyond the institutions such as family, education, military by way of emphasizing cultural values over civilizational lines. His second contention was that the interests of the community should prevail over that of the individual. The third postulation, which stemmed from the second, was that the values of the culture should be considered prior to that of civilization.

The overwhelming intellectual legacy of Ziya Gökcalp to the Republican period is most powerfully exemplified in the case of Halil Fikret Kanad. A prominent member of the *Talim Terbiye Kurulu* (Instruction and Education Committee) at *Gazi Eğitim Enstitüsü* (Gazi

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<sup>71</sup> Gökcalp, *Turkish Nationalism*, pp. 241-2.

Education Institute) from the formative years of the Republic until the early 1960s, Kanad's views regarding political socialization were in complete harmony with those of Gökalp. In Kanad's view, "ordinarily, *terbiye* does not consider the children to be individuals but as social beings. Because human beings live and evolve within a society all through their lives."<sup>72</sup>

### *Terbiye as Part of Westernization*

One fundamental point that is not sufficiently raised in the context of Gökalp's conception of political socialization is the case of Westernization. This question is of paramount importance since the question of Westernization during the Republican period is regarded in part as antithetical to the previous period. This is so much so that, as a formative element that has never been absent from the agenda of Turkish politics since the end of the eighteenth century, modernization has come to be synonymous with Westernization. Stated somewhat differently, Westernization is a social transformation project that is in tune with the goal of modernization. This great goal of Turkey was conducted in the special preserve of the elites. In their efforts to construct society, the Kemalist elites developed a set of ideas that would guide and inspire society from above. In this regard, they considered political socialization as a modernizing (read Westernizing) force in many respects. In this frame of mind, Western type modern education and political socialization became integral parts of the ideological principle of etatism. To choose only one example, in a piece in which he contrasts a European and an Easterner, Ahmet Ağaoğlu succinctly outlined the general contours of the Turkish way of political socialization as follows: "A system of education and training should

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<sup>72</sup> Celkan, *Gökalp'in Eğitim Sosyolojisi*, p. 52.



be prepared in a manner inculcating the belief that even though every personal skill is encouraged, there is no room for personal comfort beyond the well-being of society.”<sup>73</sup>

### The Question of Physical Education

The ideological delineation of sports activities is relatively a new episode in the history of humanity. The transformation of its content and its context is primarily a twentieth century development. The human body lies at the center of a wide-ranging discussion today. In the twentieth-century, sports activities came to have a life independent of physical purposes. The human body was overwhelmingly loaded with ideological content and evolved into an issue of physical perfection. It is in this context that sports activities were considered as the glue that holds a society together. In a similar vein, the virility of the human body is interpreted as a physical manifestation of patriotism. The survival of the citizen and nation is possible only by keeping the human body physically, as well as morally and intellectually, strong.<sup>74</sup>

In the light of all the above-mentioned presumptions, therefore, it can be said that physical education is not solely identified with fitness. Not surprisingly, an analogous situation is true of the Turkish case. Most of the Turkish opinion-makers recognize physical education as the most necessary and vital force in the development of a person’s character.<sup>75</sup> To put it another way, physical education provides the citizens a new political identity in line with the imperatives of the times. It is therefore not difficult to understand why the Turkish treatment of physical education displays strong elements of authoritarianism. The following remark by Ziya Gökalp provides a clear-cut instance of this anxiety: “Physical education does

<sup>73</sup> Ahmet Ağaoğlu, “Terbiye Amaçlarından Birisi”, *Cumhuriyet*, 29 July 1935.

<sup>74</sup> Morris, “Origins of Modern Chinese Sport”, p. 881.

<sup>75</sup> Nüzhet Baba, “Bize En Uygun Sistem Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor”, *Ülkü*, vol. 15, no. 88 (February 1940), pp. 335-39.

not consist simply in developing kinetic activities, like those of baby animals which are produced by the natural growth of the organism, but is also a matter of the physical formation of the bodies of the members of a society in accordance with the ideals of that society.”<sup>76</sup>

As shall be seen in the second chapter of this study, the pattern in the treatment of physical education in Turkey can be located in its proper context only by focusing on the formation of the ties between political ideology and sports activities. It was precisely by behaving in this way that many authoritarian regimes in Europe appropriated the body as their own territory. It would be useful to develop this point further in the coming pages by adding some background of the case of Turkey.



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<sup>76</sup> Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism*, p. 239.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN EARLY MODERN TURKEY

After having discussed the social and political milieu in which the notion of political socialization came into being, the discussion moves to measure the attitude of the Turkish state regarding sport activities and physical education in the light of this concept. The first part of the chapter casts the problematic of the body in terms of historical context. The judicial dimension constitutes a primary focus for our attention in questions regarding its application of these measures. It also reveals the mentality of the legislature that framed these judicial procedures.

The views of Selim Sırrı Tarcan were instrumental in shaping the views of the Kemalist elite. For that reason they are worth probing in detail. The second part of the chapter concentrates on governmental political messages conveyed by the media concerning sport activities, with particular emphasis on judicial dimension. An analysis of social approaches to the body is a suitable starting point to this thorny issue.

#### Social Approaches to Body

There has been an ever-increasing mass of literature on the historical, sociological and conceptual features of the body in recent years.<sup>77</sup> In the present context, however, not all of

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<sup>77</sup> See, in this context, the following volume of essays brought to print by Sage Publications. *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory* (eds.) Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth, and Bryan S. Turner (London: Sage, 1991).

these features can be treated and the discussion will therefore be limited to historical interpretations. In this frame of mind, the most convincing argument of body politics is put forth by Bryan Turner. In making his case, Turner develops a typology in which the body is considered from the perspective of society. Turner's contention is that the classical Hobbesian problem order can be re-stated as the problem of the government of the body in our times.<sup>78</sup> It is clear that Turner understands the body as presenting a problem of control for the authorities. Put differently, the fate of bodies gained a pivotal position in maintaining the social order. Paraphrasing Karl Marx with a touch of irony, Turner arrives at the sober and inevitable conclusion that people construct and use their bodies, though they do not use them in conditions of their own choosing.<sup>79</sup>

Quite clearly, therefore, all political systems, regardless of their ideological context, develop a shared sense of authority over the physical conditioning of its citizens. For this to come about there must first be the subordination of the body in the service of the regime. This concern goes even deeper in the case of authoritarian and totalitarian political systems. Those regimes, as Arthur W. Frank eloquently points out, are obsessed with predictability and have little room for contingency.<sup>80</sup> This explains why the issue of physical education has been matter of such close concern for so many one-party regimes. Most of these one-party systems look for similar answers because of the analogous situations of their respective societies. This is not, however, to suggest that all one-party regimes exhibit the same features, despite the presence of revealing parallels between them. To see how the issue of physical education evolved into a political matter in the case of Turkey, we need to go back to history.

### Historical Background

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<sup>78</sup> Bryan S. Turner, *The Body and Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> Arthur W. Frank, "For a Sociology of the Body: An Analytical Review", in *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory* (eds.) Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth, and Bryan S. Turner (London: Sage, 1991), p. 47.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

It is not clear when sport activities became a matter of the state in modern times. In the case of Turkey, if a watershed in mentality could be determined, the roots of this shift may be traceable to the Second Constitutional period. Although the Second Constitutional Period is beyond the time frame of this work, at this point it would be useful to give some background information on the history and development of sport activities in that era. Limited scraps of information as to the thinking of the nineteenth century Ottoman elite with respect to sport activities are available. There is no reliable or accurate information about the history of sport activities in the Ottoman Empire. Yet compelling attempts to fill this void, especially for the Second Constitutional Period, have been made during the last few years.<sup>81</sup>

As noted earlier, the notable improvements which took place at the beginning of the twentieth century can be attributed to the impact of the liberal political climate of the 1908 revolution. The period in question brought the deep changes in the organization of social and political life to a brand new understanding of citizenship. Linked to this, new modes of existence came into being in line with the slow but constant secularization of the social sphere. The visible secularization of social life expanded the importance and the obligations of youth organizations a great deal.

Over time, physical exercise evolved into a public matter. At the dawn of the twentieth century, the militarized discourses on education systems emphasized the interrelatedness of moral, intellectual, and physical education and drew attention to the importance of physical preparedness and competition in a ruthless world.<sup>82</sup> In this climate, paramilitary organizations ascended to paramount importance for they were charged with injecting the values of the regime prior to the realization of the military service.<sup>83</sup> The Unionists were supportive of

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<sup>81</sup> In this regard, too, Zafer Toprak's informative and noteworthy articles should be given credit.

<sup>82</sup> Morris, "Origins of Modern Chinese Sport", p. 878.

<sup>83</sup> For more on the organizational structures of these, see Zafer Toprak, "II. Meşrutiyet'ten Mütareke Yıllarına: Türkiye'de İzçiliğin İlk Evresi", *Tombak*, no. 24 (February 1999), pp. 19-27.

building, training and arming these organizations as a non-political defense force, which they saw as urgent and essential for the preparation of youth. Seen in this light, it is not for nothing that these associations were brought under the control of the *Harbiye Nezareti* (Ministry of War). Among the many organizations established during the period in question by the Unionists, the *Türk Gücü Cemiyeti* (Turkish Strength Society) stands out.<sup>84</sup>

### The Boy Scout Movement

When looking at the sportive developments of the period under question, one should first and foremost note the increasing importance of the Boy Scout movement in the Ottoman Empire. As is well known, the major concern of this worldwide movement is to introduce the values of citizenship in the young through self-discipline and practical training. The first Boy Scout movement came into being in the United Kingdom in 1908. It did not take long for the Young Turks to establish this organization in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Boy Scout movement was instituted by the Robinson brothers in 1911.<sup>85</sup> It fulfilled a vital function for the political socialization of youth.<sup>86</sup> In this context outstanding political figures played a pivotal role in the organization of these associations. Not surprisingly, it was Selim Sırrı Bey [Tarcan] who took the lead in this social endeavor.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, pro-Unionist newspapers devoted considerable space to the activities of Turkish scouts.

Surprisingly and somewhat unexpectedly, the Ottoman Scout movement went through remarkable developments in the space of a few years. The Balkan Wars played an important role in the increase of the number of young people who joined the ranks of these

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<sup>84</sup> The major goal of this association was to improve physical education and sport activities. For more on this, see Zafer Toprak, "İttihat ve Terakki'nin Paramiliter Gençlik Örgütleri", *Boğaziçi Journal* 7, (1979), pp. 95-113.

<sup>85</sup> For a detailed assessment of Boy Scout Movement during this period, see Toprak, "İzciliğin İlk Evresi", pp. 19-27.

<sup>86</sup> For a detailed treatment of the Boy Scout Movement in the pre-Republican period, see Zafer Toprak, "Cumhuriyet Arifesi Türkiye'de İzcilik", *Tombak*, no. 25 (April 1999), pp. 71-81.

<sup>87</sup> Toprak, "Türkiye'de İzcilik", p. 74.



organizations. From time to time, the Unionists had to intervene in the affairs of these youth organizations, while the latter immediately assumed a political identity. In 1914, 262 scoutmasters were called to İstanbul for further education. In the meantime, however, the First World War broke out and the government announced mobilization. In 1915, the Unionists called upon the German officer Von Hoff Pasha to establish paramilitary youth organizations known as *Gürbüz Dernekleri* (the Ottoman Robust Associations) in place of the Boy Scout movement.<sup>88</sup> Another significant physical education institution was the Turkish Strength Society (*Türk Gücü Cemiyeti*), which flourished under the wings of the Turkish Hearths.<sup>89</sup> All young Ottoman citizens, regardless of their nation, race and creed, had to join the ranks of these organizations. Needless to say, this change of approach was imbued with security considerations rather than physical training. This policy was implemented throughout the years of the First World War.

As far as sport clubs are concerned, there were efforts to collect them under an organizational umbrella so as to resolve intra-club disputes and adjust match schedules. In this regard, the Istanbul Football Association (*İstanbul Futbol Birliği*, 1903-1910), the League of Football Clubs of Istanbul (*İstanbul Futbol Klüpleri Ligi*, 1910-1914), the Friday League (*Cuma Ligi*, 1913-1915), the Friday Association (*Cuma Birliği*, 1915-1919), and the Sunday League (*Pazar Ligi*, 1920-1922) were all attempts to collect the sport clubs under the same organizational umbrella.<sup>90</sup>

Meanwhile, one should also note the presence and activities of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) during the Second Constitutional period. The missionary occurrence in the field of sport activities comes up by way of this association at the turn of the

<sup>88</sup> Toprak, "İzciliğin İlk Evresi", pp. 22-5. It should be noted in passing that the input of Selim Sırrı is not inconsiderable in these associations.

<sup>89</sup> The Turkish Strength Society continued to function effectively during the Republican period until they were replaced by the People's Houses. For the organizational structure of these institutions, see Üstel, *Türk Ocakları*, pp. 64-7.

<sup>90</sup> Yiğit Akın, "Not Just a Game: Sport and Physical Education in Early Republican Turkey (1923-1951)" (Master's Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2003), p. 40.

century. The model and ideals embodied by the YMCA, namely, the “three-self” formulation of the complete individual healthy in body, mind, and spirit, were understood to be applicable to the men of any culture, insofar as those men could shake off the corporeal shackles of premodernity and begin understanding and disciplining the condition and motions of their own bodies.<sup>91</sup> Previously the YMCA in Ottoman Empire functioned under the umbrella of the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. As early as 1913, the YMCA was officially recognized as an organization by a state decree in İstanbul. This association published journals and bulletins in English. Although the efforts of the YMCA came out in the form of missionary activities, it contributed to the secularization of society by way of physical education. Moreover, more than any other association, it took the lead in the attempt to extend the influence of physical education throughout the empire.<sup>92</sup>

The years of the national struggle for independence prepared a suitable atmosphere for the development of mass audience sports such as football, boxing, and tennis. This period also saw a heightened interest in the extension of mass sport activities.<sup>93</sup> In the meantime, non-Muslim scouts in the empire demonstrated their skills in the form of small troops in the streets and understandably were not welcomed with enthusiasm.<sup>94</sup> When the capital of the empire was under occupation, a small scale Olympic competition was held at Taksim Stadium in 1922, preceding the Olympic Games to be held in Paris in 1924. The UTSC shouldered the responsibility of this hard task. This event paved the way for the promotion of İstanbul to the forefront of international concern. 1,447 sportsmen participated in this event for which the

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<sup>91</sup> The activities and guiding principles of the YMCA in non-Western societies are well-captured in a perceptive essay by Morris, “Origins of Modern Chinese Sport”, p. 891.

<sup>92</sup> For a detailed exploration of YMCA’s activities in the Ottoman Empire, see Zafer Toprak, “YMCA Jimnastikhaneleri”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 1 (January 1994), p. 12. Of course not everyone was happy with the activities of YMCA. See, in this context, Cüneyd Okay, “Sebilürreşad Mecmuasında YMCA”, *Toplumsal Tarih* (November 1997), pp. 20-4. See also Gül İnanç, “İstanbul YMCA’nın Kapatılış Öyküsü”, *Toplumsal Tarih* (November 1997), pp. 25-8.

<sup>93</sup> Zafer Toprak, “Türkiye’de Sporun Tarihi- Spor Alemi Dergisi ve Türkiye’de İdman”, *Tombak*, no. 20 (June 1998), p. 5.

<sup>94</sup> For a detailed account of non-Muslim Boy Scout organizations during this period, Toprak, “İzciliğin İlk evresi”, pp. 19-27.

barracks in Taksim were transferred into a stadium.<sup>95</sup> The press followed this important social change either. From April 1923 on, *Spor Alemi*, the foremost sports journal in its time, came out with an insert titled *Keşşaf* (Scoutmaster).<sup>96</sup> Meanwhile, the sport clubs in İstanbul established contact with their European counterparts for joint activities under the aegis of the UTSC. These efforts, accompanied by joining in 1924 Olympic Games, constituted significant, if still insufficient, achievements toward the institutionalization of sports activities.<sup>97</sup>

### From Empire to Nation: Kemalist Attitudes *vis-à-vis* Sport Activities

As the earlier analysis makes clear, despite the evident revivalism in the field of physical education in the few years that followed the Second Constitutional period, the state did not have a well-defined policy of physical education. On the other hand, the heightened interest in sports activities continued in the same vein during the years of the national struggle. The national movement in Anatolia did not remain impervious to this social phenomenon. It was from within this logic that Mustafa Kemal assumed the honorary leadership of all Boy Scout movements in early 1923. The same year, the secretary general of the Turkish Olympic Committee, Selim Sırrı Bey, and the head of the UTSC, Ali Sami Bey approached the government for urgent economic assistance in order for Turkey to take part in the Paris Olympic Games in 1924. Surprisingly and somewhat unexpectedly, Mustafa Kemal

<sup>95</sup> For a detailed account of this event, see Zafer Toprak, "Taksim Stadında Mini-Olimpiyat, 1922", *Tophumsal Tarih*, no. 4, (April 1994), p. 15.

<sup>96</sup> For a detailed account of *Spor Alemi*, see Toprak, "Spor Alemi Dergisi ve Türkiye'de İdman", pp. 5-9.

<sup>97</sup> Spor Teşkilatı hakkında kanûn lâyihası ve Muvakkat encümen mazbatası. I/1125, TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Cilt. 26, Devre 5, İçtima 3 p. 1. For a detailed account of this period, see T.C. Maarif Vekilliği Umum Müdürlüğü, *XX. Cumhuriyet Yılında Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor* (Ankara: Çankaya Matbaası, 1943).

did not hesitate to extend a hand.<sup>98</sup> In addition to this form of pecuniary assistance, a group of young people with different areas of interest, including sports, was sent abroad in January 1925 to enrich their knowledge and develop their skills further in their respective fields.<sup>99</sup>

In the same way, the UTSC received a substantial amount of economic assistance from the government for the Amsterdam Olympics games in 1928. The economic backing of the government in the matter of sports activities sparked debate as to whether sport should become an affair of the state.<sup>100</sup>

Yet these views did not find worthwhile reverberation among the prominent members of the party. Considered from that perspective, it would not be unfair to argue that the Kemalist elite pursued a more pragmatic path toward sports activities in the early years of the republic. In the short term, the thing that interested them in particular was the establishment of a new nation-state. That is why the government was not involved much in the affairs of sport clubs. With these encouraging signals, the sport clubs took some comfort in the hope that they could take a path of their own making. Indeed, not until the early 1930s did a real shift with respect to the state's control over sport activities become visible. During that period, Nizamettin Bey [Kırşan], sports advisor to the RPP, was sent to Nazi Germany, a country known for its developed youth organizations, namely the *Hitlerjugend*.

Nizamettin Bey was deeply touched by what he saw. The mastermind behind this organization was a German by the name of Carl Diem, who would later be the General Secretary of 1936 Olympic Games and chief of foreign sport activities for the Nazis. At the invitation of the RPP, Diem paid a visit to Turkey in September 1933 and presented a report

<sup>98</sup> Cem Atabeyoğlu, *Sporda Devlet mi? Devlette Spor mu?* (Istanbul: Türkiye Milli Olimpiyat Komitesi, 2001), pp. 9-10.

<sup>99</sup> Four people sent by the government were Vildan Aşır [Savaşır], Suad Hayri [Ürgüplü], Sadi Bey [Irmak] and Hüsamettin [Gürel].

<sup>100</sup> See, for example, Ahmet Fetgeri, "Memleket Sporü Neden Terakki Etmiyor?", *Türkspor*, no. 1 (3 September 1929), pp. 4-5; See also Asım Us, "Spor bir devlet işidir", *Son Posta*, 14 February 1937.

to the party.<sup>101</sup> As expected, the model suggested by Diem bore strong resemblance to the German model. He went even so far as to suggest the formation of paramilitary troops under the name of “Gazi Youth” (*Gazi Gençliği*). It was thanks to the financial inability of the party that this initiative soon vanished.

From 1931 on, the RPP began to subsidize the sport clubs through the local party branches and supported the local clubs with payments from the budgets of their respective provinces. What appears from archival evidence is that this policy proved unsuccessful, as each province failed to specify a certain amount of payment for the organization of sports within that province.<sup>102</sup> Yiğit Akın puts the rest of the story this way:

The Party divided the provinces into eight groups according to their compulsory payments. This division brought the requirement that the first-degree provinces pay 28,954 Turkish Liras whereas the eighth-degree provinces were to pay 3,903 Turkish Liras. If some provinces were late in paying the specified amount, they were severely reprimanded by the Party officials, who declared that these provinces did not understand the importance of sports, which meant the improvement of the race and the youth, national defense and general health.<sup>103</sup>

Meanwhile some factions within the RPP did not remain idle behind the scenes and sought ways to bring sport clubs under the banner of the party. The most unrepentant defender of this view was Rahmi Bey [Apak], then the Director of Party’s Youth Branches.<sup>104</sup> They threatened the members of the UTSC with blocking financial aid.<sup>105</sup> Amidst all these concerns, the UTSC accepted joining the ranks of the party by an overwhelming majority. Its name was changed to *Türk Spor Kurumu* (Turkish Sport Association) to centralize the administration of sport activities and develop them for the sake of defense in the event of a possible war. Nizamettin Bey [Kırşan] was appointed as the Secretary General of the TSA. In a subsequent

<sup>101</sup> Atabeyoğlu, *Sporda Devlet*, p. 15. This report was translated into Turkish by Ekrem Rüştü Akömer. In the interest of clarity, however, it should be mentioned that it was not possible to locate a copy of the report for this study.

<sup>102</sup> For more on this, see Akın, “Not Just a Game”, pp. 48-9.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Atabeyoğlu, *Sporda Devlet*, p. 13.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. See also, in this context, Kurthan Fişek, *Devlet Politikası ve Toplumsal Yapıyla İlişkileri Açısından Dünyada ve Türkiye’de Spor Yönetimi* (Istanbul, YGS Yayınları, 2003), pp. 281-96.

leading article, written three years after his appointment, that appeared in *Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor*, Kırşan wrote that the “from that date on, the Turkish Sport Organization officially became an association of the party. It is only after this date that matters deemed crucially important, like annual revenues, expenditures and working programs were left to the discretion of the Party’s General Secretariat.”<sup>106</sup>

Obviously not everyone embraced these new trends and, more to the point, there were discordant voices within the chorus.<sup>107</sup> Despite these criticisms, a great number of changes took place in the years that followed 1936. With time, the Kemalists’ early tolerant policy toward the sport clubs began to change. Some undesirable events at football matches were soon to provide a suitable excuse for the Kemalists to drive the system toward more authoritarianism. The view echoed by many of the opinion-makers was that the sport clubs were taking advantage of the relaxed policy of the party.<sup>108</sup> One noteworthy case in point in this regard was a frantic football match between Galatasaray and Güneş on 4 July 1937. Shortly thereafter, İsmet İnönü reacted with outrage and said he regretted the event in a briefing. The prime minister’s remarks, more than any other quotation, depicts the shift in party’s perceptions of the sports activities: “In the sincere belief that they would handle the issue of physical education in a coherent fashion, the authority was transferred to an newly formed administration by the name of UTSC, which has up to now did nothing, but deprived the country of sport because of miscalculation and misadministration.”<sup>109</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Nizamettin Kırşan, “Beden Terbiyesi Kanunu’ndan Önceki Spor Hayatımıza Umumi Bakış”, *Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor*, no 1, (January 1939), p. 7.

<sup>107</sup> A noteworthy example in this regard is Burhan Felek. His criticisms increased after he was removed from official duties. For more on this, see Atabeyoğlu, *Spor da Devlet*, pp. 81-4.

<sup>108</sup> See, for instance, Halid Bayrak, “Sporda İlk İslahata Klüplerden Başlamalıdır”, *Türk Spor Kurumu Dergisi*, no. 30, (25 January 1937), pp. 2-3; Nasuhi Baydar, “Yine Klüplere Dair”, *Türk Spor Kurumu Dergisi*, no. 32. (8 February 1937), p. 32; Editorial “Böyle Spor istemiyoruz”, *Zaman*, 27 January 1935; Yunus Nadi, “Spor hayatımızda önemli bir merhale”, *Cumhuriyet*, 31 March 1937.

<sup>109</sup> See “Spor İşlerimize İnönü El Koydu”, *Top*, (28 July 1937); See also “Başbakan İnönünün Ehemmiyetli Bir Tebliği”, *Türk Spor Kurumu Dergisi*, No. 57 (2 August 1937), pp. 2-3.



The crux of prime minister İnönü's statement came near the end. After having mentioned the measures taken, he concluded "if these precautions and recommendations have gone unnoticed once again, the clubs will be abolished and go through a process of restructuring under new conditions."<sup>110</sup> The declaration of the prime minister was interpreted as a welcome development by the opinion-makers in the Turkish press.<sup>111</sup> The terrible legacy of the UTSC was identified as the source of these problems. In the same vein, sport clubs were condemned for their failure in the treatment of such actions.

From that moment on, it became clearer that the issue of physical education should be a matter of the state. Yet one may not help but question the timing of these critiques. It is noteworthy that the articles condemning the sport clubs came out at a time when the Kemalist elites were making considerable effort to include all spheres of social life under the wings of the party. The mounting interest of the opinion-makers in sports activities may at least partly account for the intensifying ties between the party and intellectuals. As for the Kemalist elite, they were well aware that the accomplishment of these objectives was impossible without a certain degree of centralization. In other words, this event served as an excuse to remove the obstacles in the way of more political control. Sport clubs were instructed to improve a new training method for physical education.

In the meantime, Carl Diem paid a second visit to Turkey at the invitation of Mustafa Kemal. After extensive consultations and debates with him, Diem prepared a comprehensive new report in which he included most of Mustafa Kemal's views on physical education. The intellectual impact of this report is most manifest on the Law on Physical Education that passed on 29 June 1938. It is worth mentioning that the spirit of this law bore an alarming

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<sup>110</sup> Atabeyoğlu, *Sporda Devlet*, p. 29.

<sup>111</sup> For reverberations of İnönü's statements in the press, see Abidin Daver, "Türk Sporunda Kutlu Bir İnkılap Başlıyor", *Cumhuriyet* (28 July 1937); Ahmet Emin Yalman, "Sporda Açılan Yeni Çığır", *Tan* (28 July 1938); Falih Rıfkı Atay, "Spor Gençliği", *Ulus* (28 July 1937).

resemblance to the views set forth in this report.<sup>112</sup> For these goals to be met, the Turkish Olympics Committee was brought under the wing of the General Directorate of Physical Education in January 1939.

Up to now, the political manifestations of the shift in the field of physical education and sports activities have been examined. It is now time to address another facet of this concern: the health education. Although not deemed as centrally important as in the case of national education, the health of citizens was an integral part of the Turkish Republican project. During this period, one frequently encountered and loosely used term, “eugenics”, points to the fundamentals of this new health education policy. As a form of social progress, eugenics seeks to improve the biological qualities of a given human group. In retrospect, it goes without saying that the eugenic description of human life predicates upon political and social prejudices, rather than scientific facts. Notwithstanding the discriminatory nature of the process, however, political leaders of all stripes in the early twentieth century were particularly attracted to the idea of “improving” their respective races. Moreover, the eugenics project was also congenial to theories of social engineering.<sup>113</sup>

As the previous analysis suggests, one should not be led into misthinking that every social form of eugenics can be counted as racial or social discrimination. One root of this situation has to do with the misjudgment that it is as if all types of eugenics were related to theories of racism at a time when the stories of discrimination on a biological basis were commonplace, as in the case of Nazi Germany. In a way, it would not be entirely wrong to argue that it was the Nazis who gave eugenics a bad name.<sup>114</sup> Contrary to what is commonly thought, however, the Turkish case is devoid of a racial context. The major concern of the Turkish eugenics movement was to elevate the physical aptitudes of the Turkish people to a

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<sup>112</sup> Atabeyoğlu, *Sporda Devlet*, p. 32.

<sup>113</sup> William Pfaff, “Eugenics, Anyone?”, *The New York Review of Books* 44, No. 16, (23 October 1997). Available at <http://www.nybooks.com>

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

higher standing. Physical education had come to be seen as one of the possible hygienic measures to cope with problems of health. This effort also included measures to combat undernourishment, reduce the rate of infant mortality and raise awareness about various diseases such as diarrhea, pneumonia and tuberculosis.<sup>115</sup>

As the years wore on, eugenics became a highly significant component of the indoctrination process with respect to physical education. For instance, detailed portrayals of the ideal body appeared time and again in journals and books on physical education. Within this framework, the treatment of physical education received extensive coverage in the press, particularly in the context of eugenics. The press constantly drew attention to the importance of physical exercises for a healthy body.<sup>116</sup> As will be discussed in the coming pages, the crucial point in the Republican discourses on the human body rested on the fitting unity of body and mind. According to this approach, body and mind need to be treated in an incorporated fashion. At the same time, however, it cannot be altogether dissociated from eugenics, which stands as an indication of improved biological eminence.

What makes the constant emphasis on eugenics and mental health so poignant has to do with the common tendency toward suicide that had taken root, especially among young women immediately after the proclamation of the Republic.<sup>117</sup> Seen in this light, the importance of such commentaries lies in the fact that they draw attention to the causal relationship between physical and mental health to boost the confidence of citizens. The issue of health has from time to time re-appeared in the literature. The preponderant view in these commentaries is that the presence of unhealthy people leads to a general sickness of society.

<sup>115</sup> Dr. Sadi Anadolu, "İrsiyet ve terbiye", *Zaman*, 13 July 1935; Şevket Aziz Kansu, "Öjenik Problemleri", *Ülkü*, no. 72 (February 1939), pp. 480-8.

<sup>116</sup> Selim Sırrı Tarcan, "Fikir Pehlivanı mı? Vücut Pehlivanı mı?", *Ulus*, 6 December 1936; Selim Sırrı Tarcan, "Spor umumî sinir buhranının önünü nasıl alabilir?", *Ulus*, 11 January 1936.

<sup>117</sup> For an elaborate argument along these lines, see Zafer Toprak, "Genç Kız ve Kadın İntiharları II: Cumhuriyet Erkeğinin Kadın İmgesi", *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 99 (March 2002), pp. 15-9.

That is why the citizens are expected to strive for bodily strength and health. The physical health of society indicates the mental health of society as well.<sup>118</sup>

In brief, the Republican way of social disciplining, along with eugenics, aimed at ameliorating the genetic properties of the Turkish people by intensive care and training methods. As might be expected, the new training method employed bore the deep stamp of the theory of Selim Sırrı Tarcan. His views largely drew on the Swedish model and launched a new trend in the making of physical education. Tarcan devoted particular effort to the development and application of this model to the case of Turkey. In that sense, it would not be wrong to say that Tarcan, more than any other person, provided intellectual aid to the Kemalist elites by advancing a program of physical education. As both pedagogue and politician, Tarcan is a representative voice of the one-party period in that his views provide valuable clues in helping to understand the mindset of the Kemalist elites, making their significance all the much greater.

Tarcan's background as a pedagogue proved to be a formative and positive factor in his organization of sport activities. He advanced an enlightened notion of physical education based on western models, but imbued it with the realities of Turkey. Tarcan's visit to Sweden was to be the first stage in the realization of this experiment. Yet it was not until the 1930s that the Swedish model became an essential point of reference. His legacy on sport activities in modern Turkey is not inconsiderable. Before proceeding to an examination of Tarcan's views, a brief look at his life will be taken in order to understand the milieu that shaped him.

#### The Life and Work of a Devout Sportsman: Selim Sırrı Tarcan

Selim Sırrı Tarcan was born in Mora on 25 March 1874.<sup>119</sup> The son of Yusuf Ziya Bey and Zeynep Hanım, he attended *Lycée de Galatasaray* (then known as *Mekteb-i Sultani*), in

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<sup>118</sup> John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), p. 95.

İstanbul, from 1881 to 1890. During high school, he developed an exceptionally keen interest in sport activities. A troublesome figure in his high school years, Tarcan was very good at sports and was always among the first picked for teams in the school. Although, he had a passion for all forms of sport, he did not have the same enthusiasm for other classes. His physical education tutor, Ali Faik Bey, took a strong stand in support of his student, but to no avail.<sup>120</sup> Consequently, he was thrown out of *Mekteb-i Sultanî* for unruly behavior.

After leaving high school, Tarcan entered the Military School of Engineering (*Askeri Mühendis Okulu*) through his uncle. He graduated from the school with the rank of lieutenant. During this period, Tarcan began to publish articles in journals and newspapers on physical education and health. At the same time, he began to teach physical education at some high schools in İzmir. In early January 1901, Tarcan was promoted to captain (*yüzbaşı*) and was transferred to Istanbul. His activities continued in the same vein along with his military duties. Meanwhile, he established a close relationship with Mazhar Bey [Kazancı], who was a noted person in the field of physical training at the time. Sharing certain key premises on physical education, the men decided to develop a common approach and found a gymnastic school. In May 1906 Tarcan joined the Committee of Union and Progress after having been promoted to the rank of adjutant major (*kolağası*). His life reached a new turning point when his friends brought him into close contact with the famous French sportsman Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic movement. Coubertin offered that Tarcan become the head of the Ottoman branch of the International Olympic Committee. Given the authoritarian

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<sup>119</sup> For more biographical information about Selim Sırrı Tarcan, see Cem Atabeyoğlu, *Kurucumuz Selim Sırrı Tarcan* (Istanbul: Türkiye Milli Olimpiyat Komitesi Yayınları, 2000). It was thanks to Selim Sırrı's efforts that the Ottoman Empire was finally accepted to the International Olympic Committee in 1911. See also Hande Özkan, "Selim Sırrı Tarcan", in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Kemalizm*, Vol. 2, Ahmet İnel, (ed.), pp. 276-81.

<sup>120</sup> For a biographical note on İsmail Sefa, "En Eski Cimnastik Öğretmeni Faik Hoca'yı Kaybettik", *Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor*, no. 43 (April 1943).

milieu of the Hamidian regime, Tarcan had no choice but to politely refuse this generous offer.

The long-awaited moment arrived in July 1908 when the Turkish parliament was reinstated and the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 re-entered into effect. From early July to August, Tarcan could not restrain himself and gave fierce public speeches in Istanbul. Yet the illiberal intellectual tradition of the CUP could not stand this diversity. Shortly after, he was dismissed from the CUP. He took this opportunity to go to Sweden to gain first-hand knowledge of the Swedish model of physical training. In Sweden what impressed him most was the physical training method developed by Per Henrik Ling.<sup>121</sup> Tarcan remained convinced that a gymnastic model made without instrumental devices (*aletsiz jimnastik*) would be the best route to extend the influence of physical education activities. Another favorable aspect of the Swedish education model was the presence of girls. Tarcan joined the Swedish Gymnastic Institute and attended classes for a year and a half. The experience of his eighteen months he spent in Sweden proved valuable to him as an instructor in the coming years. Moreover, the adoption of this method to the case of Turkey may be counted one of his great achievements.

Upon returning home, Tarcan looked for a physical education tutorship in the military schools but was denied. As a person well-versed in the intricacies of the new methods developed in the West, such an act worried Tarcan and he decided to resign from the army. Soon after, he was named to the post of Istanbul Inspector of Physical Education. Tarcan's explicit propensity to rely on the virtues of the Swedish model went on in the same vein during this period. As the president in charge of sport activities, he stood up for the rights of girls and women to participate in physical education along with men. In September 1922, he began to publish a journal by the name of *Terbiye ve Oyun* (Training and Game).

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<sup>121</sup> Given the poor conditions of Turkish libraries, it is impossible to establish the number of books written by Selim Sırrı Tarcan with certainty.



Tarcan's long adventure spanning from empire to nation entered a new phase after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic. In 1924 the Ottoman Olympic Committee was changed to the Turkish National Olympic Committee and Turkey participated in the Paris Olympics games. Tarcan maintained good relations with the government in that capacity. He remained in charge of the presidency of the Committee until 1930. In the following years, he did not hesitate to present the fruits of his experience to the newly established regime. In return, the single-party regime entrusted him with the task of representing Turkey all over the world. This provided Tarcan with ample opportunity for closer examination of the contemporary models of physical education. Moreover, he wrote dozens of books on physical education.<sup>122</sup> He entered the parliament in 1935 elections as a deputy from Ordu and continued along this path until 1946. Tarcan passed away in March 1956.

### The Legacy of Selim Sırrı Tarcan

As Hasan Ali Yücel pointed out, it appears to be a reasonable assumption that Selim Sırrı Tarcan was the first person to establish the causal and systematic relationship between the body and education.<sup>123</sup> An extraordinary pedagogue in many respects, he adapted the basic tenets of modern physical education to the Turkish condition. Not surprisingly, a constant theme in his writings was the corollary between cerebral and physical training. Over the years these models became characterizing elements of Turkish physical education. It was thanks to his endless journeys that the Kemalist elite had a well-developed worldview with respect to physical education. We have a great deal of information as to what impact these journeys had on him, as we can follow it in his op-ed pieces and books.<sup>124</sup> The major impression conveyed in his remarks is that of a beautiful union of man and nature. Yet

<sup>122</sup> For more on this, see Selim Sırrı Tarcan, *Hatıralarım* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1946).

<sup>123</sup> Quoted in Atabeyoğlu, *Selim Sırrı Tarcan*, p. 34.

<sup>124</sup> As noted, it is nearly impossible to cover the full extent of Tarcan's contribution in this effort.

another equally striking feature of his accounts is that they reveal the approaching thunder of war in Europe and the increasing importance of military power. For example, Tarcan's impressionist accounts of the mood in Europe leave no room for doubt that security concerns had assumed top priority.<sup>125</sup>

### The Second World War and Turkey

This is certainly not the place to enter into a discussion about Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War. Yet I will dwell briefly on the general contours of Turkey's policy of "active neutrality" as it is of fundamental importance for understanding the justified concerns of the Kemalist elite that paved the way for Law on Physical Education in 1938. In fairness, Turkish officials did their utmost to remain outside the war. At the same time, however, the issue of security overshadowed every other concern in both foreign and domestic politics.

### Turkish Foreign Policy during the Second World War

As the 1930s wore on, the imminent European war on the horizon rendered continental cooperation all the more necessary. Seen from a retrospective viewpoint, the ebbs and flows in Ankara's attitude can be attributed to its resolved determination to maintain neutrality.<sup>126</sup> To this end, Turkey proceeded cautiously and pursued a policy in tune with all warring camps. As Selim Deringil argues,

<sup>125</sup> Selim Sırrı Tarcan, "Brükselde halkın talim ve terbiyesi için neler yapılıyor?", *Cumhuriyet*, 2 September 1935; Selim Sırrı Tarcan, "İtalya'da Gençlik ve Halk Teşkilâtı", *Ülke*, no. 3 (April 1933), pp. 241-3.

<sup>126</sup> Selim Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy during the Second World War: An 'Active' Neutrality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 185-6.

Turkey managed to exert her influence successfully on the major powers of the Second World War to reduce the probability of her becoming involved in the war. The influence she exerted was out of proportion with her status as a poor and underdeveloped country. This was largely due to the intelligent way she made use of her unique geographical position. This position could just as easily have become a trap which would have led Turkey to destruction. Instead through able leadership Turkey managed to survive because of her geographical location.<sup>127</sup>

Of course, it took the single-party considerable energy and cost a certain price to establish security measures throughout the country. Economically speaking, the Second World War caught the decision-makers of Turkey unprepared. At that time, a significant portion of the population was living under devastating conditions due to the sorry state of the Turkish economy. In these turbulent times, it was impractical to levy upon a nation struggling to make ends meet. Militarily speaking, too, the task before the government was formidable, since the military was all but unequipped to meet the challenges of security.<sup>128</sup> It would cost a great deal of money to rebuild the army. Under these state of affairs, it was all the more difficult to maintain the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and the determination to stay outside the war.

Bearing in mind these considerations, the one-party regime was well aware that the success of this policy was largely up to society's ability to speak with one coherent voice on domestic issues. To accomplish this goal, throughout the 1930s the multi-party system was openly criticized as undesirable on the grounds that it would destroy the coherence of society by creating political factions. It was from within this logic that one-party systems were showered with praise time and again. To choose only one example, Falih Rıfkı Atay's following remark provides an explicit endorsement of the single-party regime: "There is a single-party regime in Turkey which cannot be separated from the government. We have a

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>128</sup> In fairness, it should be mentioned in passing that not all evils lead to harm. The shortcomings of the Turkish army provided a suitable excuse to remain outside the war. For a detailed account of the Turkish military during the early stages of the Second World War, see Mete Tunçay, "İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın Başlarında (1939-1941) Türk Ordusu", *Tarih ve Toplum*, no. 35 (November 1986), pp. 34-42.

number of principles. And these principles, for the time being, provide a testing ground to measure whether one is a Kemalist or not. Our point of departure has never changed. We are not in search of class concerns but seek matters of common interest. We are populist and continue to proceed along these lines.”<sup>129</sup>

What renders this story more intriguing is that, from time to time, ultra-nationalist circles sought ways to deviate from the common path built by the government. Domestically, the overriding question was how to deal with them in a reasonable manner. Yet the resistance to striking such a sensible balance was so damning that they had to wait until the conditions grew mature enough.<sup>130</sup> In brief, there were many obstacles along the way. A profound anxiety took hold among the army when the Balkan countries were drawn to the war. From 1939 to 1942, the victories of Germany cast the growing expansionism of Hitler into a more ominous light. At a time when the wartime conditions turned from bad to worse, Turkish officials had to remain silent *vis-à-vis* the ultra-nationalist circles. Under these circumstances, the thunder of war forged a broad consensus on the need for consistent pursuit of a reconciliation policy along with a comprehensive organization of domestic politics.

### A Second Attack on Social Life during Second World War

As noted, the first three years of the war witnessed the rise of Turanist circles in the domestic sphere. Yet the one-party regime acted with the highest caution toward these groups in that crucial moment of uncertainty. Another root of this stance was the anti-Soviet sentiment within the ranks of the RPP. At the same time, however, for fear that this downward twist would strengthen the domestic ultra-nationalist circles, the government was

<sup>129</sup> Falih Rıfık Atay, “Prensiplerimiz”, *Ulus*, 6 November 1937.

<sup>130</sup> For an extended treatment of the similarities and differences between the government and pan-Turanist circles, see Özdoğan, *Turan’dan Bozkurt’a* (Istanbul: İletişim: 2001), *passim*. For a different view as to the intimacy of this relationship, see Ahmet Yıldız, *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001).

determined to pursue a measured attitude toward both sides. This much-anticipated moment arrived in 1944 when the devastating defeat of the Third Reich became obvious. As a result, the hands of the pro-authoritarian circles in Turkey were weakened, largely deriving from the changes in the international milieu. From that point on, the one-party regime hardened its line against domestic fascists and adopted a number of measures. The liquidation process with respect to these groups advanced remarkably throughout the year.<sup>131</sup>

### The Treatment of Physical Education: A Comparative Perspective

When looking at the general contours of social and political life during the years of the Second World War, the prevailing tendency is to see the fascist regimes as the role models of the one-party system in Turkey.<sup>132</sup> This line of reasoning, however, concentrates exclusively on the similarities and totally ignores the differences. To put it another way, this mode of judgment tries to underestimate the relatively explanatory power of differences and overwhelmingly focuses on the affinities. As a result, the picture presented by this approach is black and white, devoid of shades of gray.

Appearances, however, are often deceptive. In this frame of mind, the shortcoming of the above-mentioned approach is that it focuses tightly on similarities. As Omar Bartov eloquently puts it, we should probably admit that we are always prone to overestimate every likelihood rather than to contextualize it.<sup>133</sup> This is understandable up to a point, as the cases of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy have provided such conspicuous examples that they tend to cloud our judgment. We cannot help but seek its imitators in other parts of the world. An additional deficiency of this line of thinking is the fact that comparative approaches illustrate

<sup>131</sup> Özdoğan, *Turan'dan Bozkurt'a*, pp. 172-3.

<sup>132</sup> For a comparative assessment, see Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, pp. 193-5.

<sup>133</sup> See Omar Bartov, "Rewriting the Twentieth Century: Extreme Opinions", *Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 3, no. 2 (2002), pp. 281-302.

similarities in discourse, yet they fail when it comes to pointing out the differences in practice. Acknowledging this basic disposition, we may now proceed to an examination of different cases in the post-First World War context.

There is no question about the effect which various aspects of World War I had on sport in schools and colleges during the *interbellum* era. From that time on, sports were regarded as the most valuable mode of action for the conditioning and morale of soldiers.<sup>134</sup> Throughout this period, authoritarian political measures gained political visibility in all spheres of social life in continental Europe. Seen in this light, it would not be unfair to argue that all European countries exhibited the same features to greater or lesser degree. It should therefore come as no surprise to see the manifestations of that sort of authoritarianism in the case of Turkey. From time to time, these similarities went so far as to recall the excesses of fascism. In this respect it is important to address the unique aspects of each case before jumping to conclusions. My contention is that, despite the many points of similarity surrounding these regimes, the differences between them are worth probing thoroughly beyond than that of affinities. I firmly believe that such an analysis in a comparative perspective will locate the Turkish case within a broader context, both emphasizing its similarities and uniqueness in this framework.

Keeping in mind the aforementioned considerations, it is possible to draw rough comparisons between the different routes to the organization of physical education. To achieve this, it is necessary to illuminate the prominent differences in the handling of physical education in each case. What follows presents a comparative treatment of the German and Italian cases, respectively.

Starting with the German case, as John Hoberman reminds us in the context of totalitarianism, “the penetration of political ideology into almost all forms of political culture,

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<sup>134</sup> Cozens and Scovi, *Sports in American Life*, pp. 81-2.



the depth and breadth of this penetration depends on the ideological ambitions of the regime being discussed. In the totalitarian political cultures we may speak of the virtual ubiquity of ideological demands.”<sup>135</sup> The case of Nazism substantiates Hoberman’s claim. Sport activities constitute a considerable part of the Nazis’ efforts to inject the values of the regime to the people (*Volk*). It is in this sense that sport can be considered a form of expressionism.<sup>136</sup> The transformation of the body in motion to a political expression manifests itself most clearly in the case of totalitarian regimes. Not surprisingly, at a time when the visibility of ideologies played a greater role in public life, it was the Third Reich that set the pace in this endeavor. The Nuremberg rallies are an impressive case in point. In this frame of mind, human bodies were functional so long as they represented the fundamental attributes of the regime. This was so much so that after one point physical activity became the primary source of political vitality.

The fundamental principle of this doctrine was laid down by Oswald Mosley during the 1930s as follows: “Our policy is the establishment of the Corporate State. As the name implies, this means a state organized like the human body.”<sup>137</sup> Seen in this light, it is not for nothing that Alfred Baeumler, the most significant sport theorist in Nazi Germany, likened the state to a body. To reinforce his point, Baeumler maintained that the body was a public rather than private entity, as the *Volk* itself was a collective body.<sup>138</sup> Arguing that “sports are not performed by the individual for individual fun,” Baeumler rather considered it “as a national duty in the service of the nation state.”<sup>139</sup> Following this line of reasoning, German sport theorists struck a balance between body and mind in favor of the latter. As Hitler pointed out

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<sup>135</sup> Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology*, p. 6.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>137</sup> Quoted in Hoberman, p. 79.

<sup>138</sup> Quoted in Hoberman, p. 163.

<sup>139</sup> Tara Magdalinski, “Alfred Baeumler, Ideology and Physical Education in the Third Reich,” *Sporting Traditions* 11, no. 2. (May 1995), p. 64.

in his address to the German Gymnastics Festival in 1933, “life will not be protected by weak philosophers, but by strong men.”<sup>140</sup>

The unavoidable tendency to consider the body as an integral part of the nation became so pressing that the *Hitlerjugend* of December 1936 took this line of argument so far as to call for the incorporation of all German youth. Competition between the rival authorities of school and the *Hitlerjugend*, however, gave rise to areas of conflict in which young people could play the one off the other.<sup>141</sup> The following years would be a turbulent period marked by huge upheavals against the *Hitlerjugend*. This conflict could also be seen crudely in terms of class conflict between the between the working-class pirates and bourgeois National Socialists.<sup>142</sup> Stated somewhat differently, the demonstrations against the *Hitlerjugend* were an indication of the deep unrest felt regarding the Nazis. This incident leads Detlev Peukert to conclude that there were alternative forms of social behavior within the Third Reich and that considerable sections of the younger generation held themselves apart from National Socialism.<sup>143</sup>

As one scholar aptly points out, “in the age of mass politics, symbols and political liturgies were of central importance in making abstract ideas effective and concrete.”<sup>144</sup> This remark tells us why in most of the authoritarian and totalitarian societies, the charismatic figure became identifiable as a type of sportive character, as in the case of Hitler and Mussolini.<sup>145</sup> As for the Italian case, generally speaking, some nuances aside, it bore alarming resemblance to that of Germany. The Italian conception of physical education, more or less, followed the same path. Unlike Hitler, however, Mussolini had a personal interest in the

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<sup>140</sup> For a penetrating analysis of cultural variables in the context of Nazi Germany, see Hermann Glaser, *The Cultural Roots of National Socialism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978).

<sup>141</sup> Detlev Peukert, “Youth in the Third Reich,” in Richard Bessel, ed., *Life in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 26.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>144</sup> George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), p. vii.

<sup>145</sup> Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology*, p. 86.

organization of physical education. More to the point, in the Italian case, the dynamism of the body was related to the dynamism of the intellect. To put it another way, the body enjoyed a more privileged status compared to mind in the case of Germany, while the Italian case struck a proper balance between body and mind. Furthermore, “*mens sana in corpore sano*” (sound mind presupposes a sound body) was hardly a new formula for the Italians. It was precisely according to this logic that Mussolini constantly referred to this old Roman maxim in his speeches. An additional third peculiarity of the Italian case is that, unlike the Nazi regime, they did not combine athleticism with aggressive or even sadistic impulses.<sup>146</sup>

As the analysis in the preceding part indicates, the notion of physical education in Turkey was more comparable to the Italian experience. Even a preliminary glance at the Turkish case may lead one to confidently postulate that there are many similarities between the cases of Italy and Turkey. In addition to sport activities, two examples from other spheres of life will suffice to show the strong interaction between two societies. To begin with, the Turkish penal code was adopted from Mussolini’s Italy. Second, the intellectual impact of Italian fascism was clearly discernible in the People’s Houses (*Halk Evleri*). In 1932 the Republican People’s Party established the People’s Houses as adult education centers to conduct cultural, sporting and educative activities.<sup>147</sup> These temples of learning largely drew on the model of *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (Spare Time National Organization). The People’s Houses played a disproportionate role in the creation of national identity and political socialization. During this period, fascist youth organizations also earned the respect of many Turkish intellectuals, so much so that shortly before the closure of Turkish Hearths in 1931, rumors were circulating that fascist organizations would be established in their place.<sup>148</sup> Tanrıöver argues that, “we are truly appreciative of the enlightened and patriotic youth in Italy

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> For a sober assessment of People’s Houses, see M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, “The People’s Houses and the Cult of Peasant in Turkey”, *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 4 (October 1998). pp. 68-91. The role of the People’s Houses in the making of sport activities is examined more closely in the third chapter.

<sup>148</sup> Üstel, *Türk Ocakları*, p. 324.

who firmly stood against class conflict in their society under Mussolini's guidance. There are many points of resemblance among Turkey and Italy. Both countries unreservedly deem that any class struggle is an inevitable catastrophe for their respective societies, this conviction also holds true as far as the Italians are concerned."<sup>149</sup>

Curiously enough, Tanrıöver's remarks were reinforced by a number of new developments in domestic politics. It is widely known that in the early 1930s, Kemalist circles reacted with favor to the ongoing debate about the establishment of fascist youth organizations in place of the Turkish Hearths. According to the plans leaked to the press, only ethnic Turkish citizens would be allowed to enter the Youth Organizations.<sup>150</sup> In similar fashion, the codification of the Law on Conscription in Italy generated many apprehensions among Turkish opinion makers.<sup>151</sup>

Of course, not only the case of Italy served as a model to the Turkish case. As can be gathered from the reminiscences of Tarcan, the European model of physical education in general seems to have made a deep impression on Turkish tutors. Tarcan did not merely confine his attention to the physical education model of a specific country. To choose only one example, his praise of the German model of sport activities is noteworthy.<sup>152</sup> To him, the enormous inclination to make everything visible manifested itself in the Third Reich. In brief, every integral form of nationalism captured Tarcan. He elaborated on this point while contemplating the parade of *Sokol* (the Czech Youth Organization) in Czechoslovakia: "15,000 bodies act in harmony as if they are one and the same. The figures of these gymnasts are transmitting a message to the society that 'no individuals but society exists! Neither financial assets nor personal desires are important. All or nothing at all.'"<sup>153</sup>

<sup>149</sup> Üstel, p. 323-4.

<sup>150</sup> See Üstel, p. 297.

<sup>151</sup> Ömer Rıza [Doğrul], "İtalya'da Militarizm", *Vakit*, 24 September 1934; Süreyya Bey, "Herkes yedisinden yetmişine kadar asker", *Son Posta*, 27 September 1934.

<sup>152</sup> Examples of this are to be found in Tarcan, *Bugünkü Almanya* (Istanbul: M.E.B, 1930), passim.

<sup>153</sup> Selim Sırrı Tarcan, *Radyo Konferansları*, Vol. 3, İstanbul. p. 30.

The physical conditioning of German athletes is a striking feature of sports narrative, as evidenced by the books of Selim Sırrı Bey and the like: As stressed previously, the German expert Carl Diem was called on to prepare a report concerning the suitability and eligibility of building up of a Turkish physical education system similar to that of Germany. Yet his model failed to materialize on account of the lack of teachers and available teaching positions. Nevertheless, government-sponsored journals continued to devote considerable space to the making of physical education in European countries.<sup>154</sup> During the late thirties, Italians and Germans exported films of group rhythmic exercises, flag twirling, and military maneuvers to foreign markets.<sup>155</sup> Not surprisingly, Turkey was among the countries that demanded those films. The UTSC requested a propaganda movie be shown in all People's Houses along with other militaristic films.<sup>156</sup>

At one point, the noteworthy similarities between the Turkish and Italian regimes boil down to the question of whether or not the Turkish case was a fascist one. Moreover, the similarities between these two cases went far beyond the realm of political occurrences. Ideologically speaking, what both regimes had in common, as Eric Jan Zürcher argues, is the

the extreme nationalism, with its attendant development of a legitimizing historical mythology and racist rhetoric, the authoritarian character of the regime and its efforts to establish a complete totalitarian monopoly for its party of the political, social and cultural scene, the personality cult which developed around both Mussolini on the one hand and Atatürk and İnönü on the other, and the emphasis on national unity and solidarity with its attendant denial of class conflicts.<sup>157</sup>

Following Zürcher's line of reasoning, one can argue properly that the greatest similarity was in their modes of thinking. Indeed, much the same about Turkey can be said of the Italian case. Turkey's notion of physical education followed Italy's in that both models foresaw a

<sup>154</sup> Selim Sırrı Tarcan, "Amerika Üniversitelerinde beden terbiyesinin rolü", *Cumhuriyet*, 23 February 1936; Nüzhet Abbas, "Başka Memleketlerde Beden Terbiyesi: Almanya", *Ülkü*, no. 76 (June 1939), pp. 346-51; Nüzhet Baba, "İngiliz Halkevleri ve Spor Çalışmaları", *Ülkü*, no. 95 (January 1941), pp. 437-40; Vildan Aşır, "Romen Gençlik Teşkilâtı: Straja Tarihi", *Ülkü*, no. 79 (September 1939), pp. 19-23; Nusret Kemal, "Sovyetlerde Beden ve Terbiye", *Ülkü*, no. 8 (September 1933), pp. 238-40.

<sup>155</sup> Koon, *Believe, Obey and Fight*, p. 101.

<sup>156</sup> "Bir spor filmi", *Ayın Tarihi*, no. 13 (January 1935), p. 542.

<sup>157</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 194.

harmony between body and mind. Their major line of argument was that they both anchored their physical education model in a Hobbesian worldview. In this context, it is interesting to note Mustafa Kemal's following remarks, as he repeated the Italian conception of physical education almost word for word. "Sport cannot only be regarded as the eligibility of one's physical conditioning. Comprehension and intelligence are also supportive of this endeavor. Physically strong people who fall short of comprehension and intelligence cannot compete with those who are smart but weak in physical terms. I admire those who are intelligent, swift and decent at one and the same time."<sup>158</sup>

Moreover, both regimes attributed outstanding qualities to their youth. The three-part Italian formula of "believe, obey, and fight" bears an alarming resemblance to Turkish formula, *öğün, çalış, güven*, ("conceit, work, confide."). In fairness, it should however be mentioned that the context within which the extremely authoritarian influence was practiced was rather different in the case of Turkey than either those of Italy or Germany. Unlike the German case, for instance, the excessive authoritarian drive had nothing to do racial concerns, although both Italy and Turkey placed substantial nationalist emphasis on the conduct of physical education. On the other hand, again unlike the case of Germany, both regimes developed a proper balance between body and mind.

As seen, there are many points of similarity between the cases of Fascist Italy and Kemalist Turkey. At the same time, however, the nature of the political regime in Turkey distinguished Kemalism from fascist ideology in three ways. First, a large portion of the university students in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy were filling the ranks of their army as storm or shock troopers. Moreover, in the Italian case, those who enrolled in the Physical Education Institute had the right to become officers. The same rationale, however, did not apply to the Turkish case. The level of centralization and coordination required for this task

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<sup>158</sup> Quoted in Atabeyoğlu, *Devlette Spor*, p. 91. Emphasis added.



was too ambitious to achieve within the limited capabilities of the Kemalist elite. Considered from that perspective, it is not easy to say that the Turkish case of physical education achieved the same degree of success as in the cases of Italy and Germany. Militarily speaking, too, such a large-scale mobilization of the population was hardly possible. Furthermore, contrary to the ill-tempered youth of fascist regimes, most of the Turkish youth bowed to the demands of the regime. Most importantly, the Kemalist officials were also hesitant to adopt a militaristic rhetoric on the issue of political socialization. They put a measured distance between them and the people, while they have cherished the population.

A second distinction has to do with the functioning of the Turkish political system. As Zürcher notes, the semblance of a relatively democratic system with a parliament and elections was carefully left in place against all odds.<sup>159</sup> Finally and most significantly, the third distinction, which grows out of the second, is that the attitude propounded by the one-party regime in Turkey was more conciliatory compared to the excesses of Italian fascism. To cite an example, the Italian regime ordered the dissolution of all sporting organizations not affiliated with the state apparatus.<sup>160</sup> While this form of totalitarianism can easily be shown to be the case as far as the Italian case is concerned, a similar sample is hardly discernible in Turkey. This perhaps accounts for the two countries' differing worldviews in that respect. In the Turkish context, the idea of being a part of the nation was stressed time and again, although not to the same extent as the Italian and German examples. While the Turkish officials were largely skeptical of the mobilization of the masses, the Italian fascists were welcomed their involvement in all spheres of social and political life.

While the above discussion basically draws attention to the parallels and differences between the cases of Turkey and that of fascist regimes, the following chapter is more concerned with the selective adaptation of European models of physical education to the

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<sup>159</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 194.

<sup>160</sup> Koon, *Believe, Obey and Fight*, p. 100.

Turkish condition. My contention is that, in view of the evidence emerging from parliamentary proceedings, it is feasible to offer some fresh thinking concerning the treatment of physical education in Turkey. Proceeding from this assumption, therefore, the following chapter expands on the peculiarities of the Turkish case.



### CHAPTER III

#### AN ANALYSIS ON THE LAW ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ITS SOCIAL MANIFESTATIONS IN VARIOUS SPHERES OF LIFE

In the preceding chapters, the major stages of state involvement in the organization of physical education were discussed and the Turkish model of physical education was examined from a comparative perspective. While the previous discussion basically deals with historical and theoretical dimensions, this chapter presents an account of these changes and shows how certain policies and measures with respect to sport activities were brought to life in a given environment during the single-party period. The principal concern of this section is to indicate how these changes transformed the social sphere. In other words, this chapter is more concerned with the outcomes of this policy.

One issue, in this regard, that should be addressed and carefully looked into is the legislative procedure related to physical education. It may be worth reflecting on the mentality that framed the proclamation of this law. Seen in this light, the parliamentary proceedings merit a closer look for two reasons. Clues as to the mindset of the political elite on the matter of sport activities can be found and they provide valuable information from which conclusions may be drawn concerning the shortcomings of this policy.

The second part of the chapter seeks to measure the extent to which the party achieved its declared goals with respect to physical education. To this end, it presents a detailed treatment on a variety of topics ranging from physical education to ceremonial practices during the single-party period. That being the case, it provides valuable clues as to the degree of its success. For the sake of clarity, it is proposed to treat them separately here. On the other

hand, although each topic demands separate attention, they are in many respects interrelated. It also casts light on the degree to which the one-party influenced social life and presents parameters for thought with respect to the limited abilities of the regime.

### Judicial Procedure

As has been discussed above, the RPP gradually extended its influence over the conduct of physical education after its inception. 1938 marked a turning point in this gradual shift. Turning our gaze to the media of the time, it is clear that the forthcoming Law on Physical Education was elevated to an issue of great concern among established opinion makers in the press.<sup>161</sup> Indeed, this issue was debated heatedly, particularly among opinion columnists, in the course of 1938. Seen in this light, it would not be unfair to argue that the press prepared the ground for the proclamation of the Law on Physical Education. The forthcoming section seeks to locate the press in its proper context. I will argue that the issues addressed in these journals and newspapers had a crucial bearing on the proclamation of the Law on Physical Education.<sup>162</sup>

It should be mentioned at the outset that government-sponsored journals like *Ülkü* became vibrant arenas for Turkish opinion-makers during the single-party period. The funding source of these journals explains the tendency to speak with one voice on many issues. The opinion-makers in these journals paid lip service to the regime. More interestingly, they mostly fell into disagreement over nuances rather than fundamentals. Only on extremely rare occasions did a critical view appear. As such, they keep us little of dynamics of power struggle between different political factions. In this respect, the flow of

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<sup>161</sup> See, for instance, Muhittin Birgen, "İsmet İnönü'nün Spor Hakkındaki Beyannamesi", *Son Posta* (28 July 1937).

<sup>162</sup> See, in this context, "Böyle Spor istemiyoruz", *Zaman*, 27 January 1935; "Beceremeyeceksek vazgeçelim", *Zaman*, 28 April 1935.

opinion was rather restricted in the Turkish media during the single-party period. By the mid-1930s, the Turkish press had already evolved into a medium that paid lip service to the single-party regime. Most of the newspapers printed news and commentaries supportive of the regime. The press was usually cautious in their criticism of the government.<sup>163</sup> Much the same counts for the sport magazines as well. Seen in this light, they do not tell us much apart from the propaganda of the regime. At the same time, however, these journals provide a window into the thinking of the Kemalist elite. Moreover, these op-ed pieces attest to the cerebral weight of authoritarian regimes in Europe on the mindset of the Kemalist elite. Established opinion-makers like Selim Sırrı, for instance, contributed many commentaries to newspapers about the evolving political and social developments in Europe.

A significant debate emerged in the late 1930s in these journals concerning how to increase the efficiency of the sport activities. This is so much so that commentaries constantly referred to settling the accounts with the past. To accomplish this goal, these articles were designed so as to confuse reality with historical myths. In this frame of mind, they waged a relentless campaign against the styles and behavior allegedly associated with the Hamidian era. This campaign holds considerable interest as the name of the Sultan is linked to suppressive policies toward sport activities.<sup>164</sup> As if more drama were necessary, the official discourse highlighted the underdevelopment of sanitary conditions and the medical infrastructure during the late Ottoman period.<sup>165</sup> An incident recounted in *Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor*, provides a good illustration with respect to the invention of tradition for the Hamidian era. In a long piece serialized in the journal, as part of a constant struggle with the past, Sultan

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<sup>163</sup> For a brief survey on the evolution of the Turkish press, see Cemil Koçak, "İkinci Dünya Savaşı ve Türk Basını", *Tarih ve Toplum*, no. 35 (November 1986), pp. 29-33.

<sup>164</sup> For an unfavorable account of the sport activities during the Hamidian era, see Cem Atabeyoğlu, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Spor Politikası", in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 8. (İstanbul: İletişim, 1985), pp. 2187-97.

<sup>165</sup> Akın, *Not Just a Game*, p. 85.

Abdulhamid was portrayed as a ghost figure.<sup>166</sup> Over the years, settling accounts with the past continued to haunt the opinion-makers.

In the course of the 1930s, a vast number of articles appeared on physical education and sports. When looking at the very many activities covered in the journals and newspapers, one especially stands out, namely, football. The number of serious injuries during the football season of 1937 fueled interest in the conduct of sports.<sup>167</sup> On close examination, however, the major cause of this revival of interest in sports activities was the imminent danger of war in Europe. What is important in these commentaries is not only that they deal with physical education, but that they also pay lip service to central authority's attitude toward sport activities.

The agenda in these commentaries was dominated by two themes. The centralization of sport activities received the lion's share of attention among a variety of topics. To this end, sport clubs and UTSC officials were repeatedly condemned for seeking only their own interests.<sup>168</sup> Second, the political socialization of youth was constantly stressed in most of the commentaries. They sought to institutionalize the sport activities. They began to stress the need for a more militarized form of physical education in order to strengthen the conditioning of youth. As early as 1935, a bi-weekly sports journal, *Spor Postası*, went even so far as to prepare a draft law for an alternative youth organization.<sup>169</sup> As these and countless other incidents show, the attitude of the press in the treatment of physical education approximated that of the ruling elite.

<sup>166</sup> Gong, "Kızıl Sultan ve Futbol: Abdülhamit, Türk Futbolunu doğarken öldürmiye nasıl çalışmıştı?", *Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor*, no. 3 (February 1939).

<sup>167</sup> See, for instance, Yunus Nadi, "Spor hayatımızda önemli bir merhale", *Cumhuriyet*, 31 March 1937; Burhan Felek, "Bütün spor dertlerini spor kurultayında konuşalım", *Tan*, 8 July 1937; Nasuhi Baydar, "Sporumuzun bugünü ve yarını", *Ulus*, 9 July 1937.

<sup>168</sup> Behçet Kemal Çağlar, "Spor Kongresi", *Ülkü*, no. 39 (May 1936), pp. 200-02.

<sup>169</sup> The details of this weird suggestion can be found in Gül İnanc, "Memleket Davası", p. 61-2.



### A Political Breakthrough: The Law on Physical Education

The eagerly awaited major breakthrough on the political scene arrived when the Law No. 3530 on Physical Education entered into effect on 18 July 1938. The declared purpose of this law was to raise the physical and moral competence of the Turkish citizens.<sup>170</sup> This mission was commended to the General Directorate of Physical Education, established solely for this purpose. Accountable only to the Consultative Board even while functioning in a quasi autonomous fashion, the directorate would serve under the government and be primarily accountable to the government. As for the educational sphere, military, school and sport clubs were to be the three pillars of physical education. The mission was defined in an ambitious way to accomplish this goal. Over the years, the Law on Physical Education underwent a number of revisions so as to keep it in tune with the political and social agenda. The most clear-cut instance of this shift can be seen in the budgetary statistics: The annual budget devoted to sports activities of 239,000 TL in 1938 jumped to 2 million TL in 1939.<sup>171</sup>

In the years that followed, these issues continued to occupy the agenda of the assembly from time to time. Several amendments passed consecutive to the Law on Physical Education. In a state decree issued on 3 April 1940, physical education was defined as a compulsory duty that each citizen, between ages 12 to 45 for men and 12 to 30 for women, had to fulfill for four hours a week.<sup>172</sup> A second amendment came on 14 August 1941 with an additional decree stipulating that women and girls were excused from compulsory physical education. The implementation of these compulsory etudes was entrusted to local governors.

<sup>170</sup> Nuri Demirci, *Spor'da Yönetim Teşkilatlanma, ve Organizasyonlar* (Ankara: M.E.B, 1986), pp. 42-3.

<sup>171</sup> Rahmi Apak, "Yeni Beden Terbiyesi Kanunu III", *Ülkü*, no. 68 (October 1938), p. 124.

<sup>172</sup> Erzincan, Bingöl, Bitmiş, Ağrı, Muş, Siirt, Tunceli, Van, Hakkari, and Antalya were not included in the law. Calculating the approximate amount of incumbents, Kurthan Fişek estimates that they account for about six percent of Turkey's total population at the time. See his *100 Soruda Türkiye Spor Tarihi* (Istanbul: Gerçek, 1985), p. 133. This amount includes women as well.

On 12 February 1942, the above-mentioned time period was limited to between one and four hours a week, largely due to the impracticality of measuring it.

At about the same time, the treatment of physical education was transferred to the Ministry of National Education. This changing of the guards partly accounts for the apparent weakness of coordination between the sport clubs, the General Directorate, and the Ministry of Interior. From 6 July 1942 on, the Ministry of National Education embarked upon an extensive propaganda program by way of radio broadcasts to increase the efficiency of obligatory physical education. Early in the morning Turkish citizens were called out of bed to do their daily practice accompanied by music on the radio.

#### Law on Physical Education: An Analysis

The proclamation of the Law on Physical Education aroused favorable popular response in intellectual circles. It was interpreted to mean the opening of new sports facilities. To them, this promising start of the state indicated the great importance attached to sport activities. The press issued many opinion pieces day after day on the elucidation of this law.<sup>173</sup>

It is not possible to spell out all the articles of the Law on Physical Education in detail here. Hence, I will address several of those that stand out for the sake of our debate. To begin with, Article 4 is particularly noteworthy: Sport activities were rendered compulsory for young people in their spare time. The extent and timing of these compulsory exercises were to be determined later. In addition, any sport club could be closed down with the General Directorate's recommendation and the Consultative Board's approval.<sup>174</sup> Another item worth mentioning, namely, Article 10, dealt with the treatment of physical education in the

<sup>173</sup> See, for instance, Ahmet Emin Yalman, "Sporda Açılan Yeni Çığır", *Tan* (28 July 1938).

<sup>174</sup> Rahmi Apak, "Yeni Beden Terbiyesi Kanunu III", p. 124.

provinces. Notwithstanding the fact that quite a few of the local officials were aware of this law, the treatment of physical education was entrusted to governors in the provinces.<sup>175</sup> Article 80 stipulates that factories employing more than 500 workers were required to have a sports complex and employ an instructor for this task. The establishment of teacher-training colleges was another important step taken in this regard.

What renders this law more remarkable is Şükrü Kaya's opening remarks in the assembly where he also portrays the fundamental features of the ideal Turkish sportsmen: "Each regime looks for a certain type of citizen. The model of citizen during the Hamidian era is apparent to all of us. The Kemalist regime is longing for a man who is cute, dignified, smart, and defensive of his own ideas at all costs. This is what we are looking for. What is intended by this type of physical education is the development of moral and mental attributes. This is the man sought after by our regime."<sup>176</sup>

At this point, it is worth mentioning the draft of the law to obtain a sense of the milieu that framed the mentality of the law makers. The draft was penned by a commission consisting of five people, whose names were Vildan Aşir Savaşır, Adnan Menderes, Fuad Sirmen, Nizamettin Kırşan and Hamdi Emin Çap. The evidence at hand suggests that the second report prepared by Carl Diem had his own stamp on the process and on the draft.<sup>177</sup> Yet the draft underwent significant changes along the way and differs notably from the final version, revealing the implicit concerns underlying the mindset of the Kemalist elite.

Between the lines of the draft version, the obsessive attachment of the commission to the impending war in Europe is clearly discernible. Thus, the premise from which the first article proceeds is the determination to prepare the large masses for wartime conditions. The very first sentence of draft reads as follows: "Physical education is a combination of all sorts of sport and gymnastic activities devoted to developing the physical and moral capabilities of

<sup>175</sup> Rahmi Apak, "Yeni Beden Terbiyesi Kanunu", *Ülkü*, no. 66 (August 1938), p. 518.

<sup>176</sup> TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Cilt 26, Devre 5, İçtima 3, p. 487.

<sup>177</sup> Cem Atabeyoğlu, *Sporda Devlet*, p. 15.

citizens in line with national and revolutionary goals. A Sport Directorate was founded to extend all these activities throughout the country so as to raise robust, swift, reliable, cheerful citizens *ready for war conditions* and hard work.”<sup>178</sup>

What is surprising is that, in spite of the emphasis on war in the draft, there is no mention of this issue in the final version. The wording of Article I in the draft version hints at certain ideological and sportsman creeds of the Kemalist regime, but does not mention the issue of war at all. The first article of the Law on Physical Education runs as follows: “A General Directorate for Physical education was established under the aegis of the Prime Ministry to handle the treatment of sport, game and gymnastic activities by increasing the development of citizens’ physical and moral capabilities in accordance with national and revolutionary goals.”<sup>179</sup>

Another topic of divergence that comes out very clearly in the issue of contention between the commission and assembly is related to the title of the law. The name of the law was stated as the Law on Sports Organizations in the draft whereas it was changed to the Law on Physical Education in the final version. This omission was not accidental. It is a testimony to their set of mind that sought to regulate the issue of sport organizations in a far broader context. Considered from that perspective, the wording of the final version covers the twin intentions of the Kemalist elite, namely, to find an urgent solution to the coming war and to bring the sport organizations under the umbrella of the party as envisaged in the preliminary draft. The final touches on the draft served to cover these intentions.

#### Parliamentary Proceedings

It is remarkable that throughout the process of legislation there was broad consensus in the assembly on the need to establish more authority over sport clubs. During his talk, Şükrü

<sup>178</sup> TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Cilt. 26, Devre 5, İçtima 3, p. 4. Emphasis added.

<sup>179</sup> *Düştur*, Üçüncü Tertip, p. 1656.

Kaya touched upon the regrettable events that had occurred during the football matches in recent years and vehemently attacked sport clubs for their failure to contain these events. On the matter of the law, Kaya declared that: “Sport is a matter of state. It is precisely within this logic that we transfer the issue fully to state. State should mobilize all of its sources so as to proceed immediately in a field beloved by our nation. The new law is the first important step that our revolution taken in this regard.”<sup>180</sup>

In later years, too, the treatment of physical education continued to be an important bone of contention in the assembly. During the parliamentary meetings, the most significant issues revolved around the familiar themes addressed in the press. The comments raised in these sessions provide valuable hints to evaluate the efficiency of this law. It is to be noted that not all the deputies saw eye to eye on the effectiveness of this law. To cite an example, Emin Sazak drew attention to the futility of physical exercises in obedience. To him, the true test of any policy was whether it worked or not. Continuing in the same pessimistic vein, Sazak maintained that workers in the factories were profoundly indifferent to compulsory physical exercises for they already worked all day.<sup>181</sup> To reinforce Sazak’s point, Abidin Daver, a deputy from Istanbul, argued that compulsory physical education was unlikely to be fruitful as it rested on obligation rather than consent. In Daver’s view, it was not easy to change the mindset and deep-rooted habits of a whole nation by coercive measures. Instead, the Directorate should go through a process of harmonization and cooperation with sport clubs.<sup>182</sup>

Another noteworthy subject raised in the parliamentary sessions was the causal relationship between health and sportive activities. An indication of this can be found in Dr. Osman Şevki Uludağ’s speech before the parliament during the negotiations. In making his case, Dr. Uludağ first spoke at great length about the situation in Nazi Germany. Then he

<sup>180</sup> TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Cilt 6 Devre 5, İçtima 3, p. 487.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., Cilt 18, Devre 6, İçtima 2, pp. 363-4.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., Cilt 25, Devre 6, İçtima 3, p. 444.

attributed the shortcomings in the treatment of Law on Physical Education to the lack of coordination between various branches of the state. In Uludağ's view, the only remedy was for the state institutions to put more teeth into the issue of coordination. During the same parliamentary session, Mazhar Kansu made a speech in which he endorsed most of Uludağ's arguments and emphasized the need for proper institutionalization.

Cemil Tahir Taner, the head of the Directorate for Physical Education, delivered a detailed address from the assembly rostrum in 1941 with respect to the current state of affairs. In making his case, Taner drew a fairly accurate picture of sport activities. His comments provided valuable clues concerning the degree of its success and, as the views of an insider, are worth mentioning at some length. Taner began his speech by saying that it was undeniable that the Law on Physical Education had recorded great progress in bringing sport clubs under the umbrella of the party. As a result, 193 sport clubs out of a total of 195 had become party members in a relatively short period of time. Furthermore, the number of people responsible for compulsory physical education had increased twenty-five times prior since the proclamation of this law.<sup>183</sup>

At the same time, however, Taner argued that the early signs regarding the implementation of this law were not encouraging. This trouble largely stemmed from the Gazi Education Institute (*Gazi Terbiye Enstitüsü*) in that only ten people graduated from the Department of Physical Education each year.<sup>184</sup> To overcome the shortage of tutors, Taner argued that due consideration would be given to the Village Institutes. In Taner's view, another daunting challenge ahead of the regime was the difficulty in preparing a common program for all citizens who were in charge of physical education. What appears from his testimony is that he had some reservations on this issue. A crucial element of his criticism on this matter is that the creation of a common program binding for all citizens from one corner

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid., Cilt 18, Devre 6, İçtima 2, p. 366-7.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p. 371.



of the country to the other was logically impossible. In Taner's estimation, one solution to the problem might be to recognize the regional differences in sport activities and encourage people to celebrate their differences rather than to unite them around certain sports.

In view of the impromptu addresses delivered from the assembly rostrum, it can be postulated that this law was prepared with the twin concerns of wartime security and centralization of sports activities. Likewise, the early draft of the Law on Physical Education and the discussions during the parliamentary sessions provide some indications of these concerns and give further credence to this line of argument. When looking at the parliamentary discussions, it is clear that the value of the Law on Physical Education was too limited to be of use. It was essentially a wish list. One root of this failure was the enormous inconsistency between theory and practice. The law was loaded with many unattainable objectives. Moreover, economic turmoil during the war years stood as an obstacle in the way of its realization. Turkey in the 1930s was too undeveloped to establish a strong, centralized one-party system. The existing means of communication were short of meeting the challenges of being a strong single-party regime. At a time when all authoritarian one-party systems called for closer coordination than ever, it was impossible for Turkey to cope effectively with these and other challenges. Just to give an example, the regime ran into difficulties meeting the shortage of teachers for the available posts. In spite of the emphasis placed on its necessity, however, this deficiency could not be handled effectively.

This observation holds especially true in the case of physical education. Notwithstanding the fact that the Turkish model of physical education largely drew on the cases of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in various degrees and fashions, the Turkish example lagged behind its role models. As to why such a transfer toward the fascist model of physical education did not take place in Turkey, one might cite the absence of a mobilizing political ideology as in the case of fascism. The Kemalist project was an inclusive and cautious one in

that the adoption of an exclusive or an alienating political ideology ran the risk growing into overt unrest. Given the economic and social constraints of the regime, and the vivid memories of the weakness of the Ottoman Empire, this concern is all the more understandable. In this sense, the Kemalist establishment adopted a more reserved approach to both fascism and communism. All this may explain why the Law on Physical Education enacted in 1938 was never realized in its entirety. We can develop this point further by looking at the limited success of physical education institutions that came into being during this period.

### Sport Clubs and the Union of Turkish Sports Clubs

As seen in the previous chapter, the establishment of the UTSC went far back to the years of the national struggle for independence. It came into being in January 1921 with fourteen Turkish sport clubs. In 1923, it achieved official recognition. From then on, the RPP used various means to curtail deviation from the official line of the party. Despite the formal independence of the sport clubs, over the years, the RPP gradually clipped their wings. At the same time, however, the sport clubs' connection with the regime remained somewhat obscured. The gradual advance of the party over the clubs did not draw much criticism from club officials as their interests were closely allied with those of the party officials. To put it another way, in contrast to standard interpretations, the relationship between the single-party regime and the sport clubs was not that controversial. Before we go any further into this tense relationship, it is worth looking at how the single-party regime saw the situation.<sup>185</sup>

In Ahmet Fetgeri's view, for instance, the sport clubs that took paths of their own choosing stood as obstacles in the way of further centralization of the physical education

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<sup>185</sup> The interplay between the sport clubs and the Kemalist regime is captured in a perceptive essay by Gül İnanc, "Bir Memleket Davası", pp. 59-63.

system.<sup>186</sup> In a similar vein, Behçet Kemal Çağlar identified the root of the problem in the treatment of physical education from a Kemalist point of view as such: “The reason why our sports have flourished well below our expectations has to do with the decentralized state of the organization. The spirit prevailing in the eighth congress and the new regulation promulgated there has made a significant contribution to Turkish sport activities.”<sup>187</sup> Moreover, despite close coordination between sport clubs, the presence of the RPP would have contributed to strengthening institutional ties. Such efforts on both sides, therefore, would be essential for upgrading this dual alliance to a higher level. What is more interesting to note here is that the sport clubs themselves expended effort to join the ranks of the single-party regime.

In 1936, the UTSC held its eighth congress at which it decided to solve the knotty problem of centralization. Thus, in an effort to bolster the rule of the single-party regime, Ankara gained the mandate to pursue his goals, which previously had lacked a judicial dimension. From now on, all sport clubs would be coalesced into a singular unit under the Turkish Sport Association. Most of the club members did not hesitate to join, as there were no other channels for social advancement. Seen in this light, it was not for nothing that the leaders of the sport clubs approached the party with the offer that all sportsmen would become party members.

Later on, the members of the newly established TSA signed a petition demanding they be allowed to become party members. It seems that this offer did not meet with resistance from the athletes either. A short time thereafter, sport clubs received a warm response from the party. This symbolized the sealing of a new relationship. Halit Bayrak, the Vice President of the TSA, published a statement in the 21 September 1936 issue of *Spor Postası*, in which he took the view that all sport clubs should be collected under the banner of the RPP and

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<sup>186</sup> Ahmet Fetgeri, “Memleket Sporu Neden Terakki Etmiyor?”, *Türkspor*, no. 1 (3 September 1929), pp. 4-5.

<sup>187</sup> Behçet Kemal Çağlar, “Spor Kongresi”, *Ülkü*, no. 39 (May 1936), pp. 200-02.

subject to a single policy.<sup>188</sup> What is astonishing is not the tone of the statement but the kind of ceremony foreseen for this relationship. All accredited sportsmen were compelled to become party members and swear an oath of allegiance to crown the process of membership. The approaching ceremonies of 29 October 1936 provided a suitable ground for the sealing of this new relationship. To recapitulate, the leadership of prominent sport clubs has a remarkable bearing on this outcome. They seized this opportunity to extend their influence in the ranks of the party.

### The Turkish Sport Association

As an institution brought under the wings of the party in 1936, the TSA held a Physical Training Conference in 1938. Those who attended the conference were told to prepare a well-founded program to handle the issue of physical education in a systematic fashion. From then on, the board held regular meetings to discuss current issues in the treatment of physical education. A recurrent and significant theme in these discussions concerned the performance of physical exercises, an issue of primary importance for the education of future tutors.

### The General Directorate for Physical Education

The General Directorate for Physical Education was founded in 1938 to increase the physical and moral capabilities of the Turkish citizens in line with the revolutionary and nationalist goals of the regime. As a result of this decision, the government set up a body devoted to the development of the basic principles in the conduct of physical education. The

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<sup>188</sup> Quoted in Atabeyoğlu, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Spor Politikası", p. 2193.

party attached great importance to this issue, as may be inferred from semi-official statements. It is worth noting that the first official appointed to this post was a major general by the name of Cemil Tahir Taner. More interestingly, Taner assumed the position on the condition that he would maintain his obligations in the military as well.<sup>189</sup> Under his tenure, the first and foremost priority of the Directorate was to form a dividing line between the sports activities in schools and in civilian life. In doing this, Taner sought to find a comprehensive solution to bridge the gap between incumbents from all walks of life.

Yet it did not take Taner too long to realize that the common ground connecting these groups could only come forward with a model that placed significant emphasis on military education. In an attempt to justify his model, Taner argued that this kind of physical education had also come to be regarded as increasingly important in militaristic terms to make the incumbents into a single entity. In this frame of mind, gray uniforms, reminiscent of military clothing, were designed for the participants. To this end, the Directorate issued a regulation with respect to clothing of men and women participants in physical education entitled “Flag and Clothing Regulation for Participants of Obligatory Physical Education” (*Erkek ve Kadın Beden Terbiyesi Mükelleflerine Mahsus Kıyafet, Bayrak ve Flama Talimatnamesi*).<sup>190</sup> The presence of the six arrows on the uniforms is particularly noteworthy. In so doing, these groups became the indispensable components of national identity.

From 1938 to his death in 1945, Taner continued as the head of the Directorate. In the meantime, the perennial problem of the need for skilled instructors became all the difficult once the new law entered into effect. To achieve this goal, the Directorate imposed courses on military education preparatory to these occupations.<sup>191</sup> Under his tenure, apart from its efforts to establish a militaristic physical education system, the Directorate took some concrete steps for the foundation of the Physical Education Institute to train physical education teachers.

<sup>189</sup> For more on Cemil Tahir Taner, see Atabeyoğlu, *Sporda Devlet*, pp 36-45.

<sup>190</sup> For a sample of these illustrations, see Atabeyoğlu, *Sporda Devlet*, p. 42.

<sup>191</sup> Halid, “Yurt Müdafaasında Sporun Ehemmiyeti”, *Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor*, no. 12 (December 1939), pp. 7-9.

This project, however, could not be materialized efficiently. Taner was succeeded by Vildan Aşır Savaşır. At this point, the Law on Physical Education, launched with so much fanfare in 1938, died. Savaşır marked the beginning of a new era by removing compulsory physical education in 1945 immediately after the end of Second World War.

### The Lessons of Physical Education

As the foregoing analysis demonstrates, the Kemalist elite devoted considerable effort to promoting sport activities. Among a variety of physical activities encouraged by the state, gymnastic and team sports receive the most attention. Obviously, however, not all Turks, perhaps not even a good number, embraced these new trends. Although the treatment of such physical exercises as gymnastics goes hand in hand with pedagogy, physical training of this sort remained confined to children and babies.<sup>192</sup> In similar fashion, contrary to the state's stated preference for team sports, individual sports, such as wrestling, continued to be most favored by the people. As a regime that had drawn a thick line through the past, the Turkish rulers viewed sports like wrestling as things of the previous period. With no respect for an archaic and individualist sport like wrestling, the Kemalist elite cherished team sports.<sup>193</sup> Interestingly enough, it was thanks to Turkish wrestlers that Turkey continued to mark record achievements in the international arena.<sup>194</sup>

Proceeding from a similar line of logic, the RPP attached exaggerated importance to the conduct of team sports in physical education lessons in the latter part of the 1930s. They justified it as necessary to strengthen the physical conditioning of the youth in the event of an attack from outside. To this end, however, they implemented the old curriculum with

<sup>192</sup> See, for instance, Ali Şükrü Şavlı, *Süt Çocukları Jimnastiği* (Istanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitabevi, 1940).

<sup>193</sup> It is noteworthy that the case of football is an exception to this overall trend.

<sup>194</sup> For more on Turkish record achievements in this field, see Ergun Hiçyılmaz, *Türkiye'de Spor*, passim.



increased emphasis on physical discipline. On 19 May 1939, Vildan Aşır Savaşır began to publish a sports journal called *Okul-Spor* (School-Sports), for students in order to give shape to sport activities. The executives in charge of preparing these activities could see no other path than these, as other sorts of activities would demand much more time, attention, energy, resources and, most of all, a more functional plan. Instead, extra-curricular sportive activities occupied an important place in the schools. Student Sport Clubs (*Talebe Spor Yurdu*) were founded in schools intended for the development of football, volleyball, skiing, tennis, athleticism and wrestling. As for the primary schools, Fuat Pura's study of physical training served as a guide to the treatment of physical education. Thus, gymnastics continued to receive the most attention in the instructional program.<sup>195</sup>

During this period, thanks to Selim Sırrı, the instruction of physical education took on new forms. Most of the ideas for the practice of sports and physical exercises were developed by him. Physical education teachers began to receive training at institutions of higher learning. As the 1930's drew to a close, not surprisingly, the question of how war is fought arose. At a time when war could not be longer dismissed as a remote possibility, this matter came into discussion in the context of military service.

### Military Service

For reasons of geopolitical location, Turkey was one of the countries that would be affected deeply by the devastating consequences of a war. Socially speaking, nothing remained of the First World War and the national struggle for independence except for bitter memories. Much the same can be said of the military equipment of the Turkish army. As if more drama were necessary, the Turkish officer corps lacked skilled, specialized personnel.

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<sup>195</sup> Selim Sırrı Tarcan, "Çocuklar ve Spor", *Cumhuriyet* (21 September 1937).

Due to these considerations, the military thinking in the formative years of the republic was governed by a defensive vision strategy. From the early 1930s on, however, security once again evolved into an overriding source of concern in militaristic terms. In this frame of mind, military service achieved new importance, grounded not only in worry about the dangers of a possible war, but also in an honest desire to keep morale up in the army so the men would be willing to risk their lives in battle for their country. This would involve adopting new educational measures as well as rethinking national security. These changes stemmed from the need to live with the threat of war as a permanent part of the daily routine. Worse still, the Kemalist elite felt threatened, despite Turkey's neutrality in the war.

Along with the concerns indicated above, it is a well-known fact that during wartime it is not possible to divide a country rigidly into civilian and military sectors; the strength of one depends on the other.<sup>196</sup> To begin with, a great deal of change occurred in terms of security. To cite an example, the borderlands in western Anatolia witnessed extraordinary mobility to meet the enemy in the event of an attack. At the height of the war, in 1941, the Turkish army drew up to 1,300,000 active duty soldiers forming fourteen army corps consisting of forty-one infantry and three cavalry divisions, seven fortified positions and one armoured brigade.<sup>197</sup> The number of active duty soldiers constituted a large number of Turkey's population.

Amidst all these concerns, the withdrawal of men from civilian occupations into the armed forces caused adverse psychological affects throughout the rural segments of the population. Not surprisingly, therefore, the second concern had to with the scarcity of economic resources in provisioning and transporting troops. The following passage from William Hale illustrates the depth of the problem for the army:

In 1938 the government increased the proportion of budget expenditure devoted to defense around 44 per cent, from a low point of 23 per cent in 1932-33, but this still left the armed forces woefully short of modern equipment. In the same year, the total strength of the army was around 195,000 officers and men, but they were mainly

<sup>196</sup> Selim Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp. 31-40.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38. See also Tunçay, "İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın...", p. 41.

armed with the weapons of the First World War. The army had very few tanks or armoured cars, and was still reliant on horses or mules for transport.<sup>198</sup>

To overcome these problems, the government resorted to many tactics in order to collect agricultural products from the peasants. During this period, the gendarme became a powerful and fearsome symbol of the state's presence in countryside.<sup>199</sup>

In the need for more moral support the military appealed to the patriotic sentiments of the troops in the course of the war. The conduct of the soldiers during the Second World War is worthy of note. To this end, wartime training camps came into being. The major aim of these organizations was to strengthen the militaristic and nationalist stress on sport activities. A wide variety of techniques, from the instruction of rifle shooting to the maintenance of the ideal of national health, received attention in these camps.<sup>200</sup> This mode of mobilization was brought into line with the requirements of day-to-day living.

### Ceremonial Practices

Official parades are visual expressions that emphasize the legitimacy of a consolidated regime.<sup>201</sup> Accordingly, one can properly argue that nearly all massive demonstrations are born in visions of national identity. As a form of cementing national and social unity, they serve to narrow the gap between people from all walks of life. Seen from the point of view of any governing elite, such enthusiasm for a regime manifests itself most clearly in national celebrations and festivals. In this frame of mind, the Ankara government, too, began to place growing importance on national holiday ceremonies. It is therefore not surprising that national

<sup>198</sup> William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), p. 65.

<sup>199</sup> For more on this, see Kemal Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: Transition to a Multi-Party System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), pp. 98-133.

<sup>200</sup> For more on wartime measures, see Tunçay, "İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda...", pp. 34-41.

<sup>201</sup> Arzu Öztürkmen, "Celebrating National Holidays in Turkey: History and Memory", *New Perspectives on Turkey* no. 25 (Fall 2001), p. 59.

celebrations and festivals, a legacy of the Second Constitutional Period, developed with unexpected intensity during the republican period. In addition, among a number of newly-proclaimed national festivals, one especially stands out: Atatürk's Commemoration and Youth and Sports Day.

19 May ceremonies began in 1939.<sup>202</sup> From that point on, they were celebrated with great enthusiasm. It celebrates the anniversary of the day Atatürk set foot in Anatolia to initiate the national struggle. In passing, it is particularly noteworthy that the day symbolizing the birth of the new regime is associated with youth. Accompanying these changes, the countryside also witnessed the encouragement of traditionally celebrated local festivals, promoted and regulated by the local municipalities.<sup>203</sup> 19 May ceremonies received extensive coverage in government-sponsored journals such as *Ülkü*, describing the *Gazi* youth as marching, saluting, and chanting in unison.<sup>204</sup> In an address during a memorial mass meeting, Şükrü Kaya gave a vivid description of how the Sevres treaty prevented the Turkish nation from carrying out this honorable and patriotic duty: "The Sevres Treaty, which now sounds like a tale from a distant epoch, prohibited sport and the scout movement to Turkish children. A generation of pale, sick, feeble, dishonored Turkish people doomed to wither away was what they desired."<sup>205</sup> In another speech delivered on the same day, Hüsnü Göksele declared the military virtues to be the basis of Turkish sport activities: "We are a belligerent nation. Our sports are militant sports. We well know how to pass fences or leap over ditches."<sup>206</sup>

At a time when all regimes in Europe sensed the approaching thunder of war, such heroic speeches were not idle coincidences. An additional worry of these ceremonies relates to paying respects to the cult of the perpetual leader. The moving of formed bodies in

<sup>202</sup> For a historical background to 19 May ceremonies, see Nevin Yurdsever Ateş, "19 Mayıs Nasıl Bayram Oldu?", *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 113 (May 2003), pp. 34-7.

<sup>203</sup> Öztürkmen, "National Holidays in Turkey", p. 49.

<sup>204</sup> See, for instance, "Hadiseler ve Düşünceler: 19 Mayıs Gençlik ve Spor Bayramı", *Ülkü*, no. 52 (June 1937), p. 303; "Atatürk'ün yüce huzurlarında Ankara'nın bayramı", *Ülkü* no. 64 (June 1938), pp. 360-63.

<sup>205</sup> *Ayın Tarihi*, no. 42, (June 1937), pp. 48-52.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57-8.

harmony to commemorate the immortal leader, as in the case of 19 May ceremonies, may also be seen partly in this light. What Susan Sontag refers to in the context of art in totalitarian regimes relates to sport activities as well.

The tastes for the monumental and for mass obeisance to the hero are common to both fascist and communist art, reflecting the view of all totalitarian regimes that art has the function of "immortalizing" its leaders and doctrines. The rendering of movement in grandiose and rigid patterns is another element in common, for such choreography rehearses the very unity of the polity. Hence mass athletic demonstrations, a choreography and display of bodies, are a valued activity in all totalitarian countries.<sup>207</sup>

As a sacred duty incumbent on Kemalist youth, what distinguished 19 May celebrations from other national holidays was that, contrary to others, these were felt strongly at the street level. As Arzu Öztürkmen argues, "the 19 May celebrations in the early days of the republic were remembered as a time of street parades, when young people flowed into different parts of the town after the ceremonies. After the 1950s, however, these celebrations were transformed into 'holidays in stadium.'"<sup>208</sup> As the foregoing analysis demonstrates, the national celebrations in the early years of the Republic had a more youthful and spontaneous coloring. The discussion of the issue of confinement to the school grounds and stadiums is very interesting as it sheds light on the mentality of the Kemalist elite. For fear that the youth would go beyond the control of the state, the organization of celebration demonstrations became a source of concern for the Kemalist elite. Proceeding from this set of mind, over the years, "the tradition of parades still continued, but they were limited to the shows put on by military and police forces, along with schools' performances."<sup>209</sup> In other words, the following years witnessed a visible shift in the organization of national holiday celebrations.

<sup>207</sup> Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," *The New York Review of Books* 2, no. 1 (February 1975), p. 26.

<sup>208</sup> Öztürkmen, "National Holidays in Turkey", pp. 70-1.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

### Boy Scout Movement

The Boy Scout movement had its roots in the Ottoman Empire. As an occupation unique to the formative years of childhood, the Boy Scout movement bears salient reference to leisure time activities. At the beginning of the twentieth century, one of the ways Baden-Powell sold the scouts to the nation was by stressing the critical role they could play in preparing the rising generation for the next war. That helps us explain why it was considered as a first step toward militaristic education and began to gain public acceptance as a professional activity.

When looking at the formative years of the Turkish republic, we encounter many attempts to draw young people to these organizations. The declared purpose of these associations was to cultivate physical fitness through games and sports. A large segment of the Kemalist youth filled the ranks of the Boy Scout movement. They were expected to develop a passionate devotion to the principles of the republic. The Boy Scout movement had a powerful influence on the early generations of the republic on hundreds of thousands of boys whose lives it touched.

The activities of the Boy Scout Movement were supplemented by summer courses including coaching schools. As the years wore on, however, these groups came to be regarded with caution by the regime for fear that they might pose an ideological threat against the social order. To prevent a possible headache, the overwhelming influence of these associations was curbed by the state.

### People's Houses

As pointed out earlier, the case of Italy served as an example for the Turkish decision-makers in the formative years of the Republic. The most telling feature of this influence was



the establishment of the People's Houses, aimed at controlling the channels of society as in the case of the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (Spare Time National Organization) in Italy. The Kemalist elite borrowed the model of the People's Houses from Fascist Italy and they used it to try to chart a new path for the political socialization of the nation. The People's Houses were founded in 1932 as nation-wide organizations charged with the responsibility of disseminating the principles of the single-party regime. Soon after, in 1937, Village Institutes were established in every corner of the countryside as an educational attempt to transform the rural sphere.<sup>210</sup> Considering the fact that even the most geographically close cities were beyond the searching gaze of Ankara, the significance of the People's Houses and Village Institutes becomes clearer. Both the People's Houses and Village Institutes waged a tireless campaign to extend the influence of the regime to the periphery.<sup>211</sup> From 1932 to 1950 the Sunday following 19 February was regularly celebrated as the "People's Houses Festival" (*Halkevleri Festivali*).

As might be expected, it did not take the single-party regime too long to transform the People's Houses and Village Institutes into hotbeds of Kemalism. The Village Institutes became an essential component of the regime so as to transform the rural development of Turkey. As for the functioning of the People's Houses, the ruling elite proceeded immediately with a number of key tasks. They provided both a breeding ground for a new form of republican entertainment and a platform for communication. Here, one example will suffice to show the close relationship between the local branches and the party, that is to say, each local branch of the People's Houses would report its respective activities to Ankara on a monthly basis. Impressive consistency was achieved by the local branches in the space of a few years.

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<sup>210</sup> For an accurate observation of Village Institutes, see M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "The Village Institutes Experience in Turkey", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 25, no. 1 (May 1998), pp. 47-73.

<sup>211</sup> On the role of the People's Houses in the shaping of the Kemalist ideology, see Kemal Karpat, "The People's Houses in Turkey: Establishment and Growth", *Middle East Journal* 17 (1963), pp. 55-67.

When we look at the organization of sport activities, the enlarged role of the People's Houses becomes even more significant. Remarkably, the Kemalist elite devoted considerable effort to shaping the nature of sport activities at the People's Houses. To this end, *Ülkü*, the official publication of the Ankara branch, devoted much space to developments in the field of sport activities at the People's Houses. They even went so far as to provide detailed sketches of buildings designed for the sport activities.<sup>212</sup> What is more, it was thanks to People's Houses that sport activities became accessible to out-of-school youth and adults as well as to those in school. The major concern of the executives in charge of sport activities was to develop a well-suited policy in a manner more responsive to the sensibilities of each region.<sup>213</sup> To take an eye-catching example, the only sport at the Antalya branch was tennis. Generally speaking, some nuances aside, team and saloon sports like basketball were considered useful as they were in accordance with the national spirit. The same was true for volleyball. As a matter of fact, the logic behind this frame of mind emanated from the assumption that team sports encouraged team work. An outstanding exception to this trend was football, since it was regarded as a selfish sport activity. In place of football established opinion makers like Nüzhet Abbas highly recommended gymnastic.<sup>214</sup>

Not everybody, however, was content with the involvement of the People's Houses in the treatment of physical education. In Rahmi Apak's view, this would lead to a duality which would complicate the realm of authority. To him, the involvement of both the TSA and People's Houses further complicated matters with respect to the question of authority over this state of affairs.<sup>215</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Rahmi Apak, "Halkevleri Spor Şubeleri Nasıl Çalışmalıdır?", *Ülkü*, no. 64 (June 1938), pp. 351-3.

<sup>213</sup> Behçet Kemal Çağlar "Halkevleri Postası", *Ülkü*, no. 76 (July 1939), pp. 467-9.

<sup>214</sup> Nüzhet Abbas, "Halkevleri ve Memleket Sporu", *Ülkü*, no. 73 (March 1939), pp. 23-6.

<sup>215</sup> Rahmi Apak, "Halkevi Spor Şubeleri", pp. 351-53.

## CHAPTER FOUR

As the 1940s progressed, the domestic and international conjecture changed a great deal for Turkey. The domination of the cultural and social spheres faded in importance after the Second World War when external pressures for democratization became the foremost priority of the one-party regime in Ankara. With a political system withdrawn into the solitude due to its wartime policies, the Turkish ruling elite had no way, but to soften their tone and adopt more conventional policies in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Moreover, all the inadequacies and deficiencies of the one-party system in Turkey came under the spotlight. In that sense, Adnan Menderes' words that were heeded in 1946 concisely express the matter:

The difficulties encountered during the war years uncovered and showed the weak points created by the one-party system in the structure of the country. The hope in the miracles of one-party system vanished, as the one-party system countries were defeated everywhere. Thus, the one-party mentality was destroyed in the turmoil and fire of the Second World War. No country can remain unaffected by the great international events and the contemporary dominating international currents. This influence was felt in our country too.<sup>216</sup>

To recapitulate, whatever the relevance of all internal considerations, with the sword of Damocles hanging over their heads, the Kemalist elite had no option but to liberalize the political system. They did not have the luxury of returning to the isolationist policies of the pre-Second World War era. In a time of vanishing uncertainties, the dramatic shifts in the postbellum context rendered the solitude of Turkey all the more pronounced. Having undergone a rather unsettling two decades in domestic politics, the Kemalist elite had to develop a new political system in a manner not detached from the realities of the day. As of 1946, the one-party

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<sup>216</sup> Quoted in Kemal Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, p. 140.

system in Turkey had come to an end. In the following years, the transformation of the political milieu threw the country into unprecedented alterations, leading to a change of government in 1950.

As is the case in every authoritarian/totalitarian political system, each one-party period, too, leaves appalling questions in its wake. Seen in this light, the following questions remain to be answered in the context of Turkey. Did the Turkish one-party system have a predilection toward totalitarianism? If so, was it a fundamental aspect of the regime or was it simply conjectural? More to the point, what conclusions are we to draw from this policy about the social life during the single-party period? Most of all, what, then, should be our value judgment regarding the involvement of the state in sport activities? Was it a well-thought out unique policy or was it simply conjectural?

These questions return us to a theme which has run through much of this work, that is, the notion of political socialization. Two important dimensions of this notion have to be underlined. First, the idea came into being at a time when the early concepts of Turkish sociology were in the making.<sup>217</sup> As a result of the search for national unity, it found currency during the Second Constitutional Period. Although there was no precise definition of *terbiye*, as a set of principles agreed upon, it served as social cement that responded to the exigencies of the times. A term both meaning education and order, *terbiye* manifested itself in many spheres of social life, particularly in the second meaning of the word.

An extensive body of literature concerning the concept of political socialization emerged during the formative years of the Republic. The discourses on burying the past in these publications are particularly noteworthy as they reflect the Kemalist regime's strong desire to create a "new man." Elsewhere, too, the main goal of the authoritarian regimes was

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<sup>217</sup> For more on the birth of sociology in the late Ottoman Empire and early modern Turkey, see Zafer Toprak, "Türkiye'de Toplum Biliminin Doğuşu," in Mehmet Alkan, ed., *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001), pp. 310-27.

to bring this “new man” into being. As an overwhelming trend of the times, they placed an increased emphasis on sports as an essential part of nation-building.

Second, the notion of *terbiye* lay the foundations of a gradually evolving sport environment and served to legitimize the control of millions of young bodies as a great promise for a better future. The excessively authoritarian discourse conveyed in these policies is attributable mostly to this fact. Considering the dramatic transformation at the turn of the twentieth century, the notion of physical education should be thought of as part of a comprehensive program which would lead to call for more national unity. A similar mentality continued to flourish after the transition from empire to nation. Fallen into a siege mentality with the approaching thunder of a new world war, the social milieu provided fertile soil for the emergence a more authoritarian model of physical education. It was from within this logic that the established opinion-makers voiced sizeable backing for the authoritarian measures adopted by the single-party regime. The worsening international context in the late 1930s posed far greater problems for the regime in Turkey. It was in this period that some high level officials within the ranks of the RPP offered the pursuit of a more domineering path. Evidence at hand suggests that, despite Recep Peker’s best efforts for more authoritarian measures, Atatürk did not view this offer with favor.

Another theme repeated within the frame of this narrative was the issue of centralization. The most important manifestation of this attitude can be seen in the effort to correlate the values of the regime (read Six Arrows) with the principles embodied in sport activities. In the view of the present author, the real motive behind these policies was the extension of the values of the regime to the remotest part of the country, though the declared motive was the establishment of a centralized physical education system that suited the requirements of the times. As such, sport clubs were deemed legitimate targets for intervention as and when the RPP considered this necessary. Nevertheless, as seen in the

parliamentary debates, the single-party regime in Ankara was well aware of how far they lagged behind in the case of centralization.

Under these conditions, the Kemalist elite abstained from carrying out an ideological model of physical education for fear that an emphasis on any ideology would take on political overtones and threaten the very existence of the one-party system. This is precisely where the efforts of Selim Sırrı Tarcan enter the picture. To be sure, his legacy on the rendering of sport activities is not inconsiderable. As both pedagogue and politician, his unwavering dedication to and relentless resolve in carrying those purposes to fruition commands special concentration. Tarcan's views on sport activities fell into a climate of opinion which was half-ready to receive them. As a matter of fact, Tarcan's model of physical education was only a restatement of a view current in the first half of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, this model earned him a significant place among the Kemalist elite. Tarcan made major efforts to introduce the Swedish model of physical education, which was relatively simple and adaptable to different cultures and circumstances, and to the Turkish condition. Likewise, all the contemporary bodily techniques of the time found their manifestations in the works of Selim Sırrı Tarcan.

Although the Swedish model lies at the center of the Turkish approach to physical education, it would be more appropriate to define the Turkish case as a peculiar hybrid of varieties within reach. Therefore on the level of implementation it is easy to find their counterparts in authoritarian examples drawn from Europe. This is so much so that a preliminary look would lead one to conclude that the fascist sport ideology fits into the framework of the Turkish case. However, if one puts aside the major similarities a more complicated picture emerges. It is clear that the Kemalist regime observed other authoritarian regimes in Europe, often with admiration, and learned a great deal from the various practices



employed in those countries. Yet the context within which this interaction came into being is rather different in the case of Turkey than either those of Italy or Germany.

In terms of centralizing the state, the Turkish example lagged behind the German and Italian cases. At the same time, however, one can draw similarities between the Turkish and Italian cases. Both countries depart from the German case in that they adopted a different attitude with respect to intellect. The cardinal element of Turkish model of physical education, as in the case of Italy, was that both proceeded upon the simultaneous treatment of body and mind whereas the German case ordered the unconditional submission of the body in the service of the regime. Both the Italians and Turks were of the opinion that physical education absolutely should go hand in hand with intellectual education. That explains why the founders of modern Turkey tried to stick to the attitude summed up in the famous phrase, “*Sağlam kafa sağlam vücutta bulunur*” (Sound body presupposes a sound mind), to the best of their ability. In so doing, Fascist Italy’s *Mens sana in corpore sano* became proverbial in modern Turkey.

One of the notable steps in the establishment of a centralized physical education system was what has come to be known as the Law on Physical Education. As the analysis of preceding pages indicates, the Law on Physical Education grew out of the conditions of an imminent world war. It was introduced to prevent the fragmentation of sport activity and aimed at emphasizing the militaristic component of physical education. For fear that sport clubs could drop into the habit of making their own agendas, the parliamentary majority adopted a number of laws intended to reduce their autonomy. More to the point, the managers of the leading sport clubs extended their full support to this law in order to further their political positions. Over the years, in view of the shifting economic and social realities, the law underwent a dramatic change and grew more authoritarian. The major reason for these changes owed a great deal to the newly-emerged wartime conditions. Considering the deep

intellectual impact of Fascist Italy, the Italian model of organizational structure was especially well-suited to the condition of Turkey, as in the case of People's Houses. The one-party regime clutched at the hope of creating a national identity so as to effectively cope with the decentralist challenge in the countryside. This was particularly the case in the villages that had national aspirations of their own or that sought to preserve their cultural integrity. It is obvious that the activities of the People's Houses bore fruit up to a point. Stemming from the need to reach broader segments of society, they proved useful in carrying this purpose to fruition. That being so, they served as the elementary basis for political socialization.

As events were soon to prove, however, there were formidable obstacles along the path. The subsequent years indicate that the Kemalist authorities ran into serious difficulties in realizing their social projects in the People's Houses. As the analysis of the preceding pages makes clear, the Kemalist regime failed to articulate a coherent policy toward sport activities during the single-party period. Judging from the available historical evidence relating to the countryside, one can confidently postulate that many things did not operate in real life as they appeared on paper. The Kemalist elite, first and foremost, fell short of meeting the economic challenges. Most of the ideas received initially with great fanfare as major contributions to the field of physical education were shelved due to the lack of financial resources and the absence of qualified personnel. At a time when the schooling was inadequate and unemployment and poverty rates climbed to alarming heights, these projects were failures from the outset.

The official Turkish historiography in the formative years of the Republic placed remarkable emphasis on the progressive dimension in Turkish modernization. One can well understand that a new nation-state like Turkey would be passionate in establishing its identity, claiming historical change even in areas in which the continuity is beyond dispute. The issues raised in this work are a clear testimony to the Kemalist elite's understandable proclivity to

overestimate the relative achievements of the early Republican era. It goes without saying that the early rulers of modern Turkey recorded significant accomplishments and emerged successfully from turbulent times. Despite these important successes of the one-party period, however, the field of sport activities was an exception to this generalization, for reasons I have tried to make clear. It is to be hoped that this modest contribution will offer some fresh thinking on the dynamics of change and continuity from empire to nation state within the confines of Turkish historiography.



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