

THE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS OF THE EAST AND THE SOUTH-EAST PARTS OF TÜRKİYE

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Democracy is a form of society whereby men and women may gain confidence in themselves and in their fellow humans, and thereby move from force to persuasion, from restriction to liberty, from blind obedience to creative effort. Unlike dictatorial forms of government, democracy has everything to gain and nothing to lose from the intelligence of its citizens. In any society progress mostly depends on education. If one class possesses all the wealth and education while the labouring class or people of a certain area remain both poor and ignorant, that society will be divided into distinctive, permanent classes. But if education is widely and equally diffused according to ability rather than wealth, children of all classes may attain their maximum potential, and society as a whole will gain from the fuller use of its human resources. The ties of democracy can only be strengthened through better education and more open communication. Democratic education should develop citizens who are "easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave" (Lord Henry Peter Broughton, Speech in the House of Commons, Jan. 29, 1828). What is the meaning of this statement? It should make people easy to lead by bringing out latent talent and leadership, conceived in cooperative terms. On the other hand, it should make them impossible to enslave because their education will have emphasized individual self-reliance, free expression, and unthwarted communication. Today, in Türkiye most people as lovers of democracy and patriotic citizens, are suffering from the situation in the east and south-east parts of our country. In these areas, thousands of innocent people - young and old, male and female, soldier and civilian - are being injured and even being killed cruelly. Some roads are dangerous to travel on and even talking to some people can be risky. In short life is very difficult for the inhabitants there, as a result of terror. It is natural that to talk about education and educational opportunity is a little bit irrelevant for those poor people who are trying not to get killed in those areas. Since

we are educationists, keeping in mind the educational side of events, let us think about the underlying reasons and probable solutions for this crucially important problem.

CAUSES OF THE PROBLEM

It is difficult to write about how education is of crucial importance in the development of a country where security has not yet been completely provided. The people living in the eastern part of Türkiye are especially in great fear of losing their lives. In such a situation the most important thing is to solve this security problem as soon as possible. The causes of such a serious matter can be listed as follows:

1. The eastern part of Türkiye has been neglected economically for many years. Investments made so far are not sufficient to provide job opportunities for the growing population of the east and the southeast.

2. Since ethnicity plays an important role especially in the life of uneducated people, citizens who are of different ethnic origins have been abused and are still being provoked to cause disorder and chaos in these regions by some of our enemies who have hidden evil intentions towards the Turkish Republic.

3. Another point is the unsuitable geographical location of cities, towns and villages. The physical features of this land are not suitable for the settlement of people in towns. Making roads requires a great amount of effort and time and expenses. As a result of this, transportation and communication are difficult.

4. The last but not the least important factor is education. After the economic reason, comes the educational factor. Lack of education causes;

* the people to be easily misled.

* many parents to have more and more babies because of not knowing anything about birth control.

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*the children not to have equal opportunities with those who are living in other parts of Türkiye.

*the living standards of those inhabitants to decline or to merely remain steady.

*the people to lose their faith in the Turkish Government.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the previous section the reasons for some important problems in the south east part of our country have been identified and the problems related to the educational factor have been emphasized as being some of the most significant obstacles preventing the improvement of this particular part of Türkiye. By means of some necessary precautions and fundamental changes I believe that it is possible to solve the problem over an extended period of time:

1. First of all, the centralized school system must be altered and a local system must be established. From the capital city it is difficult for the administrators to realize the regional problems and particular local needs.

2. All the scattered schools must be gathered to specific central places which are safe.

3. Security must be of primary importance. As a result of this, teachers will not be killed any more, and more there will be demand to work there. Teachers who work there should have special inservice training, or the ones who originally come from those cities must be assigned to positions there.

4. The curriculum must be designed so that it is suitable for the needs of the people. The purpose should be to improve the economical situation by enabling people to learn a trade or craft.

5. By means of some measures like double salary, teachers and high-status officials must be attracted there to assist the governmental officials.

6. Children should be motivated to attend the classes, but first of all the mentality of the parents must be changed in a positive manner. This can only be realized by obtaining the trust of the people towards the government. These solutions can be achieved only after the attainment of security and financial comfort. Most of this task falls to the politicians who will introduce and apply the necessary reforms in that part of Türkiye.

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