



Ismayıl Hakkı Baltacıođlu's Conception of Education Transforming from Reform to Revolution¹

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Abstract

When he was a teacher at *Darülmualimin-i İptidai*, Ismayıl Hakkı Baltacıođlu was sent to Europe by the then Ministry of National Education to make examinations on pedagogy and handicrafts teaching. Having seen many European countries, Baltacıođlu was especially influenced by the practical approach to education in England, Belgium and Germany and made a lot of effort for this approach to be established in his own country.

The starting point of the practical approach to education that influenced Baltacıođlu was the "Movement of Education Reform" which left its mark on the 20th century and deeply influenced especially the education systems of the greater countries of the world. In this context, scientists such as John Dewey from the United States of America, Maria Montessori from Italy and Ovide Decroly from Belgium proposed eliminating the obsolete components of the traditional education system which did not progress simultaneously with the social change and replacing them with a new model of school that would not isolate the school life from the daily life. This model led to the complete elimination of the conception of education that was founded on traditional values throughout the world, was based on rote learning and made students passive, and to the emergence of a new conception of education in which students had an opportunity to show their creativity and actively participated in the process of education.

After Baltacıođlu's return to his homeland, this new model of school and the new conception of education, which had a deep impact on him, also significantly affected the conception of education in the Ottoman State and then in the Republic of Turkey. Baltacıođlu, who returned to his country in 1912, taught handicrafts, too, and he suggested the idea that many courses can be taught not only in the classrooms but also in laboratory environment in a practical manner and that such learning would be permanent. In this respect, he offered a different dimension to the course of development of the innovation movements in education, which had gained momentum since the 18th century, and he made a revolution in education by radically changing the system rather than making small-scale changes.

In his *Pedagojide İhtilâl* (Revolution in Pedagogy), Baltacıođlu explained in detail through which dynamics the revolution he desired would be addressed. For instance, he aimed to completely transform the basic dynamics of the traditional education system such as school, classroom, exam, book, student and teacher, and he partially realized this aim in *Şemsülmekatip*, the school where he had received primary education and where the traditional Ottoman education system was dominant. Within this framework, Baltacıođlu's ideas in the early 20th century are highly important both because they offered the use of modern elements of education compliant with that period instead of the traditional elements that were a characteristic feature of the period and because they offer solutions for the fulfillment of the deficiencies in the contemporary Turkish education system.

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Therefore, his work *Pedagojide İhtilâl* can be useful in detecting the deficient aspects of the contemporary Turkish education system and in creating a scientific perspective on how these deficiencies can be eliminated.

This study evaluates the influence of İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıođlu on the Turkish education system, which followed a course of development from reform towards revolution, based on his *Pedagojide İhtilâl*, in which he systematized this influence.

Keywords: Pedagogy, revolution, reform, creativity, *Darülfünun*

Introduction

İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıođlu is an important thinker who devoted a significant part of his 94-year life to education and closely witnessed various social transformations thanks to his long life. He started his education in a traditional education system and then attended *Darülfünun* (university in Ottoman Empire), which was planned to develop as a Western model of school. After his graduation from *Darülfünun*, Baltacıođlu was sent to Europe by the Ministry of National Education to make research on handicraft, pedagogy and curricula in countries such as England, France, Belgium, Germany and Italy, where he closely examined the education systems of these countries, met with the prominent scientists of education of that period, worked on their practices and constructed a soundly-based system of thought regarding practical education. When he returned to his country, he partially put these thoughts into practice both in the schools where he taught handicrafts and in the schools where he worked as a manager.

Baltacıođlu became the representative, in Turkey, of the “Movement of Education Reform” which was accepted throughout the world in the 20th century and was pioneered by John Dewey in the United States of America, Maria Montessori in Italy and Ovide Decroly in Belgium, and he became one of the Turkish pioneers of a student-centered education system that was accompanied by this movement and aimed to raise active individuals learning through doing/experiencing.

Baltacıođlu was strongly influenced by John Dewey’s idea that the experience was the way to transform thoughts into knowledge, that students could acquire the real knowledge only through their experiences, and that this would lead to permanent learning. Similarly, Baltacıođlu was highly influenced by Ovide Decroly’s idea that the schools should not only provide knowledge to children about their own natural environment and social environment in addition to the basic lessons such as literacy, calculation, history, geography and natural sciences, and he witnessed how Decroly practiced this in the “School for the Normal” in Brussels. He was also inspired by Maria Montessori’s ideas that children should be free in

their choices, that they should act and that they could read and write without books, too. Besides, these educators had the opportunity to put their ideas into practice in the schools they had opened, and Baltacıoğlu worked on these ideas that had been put into practice. In this way, Baltacıoğlu played an important role in the establishment, in the Turkish education system, of the “Movement of Education Reform”, which covers the ideas of the mentioned educators and refers to the search for a new model in order to get rid of the traditional conception of education based on rote-learning throughout the world especially in the 20th century.

Having been influenced by the prominent scientists of the Movement of Education Reform such as Dewey, Decroly, Montessori and Kerschenteiner, Baltacıoğlu also emphasized the deficiencies in their ideas and practices, and he accordingly formed his own idea of education. In his article titled *20. Asrın Terbiye Felsefesi* (Philosophy of Education of the 20th Century), he expressed his criticism of these scientists as follows (as quoted by Sakaoğlu, 2003: 316):

We cannot find the philosophy of education of our time collectively in any single pedagogue. It should be confessed that our time is deprived of great pedagogues as powerful as Rousseau. The great pedagogues of our time such as Dewey, Decroly, Montessori and Kerschenteiner have been stuck in the reality of education, rather than going beyond this reality as Rousseau did. In a sense, they are all Rousseauians. It is in the sense that instead of swallowing Rousseau’s ocean like a giant, they have drawn one part of the inexhaustible water of this ocean into the channels of their intellects.

According to Fay Kirby (2012: 37-38), Baltacıoğlu was ahead of Dewey and many other scientists of education with his ideas to make many areas such as handicraft, stage play, journalism and childcare an integral part of the school curricula and to use grammar teaching or behaviors as a mediator for educational purposes. Kirby mentioned, for example, that while Dewey was working on “extra-curricular” tools in liberating school curricula, Baltacıoğlu introduced the idea of “co-curricular” working.

Besides, Baltacıoğlu noticed that the Western education had some faults, and he stated that the representatives of the Western school addressed the topic of education independently from the materialist initiatives due to their insufficient knowledge of economy (Kirby, 2012: 39). In other words, Baltacıoğlu found it inappropriate to introduce the Western schools’ conception of education into the Turkish education system as a whole, and he therefore adapted the certain elements of the Western education according to the level of development and cultural structure of the students in his country.

In this respect, Baltacıoğlu’s idea of education followed “a course of development from reform to revolution”. His identity as an educator was initially based on a reformist idea to

make changes and innovations in the existing education system; but then he switched to a revolutionary idea upon understanding that the ideal education system could not be built on the existing system.

The present study aims to examine Baltacıoğlu's life of education on the basis of a course of development from reform to revolution and thus to review his *Pedagojide İhtilâl*, which is a reference work.

On Baltacıoğlu's Life

Ismayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu (1886-1978) is an important educator that witnessed many social transformations in the history of the Turkish education. His education started in a neighborhood school (*mahalle mektebi*) where the traditional Ottoman education system was applied, and he continued his education in *Vefa İdâdîsi*, which was a product of the Period of Westernization Movements in Education and which corresponds to today's secondary schools. Baltacıoğlu started his journey with a very traditional conception of education, and he completed this journey with attainments from the beneficial aspects of the modern world. He finished his higher education in the Science Division of Darülfünun where the traditional conception was replaced by a bit more modern conception, and his success in this school was appreciated by the prominent scientists of education of that period.

Having been born in the 1st Constitutional Era of the Ottoman State, Baltacıoğlu largely benefited from the opportunities of the capital city Istanbul; although he was not a child of a family in the higher ranks of the bureaucracy, he received education in Western-type schools, the number of which increased rapidly during the period of Abdul Hamid II. During his life, he witnessed the process of transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic and from the 2nd Constitutional Era to Kemalism, and as an educator, he assessed this process through quite objective criteria (Güngör, 2008: 55).

After completing his education in *Darülfünun*'s Division of *Ulum-i Tabiiyye ve Riyaziyye* (Natural Sciences and Mathematics), Baltacıoğlu was sent to various European countries such as England, France, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland in 1910 by the then Minister of National Education Emrullah Efendi to conduct research on pedagogy and handicrafts. After his return to his country, he worked as a teacher and a manager in many schools, and in 1913, he was appointed as a professor of pedagogy to *Darülfünun* and he was selected as the dean of *Darülfünun*'s Division of Literature four times. In 1923, he was appointed as the rector of *Darülfünun* (Güngör, 2008: 55; Akyüz, 2007: 314).

In this process, he put an emphasis on a practical approach to education rather than a theoretical one; he was deeply influenced by the practical education systems in the countries he visited after graduating from *Darülfünun*.

During his stay in France, Baltacıoğlu visited educational and cultural institutions such as schools and theatres, and regarding this visit, he said: “The time I spent in France was the most productive period of my life”. After his return to his homeland, he showed an educational approach that included similar practices, and he gave students the opportunity to do practice in *Şemsülmekatip*, a private school he had previously attended; however, with the outbreak of the World War I, these practices were left unfinished. Similarly, when he was appointed as the director of Gazi Institute of Education in 1930, he wanted to organize this institute in the form of an experimental school, “a school of work”. But he was not allowed to do so, and it was canceled while in the process of planning (Altın, 2014: 222; Kirby, 2012: 71).

Starting from 1913, Baltacıoğlu achieved significant progress in pedagogy in *Darülfünun*; however, due to some political reasons, he was removed from his office under a collective dismissal in 1933. He started to publish a journal named *Yeni Adam* (New Man) in 1934. However, in 1942, he was appointed again by the then Minister of National Education Hasan Âli Yücel to establish the Department of Pedagogy in the Faculty of Languages, History and Geography at Ankara University. Between 1942 and 1950, he was elected as a deputy twice from the provinces of Konya and Kırşehir. Starting from 1951, he worked at the Turkish Language Association for 23 years. He published thousands of articles and more than 120 books in many areas including art, philosophy, sociology, education and religion from 1912 till he passed away in 1978 in Ankara (Widmann, 2000: 177-178).

A Line of Development from Reform to Revolution on Education

Ismayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu’s conception of education should be viewed through a line of development that extends from reform to revolution. During his examinations in Europe, he observed a conception of education that focused on practice rather than theory and enabled students to reveal and develop their creativity, and after his return to his country, he wanted to adapt this educational approach to his country. For this purpose, he took action by firstly making innovations in the existing education system and changing some elements of the system; in a sense, he made a reform in education. However, it was not much possible to use the existing education system as a basis for building a new conception that would make

students active, would eliminate the rote-learning system and would not reduce everything to theory. Therefore, it was necessary to demolish the existing system and create a new education system. Based on these ideas, Baltacıoğlu's conception of education evolved from a reformist line towards a revolutionary one.

His works on education should be considered in order to understand this line of development. The first work in which he revealed his revolutionary line in the literature of education is *Talim ve Terbiye'de İnkılâp* (Revolution in Education and Training). In this work, Baltacıoğlu put forward what he wanted to achieve, or what he aimed, through the new education system he wanted to build, and he criticized the existing education system (Güngör, 2008: 57).

Baltacıoğlu (1964: 6) summarized his criticism as follows: "Have a look at the school we have opened, the curricula we have created, the books we have made students read, and the procedures we have used since *Tanzimat* [reform era in Ottoman Empire]. We understand one thing from pedagogy: A pedagogy that makes students sit at school desks, read books, learn information by rote, prepare for examinations and desire being a public servant!" According to him, it was not possible to construct new ideas on such a conception of education. Therefore, it was needed to demolish the elements of the old system, replace them with new ones and completely remove the unnecessary ones from the system.

Baltacıoğlu systematized these ideas in his *İçtimaî Mektep* which was published in 1931. This work symbolizes a framework in which he demolished many elements of the existing education system, partially abandoned the individualist approach that he had initially adopted, and associated education with social things. *İçtimaî Mektep* was a new school, and it had no similarity with the existing schools. There were production and democracy in this school. It was a school of work. In other words, it was a new school that turned knowledge into work. For the students of *İçtimaî Mektep*, there was no such thing as rote learning; there was learning by doing/experiencing and practicing.

Baltacıoğlu (1942: 1) expressed these ideas as follows:

İçtimaî Mektep, which I finished writing on 24 February 1912, is my first education book. It is a thrust of development achieved by Reform in Education and Training. I collected there the experiences of my life, it is the books of my pedagogical beliefs. *İçtimaî Mektep* is the defense of a cause: the cause of education for creating complete man, real man! It is a child of misery; it ran after new opportunities. Since its creation, it has never rested in the bookshelves like a dead body; it has always influenced, always entered into the life, fought, beat the old, taught the new.

The education provided in *İçtimaî Mektep* is the concretized version of the dream that Baltacıoğlu had in his *Rüyamdaki Okullar* (Schools in My Dream). Through an artistic

perspective, Baltacıoğlu describes the model of school in his mind as a dream. So, it can be suggested that *İçtimaî Mektep* firstly manifested itself in a dream and then entered into the literature as a model of school that could be created in real life.

In *İçtimaî Mektep*, Baltacıoğlu frequently emphasized the social aspect of the school and reinterpreted the education, whose main aim was to socialize individuals, from a perspective that had never been discussed within the Turkish education system until then. He established a school system based on five basic principles, which would be frequently referred in the area of education.

His five basic principles are the principle of personality, the principle of environment, the principle of work, the principle of productivity and the principle of initiation. The first principle of *İçtimaî Mektep*, the principle of personality, refers to the aim of education as the individual's integration of the knowledge with his/her entire personality rather than transferring the knowledge to the individual. In other words, the individual internalizes what is transferred to him/her through education and makes it an integral part of his personality. For instance, when an individual learns about a work of art or a religious symbol together with all the legends about that work of art or religion, with the atmosphere in which it emerged and with the stories about it, then he/she actually learns about that piece of art or religion rather than learning it by rote. This is how *İçtimaî Mektep* manages to create a personality integrated with education.

Baltacıoğlu (1942: 24) suggests that the reality, which should be examined in order to create the social personality aimed by education and the various elements forming this personality, is not a recipe or a concept but the social person himself/herself. This social person is a citizen, a colleague. What is important here is to determine what qualities should be acquired in order to be a citizen or a colleague. In this respect, it can be suggested that the highest purpose of education is the personality of a scientist. The school should create this personality of scientist in students insofar as possible. Similarly, the real aim of vocational education is also the personality of the worker, carpenter or ironsmith. The school should create these personalities in students insofar as possible while providing education.

Another principle of *İçtimaî Mektep* is the principle of environment. According to Baltacıoğlu (1942: 29-30), real personalities can develop only in real environments. This means that a scientist is not a secluded individual has a lonely life, but a member of community with morality, conscience and a special technique. Baltacıoğlu states that being a scientist requires

a whole mentality with its books, tools, procedures, rules, laboratories, ideas, virtues and certain conservative aspects. In other words, scientist must be interested in both material and moral lives. According to him, the same thing applies to a gardener and even to an artist. They also have such a social reality. All these professional people have a perseverance, and this perseverance can emerge only through the social identity of the professional person. This social identity is made up of the genius, inspiration and work of the professional person, and this identity can appear only in a real environment related to the specific profession. Here, Baltacıoğlu emphasizes the importance of the real environment in which the area of profession emerges. For instance, one of the most important requirements for a gardener to perform his occupation is to have a garden because it is impossible for a gardener to actually perform his profession without a garden. Therefore, the real personalities of individuals emerge only in real environments where their areas of profession or the subject areas they are educated in can be practiced.

The principle of work is directly related to the two previous principles. For Baltacıoğlu, real personalities can be formed in real environments only through real works (Aytaç, 1984: 244). In this respect, Baltacıoğlu points out that the works done by the students in *İçtimaî Mektep* are real. In this new school, students try to produce real tools that they can use in daily life. For example, students can be asked to produce woodenware with particle board or plywood in accordance with the development of their psycho-motor skills. Since forming different shapes with construction papers in the name of practical education does not constitute a real work, Baltacıoğlu criticizes such practices.

With the principle of work, Baltacıoğlu (1942: 34) emphasizes technique. According to him, the technique of the scientist is the one that obtains knowledge. Scientific observation and scientific thought are the ways of intellect and understanding that enable scientific discoveries. Therefore, Baltacıoğlu suggests that each of the scientific activities that include these is an “attainment”. A scientific attainment includes reading, writing, memorizing, discussion, note, hesitation, doubt and similar factors. In this respect, the scholar or the scientist must become a discoverer and attain what is scientific. The biggest need of the scientist in this framework is to be free. The scientist, who is supposed to act with certain principles and a very creative intellect, also needs to experience. For no inculcation and no guidance can replace his/her judgments which are products of his/her personality and

experience. All these are possible only through scientist's performance of real works that fall within his/her area of profession.

Real works require productivity. The principle of productivity of *İçtimaî Mektep* stipulates that "the prerequisite of a real work is the attainment of a real work, a real production". By real production Baltacıoğlu (1942: 35-38) means a work that has a social value. For instance, supposing that a lesson had the subject of "shovel", the following methods could be considered:

1. To orally say something and give information about shovel.
2. To make students paint a shovel.
3. To make students create a model of the shovel using paper or cardboard.
4. To make students create an utilizable shovel using sheet metal.
5. To make a shovel from sheet metal in such a way that it can be marketed.

The final option includes a complete productivity because the shovel is a real shovel made from sheet iron, and its marketability shows both its reality and productivity as it can provide a profit in return for the effort made (Baltacıoğlu, 1942: 38). Getting productivity from the work he/she has done, the student believes that what he does is valuable, and gets motivated for that work. Therefore, every work to be done should offer a yield, a productivity.

The fifth and last principle of *İçtimaî Mektep* is the principle of initiation. With this principle, Baltacıoğlu (1942: 39) underlines that education has a duty to prepare individuals for social life. And the educational institution to fulfill this duty is the school. However, the school has limited time and pace for doing this. But what is important here is that the school does what is necessary and possible in order to prepare children for real life within this limited time and space. In this respect, the principle of "initiation" refers to the total of life experiences that are possible to be provided to children within the school environment.

For Baltacıoğlu, who frequently emphasizes that education is an initiation, this principle is actually more prior than other four principles. For initiation expresses a process that covers other principles, too. Baltacıoğlu emphasizes that the education in *İçtimaî Mektep* is only an initiation and that it does not continue throughout the life of the individual. In other words, the school cannot always exist in the lives of people; but the effects of the formal education process in the school continue to exist in the personality of the individual.

Revealing a significant part of his conception of education in *İçtimaî Mektep*, Baltacıoğlu defends that a revolution is needed in education on the grounds that such a conception cannot

be constructed on the existing education system. *Pedagojide İhtilâl*, which he wrote in 1963, defends that necessary revolutions should be made in order to put *İçtimaî Mektep* into practice, and it explains, in detail, in which areas these revolutions should take place. In his work based on the idea that “a new school is possible”, Baltacıoğlu provides very clear information on what this new school will not include and how such exclusions will be compensated for.

Baltacıoğlu defends that the old conception of school should be demolished and a new school like *İçtimaî Mektep* should be built instead. In his *Pedagojide İhtilâl*, he explains in detail what should be done in this process. According to him, many elements of the old school would need to be demolished by a student-centered conception of education that makes students active and lets them reveal their creative intellectuality and learn by doing/experiencing as proposed by the “Movement of Education Reform” of the 20th century. The elements to be excluded can be summarized as curriculum, book, rote-learning, exam and class. Baltacıoğlu eliminated some of these elements while he changed the system of the others; in this way, he paved the way for the student-centered approaches, which rapidly disseminated around the world, to be used in the reconstruction of the education system in Turkey.

In his criticism of the situation of the old and contemporary schools in the beginning of *Pedagojide İhtilâl*, Baltacıoğlu (1964: 7) stated that the Turkish society had been in search of a conception of school since *Tanzimat* era, but they did not know what school they wanted. Since he closely observed many different types of schools during his long life, he put forward very realistic analyses related to the issue. For him, neighborhood schools were traditionalist. Besides, they were against independence and based on rote-learning. In other words, they were a smaller version of the madrasa. No importance was attached to the personality of the child either in madrasa or in neighborhood schools because beating was a tool of punishment in these schools, and few writing tasks were assigned to the children while they were given a lot of reading assignments.

The reason for Baltacıoğlu’s criticism of these schools is clear. These schools ignored the individual learning skills of children/students and made them learn the existing knowledge by rote. No new knowledge was constructed in these schools because it was considered to be a sin to contradict or comment on such existing knowledge. Furthermore, the idea that it is a good deed to read Quran disregarded the teaching of writing especially in neighborhood

schools and gave reading a lot of weight. It was only after *Tanzimat* era that the teaching of writing started to be considered important in primary education in the Ottoman State.

The *Tanzimat* Period is a turning point in education in the Ottoman State. This period followed the Westernization policy of the “Period of First Reformation Movements in Education” which was the previous period of similar type and left its mark on the 18th century, and it led to very important innovations especially in the area of education. For instance, educational stages became clearer, and reforms specific to each stage were made in this period.

Providing a very realistic criticism of the Constitutional Era (*Meşrutiyet*) which followed the *Tanzimat* Era, Baltacıoğlu (1964: 7) suggested that the schools of this era had new buildings just like in the *Tanzimat* Era and they had a conception of education that attached importance to independence unlike the neighborhood schools and madrasa. However, the schools of this period could not provide the real knowledge and thus could not produce creative people, either.

In conjunction with the modernity, the educational policies of the Republic Period changed, and taking the West as a model led to educational innovations in more specific areas. For instance, the basic areas of education such as book, curriculum, journal publishing and teacher education were frequent targets of the change and innovation. However, Baltacıoğlu had various criticisms in this regard.

According to him, although the number of schools, teachers, students and educational tools had increased, and in fact, there had been a fight against many bigoted attitudes during the Republic Period, too much importance was attached to creating curricula in this period, too, just like in *Tanzimat* and Constitutional Eras. Creating curricula was actually the starting point of the innovations in that period. However, the way it was handled was not appropriate because it was necessary to write books to implement the new curricula, and the book was everything for the educators of the Republic Period: Everything that activated the intellect, gave the knowledge, and formed and developed the character (Baltacıoğlu, 1964: 7-8).

In addition to this, Baltacıoğlu (1964:8) states that a lot of weight was also given to publishing journals by the educators of the Republic. Journals were an important tool in disseminating the new conception of education to large masses. For Baltacıoğlu, the educators of the Republic Period, who tried to construct a new conception of education by creating curricula, producing books and publishing journals, represented the continuation of the

education of the Constitutional Era. Although he emphasized some positive aspects of the education of the Republic Period, he also underlined that this period continued the rote-learning system of the past: "...however, despite all these assets and hard work, the school of the Republic, just like the school of the Constitutional Era, could not get rid of traditionalism. Like the school of the Constitutional Era, it also makes students read, it also explains, it also makes them learn by rote!"

So, Baltacıoğlu suggests that the Republic's new conception of education is not very different from the old one because the first condition of being different is to reveal the creative intellectuality of the student. However, reducing everything to the book and considering the book as the sole condition for the students' learning is neither a new nor appropriate way. According to Baltacıoğlu, the book is a necessary tool of education; but it is not the highest-priority educational tool. In his new conception of education, the book has the lowest priority. In other words, the child/student should learn the knowledge by directly experiencing it in its natural environment and then read that knowledge from the book. The book is the theoretical dimension of education. But the new conception cannot be constructed solely on theory; practice should be more prevalent and constitute the first stage in learning.

Baltacıoğlu (1964:8) puts a clear emphasis on the social aspect of education especially during the period he wrote *Pedagojide İhtilâl*. According to him, education should socialize the individual. The institutions which will mediate this will be, of course, the schools:

What were we expecting from the schools? Did we not expect them to prepare the callow children for the social life? In short, growing up of the callow children as social persons. Social person is the one that has a national personality on one hand and a civil personality on the other. The former personality is provided through the culture. And the latter one is provided through the technique. A person without culture and technique is callow and unsuitable for social life. The school exists for giving these personalities, and the exam is for testing whether these personalities are achieved or not. Who has achieved this personality and who has not?

According to him, schools both teach the children their identity, traditions, conventions and social norms by enabling them to acquire the national culture and create the creative intellects of the future by informing them about the technological developments in the world and teaching them how to use that technology. These are the two most basic features of *İçtimai Mektep*.

In explaining what he expects from schools, Baltacıoğlu (1964: 41-43) also criticizes the sole use of exams for measuring the achievement of the aim of the school, which is not to create individuals eligible for social life. For the exam, whether oral or written, includes receiving answers in a short time for the stereotyped questions. Questions in an exam can be important

or unimportant. These questions can be from any part of the book that includes the subject area. Therefore, the students may have difficulty in remembering the answer for the question. This is something that scares them. And the students cannot be comfortable with something that they are scared of. They are required to learn the texts by rote while preparing for the exam. They take notes, draw schemas, repeat, read aloud, sing etc. During the exam, they cannot even breathe when they confront with questions that they cannot answer. If they can answer the questions, they feel a great relief. In such a case, the students feel happy as if they survived an accident. They try to tidy up and recover their personality, which disintegrates due to distress. However, if their performance on the exam is bad, their self gets broken into pieces and they experience a great disappointment and frustration.

The feeling of stress that the exam causes is also a topic to be researched in relation to the objectivity of the exam results because students frequently fail to answer the questions due to excitement despite they actually know the answer. This situation shows that it is not appropriate to measure all the things taught during a whole semester or year through stereotyped questions with limited time for answering like one, two or three hours. This is the exact reason why Baltacıoğlu (1964: 48) criticizes such use of exams as a method of measurement and assessment:

I am not against exams, but I am against this bad form of exams. Such a tradition, which considers asking questions as the sole means of testing, lets the coincidence play the biggest role and includes fear, does not deserve the name of exam. Therefore, it is necessary to eliminate exams and to replace them with an instrument that actually fulfills the task of examination and selection. Our experiences throughout the life manifests the truth of this idea. Are the most successful students in the school exams those who perform their social duties in the best way? Are the unsuccessful students of the school always backward persons? Exams are not a tool of selection contrary to what school pedagogues understand from them. Exams are a procedure that values a certain type of memory more than needed.

Another element that is not suitable for the new conception of education is the classrooms. Baltacıoğlu criticizes the existence of classrooms in which desks are aligned in a row like in a military setting. It is not possible to provide education in a sound way in such rooms. For Baltacıoğlu (1964: 13), individuals are different in terms of their age, their creation and their existence; therefore, imprisoning them in a closed room called classroom has no educative aspect. There are one teacher and mostly more than forty students in these rooms, and the teacher sits on his seat and speaks continuously. The school discipline urges students to sit without any movement, listen to the teacher with great attention, understand the things exactly as they are told and do their homework. As a justification for this, it is alleged that “humans are all created with the same intelligence”, “people of the same age have parallel evolutions”,

and “people of the same age have the same learning abilities”. However, the science of biology defends that these are not true. Therefore, it is not appropriate to suggest that the classrooms, which are a product of this understanding, have an educative aspect.

Baltacıoğlu (1964: 14) suggests that people do not have the same speed of mental evolution, and what actually exists is not an intelligence, but the intelligences. There is not one single intelligence that conceives all the subjects together; there are separate areas of intelligence such as intelligence of science, intelligence of art and intelligence of trade. This is confirmed by the science of biology. Then, if these are the realities of biology, how come the pedagogues put students with different evolutions and different abilities into the same reading rooms called classroom? How come they want to load the students with the same knowledge through the same methods at the same time and on the same days?

According to him, there is no such thing as “to educate” (to discipline), but there is such a thing as “to get educated” (to get disciplined). In other words, individuals cannot be educated from the outside. What is needed for the education of the individuals is to provide the necessary external conditions. For instance, the task of a gardener is not to make an apple tree to yield apples or to teach it to yield apples; but it is to provide the necessary external conditions for the apple tree to yield apples. The tree can yield fruits when such conditions as soil, air, water, sun, fertilizer etc. are satisfied. Similarly, the duty of the teacher in education is to provide the conditions of education for the students (Baltacıoğlu, 1964: 15).

Baltacıoğlu gained his relevant experiences through his examinations about the handicrafts courses and curricula abroad, and he pointed out the conceptions of education in various European countries he visited. He especially underlined how deeply he had been impressed by his observations during a visit to Dr. Decroly’s school in Brussels. Dr. Decroly, who was one of the important educators in the early 20th century, put into practice an educational model that is not used in many of the contemporary schools.

Baltacıoğlu (1964: 16) expresses his impressions about Dr. Decroly as follows:

I was in Brussels in 1910. I visited Dr. Decroly’s school for normal children. The Doctor was himself showing me around. We entered a room. This room did not look like a classroom. Tables were placed near all four walls of the room. Children were taking out pieces of books and journals from the baskets near the tables and cutting out the pictures on these pieces, then they were gluing these pictures on the notebooks in front of them. I asked Dr. Decroly:

-What are these children doing?

He said:

-They are learning history.

-Well, but they do not have any teachers or books! How do they learn? How will the concept of time be formed in these students?

Dr. Decroly gave me this remarkable answer:

-Did you know Brussels when you first arrived in Brussels? You wandered and looked around. And one day, the pieces of the city, which you had learned separately, merged with each other. Brussels became a city. History is also like this. These children will acquire some separate knowledges by cutting and seeing these prints again and again. Someday, all these separate knowledges will come together and the concept of history will be formed.

Various thoughts that Baltacıoğlu had already had in his mind were now grounded on a firm base thanks to such a conception. From that time on, his conception of education was not based on creating curricula, writing books and publishing journals, which were defended by the educators of the Republic Period, but it was now based on an approach that defended the abandonment of attributing basic roles to theoretical elements and that gave the highest priority to practice.

In this respect, whatever knowledge is to be taught to a child should be taught in a practical way as long as possible, and then the child should read the theoretical framework related to the relevant subject. For instance, if a child is to learn how a certain plant grows, how much it should be watered, which fruit it can yield etc., he/she should firstly observe this in the nature, and then he/she should see what has been written regarding this plant. This is the only way of gaining experience, and the learning of the child becomes permanent when he/she gets the knowledge through experience. In this way, the process of education progresses in a sound way.

Baltacıoğlu (1964: 16-17) defends that the evolution of the knowledge is not from the known towards unknown contrary to many educators suggest, but it is from the unknown towards the known. This constitutes Dr. Decroly's notion of education, too, because he believes that education starts with anarchy and ends with order.

The ideas of education proposed by Baltacıoğlu was not only influenced by his impressions of Dr. Decroly's school for normal children; they also bore the traces of the prominent scientists and persons of literature such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Lev Tolstoy. For instance, Baltacıoğlu was strongly influenced by Rousseau's ideas in his famous work *Emile* about how child education should be. The central point of Baltacıoğlu's conception of education was formed by this work in which the child, Emile, was brought up in compliance with his nature, kept far from social pressures and not exposed to any attitude contradicting with his nature. Similarly, Tolstoy's suggestion that education starts with anarchy, i.e. that the behaviors of a child are initially not subject to any rules and are therefore extremely natural, indicates that every child actually exhibits an anarchic behavioral pattern in the early childhood. This idea also made a basic contribution to Baltacıoğlu's conception of education; therefore, it can be

suggested that he took Rousseau and Tolstoy's ideas as a basis especially for his conception of child education.

For Baltacıoğlu, children find their personality within themselves as a whole. Children's competences, inclinations and abilities develop by themselves as they live their own spiritual life. That is why nothing can be given to children from the outside. The nature of children leads them to learn by experiencing. For instance, swimming cannot be learnt through teaching; it can be only learnt by swimming. Therefore, in all stages of their life, children acquire things through their own experiences. In this regard, Baltacıoğlu considers children as beings alone with their own nature until they get out of childhood period. However, the situation changes after childhood, e.g. once the child becomes an adult entering into professional life. For him, the spontaneous developments that children experience in their childhood are a kind of institutionalization in the sense that they get to belong to a community. In fact, when the children experience everything in compliance with their nature during early childhood, they also get prepared for institutionalization required by the adult life. In this respect, Baltacıoğlu suggests that learning is both the spontaneous development of the spirit and institutionalization as a society. When the spontaneous development of the spirit takes place in childhood, it also prepares the ground for institutionalization (Ülken, 2001: 103-104).

So, it can be suggested that Baltacıoğlu frequently underlines that the human is a social being. While he is loyal to the idea of Rousseau and Tolstoy about the nature of the child, he also states that the child cannot behave so naturally when he/she becomes an adult. For individuals belong to a community when they become adults. And this community, which adopts the rules of the society it exists in, enables the adult to behave in compliance with the social norms. This is actually not a transition from a free state to an unfree state. On the contrary, if individuals' freedom is not restricted in their childhood and if they are given the opportunity to behave in compliance with their nature during childhood, then they observe the social life until they become adults, and then the existing rules enter into their life when they reach a certain level of consciousness. This is a lifestyle that the individual adopts with a free will. Otherwise, a state of anomie would arise in the society. And this has nothing to do with being free or not.

As can be seen, Baltacıoğlu blends his pedagogical ideas with a sociological perspective. Therefore, it can be suggested that his conception of education does not separate the human

being from his/her social aspect. However, during the period when the Movement of Education Reform was disseminating around the world, Baltacıoğlu used to approach education with a more individualist conception; he tried to construct a conception of education based on the sole individual characteristics of each child. Later in his life, he comprehended that individuals could not be always isolated from the society with their individual characteristics, and he underlined that they were to act together with the society in terms of both formal and informal education.

By associating the social aspect of the individuals with the environment they live in, Baltacıoğlu (1964: 101) also examined a more specific area within education. For him, the first thing to do for educating an individual is to create the environment that the individual will be educated. He clarified this idea as follows:

“Every education aims to create a certain personality. There is an environment in which this personality can emerge. This environment is an environment of culture or an environment of technique. Education can be received only within its own environment. Therefore, every environment must be suitable for the nature of the education that will be provided within it. The person to be educated must live in such an environment. This living must be also compliant with the conditions of real life. By living, I mean every kind of living: cultural, technical, conscious, nonconscious, individual, social living.”

According to him, a plant needs suitable soil and climate for its growing, and the same need applies to individuals, too. Every individual is a product of his/her own social environment and cannot be isolated from this environment. In this regard, it should be emphasized that it is necessary to know the correct environments that will form the human personality. For people can talk about environment without knowing what an environment is. For example, all parents want their children to be decent persons; but in order to ensure this, they always give them advises, shout and swear at them, beat them, prison them in a room. This is not the real environment of the children including their family life. This can only be a mass life. Therefore, recognition of the real environment is quite important for child education (Baltacıoğlu, 1964: 104).

Furthermore, Baltacıoğlu (1964: 105) underlines that a real environment is not sufficient by itself for the education of children. It should be also an advanced environment. It should be compliant with the nature of the society in which the family and school environments exist. However, many environments are less advanced than the society in which they exist in both cultural and technical terms. For instance, autocratic orders can be found in democratically-governed societies, or there may be people acting like a dictator in schools which have the aim of freedom.

Therefore, all these things require effort because providing an environment of education for children means creating an environment that is suitable for their personalities, that includes and can implement democratic elements, that enables children to learn by doing/experiencing and that provides necessary conditions for this purpose. And, of course, the duty of informing families about these needs and arranging the school environments accordingly belongs to educators.

Method

This is a theoretical study based on the use of documents. In this respect, Ismayıl Hakkı Baltacıođlu's works related to the topic, *İçtimai Mektep* (Social School) and *Pedagojide İhtilâl*, have been reviewed within the scope of the study. Besides, secondary resources (books, articles etc.) written about Ismayıl Hakkı Baltacıođlu in relation to the topic have been also examined.

Conclusion

It can be suggested that according to Baltacıođlu's analysis of the Turkish education system, both the Ottoman education and the Republic Period's education system were quite late in implementing the developments in education when compared with the European education. For instance, the contemporary conception of university, which dates back to the 12th century in Medieval Europe, could emerge in the Ottoman Empire only in the 19th century with many deficiencies. Unfortunately, this lateness had negative impacts during the first years of the Republic, too. Under these circumstances, various intellectuals, who are now remembered with respect, searched for ways to alleviate the destruction of this lateness and somehow became successful in this.

Many intellectuals such as Koçi Bey, Katip Çelebi, Erzurumlu İbrahim Hakkı, Emrullah Efendi and Satı Bey managed to stop this negative situation especially starting from the late 18th century, and they could put into practice important ideas for fulfilling the deficiencies of the education system. Just like these intellectuals, Ismayıl Hakkı Baltacıođlu appeared as a prominent intellectual in the early 20th century, when the education was evolving in a very different direction.

The basic factors that made Baltacıođlu an important person in the field of education should be sought, of course, in his identity as an educator. When he was just 24, the then Minister of

National Education sent him to various European cities, where he conducted systematic research. He could objectively compare the implementation, in these cities, of the Movement of Education Reform, which was rapidly getting widespread around the world, and the desperate situation of the Ottoman State, which gave education a lower priority due to wars. His experiences in these cities led him to think that “a new school was possible”; but he did not hurry to take action. His idea of education had a systematic structure that started with detecting the deficiencies of the existing education system one by one and continued with contemplating on what should be done to eliminate them.

After his return to his country, he worked as a teacher and as a manager in various schools in which he had also received education; during this period of time, he had the chance to detect the deficiencies of the schools. Although he initially considered to make an education reform with the aim of making changes on the basic elements of the traditional education system such as school, classroom, exam, teacher, student etc., he soon recognized that it was not possible in such an education system to create the “new school”, which he wanted to establish based on his impressions abroad, and to create the “new men”, whom he wanted to educate in this new school. From that time on, reform in education was replaced by revolution; this revolution managed to demolish the old elements of education and replace them with new ones that would lead to the creation of active individuals who would be compliant with the necessities of the time, have a broad horizon and have leadership skills.

His conception changed the classroom arrangement, the exam system and the teacher profile; it set the students, who were continuously loaded with the ready knowledge, free from intellectual passivity based on constant reception, and it led to a model of student who got excited of what he/she did, became motivated to do better as he/she got a product, and had an inquisitive and creative intelligence. Such a model student would not accept ready knowledge and he/she would believe that his/her knowledge should not be tested solely by an exam that took only several hours. Of course, the execution of the minds that would think in this way would be guided by teachers. One product of this new conception would be the teachers serving as guides for the children, whose minds were not processed yet, to search for, analyze, criticize and internalize the knowledge. Baltacıoğlu revealed these ideas in *İçtimaî Mektep* (Social School); but this school never existed actually. However, until the outbreak of the World War I, Baltacıoğlu put these ideas into practice to a significant extent in *Şemsülmekatip*, where he had also received his primary education; and having alleged that “a

new school was possible” in the Turkish education, he entered into the literature as an educator who managed to realize this possibility.

In *İçtimaî Mektep*, Baltacıoğlu explained in detail how the education should be, and in his *Pedagojide İhtilâl*, he demolished the obsolete and harmful elements of the existing education system and replaced them with the new ones that were compliant with the time, with the world, and most importantly, with the needs of the students. Within this framework, his reformist conception starting with his *Talim ve Terbiye’de İnkılâp* evolved into a revolutionary conception over time; *İçtimaî Mektep*, which he called the “book of his pedagogical beliefs”, served as a bridge between both conceptions, and his conception of education took on its full meaning in *Pedagojide İhtilâl*.

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