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## Education in the Thrace Region According to the 1935 Reports of the General Inspectorate of Thrace

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### ABSTRACT

### ARTICLE INFO

With the Industrial Revolution, the demand for educated and skilled labor increased, paving the way for the expansion of educational institutions. Over time, many European states made formal education compulsory in response to this need. In the Ottoman Empire, however, attention during the same period was primarily directed toward military education. During the reign of Mahmud II, Sibyan schools were established and compulsory education was introduced. Although efforts to expand education continued in subsequent periods, the desired outcomes could not be achieved. The Second Constitutional Era, in particular, witnessed accelerated initiatives aimed at increasing the number of schools. Nevertheless, the cycle of warfare beginning with the Italo-Turkish War redirected state expenditures largely toward military needs, thereby limiting progress in the field of education. Following these prolonged wars, the newly founded Republic of Turkey prioritized educational reform. In this context, the Congress of Education (Maarif Kongresi), convened in Ankara between 15 and 21 July 1921, identified the needs of the Turkish education system. A nationwide educational mobilization was launched, and various legal arrangements were enacted to expand education from rural to urban areas. Schools and village reading rooms were constructed in rural settlements, and boarding schools were established for children living in villages without schools. In addition, the opening of "Millet Mektepleri" strengthened non-formal educational activities. Sports clubs were also established in provinces, districts, and villages to introduce the public to various branches of sports. All these efforts were monitored through a meticulous system of inspection, and reports prepared by the General Inspectorates were regularly submitted to the government. This study examines, in the light of archival documents, the reports and correspondence prepared by provincial directorates of education regarding the activities, numbers, and budgets of fee-based or free boarding schools, Millet Mektepleri, village reading rooms, and youth sports associations in the Thrace region, as well as information concerning the students, athletes, and local inhabitants who benefited from these institutions, as requested by the Thrace General Inspectorate.

**Key Words:** Village schools, Public schools, Literacy campaign, National education, General Inspectorate of Thrace

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## 1935 YILI TRAKYA UMUMÎ MÜFETTİŞLİĞİ RAPORLARINA GÖRE TRAKYA BÖLGESİNDE EĞİTİM

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### ÖZET

### MAKALE BİLGİSİ

Sanayi Devrimi'yle birlikte eğitilmiş ve vasıflı iş gücüne duyulan ihtiyaç artmış, bu durum eğitim kurumlarının yaygınlaşmasına zemin hazırlamıştır. Zamanla Avrupa'daki birçok devlet, bu ihtiyaca binaen örgün eğitimi zorunlu kılmıştır. Osmanlı Devleti'nde ise aynı süreçte askerî eğitime odaklanılmıştır. II. Mahmut döneminde Sıbyan mektepleri açılarak eğitim zorunlu hâle getirilmiştir. Sonraki dönemlerde de eğitimin yaygınlaştırılması çabaları devam etmiş fakat istenilen sonuçlar elde edilememiştir. Özellikle II. Meşrutiyet döneminde okul sayısını artırmaya yönelik girişimler hız kazanmıştır. Ancak Trablusgarp Savaşı ile başlayan savaş dönemi, devlet harcamalarının büyük ölçüde askerî alanlara yönelmesine yol açmış, eğitim alanındaki ilerlemeleri sınırlamıştır. Savaşların ardından kurulan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ise eğitim meselesini öncelik vermiştir. Bu kapsamda 15-21 Temmuz 1921 tarihlerinde Ankara'da toplanan Maarif Kongresi'nde Türk eğitim sisteminin ihtiyaçları tespit edilmiştir. Ülke genelinde kapsamlı bir eğitim seferberliği başlatılmış, köyden kente eğitimin yaygınlaştırılması amacıyla çeşitli yasal düzenlemeler yapılmıştır. Köylere okul ve köy odaları inşa edilmiş, okul bulunmayan köylerdeki çocuklar için yatılı okullar kurulmuştur. Bunun yanı sıra millet mektepleri açılarak yaygın eğitim faaliyetleri güçlendirilmiştir. İl, ilçe ve köylerde spor kulüpleri oluşturularak halkın farklı spor dallarıyla tanışması sağlanmıştır. Tüm bu çalışmalar titiz bir denetim mekanizmasıyla takip edilmiş; Umumi Müfettişlikler aracılığıyla hazırlanan raporlar düzenli olarak hükümete sunulmuştur. Bu araştırmada, Trakya Umumi Müfettişliği'nin Trakya bölgesindeki paralı veya parasız yatılı okullar, millet mektepleri, köy okuma odaları ve gençlik-spor birliklerinin faaliyetleri, sayıları, bütçeleri ile bu kurumlardan yararlanan öğrenciler, sporcular ve köy halkına ilişkin il maarif müdürlükleri tarafından hazırlanan rapor ve yazışmalar arşiv belgeleri ışığında incelenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Köy okulları, Millet mektepleri, Okuma yazma seferberliği, Milli eğitim, Trakya Umum Müfettişliği*

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### Introduction

The Industrial Revolution changed production and consumption patterns and brought about a new urban and social structure. Social mobility increased and new social organizations emerged. With the concept of the nation-state, countries needed extensive educational institutions to convey their national policies. In many European countries, the rate of schooling was increased and education was made compulsory (İşler, 2021). In the Ottoman

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Empire there was no centralized education system, and modern educational institutions began to be opened starting from the Tanzimat era. The institutionalization of educational affairs, which began in 1845 with the Meclis-i Maarif-i Muvakkat, was developed into a ministry in 1857 and the Maarif-i Umumiyye Nezareti (Ministry of General Education) was established (Budak, 2018). In the subsequent period, efforts to expand education and increase the number of educational institutions continued and intensified. When the Kanun-i Esasi (Fundamental Law) was proclaimed in 1876, education was made compulsory for all Ottoman subjects regardless of sex. The number of primary schools was increased. However, as was foreseen, these schools did not provide scientific education; rather, they mostly offered religiously oriented education (Uyanık et al., 2021). Although the Provisional Primary Education Law (Tedrisat-ı İptidaiye Kanun-ı Muvakkati) was enacted with the Second Constitutional Era, the desired success could not be achieved (Göyünç, 1976).

When the Republic was proclaimed, the primary goal was to increase the number of literate people and, as stated in the Basic National Education Law, to raise citizens who adopt, protect, and develop the Turkish nation's national, moral, humane, spiritual, and cultural values (Düster: Tertip: 5 Cilt: 12 Sayfa: 2342). In this context, work began in the villages. Because a significant portion of the population lived in villages and the literacy rate in villages was quite low (Kaştan, 2006). It is asserted that in 1923 there were 364,428 students of primary school age (Özbek, 2019). Of the forty thousand villages in the country, thirty-five thousand did not have a primary school. As secondary educational institutions, idadies and rüşdiyes were opened under the Regulation of Public Education (Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi) in 1869. A rüşdiye was planned for places with more than five hundred households, and an idadi for regions with more than one thousand households (Çağır and Türk, 2017). However, these schools remained limited to religious lessons and did not reach the targeted level of education. As higher education institutions, Darülfünun and military academies were established (Duran, 2018). Yet these schools were insufficient to meet the country's needs. For this reason, serious measures were taken in the field of education, strict monitoring was implemented, and an uncompromising education mobilization was launched. In a speech he delivered in the assembly on March 1, 1922, Mustafa Kemal Pasha said;

“...that the most efficient and most important duty is educational services, and that the program we are obliged to follow in order to accomplish this duty must be completely appropriate to the present condition of our nation, the needs of social life, environmental conditions, and the demands of the age... (Duran, 2018)” Thus he in a sense stated the justification for the principles the new state would follow regarding education. Again, on 1 November 1937 he said, “Our great cause elevates our existence as a civilized nation. This is the perpetual ideal of this great Turkish Nation. Success in this can only be achieved by working in a planned and rational manner. For this reason, to leave no single citizen illiterate, to train the technical personnel demanded by the country’s great struggle for development, to create individuals and institutions that will understand, explain, and carry the nation’s causes and ideology from generation to generation” (Önsoy, 1991). With these words he expressed his determination regarding education. As a result of this determination and the course taken,

regular annual reports concerning the country's educational situation were prepared and submitted to the Prime Ministry via the Ministry of Education. These reports described both the work carried out and the problems encountered. The Prime Ministry was informed on many matters, from teacher salaries to school enrollment rates, student numbers, and the condition of higher education institutions. In this study, the educational reports sent to the Trakya General Inspectorate, established in 1934, were examined.

### **Method**

History is the discipline that examines events that occurred in the past. Historical research is generally studied under the categories of military, political, economic, intellectual, and social history. Studies have been conducted on institutions, individuals, nations, periods, and events (Şimşek, 2009). In this research, the subject was examined objectively, without approaching it through any philosophical perspective—such as theocratic, dualist, materialist, positivist, idealist, or humanistic—that might influence the researcher's viewpoint. Events were considered in accordance with the conditions of the period in which they occurred and were not associated with present-day circumstances. The researcher employed historical methodology. In this study, archival documents were used to examine the reports and correspondence of provincial education directorates regarding the status, numbers, and budgets of boarding schools (paid or free), nation schools, village reading rooms, and youth sports associations operating in the provinces, districts, and villages of Thrace, as well as information on the students, athletes, and village residents benefiting from these institutions, as requested by the General Inspectorate of Thrace. In this study, the qualitative research method used in historical science investigations was applied. First, the topic was identified and delimited. Primary (archival documents) and secondary (published works) data collection methods were used. After the data were collected, they were examined and classified according to their subjects. During the classification process, information cards were prepared, as is common in historical research. Based on these information cards, the writing of the text was initiated in an impartial manner.

### **Findings**

#### **Education In Thrace According To The 1935 Reports Of The Thrace General Inspectorate**

General Inspectorates, an administrative unit above the provinces, were first established during the reign of Abdülhamid II in the Eastern Anatolia region (Bulut, 2015). Although this practice was abolished during the Second Constitutional Period, a decision was made on 8 February 1914 to reinstate it in Eastern Anatolia; however, it could not be implemented due to the outbreak of the First World War and the subsequent recall of the Norwegian and Dutch inspectors appointed to the region (Türkmen, 2006). Although the Ottoman State sought to reactivate the General Inspectorates in the eastern provinces during the National Struggle period, it was unsuccessful. After the proclamation of the Republic, General Inspectorates were established in 1927 for reasons of public order. From 1927 to 1952, five General

Inspectorate regions were established (Köse & Köse, 2018). Initially created for purposes of maintaining public order, the General Inspectorates eventually became involved in economic, cultural, social, and educational matters.

The Thrace General Inspectorate was established based on a report prepared by İbrahim Tali Öngören, who had been appointed to the First General Inspectorate Region, and submitted to the Prime Minister in 1931 regarding the creation of a second General Inspectorate (Burgaç, 2010). Based on this report, the Thrace General Inspectorate was founded on 19 February 1934 in accordance with Law No. 1164, covering Edirne, Kırklareli, Tekirdağ, and Çanakkale and being responsible for public works and settlement affairs in the region. İbrahim Tali Öngören was appointed to the Thrace General Inspectorate based on his experience (BCA, 163-788 – 5, Belge Tarihi: 29.11.1935, 180-9-0-0). However, due to health problems, he resigned, and on 9 August 1935, İzmir Governor Kazım Dirik was appointed in his place (Batu, 2008). Upon his appointment, Kazım Dirik toured the region to identify deficiencies and followed the ongoing activities (Batu, 2008). He particularly emphasized education and requested reports from the governorates within his region. In this regard, reports concerning education were sent from the provinces of Edirne, Kırklareli, Tekirdağ, and Çanakkale (BCA, 163-788-5, Belge Tarihi: 29.11.1935 /180-9-0-0,1).

In the telegram sent to each province, answers to the following priority questions concerning the region's education were requested:

Where are the boarding schools opened so far, and how many students are enrolled? Is there a boarding school planned for the new year? What are your thoughts and measures regarding bringing three to five children from villages without a school or teacher—where children do not receive any education—to nearby villages that have a school and teacher, as boarders? To what extent can this be implemented in 1935, and is there space available in the schools?

In how many places will Nation Schools be opened in 1935? In how many of these places or villages will education be paid or free of charge, and do they have allocated budgets?

How many reading rooms had been opened in the provinces by 1935? How are the reading needs of the public and villagers being met? Are the books to be kept in the reading rooms written in Turkish, understandable to the public, and useful works?

The number of boarding schools directly affiliated with the Ministry of Culture and village boarding schools in the province; the number of students and teachers; how many years they have been operating; and the number of children who have graduated during this period. Have reading rooms been opened in the province, and where were they opened? What are their annual expenses? The number of sports and scouting institutions in the province and their members; the number of men and women who have received certificates from the Nation Schools from the year they opened until now; and in the budgets of villages where the Village

Law is applied, how much of the allocated funds is for staffing and essential expenses, and how much is for development? (BCA, 163-788-5, Belge Tarihi: 29.11.1935 /180-9-0-0,1).

### 1. Edirne

Reports were examined within the framework of the questions listed above. Accordingly, it appears that boarding education capacity in Edirne Province was experiencing a significant decline and uncertainty. Within the province, the only boarding school directly affiliated with the Ministry of Culture was the Girls' Urban Boarding School (Kız Şehir Yatılı Mektebi) located in Karağağaç. However, since this school was scheduled to be closed, only 4th- and 5th-grade students were continuing their education there. A village room affiliated with this school was present. The Village Room had 80 readers, 4 teachers, and 1 worker who also served as a warehouse clerk. Its budget was stated as 18,343 liras. There were no village boarding schools in the province. Detailed tables showing the number of students who attended the Nation Schools opened between 1928 and 1934 by academic year, those who succeeded among the attendees, and the expenditure items included in the budget during those years were presented in the annex of the report. A table listing the names of the Nation Schools opened on a voluntary basis in the 1934–1935 academic year was also included in the annex. This indicates that the program was being continued without official budget allocation. There were no reading rooms in the province. A chart showing the overall educational situation of the province was provided. (BCA, 163-788-5, Belge Tarihi: 29.11.1935 /180-9-0-0,2).

Table 1. (BCA, 163-788-5, Belge Tarihi: 29.11.1935 /180-9-0-0,3 ).

District	Number of Villages Where the Village Law Is Applied	Amount Allocated in the Budget – Staff & Essential Expenses	Amount Allocated in the Budget – Development
İpsala	21	9,926	6,700
Kavaklı	—	11,021	8,534
Keşan	51	5,465	2,981
Uzunköprü	—	35,648	24,330 / 13
Tatarlar	12	3,542	10,297
Sırpsındığı	8	3,387	155
Havsa	—	9,215 / 7	7,400 / 86
Lalapaşa	19	6,978 / 35	6,698 / 15 – 280 / 20
Merkez	15	7,475 / 56	6,099 / 16 – 1,376 / 40

In the districts affiliated with Edirne province, the application of the village law was observed in a total of 126 villages. In these villages, budgets were specified and the processing of how much of the money sent was allocated to essential expenses and how much to development expenditures was carried out.

Table 2:

Name of the Sports Organization	Date Founded	Active Athletes / Scouts	Passive Athletes / Scouts	Notes
Edirne: Thrace Sports Region of the Turkish Athletic Association	20.12.1926	5	—	—
Edirne: Sports Union	3.10.1932	43	22	—
Edirne: Aktop Sports Club	15.1.1935	14	7	—
Edirne: Railway Workers Sports Club	24.3.1935	20	10	—
Edirne: Yavuz Sports Club	18.6.1929	30	10	—
İpsala: Sports Club	22.6.1931	21	36	—
Uzunköprü Sports Club	1924	20	67	—
Keşan Sports Club	1.1.1934	30	10	—

From 1924 to 1935, eight sports clubs were established in Edirne Province and its affiliated districts. It was determined that these clubs had 183 active members and 155 passive members (BCA, 163-788-5, Belge Tarihi: 29.11.1935 /180-9-0-0,4 ).

Table 3:

Year	Number of Classrooms	Attending Students	Students Passing Exams	Successful External Learners	Annual Expense
1928–1929	116	1,190	218	483	1,500
1929–1930	42	1,109	877	21	10,000
1930–1931	41	1,297	615	26	10,000
1931–1932	17	550	108	—	10,000
1932–1933	—	—	—	—	—
1933–1934	—	—	—	—	—
1934–1935	35	993	433	277	Voluntary

It was determined that there were interruptions in the implementation of the Nation Schools program in Edirne Province. During the 1932–1933 and 1933–1934 academic years, no activities were carried out within the scope of the Nation Schools program. During this period, the Nation Schools were opened voluntarily, without any official budget allocation. This situation indicates the dedication of teachers and administrators to public education. Through voluntary efforts, Nation Schools were put into operation in 32 different local units (villages, subdistricts, or the provincial center). Voluntary Nation Schools were opened in the following places: Tatarlar, Yağcılı, Taşlısiğmen, Hacı Umur, Akardere, B. Gerdelli, Sülxeoğlu, Sarıdanışmet, Lalapaşa, Taşımüsellim, Hacı Danişmet Vaysal, Kalkansöğüt, Küçünlü, Büyünlü, Dombay, Demirköy, Pravadı, Yakup Bey, Hasırcı, Arnavut, Lulu, Sirem, Sultan Köy, Paşaköy, Turpçular, İbriktepe, Hacı Köy, Harala, Bayramlı, Malkoç, Paşayığit, Türkmen, Çeltik, Karaincirli, and Bağçe (BCA, 163-788-5, Belge Tarihi: 29.11.1935 /180-9-0-0,6 ).

These voluntary efforts demonstrate that, despite financial constraints, both the local population and administrators in the region exerted considerable effort to meet the literacy needs of the community. The only girls' school in Edirne Province is the Gazi Girls' Urban

Boarding School. This institution is notable for both its budget and the number of students enrolled. Although it is designated as a girls' school, it appears to have admitted male students as well, with a total of 80 students—59 girls and 21 boys. The school's expenses were not covered solely by the Edirne provincial budget; rather, its operation was supported by numerous other provinces, including Edirne, Kırklareli, Ordu, Samsun, Seyhan, Siirt, Sivas, Tokat, Urfa, Van, Muş, and Zonguldak. The total amount allocated by these provinces was 18,343 Lira. No other boarding schools were identified within the province. Although a suitable building existed in Süleoğlu for the establishment of a boarding school, the lack of funding precluded its opening in 1935.

In Edirne Province, the Nation Schools program was unable to achieve the desired level of efficiency due to financial insufficiency. Since no budget allocation was provided, Nation Schools could not be opened in 1935. Within the province, aside from a reading room established by the Edirne Halkevi, no other reading rooms were observed. This indicates that efforts to promote cultural dissemination outside the Halkevi were largely neglected (BCA, 163-788-5, Belge Tarihi: 29.11.1935 /180-9-0-0,7).

## **2. Kırklareli**

According to the 1935 data, it was determined that the number of educational institutions and students in Kırklareli Province needed to be increased, and it was emphasized that the budget should be expanded to achieve this. Boarding schools, which are an important element for the dissemination of education, could not be established outside the Pınarhisar Subdistrict. The existing school in this area was closed due to insufficient funding, posing a significant barrier, particularly for children from villages with limited access to schools. Furthermore, it was reported that the student population in other schools was too large to allow their conversion into boarding schools. Education in Kırklareli Province had not yet reached the desired level.

To address this issue, several solutions were proposed. Accordingly, it was planned to establish one boarding school each in the Demirköy District, the Kofçaz Subdistrict, and the vicinity of Alpullu villages to accommodate children from villages without schools. In this way, children who would otherwise be unable to attend school could receive education through boarding schools. As these schools were to operate free of charge, equal educational opportunities would be provided for all. Nation Schools were planned to be opened in the provincial center, district centers, subdistrict centers, and large villages that already had two fully operational schools. It was anticipated that these planned schools would be ready by October and November. In addition, public reading rooms were to be established to promote cultural development and increase literacy rates. Preparatory work was underway to implement the necessary administrative measures in accordance with prior instructions issued by the Ministry of Culture for the establishment of these reading rooms (BCA, 163-788-5, Belge Tarihi: 29.11.1935 /180-9-0-0,8).

## **3. Tekirdağ**

According to the 1935 reports, there was no boarding school in Tekirdağ Province directly supported and managed by the Ministry of Culture. The only boarding school not directly affiliated with the Ministry of Culture was established in the village of İncik, under the provincial center, on 29 October 1933. The İncik school had six teachers and 159 students, of whom 40 were boarding students and 119 were day students. The boarding section of the school was organized into three classes in its founding year. As in previous years, 40 boarding students from surrounding villages without schools were admitted in 1935.

The existing school buildings, both in the center and villages, were only large enough to accommodate the school-aged children of their immediate localities. This limitation made it impossible for students from villages without schools to be transferred to these centers for education. Efforts to increase the capacity of the schools were ongoing. In the Saray district, the completion of a large school building under construction in the center would make it possible to establish a boarding school, similar to the one in İncik.

Significant difficulties were encountered in expanding Nation Schools and reading rooms due to insufficient funding. If financial support were provided, it was planned to open Nation Schools in 110 villages. The financial problems had reached such a level that teachers' salaries could not be paid. This situation necessitated the voluntary service of teachers and created an expectation that local villagers would cover the costs of classroom lighting and heating. No allocation for salaries or other expenses was expected in the 1935 budget; without such funding, achieving the planned objectives appeared impossible.

To meet the literacy needs of the population, reading rooms were set up within existing school buildings, books were delivered, and teachers provided the necessary guidance. Despite these efforts, no positive results were achieved, indicating the inadequacy of the attempts to expand education. Overall, the reports demonstrate that the need for boarding schools in Tekirdağ was high, but the lack of financial support and insufficient school infrastructure posed significant obstacles to the wider dissemination of educational activities (BCA, 163-788-5, Belge Tarihi: 29.11.1935 /180-9-0-0,8).

Progress was achieved in educational activities, with fourth grades established in the 1933–1934 academic year and fifth grades in the 1934–1935 academic year. At the end of the latter year, the first graduates completed their education, with nine children successfully graduating. In Tekirdağ, alongside Nation Schools, Public Reading Rooms were opened in schools in 1928. However, despite all incentives, these reading rooms did not achieve the expected level of activity. The underlying reason was identified as certain social and cultural habits of the villagers. In the evenings, villagers returning home tired from work gathered in coffeehouses to rest, socialize, meet friends, discuss agricultural and work-related matters, find laborers, and drink coffee. It was observed through previous attempts that villagers rarely gathered elsewhere, especially for reading.

To cultivate reading habits among the population, it is necessary to renovate coffeehouse buildings—where villagers gather daily—into hygienic and orderly spaces that can

accommodate rest, conversation, and reading. Newspapers, magazines, and books that will attract public interest should be regularly supplied to these spaces. Additionally, activities must be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined by the state. Similar to other provinces, Tekirdağ also faced financial difficulties. No monetary support was provided for reading rooms. In terms of sports and youth activities, the province had six Sports and Youth Institutions, with a total of 339 members. Since their establishment, Nation Schools have graduated 6,127 women and 11,880 men, with the number of male graduates nearly double that of female graduates. Village budgets were allocated according to the principles determined by the Village Law, and, except for Malkara, the allocations were categorized into two main items. Accordingly, the allocations were as follows: Staff and Mandatory Expenses: 86,613 Lira; Development Expenses: 103,470 Lira (BCA, 163-788-5, Belge Tarihi: 29.11.1935 /180-9-0-0,9).

#### **4. Çanakkale**

In Çanakkale Province, there are two separate primary boarding schools in the Biga District; however, no additional boarding schools have been established for the new term. In Çanpazarı, there is a boarding school with 35 students, and in Dimetoka, a boarding school with 40 students. The students admitted to these schools primarily consist of children from villages without teachers, who otherwise would not have been able to attend school. It has been reported that the schools are capable of accepting new students.

From the perspective of public education, there are no reading rooms established in the province to meet the literacy needs of the population. The villagers' need for reading is met through the books, newspapers, and magazines available in the libraries of schools that have teachers. The success of this process is directly linked to the teacher's supervision and attention. Funding is necessary to supply books to the village reading rooms that will be opened, and it has been considered more appropriate to send these books directly to the villagers rather than requiring them to purchase the materials themselves. Accordingly, it is planned to allocate funds in the 1936 budget to cover this cost. Since reading rooms could not be established in 1935, this service is expected to continue only through the existing books, newspapers, and magazines in villages with schools and teachers.

The Nation Schools program will not be implemented in 1935 due to insufficient budget allocation within the provincial budget. In previous years, this responsibility was carried out by teachers whose salaries were not paid, and these unpaid amounts were recorded as debts. Consequently, the financial obligations carried over from previous periods make it impossible to initiate a new program. In summary, although Biga District has a basic boarding school capacity, it faces significant difficulties in expanding and sustaining Reading Rooms and Nation Schools initiatives due to financial constraints (BCA, 163-788-5, Belge Tarihi: 29.11.1935 /180-9-0-0,10).

## **Conclusion**

The Thrace region has been a highly dynamic area in terms of population movement due to wars and population exchanges. The state of conflict experienced since the Balkan Wars had devastated Thrace, and its recovery could only be achieved through a structured program. The establishment of a general inspectorate and its close engagement with the public's issues was met with great satisfaction among the population. The close monitoring of local affairs by the state was perceived as an extension of governmental authority into Thrace and was met with support.

In accordance with the reports of İbrahim Tali Öngören, the provinces of Edirne, Çanakkale, Kırklareli, and Tekirdağ were consolidated to form the Thrace General Inspectorate. İbrahim Tali Öngören worked selflessly for the development of the region, prioritizing education. His successor, Kazım Dirik, continued and expanded these efforts. Reports were requested from the provinces within the inspectorate to closely monitor progress. Within the framework of the Republic's laws and plans, which prioritized rural development, education and instructional activities were organized into a structured program.

According to the 1935 reports for the Thrace General Inspectorate region:

In Edirne and its districts, the Village Law was applied in 126 villages. Eight sports clubs were established between 1924 and 1935, with 183 active and 155 passive students identified. During the same period, 141 Nation Schools were opened, educating over four thousand students. Additionally, girls' boarding schools, community centers, and village reading rooms were established. Reading rooms were stocked with books approved by the Ministry of Culture. Some boarding schools, such as the one in Süleoğlu, were closed due to lack of funding.

In Kırklareli Province, the boarding school in Pınarhisar Nahiyesi was closed due to budget constraints. As of 1935, there were no operational boarding schools in the province. Plans were made to open boarding schools for children from villages without schools or teachers in Demirköy District, Kofçaz Nahiyesi, and the Alpullu villages. In 1935, free Nation Schools were established in the provincial center, district and subdistrict centers, and large villages with two fully functioning schools. A public reading room managed by the Halkevi was also established in the provincial center.

In Tekirdağ Province, village reading rooms, boarding schools, and Nation Schools were established. There were six Sports and Youth Organizations in the province, with a total of 339 members. From the establishment of the Nation Schools until 1935, 6,127 women and 11,880 men received certificates. In the budgets of villages subject to the Village Law (excluding Malkara), 86,613 Lira were allocated for staff and mandatory expenses, and 103,470 Lira for development. As of 1935, Çanakkale had two boarding schools. No reading rooms were established in the villages; book distribution and reading activities were maintained through the personal efforts of teachers. Overall, educational and instructional

activities in Edirne and Tekirdağ were observed to be at a higher level compared to Çanakkale and Kırklareli.

In conclusion, the desired level of success in educational activities across the Thrace region was not achieved. The primary reason for this shortfall was insufficient budget allocation. Although significant budgets were allocated to villages under the Village Law (as seen in Tekirdağ and Edirne), a large portion of these funds was consumed by mandatory administrative expenses, leaving development and educational investments secondary. The lack of specific budgetary provisions for the establishment of Nation Schools and boarding schools in provincial budgets represents the greatest obstacle to the expansion of public education and schooling.

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