

A LOCAL EXAMPLE FOR NATION-ARMY SOLIDARITY IN TURKS: THE DONATION OF THE AEROPLANES BOUGHT BY BURSA SOCIETY TO THE ARMY

Saima YÜCEER¹

ABSTRACT

Turkish Aeroplane Association which was structured as a non-governmental organization completed its organization throughout the country a short time after the foundation of the Headquarters on 16 February 1925. Bursa Branch was one of the most successful branches of the Association. People in Bursa supported the policy to form an force which they considered as of vital importance for the national security with great self-sacrifice. Also, there was a great interest towards aviation among the young generation in Bursa. The campaign to buy planes aroused great interest in Bursa and the districts. Orhaneli, one of the districts of Bursa with the lowest income bought two planes and donated them to Turkish Aeroplane Association. People in Bursa proved the importance they give to the issue by being in one of the top rows of plane buying campaign.

Key Words: Atatürk, Bursa and her districts, Plane Donation, Army, Security, Republic.

ÖZET

Türklerde Millet Ordu Dayanışmasına Yerel Bir Örnek: Bursalıların Aldıkları Uçakları Orduya Bağışlaması

Bir sivil toplum örgütü olarak yapılandırılan Türk Tayyare Cemiyeti, 16 Şubat 1925'te merkezin kuruluşundan kısa süre sonra, ülke genelinde örgütlenmesini tamamladı. Bursa örgütü, Cemiyetin en başarılı şubeleri arasında

¹ Ass. Prof. at Uludağ University Arts & Science Faculty History Department.

yer alıyordu. Bursalılar, ülke güvenliği için çok önemli gördükleri hava gücü oluşturma politikasını, büyük bir özveriyle desteklediler. Ayrıca Bursalı gençler arasında, havacılığa karşı büyük bir ilgi uyandı. Bursa merkez ve ilçelerinde uçak alma kampanyası büyük ilgi gördü. Bursa'nın gelir düzeyi en düşük ilçelerinden olan Orhaneli iki uçak alarak Türk Tayyare Cemiyetine bağışladı. Uçak alımında Bursa, Türkiye genelinde ilk sıralarda yer alarak konuya verdiği önemi kanıtladı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Atatürk, Bursa ve İlçeleri, Uçak Bağışı, Ordu, Güvenlik, Cumhuriyet.

INTRODUCTION

For Turks, 19th century passed full of events that caused an intense security anxiety. 20th century, however, was to start with a period in which security matter was to be experienced under much more severe conditions. In this period, having an air force² which was an additional force to defence industry recently was of vital importance. Immediate actions were taken on this subject; Staff Lieutenant Süreyya Bey was charged with the establishment of an aeroplane station and academy in Istanbul³. On June 1st, 1911 the foundations of Modern Turkish Aviation were laid by the establishment of an Air Commission within The Ministry of War⁴.

In Republic Period, Air Force which was started during Ottoman Period reached the contemporary level. The contributions of the public under the influence of army-nation solidarity tradition to the Air Force

² Wilbur and Orville Wright Brothers managed to fly in the air for a short period of time such as 12 seconds on December 17th 1903 with their first plane which they named Flyer I. This event caused the fact that aviation studies in America and in Europe had gained speed. Wilbur Wright gave the “What will the plane you have made do?” question of the press the answer “War” without any hesitation. In 1905, 4 years after this answer, America owned the first military aeroplane. Other countries also started to form an air force in line with their either security or imperialist policies. See Hartley Cook, *The Birth of Flight* London 1941; Enzo Angelucci, *World Encyclopedia of Civil Aircraft, from Leonardo da Vinci to the present*, New York 1987; *Türk Havacılık Tarihi* (Turkish Aviation History), Eskişehir, 1950, p.48

³ Süreyya İlmen, *Türkiye’de Tayyarecilik ve Balonculuk Tarihi (The History of Aircraft and Balon in Turkey)*, I. Kitap, Hilmi Kitabevi, İstanbul 1947, p. 19- 20.

⁴ Süreyya İlmen, *ibid*, p.19-20; Yılmaz Öztuna, Yavuz Kansu, Servet Şensöz, *Havacılık Tarihinde Türkler (Turks in The Aviation History)*, Ankara 1971, p.129, Yavuz Alıcı, *Havacılığa Giriş (Introduction to Aviation)*, İstanbul 1990, p. 19. Through the end of June 1912, some of the officers who were selected for being a teacher at Air Force Cadet School and have completed their aviation study in REP aeroplane factory school returned to Istanbul with their diplomas. Thus, the personnel, equipment and facilities necessary to train pilots were prepared and on July 3rd 1912 Air Force School was established in Yeşilköy. Rıfat Uçarol, *Tarihi Gelişim İçinde Hava Harp Okulu (1951-1987) (Air Force Cadet School Through Historical Progress)*, İstanbul 1988, p. 29. Also See. *Birinci Dünya Savaşı Türk Hava Harekâtı (Turkish Air Borne Operation in World War I)*, General Staff Publication, Ankara 1971.

played an important role in this marked improvement. This article tries to throw a light into Bursa aspect of the nation contribution and to determine the support of Bursa Society to Air Force.

THE DONATION OF THE AEROPLANES BOUGHT BY BURSA SOCIETY TO THE ARMY

The occupation of Bursa on July 8th 1920 and the fact that the city stayed was occupied for more than two years increased the sensitivity of Bursa Society towards security policies. In this process in which the grief and sorrows of the occupation were still raw Turkish Aeroplane Society one of the aims of which was to introduce the importance of aviation to Turkish nation and to arouse a love for aviation in the younger generation was founded (February 16th 1925). The association which was structured as a non-governmental organization was embraced by the public. Thus, it organized throughout the country in an amazing speed⁵.

Bursa committee which was among the most successful branches of the Association was established in February 1925 coordinated with the establishment of the Head Office and started its activities. In a short period of time branches were opened in the districts of Bursa and towns participated into this organization as well⁶. Public was regarding the Association as a part of the Army and believing that it will complete a mission, they were providing all kinds of material and moral support. The fact that Bursa Society had showed great interest towards the Aeroplane Association, bought aeroplanes and donated them to the Army appeared as an example of how a poor society strained the borders of self-sacrifice in history.

The campaign which started with the foundation of Turkish Aeroplane Association to buy planes was conducted throughout the country at a quick pace. Chaplains were giving speeches emphasizing the importance of buying aeroplanes in order to strengthen air defense⁷. Bursa was among the first cities which showed a great interest in plane buying campaign.

There was a ceremony to name the aeroplanes that were bought with the donations made by the nation. In such ceremonies, the aeroplanes were named after the city, district or town which donated the aircraft. Such

⁵ *Türk Tayyare Cemiyeti Birinci Büyük Kurultay Tutanakları (The Records of the First Grand Turkish Aeroplane Association Assembly)*, Ankara 1925, p. 3.

⁶ *Türk Tayyare Cemiyeti, Esas Nizamname ve Madalya Nizamnamesi (Turkish Aeroplane Association, Principal Regulations and Medal Regulation)*, Ankara 1932, p.34-35.

⁷ Directorate General of Prime Ministry State Archives Republic Archive, Organization Code: 051/748, File. 13, Record. 114, Document. 26. The article dated April 13th 1341 (1925) and sent by Turkish Aeroplane Association Bursa Branch to Mufti's Office.

as “Bursa”, “Orhaneli”, “Karacabey”... This practise was a psychological factor that prompted the public.

August 30th, which is celebrated as “Victory Feast”, began to be celebrated as “Aeroplane Feast” as well. Public were participating intensively to these celebrations⁸. In these celebrations every corner of the city was decorated and male and female students were handing out sweet smelling aeroplane pins to the public. The ceremony for naming the aeroplanes that were bought and donated to the army was scheduled for this date as much as possible⁹.



Green Bursa II Aeroplane, bought and donated to Turkish Aeroplane Association by Bursa Society¹⁰.

In this process, more than one plane was bought in Bursa and donated to Turkish Aeroplane Association, therefore to the army. Orhaneli which was one of the districts of Bursa with a low income also bought two planes and donated them to Turkish Aeroplane Association¹¹. Emin Akkaş who is a witness of the period indicates: “Public wanted the army to be

⁸ August 30th Victory Feast was also celebrated as Aeroplane Feast . *Milliyet, August 30th 1934.*

⁹ *Yeni Fikir (New Idea)*, September 3rd 1925.

¹⁰ Saime Yüceer, *ibid*, p.35.

¹¹ *Havacılık ve Spor (Aviation and Sports)*, Number: 12, 30 November 1929, p. 219, *Aviation and Sports*, Number: 13, 15 December 1929, p. 231.

stronger. Because earlier in Çanakkale and other places there was a strong need for planes. Public is helping so that we fly high in the air and be like other nations. In the first years of the Association people in Orhaneli were racing in order to provide more help to Aeroplane Association...The first plane was bought in 1932. There was a second plane as well...Everyone in the district gave the skin of the sheep they sacrificed for Bayram, you know. Also, in Ramadan the offerings were given in the way determined by the mufti. For instance, a person brings sheep or a cow and donates it to Aeroplane Association. The association was selling it with public auction. There were many petitions during the day. Each and every petition had an Association stamp. A revenue stamp of 15 kurush, and a plane stamp, that is the stamp of the Association, of one kurush...This was money was collected and used for buying planes...”¹²



Orhanili I Aeroplane, donated to Turkish Aeroplane Society in 1932 by Orhaneli District¹³.

As indicated in the quotation above, people were giving the skin of the animals they sacrificed and the offerings to Turkish Aeroplane

¹² Saime Yüceer, *Tanıkların Anlatılarıyla Bursa Tarihi (History of Bursa with the Narration of the Witnesses)*, Uludağ University Publication, Bursa 2005, p. 289-295. (From now on this source will be referred to as TABT). Additionally, it was requested that a 50 kurush plane stamp should be put to the commands given in accordance with town codes to imams by the muftis. Directorate General Prime Ministry State Republic Archive, Organization Code: 051 716, File 3, Record 16, Document 18.

¹³ Saime Yüceer, *ibid.*, p.36.

Association every year. This made considerable contributions to the Association¹⁴. This tradition still continues today in certain dimensions.

Among public, there were some people among who didn't support this Association. For instance, the anti-Republic people who were in favor of a religious state were not satisfied with this situation. After a short While, they started to make propaganda among public in order to attenuate this social formation. They can be called fundamentalists. Hüseyin Berk, one of the witnesses of the period says "Fatwas indicating the offerings given to a non-religious state were not effective were furnished."¹⁵ Despite this opposite propaganda, public continued to provide help to the Association. However, the number of the people who had given help to the Association on one hand and to the places determined by the religious groups on the other was not insignificant.

The donations to the Association were realized via branches in the city centre and districts and mukhtar's office in towns. In towns, people were giving their offerings via mukhtar's office to the Aeroplæ Association. Every household was given envelopes of Aeroplane Association. The amount determined by the will of the donator was put into the envelope and then delivered to the mukhtar's office or mukhtar's office was collecting them. The money gathered was handed in by the mukhtars to the Association. Mukhtars and village council of elders were performing in the name of Aeroplane Association¹⁶.

One other income resource or the Association was the lottery tickets. National Lottery Administration was founded in order to create source for the Association¹⁷. On this issue, Bahattin Çiğ says "*There was Aeroplane Movie Theater in Bursa and Aeroplane Association was next to it. They had hired a place in Gemlik. It was in the center. There was Aeroplane lottery, they were selling tickets. The tickets weren't expensive. There were prizes. It was organized in Bursa and Gemlik...*"¹⁸

¹⁴ Directorate General Prime Ministry State Republic Archive, File 3, Record 17, Document 3, 21.

¹⁵ *The interview made on October 4th 2002 with Hüseyin Berk who was born in 1338(1922).*

¹⁶ Saime Yüceer, *TABT*, p. 77-78.

¹⁷ On this issue, Muazzez İlmiye Çığ, who was born in 1914 in Bursa says that, National Lottery Administration was founded for this Association. There were contributions and donations from the public as well. There were additions to the stamps... They required stamps on discharge certificates of the soldiers and thus gained considerable income. Ataturk wrote "Nutuk" and donated all the incoming profits of this book to this organization. Also, Turkish Aeroplane Association was inspected strictly. Planes were bought with the money collected..." Saime Yüceer, *TABT*, p. 68.

¹⁸ Saime Yüceer, *TABT*, p. 157.

The association had income from the membership fees as well. The members of the Association were paying the amount they desired as a fee in return for a receipt. Ali Koçum, who is one of the witnesses of the period, says “I, later, became a member as well. I used to contribute five to ten liras a year in return for a receipt. The collected money was used to buy planes.”¹⁹

Karacabey was among the districts which bought and donated planes to the Association. People in Karacabey suffered severely during the occupation and their place was reduced to ashes by the occupational forces. They provided considerable support to the security policies due to the sensitivity this situation created. The local people had shown great interest to the campaign to buy planes and Karacabey was among the first districts which bought a plane. People in Karacabey had donated the plane named Karacabey which they had bought with the contributions they had collected to Turkish Aeroplane Association on the day August 30th 1929 with a ceremony²⁰. A year later people in Gemlik also bought a plane and donated it to the Association during Aeroplane Feast after a denomination ceremony²¹ (August 30th 1930).



Karacabey Aeroplane, donated to Turkish Aeroplane Association on August 30th, 1929 by Karacabey District²².

¹⁹ Saime Yüceer, *TABT*, p. 201.

²⁰ *Karacabey Kaymakamlığı, Karacabey '99 (Karacabey Districti, Karacabey '99.)*, Prepared by: Hasan Duruer, Publication Erol Ofset, p.24-25.

²¹ *Havacılık ve Spor (Aviation and Sports)*, 30 August 1930, p. 490.

²² Saime Yüceer, *ibid.*, p.36.

One other district which had bought a plane was Yenişehir²³. On this issue, Adem Yüce states “Yenişehir, also had a plane at that time. Yenişehir also bought a plane”²⁴. Again, on this issue, Mehmet Emin Lapacı, who was also the president of Turkish Aeroplane Association Yenişehir Branch, says “I was the president of the Branch. I was in this position for three or four years. Before I, elder people used to be the president. They all served gladly. They used to collect the skins with cars...Later on, skin receipts were prepared. They were started to be given in return. People provided Turkish Aeroplane Association with support. Planes were bought with the money collected there”²⁵.

Orhangazi was among the districts which had bought a plane as well. The plane bought by people in Orhangazi²⁶ was donated to Turkish Aeroplane Association after a denomination ceremony during Aeroplane Feast (August 30th 1934). The ceremony which was held in İncirli countryside started at four o’clock in the afternoon. Governor Fazlı Bey, in his speech for the occasion, emphasized the importance of the air force and indicated that public had shown the importance they had given to air force with the planes they bought and donated to the army every year. After that, the cloth covering the plane was lifted. After the ceremony, Orhangazi Plane flew over the city and saluted the people. That day, the aviators were given a luncheon in the garden of the city hall²⁷. On this issue, Ali Kurtoğlu says “*When I was little there was Aeroplane Association. Everyone contributed as much as they desired. We are helping the government, Aeroplane Association means the government. We had a monoplane.*”²⁸

From the information presented so far, it is understood that Bursa city and her districts; Orhaneli, Karacabey, İznik, Yenişehir, Orhangazi and Gemlik had bought planes and donated them to Turkish Aeroplane Association²⁹. In 1929, Bursa was in the 10th row throughout the country in plane donations to the Association. In plane buying campaign, İzmir was

²³ *Havacılık ve Spor (Aviation and Sports)*, Number: 12, 30 Neovember 1929, p. 219.

²⁴ *The interview made with Adem Yüce, who was born in 1917 in Yenişehir, on 5 October 2002.*

²⁵ *Saime Yüceer, TABT, p. 332.*

²⁶ *Türk Tayyare Cemiyeti, Esas Nizamname ve Madalya Nizamnamesi (Turkish Aeroplane Association Principal Regulations and Medal Regulation)*, p. 26.

²⁷ *Yeni Fikir (New Idea)*, 6 September 1934.

²⁸ *Saime Yüceer, TABT, p.315-318.*

²⁹ We were able to reach the photos of the planes that were bought. A few examples are provided at the end of the article. On this issue, See Saime Yüceer, Atatürk’ün Güvenlik Politikasına Bir Örnek:Türk Tayyare Cemiyeti Bursa Örgütü (An Example for Atatürk’s Security Policy: Turkish Aeroplane Association Bursa Branch), Atatürkçü Bakış C.2, Sayı: 3 Uludağ University Publication, Bursa 2004, p. (7-42), p.32-42.

the first, Manisa was the second, and Edirne and Kırklareli were the third. Giresun was the fourth, Istanbul the fifth, Karesi the sixth, Muğla the seventh, Tekirdağ the eighth, Kocaeli the ninth. The last ones in the list were Çankırı, East Karahisar and Artvin.³⁰

On the date August 27th 1925, the plane donation money collected in Bursa was about 14.100 liras³¹. From the day it was founded till the beginning of the year 1934, all the income of Bursa Branch of the Association, which collected 18.791 liras of income in 1933, was a total of 476.653 liras 56 kurush. The Association was providing support to the security and culture policies of the nation with the contributions collected. In this context, Bursa Branch of the Association bought the area known as Bursa Airport today and donated it to Air Forces to use as a landing area. Again, by the Association, upon the order of the head office, a beautiful movie theater and the most modern theater building were built and started to function in 1932³².

In the opening ceremony of the theater building, Republican People's Party Bursa Provincial Chairman Hulusi Bey, by saying "Aeroplane Association is not satisfied only by buying war equipment but also working for the development of the country in the civilization field... It is giving this education school to patriotic Bursa Society and her prospective generation"³³ in his opening speech indicated that young

³⁰ *Türk Hava Mecmuası (Turkish Aviation Magazine)*, Number:70, 15 April 1929 Ankara, p. 1069.

³¹ *Yeni Fikir (New Idea)*, 27 August 1925.

³² Sedad, *Bursa Yıllığı 1934 (Bursa Almanac 1934)*, Bursa Municipality Publication, p. 6. Turkish Aeroplane Association had organized a competition in 1930 for the theater building in question. Architecture Arif Hikmet Koyunoğlu's project won the first position in this competition. *Ibid*, p. 6-7. In the article titled "New Theater of Bursa: The most modern theater of Turkey is in Bursa" of the newspaper Cumhuriyet (Republic) this building was described as "Upper and lower storey of the building consist many large shops and rooms for rent... The inside of the building there is the theater and movie hall. The theater hall is not like any other in Turkey. The lighting and sound systems are designed in the latest fashion. There is nearly no electric lamp in sight; yet, the enormous building is radiant like daylight. One thinks that a mysterious ray of light is emanating from the ground or the sky above. The ceiling and side walls of the hall are built like accordion bellows that are integrated from the stage on. The floor is coated with a material that covers the footprints. In the front there is the orchestra stage with a depth of 2,5 meters. Stage system is not built yet. On the sides, there are cloakrooms, smoking rooms, casinos and on the upper floor there are two balconies with upper and lower boxes. From wherever inside the theater you look, you can see the whole hall. The centers are for 1200 people. On the upper floor there is the terrace and a glass-casino was built for summer. Terrace is absolutely breathtaking. It views the whole citys." *Cumhuriyet (Republic)*, 28 May 1932.

³³ *Cumhuriyet (Republic)*, 28 May 1932.

Republic did not make a concession from the holistic development model; that is he emphasized that republic had the determination and resolution to run material progress in parallel with cultural improvement³⁴.

The development model planned in Ataturk Period did not aim military modernization or material progress only. It also targeted the socio-cultural improvement and this was among the aims with priority. There was a campaign throughout the country in order for the nation to turn into an intellectual society. The public also seemed to be willing to modernize their life style. To the effect that amateur theater groups were formed in the districts of Bursa by the local people and the plays prepared by the local people for the local people were put on the stage in community centers.

On the other hand, a first for aviation history took place in Bursa and Turkish Bird Bursa Branch opened in the second week of May 1936. A flat was prepared as an office on the upper floor of Tayyare (Aeroplane) Movie Hall for Turkish Bird which was another activity branch of Turkish Aeroplane Association. Even before Bursa branch of Turkish Bird was opened, many young girls started to become members. Their attention continued after the branch was opened.³⁵ The first female was pilot of the world Sabiha Gökçen was from Bursa as well. Sabiha Gökçen, who was a talented aviator, took off from Yeşilköy Aircraft Headquarters on June 7th, 1936 at 16:20 and after a tour over Yalova she reached Bursa in 35 minutes. A welcoming ceremony was held with the participation of The President Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, civil and military authorities and the public. Sabiha Gökçen made a successful landing to the ceremony ground, but before she could get off the plane, with the request of the people present there she took Bursa Governor with her and landed off again. This flight of the young aviator which she realized with great bravery and self-confidence was applauded again and again by the people present in the area.³⁶

Sabiha Gökçen became an ideal example for young girls. People in Bursa were regarding the participation of the young girls to Turkish Bird besides young men with excitement and pleasure. This change was an indication of how revolutions affect social structure and that it usually was the result of a common act. For the first time, 15 students from Girl's Teacher School registered as members to Turkish Bird. The ones whose names were identified were; Muzaffer Tümay, Suna Tınaztepe, Mualla Yılmaz, Müeddeb, Neyir, Hikmet Ertan, Ferhunde Polat, Maide Ulusoy,

³⁴ *Cumhuriyet (Republic)*, 28 May 1932.

³⁵ *Cumhuriyet (Republic)*, May 7th 1936.

³⁶ *Ulus (Nation)*, June 8th 1936.

Remziye Yılır, Müfide Ulusoy. It was said that the number of the participants would increase³⁷.

Türkkuşuna rağbet

Bursa şubesi yakında açılıyor, birçok genc kızlar şimdiden aza yazılmağa başladılar



The girls who were registered to Turkish Bird from Bursa Girls' Teacher School³⁸

Suna Tinaztepe stated how she felt about her becoming a member of Turkish bird as follows: “I do not think that it is right that we stay behind while civil world is making progress in flying and aviation. Even though I am a woman, I have great bravery. I loved aviation all along anyway. As soon as we were given this chance I would like to took it immediately and registered to Turkish bird. I will both fly and parachute.”³⁹

The interest of female students to aviation was impressive since women who were abstracted from social life for centuries due to various reasons wanted to show their desire to be present in every aspect of life.

³⁷ *Cumhuriyet (Republic)*, May 7th 1936. People from Bursa who registered themselves as active members to Turkish Bird till May 6th: 90 from high school, 6 from Agriculture school, 15 from Boys' Art School, 15 from Girls' Teacher School, 18 self-employed, 6 from Akınspor Club. People who were registered as associate members were about 200; however, it was estimated that the number would increase to 3000. Republic *Cumhuriyet (Republic)*, May 7th 1936.

³⁸ *Cumhuriyet (Republic)*, 7 May 1936.

³⁹ *Cumhuriyet (Republic)*, May 7th 1936.

RESULT

The occupation period caused the fact that people in Bursa approached the subject of security with a great sensitivity. The people in Bursa who stayed calm during the occupation displayed a great amount of self-sacrifice in order to strengthen the defense of the country after salvation. Again, this period played an important role in the fact that people in Bursa who were generally for regency changed their attitudes and embraced republic regime and they supported the policies which they thought might empower this regime.

Bursa society related the great grief they experience during this period to the regency regime and in order not to experience another occupation, they provided great contributions to the air force, which they thought might be a major deterrent force, of the army which realized their salvation and has republican values. The fact that people in Bursa and the districts had bought planes –despite the economic impossibilities they had– and donated them to the army is important since it displays the size of the support provided.

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