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ATATURK'S CULTURAL POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF "TURK OCAKLARI" (TURKISH HEARTHES)

The social structure in the Ottoman Empire was the most striking testament to the cultural diversity of the state. In the state with a cosmopolitan niche, each existing community had its own cultural understanding. However, this cultural complexity created by the diversity in the country has over time led to various problems and dualism in society. The Turkish Republic, which replaced the Ottoman Empire, radically changed its political, socio-economic and cultural structure. Ataturk, as the founder of the modern Turkish Republic, was not only a military genius, world-class leader, president, but also a person who pursued cultural policy. For a Kazakh researcher, the events and difficulties experienced in cultural life during the period of the republic were little mentioned in the Patriotic historiography. Most of the studies were either articles or the problem was considered superficially. In many of them, cultural issues were included in the educational policy of Turkey. While implementing decisive reforms in the country, Ataturk did not forget to pay attention to the national culture and its significance. In this context, he developed a policy and tried to create a synthesis, uniting Turkish national culture and elements of cultures of other nationalities. Of course, Ataturk's intention and efforts to bring the Turkish nation to the level of modern civilization played an important role in this. The principles of revolutionism, nationalism and secularism that underlie Ataturk's cultural policy are the most effective weapons of his struggle. In this he was assisted by the «Turkish Hearths», where the migrated leaders of the Turkic-Muslim peoples of the Russian Empire took an active part. In this regard, this article examines the main aspects of the formation of «Turkish Hearths» and its role in the cultural policy of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

Key words: Ataturk, Republic of Turkey, "Turkish Hearths", cultural policy.

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«Turk ocaklari» (түрік ошақтары) шеңберінде Ататүріктің мәдени саясаты

Осман империясындағы әлеуметтік құрылым мемлекеттің мәдени әртүрлілігінің ең жарқын айғағы болды. Космополиттік орны бар мемлекетте әрбір қолданыстағы қауымдастықтың өзіндік мәдени түсінігі қаланған еді. Алайда, елдегі алуан түрліліктен туындаған бұл мәдени күрделілік уақыт өте келе қоғамда түрлі мәселелер мен дуализмге алып келді. Осман империясының орнын басқан Түрік Республикасы өзінің саяси, әлеуметтік-экономикалық және мәдени құрылымын түбегейлі өзгертті. Ататүрік қазіргі Түрік Республикасының негізін қалаушы ретінде әскери данышпан, әлемдік деңгейдегі көшбасшы, президент ғана емес, сонымен бірге мәдениет саласында күрделі саясат жүргізген тұлға ретінде танылуда. Қазақстандық зерттеуші үшін республика кезеңінде мәдени өмірде болған оқиғалар мен қиындықтар Отандық тарихнамада аз айтылды. Зерттеулердің көпшілігі мақалалар түрінде немесе үстірт қарастырылды. Олардың көпшілігінде мәдени мәселелер Түркияның білім саясатына енгізілді. Елде шешуші реформаларды жүзеге асыра отырып, Ататүрік ұлттық мәдениетке және оның маңыздылығына назар аударуды ұмытпады. Осы тұрғыда ол саясат әзірлеп, түрік ұлттық мәдениеті мен элементтерін, басқа ұлт мәдениеттерінің элементтерін біріктіріп, синтез құруға тырысты. Әрине, Ататүріктің түрік ұлтын қазіргі өркениет деңгейіне жеткізуге деген ниеті мен күш-жігері маңызды рөл атқарды. Ататүріктің мәдени саясатының негізінде жатқан революцияшылық, ұлтшылдық және зайырлылық ұстанымдары оның күресінің ең тиімді қаруы болып табылады. Бұған оған «Түрік ошақтары» құрамына кірген Ресей империясының түрік-мұсылман халықтарының эмиграцияға мәжбүр болған көсемдері белсенді көмектесті. Осыған байланысты бұл мақалада «Түрік ошақтарының» қалыптасуының негізгі аспектілері және оның Мұстафа Кемал Ататүріктің мәдени саясатындағы рөлі қарастырылған.

Түйін сөздер: Ататүрік, Түркия Республикасы, «Түрік ошақтары», мәдени саясат.

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Культурная политика Ататюрка в контексте «Turk Ocaklari» (Турецкие очаги)

Социальная структура в Османской империи была самым ярким свидетельством культурного разнообразия государства. В государстве, имевшем космополитическую нишу, каждая существующая община имела собственное культурное понимание. Однако эта культурная сложность, созданная разнообразием в стране, со временем привела к возникновению различных проблем и дуализму в обществе. Турецкая Республика, которая заменила Османскую империю, коренным образом изменила его политическую, социально-экономическую и культурную структуру. Ататюрк, как основатель современной Турецкой Республики, был не только военным гением, лидером мирового уровня, президентом, но и человеком, который проводил культурную политику. Для казахстанского исследователя события и трудности, испытанные в культурной жизни в период республики, мало упоминались в Отечественной историографии. Большинство исследований либо публиковались в виде статей, либо проблема рассматривалась поверхностно. Во многих из них культурные вопросы были включены в образовательную политику Турции. Реализуя решительные реформы в стране, Ататюрк не забывал обращать внимание на национальную культуру и ее значение. В этом контексте он выработал политику и попытался создать синтез, объединяя турецкую национальную культуру и элементы культур других национальностей. Конечно, важную роль в этом сыграли намерение и усилия Ататюрка вывести турецкую нацию на уровень современной цивилизации. Принципы революционизма, национализма и секуляризма, лежащие в основе культурной политики Ататюрка, являются наиболее эффективным оружием его борьбы. В этом ему помогали «Турецкие очаги», где активное участие принимали мигрировавшие лидеры тюрко-мусульманских народов Российской империи. В связи с этим в данной статье рассматриваются основные аспекты образования «Турецких очагов» и его роль в культурной политике Мустафа Кемаль Ататюрка.

Ключевые слова: Ататюрк, Турецкая Республика, «Турецкие очаги», культурная политика.

Introduction

From the very beginning of the founding of the Ottoman Empire, the Turks were its main representatives. But Ottoman statesmen opposed Turkish nationalism, as this could lead to the separation of national minorities from the state and strengthen the movement of nationalism among them. Therefore, the government severely punished at the slightest manifestation of such sentiments. The Constitution, adopted in 1876, gave rise to the policy of "Ottomanism", according to which all citizens of a single state were equal. But neither it, nor the idea of "Islamism" that appeared later did not find a response among the inhabitants of the country. The situation changed in the early 20th century when the Ottoman Empire lost part of its territory as a result of the Balkan Wars, which again questioned the structure of the state.

Turkish intellectuals knew the Ottoman Empire was about to fall. The activities of the intelligentsia in the Ottoman Empire and the Turks in Russia, the loss of land, the economic and political crisis – all this gives impetus to the emergence of a new idea of Turkism. This movement shows the reality of the development of the social, economic and cultural

level of the Turks. The idea of creating a nationalist group that had no political ties began to appear in the newspaper "Jeune Turc" ("Young Turk"), which editor was Zhelal Nuri Ileri. One of those who made these thoughts viable was Zia Gokalp, who created the theoretical basis of Turkism, which became the foundation of modern Turkey (Gilyazov, 2001: 13). Zia Gokalp defined Turkism as "the rise of the Turkish nation".

The gradual weakening of the Ottoman Empire, constant wars with various countries, problems in domestic and foreign policy led to the emergence of the idea of Turkism in various strata of society. The entry into force of the II Constitution and the formation of the constitutional monarchy on July 24, 1908, marked the emergence of language, literary, artistic, sports and philosophical clubs, increased interest in the idea of a nation and strengthened Turkism. The incompatibility of the sultanate and constitutionalism begins to surface (Akçura, 1981: 199). Thinkers and intellectuals such as Ziya Gokalp, Akhmet Agayev (Agaoglu), Khamdullah Supkhi Tanryover, Mekhmet Fuat (Koprulu), Akhmet Mitkhat Efendi, declared that it is necessary to have a national identity in order to become a nation. They realized that Turkization would require social, economic and po-

litical reforms, that the interests of the nation should take precedence over personal interests (Tunaya, 1981: 140).

On June 20, 1911, a meeting was held in which students of the Military Medical School, representatives of the intelligentsia, such as Mekhmet Emin Yurdakul, Yusuf Akchura, Ryza Tevfik, took part. They decided to create a new national organization. An interim administrative committee was formed and Fuat Sabit proposed the name “Turkish Hearth” (Sarıay, 1990: 34; Üstel, 2004: 51-54). The “Turkish Hearth” was officially founded on March 25, 1912 in Istanbul, and this was announced in the newspaper “Tanin” (Orkun, 1977: 102). Akhmet Ferit Tek became the first chairman and his deputy was Yusuf Akchura. The first meeting of representatives of the “Turkish Hearth” took place in the administration of the magazine “Turk Yurdu”, which later became the official publication of the organization.

One of the first innovations of “Turkish Hearths” was associated with the surnames of the members of the organization. Even before the law on surnames was passed in Turkey, Khamdullah Supkhi used the surname “Ozkul”, İsmet İnönü was “İnan”. Also, “Turkish Hearths” attached great importance to the development of the village and the protection of the interests of the peasants. This was done to encourage nationalist intellectuals, especially doctors, to travel to the countryside. The villagers were considered the backbone of the Turkish nation, therefore outpatient centers were opened in some “Turkish Hearths” and medical care was provided to the population free of charge.

By 1916, 25 branches of the “Turkish Hearths” had been opened outside Istanbul. One of the first of these was the Izmir branch, opened on September 2, 1912. Among its founders were Khussein Vasif Chynar and Mustafa Nezhati, who were later ministers of national education in Turkey. During the First World War, many members of the “Turkish Hearths” were sent to various fronts. The Second congress could meet only 5 years later, in 1918.

During the years of the national struggle (1918-1922), the official activities of the “Turkish Hearths” could not be carried out properly. On March 12, 1920, the British captured Istanbul and firstly closed the “Turkish Hearths”. In Western Anatolia, the Greeks took similar measures. Despite all these events, according to Yusuf Akchura, the “Hearths” did not disappear, and they owed this largely to Khamdulla Suphi Tanrıöver.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, under pressure from the Entente powers and at the request of the Istanbul government, went to Samsun on May 19, 1919.

In his telegrams he expressed his thoughts about the injustice of the British invasion of Anatolia and called the Greeks, who formed armed detachments, the source of the unrest in Samsun.

Upon arrival in Anatolia, which Atatürk called “the original homeland,” he decided to create a new independent Turkish state, which was built on the principle of national sovereignty (Atatürk, 2000: 9). This began to turn small sparks of the national struggle into real torches. After the “Turkish Hearths” received the status of an association working in the public interest, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk received representatives of the delegates of the General Assembly of the “Turkish Hearths” and in his speeches emphasized the role of the centers in glorifying the Turkish state and explaining its reforms. In this process, a significant portion of the delegates attending the “Turkish Hearths” Congress were members of parliament, prominent officials, intellectuals and journalists.

In the first and difficult years of the republic, the connection between Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the “Turkish Hearths” was never interrupted, the set was strengthened. One of the most important indicators of this is the statement made by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on April 26, 1926, in the “Turkish Hearth” of Ankara. In this statement, he expressed his satisfaction with the work of the “Turkish Hearths” and that “... the “Hearths” are of great help in explaining the reforms” (Karayaman, 2011: 17).

As we can see, “Turkish Hearths” played an important role both in the social, political, economic and cultural life of the Turkish Republic. In this regard, this study aims to identify the role and activities of the “Turkish Hearths” in the cultural life of Turkey. To achieve this goal, the following tasks have been set: discussion of relations between Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the “Turkish Hearths”; the emergence of the Turkic movement in the Ottoman Empire; after the proclamation of a constitutional monarchy, briefly mention the strengthening of the idea of Turkism and the creation of “Turkish Hearths”, as well as the identification of its main cultural aspects.

Materials and methods

This research used a comparative analysis, historical analysis and a systematic approach in order to identify the role of the “Turkish Hearths” in the cultural transformations of Atatürk. The research is aimed at solving the following tasks:

- identification and gathering of materials related to the period of Atatürk’s reign;

- analysis of the collected data;
- revealing the history of "Turkish Hearths" and analysis of their impact on the cultural policy of Ataturk.

The materials of the work were scientific works of such Turkish, European, Russian authors as Y. Akchura, M. Karayaman, F. Georgeon, I. Gilyazov, as well as articles from Turkish newspapers. Together, they made it possible to establish links between historical and cultural phenomena that took place during the reign of Ataturk in the new independent state. The considered problems from the point of view of comparative analysis show the relevance of this research.

In the course of the research, it was revealed that migrants from the Russian Empire, who made up the main backbone of the "Turkish Hearths", had a great influence on the formation of the Turkish Republic. These results can be claimed by the international community, which can take a fresh look at the "brain drain" phenomenon.

Results and Discussion

Formation of "Turkish Hearths" as the main indicator of the cultural policy of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk

After the capture of Izmir on May 15, 1919, Khamdullah Supkhi talks to Ataturk and receives advice to hold rallies and protests against the imperialist policies of the occupiers, violations of international law and human rights in Istanbul. Ataturk wanted to launch the process of information movement, which was necessary for the national struggle. Although the "Turkish Hearths" followed the principle of refusal to participate in active politics, they supported this struggle from the very beginning. Their goals coincided with those of Ataturk, who identified himself with them, since they were all "spirit children of Ziya Gokalp" (Hanioglu, 1995: 1399). As a result, on June 6, 1919, the famous rallies were held in Fatikh and Sultanakhmet. The participants in these rallies were such members of the "Turkish Hearths" as Khalide Edib, Khamdullah Supkhi, Mekhmet Emin, Khusein Razhip. They made passionate speeches and called people to fight.

The "Turkish Hearths", which supported the policy of "complete independence" pursued by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and supported him in all matters, soon became one of the main interests of the Entente states, which held Istanbul under their control. They did not miss the chance to deal with the "Turkish Hearths", which for them immediately became one of the most important sources of nation-

alist resistance. After the rallies in Fatikh and Sultanakhmet, the central branch of the "Turkish Hearths" in Istanbul was occupied by the British. On March 12, 1920, documents, books and other collections of works were confiscated, many of the members of the organization were exiled to Malta. Some of the valuable documents were rescued by the members of the "Turkish Hearths", who hid them in their homes (Tunaya, 1988, p. 438).

On the one hand, the members of the organization followed the recommendations of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk to protest in front of foreign embassies, on the other hand, they secretly went to Anatolia to join the national struggle. Among them were such outstanding personalities as Khamdullah Supkhi, Khalide Edib, Mufide Ferit, Akhmet Ferit, Khusein Razhip, Akhmet Agaoglu, Yusuf Akchura and Mekhmet Emin. They followed Ataturk and accompanied him all the way to Ankara (Georgeon, 1999: 126-127).

Due to the difficult conditions of the national struggle period, the "Turkish Hearths" could not continue their official activities in the period between 1920-1922. In the wake of the military successes associated with the liberation of Izmir on September 9, 1922 and the raising of morale, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk calls for the reopening of the "Turkish Hearths". He finances 3600 lira for the construction of a building in Istanbul for "Hearths", donates 1000 lira and 2000 lira to the branches in Ankara and Izmir respectively. On December 29, 1922, Khamdulla Supkhi opened the "Turkish Hearth" in Ankara and announced the opening of 19 branches in various regions of Anatolia. At the meeting, Ataturk was assigned number 1, after which the number of branches of "Turkish Hearths" and their members increased, and more than half of the "Hearths" in Ankara consisted of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's friends, members of parliament, writers and teachers. Within a short time, they became the most populous organization in Turkey (Şapolyo, 1966: 800).

Ataturk's relationship with the "Turkish Hearths" was much broader than mere financial patronage. At every opportunity, he expressed his loyalty and commitment to them. During his trips around the country before and after the proclamation of the republic, Ataturk visited the "Turkish Hearths" in Akkhisar, Ushak, Izmir, Adana, Mersin and Konya. There he made many important speeches concerning the new Turkish state and nation, one of which said that "if there is anything extraordinary in his creation, it is his birth as a Turk" (Atay, 2004: 18). Although Ataturk objected to welcoming ceremonies, people, especially youth, flocked to the

places where he appeared. All this took place without coercion, only because of the coincidence of the goals of both sides.

On March 15, 1923 in Adana, in his notes, Atatürk wrote: "Let the "Turkish Hearth" of Adana become a source of light for Turkishness. The fire of this hearth is very ancient. They've tried to put it out for centuries. But many who tried to do this have been put out themselves" Another example of the close relationship between the "Hearths" and Atatürk is his speech during his visit to Konya on March 20, 1923. In his speech, which can be called a "declaration of Turkish nationalism", he said: "For every nation it is necessary to have certain positive qualities. Individuals who do not possess such characteristics, and nations consisting of such individuals, cannot form a real state. As far as I know, the main goal of the "Turkish Hearths", which have been opening in our country for many years, and which still burn with a sacred fire, and whose flame enlightens the heart and conscience of each member, is to give such a positive character to the people. The "Turkish Hearths" must have a strong impact on the morale and culture of the nation. They are already doing this and will continue to do so" (Turan, 1996: 83).

The creation of the Turkish Republic marked the largest victory for Turkish nationalists. In the period after the proclamation of the Republic, the "Turkish Hearths", at the request of Atatürk, intensified their educational, cultural and artistic activities, becoming the intellectual force of state reforms. In this context, various activities were carried out to educate the population, people saw innovations.

The interest and support that Atatürk showed to the "Turkish Hearths" was not only personal, but in a short time became a state policy. On December 24, 1923, the Grand National Assembly of the Turkish Republic was asked to allocate an entire building to the "Turkish Hearths" in Ankara. After the adoption of this proposal, signed by 164 deputies, 3,000 liras were allocated annually to ensure the organization's regular financial income.

After the proclamation of the republic, the "Turkish Hearths" gather their first Congress from 22 to 26 April 1924 in Ankara. By this time, thanks to material and moral support, the number of branches of the "Turkish Hearths" reached 71. When Mustafa Kemal Atatürk received delegates to the Congress, he said that "... when creating a new Turkish Republic, he mainly trusted the "Turkish Hearths"..." (Hacaloğlu, 1993: 10; Karaer, 1992: 21). This statement is important from the point of view of revealing the relationship of Atatürk with the "Turkish

Hearths" and his trust in them. Likewise, in connection with this Congress, Atatürk said: "Our future hopes as a nation are directed towards the Turkish youth who have gathered around the "Turkish Hearths" (Üstel, 2004: 159), thus re-emphasizing the importance he attached to the "Hearths".

As a result of the Congress, some amendments were made to the Law on the "Turkish Hearths". Articles that reveal the idea and purpose of the Hearths are arranged as follows:

Article 2 – The goal of the "Turkish Hearth" is to strengthen the national question among all Turks, to work for the benefit of civilized development and expanding the possibilities of the national economy.

Article 3 – The "Turkish Hearth" cannot interfere in politics. Not a single "Hearth" member can use the Society for his own political purposes.

Article 4 – Each member of the "Hearth" can work in accordance with their political views, which do not contradict the goals specified in the second article.

At the meeting of the Council of Ministers on December 2, 1924, by decree No. 117, the "Turkish Hearths" were transferred to the status of associations working in the public interest. Thus, they gained significant influence with the support of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In his speeches, he emphasized the role of the "Hearths" in glorifying the Republic of Turkey and explaining reforms to the public.

At the Second Congress of the "Turkish Hearths", which was held from April 23 to May 1, 1925, Atatürk said that the revolution of the Turkish Republic was based on the "Hearths". This Congress was attended by 85 delegates, among whom was Atatürk's wife Latife Khanym (Ushaklygil). 1925 was an important year for both the Turkish Republic and the "Hearths". Many significant events took place that year:

- Sheikh Said uprising on February 13, after which the courts of independence were established;

- The Progressive Republican Party closed on June 3;

- On November 25, the Law on Wearing Hats was adopted;

- On November 30, a law was adopted to close the dervish lodges.

Sheikh Said's uprising forced the government to pursue more nationalist policies. It also played a role in bringing the "Hearths" and the government closer together. The first signs of interest of the Republican People's Party (RPP) in the "Turkish Hearths" appear. However, opponents of the "Hearths" and some members of the RPP, who disagreed with the

idea of Turkism, began to assert that with the creation of the national state, the "Turkish Hearths" fulfilled their mission and their presence was no longer needed. These conversations did not stop until they were closed in 1931. Despite this, they were supported by the state and the RPP and spread widely, acquiring buildings and assets. By 1926, the number of the "Hearths" branches was 217, 97 of which had their own private building, and the total number of members reached 30,000.

The Third Congress of the "Turkish Hearths" was held on April 23-28, 1926. One of the main issues discussed there was about non-Turkish speaking minorities. It was emphasized that the Turkish language needs to be popularized. In addition, the following topics were raised:

- Resettlement policy for non-Turkish speaking immigrants (e. g. Bosnians);
- Churches and Greeks in the Black Sea;
- Kurds and the Kurdish question.

During the Congress, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk uttered the famous words: "We are nationalists, Turkish nationalists. The basis of our republic is the Turkish community. The more members of this community are Turks, the stronger the republic is based on this community. The "Turkish Hearths" have provided a very great service for this since its inception. Continue your activities with the same enthusiasm" (Vakit Gazetesi, 27 Nisan 1926: 2).

The issue of non-Turkish speaking minorities was again put on the agenda of the Fourth Congress in 1927. The outcome of these discussions was the "Citizen, Speak Turkish!" campaign, endorsed by Ataturk. This meant not using words of foreign origin, especially Arabic and Persian. With the support of the Central Committee of "Turkish Hearths", a society of Turkish speakers was created. In parts of Turkey, minorities who speak a language other than Turkish were fined. This campaign became not only an idea proposed by the "Turkish Hearth", but also a state policy that continued until the death of Ataturk and even up to the 1940s. Khamdullah Supkhi said that those who do not know Turkish should not be granted Turkish citizenship. Minority and foreign schools were required to teach Turkish as their mother tongue, and teachers who failed the Turkish language exam were fired.

At the Congress, Ataturk made several statements on religious, national and secular education. Leaving religious education to the family, he transfers national education into the hands of the state (Palazoğlu, 1998: 490). The "Turkish Hearths" are beginning to turn into institutions loyal to the republican regime. Together with the RPP, they participate

in state policy for the dissemination and implementation of ideals in the field of science, culture and society. At the Second Grand Congress of the RPP, held on October 15-20, 1927, Ataturk delivered his famous speech, which lasted 36 hours, 33 minutes. As a result, the "Turkish Hearths" were recognized as an institution under the control of the RPP.

Activities of the "Turkish Hearths" in changing the alphabet

Ataturk believed that Turkish society would not develop without education in their native language. At that time, the Turkish language abounded in Arabic and Persian words. This complicated the learning process, which was based on memorizing difficult foreign words. The year 1928 began with Ataturk planning the transition from the Arabic alphabet to the Latin one. For this, in June, the "Alphabet Committee" was formed, and by August the leaders of the "Turkish Hearths" supported the change of the alphabet. Thus, on November 1, 1928, the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) passed the "Law on the Adoption and Application of Turkish Letters" numbered 1353. This ended a 70-year-old alphabet reform dispute. Despite the struggle of anti-secularists against them, courses on teaching the new alphabet were organized in many departments. The "Turkish Hearths" worked hard to educate citizens in a new alphabet based on Latin letters, teaching 50,000 people to read and write in the first months of 1929. During their studies, they received great financial and moral support from the state.

The introduction of a new alphabet and a single national language helped the peoples assimilate and become a national republic of Turkey. Later, 700-800 words from the Turkic vocabulary were introduced to replace the Arabic and Persian words.

At the Sixth Congress, which took place in April 1930, it was decided to create a Committee for the Study of Turkish History, which in the future will form the core of the Turkish Historical Society. Tevfik Byıyıklıoğlu was appointed as its president at a meeting on June 4, 1930. Ataturk puts forward a new thesis on the history of Turkey. According to this, the source of the civilizations founded in Asia Minor and Anatolia are the Turks. Ataturk obliged the "Turkish Hearths" to study Turkish history in a holistic manner and inform the Turks and the whole world about it (Afetinan, 1981, p. 297).

The events in Menemen, the creation of the Free Republican Party, and the economic crisis are beginning to raise questions about the completion

of reforms among state officials. The RPP seeks to concentrate all republican powers in one hand, which will lead to a one-party authoritarian regime in the future. After traveling around the country and returning to Ankara, Atatürk shared ideas with some party members and İsmet Paşa to close the “Turkish Hearths” in order to join the RPP and create People’s Houses instead.

The first unofficial news about the closure of the “Turkish Hearths” appears on March 20, 1931. After that, the question of their closure or joining the RPP was considered at a meeting that took place in Çankaya on March 24, 1931. After this meeting, Atatürk made a statement in which he substantiated his decision: “There are periods in the history of nations when, in order to achieve goals, it is necessary to collect all material and spiritual forces at one point and direct them in one direction. It is necessary to gather nationalist and republican forces in one place in order to protect the state from dangers from inside and outside” (Atatürk, 1997: 90). It was announced that an Extraordinary Congress would be held on April 10, 1931. It was unanimously decided to liquidate the “Turkish Hearths” and transfer their property to the RPP (Cumhuriyet Gazetesi, 11 Nisan 1931: 1). At the time of their closure, they had 267 branches and 32,000 members.

After that, various versions circulated as to why the “Turkish Hearths” were closed. By that time, they were enlightened and dynamic, which caused concern among the leaders of the RPP, who began to see them as political competitors. Because of this, the RPP pursues a policy of “uniting all republican forces in a single pair of hands” (Hacaloğlu, 1993: 17). In an effort to become the sole force in the spheres of economy, politics, press and education, the state closed or took control of the following organizations: Turkish Teachers Union, Turkish Publishing House Association, Turkish National Students Union, Turkish Reserve Officers Association, Journalists Association, Turkish Women’s Union etc.

Foreign policy reasons include relations between Turkey and the USSR. The “Turanian” ideas

of the “Hearths” were close to the Turks of Russia. The USSR Ambassador to Turkey Y. Z. Surits officially informed the Minister of Foreign Affairs Tevfik Rüştu about his concern about the activities of the “Hearths”, stating that they became a haven for the Turks fleeing Russia (Tevetoğlu, 1986: 196).

Conclusion

The late 19th – early 20th centuries revealed both internal and external problems of the Ottoman Empire. The ideas of “Ottomanism” and “Islamism” could not stop the process of the disintegration of the state. To create a single nation, people needed to unite and act in its interests. After the adoption of the II Constitution in 1908, the ban on the creation of associations based on ethnicity was lifted. This led to the emergence of many organizations with the idea of Turkism. “Turkish Hearths” were created by the efforts of Turkish youth and intellectuals who believed that the national existence was in danger, that it was necessary to save the Turks, not the empire. Their activities were aimed at working for the unity and future of the country, without taking part in the political games of the constitutional era. The ideas of “Turkish Hearths” quickly spread throughout the country and their number grew rapidly.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk saw the “Turkish Hearths” as a tool that can be used to spread the idea of nationalism and his reforms. The following reforms were achieved: restoration of women’s rights, separation of religion and state, introduction of a new alphabet and simplification of language, especially in literature and history.

Turkish Hearths were founded with the aim of improving national culture, moral and intellectual life, strengthening national unity and social structure. And we can say that over the almost 20-year period from March 25, 1912 to April 10, 1931, they played a major role in the history of Turkish culture, politics and nation. They formed the ideological basis of the revolution, which resulted in the formation of the Turkish Republic.

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