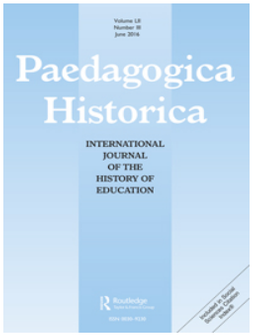

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The radical transformations and deep continuities of a decade: Turkish educational policy, 1938–1950

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ABSTRACT

Turkey witnessed many educational and cultural policy innovations between 1938 and 1950. Realising strictly secular practices against religion and traditional culture pre-1946, political elites of the time aimed to construct a *humanistic culture* unique to Turkey. Educational policies were considered the most efficient tools in reaching this ideal. Despite the adverse economic conditions of the time, western cultural institutions were adopted without reservation for modernisation. It was throughout the same time period that a number of other innovative projects such as the village institutes, western translations, new journals, Turkish encyclopaedism, and physical education for the entire public were undertaken. However, as these developments were devoid of a solid historical and sociological foundation, they were forced to change under the new world order post-1945. Despite the changing perspectives on religion, history and cultural life, the policies of the İsmet İnönü era succeeded in carrying the heritage of the Kemalist era to our day. The true dynamics behind this success are the educational practices of the 1940s and their formal and *hidden curricula* and rituals.

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Introduction

As a result of the political and sociological changes that occurred after the 2000s, Turkey has been striving to establish a new and more reasonable relationship with history in order to understand current and future times. The last century is particularly being re-conceptualised and historicised from a different perspective by using current scientific methods and accumulation. This is leading to a significant change and transformation in the perception of the official history that has been ideologically fossilised since the beginning of the Turkish Republic, as well as in the information produced. The predominant discourse in this process has been that Turkey has serious educational problems stemming from the radical ideologies of the early republican era. It is true that significant problems exist in the educational system in Turkey; however, it is rather difficult to comprehensively explain the historical dynamics of these problems. Naturally, every look into history occurs from a certain perspective, but

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the most reliable source of information on these issues would be a scientific and comprehensive look into the history of education.

The philosophical, sociological and ideological mentality that shaped the Turkish education system in the 1930s still largely exists by renewing itself in a way that cannot be understood superficially. A distinct example of this has been offered by Salmoni, who studied democracy and the educational mentality in Turkish course curricula between 1923 and 1950 and made accurate inferences about today.[1] In fact, a similar situation is also valid for the other issues and rituals of education. Many of the programmes and educational rituals that the AK Party governments have attempted to change or annul since 2003 are the cult reforms of the early republican era. However, there have been very few studies in Turkish historiography on methods, paradigms and conceptualisation. This may veil or misrepresent the historical roots and effects of existing problems.

This article does not dwell on the problems of Turkish historiography but it will try to refrain from the basic mistakes of ideological conceptualisation and sentimentalism with the influence of "state centred historiography" when viewing the educational concepts of the recent past, and I will mention the educational and cultural policies of the post-Mustafa Kemal, One Party/İnönü (1938–1950) era – one of the most controversial periods that continues to affect current educational practices. The study has been limited to this period for two important reasons: first, significant educational and cultural reforms took place during this era, when many high-stakes projects sustained the Kemalist revolution and at the same time practices against the Kemalist ideology found life. The second and more important reason is the lack of emphasis on the significance of this era in Turkish historiography[2] and on the close ties between educational history and cultural, political, economic and religious policies. The study aims to explain the radical reforms undertaken in the Turkish educational system between 1938 and 1950 and the deep continuities of the Kemalist era, not in a purely chronological sense but on a relational level by using numerical data. Naturally, it is necessary to consult original sources from the era to meet this aim.

Education as a heritage of the Kemalist Era and a tool for constructing a nation

Known as the "İnönü", "One Party" or "National Chief"[3] Era in Turkish history, the time between 1938 and 1950 was determined by the heritage received from the Mustafa Kemal Era. Founded on 29 October 1923, the Republic was a new beginning but adopted many Ottoman institutions. Modernisation, which started in the 1820s, peaked during this time. From 1923 to 1938, radical reforms took place in the fields of education, culture, publication

[1]Barak A. Salmoni, "Ordered Liberty and Disciplined Freedom: Turkish Education and Republican Democracy, 1923–1950," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 2 (2004): 80–108.

[2]Many examples exist: İlhan Başgöz and Howard Wilson, *Educational Problems in Turkey, 1920–1940* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968): Joseph S. Szyliowicz, "Education and Political Development in Turkey, Egypt, and Iran," *Comparative Education Review* 13, no. 2 (1969): 150–66; *Education and Modernisation in the Middle East* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1973); Andreas M. Kazamias' acclaimed study on Turkish educational history: *Education and the Quest for Modernity in Turkey* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966): Educational histories published in Turkey have similar characteristics. The most comprehensive work on Turkish educational history authored by Osman Ergin ends with the Atatürk era: *Türk Maarif Tarihi* [*History of Turkish Education*], 5 Cilt (İstanbul: Eser Matbaası, 1977).

[3]M. İsmet İnönü (1884–1973), the first prime minister and second president of the Turkish Republic. See more: Faik Reşit Unat, *İsmet İnönü, Biyografi* [İsmet İnönü, Biography] (Ankara: Maârif Press, 1945).

and art[4] and paved the way for the İnönü Era. Among the most important ideological and institutional reforms of the Kemalist Era were the unification of education, abolition of the caliphate and the establishment of the Directorate of Religious Affairs.

Following the madrasah, Islamic monasteries – which presented a significant potential for resistance and organisation – were also closed down in 1925. The adoption of the Latin alphabet on 1 November 1928 was presented as a step to improve literacy education; in reality it aimed to erode the most important link with the past.[5] On 1 January 1929, public schools were opened and the new alphabet and regime rituals started to spread from the centre to the periphery, even though the unification of education created a divinity faculty and religious schools and the education system was entirely cleared of religion. This imitation of France, which had been an Ottoman preference as well, continued in this era by "modeling high schools after the French education system and basing most course-books on their French counterparts regardless of Turkey's needs".[6] On 1 September 1929, Arabic and Persian courses were removed from curricula, and religious schools were closed in 1931. On 12 April 1931, the Turkish Historical Society was re-established to write a new history that satisfied the mentality and expectations of the day. The year 1931 saw the emergence of the *Sun Language Theory* to construct a "cultural and archeological nationalism".[7] In 1933, the secular Istanbul University was established in place of the previous Istanbul Ottoman University, which was blamed for "staying impartial to reforms"[8] and new schools were opened on all levels and in all varieties.[9] All school curricula were rewritten to construct a future society in accordance with the Kemalist principles.[10] By the end of 1938, there were 6700 primary schools, 13,500 teachers, 546 educators, and 864,590 students in Turkey.[11] All these developments were improved in the İnönü Era both quantitatively and qualitatively, and new institutions, projects and experiments were born.

In modern states since the early eighteenth century, "public or mass education"[12] has become a significant activity area. The radical educational and cultural reforms that took place quickly in Turkey after 1923 were a full stop to the social and political changes that dated back to early Ottoman modernisation. "The educational policies of the Ataturk regime, one of the most drastic nation-building and secularizing exercises ever, nevertheless built on the previous efforts of Ottoman reformers."[13] Even though this process has been viewed by many researchers as a compulsory road to teleological secularism and Kemalism,[14] it was at the same time a must for the consolidation and continuation of the nation-state

[4]Szyliowicz (1973), 180.
[5]İsmet İnönü, *Hatıralar* [*Memories*], 2 (Ankara: Bilgi Press, 1985), 223; Benjamin C. Fortna, *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
[6]Eleanor Bisbee, *The New Turks, Pioneers of the Republic, 1920–1950* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1951), 89.
[7]Eric Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1994), 190.
[8]"Maarif Vekili Reşit Galip ile Darülfünun Rerormu Üzerine Röportaj," *Hâkimiyet-i Milliye* [National sovereignty] (1 August 1933).
[9]Kazamias, 185 ff.; Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 408; Bisbee, 85–95.
[10]Salmoni (2004), 83.
[11]*Cumhuriyet'imizin 50. Yılında Rakam ve Grafiklerle Eğitimimiz* [Our education with the number and graphic at the 50th anniversary of the Republic] (Ankara: MEB Press, 1973), 70.
[12]Andy Green, *Education and State Formation, the Rise of Education System in England, France and the USA* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 1.
[13]Nazan Çicek, "The Role of Mass Education in Nation-Building in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, 1870–1930," in *Mass Education and the Limits of State Building, c.1870–1930*, ed. Laurence Brockliss and Nicola Sheldon) (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 225–50.
[14]Niyazi Berkes. See: *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964).

established in 1923. As seen by Wong's emphasis on "the dialectical relationship between education and the state"[15] in the process of the new nation-state formation, the newly established Turkish Republic had to be effective in educational and cultural reforms because the responsibilities of education in this era were as follows: "the task was to help people gain the skills and knowledge with which to live more productive, sufficient and healthy lives and ultimately become citizens of a modern, 'progressive and democratic' state".[16] In truth, this process was the substructure of a new society-building project, which Fortna called a type of "mechanical engineering".[17] In this way, education became a central reality of social organisation and institutionalisation.

Education Councils, resolutions and practices

Extensive educational meetings were organised under the title "Education Commission" after 1922. These meetings paved the way for later education councils. The First Education Council was held between 17 and 29 July 1939 and was headed by Hasan Âli Yücel.[18] The most noteworthy item on the Council's agenda was the re-planning of the Republic's educational reforms within the needs and possibilities. It was in this meeting that resolutions were made to open village institutes and new universities, and the report of the Physical Education Commission was debated.[19] School celebrations, festivities, physical education and gym courses and their content, outfits, etc. were discussed and regulations were prepared.[20] This led to a "hidden curriculum which is more effective than the formal curriculum in building a new nation".[21] New regulations were written for publications and new decisions made about publishing course books. Even though education council resolutions were considered recommendations, all of the resolutions made in the First Council were enforced.

The Second Education Council is noted for determining and affecting the mentality and ideology of the Turkish educational system to date. The Council, headed by Yücel, convened between 15 and 21 February 1943. Its working principles, personnel structure and the implementation of resolutions were similar to the First Council. The council's main focus was "how to determine culture, identity, new morality, new language and new history approaches and how to reflect these in course curricula".[22] The reform in language and the conceptual world became a particular breaking point. This was the peak point in the new language construction process that had started back in the 1930s. It brought an end to the artificial and mandatory language simplification reform, which in the new terminology may be defined as a "catastrophic success".[23]

[15]Ting-Hong Wong, "Education and State Formation Reconsidered: Chinese School Identity in Postwar Singapore," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 16, no. 2 (June 2003): 237–65.
[16]D. M. Ment, "Education, Nation-Building and Modernization After World War I: American Ideas for the Peace Conference," *Paedagogica Historica* 41, nos 1 & 2 (2005): 170.
[17]Benjamin C. Fortna, "Education and Autobiography at the End of the Ottoman Empire," *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series 41, Issue 1 (March, 2001): 4–5; Salmoni (2004),104.
[18]*Birinci Maarif Şurası (17–19 Temmuz 1939)* [First educational council] (Ankara: MEB Yay, 1991).
[19]"Cemil Taner" in "Kanun Uzerine Konuşması," *Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor* [*Physical Education and Sport*] 1, no. 3 (1939): 2–9.
[20]Hasan Âli Yücel, *Türkiye'de Orta Öğretim* [Secondary education in Turkey] (Ankara, 1938).
[21]Ian Grosvenor, "There's no Place Like Home": Education and the Making of National İdentity," *History of Education* 28, no.3 (1999): 248.
[22]*İkinci Maârif Şûrası (15–21 Şubat 1943)* [Second educational council] (İstanbul, 1943).
[23]Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

The "morality issue" discussed in the Council was undoubtedly the most serious pedagogic and social problem in the history of the Republic. It is surprising that it has been largely ignored until the present day. Influenced by Durkheim's sociology, the republican leaders and educators would have been expected to impose a secular, sociological morality instead of religious education and morality. However, there was a delay in this until the 1940s, and the Second Council created a true wave of excitement with its focus on a new form of morality. Council members identified new moral principles in order to "optimise the life of the Turkish public and individuals".[24] It is worth noting here that no classical works or moralists of Islamic and Turkish history were consulted. Instead, the moralists of Ancient Greece and medieval Europe were taken as models. The issue of "new history instruction" discussed during the Second Council was also important for a new identity and character engineering. At the same time, these debates necessarily produced an integrative mentality that redefined the Ottomans in its own way instead of the radical, secular-nationalist history perception of the Kemalist Era. Subsequently, the teaching stage of the new history perception that started to emerge after 1939[25] was initiated. Thus, comprehensive works on Ottoman history were produced for the first time in the republican paradigm.

The Third Education Council[26] held in 1946 decided on the "principles of school–family cooperation", whose impact can still be observed today. In addition, resolutions concerning technical high school education, which deteriorated in comparison with the regular high schools of the Turkish educational system, were also discussed in this Council. On the other hand, debates that created a philosophical change in Turkish education only took place in 1949 in the Fourth Education Council. This marked the beginning of John Dewey's[27] 1924 recommendation for "democratic education", which was delayed by 25 years.

Struggle for education and culture in the face of war, famine and extreme internal opposition

Turkey did not enter the Second World War directly and adopted an ambiguous attitude, but still the war was felt in all fields of life in the country. The continuous fear of war meant that a large number of troops had to be maintained and military expenditures took up more than half of the national budget. This was exacerbated by a famine and the Turkish public witnessed an unprecedented lack of staple foods. Deep economic hardship caused an antipathy that is still continuing today.

In the 1940s, early childhood education did not progress at all. The Children's Protection Agency, which was established in 1930 and mostly catered for orphans, numbered 25 branches in 1945. Between 1943 and 1944, there were 63 teachers and 1604 students in 49

[24] *İkinci Maârif Şûrası* [Second educational council], 118.
[25] Başar Arı, "Religion and Nation-Building in the Turkish republic: Comparison of High School History Textbooks of 1931–41 and of 1942–50," *Turkish Studies* 14, no. 2 (2013): 387.
[26] *Üçüncü Milli Eğitim Şûrası* [Third educational council] (İstanbul: MEB, 1991), 3–6.
[27] John Dewey had a significant impact on the Turkish educational system. Educational scholars in particular constantly highlight this effect. But the effect of the Emile Durkheim has been much greater than that of Dewey. Durkheim's ideas were widely accepted as official in Turkey, initially through Ziya Gökalp. Regarding the Durkheim effect on Turkish society and the educational system, see: Taha Parla and Andrew Davison, *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey: Progress or Order* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004); Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964), 409–4=19.

preschools.[28] Between 1946 and 1947, the number of preschools decreased to 45, that of teachers to 58 and students to 1524.[29]

In this era, many new types of schools opened in cities, towns and villages, such as boarding, day and evening schools. The mobilisation of education focused on rural areas and literacy training. Two important steps were taken in elementary education in 1948. The first involved the design of an "American inspired" curriculum based on "democratic education" for village elementary schools. This curriculum was implemented until 1968. The second step was to start paying elementary teacher salaries from the central budget in 1948, rather than from the budget of special provincial administrations. Despite all efforts, only 16,000 of the 40,000 villages had teachers by 1950.

In 1939, the number of secondary schools was 228 and that of high schools 75. The number of secondary schools decreased from 95,332 in 1940–1941 to 59,093 in 1947–1948. The secondary and high school regulations had been issued before 1938, and their curricula determined in 1938. In 1942, it was resolved that the "high school senior grade would include science and literature tracks". The duration of secondary and high school was regulated as three years each. In 1941–1942, 67 of the 384 counties throughout Turkey had secondary schools. Schools were planned to be built in 317 more counties and three provinces.

In this era, technical schools were given more importance and new types of technical schools were opened. Boarding and daily schools were favoured by both girls and boys. Under the influence of war, the need for technical skills increased. Night courses were also offered to ensure that technical education would cater for all segments of the society.

The targeted development in higher education was not met due to war, economic recession and the strictly statist and elitist policies of the new regime. So much so that barriers to higher education were built for different segments of the society. Even though the modern university dates back to the Era of Reform (1863), it already existed in 1839. The Royal College of Naval Engineering opened in 1773 and underwent many transformations to ultimately become Istanbul Technical University in 1944 with three faculties: Civil Engineering, Machinery and Architecture. In 1946, the faculties that had been in operation in Ankara since 1925 were combined to form Ankara University.

After 1939, the demand for higher education increased swiftly but the response was not adequate. To illustrate, the student body in Istanbul University grew threefold in the first 10 years (1933–1943) while the faculty membership grew by only 17%.[30] After 1933, many scientists from Europe arrived in Turkey. However, they soon started to return to their countries and this trend grew even more after 1940. In 1945, there were 145 foreign faculty members in the country[31] and in 1948 only 86. By the end of 1948, Turkey had three universities, five colleges and one conservatory, with a total of 19,867 students and 1027 faculty members.[32] The "University Law" of 1946 returned scientific and administrative autonomy to universities, as well as legal entity, but a full administrative autonomy was not in place. Indeed, the same law[33] considered the Minister of Education the head of universities and gave him the authority to supervise them.

[28] *Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri* [*National Educational Statistics*] (Ankara: MEB Press, 2005), 78.
[29] Nevzad Ayas, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Millî Eğitimi, Kuruluşlar ve Tarihçeler* [National education in the Republic of Turkey, its foundations and histories] (Ankara: MEB Press, 1948): 743.
[30] Taner Timur, *Toplumsal Değişme ve Üniversiteler* [Social change and universities] (Ankara: İmge Press, 2000), 4.
[31] Ayas, 374.
[32] Tahsin Demiray, *1948 Türkiye Yıllığı* [Almanac of Turkey 1948] (İstanbul: Türkiye Press, 1948), 153–84.
[33] "Üniversiteler Kanunu," *Resmî Gazete* [Official journal], no. 6336, article 2 (18 June 1946): 789.

The 1924 Unification of Education Law mandated that all educational institutions should function under the Ministry of Education. However, between 1938 and 1948, more than 20 schools of different types were affiliated with ministries other than education,[34] showing that the law was enforced only for religious, minority and foreign schools.

The overly centralised and nationalist treatment of minority and foreign schools in the Kemalist Era became even worse. After 1938, new regulations were passed that regulated courses, personnel, structure and operations in minority and foreign schools.[35] In 1947, there were 82 minority schools at different levels. Around the same time, 33 foreign schools belonging to the Americans, Austrians, French, British, Italians, Bulgarians and Iranians were also in operation. Private schools were not supported at all during this time.

The education policy of the state was challenged by the continuing war, migration from rural to urban areas and excessive population growth. It was believed that educating teachers loyal to the regime and ideology would be the best response to these challenges. In 1925, there were only 25 teacher education institutions in Turkey, which decreased to 11 in 1938.[36] Separate teacher education systems existed for villages and cities until 1954. The number of elementary schools rose to 27 in 1941 and then to 31 in 1950. While the number of students increased from 8176 to 16,306, the number of teachers went from 281 to 742.[37] In 1954, when village institutes were transformed into elementary teacher education schools, the number went up to 52 and remained like this until the late 1950s.[38]

The most controversial education project of the Republic: village institutes

Village institutes were not only an educational institution but a project that reflected the social, political, cultural, intellectual and ideological traits of the 1940s. The idea that "pure cultural values are hidden in villages"[39] started in Europe and Russia and found supporters in the Ottoman Empire from the 1910s. This idea was reflected in statements such as "villagers are the masters of the nation" or "villager state". It was important to spread the republican reforms to the masses. However, "Kemalism had brought reforms to Turkish cities and city-dwellers but not the villages".[40] After the 1930s, there were efforts to involve the masses in the regime, spread the values of the centre to the periphery and transform rural areas economically and culturally.[41] Kirby stated that quality was the main issue in education and the current system failed to train qualified personnel.[42]

After the 1930s, modernisation urged a migration from villages to cities. However, this dynamic was not natural for a country 80% of whose population were villagers. It is worth

[34]Ayas, 629–37.
[35]Reşat Özalp-Aydoğan Ataünal, *Türk Millî Eğitim Sisteminde Düzenleme Teşkilâtı* [Organisation regulation in the Turkish educational system] (İstanbul: MEB Press, 1977).
[36]Cemil Öztürk, *Atatürk Dönemi Öğretmen Yetiştirme Politikası* [Teacher training policy in the Atatürk period] (Ankara: TTK Press, 1996), 65.
[37]*Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında*... [Our education with the number and ...], 156–63.
[38]İsa Eşme, *Yüksek Öğretmen Okulları* [High school teachers] (İstanbul: Bilgi Başarı Press, 2001), 64.
[39]M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "Türkiye'de Köycülük," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasî Düşünce: Kemalizm* [Political thought in modern Turkey: Kemalism], 2 (İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2002), 294.
[40]Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 472.
[41]M. Asim Karaomerlioglu, "The Village Institutes Experience in Turkey," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 25, no. 1 (1998): 51.
[42]Fay Kirby, *Türkiye'de Köy Enstitüleri* [Village institutions in Turkey] (Ankara: İmece Press, 1962), 58.

noting that the journal of Ankara Public House, *Ülkü*, asked its readership to send in essays about the "future disadvantages of moving from villages to cities"[43] in its first issue. It was necessary to educate teachers in villages and ensure that they stay in their own areas so that villagers could be educated by fellow villagers and not by teachers from cities. According to Köymen, "there were many villagers who did not feel adequately Turkish".[44] In this new state, it was essential to "Turkify" the rural population so that a new identity could be constructed. Therefore, village institutes became one of the most important tools for creating a nation. On 17 April 1940, village institutes were opened and between 1940 and 1948, 21 institutes appeared in strategically selected regions. The first item of the law stated that: "Village institutes are being opened by the Ministry of Education for the purpose of training village teachers and other village professionals in places with agricultural land."[45]

The institutes were boarding schools and some were situated on large estates forcibly expropriated from villagers. Landlords and locals seriously opposed the expropriation process. However, others supported it with hopes of a qualified workforce. The village institutes were closely related to the economic statism policy of the era and the institutions were designed to cause minimum load to the state budget.[46] The law stated that "school building maintenance and regular school expenses would be provided by village councils."[47] Teachers and students were responsible for all needs of the schools. Teachers were given great authority and the local population had to work on building the schools. Village children studying at village institutes were required to work in their villages for at least 20 years after graduation.

As learning by doing was valued, the use of technical and agricultural tools was important. Each village institute published a newsletter that included promotions and various texts. village institutes also had extensive libraries for which books were not selected randomly but consisted of western classics translated and published by the Ministry of Education. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Turkish/Islamic classics and religious books were not allowed to enter the institutes.

Producing their first graduates in 1942, village institutes offered their last academic year in 1951–1952. Within this period, 25,986 educators and 1248 health and agriculture workers were trained in the institutes. In fact, the debates regarding the institutes started in 1940. While the law was being debated in Parliament, 148 deputies did not participate in the session. The compulsory work expected from the villagers and the appropriation of their land also drew opposition. There is a widespread belief that village institutes were closed down by the Democrat Party. However, it was İnönü who removed Hasan Âli Yücel from office on 5 August 1946 and İsmail Hakkı Tonguç in 25 September 1946. In 1948, Hasanoğlan Higher Village Institute was closed and the curricula in others fully revised. When the name "Village Institute" was changed to "Elementary Teacher Training School" in 1954, this was a simple name change. The institutes were opened with the ideological and pragmatic expectations of the Republican People Party (in Turkish, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP)[48] and closed down by the same circles.

[43]"Ülkü'nün Yazı Bölümleri," *Ülkü* [*Ideal*] 1 (1933): 93.
[44]Nusret Köymen, *Köycülük Programına Giriş* [Introduction to the peasantism progamme] (Ankara, 1935), 21.
[45]"Köy Enstitüleri Kanunu," *Resmi Gazete* [Official journal], no. 4491 (22 Nisan [April] 1940): 13682.
[46]Kirby, 208; Karaömerlioğlu, 64.
[47]*Köy Okulları ve Enstitüleri Teşkilât Kanunu* [The organisation law of village schools and institutes] (Ankara: Maârif Matbaası, 1943), 6–11.
[48]İdris Küçükömer, *Düzenin Yabancılaşması: Batılaşma* [The alienation of order: westernisation] (Ankara: Ant Press, 1965), 125.

The institutes were criticised by both rightist-conservative and leftist-Kemalist circles. The former criticised them for making communist propaganda and taking their inspiration from the Soviet system. They blamed the teachers and students for being against the military, state, social culture and religion as well as being communists.[49] The co-ed boarding school structure of the institutes was also criticised for male–female relationships.[50] Mahmut Makal,[51] one of the most ardent supporters of village institutes, has debunked these allegations in many of his books.

A Leftist-Kemalist, Kemal Tahir saw village institutes as an artificial barrier to social development and described in his novel *The Seed in the Steepe* that villagers were brutally abused in the institutes and forcibly made to work.[52] According to Karaömerlioğlu, the institutes "fell victim to CHP's indecisive attitude at a time when blunders and ambiguity was a norm in the Kemalist regime".[53] It is noteworthy that the Democrat Party took a staggering majority of the votes in places where the institutes were located in the 1950 elections.

The paramilitarism of education and the society: "physical education, scouting, and the military courses"

Scouting and physical education courses were added to Turkish school curricula after 1910. Scouting did not have much relevance to the conditions in Turkey but the educators and politicians of the time wished to imitate Europe. The paramilitary youth and society policies of the Committee of Union and Progress had infused the republican leaders. Physical education courses, as well as military courses, were added to school curricula in order to train healthy and strong generations[54] and create a society always ready to fight. In 1938, the "Physical Education Law" was issued, and in the following year the "Sports for Schools Regulation" came into effect. In 1942, the General Directorate of Physical Education was established. Even though a large budget was allocated to these courses and sports halls were built, the project did not succeed.[55]

Military courses were included in high school and higher education curricula from 1926–1927. These courses existed even at music education schools.[56] Gymnastics and military courses were tested by end-of-year shows. In 1947,there were 476 licensed clubs, 80 fencers, 283 boxers, 601 shooters, 91 cyclists, 747 wrestlers, 239 mountaineers and rock climbers, 1243 water sports players, 2099 various sports players, 3118 athletes, and 13,011 football players.[57]

[49]Ali Uygur, "Köy Enstitülerinin İçyüzü," *Köy Enstitüleri ve Koç Federasyonu* [Village institutions and Koç Federation] (Ankara: Ayyıldız Matbaası, 1966).
[50]Fethi İsfendiyaroğlu, *Köy Enstitüleri ve Koç Federasyonu* [Village institutions and Koç Federation] (Ankara: Ayyıldız Press, 1966).
[51]Mehmet Anık, "Bir Modernleş(tir)me Projesi Olarak Köy Enstitüleri," *Dîvân, İlmî Araştırmalar* [*Dîvân, Scientific Research*], 20, no. 1 (2000): 286.
[52]Kemal Tahir, *Bozkırdaki Çekirdek* [Seed at the steppe] (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1972).
[53]Karaömerlioğlu, 80.
[54]Yavuz Akın, *"Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar," Erken Cumhuriyet"te Beden Eğitimi ve Spor* [Physical education and sport in the early republican period] (İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2004).
[55]Sait Tarakçıoğlu, "A Failed Project in Turkey's Sports History: The Law on Physical Education of 1938," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 31, no. 14 (2014): 1807–19.
[56]*Türkiye Okullar Kılavuzu* [Turkey schools guide] (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı Press, 1936), 23.
[57]Ayas, 558.

The effort to infuse the periphery: public houses and rooms

Efforts were made for informal education after the establishment of the Republic through public houses and rooms (Halk Evleri ve Halk Odaları), and people's schools (Millet Mektepleri).[58] In addition to these, art night schools, vocational schools, technical courses, conferences, concerts, libraries, reading rooms, conservatories, State opera and theatre, folklore archives, monuments, exhibitions, fine arts galleries, cinema and radio[59] existed among public education activities. These continued to exist after 1938.

Following the closing of Turkish Hearts (Türk Ocakları), the education and culture institution of the Committee of Union and Progress,[60] in 1931 for a "pseudo" reason, public houses were established instead. CHP controlled these houses, which had great potential for organisation and anyone above the age of 18 could become a member. However, no other views than the centralised ideology of the CHP were allowed. Public houses have branches in cities, districts, towns and some villages.[61] Overseas branches were also opened in the following years. By 1938, 210 public houses existed throughout the country with over 90,000 members. In 1946, the number of branches reached 455 and the number of members exceeded 100,000. Of these branches, 63 were located in cities, 288 in districts, 73 in towns and 28 in villages. According to *Ülkü*, 25,000 conferences,[62] 1164 concerts, 1549 plays and 179 artistic exhibitions were organised in public houses in 1943. Over seven million people attended these.[63] Each public house centre had its own library and published its own journal. *Ülkü*,[64] published by Ankara Public House until 1950, was undoubtedly the most important.

Many activities were held in public houses in order to spread the philosophy of the 1940s humanist thinking. The works of mainly western composers were performed and many foreign artists were invited. After 1940, a language and literature department was opened in 175 public houses, where the new Turkish history and culture thesis was taught. Language meetings were held and drawing, sculpting and painting were supported.[65]

The people's schools, which aimed to teach literacy skills after the transition to Latin script and stayed open during the winter, opened in 1929. They later continued under the name of people's schools as a sub-unit of public houses. In addition to literacy education, foreign languages were taught and other cultural activities took place. The courses accepted anyone between the ages of 16–45 and the costs were met by provincial administrations. In 1944, there were 103 public houses and in 1945 there were 145. More than 10,000 people[66] are known to have attended these courses.

[58]Şerafettin Zeyrek, *Türkiye'de Halkevleri ve Halk odaları* [People's houses and people's rooms in Turkey] (Ankara: Anı Press, 2006).
[59]Ayas, 418.
[60]Füsun Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği, Türk Ocakları (1911–1931)* [Turkish nationalism from empire to nation state, Turkish cultural houses] (İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2010).
[61]Ayas, 445.
[62]*Ülkü* [*İdeal*] (1 March 1944): 16; Kemal H. Karpat, "The Impact of the People's Houses on the Development of Communication in Turkey, 1931–1951," *Die Welt des Islams* 1, no. 4 (1974): 79.
[63]Cemil Koçak, *Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938–1945* [National chef period in Turkey], 2 (İstanbul: İletişim Press, 1996), 105.
[64]Ertan Aydın, "The Peculiarities of the Turkish Revolutionary Ideology in the 1930s: The Ülkü Version of Kemalism, 1933–1936" (unpublished PhD thesis, Bilkent University, Ankara, 2003).
[65]Nurcan Toksoy, *Halkevleri* [*People's Houses*] (Ankara: Orion Press, 2007), 260–64.
[66]CHF, *XVI. Yıl Dönümünde Halkevleri ve Halk Odaları* [*People's Houses and People's Rooms at the 16th Anniversary*] (Ankara, 1948), 20.

Public rooms were another sub-unit of people's houses and existed in villages. They organised the same activities as community centres. They numbered 141 in 1940, 4066 in 1946, and 4332 in 1950. There were 8281 students in 1944 and over 10,000 in 1945.[67] With all these activities, community centres can be said to have significantly affected social change, transformation and collective memory. However, it is also noted that there were many places where public houses and Rooms were not in demand and remained inefficient, redundant and static.[68]

The state radio was another important tool for public education after 1938. The CHP supported radio-listening activities in public houses. The number of radio receivers increased despite the war, rising from 80,000 in 1940 to 180,000 in 1946. In 1942, there were a total of 105,653 radio users. In 1943, the number had gone up to 148,488. [69] Besides the radio, there was also a rise in music, cinema, theatre and performance arts.[70] Pieces from Arabia and Egypt were banned in 1943 in order to eliminate the "Arabesque effect" (that is, the Arabic cultural life style, especially in music). After 1945, American cinema became popular. In 1948, local films were supported by decreasing taxes by half. Even though there were more films displayed, Turkish cinema still remained behind world cinema. In 1939, İnönü ordered the opening of the Secondary Military Music School and the opening of a state conservatory with departments of music and drama the following year. Most of their faculty members were foreigners. In 1939, the First State Painting and Sculpture Exhibition was opened and received state support until 1945. Even though opera and ballet started in Atatürk's time, it flourished with İnönü. The first local opera was composed in 1942–1943 by Cemal Reşit Rey (*Çelebi*). With the 1940 proposal of Carl Ebart, a 10-year and three-stage ballet school was planned for children aged eight to 18, and opened in 1948 in Istanbul.

Humanist philosophy in the claws of modernisation and new cultural policies

In 1940, *Humanism* became the tool for creating a new nation and state. New reforms were tried in the fields of language, religion, history, culture and science; some were abandoned. In order to create a new culture, morality and thought realm and society, Turkish humanism[71] began to be constructed. New dictionaries, terms, historical theories, morality projects and ideal youth forms were prepared. Latin and Greek courses started in high schools, and Latin and Greek philology departments were opened in universities. New encyclopaedias and western classics were translated and published to educate the "good citizen, good human"[72] in line with humanistic philosophy. With Hasan Âli Yücel's initiatives, the First Publications Congress was gathered in May 1939[73] and new regulations were brought to the fields of language and history. The publication policies of the new era were decided. Even

[67]Uluğ İğdemir, *Yılların İçinden* [Through the years] (Ankara: TTK Press, 1976), 284; Zeyrek, 36.
[68]Ayas, 446.
[69]Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizlerinden Devlet Radyosuna* [From company wireless to state radio] (Ankara: Ankara University, SBF Press, 1980), 166.
[70]Serdar Öztürk, *Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Sinema, Seyir, Siyaset* [Cinema, watching, policy in the early republic period] (Ankara: Elips Press, 2005), 47.
[71]Suat Sinanoğlu, *Türk Hümanizmi* [Turkish humanism] (Ankara: TTK Press, 1988).
[72]Hasan Âli Yücel, *İyi Vatandaş İyi İnsan* [Good citizen, good human] (Ankara: MEB Press, 1998).
[73]*Birinci Türk Neşriyat Kongresi, 1–5 Mayıs 1939: Raporlar, Teklifler, Müzakere Zabıtları* [First Turkish Publishing Congress 1--5 May 1939; reports, recommendations, discussion records] (Ankara: Maârif Vekâleti, 1939), 13.

though there was a demand for "support for private initiative", new taxes were required of publishing houses to prevent private publications.[74] Until 1946, private initiative was not supported by the government.

The most significant development regarding humanistic philosophy was the translation policy. Hasan Âli Yücel supported the translation of western classics for Turkish humanism,[75] and a new culture and humanistic philosophy could not be developed only with Turkish works.[76] In 1940, the Translation Bureau was established and lists of books to be translated were made.[77] A translation journal[78] was planned. Between 1940 and 1946, there was a boom in translations from western classics and state-supported publications. In these same years, 496 classics were translated and Turkey became a "translation paradise". Up to 1950, 528 classics were translated (180 from France, 76 from Germany, 76 from Greece, 64 from Russia, and 46 from Great Britain). In a pseudo-effort to also include Turkish-Islamic-Eastern classics[79] 23 works were translated. The translated works reached faraway corners of the country through village institutes and their sub-units. Of course, these constituted a monist, compulsory cultural transformation policy and "this Humanism could not go beyond a naive yearning for Ancient Greece, Latin and Rome".[80]

Another aspect of the translation policy was to create a Turkish encyclopaedia[81] movement. Based on the *Larousse du Vingtième Siècle*, the *İnönü Encyclopaedia* was published between 1943 and 1984. The title of this was changed to *Turkish Encyclopaedia* in 1951.[82] Another project was the translation of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*[83] between 1940 and 1987 (47 years). Even though a new encyclopaedia with the title *Islamic/Turkish Encyclopaedia* was started, only one volume could be written.[84]

Following the Publication Congress, a comprehensive language project was started comprising terms, language and literature commissions. "The most distinguishing characteristic of the period between 1940 and 1950 was the aim of constructing new words. Extensive dialect studies and word survey projects were undertaken."[85] Course and grammar books were re-written. In 1945, the first *Turkish Dictionary* was published as well as terminology dictionaries for various scientific disciplines. In 1942, the Reform History and Turkish Republic Institute was established under the Faculty of Language, History and Geography in order to continue strengthening the ideological and scientific substructure of the era.

[74]Şeker, 112.
[75]Hasan Âli Yücel, "Klasiklere Birinci Önsöz," in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Edebiyat Çevirileri Seçkis*i [Anthology of literary translation in the republican period] (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Press, 1999), 241.
[76]Hasan Anamur, "Hasan Âli Yücel ve Bir Aydınlanma Yolu Olarak Çeviri," in *100. Doğum Yıl Dönümünde Hasan Âli Yücel* [Hasan Âli Yücel at the 100th birthday anniversary] (Ankara: AKM Başkanlığı Press, 1998), 121–22.
[77]For more information, see: Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar, *The Politics and Poetics of Translation in Turkey 1923–1960* (New York: Rodopi, 2008), 67 ff.
[78]Fuat Süreyya Oral, *Cumhuriyet Basın Tarihi 1923–1973* [The history of publishing of Republic] (Ankara: Sanayii Nefise Matbaası, 1973), 146–63.
[79]"Attila İlhan'la Çeviri Üzerine," in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Edebiyat Çevirileri Seçkisi*, ed. Öner Yağcı (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Press, 1999), 131.
[80]Kadir Şeker, "*İnönü Dönemi Kültür Hayatı (1938–1950)*" [Cultural life in the Inönü period] (unpublished PhD thesis, 2000), 9–10; Suat Sinanoğlu, *Türk Hümanizmi II* [Turkish humanism] (İstanbul: YeniGün Press, 1999), 11.
[81]*Birinci Türk Neşriyat Kongresi* [First Turkish Publishing Congress], 4.
[82]Mustafa Birol Ülker, "Türk Ansiklopedisi," in *DİA* [Encyclopedia of Diyanet Islam] 41 (2012), 534.
[83]Orhan F. Köprülü, "İslâm Ansiklopedisi," in *DİA* [Encyclopedia of Diyanet Islam] 23 (2001), 43–44.
[84]Ayhan Aykut, "İslâm-Türk Ansiklopedisi," in *DİA* [Encyclopedia of Diyanet Islam] 23 (2001), 58.
[85]Kâmile İmer, *Dilde Değişme ve Gelişme Açısından Dil Devrimi* [Language reform, in terms of change and development in language] (Ankara: TDK Press, 1976), 91.

Conclusion

Despite all the sociological, political and technological changes, educational and cultural life in Turkey is still under the influence of the philosophy that came into shape during the 1940s and created a "culture shock". Therefore, the education world is struggling to find answers to big questions. It would thus be a logical step to understand the structure that came into being prior to 1950. However, there are very few studies on the inventory and analysis of the education history of this period.

The time between 1938 and 1950 is considered to be a continuation of the Atatürk era regarding education and culture. While Lewis[86] emphasises this continuity in relation to religion and strictly secularist practices, Frey[87] stresses the habits of political elites to continue social engineering. These 11 years, with their unique conditions and "transition" characteristics, became the foundation for post-1950 times and are said to resemble what came after them rather than what went before. Indeed, modern studies agree that the transition to multi-party political life[88] and the religious, educational and social projects between 1946 and 1950 paved the way for the rise of the Democrat Party.[89]

Nation formation through educational and cultural policies, which is called the "imagined political community" by Benedict Anderson, had a unique experience in Turkey between 1938 and 1950. The educational system designed during the Mustafa Kemal Era was based on positivism, secularism, national ideology and western cultural codes. It continued into the post-1938 years by enlarging and imposing its effects and implementations. The educational and cultural policies of the years between 1938 and 1946 were the guarantor of the radical/secular identity engineering of the Republic. While religion/Islam was fully removed from educational and cultural life, institutional efforts to create a western collective memory and culture also occurred during these years. Leaders such as İsmet İnönü and Celal Bayar strived to protect the heritage of Atatürk. Kemalism was ideologised through the character of Atatürk, "not only during the İnönü Era, but also by the Democrat Party"[90] and made into a cult by laws and by using a logographic discourse. Even though the fields of religion and history underwent compulsory changes after 1946, the radical and strict identity policies of the Republic were protected by state-controlled practices.

The educational system inherited by İnönü was in fact rather low level. Literacy rates and the number of schools and students were very low. At the same time, the Turkish economy also suffered seriously after 1938. This was caused by statism as well as the world war and drought in Anatolia.[91] Instead of turning these into an opportunity, the government refused to move away from the compulsory cultural change policy. Intense effort was spent on constructing the humanistic Turkish nation of the future through people's houses, rooms, village institutes, the radio, journals, new translations, and other tools designed by the authorities. The artificial elite class created by the Republic made pragmatic changes to hold on to their power. The opening of village institutes and religious courses are examples

[86]Lewis, 418.
[87]Frederick W. Frey [Education], "Turkey," in *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, ed. Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964), 223–24.
[88]Arı, 387.
[89]Özgür Gömen, "Tek-Parti Dönemi Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nde Muhafazakâr Yönelimler," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Muhafazakârlık* [Political thought in modern Turkey: conservatism] 5 (İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2003), 132–53.
[90]Filiz Meşeci, "*Cumhuriyet Sonrası Türk Eğitim Sisteminde Ritüeller: Kuramsal Bir Çalışma*" [Rituals in the Turkish educational system after the Republic: theoretical research] (unpublished PhD thesis, Marmara University, 2007), 134.
[91]William Hale, "Ideology and Economic Development in Turkey 1930–1945," *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, Bulletin* 7, no. 2 (1980): 109.

of these pragmatic changes. The public "did not find these post-1946 efforts concerning religion and religious education sincere. They perceived these reforms as a half-hearted, clumsy apology for the practices of the previous 25 years. Some people also thought CHP was trying to create a new image through somewhat imaginary concessions."[92] It was exactly for this reason that the CHP sympathised with the Democrat Party, which was founded by people of the same political views among them, and led them to power.

The strict transformation and education policies of the years between 1938 and 1945 fed a larger tension in the country. The intellectual and political minds behind the Islamic political movement that originated in the late 1960s grew in this era. Referred to by Stone as "reactionaries",[93] conservative educators such as Nurettin Topçu and Mümtaz Turhan, and religious/political activists such as Necip Fazıl started to shine in this era. Considering that Necmettin Erbakan, the most powerful leader of the movement that gave birth to the Justice and Development Party, which has been in power since 2003, and Turgut Özal, who radically changed Turkey's political and social life, graduated from Turkey's second university, Istanbul Technical University, in 1944 and 1948 respectively, the close ties from those days to the present are evident.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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[92]Mehmet Tarhan, "Religious Education in Turkey: A Socio-Historical Study of the İmam-Hatip Schools" (unpublished PhD thesis, Temple University, 1996), 57.
[93]Frank A. Stone, "The Evolution of Contemporary Turkish Educational Thought," *History of Education Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (1973): 145–61.