



## The American Effect on Physical Education and Sports in Turkey during the Early Republican Period

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### ABSTRACT

The establishment of the new Turkish state was accompanied by a new governmental system, modernization efforts, and reforms in all fields of life. Education, acknowledged as a phenomenon that prepares new generations for the future, became one of the main concerns among the republican reform programs. The lack of specialists to implement new educational programs required inviting professionals of the relevant fields from abroad, and the first to arrive was the American educational scientist John Dewey, only 9 months after the establishment of the republic. Thus, Turkish-American relations, which had begun with commercial and missionary activities during the Ottoman period, entered a new era. Dewey, who emphasized both mental and physical aspects of education as a whole, fostered the emergence of many new services in physical education and sports thanks to his reports. In addition to Dewey's work, other American reports presented information and suggestions for physical education. The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), which played an essential role in the spread of recreational sports activities, launched many new sports branches and endeavors. This study addresses the effects of those reports and American experts' suggestions, observations, and approaches for physical education and sports in Turkey.

### KEYWORDS

John Dewey; sport education; physical education; Turkey; Early Republican Period.

## INTRODUCTION

During the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey, foreign experts played an active role in establishing a new system and modernization from the very beginning due to Turkey's loss of trained human resources in long years of war. John Dewey, an American philosopher, was the first foreign expert who was invited to reshape the educational system only 9 months after the republic was declared, with education acknowledged as a primary catalyst for change. The initial relations with the United States, which began with missionary activities in the Ottoman period, became official with the opening of an American embassy in 1927 as the first diplomatic connection with the Republic of Turkey and continued with invitations for American experts in various fields (Şahin, 1996; Ata, 2001; Türk, 2006).

Following the regime change in 1923, as in almost every field, many scholars and experts were invited to improve physical education and sports. Those scholars prepared reports that included suggestions for sports and physical education in the new republic. German and Swedish influences were prevalent among the early republican studies and attempts to reform sports, while the American impact on sports was not widely observed until the 1950s. However, Dewey's report in 1924 significantly impacted the Turkish sports system, and most of his suggestions were implemented during Mustafa Necati's service (1925-1929) as Minister of National Education. With his report, Dewey led and guided the American experts who would come after him, such as Beryl Parker<sup>1</sup>.

Physical education and sports were important aspects in Dewey's reports on the whole of the Turkish education system and Parker's reports on the primary school education system also impacted future educational planning. In addition to these two individuals, both of whom were commissioned by the Turkish government, another important American report written during this period was an informative file containing definitions of the Turkish sports system. Eugene M. Hinkle was the third secretary of the U.S. embassy during the tenure of its first ambassador<sup>2</sup> in Turkey. The study prepared by Hinkle should be evaluated in an effort to better understand Turkey in that period as it provides important information in terms of the findings and evaluations it contains. Considering the extent of the American influence in subsequent years, his efforts to understand the current situation yielded quite accurate information and conclusions.

These experts played active roles in introducing and popularizing various sports in Turkey through the activities of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), which had begun operating in the Ottoman period. Şahin (2016) stated that some American experts only gave short talks at conferences, while some conducted studies and some made observations and

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<sup>1</sup> Parker's thanks to Dewey in the preface to this report (Parker, 1939) and the fact that the American delegation headed by Hines and Kemmerer made references to Dewey in their report (Amerikan Heyeti, 1939) are clear indications of this.

<sup>2</sup> The political history of Turkish-American relations began with commercial activities (Türk, 2006), and in 1927 the first formal diplomatic step was taken with the Republic of Turkey as Joseph C. Grew took office as the first American ambassador (Barkay, 2003). The inauguration of the first Turkish ambassador in Washington took place on November 29 of the same year (Şimşir, 1977).

participated in conferences and workshops, presenting reports based on their observations and studies.

Dewey and Parker were invited by the Republic of Turkey and assigned to present reports and suggestions. As the third secretary of the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, Hinkle also conducted a study on sports in Turkey and presented his reports to the US government. In this study, the reports of John Dewey and Beryl Parker are discussed in terms of physical education and the report of Eugene M. Hinkle and the YMCA in terms of sports.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study is based on a qualitative research design that allows rich descriptions to be made (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016). A historical research model, which makes it possible to conceptualize, theorize, and examine the social factors of social change that cause a certain result, has been used (Kaptan, 1991). Within the framework of historical research models, the development of events in the past is evaluated by examining the relevant sources and publications in order to learn, understand, and explain what happened in the past (Arılı & Nazik, 2004).

### **Data Collection**

In the design of this qualitative research model, literature review and document review methods were used for data collection. The literature review method allows identifying and limiting a specific problem, taking a historical point of view, and associating the present with past information. In addition to a thorough literature review, expert reports were the primary sources of information. Document analysis was also conducted, which made it possible to analyze documents belonging to the same or different periods of the research problem. Document review is often necessary to check the authenticity of documents, to examine and understand them, and to properly utilize documents and data in stages of data analysis (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008; Patton, 2015). Accordingly, document review made it possible for this study to take place within the limits of scientific analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected by literature review and document examination methods were evaluated by descriptive analysis. In descriptive analysis, concepts are summarized and interpreted within the framework of predetermined themes. The descriptive analysis method consists of four stages: creating a framework, processing the data according to that framework, defining the findings, and interpreting the findings (Sözbilir, 2009). The descriptive analysis method was used for data analysis of this study.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to investigate the historical American influence during the founding years of the Republic of Turkey when ideological change was taking place. The research is based on the argument that while German and Swedish thoughts about sports were effective in the fields of Turkish sports and physical education, American approaches were also very important. However, the study of the research findings from two distinct perspectives, namely physical education in a pedagogical sense and sports in a recreational sense, will make it possible to more fully understand the effects.

### **The American Effect on Physical Education**

#### ***Dewey's visit to Turkey and the process of preparing his report***

Dewey, who had an understanding of learning by doing and living, questioned the value of knowledge that dealt with abstractions or neglected the body. Dewey was the first expert invited to Turkey (Ortak, 2004) and he appealed to the expectations of the founding cadres of the republic, who wanted to achieve many innovations in a short time and did not have time to "deal with" theories or philosophy (Özsoy, 2009).

In July and August 1924, Dewey conducted examinations at universities, high schools, professional associations, and teachers' schools in İstanbul (Ata, 2001; Bal, 1991). He then went to Ankara and met with Atatürk there (Ata, 2001; Bal, 1991) and then returned to İstanbul again. As a result of all of his assessments, he prepared his first report there, and his main report was completed after returning to the United States (Efendioğlu et al., 2010; Bal, 1991).

#### ***Physical Education in Dewey's Report***

According to Dewey, the soul and body complement each other functionally, and behaviors result from both mental and physical participation (Yeşiltaş and Kaymakçı, 2009; Bal, 2010). With this perspective, Dewey inevitably made recommendations on physical development and education in terms of human physical development in his report. He also conducted interviews in this direction while preparing the report.

John Dewey's work before coming to Turkey and during his stay in the country received wide coverage in the Turkish press. There were often reports about his investigations and his views in Ankara and İstanbul. In one such news story, it was reported that he watched a Zeybek dance, which was choreographed by Selim Sırrı Tarcan, one of the leading sports officials of the time, and was influenced by the show. Dewey said the following (Ata, 2001, p. 199):

Much was said about Turkish folk dances in the USA. I have wanted to get to know the oriental music and dances ever since. I hope that these talents of young people will be shown to the field of lore. I would like to thank the Alumni Association for giving me such a sincere and happy day.

It is possible to draw the conclusion that Dewey, who also met with Tarcan (Maarif Müşavirimiz, 1924), had learned about the role of physical education in the Turkish education system.

Dewey emphasized in his report that examinations should be carried out by traveling to foreign countries, and he also listed physical education, sports, and games among the subjects to be examined (Dewey, 1939). Looking at the history of Turkish education, we can see that by 1926, educational models from around the world had been studied and reports had been prepared on Soviet, French, Italian, Danish, and other schools (Ergün, 1990). In Dewey's report, he suggested that students and talented teachers be sent to Europe for training (Ortak, 2004). With arrangements made in this direction, students have been sent to Europe since 1925 in order to learn physical education systems and methods and to train other teachers upon their return (Altunya, 2006, 2020).

According to Dewey, who evaluated physical education and sports in relation to health in his report, physical health and strength are necessary conditions for progress and development in all fields. According to Dewey, gardens should be built in schools where students can engage in physical activities, walk around, and enjoy fresh air. Stating that the ways in which school buildings are constructed and educational programs are planned affect each other, Dewey suggested training experts in the field of school architecture and establishing a directorate for buildings and curricula within the Ministry of Education (Dewey, 1939; Ortak, 2004). During Mustafa Necati's service as Minister of National Education<sup>3</sup>, the School Architecture Office was established within the ministry in 1927 and schools with prominent sports halls were built.

Dewey stated that it was important for health to create squares wide enough for boys and girls to benefit from in schools and to engage in sports and games outside of school. Such squares should be large enough to allow the public to have fun and engage in sports, not only being used by students to play games and participate in physical training and sports activities. Attention should also be paid to the engagement in games and sports and the learning of young people not attending school (Dewey, 1939). Dewey, who seems to have grasped the priorities of the founders of the Republic of Turkey correctly, evaluated schools as areas for the dissemination of sports with the aim of spreading games and other sporting practices for physical education in the broader society.

Dewey thought that the most essential point in professional training was increasing the quality of the teachers. He stated that, in some teachers' schools, departments should be opened for educating teachers about physical education, sports, and health (Dewey, 1939). In 1924, physical education was one of the lessons taught in teachers' schools for 1 hour a week in all programs (Akyüz, 2007). Among the commissions established by Mustafa Necati as soon as he became Minister of National Education in 1925 was the Physical Education Commission (Günay, 2013). In 1926, program changes were made, and 2 hours of physical education per week were included in the curricula of the first four years of primary school, with 1 hour of

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<sup>3</sup> Mustafa Necati benefited greatly from Dewey's report during his time as Minister and he cited Dewey's report while explaining the innovations he would bring to life in many of his speeches (Inan, 1987).

gymnastics lessons included in the fifth year. In middle school curricula, gymnastics lessons were included for 2 hours per week (Dever and İslam, 2015).

In his report, Dewey emphasized that graduates of schools for primary school teachers could be accepted as teachers for physical education, and especially in terms of outdoor games and sports, but those who graduated from primary teacher should have special vocational training for secondary school in this field (Dewey, 1939). In 1926, it was decided to establish a school for training physical education teachers in Ankara, and a course for teaching physical education was offered until the new school became operational (Şinoforoğlu, 2015). In 1932, a department of physical education was added to the Gazi Middle School Teachers' School and the Education Institute in Ankara (Günay, 2017). Therefore, Dewey's recommendation for training specialists accelerated the efforts to establish the School of Physical Education and a department within the Gazi Education Institute.

### ***Prof. Dr. Beryl Parker's Report on Physical Education and Sports in Turkey***

Prof. Dr. Beryl Parker visited Turkey thanks to the suggestion<sup>4</sup> of John Dewey. After working as a consultant at Ankara College for two years, Parker was assigned to prepare a report on primary school education. That report, based on observations at schools, was completed in 1934 and published in 1939 (Binbaşıoğlu, 1999; Şahin, 1996). Parker, who was active in many cities of Turkey (Terbiye Mütahassısı, 1934), presented the report after visiting both urban and village schools in Ankara for a year (Amerikalı Terbiye, 1934).

Parker categorized the roles of primary school education in satisfying the needs of the Turkish nation within five categories: 1) economic development, 2) health training, 3) citizenship education, 4) the scientific method, and 5) cultural enrichment. She placed physical education and sports within the category of health training and indicated that health training included gymnastics, games, and sports in addition to education on physiology and sanitation (Parker, 1939). Parker considered and evaluated physical education and sports in terms of health promotion.

According to Parker, a definite step needed be taken to design more formal approaches to sanitation and physical education. The value of gymnastic exercises and games would lie in the hands of the teachers, being dependent on the leadership of a teacher interested in sports. Parker determined that, excluding only a few school buildings, most schools in Turkey were problematic in terms of location, design, playground organization, and equipment. She recommended measuring playgrounds to ensure the optimal use of the area by all students or groups during break times. Parker observed students' physical weakness and limited participation in games during break times, which she described as a source of despair. She suggested two reasonable explanations for this situation. First, teachers neither participated in the games nor helped students organize groups or new activities. Second, the short breaks between lessons were not long enough for real games.

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<sup>4</sup> Parker thanked Dewey in the preface to this report (Parker, 1939).

Instead, Parker stressed that two long breaks, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, would yield more productive results. She also indicated that in the event of limited space for a playground, it would be better for each class to have recess separately so that the children would have enough space to play. Similarly, indoor games should be carefully planned in the event of bad weather conditions. Parker stated that the desired results could be achieved if the breaks were longer, teachers or student leaders participated in games, and more physical activities and games that required more strength were preferred. She argued that physical education was among the first lessons that should be improved in the primary school curriculum. She suggested organizing in-service training and courses for school principals, inspectors, and teachers working in primary schools, one of which could be physical training delivered by the Gazi Education Institute (Parker, 1939).

It should be noted that after the reinvention of the body with the Renaissance and reforms in the West, public health became a political concern in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the building of a healthy society gained importance (Porter, 2005), being considered an issue of national security (Mazower, 2003). Physical education was addressed with the health-promoting aspects of sports. Similarly, with the idea that the body and soul complement each other, American experts focused on the health-promoting aspects of sports.

The challenging conditions in the country, where much human capital had been lost during the war for national independence (Toprak, 2019), led the founders of the new republic to appreciate the “healing” effects of physical education and sports. In this sense, the reports of both of these American experts overlapped with the Turkish government’s policies. However, the “didactic” approach to sports resulted in disregarding the feelings of satisfaction and enjoyment at the core of sports. In this regard, the report prepared by Eugene M. Hinkle, Secretary of the United States Embassy, becomes relevant, together with the activities of the YMCA.

### **The American Effect on Sports**

#### ***Report by Third Secretary of the U.S. Embassy, Eugene M. Hinkle***

It would be more accurate to describe the report prepared by Eugene M. Hinkle (Bali, 2009a), the third secretary of the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, as an assessment study rather than a set of recommendations. Hinkle explained the goal of the report, which was completed after 8 months of research in 1931, as follows: “To specify how and how much sports and physical education are implemented in Turkey.”

The important findings in his report were that physical exercises were unpleasant to educated Turks, who found physical activity rough and to be avoided if possible; the lower classes of society and even peasants also avoided physical activity and Hinkle claimed that the primary entertainment activity in Turkey was “sitting.” Turks could spend hours sitting in coffee shops.

According to Hinkle, although most of the population was engaged in agriculture, sports

and physical education were mainly practiced among the urban population of roughly 3 million. The government took initiatives to educate young people living on the western coast of Turkey. However, the government's efforts to improve sports and physical education experiences remained unstable and fragmented, and there was a massive difference between planned and realized projects. Hinkle also underlined the lack of coordination, especially between local administrators and agencies of the Republican People's Party, the central government, the National Sports Federation, public schools, the army, the navy, and other institutions.

He also reported that the National Sports Federation did not have a proper organizational structure, and the federation's executives did nothing about sports reforms; they merely engaged in politics and internal debates. Hinkle noted that the government was initially very conservative about doing anything except applying the Swedish system, and efforts to develop organized sports such as football and volleyball began later. According to Hinkle, the government's commitment to the Swedish system between 1923 and 1927 might have stemmed from the influence of Selim Sirri, who was educated in Sweden before World War I.

Hinkle stated that there was a lack of propaganda in sports. He observed that Atatürk rarely engaged in sports, and although he visited schools frequently, he did not participate in football or other matches. However, the government attached considerable importance to the representation of Turkey in international sporting events. Turkey was an active member of an international federation that organized the Balkan Games and a member of the International Olympic Committee, sending teams to the 1924 and 1928 Olympics.

Hinkle stated that, with scarce resources, the young Republic of Turkey was in need of money and especially educated and professional physical education teachers willing to work with students. He also indicated that physical education was not popular in Turkey, mainly because of the teaching methods, the inconsistencies in implementing Swedish exercises, and the unique systems that each school had. He further stated that physical education classes, which were conducted for 3 hours per week on paper, could only be held depending on the weather conditions in reality, since there was no indoor space to conduct the lessons.

He also stressed that sports activities were banned in primary schools and boys under 17 were not allowed to play football in high school. Hinkle observed that school officials usually did not organize any sports events, or they left such organizational efforts to students, and due to insufficient budgets, most schools only had a volleyball court, as that required nothing besides a net and a ball.

Therefore, the second most popular sport in schools was volleyball, after football. Basketball was a relatively new sport in Turkey. Hinkle noted that authorities complained that students did not play games other than football and that inter-school matches were allowed but not encouraged. He drew attention to the fact that, at the university level, sports were abandoned because there were no sports facilities and the environment was different. He emphasized that among the youth of the country, sports were generally limited to those under the age of 19, and only a few young people over the age of 20 continued to participate in sports.



Hinkle also mentioned national gymnastics festivals. He pointed out the unavailability of summer camps, except for military camp, which was compulsory for all high school boys. Hinkle reported that scout camps included only hiking and excursion activities, and the scouting movement was not well understood in Turkey. He described scouting in high schools as a sloppy organization characterized by show uniforms, very few marches, and excursions. There were no national scouting organizations and the high schools oversaw these events.

Hinkle indicated that, under the influence of the Germans, sports were already common in the army, characterized by an intense training system. He stated that the Swedish system was adopted by schools and other institutions in 1926. He reported that there were no competent trainers in the army. The primary party responsible for spreading sports in most small towns was the Turkish army, which had a sufficient budget for building football fields and had workers to complete those tasks, namely soldiers. The main headquarters of the Gazi Guard Regiment in Ankara was the most active unit in terms of sports; it was used as a model and as propaganda to popularize sports in the army, and the center had an excellent athletics track.

Hinkle summarized the critical points regarding the situation of sports and physical education in Turkey as follows:

- The tendency to see only the superficial side of sports: for Turks, the only tangible evidence was numbers – the numbers of games, pitches, stadiums, club badges, shiny jerseys, new equipment, sports magazines, athletes, and audiences. Being in a club or on a team meant engaging in sports and was often seen as a privilege in society.
- Reluctance to make efforts to become proficient in sports. Turkish youth were impatient with anything that required constant effort and wished to become famous athletes as quickly as possible. Despite their limited knowledge of any specific game, they created the image of an intellectual athlete. Turks were usually impulsive and did not like waiting or making gradual progress. Turkish football teams could withstand harsh treatment, but their endurance over a longer period of time was less than that seen in other countries.
- Inability to differentiate between competitive sports and fighting. For Turks, physical activity meant fighting.
- The primary goal in sports was to win. The motivation behind doing and loving sports was to win. A leading administrator in physical education claimed that most Turkish people quit doing sports after losing even just a few times. Only the successful ones continued doing sports.
- The tendency to engage excessively in sports activities among young sportspeople. Such individuals put sports at the center of their lives, unlike young Americans who considered sports a secondary activity in their daily lives. Turks did not accept sports as a part of Westernization and dreamed of being professionals since they put the sport at the center of life. There were very few true amateurs.

- Inability to cooperate and act as a community: The organized units in Turkish life included only the home, army, and government. The inability to organize and cooperate was a reason for Turkey's low number of competitive sports.

According to Hinkle, Turks did not yet grasp the educational or physical value of sports as game activities. He wondered whether they considered sports as concrete evidence of Westernization rather than game activities with educational values. He emphasized that it was not surprising that Turks recognized only the superficial aspect of emotional excitement in sports because they were physically and mentally unprepared for sports. He also observed that sports sometimes played an essential role in the daily life of the younger generation, and although many men actively engaged in sports, they often made little progress due to lack of equipment and money.<sup>5</sup>

Hinkle reported that sports had developed more rapidly in the last three years and that the press, which rarely had columns for sporting events until 1928, began to mention important matches and many newspapers introduced sports columns. There were three Turkish sports magazines with a yearly circulation of approximately 5,000 to 10,000 copies and 20 foreign sports magazines with a weekly circulation of approximately 300 to 500 copies in Turkey. According to Hinkle, those numbers proved Turks' so-called interest in sports, which was characterized by discussions of sports rather than active participation. He stated that Turks who wore club badges and talked about the games saw themselves as athletes although they never really felt like participating.

Questioning the roots of sports among Turkish people, Hinkle concluded that they adopted Western forms and techniques and superficially insisted on remaining unchanged. The government imposed sports on citizens, and informal groups embraced sports on their own. He stated that sports had little effect on children in informal groups, so they would become lazy as they grew older. However, the available data suggested that sports, even in simple forms, had beneficial effects in mobilizing young people and overcoming the natural inertia of the Turkish people and that they might have a desire to do sports willingly in the future.

### **The YMCA's Physical Education and Sports Activities**

The YMCA, initially operated under the umbrella of the American Board, began to organize in the Ottoman Empire in 1881 and gained momentum after the Second Constitutional Period (1908) (Toprak, 1994a). After decades of unofficial operation, it was officially established in April 1913 (Yüce, 2022). The association offered opportunities for socialization by organizing activities in increasingly anonymized cities. Among these socialization tools were sports activities and physical training, which might have been the most common efforts of the association in Turkey (Toprak, 1994a). The importance of physical education and training was also stressed in the YMCA's first Turkish regulations as follows: "Our society aims to raise young people who are

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<sup>5</sup> Hinkle reported that some athletes in İstanbul made a ball out of waste papers and rags (Bali, 2009a)

physically, mentally, and spiritually strong and to encourage them to help themselves and others" (Mecdüddin, 1338).

The YMCA opened the first well-equipped gym with showers and lockers at Robert College in 1904. At the college, all students were required to take gymnastics classes regularly after passing a physical examination. The college held a gymnastics show every year on its foundation day. The YMCA built recreational and sports facilities and provided training in football, baseball, basketball, and athletics (Robert College, 1922). For example, only 12 years after it was introduced in United States, basketball came to Turkey in 1904 thanks to the YMCA, just like other new branches of sports introduced by the association (Atabeyoğlu, 1970). According to the 1905 catalogue of Robert College, boarding students were expected to exercise in the gym, but it was optional for day students. Competitions and awards were organized for running and jumping to encourage students to engage in sports (Acun and Gürtunca Şencan, 2016).

In addition to Robert College, the YMCA opened several schools for physical education and sports activities in many parts of Anatolia. For example, one of the association's first departments was established by the Harput Office as a sports department (YMCA Notes, 1910). Physical education lessons were included in the curriculum of the American College in Tarsus in the 1912-1913 academic year (Biçer, 2010). In 1914, a physical education committee was established in the center of İstanbul to coordinate all physical education and sports activities (Uçar, 2013). The physical education lessons in schools had a role in pedagogic development and a recreational function that introduced different sports and made them widespread.

The YMCA also opened gyms outside of schools and organized sports activities. The YMCA's İstanbul Office implemented a Sanitary Education Program under the guidance of expert teachers in those well-equipped gyms, in the conditions of those days, with bathrooms, showers, and changing areas. Gym members regularly had health examinations and were informed about efficient nutrition, sleep, fitness, and weight loss. The association provided Turkish, English, and French books and magazines on health and physical education in libraries, and health conferences were held (Toprak, 1994a). The YMCA offices in İstanbul involved Beyoğlu, the Denizciler Club, and the Russian Club (Toprak, 1993).

According to the busy schedule in the Beyoğlu Office, the gym provided several opportunities in handball, tennis, gymnastics, sword fighting, fencing, boxing, and body training for businesspeople and senior and junior members (Toprak, 1994a). After World War I, the Beyoğlu Office opened a basketball court in 1920, and the first national race was held in 1920. The first checkers tournament was held in 1920 between the YMCA and American sailors. The first first-aid training program was also conducted with the participation of 31 trainees in 1920 (Uçar, 2013).

The İstanbul Basketball League began in 1921, and three of the six clubs (YMCA Beyoğlu, YMCA Clerks, and Robert College Teachers) attending the first league matches were teams operating under the YMCA (Yüce, 2022). A physical education teacher named Ahmed Robenson

(Winrow, 2020), the manager of the YMCA Beyoğlu Office, organized the first basketball championship in 1924 (San, 1959). Instructors in the Ottoman Empire, who encountered new types of sports such as basketball and volleyball, had used them for practical training and educational tools in their institutions and contacted the association's managers (Uçar, 2013). For example, in 1914, a school principal asked the organization to recruit a physical education teacher to teach games and gymnastics in return for opening a Turkish course (Davis, 1914).

Selim Sırrı, the principal of İstanbul's *Darülmüallimin-i Âliye* (Teacher Training College), invited Dr. Diver to a sports festival and he said: "There are some other excellent sports games in addition to Swedish gymnastics. I am willing to teach those games to your students if you wish." Soon after those words, he began to provide volleyball and basketball lessons at the Teacher Training College (Atabeyoğlu, 1985). "The first basketball game was held between an American and the first local team with Turkish players in the garden of Darülmüallimin-i Âliye at 4 p.m. on Saturday. The American team scored 18 points, and the local team scored 14 points" (Memleketteki, 1921).

The YMCA's İstanbul Office had two scouting groups. An American scouting organization was active at Robert College and used a scouting book titled *American Boy Scout Handbook*. Every Wednesday scouting groups met to walk, jog, play games, or study for exams. The YMCA Russian Office also had a scouting group. YMCA physical education teacher Ahmed Robenson played a leading role in the establishment of scouting in Turkey. He prepared handouts and wrote articles to popularize scouting (Sönmez, 1999).

Additionally, the YMCA initiated the first camping activities in Turkey by building the Terbiye-i Bedeniyye Camp, or Camp Perry, on the Black Sea coast. Derince Camp, built in 1919, was followed by the Suadiye Summer Camp in 1920, where 600 male students participated. Basketball, baseball, football, swimming, and hiking were included in the camp's program (Toprak, 1994a). An American Girls' Camp was also organized on the Caddebostan coast (Vassaf, 2000). The YMCA and its offices also provided sports opportunities for women to support their engagement in sports. In the summer of 1920, the YWCA opened a tennis court in İzmir and organized ball sports events three days a week (Bali, nd; Karabağ, 2021).

In addition to camping activities, special competitions, leagues, and tournaments were organized, and sports soirees were scheduled every Saturday evening (Toprak, 1994a). As can be understood, the YMCA was an active institution in all sports branches. Its main contribution to Turkish sports was its leading role in the formation of federations. Organizing leagues, tournaments, and competitions by gathering clubs under one roof profoundly affected Turkish sports (Yüce, 2022). The 1922 İstanbul Olympics was also an important event in which YMCA was actively involved.

The committee of the 1922 İstanbul Olympics, including the YMCA, prepared the program inclusively from athletics, gymnastics, and football to general and sportive games with the motto of "Sports for all, games for all, and universal health." With its four offices in İstanbul, the YMCA actively participated in the event (Toprak, 1994b). The 1922 İstanbul Olympics was a

unique opportunity to organize a multi-sport organization and to watch sporting events. It planted the first seeds of ideas for subsequent multi-sport organizations in Turkey.

Indeed, the YMCA's multi-sport organization attempts were the initial attempts to unify Turkish sports, as well (Fişek, 1983). According to Yüce, the works of the YMCA accelerated the establishment of the Turkish Training Association (TİCİ) (Yüce, 2022), which maintained its role in organizing sports events during the Republican period. It appointed American Chester M. Tobin, the manager of the YMCA American Marines Club Office, as the athletics trainer of the Turkish Olympic team in 1924 (Toprak, 1993).

Despite limited financial aid from the United States and limited events, the YMCA's contacts continued even after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic. Attempts were made to establish Turkish-American clubs among the first American-oriented civic activities in the Republican period. It might have been the most critical foreign initiative, including sports events for Turkish youth's cultural and social development. Jennings, one of the leading representatives of the YMCA, had meetings with Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, the Minister of National Education at the time, who was also the President of the Turkish Hearths, and received his support (Öksüz and Köse, 2016). In return for a significant grant received for the construction of the headquarters of the Turkish Hearths in Ankara (Bali, 2009b), Hamdullah Suphi spoke highly of the YMCA among other organizations such as the Komsomol, Oktobrist, and Sokol at the opening ceremony of the headquarters in 1931. Although the attempts to establish Turkish-American clubs failed, negotiations for improving Turkish-American relationships continued (Öksüz and Köse, 2016).

The YMCA, which continued its activities until December 1939, when it was closed in Turkey, had significant effects on Turkish social, cultural, and sporting life. Latourette stated that in response to the contributions of the YMCA, the government established camps for boys following the YMCA model and employed instructors from the association as instructional leaders there (Latourette, 1997), which shows the subsequent effects of the YMCA in the following years.

Shortly before the closure of the YMCA, the Beyoğlu Office was purchased by the Community Centers, which were Turkish institutions for public education (Latourette, 1997), and the take-over was not limited to the use of office buildings and indoor halls. According to sports historian Yüce, the Community Centers adopted the YMCA's programs, schedules, and organizational approach (Yüce, 2022). The YMCA became a model for forming federations in the following years and continued to influence mass sporting events.

## CONCLUSION

Dewey inevitably addressed physical education and sports in his comprehensive program and report, which were rich sources of inspiration (Özsoy, 2009) and led to a comprehensive scientific and philosophical paradigm in the modernization of the Turkish education system.

Dewey's recommendations for training specialized teachers positively influenced the existing attempts to train physical education teachers. In his report, Dewey drew attention to the importance of providing adequate sports fields in schools at all levels and providing sports opportunities for individuals outside of schools in order to protect public health. He recommended the establishment of a special unit for school architecture within the Ministry of Education, and the School Architecture Office that was accordingly created ensured that specialized and high-quality gymnasiums and fields were built in many schools. The proposals for teacher training and study trips abroad in the field of physical education also positively influenced research on many different countries' sports systems.

Like Dewey, Parker discussed the health-promoting effects of physical education and sports in her report. Parker made suggestions regarding the size of playgrounds and recess times and highlighted the necessity of establishing playgrounds in villages. She also stated that in-service training on physical education could be given to school principals, inspectors, and teachers in primary schools. Apart from the reports by Dewey and Parker, Eugene M. Hinkle's report findings were also interesting. He suggested that educated Turks did not understand the value of physical education and sports and mostly avoided physical activity, and there was a difference between the planned programs and reality. Both people and institutions lacked coordination and proper organization. Sports were something imposed from the top down as a symbol of the superficial adoption of Western modernization. Ultimately, the Turkish people remained unchanged.

The YMCA, on the other hand, became a model of a new lifestyle for Turkish people with the activities it carried out, and it fulfilled an important function in terms of recreational expansion and the development of sports, apart from the pedagogical dimension. Besides physical education, which was identified with gymnastics, the YMCA's effects on the spread of mass sports in a civil movement were extensive. The YMCA's first youth camps, the first initiatives for women to engage in sports, and activities in the field of scouting all left important traces. Important impetus was given to the development of individual and team sports, influencing the establishment of sports federations over time. Therefore, although the Swedish and German influences on Turkish physical education and sports life are often discussed, there was actually a significant American influence.

This was an era when the masses were not interested in sports, except in school life, and the necessary physical infrastructure and mental transformations were unavailable. Although the motto of the era was "New Turkish schools will not be places of sitting and listening, but places of doing, working, and searching" (Eğitim Alanında, 1925), it was not even possible to send teachers to the villages where a significant part of the population lived. Due to the scarcity of resources (e.g., capital and educated instructors or experts), equal access to physical activity services was not achieved except on the western coast of Turkey. Today, physical education practices, imposed from the top down and therefore not internalized, also explain the image of Turkish society that watches rather than participating. The steps and policies taken during the

early years of the republic highlight the important point of what Turkey should and should not do today. This has been studied considering the holistic effects on physical education and sports.

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