

Structuring of Sports Associations During Ataturk Period and Their Activities

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Abstract

Ataturk's views and intellection of sports in the period when the Republic was founded, not only for the governments of that time, but also maintain the same value and validity today, are the opinions and basic principles that advanced countries still apply in sports and backward countries have to apply. With the declaration of the Republic, it was deemed necessary to consider sports as a cultural and physics action of the country, to reveal the national sports philosophy, to arouse interest in sports in Turkish nation, to traditionalize sports, to make a mass action. The aim of this study is along with the proclamation of the Republic to reveal the phases of the associations that contribute to the development of Turkish sports in the State of the Republic of Turkey under the leadership of Ataturk and their services to Turkish sports. The study has been evaluated through the document analysis technique which is one of the qualitative research designs. As a result of the study, it has been concluded that Alliance of Training Community of Turkey, Turkish Sports Association and General Directorate of Physical Training, organized between 1923 and 1938, contributed to the development of Turkish sports despite their many shortcomings.

Keywords: Ataturk, Associations, Republic, Sports

Introduction

Sports has always played an important role in the social structure of the Turkish nation, which has kept body strength at the forefront. Historical documents, monuments, landmarks in arrow squares, stories from word of mouth clearly reveal the identity of the Turkish nation's athletes. Sports such as hunting, shooting, horse riding, wrestling, javelin, sword-shield have been the sports branches identified with the Turks (Beden Terbiyesi Umum Mudurlugu, 1943). With the proclamation of the Republic, one of the aims of the Turkish revolution was to make Turkish society a country of the 20th century through sports (Asaf, 1933). New associations related to sports management were established in the country and popularizing sports throughout the country and increasing the diversity of sports categories was presented as the two most important goals. With the republic period, society was wanted to be introduced with modern sports as well as ancestor sports such as wrestling, archery and hunting (Fisek, 2003). Ataturk, the founder of the Republic, as a statesman who knew that sports should be included among the reforms he tried to do in every area, pioneered the meeting of the Turkish nation with sports.

Ataturk assigned Grand National Assembly of Turkey and Government in sports activities and considered sports as an issue that the State should not neglect in the education of the nation. His most important statement corroborating this idea is: *"It is necessary to consider all kinds of sports activities as the main elements of the national education of Turkish youth."* (Ataturk Kultur, Dil ve Tarih Yuksek Kurumu, 1997). Ataturk's views and intellection of sports in that period, not only for the governments of that time, but also maintain the same value and validity today, are the opinions and basic principles that the advanced countries still apply in sports and the backward countries have to apply. In this context, the Republic period is a period in which there was a consensus that sports should be handled with great importance, as in economic, social and cultural areas (Akyol, 1976).

Before the foundation of the Republic, sports activities were carried out with private initiatives. A few sports clubs in the metropolitans usually played football matches between them, and occasionally they played matches with the teams they brought from Europe. In addition, gymnastics, wrestling and swimming activities were organized in a very narrow framework (Asaf, 1933). Turkish nation, in which raised robust men until the beginning of the 19th century, experienced the problems during the reign caused unhealthy and weak generations to grow. With the declaration of the Republic, it was deemed necessary to consider sports as the cultural and physics action of the country, to reveal the national sports philosophy, to arouse interest in sports in the Turkish nation, to traditionalize sports, to make a mass movement (Apak, 1936).

In this study, along with the proclamation of the Republic, the phases of associations that contribute to the development of Turkish sports in the State of the Republic of Turkey under the leadership of Ataturk and their services to Turkish sports will be discussed.

Methods

Research Model

The study has been evaluated through the document analysis technique, one of the qualitative research designs. Document review covers the analysis of written materials involving information about the phenomenon or facts to be researched. In qualitative research, when direct observation and interviews are not possible, research can be conducted through written

materials related to the research problem studied (Yildirim & Simsek, 2006). For this reason, documents (official notes, archive documents, journals, etc.) especially belonging to the research period were analyzed (Creswell, 2018). Records, documents, artifacts and archives traditionally defined as “material culture” in anthropology constitute a rich data source (Patton, 2018).

Results

The structure and activities of the Alliance of Training Community of Turkey (1922-1936) and Turkish Sports Association (1936-1938), which were tasked with carrying out the sports activities of the State of the Republic of Turkey between the establishment of the Republic and the death of Atatürk, will be transferred, the philosophy of the establishment and the first actions of the General Directorate of Physical Training will be mentioned in the study.

Period of Alliance of Training Community of Turkey

Being active as a youth organization in the Ottoman Empire, Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) received great reactions on the grounds that it made Christian propaganda and excluded football (Yildiz, 1979). While 13 clubs, which were active in Istanbul in 1920, were trying to organize football competitions among themselves, they focused on the idea of establishing a union. For this purpose, the first meeting was held in Kadıköy on July 26, 1920 with the participation of all club delegates. In April 1921, a commission consisting of club delegates called “Temporary Committee of Alliance of Training” started working on the draft translated from the regulations of the Swiss Federations and Sports Association. Temporary Committee of Alliance of Training finished its work on September 7, 1921. On 25 November 1921, they applied to the government for a formation according to the law of societies. The Temporary Committee worked until May 22, 1922, under the name of the “Temporary Central Committee”, in order to ensure the establishment of the Training Alliance. After the legal procedures were completed, by gathering all club delegates under the chairmanship of Galatasaray Club President Cevdet Bey at Fenerbahçe Club building they elected the first central delegation of Alliance of Training Community of Turkey on Sunday, 14 July 1922 (Beden Terbiyesi Umum Mudurlugu, 1943).

In the first article of the regulation of Alliance of Training Community of Turkey, the purpose of the organization is explained as “A society called Alliance of Training Community of Turkey has been established to work on the dissemination and maturation of training in Turkey within the framework of scientific principles and to be authorized to represent Turkish training at home and abroad.” (Turk Spor Kurumu, 1938b).

This organization, whose activities were limited to Istanbul in the early days, could not perform an important activity until Istanbul was liberated by the National Government. In August 1923, Ali Sami Yen and Selim Sırrı Tarcan visited the Minister of National Education Safa Bey and Prime Minister İsmet İnönü in Ankara, they presented their project on the expansion of the alliance throughout the country and participation in the 1924 Paris Olympic Games. The government gave 17 thousand liras to the order of the Alliance for the participation in the Olympics and added another 10 thousand liras later (Beden Terbiyesi Umum Mudurlugu, 1943). This is an important indicator of the support of the State of the Republic of Turkey for the education of the people through sports. For as much as, this financial aid to sports by a country that is just out of the National Liberation War, financially and morally tired, reveals the importance of sports in the founding philosophy of the Republic of Turkey.

With the support of the Government of the Republic, the headquarters of the Alliance of Training Community of Turkey, selected the athletes to participate in the 1924 Paris Olympic Games. At Eskişehir, in March 1923, football players, athletes and wrestlers who would go to the Olympics were selected with the participation of the athletes from Ankara, Istanbul, İzmir and Trabzon. A camp was set up in Istanbul to train selected athletes and wrestling coach Raul Peter and football coach Billy Hunter were brought to Turkey for the first time by the Government's decision (Beden Terbiyesi Umum Mudurlugu, 1943). Since these years, it has become a tradition to bring coaches to contribute to the development of various sports (Asir, 1938).

Alliance of Training Community of Turkey, which was taken among the useful associations by a government decree of 16 January 1924 participated in the Olympics in Paris in May 1924 with three athletes, three cyclists, one fencer, four wrestlers, one weightlifter, nineteen football players but athletes couldn't get a degree (Beden Terbiyesi Umum Mudurlugu, 1943). Nevertheless, Alliance of Training Community of Turkey accepted as an association for the public interest was both authorized to represent Turkey abroad and actively undertaken the task of establishing a federation by the establishment of the Turkey Football Federation in 1923 (Fisek, 1985).

After the Paris Olympic Games Alliance of Training Community of Turkey tried to establish the headquarters of the alliance of organizations within the country, began to get in touch with sports clubs in the provinces and constituted a training alliance zone in provinces with three clubs. 161 delegates from Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Adana, Antalya, Bursa, Edirne, Eskişehir, Samsun, Balıkesir, Kocaeli, Konya, Trabzon regions and clubs attended the first general congress that was held in Ankara between 5-12 September 1924, Military Academy and Navy regions delegates also attended the congress representing the army land troops and the navy. These two regions were later affiliated to Army Sports Organization. Some arrangements were made on the regulation in the congress. Athletics, Wrestling, Football and Bicycle Federations were represented in the first general congress (Beden Terbiyesi Umum Mudurlugu, 1943). In this congress, it was decided to establish federations of horse riding, fencing, marksmanship (shooting), hockey, boxing, maritime, shot gun, tennis and water sports considered as military preparation sports (Tayga, 1990; Beden Terbiyesi Umum Mudurlugu, 1943). Later, at the Second General Congress of the Alliance of Turkey Training Community, which was held in Ankara in 1925, these sports branches were established as separate federations within the Army Sports Organization (Tayga, 1990).

For the first time, Turkish championships were held in Ankara on the occasion of the first general congress of the Alliance of Training Community of Turkey, 15 region's football, wrestling, cycling and athletics competitions were held (Beden Terbiyesi Umum Mudurlugu, 1943). Thus, the State of the Republic of Turkey started sports tournaments covering the entire country, albeit in limited sports, and began to take steps to ensure that the Turkish people who had fallen weak and forceless after the national struggle were both healthy and acted together.

Alliance of Training Community of Turkey tried to be beneficial to the country's sports within the same principles and with its expanding dimensions from 1923 to April 1936. Initially limited only to football, it tried to diversify sports activities with other branches and spread the sports to corners of the country where there were no sports activities (Turk Spor Kurumu, 1938b). As a warrior nation, importance was given to the shooting sports, shooting centers were opened in big cities such as Istanbul, Edirne, Balıkesir, Izmir and Ankara in 1935 (Apak, 1936).

The State of the Republic of Turkey began allocating appropriations from the budget between 1926-1938 to newly established sports organizations from 1926. Government allocated 40 thousand in 1926, 33 thousand in 1927, 30 thousand in 1928, didn't allocated in 1929, provided 100 thousand in 1930, 40 thousand in 1931, 50 thousand in 1932, 70 thousand in 1933, 80 thousand in 1934, 203 thousand in 1935, 239 thousand in 1936, 239 thousand in 1937, 239 thousand in 1938 and a total of 1.363.000 TL monetary aid. Apart from these, the clubs in the regions were assisted by the special provincial accounts and the budgets of the municipalities (Turk Spor Kurumu, 1938b). The Republican People's Party, with a circular it sent to its organizations, divided the provinces into eight degrees and provided the special administrations to support sports every year (Beden Terbiyesi Umum Mudurlugu, 1943).

The Government and the Party's interest and assistance in sports gradually increased and the works of this financial and moral support started to be seen with the increase in the number of clubs and athletes. In 1923, when the Alliance of Training Community of Turkey was established, the number of clubs was 14, while in 1933 it was 230 and at the beginning of 1938 it was 442. The number of registered athletes in the clubs included in the Alliance of Training Community of Turkey was 827 in 1923, while reached to 6,380 in 1928, 10,450 in 1933 and 27,631 in 1938. Depending on the number of clubs and athletes, the number of regions also increased. While the number of regions was limited to 13 in 1925, it reached 16 in 1926, 19 in 1927, 22 in 1933 and 63 in 1938 (Turk Spor Kurumu, 1938b).

As the reasons for the nationalization efforts that resulted in Alliance of Training Community of Turkey's transformation into the Turkish Sports Association, it can be said that the state's sports policies could not be applied in the same way all over the country and the community did not adopt the idea of spreading sports to every corner of the country (Caglar, 1936b). In fact public health was considered important in the main philosophy of the sports policies of the State of the Republic of Turkey. In other words, the development of physical, sanity and mental health of each individual was noticed.

Abali (1974) brought a different interpretation to the end of the era of the Alliance of Training Community of Turkey as he stated that the government found appropriate to leave the responsibility for the management of sports under the control of Republican People's Party, which works in parallel with the State and incorporated Community Centers into its structure.

Period of Turkish Sports Association

At the 8th General Congress of the Alliance of Training Community of Turkey held in Ankara in 1936, with a decision made by the congress general delegation unanimously, it was accepted that the organizational charter was not adequate in the face of 13 years of development and that a regulation bearing new provisions was made (Turk Spor Kurumu, 1938b). Important sportsmen of the period attended this congress, a new regulation was prepared by discussing the problems of sports (Caglar, 1936a). With the new regulation, the organization was named as the Turkish Sports Association since 18 April 1936. In addition, the congress delegation wished for the acceptance of the Turkish Sports Association to the Republican People's Party with the decision taken in alliance. This wish was accepted by the Party General Assembly and the Turkish Sports Association acquired the status of a party organization affiliated to the Republican People's Party (Turk Spor Kurumu, 1938b).

During this period, the Republican People's Party affiliated Olympic Association of Turkey which was an independent organization to the Turkish Sports Association. Turkish Sports Association differently from Alliance of Training Community of Turkey expanded its headquarters numerically, made a great effort to bring the sport in order, increased the

influence and weight of federations by providing the authority of the headquarters in accordance with the essence and logic of sports (Fisek, 1980). Federations, on the other hand, gave great importance to clubs. Until this period, very few clubs had developed with the financial and moral support they received from grand institutions. Other clubs did not have a center, sports grounds or equipment. These clubs were interested in football under the name of sports and, to a very small extent, athletics and seasonal sports. Almost all of these clubs had more debts than their annual budgets (Baydar, 1937).

One of the nine branches within the Community Centers established in 1932 became a sports branch. These branches worked to unite the people and to educate them in accordance with the conditions of the modern world (Cavdar, 2004). The Turkish Sports Association, together with Community Centers' Sports Branches, initiated the development, advancement and spread of sports clubs that did or did not enter the association. Community Centers raised clubs that were not eligible to be affiliated with a federation to the level required by the regulations of the Turkish Sports Association and ensured the establishment of clubs in places where there were no clubs. In places where there were clubs, it worked to raise the awareness of sports among young people who were excluded by the clubs and to make them active members of sports clubs (Caglar, 1937). It allowed clubs to socialize by increasing their contacts with each other, it gave place in their own buildings to the clubs, which did not have a meeting place. It was interested in ancestor sports such as wrestling, sword-shield, javelin, shooting, and by organizing these sports, it counted races and trips in its program and regulations. It organized pedestrian, horseback and bicycle trips, took the young people of the country to the camps that were set up in the villages, provided the spread of hunting, table tennis, billiards, tennis, developed mountaineering, skiing and sea sports with the contributions of Community Centers' Sports Branches (Kirsan, 1938).

During the period of the Turkish Sports Association, the constructions of the sports fields were planned and it was decided to establish at least two clubs in each province center and one club in each district center. Importance was given to the matter of instructors that will ensure the development of sports according to technical rules (Beden Terbiyesi Umum Mudurlugu, 1943). For example, "Football Coach Course" was opened in Ankara on March 1, 1938 to train trainers and make coaching a profession (Asir, 1938). During this period, the number of athletes was increased, and technical rules were determined by encouraging sports organizations to follow a more disciplined and technical path. Monitors were sent to certain regions where free wrestling is common, one of the national sports that Ataturk emphasized while watching the wrestling competitions in the Ankara Community Center and Turkish championships were organized. Thanks to the regional and Turkish championships organized by the Cycling Federation, interest in the sport of cycling increased. As a result of the diligent studies of the Athletics Federation, great improvements were made in athletics. With the studies of Mountaineering and Winter Sports Federation, other than Bursa Uludağ winter sports facility, chalets were built on the foothills of Erzurum Kop mountain, Kastamonu Ilgaz and Ankara Elmadağ (Turk Spor Kurumu, 1938b). Two years after the establishment of this federation, the number of skiers exceeded 2.000 (Yaman, 1941). The first cross-country race in Turkey was also held during this period (Beden Terbiyesi Umum Mudurlugu, 1943).

The Turkish Sports Association decided to assist the Turkish Aeronautical Association, which was organized under the name of "Turkish Bird", as one of the main articles of its regulation (Caglar, 1936a). In the meantime, it was interested in Turkish sports history and published its study titled "Researches on Ancient Turkish Sports" that was prepared by one of the relevant experts. At the same time, it made researches in national museums and libraries and tried to identify important documents in terms of Turkish sports history. In addition, a law was

enacted that allowed 19 May to be accepted as the Youth and Sports Day from 1937 (Turk Spor Kurumu, 1938b).

The first place won in Greco-Roman wrestling in the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, also the degrees of the cycling team and the sailors in water sports are among the important achievements of the Turkish Sports Association period. In addition, successes were achieved in international competitions in cycling in Soviet Russia and in the Balkans (Turk Spor Kurumu, 1938b). After the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, the sports press got busy with what moves should be made in sports affairs. The Republican People's Party gradually increased its effectiveness in sports by competing athletes with the party emblem on their breasts in the Olympics, and made all licensed athletes members of the party with ceremonies held in provinces and districts on October 29, 1936 (Atabeyoglu, 2001).

The General Secretariat of the Republican People's Party took the decision on August 14, 1937 to appoint provincial party heads to the regional presidencies in order to ensure more efficient and disciplined work in sports activities. This situation ensured that the local needs of sports institutions in the country were met on-site and easily and many problems were solved (Kirsan, 1937). Party heads were asked to establish regions in provincial centers where sports zones were not established. While at least 3 clubs affiliated to the federation were required to establish a region in one place during the Alliance of Training Community of Turkey, the regulation of the Turkish Sports Association decided to establish a region even in provinces where there are no sports clubs (Turk Spor Kurumu, 1937).

The Turkish Sports Association somewhat centralized management, directed to sports to the areas that serve for homeland defense other than football such as winter sports, shooting, sailing flight sports, also gave importance to national sports. On the one hand, increasing interest in sports and the sports enthusiasm of young people in the country, on the other hand, the Turkish Sports Association, which was seen to be unable to meet the needs and requirements of the period with its modest staff and amateur organization, fulfilled its duty as a period of maturation (Turk Spor Kurumu, 1938b). But the experience gained by the Alliance of Training Community of Turkey and the Turkish Sports Association period, and new ideas and movements seen in the sport management of States in Europe in those years revealed that sports should be handled as a state affair (Turk Spor Kurumu, 1938a). The establishment duration of the Turkish Sports Association and all policies followed in a short time, it has been interpreted that period of Turkish Sports Association is as being more successful than the period of Alliance of Training Community of Turkey (Fisek, 1980).

However, while Turkish Sports Association was an autonomous organization that was elected and authorized to spend its revenues in the establishment phase, participation of the government and military members in the general assembly and the authorized bodies of the Republican People's Party to approve the institution's budget and work programs, receiving instructions from the party in its actions caused it to become a semi-official structure (Keten, 1974).

Period of the General Directorate of Physical Training

Turkish Sports Association, under the control of the Republican People's Party, blended statism and partisanship in sports, and the necessity of state authority for Turkish sports became inevitable (Sumer, 1989). Depending on factors such as the interference of the personal ambitions and goals of the Party administrators in sports, and the thought that the negative events in sports are thought to be caused by the party, the Party decided to exclude

sports from its constitution and so that to affiliate it to the Government and therefore to the State (Fisek, 1985).

Stating the preparation of the Physical Training Law in his speech dated 1 November 1937, Atatürk set forth that the State should handle this study with a new understanding by saying “All kinds of sports activities should be considered as one of the main elements of the national upbringing of Turkish youth. In this work, it should be considered important that the government behaves more seriously and carefully than ever before, and that the Turkish youth should be raised carefully in terms of sports and national excitement.” (Baydar, 1939).

With the approval of the Physical Training Law numbered 3530, in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey’s meeting on June 29, 1938, Turkish Sports Association left its place with its all rights to the General Directorate of Physical Training affiliated to the Prime Ministry. The General Directorate of Physical Training, whose establishment, regulations and activity style were different from the previous ones, were assigned the responsibilities of establishing, regulating, implementing and following up, and started to work with the power of the State authority (Beden Terbiyesi Spor, 1939b). Before the Physical Training Law, sports activities carried out in schools, in the army and in the clubs with very different programs and mentalities, included all Turkish youth in a fundamental and competent organization, and ensured their management from a center by linking physical training and sports activities to the program (Yaman, 1941).

According to Article 1 of the Physical Training Law; the definition of physical training was made by stating as “A General Directorate of Physical Training has been established under the Prime Ministry in order to manage games, gymnastics and sports activities that ensure the development of the physical and moral abilities of the citizen according to national and revolutionary purposes.” According to the 13th article of the law, the association that would make young people workout also became a club outside the army and school in this law, and it was decided to establish a club in villages, towns, cities with 50 or more young people and in towns and cities with no less than 200 and more than 500. In article 21 of the Law, organizations with more than 500 civil servants and workers were obliged to build facilities such as gymnasium, sports field, swimming pool and to have a specialist instructor or trainer (Beden Terbiyesi Spor, 1939a).

At the meeting of the Central Advisory Committee on May 31, 1939, 9 federations comprised of Athletics, Football, Wrestling (Boxing and Weightlifting), Water Sports (Swimming, Water Polo, Rowing, Sailing, Boat Sports), Cycling (Motor Vehicle Sports), Shooting (Hunting, Archery), Mountaineering and Winter Sports, Sports Games (Tennis, Handball, Basketball, Volleyball, Golf) were established. In addition, the Federation of Scouting and Gymnastics was established with the decision of the delegation dated 29 April 1940 and numbered 3470. Right along with preparing regulations and circulars, federations organized work programs and competitions. They drafted international regulations and orders and circulars on programs, materials, construction and maintenance of facilities on preparation, promotion and championship competitions. By the international regulations, they made up orders and regulations regarding programs on preparation, encouragement and championship competitions, materials, construction and maintenance of facilities. The General Directorate, while establishing the central organization on the one hand, on the other hand contacted the regions and gave the necessary instructions for the formation of the clubs and groups of the Regional Advisory Committees. Advisory Committees were established in 63 regions, many of the existing clubs complied with the Physical Training Law and again 470 clubs, 689 groups were established and started their activities. In addition, they planned the construction

of the facility according to the climate and population status of the country and sent the necessary information, sketches and plans to the regions and examined them in local plans (Beden Terbiyesi Umum Mudurlugu, 1943).

The period of the General Directorate of Physical Training is a period that the management of sports passed to the State administration with the need for a new structure by showing a precedent in countries that sports was administrated by the state and.

Conclusion

Ataturk is a statesman who saw that the sports administration of the country cannot be carried out with Alliance of Training Community of Turkey that had a private association status but assisted by the Government of the Republic of Turkey and semi-official Turkish Sports Association under the direction of the Republican People's Party. However, Alliance of Training Community of Turkey and Turkish Sports Association that were organized between the years 1923-1938, contributed to the development of Turkish sports despite their many shortcomings. Alliance of Training Community of Turkey was not able to become an authority and carry sports to the desired level because it was an independent organization. As to Turkish Sports Association served as a preparatory bridge between Alliance of Training Community of Turkey and General Directorate of Physical Training, it remained as a party organization. The Republican administration, which realizes that sports in the country cannot remain under party rule and control, established the General Directorate of Physical Training by making Turkish sports under the state administration. As a result, Ataturk was a statesman who pioneered the organization and institutionalization of Turkish sports, diversification of sports activities and spread throughout the country with the legislative regulations issued by following the latest developments in the world.

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