International Baccalaureate

“The effects on Panturkism during the years of newly founded Turkish Republic, 1923 and 1931, by means of ideology and external policy regarding the transition period of new Turkish Republic”

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ABSTRACT

First years of 20th century has been a crucial period for humankind with its pros and cons. Besides the alterations in terms of land exchange, social and politic regimes also got affected by this wind of change. Panturkism, which is one of the popular ways that serve the light of dawn for the Ottomans, got over a rough transition period within the years of First World War and the new Turkey afterwards. This extended essay investigates the transitional period for the Panturkist trend between the years 1919 and 1931 by means of ideologies, external policy, internal affairs regarding the conditions of this period and the radical reforms which have been made by the new Turkish government. In spite of the complexity ended up with the linguistic incompatibility and the difficulty faced while looking for any primary source regarding the era of insufficiency, the adventurous story of Panturkism and its significant position for the Turkey of 1920’s paved the road for an investigation on this topic. Starting with 1919, which stands for the rise of Turkey and ending with 1931, which represents the closure of the Turkish Hearths, Panturkist trend has been examined extensively based on various resources including primary ones. With the contributions of several newspapers and magazines from this period, the books which the leading actors has written by theirselves, various letters from the actors of Turkish national struggle and a great deal of books, online studies which has been based on this period has set the wheels on motion. With the end of this investigation, the dust over this phenomenon has been settled and the historical adventure of Panturkism between the years 1919 and 1931 has been unearthed.

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INTRODUCTION

Panturkism first rose by Committee of Union and Progress, with the second half of 19th century, the years that Ottoman Empire has gone into a period of disintegration, in order to find a way to recover the regime which had been under the threat of the nationalist trends from the ashes of French Revolution. In these years, Ottoman Empire was not able to stand in his own feet by means of economics, army and internal affairs. The empire has become a semicolonial territory for the european countries, which means that the Ottoman Empire has lost its economical independency. On the other hand, starting from the Serbian Rebellion, the Balkans adopted the trend of Panslavism led by the Soviet Union, urging the Ottoman Empire into an inevitable chaos. In such a period that the imperious end approaches through Ottoman Empire, panturkist people were seeing the light of dawn with a possible rise of a country which is made up of united Turkish nations from the far northeast through the middle east, even Europe.

PANTURKISM AFTER THE FALL OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

After the First World War, the winner countries managed to crumble upon the loser ones in order to settle the new regime based on their goodness, by various ways such as founding new states for the discomposals of empires or eliminating the military force, defusing the economical power of these countries— with respect to the international contracts and its articles- in order to delay the ‘reborn’ of these countries. Desperate situation of the Ottoman Empire from the years of First World War and the remarkable expel by the new Turkish army led the fanatics of PanTurkism to a new perception, followed by various nationalist trends but still have the common interest of uniting all the Turks in one nation. The Turkish Government had many common points with the principles of Panturkism so the Panturkist people were no longer acting as rebellions against the country system, as they were opposing to Ottoman Empire’s multinational regime. However, they were still not the dominant one throughout the country. In this paper, I will manage to evaluate the influences which have been made to Panturkist trend after the First World War until the supression of the Turkish Hearths by means of external politics and internal affairs.
A. TURKEY AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR (1919-1923)

Between the years 1919 and 1923, Turkey was such a young country that its politics regime has not been clearly defined yet. The first principle of the Turkish Government were known as “democracy and independence for everyone”. Mustafa Kemal and his friends were managing to make their way through peaceful politics and they were trying to have friendly affairs with all other countries, especially with the neighbors.

To start with the internal affairs, years between 1919 and 1923 passed by with a blurred regime, regarding the internal and external situation of the country. Mustafa Kemal and his friends’ were, at the same time, trying to settle the societic regime and dealing with the international problems. The dominant posture of the Young Turks between the years 1914 and 1918 let the new Turkish Government to consider this nationalist regime. Mustafa Kemal and his friends showed their opposition clearly to the Panturkist regime with the “Misak-ı Millî”[1], which has been adopted by the Ottoman Assembly of Deputies, stating the certain borders of new Turkish state. However, the borders of new Turkish territory was determined by a common interest regarding the Panturkist movements. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk clearly states this way of thinking with an answer to Tayfur Sökmen Bey; who sent a letter to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as indicated: “Is Sancak (Hatay) included in the Turkish Pact?” Mustafa Kemal Atatürk answers this question with these words: “Turkish Pact includes everywhere which all the Turkish people lives on.”[2] These words are clearly stating that there is a dilemma with the politics of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his friends. First of all, they shaped the borders only with Anatolia via Turkish Pact,

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[1] National Oath of Turkish Government throughout the years of Turkish national struggle.
showing that their aim is not nationally global. On the other hand, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk indicated that this pact is for all the Turkish people, which is totally parallel to the interests of Panturkist people.

With all these dilemmas and confusions, Turkey got over this painful period without a certain regime. The scenario for Panturkist people was getting shaped by these years, starting from “Türk Ocakları” Congress which has been made in 1918, resulting with the dichotomy of Turanists. One group was supporting the way that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his friends show nationalistic attitude, and the other group was still having the dream of uniting all the Turks from the northeast through Anatolia.

i. ATTITUDE OF TURKISH GOVERNMENT TO PANTURKISM DURING THE YEARS OF TURKISH NATIONAL STRUGGLE (1919-1923)

To start with, between the years 1919 and 1923, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his friends handled the atmosphere of complexity in Turkey wisely. They were considering the fact that Turkey had born from the ashes of Ottoman Empire, which means people were living with the culture of the Ottoman regime. In such a gap of authority, it would be inappropriate for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his friends to embark upon doing reforms or showing any political progress. They were not showing off their ‘color’ to the society in order to prevent any possible opposition from public. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was acting firm on the fact that the victory is in the hands of unity. Any political movement would cause some separations throughout the society and it would corrupt the ideology of solidarity. The most well-known example of this situation is the deal of caliphate, in the early years of Turkish struggle. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was aware of the fact that the society was loyal to the religious regime and it would be unwise to oppose with these people, although it was against the principles of secularity. Just as the
manner, the Turkish Government was exhibiting against caliphery, they were also acting the neutral to the Panturkist people, in other words, the Young Turks. Because these people were forming big part of the community. A possible opposal with the Young Turks would erode the authority of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his friends over the society. This is one of the most significant speciality of Mustafa Kemal; without any sharp political moves, having good relationships with all parts of the community and enhancing the support which is given to him. Panturks are not the only one which is being treat wisely by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his friends, they also used this way while dealing with anyone which carries the potential of being obstacle for the independent and democrat Turkey; such as the rebels, which is having inhibitor property for national struggle (examples are Çerkez Ethem Bey, Çapanoğlu of Yozgat) or the ones that oppose with the revolutionist moves, such as panislamic people or the provocateurs of sultanate.

ii. MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATÜRK'S PERSONAL POINT OF VIEW ABOUT PANTURKISM AND NATIONALISM

Mustafa Kemal’s political way of thinking was, in fact, coherent and totalitarian. In contradistinction to the exclusionary property of national socialism, his way of thinking of nationalism was serving to rational, pragmatist and humanist ideologies. As a matter of fact, his point of view had nothing to do with the chauvinist and communist mentality. According to Mustafa Kemal; regarding the experienced routs which people faced in order to form a unity of nations, in such an era that the empires had collapsed and race discriminations had arisen, idea of any alliance by means of race or religion was definitely not having the rationality to be

ventured upon. Mustafa Kemal was clearly stating this way of thinking by these words, in the early years of Turkish struggle to delegates of Turkish Grand National Assembly:

“Gentlemen! I figure panislamism out as: Our nation and the government which is representing it, as a matter of course, want our co-religionists living all over the world to be happy and prosperous. We hope that the communities formed by our co-religionists in several societies shall live independent. We would be highly appreciated of it. All the muslim people’s and the whole Muslim world’s well-being and happiness is ours. And we are highly concerned about this phenomenon. We also testify that they are all related to our glory. And this is crystal clear. But Gentlemen! If we had the intention of leading all these communities from a single administrative centre just like an empire, this would be much more of a fantasy. This is above the borders of science, logic and wisdom!”

Mustafa Kemal managed to express his absolute attitude about the subject on all occasions, as in the speech he had made in İzmir, 1923 as shown below:

“All the Turks arose from one source. However, they all spread throughout the world and ruled on several communities in various contitents. Regarding this fact, any attempt to unite or lead all the Turks that had branched in a

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very large territory is totally an irrational point of view.

Those who tried to apply this policy could never achieved their goals.”[6]

Mustafa Kemal believed in the phenomenon of the National Pact, that suggests certain boundaries for the national struggle, which is clearly in contrast with the Panturkist ideology. Just as the concept of nationalism in the National Pact was based on the ‘cultural’ union, Mustafa Kemal’s nationalistic ideologies were nurtured by the phenomenon of absolute independence for every single person who is living inside the borders of National Pact, without questioning one’s ethnic origin, religion or language.[7] By the declaration of Turkish Republic, this ideology had become an essential law in the 1924 Turkish Constitution as it is indicated below:

88th Article from 1924 Turkish Constitution:

“The name Turk, as a political term, shall be understood to include all citizens of the Turkish Republic, without distinction of, or reference to, race of religion. Every child born in Turkey, or in a foreign land of a Turkish father; any person whose father is a foreigner established in Turkey, who resides in Turkey, and who chooses upon attaining the age of twenty to become a Turkish subject; and any individual who acquires Turkish nationality by naturalization in conformity with the law, is a Turk. Turkish citizenship may be forfeited or lost in certain circumstances specified by law.”[8]

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i. POLITICAL TRENDS AFTER THE FOUNDATION OF TURKISH REPUBLIC

After the foundation of Turkish Republic, mainly 4 political ideologies arose. These political ideologies are Panturkism, Panislamism, Westernism and Kemalism. In the first years of Turkish Republic, Kemalists were forming the minority of Turkish Grand National Assembly.\(^9\) However, Kemalists had the lead, so the authority, by the firm and imperious stand they displayed in Lausanne Peace Conference.

On the other hand, Panturkism was clearly rejected by Mustafa Kemal in the early years of Turkish struggle. However, in order to prevent any opposition to the Turkish Government by the society and the army, Mustafa Kemal was acting the “middle-of-the-road” to the Panturkists and Panislamists. As the time went by and the Turkish Government enhanced its authority over the country, Panturkist people; such as Ziya Gökalp, Yusuf Akçura, Ağaoğlu Ahmed Bey, started to ‘soften’ against the nationalist ideology of Mustafa Kemal. Their fanatic emotions were getting diluted and they were slowly adopting the nationalistic way of thinking of Mustafa Kemal.

To start with the major actor of Pan-Turkist trend, Yusuf Akçura, who is one of the leaders of Pan-Turkist moves; moreover, he is the one who first mentioned about the Pan-Turkist ideology, in his book named “Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset”, with these words:

“(...) Turks, who are all bounded from one to another, constitute a huge nation made up of 35-40 million people. In spite of the greatness of Russia, regarding their social and political weakness, it doesn’t sound that utopic to conceive a great Turk state for the future.”[10]

Another obvious example of this situation is a sensational one; Ziya Gökalp, who is one of the major Panturkist people that managed to propagate Panturkist trend among the country by various literary works. Both Yusuf Akçura and Ziya Gökalp shaped their ideologies regarding the principles of the National Pact. In other words, these people restrained their cast of mind within the borders of new Turkish Republic. In the early years of Turkey, Ziya Gökalp published the book “Türkçülüğün Esasları” which is clearly showing the maneuver he had done. In this book, he defined nationalistic trends correspondingly with the principles of the National Pact as follows:

In order to differentiate between Turkism and Turanism, it is needed to identify the borders of Turk and Turan communities. Turk is the name of a nation. Nation, means the community of the same specific culture. Thus, a Turk belongs to one specific language and culture. However, some branches of Turks in the middle Asia are managing to keep Anatolian Turks’ cultural and ethnic structure away from their social frame. For instance, some northern Tatar Turks are trying to compose their own individual Tatar culture and language. This will result in an inner dilemma of Turks. We are not able to forecast the future

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actions of Kirghiz and Uzbek Turks. If they also presume to do something similar to Tatar Turks, it would mean the narrowing of Turkish nation’s borders. Regarding the fact that these nations including Altai Turks are too far away from the Turkey Turks, it is nearly impossible to encircle such a big unity by means of culture. [11]

Thirdly, Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, one of the Pan-Turkist poets of the transitional period, has applied kind of moderation in his poets. He replaced the word “turan” in his poets with the word “nation”, which is a little bit more globe. He avoided using sharp words in his poets as the Turkish Republic rises. He re-published his book “Turana Doğru” with the edited poems as it has been described.

ii. Turkish Hearths and the Aspect of Panturkism during the Years of Newly Founded Turkish Republic

After the chaotic period of identity seek, Turkish Hearths has gone into a recovery period in 1922 with the rise of the Turkish struggle. As the Turkish Government assumed a firm attitude against the irredentist Pan-Turkism fanatics, they made their way through via the Turkish Hearths in order to go forward with the turanist spirit, in spite of the fact that most of them has showed significant dilusion by means of political view. In contradistinction to the Turkish Hearths in the era of Ottoman Empire, differences of opinion and several divergences arose within these people, considering the new regime of the country and the ideas being modificated corresponding. On one side there were the ones that took a firm stand on Pan-Turkist mentality such as Reşit Saffet Atabinen, Hüseyin Nihal Atsız; on the other side, as it is

mentioned before, those who maintain the ideology within the boundaries of the National Pact showed up, such as Yusuf Akçura, Ahmed Ağaoglu, Hüseyinzade Ali Bey, Ziya Gökalp and so on. As the time went by, this dilemma eventuated with racist quarrels. Heading up with the definition of “Turk” by means of racial and cultural mentalities, these phenomenon led the sides to assemble under two roofs basically summarized as “Big Turan” and “Nation-State”.

a. Country-wide Spreading Period of Turkish Hearths

As the disintegrations arise within the boundaries of Hearths, on the other hand, they were playing a big role on the reforms; such as recognition of women rights, republicanism, nationalism and populism, by means of public and political support.\(^{[12]}\)

What’s more, Turkish Hearths were playing big role on the mediatic protest of allied powers’ attitude over Ottoman Empire. \(^{[13]}\) Thus, Mustafa Kemal was having profound sympathy for the Turkish Hearths. He adopted these hearths and supported the works of these people. Despite the donations he had made for the Turkish Hearths, he was implying the might of the Turkish Hearths via his speeches whenever he visits a Turkish Hearth branch. Moreover, he was prompting his relatives to latch on seizing the Turkish Hearths. Mustafa Kemal explains the Turkish Hearths’ power as it is indicated below, via the words he had written to the journal of Turkish Hearths’ branch, in March 15\(^{th}\), Adana

“(...)The torch of the Turkish Hearths is such an ancient one that they dare to suffocate it throughout the centuries. However, their trials couldn’t make its way being more than an attempt.\(^{[14]}\) (...)”


Image 1: The original copy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s words from the journal of Turkish Hearths, Adana branch.
What’s more, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s wife, Latife Hanım, indicates her devotion to Turkish Hearths as it is indicated below with the original copy of the note:

“May the divine light of Turkish Hearths, which hosts such blessed land and its enlightened young generation, have an eternal shine.” [15]

(March 15th, at Turkish Hearths, Adana 1923)

Image 2: The original copy of Latife Hanım’s note to the Turkish Hearths, Adana branch.

On the other hand, this relationship was not unilateral, which means that the Turkish Hearths’ members were also bearing great admiration to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his friends. Yusuf Akçura explains this symbiosis by these words:

“The ideology of Turkism has just come true. The ones that actualize such a big inspiration are being considered worthy a hero by mankind. For the Turkish nation, the one who effectuated the Turkish ideals is the founding father, the first and only president of Turkey; Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.”

[16]

As a consequence to this symbiotic relationship, Turkish Hearths asserted itself throughout the country. This has been resulted with the country-wide spreading of the Turkish Hearths in a very short time with the contribution of Turkish Government.

Image 3: In the picture given above, each dot is representing a branch of Turkish Hearths in 1925. [17]

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b. The mission of the Turkish Hearths in the early years of Turkey

Despite the big role they had played during the Turkish struggle, they have a significant importance for the validity of new Turkish regime throughout the country by various ways. Hamdullah Suphi Bey, one of the authorized men among the Turkish Hearths, explains the mission of the Turkish Hearths in an assembly that has been made in January 1924 by these words:

“Turkish Hearths took a sacred duty in this chaotic period. Turkish Hearths are the guards of Turkish revolutionary. We are based on the reservation of shiny and sovereign life that the Turkish nation embraced. Turkish Hearths are not supposed to proceed a party line or attempt to take place in Turkish policy. The priority of the Turkish Hearths are to shield the sovereignty of the Turkish nation.”[18]

To have a deeper perspective, having a look to the Turkish Hearths’ own laws comes up with these provisions which are taken from a nationwide congress:

“The idea of the Turkish Hearths is that, the national conscience must be enhanced by terms of national economy, civil and sanitary recruitment. Turkish Hearths’ field of business is based on the borders of Turkish Republic.”[19]

(Compromised on Turkish Hearths’ fourth congress made in 1927)

c. Closure of the Turkish Hearths

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[19] Atatürk University, “Türkİyat Arastırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi” 45, Erzurum 2011, p. 239
By the end of 1930, Turkish Hearths were the absolute largest non-governmental organization throughout the country. With respect to the branches more than 260 and members over 30,000 all around the country, it has to be said that Turkish Hearths were representing the voice of the Turkish nation.\(^{20}\) Regarding such an authoritarian vox populi, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk suggested to merge “Republican People’s Party” with the Turkish Hearths in order to provide the unity among the country during the years of chaos. He explains his purpose as follows:

“I saw the actual revolutionist clique in the Turkish Hearths. The first thing to be done is that, Turkish Hearths should be merged with our party and we should make our way with the Turkish Hearths’ mentality.”\(^{21}\)

However, it hasn’t been reflected to the public as it is stated as above. The public press organisations claimed that Turkish Hearths got nothing left to do by terms of national issues, since the ruling party undertook the misssions that Turkish Hearths were supposed to go for. Finally, after the congress made in March 24th, 1931, the closure of the Turkish Hearths has been decided.

\(^{20}\) The absolute stats are taken from Turkish Hearths’ own archive, prepared by İsmail ACAR; Balikesir 2004.

\(^{21}\) ACAR, İsmail. *TÜRK OCAKLARI*, Balikesir 2004, p. 86
Conclusion

Throughout the transition era, Panturkism has undergone a veritable reestablishment such as the political system which has been restructured from scratch. Born with the negative yields of the renaissance and reform, Panturkist moves earned esteem throughout the country, even in the central asian Turks, in a very short time. In the beginning, Panturkist ideologies were being planned with the imperial mentality, until the new regime became clear. First of all, based on the National Pact, Panturkist moves has gone into an adaptation period. Especially the authoritarian Panturkists such as Ziya Gökalp, Mehmet Emin Yurdakul and Yusuf Akçura started to manipulate their ideologies within the borders of the National Pact and this led the Panturkist moves to get across the new country in a very short time. Besides being on good terms with the Turkish government, Panturkist ideology got adopted by the Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk under the name “Turkish Hearths”. However, the momentum they gained will not last for long. With the unexpected closure decision, the Turkish Hearths, which spread all among the country with over 260 branches and 30,000 members, has been closed by Turkish government and merged with the ruling party. Although it seems like good news at first sight, the supression caused them to carry on their works under a roof, which means dependence to any field. To sum up, in spite of the deacceleration they had overcome, Panturkist moves will rear up again with the rise of Germany within the years of Second World War and the Turkish Hearths will be reopened in 1949.
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EXTRAS
Hamdullah Suphi bey dün gece geç vakte kadar Reisicumhur Hz. nin köşklerinde kaldı

Ankara 24 [Tелефon] — Türkocakları umumî merkezi, Ocak merkezlerine 10 nisanda toplanacak kurultaya murahhaslarını seçip göndermelerini tamam etmiştir.

Ocaklar heyeti merkeziye reisi Hamdullah Suphi bey dün gece geç vakte kadar Reisicumhur Hz. nin köşklerinde kalmıştır. Ocağın bütün erkan ve mensupları fırkanın arzusunu tarm bir muvafakatile karşılamışlardır.

Bu itibarla kurultayın bu arzuyu ittifakla kabul edeceğine muhakkak nazarile bakılmaktadır.

This image is accessed from the Turkish National Library, stating that Hamdullah Suphi, one of the major men among the Turkish Hearths, discussed the supression of Turkish Hearths with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk all night long after the day that Turkish Hearths’ close has been announced.

(AKŞAM; March 25th, 1931)