

# Sports – politics relationship in Turkey in the early years of the republic

Ayhan DEVER<sup>1</sup>, Burkay CEVAHIRCIOGLU<sup>1</sup>, Bahadır DEMİR<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Physical Education and Sports, Ordu University, Ordu, Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> Physical Education Teacher, Ministry of the National Education, Turkey.

Address correspondence to A. Dever, e-mail: ayhandever@odu.edu.tr

## Abstract

One of the most significant of shortcomings in the field of sports in Turkey is that the History of Sports in Turkey is not preserved in its well-deserved place. Although some research is being carried out by utilizing the limited resources available, obviously no new data is discovered in this area. In fact, the information accumulated via the oral narrative tradition till this day has lost its validity for some reasons along the way; consequently, alternative versions of the History of Sports in Turkey have evolved thus emerged. In order to avoid such complications, this study seeks to reach out to firsthand information and complements its data with references from the newspapers and magazines of the early-republican era. The study aims at revealing information about the Federation of Turkish Training Associations (TİCİ, 1922-1936), the Turkish Sports Association (TSK, 1936-1938) and the General Directorate for Physical Education (BTGM, 1938-1983), which were established at various phases of the Early Republican Era and in charge of the administration of sports. The study also aims at indicating the relationship of these administrative bodies with the politics and making conclusions by comparison. Leastwise, the study aims at making some contribution to the History of Sports in Turkey particularly by means of firsthand resources and revealing unknown political arguments.

**Keywords:** Federation of Turkish Training Associations (TİCİ), General Directorate of Physical Education (BTGM), Republican People's Party (CHP or RPP), Turkish Sports Association (TSK).

## INTRODUCTION

Thanks to the proclamation of the Republic, the bodies regulating sports also began changing. Sports in Turkey continued its development in the scope of these administrative changes especially during the period between the 1920s and the 1940s, and these changes also brought about occasional challenges, one of which was the direct intervention of political powers into sports.

In this regard, within the newly established Republic of Turkey, sports remained subject to three different institutions during the said period and such changes posed an obstacle before the advancement of sports. Likewise, each of these governing bodies in charge of sports administration shaped sports in line with their own views and turned sports into an area where the state had a strong say over the course of events.

Especially the single political party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), directly communicated with these administrative bodies and

attempted to shape sports in line with its own political ideology. The fact that CHP was the only political party of the era caused CHP to intemperately position itself as both the state and the government which was reflected upon the sports policy of the era.

## Federation of Turkish Training Associations (TİCİ) and Sports

The Federation of Turkish Training Associations (TİCİ) is the first organized sports association in Turkey. In the 1920s, 13 sports clubs active in Istanbul began considering the establishment of an organized authority to regulate football activities amongst themselves (18). In order to materialize these plans, Mr. Yusuf Ziya Öniş, a former football player who had recently returned from training in Switzerland, and his friends translated the Switzerland Sports Associations Conduct into Turkish thus laid the foundations of the "Federation of Turkish Training Associations" (21).

The translated version of the regulation was amended according to the standards in Turkey and submitted to the Interior Ministry on 27 November 1921 which ratified it in April 1922 officially establishing the TİCİ (16).

Although the TİCİ emerged as a result of private entrepreneurship, it gradually became affiliated with and subsidized by the State. Because, the TİCİ was transformed into an association serving the public interest in 1924 thus “enabling it to receive higher financial support from the Government, fall under the direct patronage of the State and be exempted from various tax other independent associations had to pay”<sup>1</sup>.

In other words, the TİCİ went under protection of the Government and by securing its position caused a certain sports - politics relationship to emerge within organized bodies. In fact, on its first congress it adopted a motion to offer patronage to Mr. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founding President of the Republic of Turkey and Mr. İsmet İnönü, another prominent politician, honorary chairmanship, both of whom accepted the titles thus granting the TİCİ a place within the CHP. Meanwhile, one may also interpret this development as the indicator of the significance and value Mr. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Mr. İsmet İnönü attached to sports.

The TİCİ particularly sought to be hand-in-hand with the CHP, one of the most well-known examples of this was the fact that federations under the TİCİ had offices (29) within the Republican People’s Party Building in Istanbul. Therefore, the federations functioned hand-in-hand with the CHP thus tried strengthening the roots of the sports – politics relationship.

Moreover, the figures, Mr. Hasan Reşit, CHP Deputy from Muş Province and Mr. Ali Rana, CHP Deputy from Samsun Province, who were elected to membership of council of appeals as published on the TİCİ’s Sixth Congress records are also worth noting (29). In other words, the CHP gradually took control of TİCİ administration and began involving in the administrative process.

The speech of Mr. Recep Paker, who acted as the Secretary General at the said Congress, also signifies the TİCİ – CHP ties;

Dear Friends, our Party notably expressed a significant point upon which it agreed during its

former congress. The point is pertaining to the exceptional interests our Party has over the affairs of sports and sportsmanship. Amongst their daily state affairs, the authorized bodies of the Party spare time to deeply consider and analyze the matters pertaining to sports as well as how to achieve material goals in this field (29).

Therefore, the view of CHP on sports grew rather clear and the significance of sports for CHP became obvious.

It is not a coincidence that the Government directly interfered with sports. The poor results in football under the TİCİ and delays in forming an organized body amongst sports clubs is the main reason of this situation. As a matter of fact, Mr. Ali Sami Yen, then Chairman of TİCİ began losing hope from sports and expressed that sports would go worse unless the Government directly stepped in (31).

The Party’s support for the TİCİ, in other words to sports in general, became more evident in time as the party granted the TİCİ 40.000 Turkish Lira in 1926, 33.000 in 1927, and 30.000 in 1928, respectively in financial aids (18). The objective was to spread the development of sports in all parts of the country, however, in 1929, the Party stopped sparing budget for the TİCİ which was held responsible for the failure of athletes in 1928 Amsterdam Olympics thus received no funds from the Party that particular year (1). In other words, the Party continued to direct sports as it wishes, interfered with it and shaped it towards its own ideology. Still, the fact that the newly established Republic allocated some budget to sports then cut it upon failure is an indicator of the arbitrariness of sports in the era.

### **Turkish Sports Association (TSK) and Sports**

At the 8<sup>th</sup> and last General Congress of the TİCİ (18 February 1936), along with other decisions, the name of the TİCİ was changed into TSK effectively launching the phase in Turkish sports history where the Party had all say. As a result, the TİCİ, which coordinated nation-wide sports activities for 13 years, was dissolved for reasons of failure and inadequacy, therefore, the TSK, a brand new organization, emerged as of 18 April 1936.

However, the foundation of the TSK was not the consequence of temporal decisions. In fact, prior to the establishment of the TSK, Mr. Nizamettin Kırşan, Sports Counselor of CHP and acting Secretary General of the TSK and Mr. Turhan Rabat, a member

of CHP Administration were sent to Germany in order to make observations and gain knowledge of the Nazi Sports Association and the Jugend (Youth) Organization. In line with the reports submitted by these figures, it was agreed that the most suitable youth and sports organizational model was the German Youth Organization Model and Mr. Carl Diem, founder of the model, was invited to Turkey in 1933 by CHP to conduct some research. At the end of a two-months study, Mr. Diem suggested the formation of "Gazi Youth" Organization, similar to Hitler's Jugend (youth) organization (17) thus, trying to make sports in Turkey dependent on an organization established by the Party. The most striking feature of Jugend is that it mandated all athletes in the country to be its members (25). Because, the Jugend (Youth) Organization is directly affiliated with the Nazi Party, in other words, the young people who were members of the organization were indirect members of the ruling Nazi Party, as well.

In this regard, in line with the work of Diem, the CHP annual program for 1935 stated that a new sports association would be formed. The program mentions a new association which all sports activities and athletes in Turkey would be affiliated with. <sup>2</sup>Therefore, the fact that sports would be dependent on an association formed by CHP itself, in other words, CHP would directly interfere with sports was hinted in the Party's program in 1935 already.

The expression uttered by Mr. Şükrü Saraçoğlu, CHP Deputy and then Minister of Justice;

"... as we remember the sympathy and support of the Party and the Community Centers in the sports affairs if it were customary to thank a father for what he did for his children, the Congress here today would have to express gratitude to the People's Party and the Community Centers" (5).

in the initial days of TSK in 1936 is one of the most striking indicators that the TSK would be intertwined with the CHP, directly. The TSK, which preliminary studies were conducted as of 1933 and was responsible for nation-wide sports events, conducted its work as a subsidiary body of the Party, anyhow.

The TSK, established in the scope of a report drafted by Mr. Carl Diem and adopted by the CHP, was linked to the Republican People's Party (CHP)

the same day it was formed and literally became an asset of CHP. The statement "Turkish athletes, the Turkish Sports Association, consider itself as the own child and an integral part of the Republican People's Party which is the only and highest political entity that ensured salvation and reformation of our country" (13) as signed and submitted by about forty delegates to the CHP administration, is an indicator that the TSK along with its members wanted to (actually were) be involved in politics. Later, the TSK formed regional sports divisions and elected the Governors or Provincial Chairmen of CHP to the presidency of those national divisions (10).

As soon as he took office as the TSK Chairman, General Ali Hikmet Ayerdem, CHP Deputy from Gaziantep expressed his allegiance to the powers that be, i.e. CHP, the single party of the era, with the following words;

"another significance of the youth to be engaged in sports activities is that it shows their allegiance to our National Chief (Mr. İsmet İnönü). It is, therefore, our Government is concerned with the sports affairs and makes sacrifices. For this, it is our duty to raise youth worthy of the confidence the nation and the State have placed in them. We shall honor such responsibility as we make progress. And, our path will be the direction shown by the People's Party, which serves the development of the Turkish sports and Turkish youth" (6).

The Turkish Sports Association Magazine, the official publication of the TSK began publishing on 29 June 1936. An excerpt from an article that appeared in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Issue of the Magazine where CHP directly called the Turkish youth to enter the TSK is as follows;

"The mother party (CHP), which always embraces the Turkish youth as a whole, is awaiting and hoping the youth would gather in unity under the roof of the TSK. Only with your support and participation, may the Turkish Sports Association be able to transform the Turkish sports into a substantive cause of Kemalizm: a cause of physical-fitness training, rather than disorganized efforts and futile ambitions"(7).

As you would note, the Turkish Sports Association copied the structure of the Hitlerian

Jugend (youth) Organization and incorporated all youth in Turkey under its wings. For the exact same objective, the TSK invited Turkish youth to become a member of the CHP this time.

Turkish athletes participated in the Olympics held in July 1936 in Berlin and won the first gold medal for Turkey. However, the gifts of “assorted alcoholic beverages in elegant bottles, exclusive cigarettes, premium grapes and fig prepared by the Governorate of İzmir Province. The cigarette packages bear the five interlaced rings of the Olympics and the alcohol bottles have its motto on an elegant picture” (8) which the Turkish athletes brought to the Berlin Olympics to be presented to their opponents / other competitors raised some concern. The concern was that gifts to be presented on the sidelines of an official sports contest were tobacco and alcohol products, which contradicts with the fundamental principles of the TSK (hence those of TİCİ). The paragraph b of Article 7 of the Turkish Sports Association and the Chapter 3 of Article 3 of the TİCİ regulation stipulate that a sports club “must prohibit its athletes from consuming libation (alcohol)” (29,30) which indicates both associations do not approbate alcohol as they deem it unwelcome in the framework of sports. One may interpret this case as an attempt to exhibit western behavior by the Republic of Turkey, which was newly established and aspired after westernization.

Furthermore, the fact that CHP emblem’s six arrows were imprinted on the gift cigarette packs and alcohol bottles beside the Olympic rings along with the title “A gift from Turkish athletes” is another noteworthy point (See: Figure 1). This example gives us a clearer understanding of the relationship between sports and politics of the era. The gifts of cigarette packs and alcohol bottles served as a nice gesture as well as helped the promotion of the Republic of Turkey, in other words, the ruling Government. This is also one of the most significant illustrations of the ruling party, which could interfere with the sports as it wishes, playing politics in sports.

Moreover, another indicator that the TSK functioned as a subsidiary of the CHP is the six arrows emblem on the attire of the athletes who participated at the Olympics<sup>3</sup> (See: Figure 2 & 3).

The badge worn by the athletes featured the Turkish flag on top, the Olympic rings in the middle and the six arrows of CHP at the bottom. This is yet

another illustration of the fact that the CHP left its explicit mark on the sports of the era.



Figure 1. The emblem of the ruling party as it appeared on the gift cigarette packs presented by the Turkish Sports Association to the contenders.



Figure 2. Mr. Yaşar Erkan, a successful athlete at the Olympics, wearing the badge with the emblem of the ruling Party.

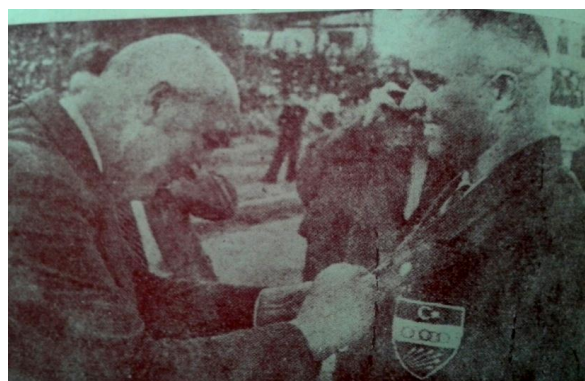


Figure 2. Mr. Mersinli Ahmet, a successful athlete at the Olympics, bearing the ruling Party's emblem on his chest while receiving his medal.

In August of 1936, directive letters posted by Mr. Halid Bayrak, Vice-Chairman of TSK and CHP Deputy from Bayazıt, to the sports federations and

regional directorates of sports are also significant. The letters informed that nation-wide sporting events were to be organized in celebration of the admission of Turkish athletes as members of CHP, and the following instructions outlined the details of the ceremonies:

1. The ceremonies are to be held in the entire country on or before the Republic Day on 29 October 1936.
2. The members of regional directorates of sports and clubs in provinces and districts are to gather at the Party Building or Community Centers and the Party Chairmen will deliver a speech emphasizing on the allegiance by the Turkish Sports Association towards the Republican People's Party and such an affiliation was welcome by the Board of the Party and the Executive Committee approved of it, therefore clarifying the Turkish athlete youth's duty of faith and loyalty towards the Party's six cardinal principles embodied in its six arrows.
3. The speech will be responded by individuals in the crowd selected by the local sports director or the sports clubs.
4. The above matters have also been circulated by the Office of the Secretary General of the CHP to its provincial Party Chairmanships, as well. I request your prompt action to hold necessary contacts to organize the events and to inform the Headquarters about your preparations; to further submit detailed reports after the actual execution of the ceremonies.
5. Hereby letter has been posted to the Federation Chairmanships and Regional HQs, also submitted to the Provincial Chairmanships of the Party, for information only (4).

In fact, after the admission ceremony to the Party, the athletes in Ankara formed a parade at 14:00 pm on 30 October 1936, toured around the city and laid a wreath of flowers on the Atatürk Memorial at Ulus District. The cortege later arrived at the Party's Administrative HQ in Yenışehir District and saluted the Party chanting "hooray!" (6). The celebrations organized as a consequence of admitting athletes as a member of the single party of the era were held with a great joy and excitement, and the athletes contributed to the development of the sports – politics duo by pledging allegiance to the CHP.

During the same year, another ceremony was held to welcome the successful athletes (especially Mr. Yaşar Erkan) returning from the Berlin Olympics and the athletes participated at the ceremony while wearing the above-mentioned CHP emblems fixed on their jackets. Indeed, the welcoming ceremony commenced "at five minutes before five, as an athlete came running in the field carrying medals and a flag of the party" (3).

Within the two years period, the Turkish Sports Association acted as an integral part of the Republican People's Party, single political party of the era, and sports became directly tied to the Party. Sports activities organized in line with the directives of CHP, all athletes registering as members of CHP virtually made sports an inherent component of politics.

The companionship of the Party and sports raised some critical voices and the Turkish Sports Association decided to tidy up in terms of administration. Mr. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founding the father of the Republic of Turkey played a prominent role in this decision. In fact, Atatürk did not overlook the fact that Turkish athletes appeared at 1936 Berlin Olympics wearing badges featuring six arrows and he almost decided to shut the Turkish Sports Association down.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, the acts of violence that broke out during a football game between Galatasaray vs. Güneş on 4 July 1937 infuriated the then Prime Minister İsmet İnönü and published a memo stating that certain football clubs posed an obstacle before the TSK to achieve its goals and that some of them could be shut down, if deemed necessary (10).

Besides, it is understood from the statement;

"as you would note, the sports affairs are governed by the Turkish Sports Association in line with the directives of the People's Party. In case the will of our Government to unite these affairs under the umbrella of a rather solid organization prevails soon; although we are looking forward to sports to further advance by transforming sports into a public service offered by the State, we..." (14).

by Mr. Rahmi Alpak, Chairman of Turkish Sports Association in May 1938 that the Party will gradually pull its hands off the sports affairs thus leaving those at the hands of the State.



After all these statements, the TSK vanished into the dusty pages of history within the next 6 months on grounds that the affairs of sports and the party had to be separated and;

“on one hand, the increasing interest in sports in our country and the enthusiasm of youth in sports, on the other hand [TSK’s] impracticability to satisfy today’s current requisitions via its modest staff and amateur organization in the face of the issue of the need for both physical and cognitive training” (18).

Especially the members of the Party grew the idea that being directly involved in sports affairs damaged the Party and that a new organizational structure needed to be formed.

### **General Directorate for Physical Education and Politics**

The General Directorate for Physical Education (BTGM) was adopted on 29 June 1938 at the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the decision was published on the Official Gazette on 18 July 1938.

Referring to the establishment of the BTGM, Mr. Celal Bayar, and then Prime Minister emphasized on the inadequacy of the former (TİCİ and TSK) organizations. According to Mr. Bayar, the TİCİ failed to spread sports in all parts of the country, while the TSK failed because it functioned as a subsidiary actor of the ruling party. In this regard, with the establishment of the BTGM, the administration of sports was handed over to the State, thus BTGM attempted to make up for the existing lack of authority and discipline (1).

The statement, as recorded on the Minutes of Negotiation of the Law No. 3530 on Physical Training;

“it has been not long since the terms sports and physical training are known in our country. In fact, those who first uttered these terms are members of this parliament and with us here today. However, along with these terms also emerged some experts, scholars and authorities leading to a state of chaos blocking the achievement of our national goals in sports and physical training. It is, therefore, our Party stepped in. However, upon consultations at our Party’s HQ, it was decided that the Party would leave these affairs at the safe hands of the Government” (23).

by Mr. Şükrü Kaya, then Deputy Minister of Interior Affairs, may be interpreted as an auto-critique as far as the sports – politics relationship is concerned. This piece of self-criticism stresses on the fact that sports failed to improve due to unsuccessful sports policies, particularly those stemming from political elements, so far.

With the establishment of the BTGM, the affairs of sports was freed from the monopoly of the party and handed over to the Government, by which sports slightly liberated and begin growing outside politics (22). However, the fact that Major General Cemil Tahir Taner was appointed as the Director General should be interpreted that the State was going to try to train youth / athletes as if they were “soldiers”. One may also deduce, from the expressions of Mr. Celal Bayar, that attaining authority and discipline was thought to be only possible within the framework of military discipline, therefore a general was put in charge of sports affairs.

The most striking feature of the BTGM is that it was directly under the Prime Ministry, which is almost the first of its kind in World history as well “because, in 1938 when the BTGM model was implemented, no other country organized its sports affairs in a similar manner” (24).

In this regard, sports made progress with the support of the government and became relatively more successful compared to other organizations.

Mr. Refik Saydam, then Prime Minister explains the spirit of the BTGM Law with the following words;

“this serves for the ascension of our youth both physically and morally thus making our race healthier and rather stern, it also helps development of dynamics of kindness and patriotism, which are at the same time characteristic features of the Turkish nation, that are welcome in the civilized world in the name of sportsmanship” (23).

The idea that sports would render individuals healthier and rather stern helps us clearly understand the role the people of the era cast on sports. Such a role was expressed by the great Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as “*mens sana in corpore sano* (a healthy mind in a healthy body)”. In scope of the objective of raising healthy and resolute generations,

the Article 4 of the Law on Physical Education stipulated that “it is mandatory for the youth to enter clubs and engage in physical training during their leisure time. The Cabinet Council will determine the amount, duration, conditions, locations and seasons of sports activities to be engaged by all citizens” (26).

In line with this mandatory article, it was compulsory for male citizens aged 12, the beginning age of middle school, until 45 years old, ending age of conscription; and female citizens aged between 12 and 30 to perform sports activities for at least 4 hours on seven days a week (23). In summary, by means of an unprecedented practice, male citizens of 12-45 years old and female 12-30 years old were obliged to engage in sports activities.

In line with Article 11 of the Law on Physical Education Obligation<sup>5</sup>, the sports branches citizens were to engage in were addressed under the headings of compulsory sports, namely gymnastics, athletics, handball, volleyball, basketball, swimming, scouting, horse riding, and mountaineering, seamanship and skiing where applicable; and voluntary sports, namely football, wrestling, boxing, cycling – motorcycling, tennis, fencing, sailing and rowing, heavy apparatus gymnastics, weight-lifting and others (28). A salient point in this list is that wrestling, one of the ancestor sports of Turks, was omitted from compulsory sports branches and moved under voluntary heading. Although, the motive behind this action is unknown for sure, it may be for consideration of introducing rather western (more popular in the West) and newly developing sports branches to the public.

The implementation of obligatory physical education was introduced gradually, with the exception of 9 provinces out of the program initially. However, the main issues on the subject emerged at this point. Because, the “Provisions on the Implementation of Obligatory Physical Education<sup>6</sup>”, published in 1940 by the General Directorate for Physical Education, 8 provinces (Erzincan, Bingöl, Bitlis, Ağrı, Muş, Siirt, Tunceli and Van) were listed. Likewise, “Decree on Physical Education and Obligation on Sports” as stipulated in Article 4 of the Law numbered 3530 and Article 9 of its annexed by-laws, the number of provinces (Erzincan, Bingöl, Bitlis, Ağrı, Muş, Siirt, Tunceli, Van, Hakkari and Antalya) occurred to be 10. The issue was that 9 provinces were supposed to be exempted from the obligation, however the text of law and by-laws failed to correspond with the number nine (as you

would note, either 8 or 10 provinces were mentioned).

We are however in the opinion that the most accurate source to shed light on this conflict is the map published on June 1940 issue of the PES, Physical Education and Sports Magazine, where the names of following 9 provinces exempted from the obligation were clearly printed; Erzincan, Bingöl, Bitlis, Ağrı, Muş, Siirt, Tunceli, Van and Hakkari. The fact that correct information on the matter is retrieved from magazines of the era instead of text of law and by-laws appears to be one of the most significant reasons for incompetence in terms of sports historiography.

However, due to this mandate, sports – politics due began to emerge once again. In fact, the uniforms that the obliged citizens had to wear at certain intervals clearly shows that the sports – politics (party) relationship still endured.

The Regulation on the Compulsory Attire, Flag and Pennant for Male and Female Practitioners of Physical Training outlined the details of the uniforms to be worn by the obliged individuals at general meetings and parades.

One of the components of the compulsory attire was a cap featuring a cockade which bears an embossed set of crescent moon, star and six arrows on an opaque background (23) (See: Figure 5).

In other words, six arrows which was the symbol of CHP, the ruling party of the era, were imprinted on the caps which the practitioners of compulsory physical training had to wear on the occasion of certain meetings and sports festivals.

The same is also true for sleeveless shirts. The sleeveless shirts “were made of white fabric or lisle thread (athlete vest) bearing an embossed emblem of youth in red color (same as the cockade fixed on the cap) on the left side of the chest” (23) (See: Figure-6).

In other words, the emblem of the ruling party depicting six arrows was gradually introduced as the symbol of youth and was used to emphasize on the power of the ruling party and directly reminding individuals of its presence.

The same is also true for the pennants of the clubs which had to “bear the six arrows stemming from crescent moon and star on the bottom corner of the inner face of the shaft. The crescent moon and star and the white arrows should be embroidered using white silk thread” (23) (See: Figure 4).

In other words, all pennants of the sports clubs in the era featured the six arrows of the ruling party which was promoted as if the “symbol of the youth”.

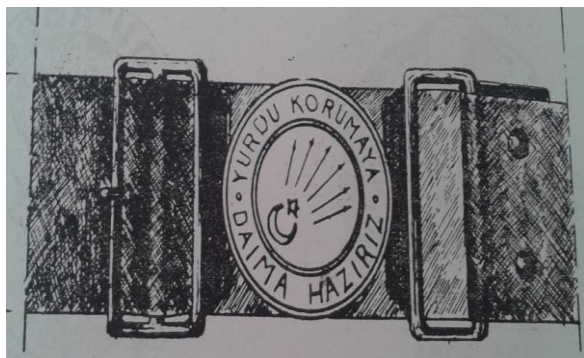


Figure 4. A belt featuring the emblem of the ruling party of the era worn by the practitioners of compulsory Physical Education

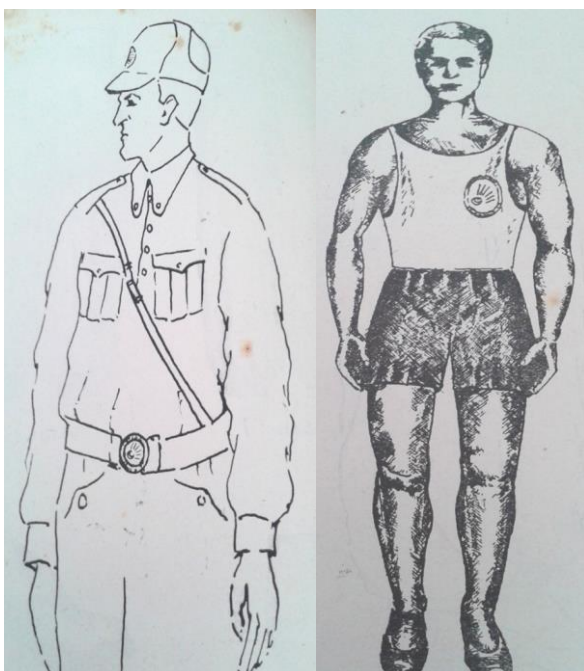


Figure 5 & 6. The emblem of the ruling party of the era is depicted on the uniforms and attires of the practitioners of compulsory Physical Education.

After it was made mandatory to perform sports and exercises, the following letters of appreciation posted by Mr. Cemil Taner, the General Director of Physical Education to Mr. İsmet İnönü and the Republican People’s Party also indicates the sports and politics relationship of the era and document the ongoing dominance of politics over sports;

“The Turkish Youth, who gathered around the National Chief as an everlasting halo looking

towards their bright futures, has taken with great pleasure the first step in the implementation of their compulsory practice of physical training. While our young generations gathered at the inauguration ceremonies of youth clubs and groups in provinces, districts, towns and even some villages in order to celebrate the anniversary of our victory, I am honored to convey their sincere homage and allegiance to You, my respectable National Chief” (11).

This text also indicates that although the affairs of sports were handed over to the State, the affiliation with the Party did not break yet, and General Director of Physical Education, Mr. Taner restated their loyalty to the party on behalf of the Turkish athletes. Meanwhile, the telegraph posted by Mr. Cemil Taner, the General Director of Physical Education to the Office of the Secretary General of the Republican People’s Party is as follows;

“I am pleased to inform that inauguration ceremonies were organized today in provinces, districts, towns and even some villages for the youth clubs and groups formed with the inspiration from the cardinal principles outlined in the constitution of the Republic of Turkey, and that the movement enabled the Turkish youth, who are united around our Party and its Chief as a massive population, to express their joyous excitement” (11).

This is an illustration of the attempt, especially by the administrators, to incorporate sports within politics and the efforts to promote the athletes and sports as partisans.

A news report by Mr. Ziya Çalık at the Ekenon Daily (20) elaborates on the importance of compulsory practice of sports and that the exercises which the public do not perform would be urged by the Republican Government. Therefore, the citizens would grow healthier, more sound, discipline and joyous, thus attaining the perfect race.

Addressing the youth at a gathering organized by the General Directorate for Physical Education, Mr. Rahmi Apak encouraged all athletes to register as members of the CHP and to frequently visit the institutions formed by the ruling party itself with his following statement “it is the youth who will promote, protect and perpetuate the Turkish revolution. Therefore, please strengthen the ranks of



the Republican People's Party and occupy the community centers" (15), consequently the fine line between the sports and politics was breached during the era.

### Conclusions and Assessment

In today's world, the affairs of sports are somehow incorporated with politics since it is a concept that concerns millions of people making it a commodity which politics may not ignore. Wherever there are mass groups of people, the politics, hence the political parties are going to try to seize (votes) the opportunity, especially when it is a concept that concerns millions of people, it is impossible for sports to remain out of politics' shadow.

In this regard, sports – politics relationship in Turkey is not a relatively new concept. In fact, during the ending days of the Ottoman Empire, the Union and Progress Party adopted the Altınordu Football Club as the official sports club and appointed Talat Pasha as its chairman. The sports – politics relationship grew rather apparent since that phase and the said football club became the league champions five years in a row.

The spread of sports in Turkey in the framework of organized associations and the establishment of the first and only political party of the era coincides on the same year, i.e. 1923. In this regard, both the sports in terms of administration and politics in terms of national governance began their development during the same period. In other words, the relationship between sports and politics were almost born in the same era and affected one another.

Particularly, with the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, the sportsmen of the era sought union in terms of administration and made an effort to unite sports activities, which were performed in a dispersed and unconscious manner, under the umbrella of a single organization. In order to achieve this, they were nolens volens involved in politics with the ambition of gaining power. In fact, although the newly established Turkey was unable to spare an exclusive budget for sports, the close relations with the political circles paid off in time and budget was received from the government/state. In this regard, the sports – politics relationship in Turkey emerged as financial aid was allocated to the governing bodies of sports affairs. However, the fact that tangible support was provided amid monetary shortage lead to anticipation for "success". In a sense, the government/state became the sponsor of

sports hence grew an expectancy of sports, failing which was ceased their financial support.

Although, the TİCİ, the first organized sports association of Turkey was established as a result of private entrepreneurship without backing from the government, it soon went under the patronage of the government hence transforming into a subsidized organization thus expediting the development of sports – CHP relationship.

TSK period however marks a phase where sports was directly at the monopoly of the Party, during which time the sports – CHP relationship climaxed and the party directed sports as it wish.

During the BTGM period, although sports affairs were governed by the State, sports were unable to free itself from the dominance of the CHP. In fact, being the single political party of the era, the CHP functioned as both the Government and the State. Therefore, the fact that sports was transferred from the monopoly of the party over to the state further fostered sports – CHP relationship.

In light of the periods of the TİCİ, the TSK and the BTGM, the pioneering sports administrative bodies in the Republic of Turkey that are evaluated in scope of this study, we understand that politics had a direct influence over sports in terms of administration. Because these organizations virtually functioned as an auxiliary organ of the government of the era, accordingly the government arbitrarily interfered with the sports from time to time.

Therefore, the interference of CHP over sports maintained throughout all three periods. However, the effect of CHP over sports during the periods of TİCİ and BTGM is relatively weaker compared to the TSK period. The TSK period is when CHP implemented all its projects pertaining to sports and literally occupied the realm of sports. During this period, the sports developed as a political commodity circled around the ideological doctrine of the CHP and pro-CHP athletes were raised. All athletes were mandatorily registered as members of the CHP and CHP's influence over sports and athletes grew deeper.

In particular, during the TSK period, sports evolved into an avenue of promotion and advertisement for CHP and the "six rows", which represent the fundamental principles of the party, frequently appeared on gift packaging, athlete uniforms or on the occasion of national festivals,

which may be considered to have boosted confidence of the Party.

**Notes:**

1. The report prepared by Carl Diem, who played an active role in the emergence and development of national-socialist sports view, includes eleven sections entitled a) Organization, staff and press, b) National Olympics Committee c) Training of Trainers of Physical Education d) Physical Education for children aged 10-18 e) Turkish sports organization f) Physical education and gymnastics at schools and the organization and staff of Ministry of Education g) Sports liability of the youth h) Youth organization i) Sports Clubs j) National and moral training of the youth k) Cultural societies. For detailed information on the subject, please see: (2) Prof. Dr. Carl Diem...
2. The Turkish youth will be bound to a national organization that will gather them around the virtue of passion for decent moral values, an excelled nation and revolution. Physical education cultivating enthusiasm, good health, faith in self and the nation will be offered to entire Turkish youth and they will be raised with an acknowledgement of assuming dearly the duty of protecting the motherland through the conditions of revolution and maturity and an understanding of preparedness for self-sacrifice towards such duty. In order for this primary training to yield results, while high performance skills such as thinking, decision making and initiative taking of the Turkish youth will be improved on one hand; the youth will be trained under the influence of discipline, the key element required to achieve every challenging task, on the other. Accordingly, sports organization in Turkey will be formatted and administered in line with the aforesaid principles. Business and administration unions will be organized in cooperation with the sports organization and universities, schools, institutes, community centers, factories and agencies pursuant to above mentioned objectives. Ceaselessness will be maintained in nationwide operations of physical education and accommodation of revolutionary ideals and sports activities. All citizens at schools, public and private institutions and factories will be obliged to engage in physical education activities in respect of age. Fields and establishments required for sports and physical education activities will be founded and

appropriate rules and regulations will be attributed to various fields of sports" (19).

3. The six arrows represent the principles of Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Statism, Secularism, Revolutionism, and the main attributes of the Republican Peoples' Party. The six arrows forms the fundamental ideology of CHP. For more information, please see: (27).
4. For more information, please see (17).
5. As a matter of fact, Nureddin Bingöl even composed a "Obligation Anthem" for those obliged with physical education, lyrics of which goes: Firm is our belief, Glorifying the future, Strong our biceps, Harsh our steps, marching Forward, march Forward; We – the youth Obligated with Physical Education!. One would note the particular emphasis on physical strength.
6. Age restriction on the physical education obligation varies among different provinces, as well. While, male citizens aged between 15 and 20 (inclusive) residing in 26 provinces (Gaziantep, Hatay, Adana, İçel, Antalya, Muğla, Aydın, İzmir, Manisa, Balıkesir, Çanakkale, Bursa, Kocaeli, İstanbul, Tekirdağ, Kırklareli, Edirne, Zonguldak, Ankara, Sinop, Samsun, Erzurum, Kars, Artvin, Rize, Trabzon) were considered to be liable for compulsory physical education; male citizens aged from 18 to 20 (inclusive) residing in other than above listed cities (excluding 9 provinces that were exempted) were obliged to engage in physical education activities. The collected data shows that these cities did not differ in terms of total number of residences or obliged citizens. Sports clubs opened and physical education obligation commenced on 30 August 1940. However, another issue with the era is that, newspapers then greatly exaggerated the number of obliged citizens. For instance, Yeni Sabah (New Morning) daily reported the number to be 3 million, yet 9 provinces were exempted and only male citizens aged 15-20 in 26 provinces and 18-20 in the remainder of provinces were considered to be liable, thus making 495,213 between 15 and 20 years old and 171,375 aged 18 to 20, in other words 666,888 people, who fell into age range as stipulated by the Physical Education Obligation were identified (This figure is male population at the time, who fell into the age range in scope of applicable law). In order words,

exaggeration on the numbers newspapers reported in this respect was exorbitant.

## REFERENCES

1. Akın Y. Gürbüz ve Yavuz Evlatlar Erken Cumhuriyet'te Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2004.
2. Akömer E. Prof Dr Carl Diem. Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu Belleteni, No: 255, İstanbul, 1963.
3. Anonymous. Olimpiyaddan Dönen Sporcularımız Şerefine İstanbul'da Merasim Yapıldı. Turkish Sports Association Magazine, September 7, No: 11, p. 8, Ulus Basımevi, Ankara, 1936.
4. Anonymous. Spor Bölgesi Başkanlığına. Turkish Sports Association Magazine, No: 11, September 7, p: 3, Ulus Basımevi, Ankara, 1936.
5. Anonymous. Spor Kongresi Dün Ankara'da Toplandı. Republic Newspaper, 14 Nisan, p: 2, 1936.
6. Anonymous. Sporcularımız Partiye Geçişlerini Törenle Kutladılar. Turkish Sports Association Magazine, November 9, No:19, p.5, Ulus Basımevi, Ankara,1936.
7. Anonymous. Türk Gençliğinin Vazifesi. Turkish Sports Association Magazine, July 6, No: 2, p. 2, Ulus Basımevi, Ankara.1936.
8. Anonymous. Türk Sporcuları Berlin'e Hediyeler Götürüyor. Republic Newspaper, 18 July, p: 6, 1936.
9. Anonymous. Türk Sporculuğu Kıymetli Bir Başkan Kazandı. Republic Newspaper, 19 April, p: 9, 1936.
10. Anonymous. Spor İşlerimizin Yeni Veçhesi. Republic Newspaper, 20 August, p: 8, 1937.
11. Anonymous. Büyüklerimizimizin Gençliğe İltifatı. Physical Education and Sport Magazine, No: 21, p. 1-2, Alaeddin Kırıl Basımevi, Ankara, 1940.
12. Anonymous. Milli Şef İsmet İnönü. Turkish Sports Association Magazine, No: 45 p.4, Ulus Basımevi, Ankara, 1937.
13. Anonymous. Türk Spor Kurumu Kongresi Cumhuriyet Halk Partisine Bağlılık Kararını Alkışlar İçinde Onayladı. Ulus Newspaper, 19 April, p: 1, 1936.
14. Apak R. Türk Spor Kurumu Başkanı Rahmi APAK'ın Konuşması. Turkish Sports Association Magazine, No: 73, p. 3, Ulus Basımevi, Ankara, 1938.
15. Apak R. Gençlik Sıkı Dur! Yalnız Kendine ve Türklüğüne Güven! Physical Education and Sport Magazine, Özel Ek, p.6, Alaeddin Kırıl Basımevi: Ankara, 1940
16. Atabeyoğlu C. 1453–1991 Türk Spor Tarihi Ansiklopedisi, AN Grafik Basın Sanayi: İstanbul, 1991.
17. Atabeyoğlu C. Sporda Devlet mi Devlette Spor mu, Türkiye Milli Olimpiyat Komitesi Yayınları: İstanbul, 2001.
18. Btum XX. Cumhuriyet Yılında Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor, Çankaya Matbaası, Ankara, 1941.
19. CHP 1935 Programı, Gençlik ve Spor Örgütü (Madde 50), Ulus Basımevi, Ankara.
20. Çalık Z. Beden Terbiyesi Mükellefiyetinin Faydaları. Ekekon Newspaper, 20 Temmuz, 1940.
21. Dağlaroğlu R, San H. Türkiye Futbol Tarihi, Türk Ticaret Bankası Yayınları: İstanbul, 1960.
22. Dever A. Spor Sosyolojisi, Siyasal Kitabevi, Ankara, 2015.
23. Ergeneli N, Tuna, N. Beden Terbiyesi Mevzuatı, Alaeddin Kırıl Matbaası: Ankara, 1941.
24. Fişek K. Yüz Soruda Türkiye Spor Tarihi, Gerçek Yayınevi, İstanbul, 1985.
25. Gökaçtı MA. Bizim İçin Oyna 'Türkiye'de Futbol ve Siyaset', İletişim Yayınları: İstanbul, 2009.
26. Law on Physical Education, Beden Terbiyesi Genel Direktörlüğü Yayınları, İzmir, 1940.
27. Parla T. Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları Cilt: 3 Kemalist Tek Parti İdeolojisi ve CHP'nin Altı Ok'u, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1992.
28. Physical Education Obligation. Alaeddin Kırıl Basımevi, Ankara, 1940.
29. TİCİ Nizamname. Devlet Matbaası, İstanbul (Altıncı Kongre – 20 Haziran 1932), 1933.
30. TSK Nizamname. Çankaya Matbaası, Ankara, 1938.
31. Yen AS. Berbat Bir Maçtan Sonra Zorla Galip Gelebildik. Republic Newspaper, 20 June, 4, İstanbul, 1932.