PEOPLE'S HOUSES IN TURKEY (1932 – 1951)

A Historiographical Analysis of an Educational Enterprise for Adults

Sabri SADIKOĞLU

sonçağ akademi

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PEOPLE'S HOUSES IN TURKEY (1932–1951)

A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF AN EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE FOR ADULTS

People's Houses was an adult education institution established to indoctrinate the masses according to the ideals and principles of the single party of the newly founded Republic of Turkey. Being affected by the similar adult education institutions in Europe, they aimed to train people in different domains of culture from language and literature to music and tried to transform the masses from the remnants of an Islamic empire to the citizens of a modern western nation-state linked to one another on the basis of solidarity. The success of the institutions, however, depended on the degree of their appreciation by the people who were seen by the rulers solely as raw material that could be penetrated easily.

The purpose of the current study was to analyze the activities of these institutions in the light of the books and articles produced about the topic in the later times and to make a qualitative evaluation of the most prominent works about the topic in terms of their approach to historiography, contribution to the literature and quality of dealing with the topic.

As the above-mentioned purposes imply, this study consists of two parts. In the first part, the resources were analyzed in order to account for a factual history of the Houses from the establishment to disbanding. In the second part, the most important trendsetting academic works about the topic were analyzed in order to provide a qualitative evaluation. In order to reach these aims, all academic works including the books, articles, master theses and PhD theses were searched, identified and collected by making use of the international online databases, national thesis database of Turkey provided by the Higher Education Council of Turkey (YOK), the academic database of the National Academic Network and Information Center (ULAKBIM) in Turkey, and the library of the Middle East Technical University in Ankara. The resources were analyzed carefully. As a result of this analysis, master and PhD theses were excluded from the study as it was beyond the limits of the study to address all of them. Some resources had to be excluded because of being inaccessible and yet a few others were excluded as they seemed to be lacking the quality of an academic work when compared to the whole body of research about the topic. Finally, the analysis was limited to eight books and four articles which were seen as the trendsetting works about the topic.

The analysis of the resources showed that although there are good works that adopt a critical approach to the subject, the need for the production of academic works that adopt a more social and critical perspective which excludes the romantic and sentimental glorification of the institutions persists. To be able to do this, it is suggested that more case studies supported with views from the lives of the ordinary people who had experience with the Houses should be encouraged.

Foreword

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Marc Depaepe for his guidance, advice, encouragements and insights throughout the research.

I would like to thank to my wife Esra Sadikoglu for his patience, tolerance and help during the long hours of writing my book.

Finally, I would like to thank to my parents who, as they have been doing all through my life, supported me in study in general and helped me during the library search in Ankara in particular.

Without their help, this study would never be completed.

Contribution

During the formation of this research study, the researcher and the thesis supervisor worked collaboratively on a regular basis. Prior to the beginning of the thesis, the topic of the thesis was suggested by the researcher. The thesis supervisor helped with limiting the boundaries of the topic in order to make it a manageable project. Literature search was done by the researcher as most resources were in Turkish. The thesis supervisor helped with the research method and determined the direction in which the research proceeded. Also, the format of the thesis was suggested by the thesis supervisor. As the writing process began, the thesis supervisor gave feedback about the content, layout and method either by emails or on the appointed days on a regular basis. Necessary changes were made based on that feedback. Along with the writing process, the proofreading for style, punctuation and grammar was done by the researcher many times.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

"The Soviet order cannot tolerate the education of the young in the spirit of indifference to Soviet politics, in the spirit of a devil-may-care attitude and ideological neutrality" (Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. (B), 1946 as cited in Gould, 1951, p. 305).

"There can be only one German Youth movement because there is only one education of youth . . . This new Reich will give its youth to no one but will itself take youth and give to youth its own education and its own upbringing" (Hitler's May Day Address to German Youth, 1937 as cited in Gould, 1951, 305).

As these quotations indicate, the era between the First World War and the Second World War was a period in which education was used for the propaganda purposes of the dictatorships and totalitarian regimes. Countries were attracted to these tendencies of dictatorships in different degrees. Being a new-born country which needed to legitimize its regime and be confirmed by its people, Turkey found the model it needed in the ideological education methods of the totalitarian regimes in Europe. People's houses were founded to indoctrinate the masses towards the ideology of the single-party of the era. Founded in 1932 on the legacy of Turkish Hearths (*Türk Ocakları),* people's houses used all kinds of cultural means from music to history both to indoctrinate the people and to form the basis of a national culture that would legitimize the foundation of the new nation-state. Engaging with different kinds of activities, Houses functioned all over the country while their numbers increased from 16 in 1932 to 478 in the late 1940s. The ruling party aimed to increase their penetration in the countryside by opening people's rooms in villages after 1944. In 1951, they were disbanded with the start of the multi-party era and the strengthening of the democratic regimes all over the world. Thus, the first period of the people's houses, which also constitutes the object of this study, had ended.

People's houses have been the subject of many studies and books since 1960s and all these works emphasized different aspects of the topic. Works produced in the first period after the dissolution of the Houses seemed to be an emotional lamentation on the loss of the Houses that employed a romantic, subjective and extolling language. Although a few objective works that handled the topic in a scientific way were written in this period (e.g. by Karpat in 1963 and 1974), nearly no attention was paid to the subject until the late 1980s in a disciplined and academic way. The most important work of this era by Anıl Çeçen (1988), which was one of the first that handled the issue relying on various sources, still preserved the sentimental tone that dominated the previous works. It was in late 1990s and early 2000s that the first social critical works which dealt with the issue in an objective way that integrated the sources bringing alternative perspectives to the subject were

produced. Works by researchers such as Yeşilkaya (1998), Şimşek (2002), and Karaömerlioğlu (2006) were the most important examples of the academic works that bring an enriching perspective that went beyond narrating the archival information with the aim of vindicating the Houses. Interestingly, however, a new trend seems to be forming in the late 2000s that adopts a re-commending approach towards the works of the Houses. By re-adopting an extolling and vindicating approach, the researchers in this group seem to be representing a reactionary trend towards the critical researchers. Although criticizing the previous line of researchers for emphasizing the political and ideological aspect of the Houses (Toksoy, 2007), researchers in this group also adopt a political stance in favor of these institutions by suggesting that there is still a need for the Houses or similar institutions for "enlightening" the common people.

The current study was motivated by the question of how these different works approached the subject, led by the questions of why and how these institutions were founded, what their impacts were, and how they were affected by the institutions in Europe. Secondly, as the brief above-mentioned analysis of these works indicated, each work has a different style in historiography. As historiography has an important role in giving shape to the minds of people about the past, it deserves being treated separately so as to see to which directions it may lead the understanding of the people. Also, very little information was found in the literature that provided an overall Evaluation of the Studied Literature in terms of their approach to historiography and quality of dealing with the topic.

With these rationales in mind, the current study aimed to analyze the works produced on the Houses in order to (a) to give a factual history of the people's houses, (b) to make a qualitative evaluation of the works so as to identify the main trends of historiography and the quality of their dealing with the subject.

The method which was employed in reaching the aims of the study was analyzing the existing works with the aim of (a) constructing a story of the first period of the Houses and (b) making a qualitative evaluation of the works produced about the topic.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

With the general aims mentioned in the previous section in mind, this study has the following purposes:

1. To illustrate the historical facts about the foundation and activities of people's houses based on the secondary documents related to the topic.
2. To analyze the selected academic works (namely, books and articles) in order to evaluate their value in terms of their contribution to the literature.
3. To find out if there is/are some certain trend(s) in historiography.

To reach these purposes an attempt to answer the following research questions was made:

1. What is the political, social and economical basis/context in Turkey and in Europe on which people's houses were founded?
2. What were the foundational aims of the Houses with respect to their founders' thoughts?
3. How were the people's houses organized by the party to reach its aims?
4. What were the activities of people's houses in relation to its aims?
5. How do the existing works evaluate the activities of the people's houses in terms of;
   5.1. Reaching their aims
   5.2. Their general impact on the society
6. How do the books and articles written on the topic reflect the history of people's houses based on the language and the sources they employ?
7. What kind of a style in historiography is adopted in the written works?

1.3. Significance of the Study

Although people's houses had been important institutions in the history of education in Turkey, few trendsetting studies that handle the issue in a scientific way and that provide different perspectives to the topic exist (Akyol, 1996). In this respect, the current study is expected to contribute to the literature in terms of:

1. Drawing attention to the production of works which adopt a critical perspective towards the educational institutions of the early republican era in Turkey so as to enrich our perspectives.
2. Bringing together the important written works in the field and providing the researchers with a basic bibliography and criticism of those works so as to inspire the production of more works with a critical approach.

2. Method

2.1. The Design of the Study

In order to reach the aims of the study, an extensive literature analysis that dealt with analyzing the secondary sources with the aim of obtaining the answers to the research questions mentioned in the previous section was undertaken. The data obtained in the analysis was then used to construct a factual account of the history of people's houses. In the second part of the study, data was analyzed paying attention to the historiographical aspects of the sources such as the language used in the sources, the researcher's quality of handling the data in the sources, the researcher's approach to historiography, etc.

2.2. Data Collection

Data was collected by employing an extensive search using many resources. Firstly, the international databases for research provided by the library services of KULeuven was searched by making use of different search words related to the topic both in Turkish and in English. Secondly, the national thesis database provided by the Higher Education Council of Turkey (YOK) was scanned with the same search words and the relevant sources were downloaded. Some theses were inaccessible due to the limitation of permission. Thirdly, the academic database of the national academic information center of Turkey (ULAKBIM) was scanned to access the books and articles about the issue. As the search result provided by ULAKBIM covered a wide range of sources from articles to books and even to symposium papers (but not the theses) about the topic, it was also used as a checklist to see whether most sources were covered. Fourthly, a document search was done in the library of the Middle East Technical University in Ankara in order to access the books about the topic. Also, a search on the internet using different search engines was made to see if there were any sources that were missed. As a result of this search, many online articles about the topic were accessed. Internet was useful also for providing different kinds of sources such as newspaper articles about the topic. Finally, some books and a journal issue which could not be accessed either because no library involved them or because they were not in press were accessed by contacting the publishers and requesting the books and the journal from them. Despite all these efforts to access the sources, a few articles and a book could not be accessed and had to be excluded from the study. But still, most research about the topic is expected to be covered in the study.

Rather than being a linear stage, data collection continued throughout the research process as need for them emerged or as important sources were discovered regarding the topic.

2.3. Limits of the Study

Two kinds of limits were set for the conduction of this study. The first limit regards the time limit as this is a study in history. People's houses were institutions that were first established in 1932 and closed in 1951. After 1951, they were opened and closed again for many times. Today, they are still open and act an NGO independent from the state. Taking into account the time and space constraints that limit this study and in order to make it a more manageable project, this study is limited only to the first period of people's houses.

The second limit concerns the use of the sources. There was a great variety in the types of sources (master and PhD theses, articles, books, conference papers, etc) about the topic. Not only

types, but also the number of sources was a great many. Therefore, a limit had to be set for which sources to include as it was impossible to include all the sources in a master's study.

For the first part of the study, the reliability, accuracy, and originality of the information given in the sources were important. Because of this, a preliminary selection was made among the sources in terms of their accuracy in dealing with the topic. In this respect, some sources were excluded from the study based on their poor quality of dealing with the topic. The quality judgment of the sources was made by comparing different sources in terms of the truth of the historical facts. Some sources (mostly master theses and some articles) were observed to give inaccurate information about the topic. For the second part of the study, where an Evaluation of the Studied Literature was made, the contribution of the works to the literature had priority. Some articles which were observed not to contribute much to the literature in terms of providing the readers with new information, a new perspective, analysis or synthesis were excluded from the study as they seemed to be giving a mere repetition of the common factual knowledge about the topic. Therefore, only the most important trendsetting works were included in this part. Because of this, the analysis was limited to the articles and books only in the second part. As a result, the analysis was limited to four articles and eight books in the second part.

3. Literature Analysis

3.1. The World Political Context during the Interwar Period

3.1.1. Europe between the Two World Wars

In order to be able to understand the motives underlying the need for an institution like people's houses, it is necessary to identify their sources of origin. Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, the head of the Turkish Hearths that were founded to spread Turkish nationalism, stated in the journal of *Türk Yurdu* [the Turkish Land] in 1930, "Fascism thinks of building the economical welfare, and political and social harmony around the ideal of a country. We see in yesterday's excitement of fascist nationalism both our past and our future." (Ardıç, 2010).

In a similar fashion, Falih Rıfkı Atay, an influential journalist of the time, in the preface of his book *Faşist Roma, Kemalist Turan* written in 1931, maintained, "For the education of Turkish masses, the mass education methods of Moscow, and for the étatist Turkish economy, the corporatist methods of fascism must be adopted." (Ardıç, 2010).

Another account of a praise of the fascist ideology by a member of the parliament in a daily newspaper in 1923 reported:

> When the whole Europe rushes to fascism with the joy and safety it brings to the world, the fact that it is seen as if it was something dangerous worried me. Fascism cannot be viewed as

> something which should be feared of. On the contrary, for nations like ours who made a revolution there are principles which can be derived from fascism. (Feridun Fikri Bey, RPP member of Parliament from Dersim in Yenigün Newspaper, 1923 as cited in Ardıç, 2010)

As this Member of Parliament stated, Europe was rushing to fascism after the First World War. Bakırtaş and Tekinşen (2004) maintained, "Bourgeois civilization of the nineteenth century had been severely wounded and nationalist movements from Mexico to China, from Turkey to Russia had spread all over the world" (p. 83). Treaties signed one after one by the defeated countries of the First World War had loaded new burdens on the shoulders of those countries. The defeated countries had been condemned to pay heavy compensations which increased the debts of these countries to an incredible amount. This, in turn, devastated the economy of these countries, especially Germany and increased the feelings of rage in the people causing the rapid rise of nationalistic movements like Nazism and fascism. According to some political scientists, payments demanded from Germany were punishments for Germany, but a reward for German nationalism (Bakırtaş & Tekinşen, 2004).

The Great Depression of 1929 made the situation even worse. By driving millions of people to poverty caused by unemployment and devastating the economies of many countries from the U.S. to Europe, radical right movements gained an incredible popularity, whereas leftist movements decreased in popularity as they seemed not to be able to respond to people's demands. According to what Bakırtaş and Tekinşen (2004) report, while the German Social Democrat Party and the social democrat party in Austria were totally dissolved, Labour Party in Britain had lost half of its members and lost power with respect to 1913 (p.95). Likewise, all political parties in Italy were disbanded after Mussolini declared in 1925 that a new authoritarian state was founded by leaving the constitutional regime (Aydoğan, 2002, p. 183). Taking advantage of the economic crisis, the regimes made people believe that the charismatic leader (*Führer, Duce* and the like) was holding the power to lead the nation to the construction of a powerful country.

Thus, Europe was being led to a new world war by the motive of taking the revenge of the past under the roof of national authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, which needed a tool to make people believe in them in their strive for creating a powerful country. Toksoy (2007) stated that education served as the tool in strengthening the regime by imposing the doctrines of the republic on the masses in Turkey. Being the pervading paradigm from the nineteenth century on, educationalization of the masses had a special significance in Europe in the thirties. People were viewed as the objects of huge social engineering projects and were categorized based on different dimensions such as race, age, gender, intelligence, etc., each dimension requiring a different type of treatment and education based on their conceived roles in the society and in the rise of the regimes. Thus, different institutions and organizations were established for the training of different sections of the society. In those organizations, women and men, girls and boys were taught that they all had a role in the establishment

of the welfare of their countries and social and political duties to fulfill for the victory of the regime. The frame and the boundaries of the education people received in those organizations were drawn in line with the principles of the regime. In the Soviet Union, for example, these schools were named *Little Octabrists* for children from age 8 to 11, *Young Pioneers* for those between the ages of 10 and 16, and *Komsomol* for the youth between the ages of 14 and 23, whereas in Germany many organizations for different age groups such as *Jung-mäidel* and *Bund Deutscher Mäidel* for girls, *Landjahr* for elementary school children, *National Politische Lehrgänge* for youth from 16-19 years old, and *Arbeits-dienst* for those from 18 to 25 years old existed (Woody, 1939, p.44). In Italy, there were *Balilla* organizations named after a little boy who threw a stone at the invading Austrians in 1915 after the whole village had escaped. These organizations aimed to educate children from six years old to eighteen. A child who succeeded in these institutions continued to *Balilla Riflemen* and then to the *Avanguardisti*. In Italy, there were even *Pre-Balilla* organizations, established in 1936 to educate pre-school children, whose favorite toys were "model tanks which fire small corks and tiny airplanes equipped with rapid-firing guns" (Miller, 1938, p.969).

Thus militarism, ideological training and propaganda were the leading educational methods in these organizations. Children who completed them had the chance of being eligible for a high position in the ruling national, fascist or communist parties in these countries. Among the common features which characterize these organizations are their support and direct (sometimes indirect as in the *Balillas*) link to the governing party, loyalty and service to the regime, ideological training in favor of the regime reinforcing the feelings of solidarism and social belonging among the members, and gender-oriented education which reminded the youth their duties in the holy organization of the state.

Adult education, on the other hand, was developing in a different direction with different realities. Far from living in a world of fantasy and illusion, adults were the ones who were most affected by the economic crisis of 1929. High unemployment rates had forced the governments to take some measures against the effects of the economic crisis. As a result, different adult education institutions were established in different countries. In Germany, for example, there were folk high schools that aimed to train young adults in certain occupations in the 1920s. Even though there was diversity among these adult education institutions as to their ideological orientations (socialist, nationalist, roman catholic or protestant), they all served for the same purpose. Field argued that these institutions, which were later transformed into work camps, namely *Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst*, showed the same kind of diversity and therefore seen as "a training ground for building new kinds of citizens" together with being seen as "free space for social experimentation" or as "a residential element in the wider process of popular education" (as cited in Hake, 1993, p. 128). These voluntary organizations of the 1930s were turned into compulsory labour organizations during the National Socialist movement with a strong emphasis on ideological propaganda added. Hake (1993) noted that the national

socialists encouraged by the success of FAD later scheduled compulsory labor for a great many portion of the working population including the university students and academicians, and established special labor and propaganda organizations for socialists, communists, artists, intellectuals and trade unionists (p. 129). The same themes of nation building and national unity as in the youth organizations were visible here, too.

The leisure and recreational organizations for adults also aimed to support nation building and propaganda. The KdF (*Kraft durch Freude)* in Germany, *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* in Italy and the *Sokols* in Czech Republic, for example, provide us with good examples of social recreational adult organizations of the time though there are some subtle differences among these organizations as to their aims and contexts in which they act. KdF (Strength through Joy), for example, aimed to provide the large masses in Germany with the opportunity to go on cheap holidays thus providing them with the advantages of National Socialist regime (Life in Nazi Germany 1933-9, p.1). An underlying ideological motive for providing people, regardless of their class, with such recreational activities was that "they would be much more likely to work hard at their jobs" if they were contented with lots of activities in their free time (p.1). Though mainly being a tourism organization, KdF provided people with other different kinds of activities such as concerts, libraries and plays as well (Grünberger, 1995, p. 197). Another similar organization was *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (OND) in Italy, founded to "mediate the sharp social and economic conflicts that resulted from fascism's intervention in an already deeply divided and unevenly developed Italy" (De Grazia, 1981, p. viii). These institutions were mainly cultural organizations that functioned as an apparatus of the fascist party. De Grazia (1981) stated that by seeming to be apolitical organizations, the ONDs had a striking political and indoctrinatory effect on the masses as they penetrated into every domain of social and individual life without clearly claiming fascistic ideals (p. vii-viii). ONDs organized many activities for people such as mass sports, traditional games, amateur theater plays, film showings, etc. all aiming to "organize the Italian people into a public ostensibly above class…responsive, if not always enthusiastic, toward the regime's policies" (p.ix).

Yet another example of this kind of organization, which seems to be the most influential one on the Turkish model, is the Czech *Sokol* movement and organization. Recruiting more than 350.000 people from age 6 to 18 and over at the beginning of 1930s, the Sokol Gymnastic Unit aimed "in a Czech and Slovak spirit at uniting the "brothers" and "sisters" of the same nation into a great band, ready to perform great achievements for the common welfare. There is therefore a fine harmony of individual and corporate spirit in team training and exercises the individual is merged in the whole" (Jandásek, 1932, p.69).

Thus, it can be claimed that the *Sokol* organization had undertaken the role of building a new nation of physically and morally fit citizens for Czechoslovakia around the theme of sports and

physical well being. Jandásek (1932) reported that although sports was the central theme in these organizations, other types of recreational activities such as addresses, lectures, theatrical representations, excursions, puppet shows, concerts, exhibitions and gymnastic performances that contributed to the ideology of nation building in positive ways also took place as educational activities (p. 70).

Turning back to the question at the introduction of this chapter, we now have a clearer answer as to the origins of people's houses. Aydın (2003) asserted that the Turkish ruling elite of 1930s combined different philosophical and political aspects of the western Enlightenment and modernity in quite an eclectic and pragmatic sense. Not only the radical re-constructivist political styles of Stalinism, Italian fascism and German Nazism, but also institutions serving these political regimes, with some adaptations, were adopted by the single party of Turkey. Karaömerlioğlu (1998) maintained that some educationists had been sent to Europe in order to identify the mass education methods employed in European countries at the end of 1920s and beginning of 1930s. These educationists returned to their country with ideas in their minds. Vildan Aşir Savaşır was one of these educationists sent to Europe for an educational trip. Being especially impressed by the *Sokols* of Czechoslovakia, he reported in a radio conference on what he witnessed there and proposed that a new institution resembling those in the Czechoslovak setting may have been founded. It was not only the *Sokol*s, of course, on which people's houses were modeled. There were a few more similar institutions whose methods were examined and utilized in the formation of people's houses. Zeyrek (2006) stated that apart from the cultural institutions of Czechoslovakia, Hungarian cultural institutions had been influential on Houses as well. However, the real influence was coming from the *dopolavoros* of Italy and the mass education institutions of the Soviet Union (p. 20). Zeyrek attributes this influence to the good relationships of Turkey with these two countries at the time. The influence of these two countries on the Turkish intellectuals can also be seen in their written works as well. Falih Rıfkı Atay, for example, had stated that the revolutionary methods of the communist and fascist parties that experienced a transition from an old regime to a new regime must have been adopted (p. 21).

Atatürk and the ruling elite, led by the internal and external events that took place in those years, had already formed an idea of establishing an institution of indoctrination for adults prior to Vildan Aşir Savaşır's radio conference, which was only the starting point of the process of the foundation of people's houses. As the Houses were modeled on the European models and as their foundation was necessitated by some inner political events, it is necessary to explore the political atmosphere of Turkey along with the important events in the interwar period in order to identify the underlying motives which necessitated the formation of these institutions

3.1.2. Turkey between the Two World Wars

The era between the two world wars in the world corresponds to the foundation of the republic in Turkey on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. A country having lost most of its territory and exhausted by the endless wars which started in 1911 and ended in 1922, Turkey had a new agenda after the foundation of republic in 1923. The problems the ruling elite was facing were twofold. On the one hand, they were trying to legitimize the new regime in people's minds while on the other hand they were trying to take the necessary steps in modernization rapidly as they believed that the country had stayed backward for a very long time and should compensate for the time lost as soon as possible. Köker noted that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and the first president of modern Turkey, stated in one of his speeches:

> There are two systems(…) the first one as known, is the style of the great French Revolution: The regimes will change, counter revolutions against revolutions will be made. While right fights against left and left kills right, one and a half centuries will elapse (…) Does this nation [the Turkish nation] have that much time and that much blood in their veins? (as cited in Yeşilkaya, 1998, p. 54)

This speech, as Yeşilkaya (1998) argued, shows the revolutionary nature of Turkish modernization rather than being evolutionary. The republican elite believed that they must launch the modernization process as soon as possible and reach the end result without going through the intermediary stages.

Transforming a people into a nation was not easy, though. First of all, the new regime had to prove its legitimacy against the Ottoman Empire. Without this being proved, it would not have had the basis on which the ruling class of the republic would base their reforms. The regime had been fighting against the counter-revolutionary actions like Sheikh Said Rebellion between 1925 and 1930. This incident along with the attempt of assassination to Atatürk in 1927 led to the dissolving of the Progressive Republican Party, the first opposition party in Turkey. Meanwhile, many superstructure reforms had been put into practice by the ruling party. Radical reforms "from law to the alphabet, from education to fashion" had the aim to eliminate all the remaining connections between the old Ottoman Empire and the new Turkey, as Şimşek (2005) put it (p.73). Many of the opposition movements and rebellions were actually reactions against the pace of and the way in which these revolutions were practiced.

Nevertheless, the regime had strengthened itself by succeeding against the opposition movements. Şimşek (2005) stated:

> In fact, when we come to the 1930s we have a new Turkey seeming to have guaranteed its existence through its victorious government, which had entirely monopolized the political

power at home, and through some international treaties, such as the Lausanne Treaty, abroad. (p. 73)

In the 1930s, however, a new challenge was awaiting the young Turkish Republic. The effects of the Great Depression of 1929, though not as great as it was in Europe, added to the poverty of the rural areas as the price of the agricultural products decreased a great deal (Ergin, 1992). Not only the decrease of prices in agricultural products, but also the contraction in foreign trade as a result of the increase in the prices of imported goods debilitated the Turkish economy. The parties that were most affected negatively by the crisis were farmers, landowners and the middle-scale traders. (Seyidoğlu, 2001). Bureaucrats and industrialists, on the other hand, reinforced their economical power. In other words, the bourgeoisie which was already undeveloped and the villagers were weakened whereas bureaucrats strengthened their position (Çeçen, 1988). The state had to take some measures in order to eliminate the effects of the depression. Those measures will not be mentioned here as they are out of the scope of this study, however, it is important to point out that the Great Depression of 1929 resulted in the expansion of the intervention of the state in economy in Turkey (Boratav & Keyder, 1984).

The expansion of intervention, however, was not confined to the economical domain. Based on the étatisme principle of Kemalism, the state spread its intervention also to the sociological, cultural, and ideological domains of life. Not only the Great Depression, but also and more than that, the political atmosphere in the country encouraged the intervention of the state to all the domains of people's lives. Two very important events that took place in the period affected the political atmosphere inside to a great deal. The first one was the foundation and the rise of the Liberal Republican Party in 1930. It was Atatürk who proposed and encouraged the foundation of the party in order to direct the opposition movements to a legal path and to give the opposing parties the chance to express their ideas (Çavdar, 1995, p. 2053). Prior to the foundation of LRP, people were in search of a new political movement to identify themselves with. The new regime had started to be identified with pressure and oppression because of its harsh treatment of the uprisings (e.g. the Sheikh Said Rebellion), the imposition of the revolutionary applications, the burden of the heavy taxes, the poor economic conditions which were caused by the burden of the war and the payment of the foreign debts of the Ottoman Empire without receiving outer support,. Also, the effects of the Great Depression had widened the gap between the regime and people (Zeyrek, 2006, p. 7).

The Liberal Republican Party was founded under these circumstances by Atatürk's friend and Turkey's ambassador to France Ali Fethi Okyar in August 1930. The party defined itself as nationalist, secular and republican. It adopted the liberal views in economy. It reached 13.000 members in a very short time and showed great success in the municipality elections of 1930. LRP enjoyed such great support from the ordinary people that when the party leader Fethi Okyar came to İzmir for the great İzmir meeting on 4 September 1930, he was met by thousands of people in İzmir, some of them with

tears in their eyes. During the chaos, Fethi Okyar was nearly crushed and his jacket was torn. In the meeting area on September 7, there were nearly 50.000 people protesting the ruling party fiercely. Fethi Okyar, who could not calm down the crowd, was also surprised by the interest he had been shown. In a very short time, the meeting turned to be a wide-scale protest against the ruling party. When people started to attack the bureaus of the ruling party, armed forces responded by opening fire to the crowd. In the end, a child was shot to death, but surprisingly his father, who was holding him in his arms, brought him to Fethi Okyar and cried that he would not mind sacrificing his child on the condition that he [Fethi Okyar] saved them from those "oppressors" (Özgürel, 2008b). Şimşek (2005) interpreted these reactions as a sign of prevalent discontent against the government and stated that the meeting had become a means of discharging for the people.

For the ruling party, this reaction was a sign of danger as it pointed out the potential power of the new party and the dangerous situation in which they themselves took place. LRP was "forced" to disband in December 1930 because

> This multi-party experience strengthened the culture of fear, a deeply rooted mentality in the late Ottoman Empire and the early Republic, that times were volatile and that the enemies of the Kemalist regime were consolidating their power for their 'separatist' goals. (Karaömerlioğlu, 1998, p. 68)

What contributed to Kemalists' thought that the regime was in danger was an important incident, the Menemen Incident, which showed its effect in the political and social arena for many years and in many ways. Brockett (1998) recounted on the details of the event as follows:

> The event derives its name not because it originated with the inhabitants of Menemen but because the chief protagonists - six men who hatched their plot in the nearby city of Manisa - unveiled their cause in Menemen. *En route* there, the six had passed a number of weeks in the isolated village of Bozalan where they allegedly indulged in narcotics and practised various *Nakşibendi* rituals. Proceeding to Menemen, the six entered a mosque and, armed with a gun, insisted that locals arriving for early morning prayers recognize their leader, *Giritli* [Cretan] Mehmet, as the long-awaited *Mehdi*. Having forced these locals to join their revolt against the 'heathen' Kemalist state, the rebels then seized the mosque flag and herded their followers through the city streets, loudly proclaiming the *tekbir* and announcing that they were but the vanguard of an army 70,000 strong and committed to the restoration of the *Şeriat*. (Brockett, 1998, p.54)

The events did not, however, end at this point. The group was confronted by three separate officials who asked for explanation. When the two departed confused, the third who was a young reserve officer named Kubilay grabbed Mehmet. However, Kubilay was shot by the other dervishes and attempted to depart. His regiment, confused, scattered and this encouraged Mehmet to pursue

Kubilay. Putting it with Brockett's words, "the most sensational act occurred": Kubilay was decapitated by Cretan Mehmet and his head was mounted on the top of a flag pole. With the pole in their hands, the group wanted to go on their protest in the streets of Menemen and they were confronted by two more state authorities both of whom were killed by them. In the end, three of them, including Mehmet, were shot to death by a group of armed soldiers, one wounded severely and the other two escaped. They were, however, caught later, trialed in Menemen and sentenced to death (Brockett, 1998).

Far from being a mass movement according to Brockett (1998), the Menemen Incident is still not fully illuminated up till today. He maintained that:

> Ever since 1930, the event has been the subject of a highly emotional debate: Kemalists have perpetually cited it as evidence of the potential threat posed by radical Islamists, while Islamists themselves have pointed to the unjust punishments as proof that the *Menemen Olayi* was in fact orchestrated by Kemalists' intent on finding a pretext to eliminate potentially popular political opponents, namely respected members of the *Nakşibendi tarikat.* Neither conspiracy theory, however, is based upon incontrovertible evidence. (p.54)

The effect of this incident became widespread. Not only were the six rebels but also 28 local people from Menemen were punished for they abetted the rebels (Brockett, 1998). This event also formed the basis for the precautions the government and the army took in order to fight against so-called anti-revolutionary movements. In this respect, Malkoç (2009) maintained

> Many revolutions which were rapid and spreading into various domains with the aim of founding a contemporary populist state were being put into practice. However, the effects of Great Depression on Turkey, the failure of the Liberal Republican Party experience and the Menemen Incident unveiled the fact that these revolutions could not be laid out to people. (p. 14)

Çeçen (1988) emphasized the similar points, but adopted a slightly different perspective. For Çeçen, followed by the poverty caused by the Great Depression, the gap between the bureaucracy and the folk had widened as a result of the policies which limited the democratic rights and freedom of people and which loaded the economic burden on the shoulders of the poor masses i.e. by taxes between 1923 and 1929. On the other hand, the ruling party was now deprived of the popular support and legitimacy it was given during wartime, for "the military victory was too far in the past" (Şimşek, 2005). Atatürk, himself, was actually aware of the discontent of people as shown in his talk to his secretary general Hasan Rıza Soyak during his compensatory and diagnostic visits to the Anatolian cities, "…I am distressed in a big pain. As you see, we have been listening to problems and complaints everywhere we go. Every part of the country is in a deep deprivation and psychological and material

misery…" (as cited in Zeyrek, 2006, p.10). A means to entrench the roots of the regime in the society was needed.

Çeçen (1988) argued that the ruling party had two major choices: Either to soften the regime to a certain degree by extending and expanding the arena of democratic rights and freedoms or intervening into every aspect of individual life in order to transform people according the ideals of the revolution and thus making the regime more authoritarian. Çeçen further stated that the experience of the Kemalist cadre and the circumstances in which they took place necessitated them to choose the second way. As the ruling party could not solve the problem on an economical basis, they resorted to an ideological solution which would create a new excitement in the country and which would bridge the gap between the state and the people (p. 95).

In the atmosphere created especially by these two events, the ruling party did their third congress (which took place in 1931) in which "a series of new politico-ideological measures were taken." (Karaömerlioğlu, 1998, p. 68). These measures were planned based on the rhetoric of "unifying the forces" for the success of the revolutions (p. 68).

Zeyrek (2006) asserted that the ruling party first started with getting rid of its opponents. The first party that was treated this way was the members and the sympathizers of LRP. Along with the unsuccessful MPs in RPP, they were isolated from the parliament. Secondly, all other political parties that were founded by bottom-up initiatives were disbanded by proposing different pretexts such as having communist tendencies. Also, the opposing press and the journalists were put under pressure by sending them to jail because of the news or articles they produced. The control of the government on the press was even strengthened by a law which allowed the disbanding of the newspapers in case they published news which was opposite to the assets and interests of the country. This was the result of the mentality of the regime that sought a type of citizen and a type of press which were compatible with the regime (pp. 10-12).

In addition to these, many non-governmental institutions such as student unions, The Teachers' Union (*Muallimler Birliği*), Turkish Hearths (*Türk Ocakları*), the Journalists' Society (*Gazeteciler Cemiyeti*), the Turkish Women's Union (*Türk Kadınlar Birliği*), the Turkish Mason Society (*Türk Masonlar Cemiyeti),* etc. were disbanded by the ruling party (Şimşek, 2005, p. 75; Zeyrek, 2006, p.12). Moreover, the party-state relationship was strengthened and embodied by some regulations like appointing the governor of the city as the party leader of the city at the same time (Karaömerlioğlu, 1998, p. 68). This absolutist style of governing the country pervaded for nearly two decades.

Foundation of the people's houses was among the politico-ideological measures taken in the third congress of Republican People's Party (RPP) in 1931. The "voluntary" dissolution of the

mentioned non-governmental organizations was realized in order to pave the way for a new organization initiated by the state in order to educate people towards the ideals of the republic.

Malkoç (2009) emphasized another dimension of the basis on which people's houses were founded. He established a connection between People's Houses and the principle of Populism of Kemalism. For Malkoç (2009), "People's Houses were both necessary for the Populism principle of the revolution and a natural result of it" (p. 15). He further elaborated on this view by saying:

> RPP's approach which constitutes another dimension and meaning of the principle of Populism maintaining that Turkey is a classless society was oriented towards ensuring equality around the principle of Populism. RPP, in view of this approach, took it as the main aim to fight against individual, group and class tyranny and by harmonizing the benefits of the different social groups that constituted the nation toward the benefits of the country aims to reach a unitary structure and integrity of the nation. (p.15)

According to this view, foundation of the institutions like people's houses was necessary in a populist state as the aim was to equip people with the necessary knowledge and culture in order to be able to participate in the governing of the country. Yeşilkaya (1998), focusing on the same point, claimed that class diversification was not accepted by the ruling party, whereas the existence of vocational groups and their solidarity (corporatist solidarity) was accepted and took place in the party program (p. 47). People's houses were the institutions which were expected to contribute to the creation of the "classless granite mass" (p. 48).

3.1.3. The Way to the Establishment of the Houses: From Turkish Hearths to People's Houses

Even though the speech of Vildan Aşir Savaşır on a radio conference is accepted as the beginning of the process which paved the way to the foundation of People's Houses in most of the sources, Yeşilkaya (1998) noted that Atatürk had already been thinking about adult education even before founding the republic. Göğüş maintained that in his speech on 1 March 1923 Atatürk stated:

> …as it is necessary for a common education which is based on learning by doing to establish new libraries, gardens which encompass various plants and animals, conservatories, workplaces, galleries, exhibition lounges… To organize scientific night meetings and conferences, to teach the common people who do not know reading and writing how to read and write using the easiest way, thus teaching them the most necessary, to open evening courses in these centers… (as cited in Yeşilkaya, p. 69)

This quotation is a sign of Atatürk's thought of adult education even in the 1920s. However, it is difficult to say that his thoughts were unprecedented, because there was already an example of a similar institution. It was Turkish Hearths (*Türk Ocakları*). Founded in 1912 by a group of medicine

students in a military school and some intellectuals who later established the foundations of Turkish nationalism, the Ocaks aimed to awaken Turkish nationalism and spread the ideal of progressivism among common people (Georgeon, 2006). Putting it by the words of the founder of the Ocaks Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, the Ocaks had mainly four activities: "Place, aid and help, propaganda, and gathering" (as cited in Yeşilkaya, p. 65). In view of these principles, Ocaks published the *Türk Yurdu* [Turkish Land] journal, organized meetings and conferences in Ocak buildings so as to spread Turkish nationalism, and became a place of gathering, help and financial aid for Turkish students from all over the Turkic world including the Turks from Central Asia, etc (Toksoy, 2007, p. 23). Ocaks in İstanbul were dissolved in 1920 by the invading forces, but their members went to Anatolia and contributed to the Independence War between 1920 and 1923. In 1923, they were opened again with some changes in their statutes compatible with the new regime and by 1931 had become a powerful organization with 267 offices and 32.000 members all over the country (Georgeon, 1996). Their activities had also been diversified from "health, rural improvement, social assistance, drama, music, culture, economic development, sports to courses in language, typing, printing, translation, accounting, speech, and home economics" (Karpat, 1963, p. 56). In this respect, Ocaks can be said to be contributing to adult education during the era. However, it is apparent that they were not the ideal adult education centers in Atatürk's mind. Atatürk, visiting the Ocaks many times and having come together with the intellectuals there, wished to use them in the service of the republican ideals. Because of this, he established good relations with the Ocaks (Şimşek, 2005, pp. 34-35). Ocaks, on the other hand, responded positively to Atatürk's attempts for their existence depended on his consent in a way. In this respect, they underwent some ideological changes in order to comply with the republican regime and the ruling party during the period they remained active. Şimşek (2002) maintained that the Ocaks, even though they stated in their statutes that they were non-political cultural organizations, sometimes had to involve in political actions in order to have good relationships with the government. In the first years of the republican era, Ocaks participated in political activities to support the ruling party (like organizing meetings against Sheikh Said Rebellion), elected Atatürk's wife as the honorary head of the Ocaks, revised their statutes many times to comply with the principles of the new regime (like adding an article to their statutes that their aims and actions would be compatible with those of RPP even though they had stated before that they were non-political organizations) (Şimşek, 2002).

As Şimşek (2002) further stated, it is interesting to see that Ocaks, though being autonomous cultural institutions, always had the fear of being disbanded by the ruling party. Whenever they felt threatened, they changed their attitude and tried to be close to the government. This was understandable when taking into account the actions of the ruling party to strengthen its position in order to become the sole ruling and governing power in the country.

It seems that whatever they do, Ocaks could not satisfy the ruling party and Atatürk in their attempt to be close to the party. Like all the civil institutions, they were disbanded in 1931 as a part of the ideological mobilization movement of the single party. Many hypotheses as to why they were disbanded exist. Karpat (1963), for example, maintained that Ocaks were disbanded because they had fulfilled their aims and remained obsolete in the republican era. He also stated that Ocaks were a source of discontent for their racialist tendencies under the name of Pan-turanism (p. 56). This view may not be fully refuted for some important members of the Ocaks were reported to have Pan-turanist speeches. However, Ocaks had already confined their territory of action within the borders of Turkey in 1918 (Şimşek, 2002, p. 30). Malkoç (2009) supported the same view that Ocaks were disbanded because of their racialist tendencies and that they had remained obsolete in the new system (p. 19). He also added that it was because of the Ocaks' pan-turanist aims that Soviet Russia had applied pressure on Turkey and Turkey could not endure that pressure and disbanded the Ocaks. Toksoy (2007) and many other historians however, did not support this view by stating that there was not enough document to support the view that Russia applied pressure on Turkey.

According to a third view, which Çeçen (1990) and Malkoç (2009) proposed, Ocaks were disbanded also because they were holding an attitude that was counter-revolutionary and supporting backwardness. However, it was noted before that Ocaks had spent tremendous efforts to be in line with the ruling party. In one of his speeches in 1925, Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver redefined Ocaks' aims as helping the government to educate the nation in line with the Kemalist revolution principles. Üstel argued that complementary to this effort, they named themselves as "the guard of the revolutions" and "warriors against backwardness" (as cited in Şimşek, 2002, p. 34).

A fourth view, on the other hand, suggested that Ocaks were disbanded because of their closeness to the newly founded Liberal Republican Party. This fourth view may be considered in connection to the previous view, because as it had been noted before LRP was disbanded with the pretext that it had become the center of anti-revolutionary and radical Islamist backward movements. The researchers supporting the third view seem to be sharing the same point of view with that of RPP about the anti-revolutionary nature of the Ocaks. Şimşek (2002), Toksoy (2007), and Karaömerlioğlu (1998) put the hypothesis forward that Ocaks had been involved in close relationships with LRP after it was founded. Toksoy (2007) noted that many Ocak members had also become LRP members. She further stated that Ocak members had helped LRP to establish institutions in different cities and that this attracted the attention of the RPP members. RPP inspectors complained the Ocaks many times to Atatürk that Ocaks were no more in cooperation with RPP (p. 27). Atatürk, with the negative impact and surprising success of LRP's İzmir meeting, went on a journey to some Anatolian cities to discover the reasons of people's discontent with the regime. During these journeys, he also visited some Ocaks and expressed his criticisms to the members. Tunçay noted that after those visits, Atatürk announced

in a press conference that the great People's Houses were going to be founded soon (as cited in Şimşek p.38). Şimşek (2005) interpreted this speech of Atatürk as his intent to isolate the Ocaks and estrange them from the ruling party. This way, a good pretext to dissolve them would have been invented.

It was in April 1931 that Ocaks were disbanded in their last congress by the forced consent of its members. It was forced because their dissolution had been announced two weeks before the last congress by Atatürk in a press release (Şimşek 2002, p.43). Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, head of the Ocaks, claimed that Atatürk decided to disband the Ocaks in order to assemble the power in one hand. He stated:

> The model is quite clear: In Russia, there is Narodni kom and Komsomol in the hands of the single party. In Germany, there is a single party and at its service Hitler's Jugend Organization. The chief's will is absolute. Mussolini's single party founded the Balilla Organization at its own service…These are the models and the sources of contagion. (Journal of Turkish Grand National Assembly records, issue 9, p. 615-616 as cited in Şimşek, 2002, p. 40)

Based on these facts and records, it would not be wrong to say that Turkish Hearths although being a model for adult education centers, did not exactly meet the criteria Atatürk had in mind for organizations like those. Actually, they were cultural and intellectual organizations which mainly aimed the intellectual elite. Georgeon (1996) reported that there were two cliques in the Turkish Hearths one of which accepted the Ocaks as a "club of intellectuals" while the other viewed them as social aid institutions that worked in service of the poor. The first clique was headed by Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver while the second was headed by Dr. Reşit Galip, who was going to be one of the most prominent figures later in the foundation of People's Houses (p. 45). These two cliques also represented two political orientations: LRP and RPP, respectively. Atatürk, both by the fear that Ocaks could be a major opposition movement against the ruling party and that they would not be useful for the indoctrination plans of the regime in their current elitist structure, in a way "ordered" them to dissolve themselves. Their decision of dissolution was approved by RPP in their third congress and all their properties were transferred to the party. In that same congress, the foundation of People's Houses was announced.

3.2. People's Houses at Work

In this section, the activities of People's Houses along with the specific aims for the different divisions it enlisted are analyzed. However, it is important to highlight their general aims before analyzing the specific aims of different divisions.

3.2.1. The Aims of Foundation

The general aims of people's houses may be categorized under some different headings. The first and the utmost aim as stated by the general secretary of RPP, Recep Peker, was to organize the nation in the form of a mass of people who were engaged to an ideal and who understood and loved one another (Ankara Halkevi, 1933, p.10). Being the remnant of the former Ottoman society, the society under the rule of the new republic consisted of different ethnic and religious groups among whom Turks were the majority. Seventy percent of the population was living in small rural units like villages (which sometimes consisted of 200-250 people) which were deeply isolated from other villages and from the cities because of the harsh geographical conditions of Anatolia (Karaömerlioğlu, 2006). Under these circumstances, it was difficult to speak of a nation who bore the consciousness required to form a mass that knew, understood and loved each other. Therefore, it was natural for the founders of these institutions to adopt the nation-formation aim as the first and most important aim of People's Houses. Moreover, Köymen, who was a peasantist, maintained that there were people in some of these villages "who did not feel themselves Turk enough" and Korok, another peasantist, stated that some people, because of the ignorance and historical unconsciousness of the old rulers, named themselves as Circassians, Kurds or Lazs (as cited in Karaömerlioğlu, 2006, p.102). These people should have been taught that they were Turkish and that they also had to take part in the progression of the country. Regarding nationalism in that era, it would be appropriate to conceive it as a complementary principle of Kemalism rather than in the form as it was perceived in Europe at the time. As Karaömerlioğlu (2006) put it, Kemalist view of nationalism (in particular in relation to the peasantist movement among the Kemalists) does not refer to the notion of biological racism and blood superiority as opposed to the German *Blut und Boden* ideology even though Kemalist peasantists sometimes adopted racist discourses. After all, no racist would strive to transform the "other" exactly to himself (p. 71). In the end, according to Şimşek (2002), one of the main aims of people's houses was to create an illusionary community from the individuals who were disjointed, unrelated, and even isolated from one another (p. 64).

Thus, it was not nationalism as such, but the Kemalist version of nationalism which was aimed to be spread among people. Not only nationalism, but the provision of the adoption of Kemalist ideology as a whole by the masses was the second aim of the foundation of People's Houses. As proved by the LRP experience and the Menemen Incident, the ideology of the single party was not adopted by the masses. Therefore, it was necessary to change the beliefs and thoughts of the society so that the rebellious movements which had as their source ideological opposition would have ended (Şimşek 2002, p.63). Şimşek (2002), portraying the ruling party as having narcissistic tendencies because of the party's statement that the party's guidance saved the country from the enemies and that

the party wished to advance the country on firm political and economical foundations, added that the party now had a defensive justification of its narcissistic tendencies. People's houses would have been the means of indoctrinating the masses towards the principles of Kemalist ideology. Çeçen (1988), Karaömerlioğlu (2006), and Malkoç (2009) also conform to the same point by stating that people's houses had as one of its main aims the indoctrination of people towards the ideals of Kemalism. Toksoy (2007), on the other hand, did not touch the point at all as she emphasized the cultural aspects of these institutions.

The minister of national education Reşit Galip stated in his address to people in the opening ceremony of people's houses in 1932 that the ultimate aim of the republic was to compensate for the time the nation has lost on the track of civilization as soon as possible and to head for and advance towards the first position, which the great Turkish nation deserved, in the line of civilization (Ankara Halkevi 1933, p.18). This ideal was determinant in setting the third aim for people's houses which was training, educating and in the end transforming the nation to the most advanced level of civilization. This aim of people's houses, which has also been one of the leading ideals of republican Turkey, gave rise to a contradiction which was possible to see in all domains of social life. The ideal of rising up to the level of contemporary civilizations meant westernization. Modern Turkey had adopted western values in especially social and cultural domains of life from clothing to physical outlook and even to aesthetics and taste. Along with the naïve belief that ideological mobilization would have been the engine of progress movements (Karaömerlioğlu, 2006), the republican elite thought that people's houses would serve as the cultural models which showed people the civilized way of living. It was actually evident in many instances in the activities of people's houses. Yeşilkaya (1998), for example, stated that Turkish folk music and classical western music were played in people's houses, whereas classical Turkish music was forbidden as it was thought to be representing a backward trend because of having developed during the Ottoman era. Similarly, Karaömerlioğlu (2006) maintained that tennis, which even today is a type of sport peculiar to the westernized elites, was the only sport which was done in Adana People's House (p. 75). The discourse however, denoted the opposite. The supporters of the peasantist ideology in the republican era, who were influential in the foundation and running of people's houses, developed a critical and an opposing attitude towards westernization (p. 84). The Great Depression of 1929, labor movements, revolutions, liberalism and imperialism, which posed a threat to the traditional rural texture of Turkish countryside, all had their roots in the West. Therefore, the West would not become the economical and social model for the Turkish republic. The reason of this contradiction, which actually lasted up to the present time and formed a problematic notion of westernization, was caused by the eclectic and vague attitude of republican elite towards westernization (p. 85).

The fourth aim of the People's Houses attempted to solve a long-lasting debate among the Turkish intelligentsia, the gap between the intellectuals and the people. Most intellectuals, since 1900s, had been complaining of the great cultural gap between themselves and the ordinary people that they could not make their ideas known to the masses and this in turn limited the diffusion of their ideas among people (Karaömerlioğlu, 2006). This trend continued during the republican era and paved the way to the peasantist movement which took the peasants as the basis of ideological, social and economic policies. In a newly-founded country like Turkey, it was particularly important to teach the ideals of the republic so as to have the masses adopt those ideals. And those ideals would be best taught by the intellectuals. However, the intellectuals must first have understood the world of the ordinary people and learn about their lives. Thus, they would have been able to impose their -hence the republic's- ideals upon them. The general secretary of RPP, Recep Peker had announced the People's Houses as the preparations and solutions necessary to fuse urban dwellers with the peasants and the awakened with the uneducated (Ankara Halkevi, 1933, p.7). He, therefore, maintained that it was high time that the enlightened people had given up indolence and fulfilled their duty of guiding the uncivilized people towards a civilized life (p.12).

Yet another aim was to foster the secularization of the society. Özgürel (2008a) noted that Recep Peker had stated once in one of the issues of the official journal of Ankara People's House, *Ülkü* [The Ideal], that the republic was the real sacred, not the religion, *Nutuk* [the Sermon] by Atatürk being the new holy script of the Turk and people's houses the temples of this belief. Çeçen also emphasized the same point by claiming that secularism being among the principles of the Kemalist worldview, people's houses aimed to provide a gathering place for the people alternative to the mosques (as cited in Yeşilkaya, p.76). Şimşek (2002) further stated that the emphasis on secularism served the official history thesis of the Turkish Republic, which emphasized the pre-Islamic past of the Turkish nation. In this respect, the practice of secularism in people's houses meant both transforming the *ummah* (followers of Prophet Muhammad) to the Turkish nation and to disconnect the people from their immediate Ottoman past, which described serving Islam as its reason to exist.

3.2.2. Organizational Structure and Functioning of People's Houses

Being institutions aiming at ideological indoctrination and cultural transformation, people's houses had a very strict centralized organization. Toksoy (2007) maintained that all the decisions regarding, for example, the election of the head and the executive board of the Houses, how the opening ceremonies will be done, from giving the names of the journals published by the Houses to selecting the plays that would be performed in the Houses and to selecting the topics of the conferences that would be given in the Houses were taken by the party center. It was nearly impossible

to make any decisions without the consent of the party center (p. 32). Karaömerlioğlu (2006) added that no kinds of non-governmental initiatives were allowed in people's houses, which according to the author became one of the reasons of their rejection by the people (p. 62). As the most important attempt of controlling the Houses strictly, a general center to manage and to make decisions regarding the people's houses did not exist. Instead, there was a bureau holding the mentioned responsibilities in the general center of the party. Çeçen (1988) explained this fact as being a necessity because of the statement in their statutes that Houses acted as the auxiliaries and secondary institutions of the party. Tunçay stated that the General Management Council of the party had been divided into four groups of A, B, C, and D which altogether consisted of thirteen bureaus. People's houses were connected to the fifth bureau in group B (as cited in Şimşek, 2002, p.74). Even though a separate center did not exist, Ankara People's House can be said to be the head of the people's houses all through Turkey. The head of Ankara People's House was directly appointed by the general secretary of the party and was able to correspond with the party secretary directly. Ankara People's House also had the role of being the House where a play, an exhibition or a conference would be performed or displayed for the first time. After the premiere in Ankara People's House, events were performed in the people's houses of other cities. Moreover, Ankara People's House had a directive function among the others. Other people's houses were being directed or criticized by Ankara People's House. It was, in a way, a bridge connecting the Houses to one another. All their activities were made known to one another by means of the journal by Ankara People's House. This role of Ankara People's House is important in showing that it acted like a center for all people's houses in the absence of an official center (Toksoy, 2007).

In the periphery, the representing bureaus of the party in villages, towns or cities were responsible for opening and running the people's houses. While in the 1930s there were no preconditions to open a House; after 1940 a series of minimal conditions had to be met. According to the administrative and organizational manual of people's houses, these conditions were:

(a) Having registered the adequate number of members which would be necessary in running at least three sections,

(b) The provision of a building which includes a hall for at least 200 people, a library, a few study and activity rooms and a garden suitable for doing gymnastic,

(c) The constitution of a minimum budget which allows for hiring a bureau official and someone in charge of services, and other obligatory costs (Zeyrek, 2006, p.31).

If the minimal conditions were met in a village, town or city, the ruling committee of the party in that province sent a written request to the managerial board of the party organization of the city. According to the above mentioned manual, if the board found it persuasive enough, they directed it to the general secretary of the party (Toksoy, 2007, p. 35). The general secretary carried the matter to the general managerial board, and the board either approved or disapproved it. The general managerial

board was the ultimate authority in making the vital decisions about people's houses. The managerial board of the party organization of the city was authorized to run, organize and decide about the activities of the Houses (p. 37). Malkoç (2009) stated that later in 1938, the ruling committee of the province (village, town or city) was handed over the authorization for the running and organization of a House. Where there was no party organization, the Houses were to be supervised and controlled by party inspectors. Malkoç added that the party made its control even stricter by founding a High Counseling Committee that included four House managers and one Room manager in 1945 (p. 35).

At the micro level, the Houses were open to everyone regardless of their worldviews. However, only the members who were registered to the party were able to take place in the administrative positions. Even the state employees, who were strictly forbidden to participate in political activities and state their political views, were allowed to take part in the administrative positions in the Houses (Malkoç, 2009; Toksoy 2007). Anyone who wanted to participate in the activities of the Houses was able to register to a section based on his/her preference. A member could be registered to two sections at the same time, but was permitted to vote for the election of the section committee of only one section. Similarly, a person could become a member of two Houses at the same time or transfer from one to the other if s/he moved to another place, but could vote for the committee selection of the one in which he was present during the election period (Şimşek, 2002).

The building of a House was sometimes supplied by the local authorities. Most of the time it was bought by the party using the resources from the state budget spared for the Houses. Also, local people were sometimes asked to contribute financially to the Houses in campaigns. When the opening of a House was approved by the party general center and the building was ready, the House was opened with a ceremony and the procedure of membership registration began. The party center sent the necessary documents like registration notebooks, circular notes, documents about regulations, etc. to the House. Not only the names of the members, but also a record of activities, photographs related to the activities, the official meetings and decisions taken in those meetings along with the corresponding dates and names had to be registered in the notebooks. The section committees had to keep the records of their works separately. If the number of people registered to a section exceeded ten (later twenty-five), that section could select a committee of three people who directed the work of that section. If the number of the members exceeded fifty, they could select a committee of five. One among the three or five committee members represented the section in the general assembly of the House as a delegate.

Only party members and state officials if they were a member of the party (if they were not, only the ones who believed in the principles of the party) were eligible to be elected to the committee of the section. Members who took at least one third of the votes were elected a committee member. If the two members got an equal amount of votes, a lot was drawn between them. The committee

member who got at least half of the votes was selected the head of a committee (Şimşek, 2002). The section committee called the members to gather every two weeks. During those meetings, activities were discussed and new decisions were made regarding the planning of the activities. Decisions were taken by the vote of the absolute majority. If the number of votes cast by the two opposing sides was equal, the decision supported by the head of the section was accepted (Şimşek, 2002; Toksoy, 2007).

The general assembly of a House held meetings between certain periods of time. The head of the House (appointed by the party general secretary) led the meetings. In these meetings, every delegate informed the executive board about the activities done by their own section in that year and also gave briefings about the planning of the next year's activities. All records of meetings held, activities performed, photographs taken, members registered were kept in special notebooks supplied by the party center.

In the notice on 1 March 1932, the House heads were warned and informed about the main principles they should follow in working (Toksoy, 2007). According to these principles, Houses should have taken advantage of the interest shown at the beginning and should have always kept the interest of the people at a high level. Also, the Houses should have planned their activities themselves with the participation of the House members. The following sentence stated, however, that the general center would send the necessary documents (poems, plays, books, songs, etc) to aid the Houses in planning. This statement leads one to question the degree to which the members were able to choose and plan their activities while the general center supplied everything for them. Also, children under eighteen years old were not allowed to participate in the activities and as little children were thought to have disturbed the seriousness of the work inside the Houses, parents should have been asked kindly not to bring their children to the Houses. Another principle stated that all educated and capable people should be called to duty under the roofs of the Houses, because there was a huge mass that needed to be educated. Later in the 1930s, some educated people were "forced" to participate in the activities of the Houses. Karpat (1963) stated that the minister of interior affairs, Şükrü Kaya, urged teachers and intellectuals to take part in the activities of the Houses. As a result of this, some top ranking field officers tried to drive their staff to become members of the Houses. In one of the cases, the city governor of Ordu even pressurized the government officials to become House members by asking for the list of the government officials who did not become a member of the Houses (Karpat, 1963, p. 65). Toksoy (2007) also stated that the professors at the universities were urged by the ministry of national education to participate in the activities of the Houses in order to increase the quality of the work at the Houses (p.50).

3.2.3. Basic Principles of Functioning

Each people's house was opened with more or less the same ceremony. Samples of speeches, poems, and other documents that can be used in the opening ceremonies were all supplied by the party general center. One week before the opening ceremony, the educated "elements" were invited to the Houses and were instructed about the basic principles and general aims of the Houses. Especially teachers along with educated people from different professions were called to these meetings. In the two weeks following the opening ceremony, members were registered; section committees and the general executive board of the House were elected and formed. The registration procedure continued throughout the year, but members who were registered after the first two weeks were able to vote for the next year. In the first meeting following the opening ceremony, the founding members (educated members, though they did not have a privileged status in the Houses) made the decision about which sections to establish in the province taking into account the specific conditions of the region (Republican Archive, 490.01/4.16.9 as cited in Toksoy, 2007, p. 48).

It was important to keep the discipline at the Houses, because Houses were not the places to have fun, but places serving an honorable goal. Because of that, children were not accepted to the Houses. Also, games except chess and billiards were forbidden. In the saloons, only table tennis and saloon gymnastics were allowed to be played. The House members could use the Houses for the wedding and engagement ceremonies of their relatives. In those ceremonies, local alcoholic drinks except *raki* and cognac were allowed to be drunk (Malkoç, 2009). Çeçen (1988) added that every people's house had to organize a general performance for the local community once a month and had to organize concerts and conferences from time to time. Also, it was important to treat all citizens in an equal way regardless of their social background (p. 105).

The party organization of the city had to send activity reports of the Houses to the party general secretary every three months. Based on these reports, the party was able to follow the activities of the Houses. Sometimes, the party warned the Houses that did not follow the regulations or that did not work as hard as expected. Toksoy (2007) presents an extract displaying an example of response to the activity reports and warning to the members of the Houses about their activities:

> It is necessary to increase the number of female and male members and to issue their records in copy books without any neglect… People's houses are the cultural organs of our party organization. Therefore, they should keep the intense and close relationships and correspondences with the party organizations to which they are connected. (Republican Archive, 490.01/4.21.9 as cited in Toksoy, 2007, p. 48)

Information about the organizational structure and functioning of People's Houses is based on three main sources, Administrative and Functional Manual of People's Houses which was the

produced by Republican People's Party in 1932, People's Houses Curriculum of 1938 produced by RPP, and Administrative and Functional Manual of People's Houses produced by RPP in 1940. Historians who account for the facts about the functioning and organization of the Houses mainly rely on these documents. Documents are valid sources to explain the organizational structures of the institutions, because they regulate the hierarchical relations and labor division in an institution. To explain the functioning of an institution, however, documents may not always be sufficient. Documents almost always explain the ideal situation which is expected to occur in an institution. The official statute regulating the functioning of an institution, for example, may claim that all citizens will be treated equally regardless of their social backgrounds; however, the reality may prove the opposite. Also, decisions made in a meeting may be recorded by the committee members in an ideal way in order to give the impression that everything goes smoothly in that institution. In his criticism of the historiography of the Houses, Akyol (1996) asserted that various evaluations regarding the Houses in the written literature did not bear any scientific quality as most of them interpreted the data (including the statistical data) in the official documents from their own points of views and distorted them in order to shape them according to their own worldviews (p. 139). This, in turn, seems to have created a people's houses myth among the Kemalist Turkish intelligentsia. What looks necessary is collecting data from the periphery, namely from the people who joined the activities in the Houses, who directed them or who taught at those institutions. One of the most suitable ways of realizing this aim may be giving importance to case studies about individual people's houses. Although there were 478 people's houses and more than 4000 people's rooms in Turkey in 1950, only a few of these have been the subject of a research study such as the one by Malkoç (2009) about Kadıköy People's House in İstanbul or the one about Elazığ People's House by Ergen (2007). Apart from these, there are a few short articles about for example, personal memories about Diyarbakır People's House by Beysanoğlu (1996) or Merzifon People's House by Yüksel (1996). As it is evident in these examples, there is still a lot do in order to illuminate what happened in those institutions and how they worked.

3.2.4. Activities of People's Houses

In his speech in the opening ceremony of people's houses, Recep Peker, the general secretary of RPP stated that the Houses would be working in nine domains, which will be referred to as divisions from here on (Ankara Halkevi, 1933, p. 10). The names of these divisions were: Language, Literature and History Division, Art Division, Drama Division, Sports Division, Social Aid and Assistance Division, Public Classes and Courses, Library and Publishing Division, Peasantist Division, Museum and Exhibition Division. The names of some divisions were given by the effect of the purified Turkish movement and were therefore newly invented. However, in the later years the

movement was thought to become an extremism and most of the words invented like this were abandoned as ordinary people (as well as some educated people) did not show the willingness to adopt them. This resulted in changes in the names of some divisions. In addition, the function of one of the divisions was transferred to another one. As a result, the names of some divisions have changed to: Language and Literature Division, Fine Arts Division, and History and Museum Division. The current section will focus on the activities of people's houses along with their evaluation as to whether they reached their aims or not with reference to the divisions in which they were performed.

3.2.4.1. Language, Literature and History Division

As for all nation-states, language and history were the most important components of the new Turkish Republic as they provided the means to legitimize the ideology and the actions of the state. Aydın (1996) maintained that German interest in cultural history and archeology in the first half of the twentieth century led to the search for ethnic roots (*ethnogenesis)* of nations in order to be able to claim rights on the territories on which they were founded and would be founded in the future (p. 115). This, in turn, led to the tracking of a nation's roots to the prehistoric times. Turkey, being a newly founded country, needed such an approach in history and indirectly in language in order to encourage the formation of a new nation and to legitimize its settlement in Anatolia. Turkish Historical Society and Turkish Language Society were founded with these aims in mind. Turkish Historical Society was founded to find evidence that proves the Turkish history thesis, which claimed that (a) Turkish history reaches far beyond the Islamic and the Ottoman era and goes back to the ancient prehistoric times both in central Asia and Anatolia (b) Turks are the "autochthon" people of Anatolia and also the inheritor of the ancient Turanic people who diffused civilization to the whole world (Aydın, 1996, pp. 107-108). Similarly, Turkish Language Society aimed to prove the *Güneş Dil Teorisi* [Sun Language Theory], which claimed that Turkish was the oldest and the root language of all the languages in the world. The activities of the institution focused on proving this theory. Together with the foundation of the Turkish Republic, these two institutions were thought to be serving for the aims of *the tripled revolution* (Kaplan, 1974, p.120). The Tripled Revolution would become complete when the Turkish history and language theses would be proved and to prove them, a means to collect data was needed. Language, literature and history division was the means to meet this aim. Reşit Galip, in his speech in the opening ceremony of the Houses in 1932, had put forward this aim by stating that these divisions would function as uniting people working in these areas and providing the resources to collect data for these people. Çağlar (1935) stated that, in line with these aims the Language Division had two main activities:

1. To search for, to collect and to record the Turkish folkloric elements (words, idioms, proverbs, syntactic structures, poems, stories, myths, etc)

2. Based on these studies, to suggest, and most of the time invent, new words

which could replace the words borrowed from foreign languages, write articles about these works in the People's Houses journals, and to spread the love for "purified" Turkish (p. 17). Beysanoğlu (1996), for example, recorded in his account of the works he did in Diyarbakır People's House that before their visit to the houses of the people from whom they were going to learn some folkloric elements, they were buying small presents like coffee, sugar or cigarettes. During the visit, they were recording the words of the speaker by paper and pen as they did not have tape recorders at that time (p. 161). Karaömerlioğlu (1998) depicted a similar scene and stated that the deriving job was usually done during the village visits of the Peasantist Division. Apart from these main aims, the language division examined the names of the cities, towns and villages in terms of their "Turkishness" and changed the ones which did not have a Turkish origin, helped local people to find Turkish surnames by means of surname campaigns after the surname law, gave conferences about the Sun Language Theory, and to "reteach" Turkish to the "citizens who forgot their mother tongues because of the unwary, neglecting and oppressive" Ottoman sultanate (p. 19). This action can be viewed as part of the aim of creating a homogenous nation.

The literature part of this division organized activities to encourage the production of literary works (poems, novels, plays, etc.) about the Turkish Independence War, ancient Turkish history, principles of the Turkish revolution, etc., to give literary conferences and organize special nights to recite poems, to organize literary contests, etc.

Karpat (1974) added that the Language and Literature Division had another responsibility that helped establish a system of communication: Publishing monthly journals/reviews and giving talks and conferences about different matters to the local people. The reviews were an important means to communicate the ideology of the regime, to educate people in subjects such as history, health, hygiene, law, diseases, village life and welfare, science, etc. and to raise their cultural levels. Among these, *Ülkü* [The Ideal], which was published by Ankara People's House, was the leading and the most important one, because it functioned not only as a review but also as a checking, leading, correcting, criticizing, warning and praising agent for the reviews published by different Houses. To emphasize the educational nature of the review, *Ülkü* was imitating the cover of the *Adult Education* published in the U.S.A (Karpat, 1974, p.71). The main function of *Ülkü* was described as "to express the principles and ideas of the Republic in a scientific and persuasive manner" (p. 72). The party, therefore, advised to hire capable writers to this review for it to set a good example for the other reviews. Moreover, the party suggested the other Houses that published reviews to be inspired from *Ülkü* and *Yeni Türk* [New Turk] in terms of ideas and thoughts in order to avoid the misrepresentation of Republic's ideals.

Because of the control of the party, the subjects of the articles published in these reviews were restricted to some certain domains like language, history, folklore, sociology, philosophy, women's rights, economy, agriculture, science, protection of the motherland, public health and education, sports, entertainment, village life, and fine arts (Toksoy, 2007, pp. 350-352). The subtitles and boundaries of these main subjects were also prescribed by the party. As an example, writers who wrote about women's rights had to write about feminist movements in Turkey and in the world, women's rights in the society, and women's role as a mother and as a housewife. The party was sensitive about these limitations. Therefore, the reviews were checked strictly one by one and suggestions and criticisms were made if necessary. Not only the subjects, but also technical aspects of the reviews like the name, frequency, press quality, etc. were controlled and decided by the party. The review of the city of Burdur, *Burdur Dergisi*, was criticized by the party for it did not include high-quality publications, lacked the necessary technical qualities, and that the excitement of the revolution was not adopted by the people publishing and writing in it. As a respond to the criticisms, the director of the review had stated that his aim was to serve his country, but that they had some technical difficulties, and in the end, he had promised to keep loyal to the standards of the party (Republican Archive, 490.01/ 828.272.1 as cited in Toksoy, 2007, p. 382).

Karpat (1974) noted that the party had tried to control the free reviews of the time as well. Consequently, some of these free reviews were turned to people's houses reviews while some others stopped publication altogether in order to protest the press control of the party.

These reviews performed an important function till the end of 1940s by being important sources in the field of social sciences as most of them had high academic and literary quality. Some of them provided the public with valuable information in the fields of sociology, anthropology, folklore and education, and presented different pictures from the lives of villagers, townspeople or city dwellers as the writers were in close contact with these people most of the time (Karpat, 1974, p. 74). Because of this feature of the reviews, some academicians like Karpat (1974) claim that most of the famous writers (e.g. Yaşar Kemal), politicians or newspaper publishers started their writing careers and were first introduced to the public in people's houses reviews. However, this idea was challenged by Akyol (1996) who stated that everybody writes and talks about these famous people, but let alone telling their names, nobody knows even how many they are.

Beyond their academic quality, these reviews, along with the conferences given by the Houses and books in their libraries, had an important unintended effect on the lifestyles of people. Karpat (1974) claimed that they served for the modernization of the country with "the media, the establishments, the professions, and the habits" created by this "communication system" which "survived and became part of everyday life in Turkey long after the Houses were closed in 1951" (p. 70). According to Karpat (1974) this was first of all caused by the abandonment of the old literary

forms and writing styles of the Ottoman era which necessitated the use of some certain forms in written language. Freedom in written language brought about the freedom in intellectual life.

Secondly, these reviews brought intellectuals from different social classes together and served as a means of communication between them which gave way to the recognition of alternative lifestyles. Finally, they created an interest in the printed word which led to the rise of circulation of national newspapers and finally accelerated the political education in the countryside.

Despite these positive points, the reviews were criticized for many points. “The strict conformity to party directives, the officious language and the inability to express the people's real thoughts and feelings” were the main weaknesses of these reviews (Karpat, 1974, p. 73). The rise in the number of non-official reviews in the same period is a sign of reaction to the pressurizing attitude of the party on the intellectual world according to Karpat (1974). Also, the scientific and academic quality of the reviews was questioned by some scholars. Demirkol (2004) challenged the academic quality of the folkloric derivations in her study of the contents of *Ordu*, a review published by Ordu People’s House. She calls these derivations, attempts with good intention but lacking the necessary scientific methods. Similarly, Tunç (2004) maintained that far from being scientific studies, the folkloric derivations aimed at serving the nationalistic ideals by trying to discover the essence of the Turkish culture in the cultural elements of the rural areas. In his analysis of the review *Çorumlu*, which is published by Çorum People’s House, Tunç (2004) also stated that folkloric elements were recorded by amateurs who most of the time dealt with practice as they lacked the necessary theoretical and methodological knowledge.

3.2.4.2. Art Division

As Çağlar (1935) maintained, modern Western art in the Turkish society had a history which was only as old as a human being (p. 37). Painting, sculpture, western classical music, and western drama were known to a limited group. It was with the attempts of this group that the western art was being introduced to the masses and people were expected to adopt this new art instead of the traditional Ottoman art. These attempts were clear in the statements of the Administrative and Functional Manual of RPP which described the function of the art division as bringing together the amateurs interested in music, painting, sculpture, architecture and decorative arts, and protecting and training the young capacities in these fields. Art was an innate ability of Turks since they were the first to sculpt the stone, cultivate the soil, and shape iron. However, this ability was oppressed by the Ottoman Sultanate (p. 37). It was the mission of the people’s houses to help people rediscover their artistic roots and improve their artistic tastes. This was especially apparent in music. The art division had the duty of increasing people’s love of music and improving their musical tastes by using tools

like radio and gramophone. To realize these aims, some Houses had connected their radios to big loud-speakers so that everybody was able to listen to the radio programs broadcasted by the radio of Ankara. Also, some Houses had small bands and orchestras which gave small concerts in the villages. Çağlar (1935) reported that these orchestras attracted great attention from local people and that people followed them for kilometers when they went to other villages. In addition, music courses were opened and national patriotic marches were taught in order for them to be sung on important national days by people. Ankara People's House had trained 55 villagers to sing in the celebration of the foundation of the republic in 1935. During these courses, only western instruments were permitted to be used. Others, especially ones representing the Ottoman music, were forbidden. This attitude was reflected in many instances in the speeches of the statesmen as well. Atatürk, for example, upon being introduced to a local musician playing a local instrument, had interrupted his performance by stating that the instrument played by the musician, however authentic it is, was a primitive one which was used thousands of years ago and that now, it was time to compose national symphonies and operas based on these authentic tastes (Yeşilkaya, 1998, p. 88). As shown in this incident, the expectation of the ruling elite was creating a national music founded on Turkish origins and enriched by western techniques. This tendency was described by Çağlar (1935) by saying "international technique, Turkish spirit and style" (p. 39). With this aim in mind, the Functional Manual of 1940 highlights the importance of recording the folk songs in order to recompose them according to the western techniques and to make people fond of this new type of music; to realize these aims, to have them listen to western music as much as possible (p.40). In relation to these aims, some western composers were invited to Turkey. Bela Bartok, for example, had given a concert in Ankara People's House and had helped the members of the Houses in recording and noting the folk songs in the south part of Anatolia in 1936. Not only folk songs, but also folk dances were discovered again and arranged in new formats. Öztürkmen reported that contrary to the traditional formats in which women and men danced separately, new arrangements brought them together so as to produce a new style resembling those of the classical western dances. Upon seeing such a choreography based on a traditional folk dance, Atatürk had demanded that that dance be performed also with the evening dress so as to show the Europeans that we also had dances to be performed on our special days (as cited in Yeşilkaya, 1998, p. 91).

In addition to and maybe more than teaching art and imposing the western art on people, art division had the duty of using art as a medium of public education. According to Çağlar (1935), art had the function of indoctrinating, governing and revolutionizing a society and therefore it was to be utilized (p. 36). Art, as it appealed to all senses, could be used in indoctrinating the people with the principles of the revolution. Painting, music, architecture and sculpture were all viewed in this respect and were shaped according to the principles and ideas of the government. In music, national marches

were composed and people were taught and were made to sing these marches. Family reunions could be held in the Houses on the condition that European music was listened to, danced with this music and local songs were sung all together (Kaplan, 1974, p. 139). In painting and sculpture, only national subjects and subjects describing the revolution were encouraged. A statue sculpted in a house was aimed at describing the "feelings of gratitude of the Turkish woman to the revolution." Similarly, a contest of "the amateur painting which resembled Atatürk most" was organized for the youth in the Houses (Çağlar, 1935, p. 46). In architecture, modern architecture was taught and encouraged (Yeşilkaya, 1998, p. 94).

3.2.4.3. Drama Division

Arı (2004) stated in her article about Turkish theatre that "theatre had no match as an effective vehicle for disseminating the state's new ideologies" (p. 34). Such was the experience in the cultural institutions of the era in most countries in the world such as Fascist Italy and Communist Russia. Theatre was the most suitable vehicle of making the propaganda of ideas because it required no education or training, not even reading and writing, on the part of the spectator. Reşit Galip, the minister of national education of the era, had made an assumption of about 200.000 people seeing the plays in 3-4 days if 100 Houses were opened the next year and if in each act 2000 people saw the plays (Ankara People's House, 1933, p. 21). According to this assumption, most people in Turkey would have absorbed the republican ideals in a short time thanks to the activities of the drama division. Therefore, drama division was one of the most important divisions of the Houses.

To realize this purpose, plays which employed only the national theses were performed (Reşit Galip's speech in Ankara People's House, 1933, p.21). The topics would be derived from the

> Turkish history, the Independence War, high-honored character of the Turk, the comparison of the sultanate to republic, backwardness to revolution, modern school to old medrese [Ottoman school], poverty caused by laziness and ignorance to welfare gained by working hard; bad citizen to good citizen; benefit of the whole society to benefit of the individual; and despair and pessimism to hope and optimism. (p.22)

To realize this, plays were written either by the members of the drama divisions or famous poets or playwrights. These plays were examined by the general secretary of the party and were approved if they met the criteria. Apart from these, plays that already existed were recommended to the Houses by the general secretary of the party (Zeyrek, 2006). As the priority was the dissemination of the ideas rather than artistic concerns, plays written by amateurs were sometimes also accepted (Çağlar, 1935). Famous plays by foreign writers or playwrights were also translated and adapted. As another source of ideas, traditional folk theatre elements were exploited to create new plays. In these

plays, which are named as “fakelore” because they transform the traditional structure of the folk culture, well-known heroes from fairy tales and folk theatre were given new and favorable personalities which were set as an example to ordinary people and make the propaganda of the single-party ideology (Güven, 2008).

Apart from plays, the drama division had the duty of showing the movies recommended by the party secretary to the Houses. These films were about health, agriculture or the celebrations of national days (Çağlar, 1935, p. 68). Also, choreographing the folk dances again so as to perform on national days was done by the drama division.

Apart from disseminating the ideals of the single party, Houses had the aims of enlivening the Houses and their environments, to help the youth acquire the habit of speaking well and giving impressive speeches and to give them artistic and ideological education (Yeşilkaya, 1998, p. 94). According to Malkoç (2009), Houses were successful in realizing these aims. Despite remaining amateur all through their lives, Houses attracted thousands of people thanks to the drama activities. Not only in cities like İstanbul or Ankara, but also in small Anatolian cities, even in the villages and towns, were many plays performed by the local youth. Velidedeoğlu reported that sometimes, people were coming to the Houses only to see these plays. Therefore, plays were acted before serious conferences (as cited in Malkoç, 2009, p. 46). In a country where theatre had been an unfavorable activity thirty years ago, people’s houses had contributed a lot at least quantitatively to the development of Turkish theatre (Malkoç, 2009, p. 46). It is also important to emphasize that participation of women both in the planning activities and in plays themselves as actresses was especially encouraged by the party. Zeyrek (2006) noted that to set an example to the people, the mayor of a small town in Anatolia had acted in more than fifty plays with his wife (p. 50).

Arı (2004), however, drew another picture about the theatrical activities in the Houses. She asserted that House activities remained mainly urban as participation in the villages was very low due to the vastness of the country, financial and physical shortcomings, and the gap between the traditional entertainment styles of the villagers and that of the Houses (pp. 52-53). Arı also added that the ruling elite held the fear that propaganda activities could have implanted a political consciousness in the villagers against the ideology of the party. Therefore, they confined most of their activities to the urban areas where the party was strong and an audience of theatre plays had already been formed (p.53).

3.2.4.4. Sports Division

The motto of this division was “No champions and the selected ones; but robust hundreds of thousands” (Yeşilkaya, 1998). As shown in this motto, the aim of this division was to propagate the

habit of doing sports to the whole society rather than discovering people skilled in doing sports. Suitable to the spirit of the time, people were encouraged to do gymnastic movements en masse in the gardens of the Houses, rhythmically and in an organized way (Yeşilkaya, 1998). Members of this division had to do sports regularly in order to set an example to the society. The Turkish society who had been involved in sports up to the old age, had forgotten to do so and their bodies had been deformed after the 19th century because of contagious diseases (Çağlar, 1935). It was the duty of this division to teach all people from different age groups to do sports and to set it as a daily habit. Apart from doing sports collectively, this division gave conferences about sports in order to raise awareness. As sports was the key to a strong character formation, the physical power to defend the motherland, and the increase in job efficiency, it should have been encouraged (Çağlar, 1935).

Other areas of functioning for this division was to support the sports clubs in the environment, to establish sports areas and clubs if the location is in need of one, to promote both western sports and the traditional sports, and to organize hikes to the nearby villages in order to have the House members get to know the realities of the countryside. Among the sports which were practiced for the first time in most parts of Anatolia by the House members were skiing, climbing, swimming, rowing, hunting, athletics, gymnastics, horse-riding, fishing, hiking, different branches of saloon gymnastics, football, volleyball, basketball, fencing, tennis, skating, cycling, etc. depending on the physical conditions of the region and the availability of buildings (Çağlar, 1935; Yeşilkaya, 1998; Zeyrek, 2006). The equipment for these sports were either produced in the military factories or imported from abroad (Zeyrek, 2006, pp. 67-68).

Traditional sports such as free wrestling, javelin throwing, and shooting were also encouraged and modernized in some Houses. Houses of Bursa, Mersin, Trabzon, Samsun, etc. had trained their members in free wrestling and organized wrestling contests. Bursa People's House had trained a group of sword - buckle dancers and sent them to Ankara for a performance. Some other Houses had given importance to javelin throwing and had tried improve it according to the modern conditions. Yet other Houses such as the ones in Tokat, Tekirdağ, Simav, Siirt, etc. leaned on shooting and had their members do shooting exercises regularly (Çağlar, 1935, p. 70).

Türkoğlu (1996) claimed that the party had a strict control on the activities of the sports division as it had on the others. The party had not favored youth formations (be it cultural or sportive) not functioning under the roof of people's houses. These formations had been ordered to expostulate to gather under the roof of the Houses rather than acting separately by means of a notification from party general secretary to the board of presidency (Türkoğlu, 1996, p. 102). Türkoğlu further stated that the sports division did not engage into serious activities until the Second World War years, but that just as the war began, the division started to function actively by organizing sports contests which consisted of activities resembling military training activities especially in Western Anatolia and Thrace. For

Türkoğlu, this was a proof that the sports division did not only aim to ingrain the habit of doing sports in ordinary people, but also and more than that to prepare them for a prospective war which was expanding towards the borders of Turkey (pp. 102 – 103).

3.2.4.5. Social Aid and Assistance Division

According to the functional manual of 1935, the main function of this division was described as awakening the sentiments of love, compassion, brotherhood and solidarity among people (as cited in Şimşek, 2002, p. 84). Not being supported financially by the party general center, this division had to create its own resources by organizing various activities such as concerts, plays, trips, balls, etc. The art division and the drama division could also support this division by giving concerts and organizing theatrical performance, on the condition that these activities would not exceed three times (Zeyrek, 2006). This division sometimes also worked in collaboration with local charity institutions or national institutions such as the Red Crescent or the Child Protection Institution.

The functional manual of the houses specified the functions of the division as providing aid and support for women, children, the disabled, the old, and the sick who were in need of financial and medical support and to attract the attention of the society to these groups (Çağlar, 1935, p.83). Because of this mission, the members of the division usually consisted of doctors, dentists, veterinaries, teachers, etc. As the aim was providing help and support, this division had a wide variety of people to work with: from students who did not have a shelter, clothes, books, etc., to the peasants who did not have access to medical services as they were living in deprived regions; from women who newly gave birth, to unemployed people; from old convicts who were seeking jobs, to the poor workers who came to the big cities to work but could not even earn the money to go back to their hometowns and even to the poor people who needed clothes, food and heating. The kind of help provided by this branch of the Houses depended on the location of the house, availability of the resources and the needs of the people living there.

The members both provided the support directly to the people by organizing day trips to the nearby villages or poor areas and indirectly by supporting charity institutions, hospitals, dispensaries, student dormitories, boarding schools, etc. Depending on the region, some houses (eighty of them) opened nursing homes and polyclinics where the doctor members examined and cured patients free of charge. In addition, poor people were provided with food, shelter and clothes in these care centers. These care centers served only for the peasants on Sundays when the peasants came to the town or city centers to sell their goods (Zeyrek, 2006). Apart from free consultation and provision of medicine, doctors helped some patients to have operations in the nearby hospitals. Sometimes, members of this division joined the trips organized by the peasantist division and determined the people who were in

need. In these trips, old people were examined and cured, students were distributed school materials and clothes, dentists examined the teeth of the children, and various problems of people were listened to and tried to be solved.

Most Houses were able to maintain these support facilities for a long time. Malkoç (2009) reported that Eminönü People's House (İstanbul) was able to provide 100 families with bread on a daily basis and some others with coal in the winters. The same House had also opened a soup kitchen where they were giving meals to poor people four days a week (p. 135). Other houses such as the ones in Ankara, Aydın, Denizli, Edremit, etc. had engaged into similar activities (Çağlar, 1935). These activities were supported and encouraged by means of conferences and films about health and the importance of solidarity.

As a result, this division seems to have fulfilled an important function of the social state. Improving the feelings of solidarity and brotherhood among the members of the society was the common slogan of the era in all Europe. Leyla Baydar likens the activities of the social aid division to those of *Kraft durch Freude* in Germany as both institutions had similar aims (Yeşilkaya, 1998, p. 100). Though the content of the activities of the two organizations were different most probably because of the needs of the people in two countries and because of the different economic situations in two countries, they can be likened to each other in one respect. As stated at the introduction of this study, KdF aimed to make the propaganda of the national socialist regime by providing people with the benefits of the regime. The republican regime in Turkey also aimed to "strengthen the belief in the regime and the trust in the party" with activities of this kind (Çağlar, 1935, p. 83).

3.2.4.6. Public Classes and Courses

"The blind, ungrateful and defective" regimes of the past had limited people's chances of access to literacy, intellectuality, and all kinds of knowledge (RPP, 1935, p. 94 as cited in Yeşilkaya, 1998, p. 101). The new regime, therefore, aimed to increase the level of education and knowledge of the people by opening public courses which aimed to equip people with technical and expert knowledge (p.101). These courses, which are the closest to today's understanding of adult public education and which founded the base for the adult education in the following decades according to Şimşek (2002), were to be opened taking into account the needs and conditions of the local context. Apart from the basic literacy course aiming to disseminate the knowledge of the newly accepted Latin alphabet, citizenship courses and history courses which were nearly standard in all the Houses, the administrators of the Houses were identifying the needs for different courses. In some Houses, women were trained in tailoring, sewing, home economics, weaving, millinery, floriculture, etc (Zeyrek, 2006, p. 70). Men and male workers in factories or mines were trained in practical matters which could help

them in their daily lives such as electricity, motor craft, driving, accounting, etc. There were also vocational courses for them like gardening, book-binding, iron working, construction business, typing, etc. There were courses for the peasants and village administrators such as olive cultivation, viticulture, beekeeping, application of the village law, training the village clerks, etc. Students were not forgotten as well: They were given courses preparing them for the high-school completion exams, courses to support them in their school life in general, etc. For the citizens living in the southeastern and eastern part of the country and for the immigrants, there were Turkish courses. Apart from these, there were also general courses such as drama, music, art and foreign languages. Prisoners were also given literacy courses in some Houses (Çağlar, 1935; Şimşek, 2002; Toksoy, 2007; Yeşikaya, 1998; Zeyrek, 2006).

Teachers and trainers of these courses were either House members (who were not paid) or trainers from outside (who were paid by the House or by the course participants). Likewise, if the building of the House was not convenient for giving a certain course, a new building was hired by the House administration. Courses were organized for a period of several months and adults who succeeded were issued a diploma after graduating (Toksoy, 2007, pp. 432-433).

An interesting type of course given in this division was the application of the positive sciences. In the physics or chemistry laboratories founded in the Houses or at schools, teachers were doing experiments and showing people the application of physics or chemistry rules. Toksoy (2007) noted that these courses aimed to equip people with the basic scientific knowledge which they may require in their daily lives in order to, for example, protect themselves from the effect of poisonous gases. However, the preference for founding positive sciences laboratories instead of other facilities seems noticeable. Although there is still a need of evidence regarding their function, it may be proposed that these courses were seen as a tool of instilling the positivistic ideology of the new republic in people's minds.

3.2.4.7. Library and Publishing Division

A library and a reading room was one of the basic facilities of a House. Even in Rooms in villages (during 1940s), a reading room and a number of books had to exist in order to be opened. In the 1930s, only reading rooms were opened in the villages. Çağlar (1935) explained the importance of this division for villages by stating that a reading room was as necessary for a village as an irrigation canal or a stack yard (p. 104). It is; of course, open to question whether villagers shared the same idea with the party, especially after having built the reading rooms themselves using their own materials (Çağlar, 1935, p. 108). More research into the perceptions of the people about these facilities may be illuminating in evaluating the success of the Houses. According to the existing sources, it can only be

stated that in some villages, Houses mobilized the villagers in order to build their own rooms where a number of people were reading in the evenings. Houses, “being encouraged by the desire and enthusiasm of the villagers” had attempts of opening new reading rooms in other villages (p. 108).

Being that important, the House members had to take the necessary precautions to provide people with reading facilities. In line with this aim, they founded libraries in the Houses and provided the book supply which people needed most (Çeçen, 1988). This need of the people was determined by the party. Reşat Galip had already drawn the general boundaries of the publications that were to be put in the libraries in his speech in the opening ceremony of the Houses: Only those books that were suitable to the aims of the Houses could be put in the libraries (Ankara Halkevi, 1933, p. 24). Publications about religion, against the Turkish revolutionary ideas, depicting the foreign regimes and ideologies, trying to instill backward reactionary superstitions outside the boundary of the national and realist perspectives; infusing impair and illustrating scenes of suicide and murder; stimulating sexual desires and instilling bad habits in youth were strictly forbidden (Yeşilkaya, 1998, p.103). On the other hand, publications giving literary, agricultural and sanitary admonitions; opening a *correct* new era and inspiring people in different subjects from architecture to psychology, and advising people about the local solutions for local problems were allowed by the party. These were the books appropriate for and good for people (Yeşilkaya, 1998, p. 103). Books were controlled strictly in this respect before being put in the library. Also, sources from where books were accepted were not varied: From governmental institutions, party general secretary and donations. They were also bought using the money spared for them from the budget of the Houses (Şimşek, 2002, p. 85).

Among other functions of this division was opening book exhibitions, taking books to people deprived of them by mobile libraries, to establish reading rooms, having individuals with good elocution read books aloud to the public about different subjects, taking the necessary precautions for the people to use libraries every hour, to keep some journals and newspapers in the libraries, and to establish archives about some important subjects (Çeçen, 1988). Şimşek (2002) noted that printing all publications of the Houses except the House journals were also among the duties of this division. Houses printed many books based on the above mentioned criteria. Apart from the books, they also printed brochures which were appropriate for and good for people including the topics such as beekeeping in Ankara, cotton growing in Aydın, tobacco growing in Samsun, etc. (Çağlar, 1935, p. 105).

Finally, it was also possible to publish one’s piece of written work using the publishing facilities of the Houses as long as these works bore the features such as a clear language, national sentiments and a Turkish core with the aim of addressing the simple minds of people who had never read before (Çağlar, 1935, p. 109).

3.2.4.8. Peasantist Division

Karaömerlioğlu (1998) appreciated the peasantist division of the Houses as a reflection of the peasantist movement which was popular among the politicians and intellectuals of the era. The movement had started in Germany and was a reaction against the corrupted life of the urban dwellers and bourgeoisie. Cities were the sources of evil, poverty and corruption whereas villages represented the true cultural values of the nation (Karaömerlioğlu, 2006). The movement had been popular especially after the Great Depression. Even though the experience of Turkey was different from that of Europe in terms of urbanization (Europe had been facing with the consequences of urbanization since the Industrial Revolution, but the majority of Turkey's population was still living in rural areas at the time), the movement was supported by many intellectuals and politicians at that time. Again according to Karaömerlioğlu, this was because Turkish ruling elite was afraid of the instability that could be caused by urbanization and industrialization and which would cause them lose their status as the governing power. With this idea in mind, the ruling elite had been launching many attempts to preserve the traditional texture of the countryside but at the same time to transform it with western cultural values. Çağlar (1935) maintained that the peasant's welfare was the country's welfare and the country's reconstruction was the peasant's reconstruction. The essence was there. All they had to do was to take it, to process it, and to develop it (p.113). Let alone the perspective viewing the peasants as raw material which should be processed and improved here, the peasantist division aimed to improve the sanitary, social and economical conditions of the villages, to change their outlooks in order to make them look nice and esthetical, and to raise the cultural level of the people. This would have helped the formation of the bonds of solidarity and fondness between the educated urban people and the rural people.

As the aim was defined so broadly, the activities to fulfill it were varied and involved as many divisions as possible in the Houses. The activities mainly consisted of either organizing village visits which included the contributions of different divisions of the Houses or entertaining the peasants with the activities they organized in the city centers while at the same time solving the bureaucratic problems peasants face in the cities. A typical village visit was described by Çağlar in *Ülkü* as follows:

> First the flag is hoisted while the people are singing the national anthem. After this ceremony, the high officials and members of the People's Houses mix with the people. They donate books and journals to the peasants and doctors take care of the diseased peasants. Then, everybody listens to authentic music sung by local youth, and watches sporting facilities. Usually some members of the Dramatic Divisions of the People's Houses perform a theatrical show and at the end of the day the visitors return to the cities. (as cited in Karaömerlioğlu, 1998, pp. 70-71)

As this passage depicts, the village visits were organized in quite a formal and bureaucratic way. The type of activities during the visits shows there was a one-way interaction and that most of these activities were initiated by the House members. The members of the literature division inscribed the local linguistic elements while the library division recommended them which books to read and lent some books to them. Peasants were also given advice about different subjects such as health, agriculture, marketing their products, etc. by the experts. The art division gave concerts especially in western classical music and recorded the local songs. Drama division, on the other hand, performed plays aimed at teaching them the republican ideas. Social assistance division provided them with medical care and distributed aid to the people who were in need. Public classes division opened literacy and citizenship courses and wrote the letters of the peasants. Physical and material problems of the villages such as helping build squares, reading rooms, sewages; donating farm animals, teaching how to lay tiles to the roofs, etc. were also tried to be solved by House members (Malkoç, 2009; Yeşilkaya, 1998; Zeyrek, 2006). In southeastern cities like Diyarbakır, Turkish speaking contests were organized in order to encourage the citizens there to speak Turkish (Beysanoğlu, 1996). In short, these visits were the means to take cultural raw material from the peasants and to give them refined culture. Çağlar (1935) had already stated that there must have been a mutual benefit in these visits: Giving ideas and taking material (p. 117).

The atmosphere of these visits was criticized by many scholars. Karaömerlioğlu (1998), for example, asserted that the bureaucratic nature of these visits and the strict control of the local initiatives by bureaucratic pressure doomed these visits to failure from the beginning. Not only strict but also sometimes coercive nature of the relationship between House members and the peasants was reflected in a memory in an article by Yüksel (1996). In that article, Yüksel narrated that the signing of Montreux Convention of 1936 was ordered by the party to be celebrated in the city centers by crowds. The party and the Houses had the duty of mobilizing people from the countryside to join the celebrations in the cities. In the Amasya region, people were gathered in the city center by the “help of the gendarme” (p. 174).

Secondly, the idea of being looked down as “objects of social engineering” only increased the distrust of the peasants towards urban people (Karaömerlioğlu, 1998, p. 72). In a similar comment, Fay Kirby likened people who participated in these visits to “foreign tourists or travelers who try to discover the dark corners of Africa” (as cited in Karaömerlioğlu, 1998, p. 72). Zeyrek (2006), although stating that they were successful, criticized the House members by stating that when looked at the photographs, one can see that the House members, who always wore ties, made a good advertisement of themselves among the peasants (p. 82).

Finally, these visits were far from meeting the real needs of the peasants. As part of the pervading paradigm of the era according to Karaömerlioğlu (1998), the intellectuals viewed the

backwardness in social and economic conditions as a result of lack of education. Education was the magic wand which would transform the countryside. However, the countryside of Turkey required more than that. In this sense, the activities of the Houses could have been only complementary to the state-initiated activities which aimed to eradicate the problem (pp. 79-83).

3.2.4.9. Museum and Exhibition Division

This division had functioned as Museum and Exhibition division until 1940. In 1940, the exhibition part had been transferred to the Art Division and the History part in the Language, Literature and History Division had been transferred to the Museum division. Thus, the name of the division had been History and Museum Division (Zeyrek, 2006). When it was first founded, this division aimed to detect and protect the historical monuments in the locality and if possible to open museums to exhibit them. Not only historical values but also local cultural products such as agricultural products, traditional clothes, handmade artifacts, carpets, etc. in the households were exhibited in museums. In this respect, some Houses had found a good number of Roman and Hittite artifacts and started to exhibit them in a simple museum (Çağlar, 1935). Some Houses had started the attempts of opening revolutionary museums and collected materials that belong to the war years in Anatolia. Yet, other Houses had published books and booklets about museums. After 1940, the activities of the division were directed more by the history part. The foundation of the museums had been more systematic and led by historical search. House members dealt with issues such as writing the local history of the towns or cities where the House was settled; publishing their findings in *Ülkü*, collecting historical documents like gravestones, epigraphs, historical coins, statues, etc. and exhibiting them in museums; and translating the books written in foreign languages about their topics of interest. The exhibition part had been involved in activities like exhibiting the works of the painters, architects, sculptors, fashion designers, and other artists at different times (Malkoç, 2009; Yeşilkaya, 1998; Zeyrek, 2006).

3.3. The End of an Era: An Evaluation of the Performance the Houses

The end of the Second World War had proclaimed the failure of totalitarian regimes all over Europe. Along with the collapse of the old regimes, democracies started to gain power again. In Turkey too, things had started to change in this respect. With the separation of a group of members of parliament from the ruling party in 1946, the third opposition party of Turkey, Democrat Party was founded. With the start of the multi-party era, the existence of the ideological institutions remaining from the single-party period had started to be questioned. People's houses had been the subject of a

big debate between the opposition party and the ruling party in this respect. The opposition party claimed right on using these institutions for political activities as the ruling party did if these institutions were really open to everybody. In a democratic order, such institutions should have served all sections of society if they were financed with people's taxes. Otherwise, they should have been disbanded for they represented a remnant of the old totalitarian regime (Şimşek, 2002, p. 206). RPP, even though not permitting DP members to use the Houses, knew that they would not be able to sustain the situation like this anymore. They prepared a new project which would change the status of the Houses from an organ of the party to a public facility. However, they were not showing the eagerness to democratize the institutions. They rather seemed to follow a strategy of distraction and acted slowly in doing the necessary legal alterations. Thus, the issue remained unsolved until 1950. When the Democrat Party became the first party that came to power by winning a free election and taking the majority of the votes in 1950, the old conflicts between RPP, which became the opposition party now, and DP came to surface with more fierce debates. Being the governing party now, DP changed its claims from that of asking for the right to use the institutions equally, to that of questioning the place of such an institution in a democratic order which served the purposes of one party. Moreover, DP claimed that, contrary to the constitution, the Houses were financed with resources which were taken from the people, local administrations and other institutions unlawfully under the name of donation (Malkoç, 2009; Şimşek, 2002). If we remember that the Houses were first founded in the buildings that belonged to the Turkish Hearths, this claim of DP was not totally unjust. In order to silence these protests, RPP accelerated its project of turning the Houses into public facilities and handed the project to the prime minister. Prime Minister Adnan Menderes even though reaching a consensus with the representative of RPP at first, changed his mind and made a new law about the handover of the properties of the political parties to their ex-owners. This meant the disbanding of the Houses.

The Houses had been disbanded in 1951 with their properties shared between the state, ex-owners and RPP. Their legacy and their effects, however, have been the subject of a long-lasting discussion among the scholars up till the present time. Scholars who were at the same time House and party members always commemorated the Houses with longing. The disbanding of the Houses was part of the anti-revolutionary movement against Kemalism according to these scholars. Kansu (1972) who claimed that the 1950 election was a period when revolution was defeated by the votes of the people was one of those scholars (p. 184). He and many other Kemalist scholars carried the belief that the Houses were the intermediary institutions that prepared people for a real democratic life. Without the basic education received in such institutions, people would not be able to decide what was good for them (Çeçen, 1974, p. 191; Kansu, 1972, p.182). Politicians who closed the Houses were involved in an anti-revolutionary and anti- Kemalist movement in cooperation with the local feudalists and traders

who did not want people to awaken and to harm their interests (Çeçen, 1971, p. 231; Salihoğlu, 1971, p.171). This highly subjective point of view is understandable when the background of these scholars and their attachment to these institutions are considered. What is interesting is the pervasiveness of this point of view up to the present time. An academic piece of work by Toksoy (2007) represents a good example of such an approach in the present time. The name of the book *Halkevleri: Bir Kültürel Kalkınma Modeli Olarak* [People's Houses: As a Cultural Development Model] by Toksoy (2007) denotes the still lasting mentality of the writer's perspective on the Houses as a model institution which will improve people's minds even today.

If we leave aside the subjective arguments and counter-arguments about the success of the Houses, we will see that the Houses although not fully attaining their aims, had direct and indirect effects on the Turkish cultural life. Though there is not much literature about the evaluation of the House activities, it is still possible to make some comments based on a few written accounts of what have been experienced by various participators of House activities. As to the first goal, which was about creating a new nation of granite mass engaged to an ideal, Houses can be said to be effective up to a certain point. However, its effectiveness does not lie in connecting masses to each other. Rather, Houses enhanced the formation of a national culture by means of the cultural studies, activities, courses, language campaigns, folkloric derivations, plays, etc. they encouraged (Karaömerlioğlu, 1998). The experience and knowledge gained during these activities inspired many scholars, academicians, writers and artists and gave a direction to their works. It may also be suggested that the suppression of other ideological perspectives and intellectual movements during the era has created a main single-track nationalist and Kemalist intellectualism that pervaded all cultural activities in the later decades. However, more research into this subject is required to confirm the point.

All the aims of the Houses depended, somehow, on the dissemination of the House activities to the common people living especially in the villages. One of the best indicators of whether people participated in the activities of the Houses is the statistics of the Houses which showed the rate of participation. Houses sent reports to the general center on a regular basis and included the statistics about the participants and members in these reports. Most sources included in this study draw on these statistics in commenting about the pervasiveness of House activities and memberships. According to these statistics, Houses recruited members from all parts of the society: teachers, doctors, farmers, workers, tradesmen, lawyers, etc. As an example of such an account of House members, Şimşek (2005) quoted a speech of Şükrü Kaya from Ankara People's House, talking about the activities and number of members:

> While 59 exhibitions were held at our Houses in 1935, we opened 179 exhibitions this year…
>
> In 1933, 500.000 citizens had come to people's houses; their number is 6.642.000 this year.

> The number of our active members was 95.253 last year. Of them, 8877 were teachers, 15.577 farmers, 23.935 workers, 5113 tradesmen, 1551 doctors, 1904 lawyers… (Şimşek, 2005 p.80)

This account of the number of members gives a very brilliant picture of the Houses. However, the reliability of these statistics is challenged by another member of the same House, İlhan Başgöz. Başgöz, contending that the Houses did not use organized and professionalized methods to collect these statistics and that "the directors quite often distorted the actual figures" to prove the rapid spread of memberships, added that he did not see a member of the working class in the Houses even though he spent five years there as an active member (as cited in Şimşek, 2005, p. 80).

These conflicting statements show that statistics must be used cautiously and must be complemented with qualitative data. Başgöz's statement indicates the failure of the Houses in realizing the aim of diffusing their activities to the whole society. It is difficult to speak of the realization of ideology-related aims of the Houses when they were not inclusive of the whole society. The same point is validated in another account from a member of Konya People's House, Muhlis Koner, where he stated that almost all the houses were the meeting place of only the educated people (Şimşek, 2005, p.81).

When investigating the reasons of this failure, Şimşek (2005) identifies two reasons about the nature of the activities in the Houses. First of all, the activities were strictly controlled by the party, meaning that it was not people's preferences that directed the activities in the Houses, but the aims of the party. A striking example is presented by Şimşek (2005) from a people's house journal. A citizen who had his children take private music lessons from the music teacher of the House was criticized harshly by the House committee. Although the same teacher had opened a course in the House, nobody had participated in it in the first six months. Şimşek (2005) interprets the action of the citizen as an attempt of "protecting" his children from the suggestive methods of the Houses and as the rejection of the type of the music taught there (p. 81). After all, all kinds of western music were foreign to the Turkish society.

Karaömerlioğlu (1998) contends to the same point by stating that Houses were unsuccessful in reaching the countryside. This was, first of all, because of the scattered structure of the villages of Anatolia and the vastness and harshness of the geography. More important than this, the top-down bureaucratic approach of the House members prevented the peasants and the House members to mix with each other. The controlling attitude of the party estranged the peasants from the Houses. Also, "being looked down by House members as objects of social engineering" deepened the distrust of the peasants in the educated and intellectual people (Karaömerlioğlu, 1998, p. 72).

As a result, Houses became only partially successful in disseminating the ideology of the ruling party, and not successful at all in transforming the countryside and eliminating the gap between the common people and intelligentsia. The failure of the ruling party in the first free election in the

history of Republic of Turkey is also an indicator of the failure of the dissemination of the Kemalist ideology to the masses.

Nevertheless, the issue is far from being fully settled since there is a lack of research that makes an in-depth analysis of how the Houses were perceived by its runners, members or common people rather than relying on some statistical figures. Whether Houses had been effective in changing the texture of the country or why it has failed to do so need further investigation.

Despite its failures, people's houses had a positive impact on the cultural development of a limited proportion of the population, especially on the urban population. Zeyrek (2006) presented an extensive account of the impacts of the Houses on the urban population where he asserted that the Houses encouraged scientific, artistic and literary productions and formed the basis of some domains in social sciences (pp. 85-93). He also maintained that most people were introduced to the western culture in these Houses in terms of both knowledge and lifestyle. It seems possible that these people may have formed the nucleus of the bourgeois culture in Turkey which developed in the later stages.

Even though they were primarily cultural and ideological propaganda institutions developed under the influence of similar institutions in Europe, people's houses formed the basis of the adult education centers which are called public education centers today. The leading studies about this topic have been emphasizing their political or cultural dimension up to now. No studies have been done to show their educational impacts. Some possible questions that may be asked are: To what extent did the educational paradigm pervading these institutions affect the later institutions? What kinds of educational methods did they bequeath to the next generations of teachers, principals and policy makers? Did they have an everlasting effect on the perception of education and educated people in the minds of common people?

As it was stated in the previous paragraphs, the Houses had both a direct and an indirect effect on the cultural life in Turkey. Writers, actors, academicians, etc. who started their career in the Houses (and also in Village Institutes) shaped the cultural sphere in Turkey in the later decades. This gave way to the formation of a mainstream Kemalist intellectual and cultural monopoly which outmatched and sometimes excluded other intellectual movements. Is it possible that the same elitist mentality affected the educational institutions and shaped the perceptions of people in understanding education? It seems that the Houses as part of a western elitist mentality had been institutions which had deeper impacts than expected on the perception of the society who sees education still as an elite activity.

4. Evaluation of the Studied Literature

Tekeli (1998) identified as a problem of nationalistic historiography that the identity of "us" is described based on the stereotyped "others." He continued that it is not always the "outsiders" who are qualified as the others, but that "insiders" may also be represented as the "others." These others may be either minority groups or *the unenlightened* as opposed to the children of enlightenment (p. 119). The validity of this comment can be seen at different degrees in most works produced about people's houses in terms of their approach to writing history. However, there are also works which have a critical approach to the topic.

The earliest works about people's houses were produced in the early 1960s. Among these, the most important one is an article produced by Kemal H. Karpat in 1963 where he aims to "give a factual history of the establishment of the Houses" (p. 55). This work is important because it seems to be the first that deals with the topic objectively and in an academic manner. In his article, Karpat does not confine himself to the official history discourse, but presents alternative views as well. Far from depicting a romantic view of the Houses, he provides the readers with a realistic account of how the Houses were established. Another point that needs to be mentioned in this article is that Karpat also provides us with hypotheses that explain why people were not interested in people's houses.

In 1974, another important work about the Houses was produced by Karpat again, titled *The Impact of the People's Houses on the Development of Communication in Turkey - 1931-1951*. Building on the first article where he presented a factual account of the establishment of the Houses, Karpat touches an issue which has not been touched up to the present time. The article investigates the contribution of the Houses to the development of communication, which enhances and accelerates modernization. This trait of the article makes it an original one among the others for it examines a social dimension which investigates the impact of a certain aspect of the institutions on the society. The language employed in the article is also different from the majority of the works about the Houses in that it is neutral, scientific and objective. The academic treatment of the subject looks sufficient for the author provides the readers with the necessary bibliographic references and empirical evidence.

Published in the same year with Karpat (1974)'s article was a book by the Turkish Historical Society which consists of qualitative articles by different authors who had been involved in the activities of the Houses as members or teachers: *Atatürk ve Halkevleri* [Atatürk and People's Houses]. Based on the introduction part, the motivation in writing such a book can be described as reviving the spirit of the Houses. Motivated with this main aim, various authors present their views about different aspects of the Houses. Contrary to the academic works produced by Karpat, the articles in the book act as an emotional chorus lamenting on the Houses. This highly emotional tone is reflected in many instances both in the language used by the authors and in the analysis of the events. Although they are

not sequenced chronically, the articles follow an implicit pattern beginning with the period of foundation, proceeding through the acting period, and finally ending in the closure of the Houses. Although the sequence and the titles of the articles give the impression that the reader will be engaged in reading factual information, the content mainly consists of the subjective comments and judgments of the authors in which they do not analyze or synthesize events, but simply deal with propagating their own views about the topic of the article. Çeçen (1974), for example, bases his arguments for the Houses on the axis of enlightened Kemalists versus anti-revolutionist and backward democrats in his article titled *Atatürk'ün Kurduğu Halkevleri* [People's Houses Founded by Atatürk] (pp. 89-95). The same author, when accounting for the disbanding of the Houses, comments that the disbanding of the "Houses which raised the awareness of people" was a result of the "attempts of the politicians and anti-Kemalists" that had the hidden agenda of putting people to sleep for the sake of their own interests (Çeçen, 1971, p. 231). Regardless of the value of truth of his remarks, one can claim that the judgmental nature of these comments which is not supported with evidence, sound arguments or analysis undermines the reliability of the source and makes it only a secondary source that could be used as a support to primary sources at best.

The language and rhetoric employed in the articles seems to have affected the historiography. The validity of the above mentioned traits of nationalistic historiography aiming at the *unenlightened* by Tekeli (1998) can be detected, for example, in the claims of a writer who stated that common people cannot train and rule themselves and therefore they should be educated and put on the right track (Çeçen, 1974, p. 191). If common people are stereotyped as *unenlightened,* then their experience will not be reflected in the historiography. The absolutely positive perspective which reflects the views of the central state do not give place to the views and experience of the periphery. The approach to the subject is not critical but rather vindicating. The modernist discourse, which qualifies the Houses as the vanguards of progress and development, is prevalent all through the book and also reflects the official historical perspective. Rather than having academic claims, the book can be said to have the aim of arousing and reviving public interest in the Houses which were opened again after 1960, but enjoying very little interest this time.

For a very long time after the first works had been published, no important academic work on the topic was published. It was in 1988 that Anıl Çeçen who was a House member himself and had also produced some work on the Houses, decided to write a book which dealt with the issue in a scientific manner for the first time. The book was called *Atatürk'ün Kültür Kurumu Halkevleri* [Atatürk's Cultural Institutions People's Houses]. Çeçen (1988) stated in the introduction of his book that the reason for creating this work was the lack of scientific works about the topic. In this regard, the author seems to meet his claims by making use of historical documents and by attempting to base his arguments on theoretical grounds. The book consists of four sections each of which deals with the

issue chronically. The first section discusses the foundations of populism in Turkey and concludes that the Houses are an extension of the Kemalist populist worldview. The rest of the book accounts on the birth, life and death of the institutions, based on documents. The book is important because it is the first book which deals with the issue extensively and objectively (most of the time) for the first time. Çeçen (1988) makes sound analyses about the events basing them on historical evidence. However, it is still possible to see the straightforward judgmental claims that simply avoid the careful scrutiny of some subjects when, for example, analyzing that the new regime was easily accepted by the Turkish people because they were prepared for that by the help of the principle of populism (p. 68). The most interesting feature of this book is the leftist and surprisingly anti-western jargon the author employs in it. As we have seen in many instances, the Houses aimed to educate people according to the western values and therefore an extolling discourse was used for the western values in most works of the era. Çeçen (1988), however, identifies the West with imperialism and capitalism and asserts that the disbanding of the Houses suits to the logic of the West. In his dualistic understanding, people are striving against imperialism, capitalism and bourgeoisie (p. 17). Based on Tekeli (1998)'s views about national historiography, it can be stated here, too that an "other" is created and all the negative traits are ascribed to it. This time, the "other" is the West.

Towards the end of the 90s, the romantic nationalistic approach adopted in writing the history of the Houses shifts to an objective analytical approach which gives importance to understanding the social and political setting that produced the Houses. Not only the setting, but also the social and political impacts of the Houses are discussed in depth in the academic works produced in this period. The emphasis on the ideological dimension of the Houses as a propaganda device of the state is common in all the works in this group. When compared to the previous works except Karpat's articles, these works can be called revolutionary in terms of historiography as they totally exclude the official history thesis and adopt a more critical approach to the subject. The sources are also varied in these works. Not only the state archives, factual information from the official documents of the Houses, and the positive memories of House members, but also the alternative views of people from different backgrounds who had somehow come into terms with the Houses were included in these works for the first time. Providing the readers with alternative perspectives, thus offering them the chance to think in a more balanced and demystified way, these works achieved an important task in writing the history of the Houses. The only criticism that can be directed to these works may be that they emphasized the ideological dimension of the Houses at the expense of their educational value for and educational impact on the society. This, of course, may be seen quite natural when the academic background of the authors is taken into consideration.

The first academic work in this group is *Halkevleri: İdeoloji ve Mimarlık* [People's Houses: Ideology and Architecture] which was written by Neşe Yeşilkaya in 1998. In harmony with her

architecture background, Yeşilkaya (1998) examines the buildings of the Houses in terms of their reflecting the ideology of the single-party era. In this respect, she first discusses the concept of ideology and the relationship between ideology and architecture. Then, she displays the ideological ground, political setting and policy of culture of the era. In the final part, she examines some House buildings in terms of the relationship between ideology and architecture. This work is an important one for it seems to have been a trendsetting one for the following works.

The second writer who can be included in this group is Sefa Şimşek with his PhD. thesis upon which he based an article in English titled *"People's Houses" as a Nationwide Project for Ideological Mobilization in Early Republican Turkey* and a book titled *Halkevleri 1932-1951: Bir İdeolojik Seferberlik Deneyimi* [People's Houses 1932-1951: An Experience of Ideological Mobilization], produced in 2005 and 2002 respectively. The book is the product of an interdisciplinary study which handles the issue from a sociological point of view in the frame of the social needs of self-definition and the search for self-identity (Şimşek, 2002, p. vii). It investigates the organic relationship between the official ideology and the social and institutional structure formed in the republican era (p. vii).

Asım Karaömerlioğlu is the last writer who has produced works in the same critical trend. Both his works are based on his PhD. thesis in which he examines the impact of the peasantist movement of the era on the foundation and functioning of the Houses. The first work is an article in English titled *The People's Houses and the Cult of Peasant in Turkey* written in 1998. The second work is a book which is titled as *Orada Bir Köy Var Uzakta: Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Köycü Söylem* [There is a Village Far Away: The Peasantist Discourse in the Early Republican Era] and published in 2006. The book is the expanded form of the article where he not only examines the Houses but also the Village Institutes and the literary works of the era. The main research question which led the writer in these works was "Why did rusticity last for such a long time in Turkey?" With this question in mind, Karaömerlioğlu identifies the traits of a romantic peasantist discourse peculiar to the early republican era which aims to preserve the stability of the rural areas and to prevent the peasants from developing an autonomous initiative because of the fear of the single-party regime of the consequences of industrialization and urbanization. In this respect, Karaömerlioğlu (2006) presents and in-depth examination of the peasantist division of the Houses in order to understand the relationship between the activities of the peasantist division and the peasantist discourse. The book can be said to be revolutionary not only in terms of its critical approach towards the official history thesis, but also in terms of its depicting an ironical and demystifying picture of the House activities based on his claim of the failure of the Houses being caused by the naïve assertion of the intellectuals that culture and ideology would be the main driving forces of development.

In 2006, another work was produced by Şerafettin Zeyrek based on his master thesis. What separates this work from the others is the writer's approach to historiography and sensitivity to the

methodology of historical research. Most probably because of having a background in history, Zeyrek (2006) tackles the issue in a more academic and objective way paved with a careful analysis and Evaluation of the Studied Literature. In the preface of his book, he expresses his motivation about writing such a work not as a lack, but as an abundance (even excess) of those resources that deal with the issue in a sentimental way which makes it difficult to understand the reality as it is (p. iv) While emphasizing the prominence of a sound and careful use of the sources, he claims to have attempted the achievement of the reliability and consistency required in an academic work by including various sources (p. iv).

This work seems to be another successful attempt in contributing to our understanding of the issue not only because of the researcher's efforts and concern with constructing and presenting a whole story about the issue, but also the prospect that academic studies in this fashion would lead future research to more scientifically based academic works about the topic. The book, however, is not without its weaknesses. The writer seems to be missing some most important critical works which were mentioned above as he claims that there is a lack of scientific studies that does not address the issue in a calm way. Adding a critical dimension by including critical works may have led the researcher to a wider perspective. Also, the work seems to be lacking a theoretical perspective that connects it to wider network of truth. Though he maintains that he aims to display the reality from a wider and objective point of view, the writer not always, but sometimes seems to be submitting to the common vindicating discourse of the official history thesis in his analysis and synthesis of the events which does not satisfy the reader and make one question the validity of his conclusions.

The last two works which will be mentioned in this study constitute another separate group although they seem to be a successor of the previous romantic nationalistic trend in historiography. In this regard, they make no novel contribution to expanding and enriching our perspective about the topic. Apart from the positive and sentimental language, they both emphasize the cultural values of the Houses. Their titles also display their concern with the cultural dimension of the topic: *Halkevleri: Bir Kültürel Kalkınma Modeli Olarak* [People' Houses: As a Cultural Development Model] by Nurcan Toksoy published in 2007, and *Devrimin Kültür Fidanlığı: Halkevleri ve Kadıköy Halkevi* [The Cultural Nursery Garden of the Revolution: People's Houses and Kadıköy People's House] by Eminalp Malkoç published in 2009. In both of the works, the writers emphasize the cultural contributions that Houses made to the Turkish cultural life. Toksoy (2007) even criticizes the approach to the Houses which depict them as mainly political institutions. She asserts that it is unjust to treat these institutions which were mainly established to raise the level of culture in the country as merely ideological institutions and that this perspective impairs the objectivity of the research (p. 3). Based on these assumptions, the main aim of her research is explained by her as building an independent and

objective work that will form a basis for new research. To realize her aim, she claims that she has made use of primary sources such as the republican archives, newspapers, etc (pp. 3-4).

The size of the book, which is a voluminous one, actually confirms the researcher's claims about using the primary sources. Most of the book consists of directly quoted or paraphrased parts from the primary sources, especially from the state archives. The researcher includes every detail regarding the House activities, year by year and place by place. The concern for so many details seem to be a concern for displaying how much the Houses did for the cultural development of the country. It seems to be a good reference source for researchers who need basic documents that include detailed account of the cultural activities. However, the book does not provide its readers with a new perspective, comment, analysis or synthesis which may contribute to the understanding of the subject. A careful analysis and critical Evaluation of the Studied Literature is not only necessary for expanding our perspectives, but also for judging the truth of those sources. In this work, however, the researcher directly reflects the content of the sources like a mirror. This limits the reader's knowledge and perspective to what s/he sees in the sources.

The second work in this line belongs to Eminalp Malkoç. His work is similar to Toksoy (2007)'s work in terms of its cultural approach to the evaluation of the House activities. Malkoç (2009) is motivated by the same incent that Houses contributed a lot to the cultural development of the country and that their disbanding was a misfortune (p.12). What makes his work different from the others that have been examined so far is the main component of his work which is a case study. In the first section of his book, Malkoç (2009) gives a factual history of the Houses based on various sources. The main concern of his work is a specific House: Kadıköy People's House in Istanbul. In the second section of his work, the researcher presents the history of Kadıköy People's House in Istanbul based on various sources such as written documents, visual materials, and personal archives. Although the researcher does not seem to be contributing much to the literature in terms of general knowledge about the Houses, he expands the body of knowledge about individual Houses. This is important for it is another way which may help the construction of the story about Houses. As every setting has its own circumstances, the perception and experience of each town or city regarding the House activities will be different. For example, cities may be more tolerant towards the cultural values imposed by the Houses than rural areas where there is a strong local culture. This may, in turn, affect the degree of penetration of the Houses or their perception by the people in two different areas. As a result, Malkoç (2009)'s work is an important one regarding its leading role in directing researchers to case studies.

An interesting feature that can be observed in the last two works is their implied political motivation. Toksoy (2007) criticizes the former works for they handled the issue in a political and ideological way. However, Toksoy (2007) and Malkoç (2009) both maintain that the Houses started an age of enlightenment in the country and that their closure interrupted that enlightenment process. For

them, it is quite open and clear that such a structure is quite necessary even in today's Turkey (Toksoy, 2007, p. 3; Malkoç, 2009, p.12). In their view, then, Turkish people are still "unenlightened." In this respect, both researchers seem to be ironically confirming what the former critical researchers have stated about the political and ideological use of the Houses.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

5.1. Conclusions

The era between the world wars had been the golden age of the propaganda education all over Europe. Even though the Turkish ruling elite of the time did not adopt the political ideologies of the European countries as such, they had always been following those countries in terms of the methods and means they employ in disseminating those ideologies. After all, the west was the representative of modernization and progressivism, which Mustafa Kemal Atatürk thought of as being the only way of development.

Atatürk had fully understood the relationship between education and modernization; for he realized a series of reforms like adopting the Latin alphabet and the starting the purified Turkish movement in order to abolish all the remaining bonds with the Ottoman Empire (Szyliowicz, 1966). Apart from the expansion of formal education as a means to train people as a citizen of the Turkish Republic, he had given special importance to the education of the adults especially in rural areas as they seemed to be the most resisting part of the society to the imposition of the modern values. In this regard, Village Institutes, which trained teachers for villages, and people's houses were opened. Aiming to gather millions under their roofs, people's houses served as "the agents of political communication and socialization" (p. 272). As stated in the paragraph above, these institutions were modeled on different similar institutions in Europe, especially the *Sokol* of the Czech Republic, the ONDs of Italy, and the *Komsomols* of the Soviet Russia in terms of the type of activities they employed in order to create a granite mass of people connected to one another on the basis of solidarity. After functioning for more than a decade, they were closed in 1951 by the governing party of the new era.

Based on the analysis of the historiography about the Houses, a series of conclusions seem to be emerging about the treatment of the topic in the sources. First of all, there still seems to be a gap in the knowledge of the House activities. Almost all sources mainly rely on the statistics produced by the House administrations, the state archives, the documents about the functioning of the Houses, and the positive memories of House members. This kind of data, although becoming valid, represents only one side of reality. What is missing here is the perspective of the common people who had direct or

indirect experience with the Houses. The way they were viewed in the locality, the rate of participation in the activities, the type of activities that were or were not preferred, etc. could become illuminating details about the perception of the Houses by common people. This way, a more detailed story about the Houses which may help us understand the era better and move to a theoretical perspective will be constructed.

Secondly, there seems to be a great gap of case studies in the literature. Although it was stated that 478 Houses and more than 4000 Rooms existed, there seems to be no trace of those Houses or Rooms in the literature as if they disappeared suddenly. To a degree, this fact may be attributed to the damage given to the House documents and properties after the Houses were closed. However, it does not explain the indifference of the researchers to the topic. Apart from a few examples of such case studies, individual Houses did not become the topic of research studies. Building on the previous claim about the experience of the members of the society about the Houses, case studies seem to be an important means to collect data about individual experience. By means of such studies, not only the perspective of the center, but also the perspective of the periphery will be understood and a more holistic approach will be developed towards the understanding of the subject. These studies will also add a social dimension to the examination of the topic.

Thirdly, a need to connect the story of the Houses to a general theoretical perspective seems to emerge. Most of the sources deal with the issue in an isolated way which prevents us from seeing the issue in relation to the social and political phenomena underlying the institutions. Asım Karaömerlioğlu's work which places the Houses in the context of the peasantist discourse may be cited as an exception in this respect. This work accomplishes an important work in expanding the perspectives of its readers by linking the topic to a wider context. Similar works may contribute to the enriching of our perspectives of the topic.

Another point to be made concerns the educational impacts of these institutions. Again, there seems to be a lack of the treatment of the educational values of these institutions in the literature. The existing research body about the topic handles the institutions either in terms of their ideological or cultural values. However, the Houses, along with the similar institutions like the village institutes, are the products of a certain educational mentality. Teachers, administrators or participants who took part in the functioning of the Houses continued to work in the educational domain. Also, these institutions formed the basis of the adult education and teacher training institutions of the present day. It is possible that they had an impact on shaping the approach of the state to education as well as its perception by the people. Is it possible that the educational mentality spread by these institutions had an impact on people's perception of the educational activities as either elite activities or means of assimilation by people living in the regions except the western part of Turkey?

Concerning the historiography, it seems difficult to identify a certain type of trend that dominates all the works about the topic. However, it is possible to claim that the works seem to be going back and forth on a pendulum of sentimentalism and neutralism regarding the language they use. With respect to the language they use, they can be classified as belonging either to the nationalistic trend as they support the official history thesis of the Kemalist worldview or critical trends of historiography for they totally exclude or even react to the Kemalist historiography. In his article, which is a call to the formation of a framework for the social history of the Turkish populace during the early republican era, Brockett (1998) maintained that the research into the experience of the people during the era was limited and that the "limited nature of this research" led some scholars to some simple assumptions about the nature of some events of the era (p. 61). Building on Brockett (1998)'s comments, it can be suggested that the social history of the early republican era in Turkey should be researched better so as to construct a framework about the social history of the era. In this respect, the educational institutions deserve a distinct attention for they were aimed at the transformation of the wide public. The body of research that has been examined so far denotes a lack of consciousness about the social dimension of the people's houses as an educational institution.

5.2. Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the conclusions derived from the analysis of the literature about the people's houses, the following suggestions can be made for further research:

- More studies which have a social historical focus must be encouraged in order to have a more complete picture of the history of Houses.
- In this respect, experience of the large population must be reflected in the studies. To be able to do this, case studies about individual Houses and Rooms supported with interviews and memories of the people who had direct or indirect experience with the Houses must be encouraged.
- Rather than viewing the issue in isolated way, the Houses like the other educational institutions of the era should be examined in relation to a theoretical perspective which will link the isolated knowledge to a wider network of truth and will expand our perspectives.

- Finally, research investigating the educational impacts of these and other early republican education institutions on the society and educational system of Turkey should be encouraged in order to better understand their roles and/or contributions in the formation of educational situation of Turkey today.

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