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The Netherlands

Between Central State and Local Society

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Citation

Lamprou, A. (2009, December 18). *Between Central State and Local Society*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/14423>

Version: Corrected Publisher's Version

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Chapter One

The People's House

If you want to create a nation in this century, to create a community on national qualities, you'll have to create the basis of a popular education.⁶⁷
Recep Peker

The People's Houses were established by the Republican People's Party (CHP) in 1932 as an institution of 'Popular Education' (*Halk Terbiyesi*). Aim of this chapter is to study the People's Houses, this 'juncture of state and society' to quote Migdal, in the realm of the state's intentions, of the 'image of the state'. In order to do so, we first start with a short study of 'Popular Education', the concept upon which the Halkevleri were created according to Recep Peker, the powerful General Secretary of the CHP in the early 1930s. We attempt to trace its origins roughly since the 1908 Young Turk Revolution and the Second Constitutional Period in tandem with the rise of Turkish nationalism, through the Turkish Hearths Association in the Republican Period up to the 1930s and the establishment of the People's Houses. The second part of this chapter focuses on the 'textbook version' of the Halkevi institution defined as it was in a number of normative texts, such as the Halkevi bylaws and other Party papers. The study of such sources aims at presenting the Houses' administrative structure and the ways they were designed to operate.

Finally the third part of this chapter attempts a 'critical reading' of the center's aims and perspective in respect to *Halk Terbiyesi* and the Halkevleri as an institution of 'Popular Education' created by the centre to transmit the reforms to the populace; a 'critical reading' that tries to be inclusive and interpretative of any ambiguities and contradictions situated at the core of the center's discourse about the Houses, their modus operandi and aims, the people who were supposed to carry out their operations as well as those who were supposed to be the targets of their activities. In a more general sense, it entails a double, or else an elaborate, reading of the center's 'modernizing discourse' (and the Halkevleri as a part of it): firstly as a seemingly seamless set of programmatic ideas and goals as it is expressed in normative, pattern-setting texts (Halkevi bylaws for instance) and secondly as a discourse (but also a practice of power) that intrinsically contains ambiguities and contradictions next and in line with similar inconsistencies in the political system of the period, within which the reform movement and the Halkevi have to be considered.

⁶⁷ Recep Peker, "Halkevleri Açılma Nutku", *Ülkü*, No 1, (1932), p. 6, speech at the opening ceremony of the first 14 People's Houses.

In a more general sense this chapter attempts to offer an elementary context for the study of the Halkevi institution, offering a prehistory of similar institutions and placing it in the center's aims and policies, and the regime's discourse.

A

A concept: *Halk Terbiyesi*

In January 1931, Hamit Zübeyr gave a speech on 'Popular Education' (*Halk Terbiyesi*)⁶⁸ at the Turkish Hearth (*Türk Ocağı*) building in Ankara.⁶⁹ Three articles presenting institutions of Adult/Popular Education in various European countries were published in 1929 and 1930 in *Türk Yurdu*, the journal of the Turkish Hearths.⁷⁰ Within 1931 the venue these debates were taking place, the *Türk Ocakları*, was closed and, in 1932, the People's Houses, a network of adult education centers directly administered by the People's Republican Party, was established. Nevertheless, the interest continued. In the first volume alone (1933) of *Ülkü*, the journal of the People's House of Ankara, seven articles treating the issue of Popular Education in Turkey and Europe appeared.⁷¹ It is evident that the term *Halk Terbiyesi* and what it denoted appeared repeatedly around the year 1930, especially with the establishment of the Halkevleri institution. If this growing interest in Popular Education in the beginning of the 1930s is compared to the references to the term *Halk Terbiyesi* during the previous period it becomes evident that Popular Education became an issue of particular importance, debated among intellectuals and circles within the regime, around 1930.⁷² The repercussions of the 1929 crisis, the Free Party experiment with a loyal opposition and the consequent Menemen incident alarmed the ruling elite of the regime's unpopularity among the population and of the failure of the reforms to take roots among the people.

⁶⁸ *Halk Terbiyesi* is literally translated as 'training of the people/people's training'. Here we prefer to use the less precise but more elegant 'Popular Education'.

⁶⁹ Hamit Zübeyr (Koşay), *Halk Terbiyesi* (Ankara: Köy Hocası Matbaası, 1931).

⁷⁰ S. Laslo, Faşist Halk Terbiyesi, *Türk Yurdu*, Vol. 4, (1930); F. Yozsef, "Fin Yüksek Halk mektepleri", *Türk Yurdu*, Vol. 1, No 24- 218, (1929); n. a., "Yugoslavya'da İslav Sokol Kongresi", *Türk Yurdu*, V. 5/24, No 32/226, (1930).

⁷¹ Osman Halit, "Cumhuriyette Halk Terbiyesi", *Ülkü*, No 9, (October, 1933); Kazım Namı, "Cumhuriyet Terbiyesi", *Ülkü*, No 10, (November, 1933); H. Z. Koşay, "Halk terbiyesi Vasıtaları", *Ülkü*, No 2, (March, 1933); Nusret Kemal, "Sovyetlerde Bayram ve Terbiye", *Ülkü*, No 9, (October, 1933); Nusret Kemal, "İnkılap Terbiyesi", *Ülkü*, No 7, (August, 1933); R. Ş., "Garp Memleketlerinde Halk Terbiyesi", *Ülkü*, No 4, (May, 1933); M. Saffet, "İnkılap Terbiyesi", *Ülkü*, No 8, (August, 1933); S.S. Tarjan, "İtalya'da Halk ve Gençlik Teşkilatı", *Ülkü*, No 3, (April, 1933).

⁷² Only one article seems to have been published on *Halk Terbiyesi* in the 1920s, at least according to the Cumhuriyet Dönemi Makalalar Bibliyografyası. İsmail Hakkı, "Halk Terbiyesi", *Muallimler Mecmuası*, No 50-51, (İstanbul, 1927).

The emergence of the concept of Popular Education at that time was not coincidental with the political unrest around the year 1930. It has to be understood as a part of a conscious attempt by the ruling elite to win the population to the reform movement. The significance of Popular Education, beginning in the early 1930s, can be also seen in the creation of an ‘institution of Popular Education’, as the Halkevleri were considered. The PRP’s General Secretary and a very influential political figure of the period, Recep Peker,⁷³ stated the following at the opening ceremony of the first 14 People’s Houses in February 1932:

Friends; we have firmly decided to raise the national unity in a painstaking work and assemble all the fellow citizens under the roof of the Halkevleri that have been created with a mentality that sees all the sincere and Turkish fellow citizens in a place of equal honor.

The school is the classical institution a country has to prepare the nation for the future. However, in order to organize and educate the modern nations as an entity, the usual methods and the regular efforts are not sufficient. However, if you want to create a nation (milletleşmek) in this century, to create a community on national qualities/values (milletçe kütleşmek), you’ll have to create the basis of a popular education (bir halk terbiyesi) at the same time with schools, and after it, that will make the people work together as an unit.⁷⁴

Although the term *Halk Terbiyesi*, as well as the state’s direct involvement in Popular Education, emerged in the 1930s, ideas and activities that were closely related to what in 1930 came to be referred to as *Halk Terbiyesi* had existed before, an immediate example being the *Türk Ocakları* association. Germane as this concept was to the institution under treatment in this thesis, our aim here is to discuss the ‘prehistory’ of the term; to investigate upon the emergence of ideas and activities aiming at ‘educating’ or ‘awakening’ the people; and to come to see how and for what reasons the term came so vigorously to the forefront in 1930.

Before starting this ‘archeological’ survey, it is necessary to understand what the term stands for, or at least how the term was defined in the 1930s. In the following passage Hamit Zübeyr gives an outline of what *Halk Terbiyesi* stands for.

How can we raise the level of civilization of the villager? The sole remedy is Halk Terbiyesi. What is Halk Terbiyesi? It is the work carried out in order to organize the nation and to bring

⁷³ For Peker’s biography see Ahmet Yıldız, “Recep Peker”, in Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekinil (eds.), *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Kemalizm*, Volume 2, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), pp. 58 – 63.

⁷⁴ Recep (Peker), “Halkevleri Açılma Nutku”, pp. 6-8.

out our national values. It means to educate the soul by working the feelings, thoughts and the demands of the individual in a way that is appropriate for the whole nation's ideal. It means to knead the nation's units that have come apart to many pieces as a result of different accents, levels of civilization and religious sects, into a social body, into the state (haline) of a nation. It means to give a share of the national culture back to the broad strata of the Turkish nation, to make the conscious groups (küme) become part of the political and social life of the Turkish nation. It means to make them evolve and progress. This is something we cannot just leave to schools. Adults also need to be educated in this way. (...)
*The aim of Halk Terbiyesi is not just to offer knowledge. Its primary aim is to stir up the desire to move forward and become civilized; to make this desire permanent; to inspire the people to educate itself; to make the people a part of this process.*⁷⁵

The same author states that the “first aim (of popular education) is national consciousness and racial civilization (*ırki medeniyet*). The second is to raise the human soul. The means to achieve these are merry discussions, national dances, folk plays and sports, all within a moral framework (*ahlak çerçevesi*).”

⁷⁶ In another article in *Ülkü*, R. S. argues the following:

*In the progressive western countries next to the school structure that works in the direction of educating the children there is a structure that strives to make the working generations live better off and happier. These activities and structures are defined as Popular Education. Halk Terbiyesi tries to educate those who have not managed to be educated for a variety of reasons; to increase the skills and the knowledge of those educated; to transform them into useful and valuable members of the society.*⁷⁷

Based on the above definitions, it is possible to offer a first outline of what the term signifies. Firstly, all the above authors agree on the inadequacy and/or inability of the state educational system to ‘educate’ the people, especially the villagers that make up the majority of the Turkish population. Adults compose a large part of the ‘uneducated’ population as well. Popular Education, then, denotes the necessity to educate these segments of the population that the school cannot touch.

Secondly, the contents of this ‘educative enterprise’, or else the aims of *Halk Terbiyesi*, are manifold. The authors refer to the need to ‘mold’ the ‘people’ into a nation. The aim is to make the ‘people’ cognizant of themselves

⁷⁵ Koşay, “Halk terbiyesi Vasıtaları”, pp. 152 – 3.

⁷⁶ Hamit Zübeyr, *Halk Terbiyesi*, p. 9.

⁷⁷ R. Ş., “Garp Memleketlerinde Halk Terbiyesi”, p. 295.

as a nation, of being citizens of the Turkish Republic. This means to accept for themselves an identity that had been constructed for them by the state. More specifically, this entails that the ‘people’ are to understand and agree to the principles and reforms that were introduced by the regime. Apart from being a form of ‘civic training’, *Halk Terbiyesi* also aims at the ‘raising of the level of civilization of the people’. Its aim is to create a ‘People’ that would have both ‘modern’ and ‘national’ qualities. In Şükrü Kaya’s words, “the decisions and activities of the People’s House must be carried out in an entirely western, modern and national mentality”.⁷⁸

A third characteristic aspect of the term Popular Education emerges if we consider what the word ‘halk’ denotes. The term ‘people’, used in the sources of the period, is ambiguous; on the one hand, the term refers to the nation, on the other it seems that the ‘people’, or else the ‘common people’ (*asil halk*), signifies the large majority of the population – in contrast to the intellectuals - that has not yet reached the level of civilization the elite or intellectuals have supposedly achieved. In that sense, an implicit distinction is located in the core of the term *Halk Terbiyesi*; the division between the ‘common people’ and the intellectuals. The intellectual, or the ‘citizen’ is a person educated in the principles of the Republic, cognizant of his/her duties and rights, devotee of the reform movement, in a word, a person who is able to act as a representative of the Republic. The movement of ‘Popular Education’ then requires that these “conscious groups become part of the political and social life of the Turkish nation”, in Hamit Zübeyr’s words. The ‘people’, in contrast, is the large part of the population, uneducated and usually still attached to a rejected by the elite ‘past’, a majority that has not yet discovered its real self, almost a ‘child’⁷⁹ that needs to be instructed.⁸⁰ In this perspective, Popular Education comes to mean the envisaged process by which the ‘common people’ are to be ‘educated’ by the intellectuals in order to become aware of their own identity – in reality the identity the ruling elite has carved for them, in other words, to accept and attach themselves to the state’s reforms and principles, to become model citizens of the Turkish Republic.

The reference to childhood and the expressed need to educate and civilize the ‘people’ - apparently still in a state of infancy – to the level of a modern citizen aptly conveys a sense of belatedness, of still being unqualified for that task, which many intellectuals and bureaucrats present as a cause, or even an excuse, for not being able on their part to bestow upon this child-like, ‘unprepared’ people the status and rights of a community of citizens. Recep Peker for instance was adamant and quite expressive in declaring this state of inapplicability and delay: “Democracy is not a dogma, a paragraph of the

⁷⁸ Şükrü Kaya, *Halkevleri ve ödevimiz*, TC Ordu ilbaylığı (Ordu: Gürses Matbaası, 1938), p. 22.

⁷⁹ Koşay, one of the intellectuals dwelling on the issue of Popular education, argues that “the people exactly like children are captivated by the picture” (*halk tıpkı çocuk gibi resme meftundur*); in Koşay, “Halk terbiyesi Vasıtaları”, p. 154.

⁸⁰ Funda Cantek, *‘Yaban’lar ve Yerliler. Başkent olma sürecinde Ankara* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2003), p. 34.

Kuran (*ayet*). It is a spirit (*bir ruh, bir espri ve bir manadır*) and a meaning. If the works to be done are carried out after being passed from a filter called reason (*akıl*) and in accordance with a necessity called place (*muhit*) then they are useful and take roots. Orange trees cannot grow on mount Zigana”.⁸¹ Neither the ‘people’ then possessed the necessary ‘reason’, nor the inescapable place they occupied was ready for the ‘luxury’ of the ‘orange groves’ of democracy. The people have to be instructed, ‘trained’ into citizenship, into being ‘civilized’ and ‘national’ by means of ‘Popular Education’.

The choice of words is probably not totally coincidental: the primary meaning and connotation of the term *terbiye* is ‘(training in) good manners’, ‘civilized behavior’, ‘learning through practice’ rather than ‘knowledge’, ‘education’ and ‘learning through teaching’ the term *maarif*, or later *eğitim* connotes. Even today in Turkey ‘terbiyeli’ is a person with ‘good manners’, ‘civil’, ‘well-bred’, while ‘terbiyesiz’ (rarely *edepsiz*) is the uncouth, impolite, unsophisticated/unrefined and rude person, bearing close semantic similarities with words used to describe people (and/or things related to people) from villages or the countryside (*köylü, taşralı, kurnaz*). Viewed from such an etymological perspective, *Halk Terbiyesi* appears as a civilizing operation, almost a colonial mission to civilize the ‘indigene’, an internal indigenous ‘other’ though, quite dissimilar from the indigenous populations the colonial powers conquered and occupied.

Peker’s spatial metaphor can also be read upon the temporal axis.⁸² A prominent intellectual of the period, the peasantist Nusret Kemal (Köymen) offers such an example where the process by which the state educates the people can be easily understood in temporal terms. He wrote of the ‘duty’ of the populist state to take the necessary measures in order to have the ‘people’ reach its own level of culture and consciousness that will make them capable of administering themselves. As a result of these measures, “those among the people who reach this level will automatically be made partners in the administration of the country”.⁸³ The belatedness, the ‘time lag’ between the modern (west, Europe, colonizer, etc) and the backward local (east, colony, islam, etc) of the colonial/orientalist discourse, also appears at the centre of the discourse of the non-western indigenous elites that adopts a similar historicity and sense of time and place.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Speech of Recep Peker on the new Party program on the 13th of May 1935 in *CHP Genel Sekreter Söylevleri* (Ankara, 1935), p. 33.

⁸² For a similar perspective see Meltem Ahıska, “Occidentalism: The Historical fantasy of the Modern”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102, 2/3 (2003).

⁸³ Nusret Kemal (Köymen), “Halkçılık”, *Ülkü*, Vol. 1, No 3, (April 1933), p. 187.

⁸⁴ Meltem Ahıska, “Occidentalism: The Historical fantasy of the Modern”; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 7-10.

'Towards the People': Ottoman/Turkish Associations in the turmoil years 1908 - 1923

The need to 'educate' the people was heard before the 1930s, during the late 19th century, especially in relation to issues such as the simplification of the language in order to become more intelligible to the people.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the issue of awakening the people was repeatedly raised during the last years of the Ottoman Empire. The 1908 Young Turk revolution, the subsequent establishment of various social and political associations, and the publications' boom that followed, had as an effect the creation of a more open than before public space wherein intellectual and political figures were expressing the need to awaken the people in order to save the threatened state.

Among these intellectuals, a number of Russian Muslims played a prominent and influential role. These intellectuals differed from their Ottoman colleagues in several respects. They had been Muslim citizens of a Christian state. Most of the 'Russian Muslim' intellectuals, men like Yusuf Akçura, Ismail Gasprinski, Ahmet Ağaoğlu and Hüseyinzade Ali, had been educated in Russian schools and were aware of the shortcomings of the old *medrese* type of education.⁸⁶ They had stressed the importance of education in raising the national consciousness of the people.⁸⁷ Some of them were aware of, and had been deeply influenced by the (Narodnik) Populist movement in the late 19th century Russia. Hüseyinzade Ali was reported to have taken part in the Narodnik movement in Russia.⁸⁸ It is not a coincidence then that in 1912 the name *Halka Dođru* (Towards the People) was given to a journal published by the *Türk Ocakları*. 'Towards the people' was the slogan of the Russian populists, and Hüseyinzade Ali was almost certainly the one who introduced it.⁸⁹

Ottoman intellectuals were also emphasizing the need to awaken the people by means of education. François Georgeon indicates that the emergence of nationalism among the non-Muslim populations of the Ottoman Empire alarmed the Ottoman intelligentsia. The emerging nationalism of their non-Muslim classmates seems to be one of the reasons for which a number of students of the Military School of Medicine decided to form an association

⁸⁵ David Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism 1876 – 1908* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), pp. 56 – 80.

⁸⁶ Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (California: University of California Press, 1998).

⁸⁷ Shissler, A. Holly, *Between two Empires. Ahmet Ağaoğlu and the New Turkey* (London: Tauris, 2003), p. 170.

⁸⁸ İlhan Tekeli and Gencay Şaylan, "Türkiye'de halkçılık ideolojisinin evrimi", *Toplum ve Bilim*, No 6-7, (Summer-Fall, 1978), p. 57. It has been also argued that Russian populism had also indirectly influenced the Young Turks this time through their cooperation with Slav intellectuals against the Sultanate regime in Macedonia.

⁸⁹ François Georgeon, *Aux origines du nationalisme Turc. Yusuf Akçura (1876 - 1935)*, (Paris: ADPF, 1980), pp. 66-7.

with the direct aim to ‘awaken the people’, a desire that led to the creation of the *Türk Ocakları*.⁹⁰

Ziya Gökalp, who came to be known as one of the fathers of Turkish nationalism, was undoubtedly one of the most influential thinkers of this turbulent era. His writings inspired many of his contemporaries, among them the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress, who were deciding upon the country’s fate during that period. One of the recurrent themes of his writings was the need to awaken the people. His famous distinction between civilization and culture is of great use here. In his theoretical scheme, Gökalp states that the ‘intellectuals’, whom he considers as the conveyors of civilization that is one and essentially international, should reach the ‘people’, who are the possessors of the real, pure Turkish culture, with the double aim to bring civilization to the people on the one hand, and, on the other, to educate themselves into the national culture that is only to be found among the people. In this framework, “the intellectuals and the thinkers of a nation constitute its elite. The members of the elite are separated from the masses by their higher education and learning. It is they who ought to go to the people.”⁹¹ The word ‘People’ in Gökalpian terms connotes “the main bulk of a nation excluding the elite”, the elite being “intellectuals and thinkers”.⁹²

What is evident from the above extracts is an explicit distinction between the elites – described as intellectuals – and the people, a distinction also to be found in the core of the Kemalist discourse implicitly hidden behind the populist overtones. Gökalp, then, is preaching for a move ‘towards the people’ by the intellectuals in order to realize his ‘synthesis’ of civilization and culture, between the elites and the people. It is almost a commonplace to stress Gökalp’s influence on his contemporaries and the impact of his ideas on the policies of the Turkish Republic after 1923, but we cannot but underline here the close relation of his suggestions to the intellectuals to study the folklore and literature of the people, as well as his short works on folklore and literature, with the aims of the Halkevleri in the 1930s and 40s to collect folk traditions, poems, and establish museums of folk art.

Gökalp, the circle of “Russian Muslims”, as well as other Ottoman scholars, were engaged in publishing, as editors of or contributors to the journals of the era. Moreover, they were among the founding members of associations that had among their aims to reach and educate the people. The need to educate and enlighten the people can be seen in the founding texts of a number of associations of the period: the declaration of the *Türk Derneği* (1908);⁹³ the 1915 bylaws of the *Milli Talim ve Terbiye Cemiyeti*;⁹⁴ the 1912

⁹⁰ Georgeon, *Aux origines*, p. 67.

⁹¹ Niyazi Berkes, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization. Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp* (London, 1959), p. 259; extract from Gökalp’s article ‘Halka Doğru’.

⁹² Berkes, *Turkish Nationalism*, p. 127.

⁹³ Masami Arai, *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 7-20.

⁹⁴ İsmayil Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, *Halkın Evi* (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1950), pp. 22-4.

Nizamname of the Turkish Hearth (1912),⁹⁵ the bylaws of the *Köylü Bilgi Cemiyeti* (1919)⁹⁶ and of the *Halka Doğru Cemiyeti* of Izmir (1916),⁹⁷ to state a few.

Türk Derneği (Turkish Association) was formed in 1908 by a number of scholars, the most prominent of them being Yusuf Akçura. According to the “Declaration of the Turkish Association”, published in the second issue of their publishing organ *Türk Derneği*, aims of the Association were to spread the Ottoman – Turkish language among all Ottomans, publish books in order to complete the education of all Turks, set up libraries and similar educational activities. The declaration speaks of an Ottoman language and of Ottomans, but at the same time stresses its Turkish character.⁹⁸ Moreover, it refers to the education not only of the Ottoman Turks, but also of ‘all Turks’, that is Turks living in other states, a direct influence of the ‘Turkists’, the Muslims coming from Russia. The importance of this declaration for this thesis lies in the call for education of the Turks, by means of spreading the knowledge of the Ottoman Turkish language, the opening of libraries, and the publication of books, all three of which were considered instruments of ‘Popular Education’ in the 1930s.

Undoubtedly the most famous intellectual center of the Young Turk Period was the Turkish Hearth (*Türk Ocağı*) society. The initiative for the establishment of the Turkish Hearth came from the students of the Military Medical School, who were alarmed by the spreading of nationalist/separatist ideas among the non-Muslim students of their School. In a statement composed by Hüseyin Ragıp Baydır dated 24 May 1911, the Medical students declared the need for the spreading of education among the people. They suggested that a national and social institution with branches in both Anatolia and Rumelia must be established. Together with this statement, the students visited intellectuals and tried to win their support for their cause. Among the intellectuals the students contacted, Ahmet Ferit proposed the creation of a club that would gather the Turkish youth and have as its aim to awaken the common people. Various means would be used to succeed in this endeavor, such as the publication of books and brochures, the offering of material and moral aid to schools, etc.⁹⁹ Georgeon evaluates the establishment of the Turkish Hearth association as a reflex of defense of the intellectuals and students facing the critical state of the Empire. Their aim was to maintain the Ottoman state

⁹⁵ Francois Georgeon, “Les Foyers Turcs à l’ époque Kemalist (1923 - 1931)”, *Turcica*, XIV, (1982), p. 169. Also in Zafer Toprak, “Osmanlı Narodnikleri : Halka Doğru gidenler”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 24, (1984), p. 70.

⁹⁶ *Köylü Bilgi Cemiyeti esas nizamnamesi* (İstanbul, 1335 [1919]).

⁹⁷ Toprak, “Osmanlı Narodnikleri”, p. 75.

⁹⁸ Arai, *Turkish Nationalism*, pp. 7-20.

⁹⁹ Arai, *Turkish Nationalism*, pp. 72-3.

against external enemies and centrifugal forces, namely the development of nationalism among the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire.¹⁰⁰

Some time after the defeat in the Balkan Wars, İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu gave a speech and published a brochure about the “education of the people” (*Terbiyeyi Avam*). In his book about the People’s Houses published in 1950, he writes a small history of popular education in Turkey stressing the importance of the political and social associations of the period after the 1908 revolution, especially the Committee of Union and Progress, the Turkish Hearths and the *Milli Talim ve Terbiye Cemiyeti*.¹⁰¹

In 1912, within the Turkish Hearth association a new movement, called *Halka Doğru* (Towards the People), appeared. It started with the publication of a new journal with the same name. Yusuf Akçura, director of the *Türk Yurdu*, was among the founders of this journal. *Halka Doğru* was a publication related to the *Türk Yurdu* journal; while the latter was a more scientific literary review, *Halka Doğru* was a periodical published in the simple language, accessible to everyone, and treating practical problems and issues of education. Most of the contributors of *Halka Doğru* can also be found in the redaction committee of *Türk Yurdu*; Halide Edib, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Yusuf Akçura, Celal Sahir, Hüseyinzade Ali, Ziya Gökalp.¹⁰² The use of the Russian populists’ slogan ‘towards the People’ was not of course a coincidence, as the presence of the Russian Muslim intellectuals suggests. In 1916, the *Halka Doğru Cemiyeti* of Izmir was founded. The Bylaws of this association state the aims, as well as the proposed actions, of the Association. Article 2 declares that the aims of the Association are to set up libraries with works that would enlighten the people and help them progress, to publish journals, open reading rooms, organize scientific competitions, “in short, to raise the moral, economic and social level of the people”.¹⁰³

Parallel to the gradual emergence of the concept of the ‘people’ and the ensuing need to train the population into being ‘the people’, the concept of ‘youth’ as a separate category of the population that also needs special treatment and attention appears. Following the Balkan Wars the Unionist leadership established a number of youth associations with the aim to prepare the youth of the country for war. The Ottoman Strength Clubs (*Osmanlı Güç dernekleri*) were founded by the war ministry in 1914. The Turkish Strength Association (*Türk Gücü cemiyeti*) was established by Cemal Paşa the previous year. Selim Sırrı, an ex army officer, later to become famous as the introducer of Swedish Gymnastics in Turkey wrote an article in 1915 on “how to prepare

¹⁰⁰ Francois Georgeon, “Les Foyers Turcs à l’ époque Kemalist (1923 - 1931)”, *Turcica*, XIV, (1982), p. 169. Also in Zafer Toprak, “Osmanlı Narodnikleri : Halka Doğru gidenler”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 24, (1984), p. 70.

¹⁰¹ İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, *Halkın Evi* (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1950), pp. 18 – 28.

¹⁰² Georgeon, *Aux origines*, pp. 66-7.

¹⁰³ Toprak, “Osmanlı Narodnikleri”, p. 75.

the youth for military service” (*gençler askerliğe nasıl hazırlanmalı*). His emphasis was on the Turkish youth as the future soldiers.¹⁰⁴

In 1918, yet another Association stemming from the Turkish Hearth Society was founded under the name *Köycüler Cemiyeti* (Villagists’ Association) by a group of doctors active within the Turkish Hearth association. Reşit Galib, a young idealist doctor, later to become Education Minister of the Republic of Turkey, was among the founding members of the Association. The first paragraph of the short statute of the *Köycüler Cemiyeti* stated the following: “in Istanbul, on the 25th of November 1334 (1918) an association under the name *Köycüler Cemiyeti* was founded with the aim to provide help to the villagers in the fields of education and hygiene while working among them in a (*insaniyetkar bir tarzda*) humanitarian manner.”¹⁰⁵ In 1919, a group of members of the association – all of them doctors – went to Kayseri and settled in nearby villages in order to take care and treat the villagers. Uluğ İğdemir, writing about his old friend Reşit Galib, described his life as one of a missionary.¹⁰⁶ The depiction of Reşit Galib, who was a prominent member of the Turkish Hearths Association and a person engaged personally into the movement to educate the people and raise their level of civilization, as a missionary, highlights the distance between intellectuals – elites and the people, a distance that lies in the foundations of the ideas and activities of the advocates of ‘Popular Education’ movements.

Taken together with the *Köylü Bilgi Cemiyeti* established in İstanbul roughly the same period, (1335 [1919]), the ‘Villagist Association’ was a natural and logical extension, or part of the whole ‘Popular Education’ movement emerging among the intellectuals of the period. The vast majority of ‘the People’ they were aspiring to ‘educate’ and ‘enlighten’ were peasants living in villages. The Villagist trait, composing an integral and significant part of ‘Halk Terbiyesi’, received increased interest during the chaotic years of the almost continuous warfare till 1922. Interestingly enough, the war brought many elite figures into greater contact with the villagers. Consider the words Mustafa Kemal devoted in a letter to a female friend to his peasant soldiers in Gallipoli, at once demeaning and respectful: “My soldiers are very brave. Their private beliefs make it easier to carry out orders which send them to their death. They see only two supernatural outcomes: victory for the faith or martyrdom. Do you know what the second means? It is to go straight to heaven. There, the houris, God’s most beautiful women, will meet them and will satisfy their desires for all eternity. What great happiness?”¹⁰⁷ The villager and village life was introduced in the literary canon in essence during the

¹⁰⁴ All information on youth associations is taken from Handan Nezir Akmeşe, *The Birth of Modern Turkey. The Ottoman Military and the March to World War I* (London: Tauris, 2005), 163 – 172.

¹⁰⁵ Uluğ İğdemir, *Yılların içinde* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1976), p. 292.

¹⁰⁶ İğdemir, *Yılların içinde*, p. 293.

¹⁰⁷ Given in Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 150.

Republican Period, a fact that by itself only exhibits the growing interest of the elites in the peasant.¹⁰⁸

In spite of their aims, the activities of the Turkish Heart Association, the Villagists and the *Halka Doğru* movement remained rather trivial due to the extraordinary circumstances of the last years of the Ottoman Empire. The First World War, the War of Independence, and the consequent establishment of the Republic of Turkey in place of the defeated Ottoman Empire had an enormous impact on the existence and activities of the Associations we discussed above, as well as on the lives and ideas of the intellectuals we mentioned. The situation in 1923 was completely different from the preexisting order. The Ottoman Empire had disappeared together with any appeals to an Ottoman state or identity. The outcome of the Great War had destroyed any hopes and dreams of a 'Turkic' state that would unite the Turkic peoples of the former Russian Empire with the Ottomans. The remainder became the only option: a new state devoid of Christian minorities, with an almost totally Muslim population. The Turkish Hearths continued to exist after 1923, since they had wholeheartedly supported, as well as most of their influential members, the Nationalist Government of Ankara during the War of Independence.

The Turkish Hearths Association in the Republican Period

The 1924 Congress of the Turkish Hearths ratified the new statute of the Turkish Hearts (*Türk Ocakları Yasası* 1925). Article 2 defines the geographical domain wherein the Hearths would exercise their activities. It states that the Hearths would work among the Turks, having as their aim to reinforce the national consciousness and the Turkish culture, facilitate the progress of civilization and hygiene, as well as the development of the national economy. Article 3 forbids the Hearths' connection with any political Party. It is stated that the members are forbidden to use the Association for political purposes. Georgeon in his article on the Turkish Hearths in the Republican era gives an overview of their structure and their growth in the 1920s. He also calculates that almost 70% of the Hearths' members belonged to what we can call 'western' elite, in a broad sense of the term, that is the parts of society that had a 'modern' or 'western' type education, mainly teachers, doctors, officers, lawyers and state functionaries.¹⁰⁹ According to the bylaws of the Hearths, it was extremely difficult for a person to become a member. It seems that this

¹⁰⁸ The very first novels and short stories that depict or refer to peasants and village life appear during the late 1910s. Reşat Nuri's *Çalıkuşu*, published in 1922, was one of the first and probably the most popular novel about life in a village. See Carole Rathbun, *The Village in the Turkish Novel and Short Story 1920 to 1955* (The Hague/Paris: Mouton, 1972), pp. 18 - 21; Ramazan Kaplan, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Romanında Köy* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 1997), pp. 33 - 63. Mehmet Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "The People's Houses and the cult of the peasant in Turkey", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 34 (4), (1998). For more information on the Villagist movement see Chapter 8 of this thesis.

¹⁰⁹ All information is drawn from Georgeon, "Les Foyers Turcs à l' époque Kemalist (1923 - 1931)", *Turcica*, XIV, (1982).

was a conscious choice of their executives who were constantly afraid of the possibility of ‘reactionary’ elements infiltrating the Association. From another point of view this exclusionary mentality that differentiated between the rulers, state - functionaries and the rest of the population had a long past and can be found in the political discourse of the state elites of the Ottoman Empire.

Even though the members’ statistics show that the majority came from the educated segments of the Turkish society, the Activities Programme of the Turkish Hearths gave great emphasis on the contact with the common people. The *Türk Ocakları Mesai Programı* (Activities Program of the Turkish Hearths), published in 1926, laid the foundations of their intended activities. According to the Program, every Hearth was supposed to organize a conference once a week on Fridays for the benefit of instructing the people on various subjects, such as economical issues, history, geography, local researches, fine arts, and other relevant subjects. The Hearths were also to establish public libraries, as well as to collect photographs of the natural beauties of their region. Moreover, every Branch was requested to set up a lecture Hall, where journals and periodicals would be exhibited. They were also advised to organize exhibitions of local products and artifacts, and to work for the preservation of the Turkish culture by assembling and recording traditions, folk songs, dances and music. The objectives of the members of the pre-war Villagist movement of the *Köycüler Cemiyeti* and the *Köylü Bilgi Cemiyeti* were also to be continued, given that the Activities Program considered as one of the Society’s aims to ‘go to the People’, to the villagers, examine the population, distribute medicines, fight against contagious diseases, and to help ameliorate the local production means. Finally, the branches of the association were asked to open courses of foreign languages, commercial techniques, and relevant subjects.

The activities of the Turkish Hearths described in their Program adopt a more systematized than before form. These activities can be seen as a continuation of the aims and projects of the pre-war *Türk Ocağı* taken together with the *Halka Doğru* movement and the *Köycüler Cemiyeti*. In place of a sometimes rather romantic, unplanned mission to ‘civilize’ the ‘common people’, which in most cases never went beyond the realm of wishful thinking in the Young Turk era, we now observe the drawing of a more organized operational plan.

The structure and organization of their activities in line with a meticulous program indicate that the 1920s was a period of expansion for the Turkish Hearths. This development is also testified by their growth in absolute numbers. In 1924 there were 71 branches of the Hearths and their budget did not exceed an amount of 8.900 T. Liras. In 1931, year of their dissolution, the Hearths had 267 branches, over 32.000 members, and a budget of 1.500.00 liras. Interestingly enough, as Georgeon notices, before 1925 almost all of their branches were located in the western regions of Turkey and along the Black Sea coastline. The branches opened after 1925, though, were mostly

established east of the Adana – Trabzon line. Georgeon convincingly argues that this was the result of a conscious policy of the Hearths that was in line with their aims, since the Eastern part of Turkey was, and still is, considered the most ‘backward’ area with a variety of ethnic and linguistic groups. In that sense, the ‘people’ of the eastern part of Turkey were considered more ‘in need of education’. If we also take into consideration the ‘nationalistic’ overtones of the Turkish Hearths together with the existence of large ethnic minorities in the east, then Georgeon’s observation immediately becomes more credible.

Upon a closer look at the *Türk Ocakları Mesai Programı*, the ideas of Ziya Gökalp can be easily tracked. More specifically, his famous distinction between civilization and culture is echoed in such activities as the collection of folk traditions and the opening of museums of local traditional artifacts and products, wherein the local, national, and ‘pure’ Turkish culture is to be saved from extinction, collected, systematized and rejuvenated. The drive ‘towards the people’ he, as well as other intellectuals, had preached for is also embedded in a number of activities that were planned to take place among the people, in the villages, such as medical treatment and distribution of medicines. The ‘Gökalpian synthesis’, wherein the intellectuals will bring ‘civilization’ to the people and, at the same time, re-immerse themselves in the Turkish culture of the people, is reproduced in the *Mesai Programı*.

The activities of the Turkish Hearths can be broadly put into three major categories. Firstly, we can speak of educational and/or propaganda activities, such as the conferences, libraries and courses the Hearths were organizing. The works of the old Villagists’ Association (*Köycüler Cemiyeti*) fall into a second category. The Hearths were working towards the sanitary, educational and economic condition of the villagers by promoting the improvement of the economic and material conditions of the people, mainly by introducing new methods of cultivation and production. Finally, their folklorist activities, such as the collection of traditional forms of culture and the opening of museums, make up a third category. In the last two categories, we see, again, the influence of Gökalp’s teachings: the intellectuals bring ‘civilization’ to and take ‘culture’ from the people.

What is not explicitly stated in the *Türk Ocakları Mesai Programı*, but Georgeon describes as one of the Hearths’ primary activities, is their active participation in the state’s reform program, mainly in diffusing the reforms to the masses. In Hamdullah Suphi’s words, “the Hearths are the guardians (*bekçi*) of the revolution”.¹¹⁰ In 1928, Propaganda Committees (*irşad heyeti*) existed in 14 Branches. In the Trabzon Turkish Heart an *İnkılap işleri* (Revolutionary works) Committee was set up. It was composed of a school principal and two teachers, who were visiting villages to introduce the ideas of Kemalism and of the revolution to the villagers. Moreover, the Turkish Hearths took an active part in the introduction of the Latin alphabet by opening courses

¹¹⁰ Georgeon, “Les Foyers”, p. 203.

and teaching thousands of citizens the new script. The Hearths, throughout the 1920s, were closely working with the state and acted as the educational and cultural arm of the regime. They supported the regime and its reforms, tried to disseminate its ideology and, finally, tied themselves to the Party. At the 1927 Congress the Turkish Hearths decided to act as 'cultural branches' of the RPP. The Bylaws of the ruling Party approved at the Congress stipulated that the Party Inspectors would investigate the Hearths activities and structures, and that they could even intervene in the Hearths' policies and in the election of their executives.¹¹¹

If we are then to look at the *Türk Ocakları* association more broadly, we can firstly discern a strong connection with the Turkish Hearth and their ideas/activities during the Young Turk era. This continuation becomes more evident when looking at their leading cadres, which include most of the influential intellectuals of the previous period. Secondly, the *Türk Ocakları* of the Republican period adopted a more systematized than their predecessor structure and form of activities, and expanded enormously during the 1920s (branches, members, budget). Finally, the content of their program and works became more concrete, as they had to work on a more or less set, defined political and ideological setting than before. In other words, their aims became clearer in the context of the Kemalist reform movement.

In short, what was defined as *Halk Terbiyesi* around the year 1930 and became the program of the People's Houses in a form even more systematized than the *Türk Ocakları Mesai Programı*, can be seen as a developed and refined form of a set of ideas and practices that had been frequently heard since the Second Constitutional Period.

1930: the turning point

The year 1930 is considered a turning point in the history of modern Turkey. A series of events led the leading cadres of the state to move towards a more authoritarian restructuring of the regime. More specifically, the unsuccessful experiment at a loyal opposition with the Free Party and the events that occurred during its short life, as well as the Menemen incident, had a great impact on the ruling elite of the period, and, consequently on the

¹¹¹ The Hearths chairman, Hamdullah Suphi, was the only delegate to disagree in vain and speak against the 40th article of the 1927 Party Bylaws that curtailed the independent/autonomous status of the Turkish Hearths. Tuncay Dursun, *Tek Parti Dönemindeki Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Büyük Kurultayları* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2002), pp. 20 - 1.

political and social life of the era.¹¹² It has been argued before that the innovations in the political and social life the Kemalist elite introduced after the Free Party experiment in multi party politics were reactions to the issues the Free Party and other developments, like the Menemen incident, had brought to the surface.¹¹³ Following the dissolution of the Free Party, the ruling elite went through a period of 'soul-searching',¹¹⁴ Atatürk's long investigation trip throughout the country seems to suggest.¹¹⁵ An imminent effect was the expansion of the ruling Party's prerogatives and powers especially in relation to non-Party associations, with parallel attempts to increase the control of the Party leadership over the provincial Party structure, a tendency that had already been initiated with the first organizational attempt at the 1927 Party Congress.

First of all, a wide set of changes were initiated in the People's Republican Party, especially after the 3rd Party Congress in May 1931. Modifications of the Party's by-laws were introduced and a number of prominent deputies of the Free Party were included in the CHP. "The 1931 reorganization, the immediate response to the events of the Free Party period, was a combination of tightening the control of the top echelon of leaders over the party's central organs, and decentralization at the province level."¹¹⁶

The trend to close down independent cultural or political clubs and associations, or control them directly, grew during this period, under the slogan of unifying the forces of the Revolution.¹¹⁷ Student Unions, Teachers' Unions, Journalists' society, the Reserve Officers' Association, the Union of Turkish Women, Mason Lodges were either abolished, or decided themselves, probably following directives, to dissolve or join party associations.¹¹⁸ The tendency towards the centralization of power within the party and the intention to deal with those forces that were out of reach of the regime can also be seen in other instances, such as the University reform, carried out in 1933. It was an example of how "the aim of creating a university that would be a supporter of the political power and that would defend the principles of the Turkish Revolution was realized."¹¹⁹

¹¹² Walter Weiker, *Political tutelage and democracy in Turkey* (Leiden, 1973). Mete Tunçay, *T. C. 'nde tek-parti Yönetiminin kurulması (1923-1931)*, (Ankara, 1981).

¹¹³ Esat Öz, *Türkiye'de Tek-parti Yönetimi ve siyasal katılım (1923 - 1945)*, (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 1992); Yılmaz Gülcan, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (1923 - 1946)*, (İstanbul, 2001), pp. 155-62.

¹¹⁴ For the tremendous effect the short Free Party experience had on the ruling Party see Cemil Koçak, *İktidar ve Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2006), especially pp. 343 - 508 for a number of reports by Party men.

¹¹⁵ Ahmet Hamdi Başar, *Atatürk ile üç ay ve 1930 dan sonra Türkiye* (Ankara, 1981).

¹¹⁶ Walter Weiker, *Political tutelage*, p. 193.

¹¹⁷ M. Asım Karaömerlioglu, "The People's Houses and the cult of the peasant in Turkey", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol 34, No 4, (1998), p. 68; Tunçay, *T. C. 'nde tek-parti Yönetiminin kurulması*, p. 297.

¹¹⁸ M. Asım Karaömerlioglu, "The People's Houses and the cult of the peasant in Turkey", p. 68, 86 (footnote 6); Çetin Yetkin, *Türkiye'de tek parti yönetimi* (İstanbul, 1983), p. 62, 78-86.

¹¹⁹ Çetin Yetkin, *Türkiye'de tek parti yönetimi*, p. 72; Ali Arslan, *Darülfünun' dan Üniversiteye* (İstanbul, 1995).

Within such a political environment the term ‘Popular Education’ becomes a catchword, as it epitomizes the regime’s aspirations and efforts to win over the population to their ‘ideal’, in other words to propagate the reforms that had been implemented since 1923, but failed to win the acceptance of the people. This is evident in the preamble of the statute of the People’s Houses, an institution based on the notion of Popular Education:

*We have the obligation and duty to pull out from the deepest structures of society the roots of the institutions that already belong to the past, and clinch the principles of the republic and of the revolution, in the form of the holiest provisions, to all the spirits and opinions. As we are not far away from the Menemen incident and other similar events, it is evident that we must leave as soon as possible the stage/phase of negative tendencies to the past. The power and speed the nations show in their way towards the road of life is parallel to and commensurate with the work of guidance and education that is carried out.*¹²⁰

The statute of the People’s Houses enumerates the duties of each one of the nine working Sections of every Halkevi. It is a detailed program of activities and, in that sense, shares many common features with the *Türk Ocakları Mesai Programı* of 1926. It is fairly reasonable to argue that the *Halkevlerin Talimatnamesi* was influenced by the experiences of the Turkish Hearths, although this is not acknowledged in the *Talimatname*. Nevertheless, it suffices here to mention that most of the individuals engaged in the drawing up of the statute had also been active members of the Turkish Hearths.¹²¹

The interest shown in the institutions of Popular education in various European countries indicates the importance the regime and its advocates placed on *Halk Terbiyesi* as a means to carry their reforms to the people. A number of articles appeared in the first volume of *Ülkü* describing Popular Education in Europe. Within this trend, we also come across more than a few articles on the achievements of authoritarian regimes and their Popular Education associations in Europe, usually of the Soviet Union and Italy.¹²² This interest takes place within the political and ideological tendencies of Turkey after 1930.

¹²⁰ Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası, *Halkevlerin Talimatnamesi* (Ankara, 1932), p. 4.

¹²¹ Şevket Sureyya Aydemir, Sadi İrmak, Tahsin Banguoğlu, Hamit Zübeyir Koşay, Hüseyin Namık Orkun, Kerim Ömer Çağlar, Namık Katoğlu, Vildan Aşir Savaşır, Reşit Galip and others. Anıl Çeçen, *Atatürk’ün kültür kurumu Halkevleri* (Ankara, 1990), p. 95; Orhan Özacun, “Halkevlerin dramı”, *Kebikeç*, Vol. 2, No 3, (1996), pp. 89-90.

¹²² Nusret Kemal, “Sovyetlerde Bayram ve Terbiye”, *Ülkü*, No 9, (October, 1933); R. Ş., “Garp Memleketlerinde Halk Terbiyesi”, *Ülkü*, No 4, (May, 1933); S. S. Tarjan, “İtalya’da Halk ve Gençlik Teşkilatı”, *Ülkü*, No 3, (April, 1933); H. Z. Koşay, “Halk terbiyesi Vasıtaları”, *Ülkü*, No 2, (March, 1933); F. Yozsef, “Fin Yüksek Halk mektepleri”, *Türk Yurdu*, Vol. 1, No 24- 218, (1929); n. a., “Yugoslavya’da İslav Sokol Kongresi”, *Türk Yurdu*, Vol. 5/24, No 32/226, (1930).

In brief, the reorganization of the regime following the 3rd Party Congress in 1931 and the consequent centralist and authoritarian policies described above went hand in hand with a positive reception of the achievements of authoritarian and/or totalitarian regimes, especially of the Soviet Union's economic policies and propaganda institutions, and of Italy's successes in Popular Education. Falih Rıfki Atay, journalist, one of Atatürk's confidants and an extremely influential person among the elite groups, wrote two books drawing on his recollections and thoughts from his travels to Russia and Italy in the beginning of the 1930s. A passage from his book called *Moskova Roma* illustrates, first of all, the search for solutions for a 'stagnating' revolution, and secondly the prevalence of influences from an authoritarian contemporary Europe:

*The name of the Turkish revolutions is Kemalism. The most precious value of Kemalism is Turkey's experiences from 1919 up to 1932. All the revolutions are going to take a lesson from these experiences of Kemalism. We can also take advantage of the experiences of Leninism in Russia and of Mussolinism in Italy. We will step by step investigate Moscow's methods of mass education for the sake of the education of the Turkish masses, Fascism's corporatist methods in order to help the Turkish statist economy, as well as the methods both revolutions use for the education of both children and grown ups, in order to educate a Republican youth with a completely new mind and soul.*¹²³

Hamdullah Suphi, the president of the Turkish Hearths association, claimed that parallelisms exist between the Turkish nationalism and the Piyonir – Komsomol – Children of October organizations created after the 1917 revolution in the Soviet Union aiming at the physical and political education (*vücut terbiyesi ve siyasi terbiye*).¹²⁴

To sum up, the aim of this 'archeological survey' was to explore the 'prehistory' of the term 'Popular Education' and the activities it connotes, taking as *terminus ante quem* the year 1930. It has been then argued that an intellectual movement within the framework of the emerging Turkish nationalism in the Young Turk era preaching the need for the education of the People continued with clearer aims in the Republican period. In the last years of the Ottoman Empire and in the new Turkey, the Turkish Hearths Association was the headquarters of a movement that was calling for the education of the people. During the first part of their life, the Hearths managed to gather a number of intellectuals coming from different backgrounds. The

¹²³ Falih Rıfki Atay, *Moskova Roma* (Muallim Ahmet Kitaphanesi, 1932), p. 5.

¹²⁴ Hamdullah Suphi's speech at the opening ceremony of the Ocak in Ankara on the 23rd of April 1930. Üstel, *Türk Ocakları*, pp. 166-7.

influence of the ‘Russian Muslims’ and of Ziya Gökalp was paramount. The continuous state of war and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire limited the activities of the Turkish Hearths, although a number of projects, such as the Villagists’ Association (*Köycüler Cemiyeti*) and the *Halka Doğru* movement stemmed from the *Türk Ocağı*. A further effect of the chaotic situation of the last years of the Empire, where various ideological schemes that were often inconsistent and contradictory to each other were put forward, was the relative vagueness of the movement’s aims and activities. When the outcome of the War of Independence and the Lausanne Treaty settled the fate of the Ottoman Empire, and the Republic of Turkey was established, the Turkish Hearths were restructured and adopted an organized makeup and program of activities. Their activities, as well as their prominent members, demonstrate the strong connection with the old Turkish Hearth. They continued to expand throughout the 1920s and tried to operate as the regime’s ‘guardian’ and ‘educator’. However, when the regime turned towards more authoritarian policies in the beginning of the 1930s, the Turkish Hearths were closed¹²⁵ and the movement of ‘Popular Education’ came under the total control of the party and state with the establishment of the Halkevleri institution, while the content of that ‘education’ assumed a more evidently political nature. In addition, a term (*Halk Terbiyesi*) was coined to designate the aims and ideas of the movement. A more detailed than the one offered here examination of the activities of the People’s Houses, as well as of the people engaged in this undertaking, will probably show that the continuation between the ‘Popular Education’ - as it was carried out in the Halkevleri - and the activities of the pre-existing associations is greater than what the sources of the 1930s and 1940s indicate.

B

Structure and Functions of the People’s Houses.

The structure of the People’s Houses and their modus operandi were laid down in a number of texts published by the Party. The majority of the literature on the People’s Houses is based on these same texts. In order to give an outline of the institution’s programmatic structure and activities we mainly use three Party publications. The first one is the People’s Houses Bylaws (*CHF Halkevleri Talimatnamesi*, henceforth *CHFHT*) issued in 1932. In 1940 a second and more detailed set of administrative and organizational Bylaws (*C.H.P. Halkevleri idare ve Teşkilat talimatnamesi*, henceforth *CHPITT*) was

¹²⁵ All the works on the dissolution of the Turkish Hearths and the establishment of the Halkevi state a number of reasons for this political decision. These reasons range from foreign pressure by the Soviet Union that was alarmed by the Hearths interest in Turcic populations in its borders, to the support the Free Republican Party had supposedly received from members and executive of the Hearths. For a thorough discussion see Füsün Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Türk milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları (1912 – 1931)*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1997), pp. 321 ff.

published together with a set of operational regulations (*C.H.P. Halkevleri çalışma talimatnamesi*, henceforth *CHPHCT*).¹²⁶

General Structure

The first 26 articles of the 1932 bylaws lay down the structure of every House and describe their prerogatives and duties, as well as the activities they were supposed to perform. According to the first article,

The People's House is a place of gathering and work for those who feel affection for the country in their hearts and minds in the form of a holy, progressive and lofty enthusiasm.

The article continues stating that every citizen can become a member of a House, whether he/she is a party member or not. Nevertheless, only Party members can be elected in the Executive Board of every House and the Administrative Committee of each Section.¹²⁷ There was no legal objection to civil servants joining the Houses or becoming members of the Sectional Committees. The Halkevi employees (secretary, cleaner, porter, librarian) though had to be Party members.¹²⁸ On the contrary, the participation in the Halkevi works was 'highly recommended' to all school teachers by a circular of the Party sent by Recep Peker, the Secretary General, and also signed by Esat, Education Minister in 1932.¹²⁹ According to the 1940 bylaws (*CHPITT* article 16), civil servants (*devlet memurları*) could also be elected to the Sectional Committees. Given that many state employees were not Party members, this clause in reality provides a justification for the employment of educated (mostly school teachers) civil servants that were not (or could not be) party members in the Halkevi activities and management.

While the decision for the opening of a People's House in a region is taken by the General Administrative Board of the CHP, it is the Party's Provincial Branches that carry out all the preparatory work and the actual establishment of the House.¹³⁰ This clause is also included in the duties of the

¹²⁶ *C.H.P. Halkevleri idare ve Teşkilat talimatnamesi* (Ankara: Zevbamat, 1940); *C.H.P. Halkevleri çalışma talimatnamesi* (Ankara: Zevbamat, 1940).

¹²⁷ *C.H.F. Halkevleri Talimatnamesi (CHFHT) Umumi idare heyeti tarafından ihzar, umumi reislik divanınca kabul edilmiştir* (Ankara: Hakimiyet-i Milliye Matbaası, 1932), article 1, p. 5. "The People's House is a place of gathering and work for those who feel affection for the country in their hearts and minds in the form of a holy, progressive and lofty enthusiasm. With this in mind the doors of the People's house are open for all citizens, whether they are members, or not, of the Party. However, it is compulsory that the members of the Executive Board and of the administrative Committees of the sections in a People's House are also members of the People's Party." Also *CHPITT* article 16.

¹²⁸ *CHPITT* article 53.

¹²⁹ From the General Secretary of the Republican People's Party to the Provincial Executive Committees of the Party, 13/3/1932, No 28, in Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası. *Katibi umumîliğinin Fırka Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı* (Ankara, 1933), Vol. 1, pp 56-7.

¹³⁰ *CHFHT*, article 2, p. 5. "The decision for the opening of a House and the conduct of its works is the work of the General Administrative Board of the Party; the foundation, formation,

Provincial Administrative Committees of the Party, as they are asserted in the 75th article (paragraph G) of the statuses of the CHP (*CHF Nizamnamesi ve Program 1931*, Ankara, 1931), approved by the 3rd Party Congress in 1931.¹³¹ The Provincial Party Administrative Committees were also entrusted the duty to “obtain, prepare and provide the Halkevi building”.¹³² In fact, most of the first 14 Houses established in February 1932 were housed in the former *Türk Ocakları* buildings that a year before had been transferred together with their property to the Republican People’s Party. Other buildings were also used, such as the former building of the Committee for Union and Progress in Edirne.¹³³

In addition, the local Party structures maintained a tight control over the funding and finances of the Houses.

*The Houses are governed, exactly as their revenues are provided and fixed, by the Party’s Provincial Boards. The Party’s Provincial Boards are also ratifying and inspecting the budgets of the Houses.*¹³⁴

The Houses were administered with the support of revenues that the Local Administrative Board of the Party provided and secured. The Party’s Provincial Boards were inspecting and ratifying the budgets of the Houses (CHFHT article 9 and CHPITT article 25). Any donation given by individuals or institutions to the Houses was accepted and appropriated for the needs of the Houses by the Executive Board. (CHFHT article 16) The same responsibility was also bestowed upon the Party’s Headquarters (General Administrative Board – Genyönkur) with the 1935 Party bylaws.¹³⁵

All Houses were divided into nine working sections, “in order every citizen to be able to find his preferable sphere of activities according to their various interests, aptitudes and desires.”¹³⁶ The Sections were the following:

- 1-Language, History and Literature Section (*Dil, Tarih, Edebiyat Şubesi*).
- 2-Fine Arts Section (*Güzel sanatlar [or Ar] Şubesi*).
- 3-Theatre Section (*Temsil Şubesi*).
- 4-Sports Section (*İspor [or spor] Şubesi*).
- 5-Social Help Section (*İçtimai [sosyal] yardım Şubesi*).
- 6-Adult Courses/Education Section (*Halk dersaneleri ve kurslar Şubesi*).
- 7-Library and Publications Section (*Kütürhane ve neşriyat [yayın] Şubesi*).

preparation and composition of the House, according to the Regulations, is the work of the Provincial Administrative Committees.”

¹³¹ Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti nde Tek – Parti Yönetiminin kurulması*, pp. 317 and 439.

¹³² CHFHT, article 8, p. 7; also CHPITT article 28.

¹³³ Neşe Gürallar Yeşilkaya, *Halkevleri: ideoloji ve mimarlık* (İstanbul, 1999), pp. 135-6.

¹³⁴ CHFHT, article 9, p. 7.

¹³⁵ *CHP Tüzüğü* (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1935), article 49, in Çetin Yetkin, *Türkiye’de Tek Parti Yönetimi*, p. 267.

¹³⁶ CHFHT, article 4, p. 6.

8-Village Section (*Köycüler* [or *Köycülük*] *Şubesi*).

9-Museum and Exhibitions Section (*Müze ve sergi Şubesi*).

The 1940 bylaws introduced a reorganization of the Sections affecting the first and last Section (*CHPITT* article 8). The first became Language and Literature (*Dil ve edebiyat*), while the last Section was named History and Museum (*Tarih ve Müze*). The names of the other Section were changed according to the language preferences of the time, something that had happened before with the 1935 bylaws, which were actually an *Öz Türkçe* version of the 1932 registrations. Some of these changes are given above in parenthesis.

Every Section keeps a registration book to enroll the new and record the old members. Each section is directed by an Administrative Committee elected from its members, composed of 5 members for those Sections with more than 50 members, and of 3 members for those ones with less than 50 members. However, a Section with less than 10 members cannot have a Section Committee; those elected to be their representative in the House's Executive Board carry out at the same time the duties of the administration of that Section. The Administrative Committee of each House is composed of one representative member from each Committee elected among the members of the Committee for this particular purpose, or between the members of the Section in the event of less than 10 existing members. The Sections have a relevant autonomy to arrange the rules and regulations concerning their activities, as well as the division of labor between the Committee members by themselves, but these regulations have to be endorsed by the Administrative Committee of the House. Some Houses even published the regulations of each Section in the form of bylaws. Although the Party General Secretariat was the supervising authority for the Houses, the Halkevi of Ankara functioned as an unofficial model for all Houses and was the first House to publish these *Talimatnames*, setting the pattern.¹³⁷

Every House must be equipped with a hall devoted to the exercising of certain indoors sports (billiards, table tennis), and that cinema and radio would be used to communicate with the people. Furthermore, the House is compelled to arrange at least once a month a general programme aiming at assembling the entire population of the area.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Orhan Özacın, *CHP Halkevleri yayımları bibliografyası* (İstanbul, 2001), p. 1, 5. For example, Ankara Halkevi: *Ankara Halkevi Dil, Tarih, Edebiyat şubesi talimatnamesi* (Ankara, 1932); Ankara Halkevi: *Ankara Halkevi içtimai yardım şubesi hususi talimatnamesi* (Ankara, 1932); Ankara Halkevi: *Ankara Halkevi kütüphane ve neşriyat şubesi hususi talimatnamesi* (Ankara, 1933); Ankara Halkevi: *Ankara Halkevi spor şubesi hususi talimatnamesi* (Ankara, 1933).

¹³⁸ *CHFHT*, articles 12, 13 and 14, p. 7.

Administrative Committee

The Administrative Committee of the Houses were composed of one representative from each Sectional Committee elected among them. Elections for the Administrative Committee and the Sectional Committees were held once every two years. The president of the Administrative Committee of the House was selected by the Party's local Administrative Committee among its members and not elected by the House's Administrative Committee, or the members of the House. (*CHFHT* article 19). The 1940 Bylaws though allowed for the appointment, again by the local Party Administrative Committee, of civil servants to the Halkevi chairmanship upon recommendation and if a suitable candidate could not be found among the Party members.¹³⁹ Indicative of the same mentality was the proviso that the president of the People's House in Ankara was appointed by the General Administrative Committee of the Party, and that the Ankara People's House communicated directly with the General Secretariat and sent the reports directly to that office (*CHFHT* article 3 and *CHPITT* article 41).

The Administrative Committee of the People's Houses convened at least once a week and its duties were the following:

*a-- the organization and preparation of the general shows for the people at the national anniversaries. b-- the carrying out of the House's programmes. c-- the preservation of the working harmony between the various sections. d-- the arbitration between the sections in case of any dispute or misunderstanding. e-- the examination and ratification of the special bylaws that will be prepared by the sections in order to organize their activities. f-- the keeping of the Houses' accounts and the supervision of their heavy equipment. g-- the drawing up and carrying out of the House's budget.*¹⁴⁰

With the 1940 Bylaws, the Halkevi Administrative Committee became also responsible for the pronouncement and application of disciplinary decisions, introduced by the same Bylaws for the first time, and the employment and dismissal of the Halkevi employees.¹⁴¹

A clear separation of responsibilities was introduced between local and central Party structures in relation to the monitoring of the activities of the Houses. "The Administrative Committee of each House communicates with the Party's Provincial Administration Boards on financial and local administrative matters, and with the Party's General Secretariat on issues related to the duties and activities of the Sections shown in the regulation books of the sections. The budget of each House is ratified by the Party's

¹³⁹ *CHPITT*, article 35.

¹⁴⁰ *CHFHT*, article 20, pp. 8-9.

¹⁴¹ *CHPITT*, article 43.

provincial Administration Committee.”¹⁴² Moreover, the House’s Administration Committee was to send a report on the efforts and activities of the various sections to the General Secretariat of the People’s Republican Party every three months. One copy of these reports was also dispatched to the regional Party Administrative Committee.¹⁴³

*Language and Literature Section*¹⁴⁴

The Language and Literature Section aims at spreading the principles of the CHP through researches and other activities and raising the general educational level. It organizes lectures “with the purpose of raising the general knowledge. These conferences have as their aim to well establish the principles of the Republic and the Revolution, to increase the love of the country and the feeling of the duties of citizenship.” It also carries out research and collects “ancient national fairy tails, sayings and proverbs, as well as ancient national traditions”. The Section takes part in the language reform project by collecting ‘pure Turkish’ words and in publications on the above-described subjects. “The Section protects and encourages those youngsters who, while being educated in the House, show a special aptitude in the fields of science and literature. The Section tries to ensure ways and solutions so that they may cultivate their aptitudes and capabilities”. It publishes the House’s journal and organizes ceremonies to commemorate the ‘Great Turks’ in the fields of literature, knowledge and the arts. The General Secretariat has to be informed on - and probably consent to, although such an approval is not mentioned – the persons to be commemorated before the actual ceremony takes place.

*Fine Arts section*¹⁴⁵

The aims of the Fine Arts Section are to gather artists who would be active in the arts such as music, sculpture, architecture, or the decorative arts; organize concerts and play music in the House and during the House’s shows; ensure that the modern and international music is performed in its true nature; increase the number of those interested in the fine arts, by way of giving lessons if possible; promote the learning of the national marches and songs by the whole people; record the notes, as well as the harmony and style, of the national songs that are recited among the people, especially in villages and in nomadic communities. The Section should encourage the performing and should incorporate into its shows national dances with their original clothing,

¹⁴² *CHPITT*, article 21, p. 9.

¹⁴³ *CHPITT*, article 26, p. 9.

¹⁴⁴ *CHPHCT*, articles 1 – 18.

¹⁴⁵ *CHPHCT*, articles 19 – 42.

instruments and songs. It should also encourage men and women to perform these dances together. The Section should also open exhibitions of painters and photographers.

*Theatre Section*¹⁴⁶

The Theatre Section establishes a theatrical group composed of male and female members and stages plays. The plays to be staged should be approved by the General Administrative Board of the CHP. The female roles in the plays cannot be given to male actors. Shadow theatre and puppet show (*Karagöz* and *Orta Oyun*) are very important for the purpose of educating the People (*Halk Terbiyesi bakımından*) and should be incorporated into the works of the Section. The Section can also acquire a cinema projector and organize cinema shows free of charge in order to “raise the ideas and good taste of the People through the means of cinema”. The films to be shown are sent by the government or the Party. The Theatre Section tries to propagate the ideology and principles of the Party through the staging of theatre plays and cinema.

*Sports Section*¹⁴⁷

The Sports Section organizes sports events, “teaches the citizens the indoor Gymnastics that are the foundation of modern Hygiene”, and opens physical training rooms. Once a week it organizes a gymnastics event, separately for men and women. With the passing of the Law for Physical training (*Beden Terbiyesi*) the Section cooperates with the local Director of Physical training in organizing sporting events. The recruitment of Gymnastics teachers is also emphasized. The Halkevi Bylaws refer to and recommend certain sports in particular: hunting, *cirit* on horses, and wrestling are mentioned as ‘national’ sports that need to be developed. Other, equally ‘masculine’ sports are recommended: fencing with the assistance of army officers, boxing; moreover, cycling, winter sports and skiing in particular, and sea sports, especially swimming. The reasons for the development of these particular sports are interesting and significant for understanding the planners’ ideas. Some of them are designated as ‘national’, while the development of other sports that were not widespread at all is considered a national need. Swimming is an illustrating example: “everyone should learn how to swim”. One cannot but underline the potential ‘martial’ use of all the sports mentioned in particular in the Bylaws and, in that sense, we can point to the similarity with the ‘youth associations’ established during the First World War.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ *CHPHCT*, articles 43 – 52.

¹⁴⁷ *CHPHCT*, articles 53 – 65.

¹⁴⁸ The issue of Physical Training and sports in general and in relation to the concept of ‘the youth’, as well as the state’s policies in this respect is quite large and we cannot of course dwell further into it. For an analysis of the policies on sports during the Republican Period: Yiğit Akın, “*Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar*” *Erken Cumhuriyet’te Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004).

*Social Assistance Section*¹⁴⁹

The Social Assistance Section organizes and carries out philanthropic activities alone and with the cooperation of other similar Associations. The Section “acts as a guide for the transport of those who need medical treatment”, “provides shelter in the cities and towns to those farmers and their families coming from the villages in need medical treatment”, and “mediates for the jobless to find a job”. The targets of its activities are orphan students, the disabled, especially war veterans, women with no men or family, the elders, the sick, and the villagers. In the villagers’ case, the Sections activities are to be carried out with the help and cooperation of the Village Section. The Section might work in order to open and operate dispensaries or Medical Examination Centers that will offer their services free of charge. The cooperation of the doctors and medical staff of the district is mentioned in particular.

*Courses Section*¹⁵⁰

The Courses’ Section “offers its assistance to the works of those enterprises of the municipalities and private local institutions that aim at strengthening individuals, by teaching them reading and writing, foreign languages and sciences, art, and every day life practical information”. Courses on many subjects (Reading and Writing, historical and local information, knowledge of civilization, foreign languages, arithmetic, accounting, typing) are given by volunteers, even in Prisons. Attesting to the positivist ideological roots of the Houses own project, the bylaws mention that the Section might also open laboratories of physics or chemistry that will introduce the exact sciences to the people of the region.

*Library and Publications Section*¹⁵¹

The Library and Publications Section establishes and runs a library open to everybody free of any charge and carries out events that aim at “boosting the people’s knowledge”. It can also establish reading rooms and book exhibitions. The 1940 Bylaws are very meticulous in relation to what kind of books are not supposed to be found in a Halkevi library offering us a very short but detailed description of the regime’s own specters:

“Books of religious nature, [books] that do not comply to the ideology of the Turkish revolution, that depict foreign regimes and ideologies, that aim at [spreading] superstitions that run contrary to the overall national and realist opinions but at [spreading] backwards and reactionary mentalities, that inspire pessimism, that depict crime and actions like suicide, works that increase the inclination for lust and greed and encourage the youth to harmful habits.”

¹⁴⁹ *CHPHCT*, articles 66 – 78.

¹⁵⁰ *CHFHT* articles 45 – 52; *CHPHCT*, articles 79 – 88.

¹⁵¹ *CHFHT* articles 53 – 56; *CHPHCT*, articles 89 – 103.

Furthermore, “all kinds of publications¹⁵² that might possibly be sent to the Houses from a foreign source – no matter how – are to be sent to the General Secretariat before being placed in the House’s library.”¹⁵³

*Village Section*¹⁵⁴

The Village Section “works towards the material, aesthetic and sanitary progress and growth of the villagers, as well as towards strengthening the feelings of mutual affection and solidarity between the villages and the city dweller”, “by means of inviting the villagers of the nearby places to the Houses’ fests and the Houses’ members to the countryside festivals”. Moreover, in cooperation with the Social Assistance Section it expands the activities of this Section to the countryside and to the villagers. A more detailed presentation and analysis of the Village Section’s activities is given in Chapter 8.

*History and Museum Section*¹⁵⁵

Finally, the Museum and History Section assists in the establishment or enrichment of Museums, organizes exhibitions of works of artists and of “national products and manufactures”. It works to assemble Ethnological and folklore material. All the material to be collected is to be registered in an inventory to be sent to the General Secretariat.

As for the general atmosphere that should reign in the Halkevi halls and among its members and guests, it is one of fraternity and equality.

No separate place is reserved for individuals during the meetings of the Houses. Only as a sign of respect for persons like His Excellency the national leader, Gazi Mustafa Kemal, and the State authorities, a special place is prepared for the President of the Republic, the President of the National Assembly, the Prime minister, and in places with Civil Servants, for the prefects, majors, village headmen, and the highest military commander of the region. A sense of sincerity and brotherhood reigns under the roof of the People’s Houses. For these reason there is no place in the People’s Rooms for

¹⁵² Later on the General Secretariat issued lists of books that “inculcate the idea of communism to the youth, which will dominate the future of this country, while they are also effective in propagating similar foreign and false views” and should therefore be erased from the records of Halkevi libraries and be sent immediately to the General Secretariat, as the No 1166 communiqué of 8/4/1938 to 209 Houses stated. The communiqué contains two lists. The first contains seven books in Turkish by Karl Marx, Fatma Yalçın, Sabiha Zekeriya (Sertel), Haydar Rifat. The second list contains eleven books, (Marx and Engels, Nazım Hikmet, and translations of Hikmet Kıvılcım, Sabiha Zekeriya Sertel, Haydar Rifat and Hasan Ali). Contained in *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğin Parti örgütüne Genelgesi, İkinci Kamun 1938 den 30 Haziran 1938 tarihine kadar*, Vol. 12, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1938), pp. 74 -5.

¹⁵³ *CHPHCT*, articles 90 and 94.

¹⁵⁴ *CHFHT* articles 57 – 61; *CHPHCT*, articles 104 – 112.

¹⁵⁵ *CHPHCT*, articles 113 – 117.

*any thinking to act contrary to the idea of treating everybody the same way (as equals). Those who come late at the gatherings, if there is no seat available, remain standing. Although these principles are safeguarded, the Executive Board of every House, in order to organize the attendance of the meetings and the activities that take place in the Halls, as well as to preserve the tranquility and order, can lay down provisions, in harmony with the peculiarities of the region.*¹⁵⁶

C

The Halkevleri institution was a product of its era, the 1930s. This can be read in their administrative and organizational built up expressed in the normative texts of the period. My argument is that the political system and regime of the period, the ruling elite's preoccupations, plans and aims were inscribed into the Houses' structure and the way they were designed to operate.

By political system I am referring to the one-Party regime, the two-tier electoral system that safeguarded the selection by the centre of the MPs to be 'elected'. A large part of those elected to the National Assembly had no real ties to their electoral constituencies, had been born elsewhere (usually in the Balkans or the Caucasus region), had military or bureaucratic background, and, probably most important, had close ties with (or even were members of the narrow circle of) the ruling elite, as friends, associates and colleagues. The rest (and less significant) of the members of the National Assembly – if we take this group as representative of the centre – were mostly professionals from the provinces.¹⁵⁷ Members of Government and other positions with executive power were staffed by persons of the same background with close ties to the ruling circles. In short, at least the political and executive power in the centre was held by a rather small group of people with military or bureaucratic background and a similar past (participation into war of Independence and ex-Unionist or at least sympathizers).

From the beginning of the 1930s, a tendency towards centralization was well under way.¹⁵⁸ A wide set of innovations and changes in the regime and the political system at that period attest to this growing at that time attempt

¹⁵⁶ CHFHT article 15.

¹⁵⁷ Frederic Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite* (Cambridge Mass, 1965); Cemil Koçak, "Parliament Membership during the Single-Party System in Turkey (1925 - 1945)", *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, Thematic Issue No 3, Being an MP in contemporary Turkey, (2005), URL: <http://www.ejts.org/document497.html>.

¹⁵⁸ To be more precise, the changes introduced by the 1927 Party Congress (selection of Party candidates for the Parliament by the Party president, control of non party associations by Party inspectors) according to Öz were a "legitimization of the centralist – authoritarian structure" and laid the foundation of the One Party System. Esat Öz, *Türkiye'de Tek-parti Yönetimi ve siyasal katılım (1923 - 1945)*, (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 1992), pp. 99 – 101.

towards the organizational sophistication in the centre and the periphery with the employment of vertical, top-down control mechanisms: the establishment of General Inspectorates¹⁵⁹ with wide authorities staffed by persons very close to the Party and State leaders; the Party reorganizations of 1931 and 1935, the sophistication of Party activities and structure, part of which were the regularization of the Party Congresses, the corollary to the Party Congresses “*Dilek Sistemi*”¹⁶⁰ and the administration of petitions and grievances by Party and State;¹⁶¹ the reemergence of the Party Inspectorship System¹⁶² with the appointment of trusted by the centre non-local to their Inspectorship areas Party inspectors in place of the old (Unionist and later Party) local ‘trustees’ (*mutemed*). The convergence between the Party and the state mechanisms at the centre was close even before the 1936 resolution that merged the offices of the Interior Minister and the General Secretary of the Party.¹⁶³ The office of the General Secretary had always been occupied by political figures that had been or were to become ministers or high government and state officials since the establishment of the *Halk Partisi*. Many of the people staffing the General Secretariat were also state officials and/or members of the ruling Party elite at the centre (MPs for example). In other words, the Party headquarters, i.e. the General Secretariat, cannot be understood as an autonomous from the central state and Party organization, at least in terms of its cadre.¹⁶⁴ We cannot apprehend these policies without taking into account an increasing distrust by the centre of the Party membership and bosses in the provinces.¹⁶⁵ In short, the

¹⁵⁹ Cemil Koçak, *Umumi Müfettişlikler (1927 - 1952)*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003).

¹⁶⁰ Probably the best description of the *Dilek Sistemi* and the Party Congresses is to be found in Esat Öz, *Türkiye’de Tek-parti Yönetimi ve siyasal katılım (1923 - 1945)*, (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 1992). Also in Tuncay Dursun, *Tek Parti Dönemindeki Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Büyük Kurultaylar* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2002), p. 24 – 5.

¹⁶¹ Yiğit Akın, “Reconsidering State, Party, and Society in early Republican Turkey: Politics of Petitioning”, *IJMES*, No. 39, (2007); Alexandros Lamprou, “‘CHP Genel Sekreterliği Yüksek Makamına’: 30’lu ve 40’lu yıllarda Halkevleri’yle ilgili CHP’ye gönderilen şikayet ve dilek mektupları üzerine kısa bir söz”, *Kebikeç*, 23, (2007).

¹⁶² Cemil Koçak, “Tek- Parti Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi’nde Parti Müfettişliği”, *Tarık Zafer Tunaya’ya Armağan*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Barosu Yayınları, 1992). For reports by Party Inspectors see Chapter 2 and Murat Metinsoy, “Erken Cumhuriyet döneminde mebusların intihap dairesi ve teftiş bölgesi raporları”, *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, No 3, (Spring 2006).

¹⁶³ Cemil Koçak, “CHP – devlet kaynaşması (1936)”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, No 118, (November 2003).

¹⁶⁴ The archive of the General Secretariat of the CHP contains thousands of documents of correspondence between state offices (Secretaries, Ministries, various state offices) and the Party Headquarters. It is not an exaggeration to argue that the General Secretariat of the CHP was partly functioning as a state bureau.

¹⁶⁵ Speaking against the proposed 125th article of the Party Bylaws during the 1931 Party Congress that stated that no candidate is put forward at the Party elections unless proposed by the General Committee of the President (*Umumi Reislik Divanı*, i.e. the Party and State president, the prime minister) Alaeddin Bey, delegate of Kütahya expressed this deep suspicion of the Party elites, members and, consequently, of the population at large: “There are 30 thousand Party members in the Vilayet of Kütahya. There would be no issue, if 3 thousand had comprehended the revolution’s ideology. If we abolish the ‘namzet system’ – our friends from Anatolia know that – demagoguery plays a major role in Anatolia. If we abolish it, as a result of propaganda of the type ‘he does not pray’, ‘he does not fast’, we won’t see any youth that has accepted the revolution enter any (Party) Administrative Committee.” In *CHF Üçüncü Büyük Kongre Zabıtları* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931), pp. 231, 236.

1931 and 1935 Party reorganizations as well as the overall tendency throughout the 1930s went towards the expansion the central Party and State's control over the Party mechanisms and structures in the provinces. Needless to say, this policy of centralization run parallel to the ongoing penetration of the state into the countryside, through the establishment and expansion of communication networks, a national market, and various state agencies (educational, judicial, military, administrative, financial institutions).

In principle and theory, this tendency and in general the policies of centralization and the increasing control of the provinces by the centre can be read as an attempt by the state to curtail, or at least seize, some of the powers and privileges of the provincial elites and local notables who had traditionally functioned as middlemen between central state and population. These middlemen were well-entrenched local elites constituting the backbone of the provincial Party leadership, exhibiting a high degree of integration into the political system through their status in the provinces, their Party positions and their vertical connections with state offices and men (in the provinces and in the centre) by virtue of their official and unofficial status and functions (tax-farmers, court witnesses, municipal officials, members of chambers of commerce, ex-CUP and current CHP members and executives, second electors, vote-mongers, useful for the mobilization of the population as in the case of the War of Independence).¹⁶⁶

In practice though, there was the other side of the coin. Past the center's intentions and the rationale behind the policies of centralization mentioned above, it is essential to acknowledge the *center's constraints* in implementing such policies in the provinces. It was not only the local elites that benefited from their cooperation with the center. The centre as well had to rely on these local elites that formed its Party core in order to control the provinces and population as long as the central state did not have the capacity to control the periphery on its own. In other words, the structural dependencies of centre on the local (Party) elites due to the rather low level of state (offices, personnel) penetration of the provinces and the ongoing reform program necessitated the utilization (or at least could not do otherwise) of local elites. We also have to keep in mind not to imagine the centre (in terms of offices, structures and individuals and networks) quite away, distinct and unrelated to the provinces. Local elites had vertical relations with members and interests at the centre occasionally going years back, to the CUP and the War of Independence. Conversely many members of the core ruling elite in Ankara came from and had close personal ties and interests in the provinces.

Two examples illustrating the vertical link of the provincial elites to the center: (1) During the discussions over the new Party Bylaws (*tüzük*) at the 1931 Party Congress¹⁶⁷ one of the few topics that raised objections was the

¹⁶⁶ Hakkı Uyar, "Tek Parti İktidarın Toplumsal Kökenleri", *Toplumsal Tarih*, No 106, (October 2002).

¹⁶⁷ *CHF Üçüncü Büyük Kongre Zabıtları* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931).

126th article. The article stated that “persons working in the Party organization cannot occupy more than one position that produces income such as at the Provincial General Assembly, the Municipal Assembly, the Chambers of Commerce. Moreover, those occupying one position at these institutions cannot assume even a honorary duty in institutions such as the Red Cross.” At the end the article was accepted as it stood after Recep Peker, the powerful Secretary General, intervened. In defending the article at the debate, Hakkı Tarık was clear about the article’s aim. The article would help the Party become younger. Conversely what was feared was also stated: “Wherever we went we saw the core of the 25 year old Committee of Union and Progress in charge of the Party structures. Friends, it is a pity if 25 years now we could not produce a new ideological friend.”¹⁶⁸ In practice the provisions of the 126th article were habitually overturned, as we shall see in the second chapter.¹⁶⁹ That debate, rare as it was during the discussions, is, according to my reading, a sign of the uneasiness entrenched in the provinces local elites felt in relation to this article and to the possibility of losing some of the power they were possessing in the provinces. What is more, this uneasiness was expressed in the Party discussions demonstrating the existence of vertical connection of provincial elites within offices of the centre.

(2) In his memoirs Kazım Nami Duru writes of his experience as a Party Inspector of the Afyon region. After a inspection trip to the region he returned to Ankara where he learned that Ali Çetinkaya, a native and MP of Afyon, had spoken vehemently against him because his reports from Afyon gave the impression that the Party friends there were thinking of nothing but their own personal interests. Kazım Nami implies that this enemy his reports had won him, a person close to Atatürk, was the reason he never again was appointed as a Party Inspector.¹⁷⁰

Both cases, the debate on the 126th article and Kazım Nami’s story, demonstrate the existence of vertical relations between Party elites in the provinces and members of the ruling elite in the centre that might run contrary to the center’s plans.¹⁷¹ This contradictory relationship is evident in the words/names used for the Party bosses in the provinces before 1930:

¹⁶⁸ “Nereye Gittikse fırka başında 25 senelik İttihadü Tarakkinin anasını görüldük. Arkadaşlar, 25 senedir bir fikir olarak yeni bir arkadaş peyda edememişsek yazık bize.” In *CHF Üçüncü Büyük Kongre Zabıtları* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931), p. 276, mentioned in Tuncay Dursun, *Tek Parti Dönemindeki Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Büyük Kurultaylar* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2002), p. 43. See also Cemil Koçak, *İktidar ve Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2006), p. 259, where a Free Party pamphlet is referring to the power of the (CHP) Party’s men as ‘the sultanate of the usurpers’ (mütegallibe saltanatı).

¹⁶⁹ For a very detailed presentation of the issue of the 126th article see Cemil Koçak, *İktidar ve Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, p. 294 ff.

¹⁷⁰ Kazım Nami Duru, *Cumhuriyet Devri Hatıralarım* (İstanbul: Sucuoğlu Matbaası, 1958), p. 46.

¹⁷¹ For a nuanced analysis of the relations of the forces of the center and the periphery in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey see Şerif Mardin influential articles, “Centre-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?”, *Daedalus*, (Winter 1972/73) and “Centre-Periphery as a Concept for the Study of the Social Transformation of Turkey”, in D. D. Grillo (ed.), *Nation and the State in Europe. Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Academic Press, 1980).

mütegallibe (usurper)-*mutemed* (trustee). Whether from the perspective of the central state/Party or of the provinces, the connotations of the latter term signify an entrusted local person representing the centre/Party to the province and vice versa, while the former term points to this person's illegitimate power to fulfill this intermediary role, to his usurping the power and status of another authority.¹⁷²

A similar case indicating the Party's preoccupations to enlarge its constituency at the expense of entrenched local elites appeared when in 1936 the Halkevi of Harput asked the General Secretariat's resolution regarding the existence of relatives in the Administrative Committee of the Halkevi. The Halkevi Bylaws did not clarify whether it was permissible to have members of the same family on the Halkevi Board. The General Secretariat replied to all Houses in 15/10/1936. The directive stated that the issue was discussed during the meeting of the GenYönKurul in 3/10/1936. Based on the 79th article of the Party Bylaws (*tüzük*) that forbids relatives (father, wife or children) to occupy more than one position in the Party Administrative Committees, the Party's equally decided to prohibit more than one relative in the Halkevi Administrative Committees. This stipulation did not apply to the Sectional Committees though.¹⁷³

To recapitulate, a tendency and a reality: the tendency of the centre to control the provinces and local party men, whom it did not fully trust, the reality imposing the need to employ these not fully trusted local elites to carry out its policies. The dynamics of the power distribution and politics at the local level depends on and oscillates between these two conflicting traits, always to be understood in relation to the social conditions of the local societies.

Parallel to these two attributes, we need to consider a third one, namely the centre's effort to propagate in the provinces and among the populace the reforms initiated in the 1920s and the ones continuing to be introduced in the 1930s, primary through a conscious attempt to broaden the regime's influence and constituency. The establishment of a novel set of institutions in the 1930s attests to the urgent need felt by the ruling elite to broaden its base and propagate its policies. The People's Houses were among these institutions preceded by the People's Orators (*Halk Hatipleri*),¹⁷⁴ to be followed by the

¹⁷² Esat Öz, *Türkiye'de Tek-parti Yönetimi*, p. 107; Hilmi Uran, p. 230; Alaeddin Bey, delegate of Kütahya at the 1931 Party Congress expressed this ambivalence regarding the Party mutemed: "We do know that many mutemet are old ağas, wherever we may go, a mutemet comes out, like a userper (mütegallibe) of the old age." In *CHF Üçüncü Büyük Kongre Zabıtları* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931), p. 231.

¹⁷³ Both letter and directive contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/3.13.74.

¹⁷⁴ The People's Orators Organization (*Halk Hatipleri Teşkilatı*) was a Party initiative established around September 1931. The Orators were to be chosen by the Party center among the Party members. They would address the population during state anniversaries, national and local elections, during village fests and open markets in provincial centers and villages. The Bylaw of the Organization provides detailed information about the orators down to the way they were to address the people and even the clothes they were supposed to wear. They were to speak about the Republican regime, the Party program and principles, the Turkish history, civilization and bravery, as well as about issues that would arise on a daily basis in different localities and needed to be

People's Rooms, the Turkish Language Association, the Village Institutes, to name a few. In order to reach the periphery and the populace the regime couldn't but rely on the employment of the local Party structures. The provincial Party organization was probably one of the few organizational mechanisms under the relative control of the centre that possessed the necessary resources and means to penetrate the countryside. Both People's Houses and Rooms as well as the *Halk Hatipleri* initiative were conceived and activated through the employment of the Party's local resources. The oxymoron lies in that the centre was trying to reach the periphery and populace through the use of the same structures and people whose power it was on a more general level intending to reduce, namely the local notables, the provincial Party elites.

Furthermore, a first step towards increasing its following, propagating its policies and attempting to cling the population – by large considered hostile – to the reforms, was to consolidate what it considered its 'natural constituency', the educated parts of the population that had a more 'western' outlook, a rather easy task if we consider that most of them were state employees. A number of occupational and cultural associations and clubs were closed down, voluntarily or under pressure from the government, and their members, or even assets as in the case of the Turkish Hearths, were advised to join the Party or participate in Party controlled associations. The civil servants were prohibited by law to become members of political Parties. In practice though, this prohibition did not cover the RPP as there was not much objection when civil servants were or became members of the ruling Party.¹⁷⁵ The idea was to tightly control all non-Party and autonomous associations and absorb them and their members in Party or state structures.¹⁷⁶ I chose to read this as an attempted 'instrumentalization' of the educated segments of the population within Party structures. The regime's aim of this consolidation of 'kin' forces was to employ them in its ongoing program of 'reform diffusion' to the population that was to be carried out through Party organizations the People's Houses being among the most important. From another point of view, this 'instrumentalization' of the 'intellectuals', as the Party sources call the educated, was homologous to the center's policies that were aiming at controlling the Party structure in the provinces and raising the Party (and Halkevi) membership figures,¹⁷⁷ more generally put, to increase the

explained to the people. The information given here is taken from the detailed presentation of the organization in Işıl Çakal, *Konuşunuz Konuşturunuz. Tek Parti Döneminde Propagandanın Etkin Silahı: Söz* (İstanbul: Otopsi, 2004), pp. 67 – 82.

¹⁷⁵ Civil servants were apparently considered by the ruling elite as "natural elements" of the Party. Cemil Koçak, *İktidar ve Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, p. 197.

¹⁷⁶ The motto of the period was 'unity of forces'. As Atatürk himself stated "the forces of the same nature must be unified towards the common aim." In *Vakit*, 25 Mart 1931, in Çetin Yetkin, *Türkiye'de tek parti yönetimi*, p. 30.

¹⁷⁷ See directives from the General Secretariat urging Provincial Party structures to raise the Party membership: No 100, *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Katibiumumluğunun Firka Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı, İkinci Kanun 1933' ten Haziran nihayetine kadar*, Vol. 2, (Ankara: Hakimiyeti Milliye

inclusiveness of the population into the Party and State structures and policies. The centre (central state and Party) was, simply put, quite suspicious, uneasy, or at least not quite trustful of its Party members and executives in the provinces. In certain circumstances, especially when it came to propagating the reforms and novelties to the population, it rather tended to favor and trust educated state employees and civil servants more than local elites that were staffing, or more openly put were the Party elite in the provinces.

The ‘textbook version’ of the Halkevi institution, its structure and modus operandi, in other words the way this structure was conceptualized and planned by the ruling elite, bares close resemblance to the political system this same elite partly inherited and partly shaped. In a single Party political system where opposition Parties were in practice banned especially after the year 1930, the People’s Houses were during the same period established upon the abolishment and occasional incorporation into their structures of a variety institutions, associations and clubs that were independent of or not directly controlled by the state and/or Party although they had similar ideological roots, functions and activities (Turkish Hearths, Women and Teachers’ Associations, Mason Lodges, etc). Likewise, the two-tier electoral system that allowed the ruling elite to virtually handpick the members of the National Assembly to be elected while giving the outward image of a Parliamentary Republic closely corresponds to the administration of the Houses: while everybody was free to become a member and vote in the House elections, those to be elected to the Sectional and the Administrative Committees had to be Party members or civil servants while the House’s Chairman was appointed by the local Party structure usually among its members. The electorate, either for the National Assembly or the Halkevi Committees, was deeply mistrusted, or at the very best was considered not yet mature – consider the ‘child(hood) metaphor employed to describe the ‘people’ and justify their exclusion – for full and free citizenship rights. This mistrust of the ‘center’ over the ‘forces of the periphery’, to use these terms in the way Mardin employs them, was not limited to the elusive ‘other’, the ‘childlike’ or ‘backward people’ that was at once viewed as the ‘true people’ and the ‘ignorant people’ (*asıl/cahil halk*); this entrenched suspicion and the corollary need for control extended to virtually all existing social, political and financial associations not directly controlled by the center.

Matbaası, 1933), p. 10; No 188, *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Katibiumumliğinin Firka Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı, Temmuz 1933’ ten Birinci kanun 1933 sonuna kadar*, Vol. 3, (Ankara: Hakimiyeti Milliye Matbaası, 1934), p. 17; No 1179, date 4/5/1938, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğin Parti örgütüne Genelgesi, İkinci Kanun 1938 den 30 Haziran 1938 tarihine kadar*, Vol. 12, (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1938), p. 23; No 1/1987, date 24/1/1941, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğin Parti Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı, 1 Birinci Kanun 1941 den 30 Haziran 1941 tarihine kadar*, Vol. 18, (Ankara: Ulus Matbaası, 1941), p. 5. For directives urging for the registration of women Party members see No 413, 414, 420, *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Katibiumumliğinin Firka Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı, Temmuz 1934’ ten Birinci Kanun 1934 sonuna kadar*, Vol. 5, (Ankara: Ulus Matbaası, 1935), pp. 21, 22 and 29 respectively.

The establishment of top-down, vertical control/investigation institutions, either new or in place of pre-existing horizontal ones, is a direct indication of this tendency. The establishment of the ‘General Inspectorships’ and the re-emergence of the Party Inspectorships system¹⁷⁸ staffed by high level bureaucrats selected directly by the upper echelons of the Party and State leadership in place of the older system of the local ‘Party trustees’ (*mutemed*) is a case in point. Needless to say, the Party Inspectors, apart from their responsibility to investigate and report on almost everything in the provinces (from Party and State structures and employees to newspapers, Sports clubs, and other association, from the financial state of the regions and populace to the state of roads and popular grievances), had wide prerogatives to intervene in local Party and state politics and take decisions bypassing local authorities.¹⁷⁹

The argument put forward here is that all the above three tenets (i-centralization through vertical top down control mechanisms, ii-employment of local Party elites/notables and resources, and iii-instrumentalization of ‘intellectuals’ and state employees) can be read in the Halkevi institution’s administrative structure and underlying ideological framework, and thus have to be accounted for and problematised in any study of the Halkevi institution.

In terms of administrative structure, the dual control and administration of the Houses by the centre and local Party structures is an obvious example of the first two tenets. The Houses were to be established according to a centrally devised plan, run by local Party elites and through the employment of local resources but also controlled by central Party and state authorities, such as the Party Inspectors and/or the Party General Secretariat. The local Party was also

¹⁷⁸ The Party issued regulation booklets on the inspection activity of the Party Inspectors: *C.H.P. Teftiş Talimatnamesi* (Ankara: Ulus basımevi, 1939); *C.H.P. Teşkilatı kurulmamış Vilayetlerdeki Halkevleri ve odaları Teftiş Talimatnamesi* (Ankara: Zerbamat, 1940); *C.H.P. Teftiş Talimatnamesi* (Ankara: Sümer Matbaası, 1943).

¹⁷⁹ The ‘General Inspector’ and the ‘Party Inspector’ were the most high level bureaucrats holders of this rank, probably the most feared by those to be investigated, while they have also drawn the attention of the literature, if we judge from their appearance in novels and memoirs. Nevertheless, apparently there was a whole array of ‘inspectors’ from many state structures (ministries etc) cruising through the provinces. Even the rumor of an incoming müfettiş seems to have caused a lot of anxiety and fear among the people to be investigated but also in general. The event of an arrival of a müfettiş and the panic that follows was apparently so widespread that became the hilarious story of Orhan Kemal’s novel *Müfettişler Müfettişi* (İstanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 1966) about a trickster who travels around Anatolia pretending to be ‘the inspector’ in order to extract bribes and presents in exchange for not reporting the frauds and wrongdoings he supposedly finds. Cemil Koçak, “Tek- Parti Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi’nde Parti Müfettişliği”, *Tarık Zafer Tunaya’ya Armağan*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Barosu Yayınları, 1992); Koçak, Cemil, *Umumi Müfettişlikler (1927 - 1952)*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003). For the account of the visit of an Inspector from the Ministry of Education to investigate the case of an alleged communist teacher in the Kayseri Lise see the novel of Cevdet Kudret, *Havada Bulut Yok* (İstanbul: İnkılab ve Aka Yayınları, 1976), p. 325 onward, as well as Fakir Baykurt’s memoirs *Köy Enstitülü Delikanlı* (İstanbul: Papirüs Yayınevi, 1999), pp. 301 – 324, where the real story of the visit of an inspector to investigate again an alleged communist teacher in the Village Institute the writer was attending is described. Although the former is a novel and the latter an autobiography, the similarities between the two stories are impressive suggesting that the experience of an incoming inspector was quite common.

designed to go through the same vertical, top-down control by similar authorities. The 1936 resolution for further cooperation between Party and state, and its practical result in the provinces, i.e. the presiding over the local Party structures by the Governor (Vali) in place of an elected/appointed local Party boss, as was the norm before, is also a case in point. The center's tendency towards more centralization through the employment of state employees and instrumentalisation of the 'intellectuals' was also inscribed into the Halkevi Bylaws. In the 1932 *Halkevi Talimatnamesi* the Halkevi chairman was to be elected among the members of the local Party Administrative Committee and the members of the Houses' Sectional Committees had to be Party members. The following sentence though stated that there is no objection to civil servants becoming Halkevi Committee members. The 1940 Bylaws were more straightforward: Party members and/or civil servants could become Committee members and even Halkevi chairmen. In practice that was the case even earlier in the 1930s as demonstrated in the second chapter for a number of Houses. All the normative texts regarding the Halkevi institution though never displayed any degree of ambiguity in relation to the need to employ the civil servants and the 'intellectuals'. From the Halkevi Bylaws¹⁸⁰ to the communications of the General Secretariat to the Party structures and the speeches of politicians and bureaucrats the point was made openly: the 'intellectuals' have to be incorporated into the Halkevi project. Coercion and pressure was rife.¹⁸¹

In conceptual terms, the Houses' essential task, i.e. *Halk Terbiyesi*, incorporates, or rather is written upon, the center's policies of centralization and instrumentalisation. The 'Popular Education' activities the Houses were supposed to carry out in accordance with their Bylaws bear a singular content, uniform for all parts of the country and for the population as a whole with no differentiation. This singularity is attested by the center's minimal tolerance to any degree of divergence in the Houses' activities or makeup due to local peculiarities; the project was to be identically executed with nation-wide uniformity. Allowance for the local was only allowed in case this local was to be part of a 'national canon', a distinctive local part of a larger national set of characteristics. The crafting of a national repertoire of folklore, salvaged and

¹⁸⁰ The activities and duties of the Halkevi Sections presented in the 1932 *Talimatname* required the employment of teachers, doctors/medical staff, artists, and, in general, the literate. Recep Peker's speeches are adamant in that respect: "We have to drive the new educated fresh elements every day and by every means to the pulpit, to the fronts of discussion" in Recep Peker, "Konuşunuz ve konuşturunuz", *Ülkü*, Vol. 1, No 1, p. 27; also "there is great need of a guiding element that would be composed of all the mature/experienced people that would function as educators. [A] school teacher after completing his assigned duty, a deputy after carrying out his tasks in the national assembly, a doctor after treating his patients with knowledge and tender, they think that they there is no other work and duty left to do for the community. This is what needs to be corrected in a true way", in "Halkevi Açılma Nutku", *Ülkü*, Vol. 1, No 1, (1932), pp. 6-8. Also in Recep Peker, "Ülkü niçin çıkıyor", *Ülkü*, Vol. 1, No 1, (1932), p.1.

¹⁸¹ Yahya Akyüz, *Türkiye'de öğretmenlerin toplumsal değişimdeki etkileri 1848 - 1940* (Ankara: Doğan Basımevi, 1978), p. 251; Hürrem Arman, *Piramidin tabanı. Köy Enstitüleri ve Tonguç* (Ankara: I Matbaacılık ve Ticaret, 1969), pp. 208, 213, 240. See also Chapter 5 of this thesis.

purged from undesired elements, de-contextualized, and inserted into the national repertoire of the ‘popular’ (dances, theatre, sports, music) that could be enacted time and again in a unified national time and space, a national ‘market’ for folklore, is one of the very few cases where the ‘local’ – de-contextualized, de-localized and instrumentalised in a different, national this time context - could be tolerated, employed and operated upon in and by the Houses.¹⁸²

In the introduction to this chapter we defined *Halk Terbiyesi* as ‘training’ of ‘the People’ by the ‘intellectuals’ the centre sought to instrumentalise, a ‘civic training’ to be realized in the Halkevi space, created by the centre, imbued with activities bearing a singular, uniform content, administered and provided for by local Party structures and resources, and optimally controlled by vertical top-down Party and State mechanisms.

Halk Terbiyesi, as a process and a concept, expresses a cleavage between ‘*halk*’ and ‘*münevver*’ felt and expressed in the core of the discourse of the centre. The nation and people is one, equal, ‘the true master of the country’, but also differentiated between ‘the real people’ and the ‘intellectuals’, between which a rift, a cleavage exists and needs to be closed through *Halk Terbiyesi*, the essence of the Halkevi institution. This Kemalist equation (*Halk + münevver = halk terbiyesi*) expresses the center’s uneasiness with and suspicion of the population, and implies a paradox if put next to the regime’s populist overtones. This paradox in the centre of the regime’s discourse can be explained with reference to the ruling elite’s internalization of core tenets of the orientalist discourse in what Ahiska has termed the ‘occidental fantasy’, wherein, among other things, the non-western elite discourse, in place of the ‘orientalist/colonial’ exotic other, constructs an internal ‘other’ inhabiting an ‘oriental/traditional/backward’ space-time.¹⁸³ The cleavage between the People and the intellectuals implied in the concept of ‘Popular Education’ becomes evident when we consider the way these two elements of the equation are mentioned in the normative texts.

The intellectuals, the ‘guiding element’, are described as ‘modern’, carriers of civilization, ‘western’ (*garpli*), but potentially idle, bored, snobbish, overwesternized, not adequately national perhaps, terms similarly used in the Kemalist literary canon of the 1930s for Istanbul and its supposedly corrupt, international and ‘Levantine’ character. The process of instrumentalising the

¹⁸² Öztürkmen’s works on folklore have forcefully made this point: “I dance Folklore”, in Arzu Öztürkmen, “The role of the People’s Houses in the making of national culture in Turkey”, *New perspectives on Turkey*, 11, (Fall 1994). Also Arzu Öztürkmen, “I Dance Folklore”, in Deniz Kandiyoti and Ayşe Saktanber, *Fragments of Culture. The Everyday of Modern Turkey* (London: Tauris, 2002).

¹⁸³ Meltem Ahiska, *Radyonun Sihirli Kapısı. Garbiyatçılık ve Politik Öznellik* (İstanbul: Metis, 2005); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000). In her article “Occidentalism: The Historical fantasy of the Modern”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102, 2/3 (2003), Ahiska reminds us that the Ottoman Empire can also be considered a colonial power – albeit a different one than the European colonial powers – in relation to the Arab lands and populations.

intellectuals, the educated and ‘westernized’ segments of the population within *Halk Terbiyesi* resembles the celebrated¹⁸⁴ Kemalist journey from the ‘oriental’, Ottoman, ‘old’, ‘idle’, ‘Levantine’, international and ‘degenerate’ Istanbul to the ‘young’, ‘modern’, national and vibrating Ankara, an obligatory journey to the Anatolian wasteland conversely feared and experienced with despair by many bureaucrats and state employees.

On the other hand the second part of the Kemalist equation, ‘the people’, were rather defined in the negative, as ‘traditional’, ‘backward’, ‘fundamentalist’ (*taasup, irticai*), in relation to similarly described events such as the Menemen incident, or in relation to a set of deficiencies, a lack of ‘civilization’, ‘modernity’, ‘nationhood’. The lack can be also read in temporal terms, as belatedness, the status of ‘not yet being there’, a time lag. The populist rhetoric of the time proclaiming the villager the real master of the country, the singularity of the people and the nation, equality and the abolishment of past privileges, was considered a target not a reality, a *telos* that had to appear like reality though. Likewise, the people were celebrated as the repository of culture, a national culture that had to be created though through the creation of national canons of folklore, language, music, etc – again a *telos* that was proclaimed and had to appear like reality.

¹⁸⁴ Especially Falih Rıfık Atay, Behçet Kemal Çağlar, see Funda Şenol Cantek, *Yabanlar ve Yerliler* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003), pp. 87 – 94.