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TRANSFORMATION OF THE PEOPLE'S HOUSES INTO PUBLIC EDUCATION CENTERS: AN EVALUATION STUDY BASED ON ARCHITECTURAL SPACE, USING THE İZMIT PEOPLE'S HOUSE AS AN EXAMPLE

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Abstract

People's Houses (*Halkevleri* in Turkish) are structures that were established after the Republican revolutions in order to support and encourage these new revolutions and thus contribute to the social and cultural development of the society. These structures --which have been serving as cultural centers from the time they were established-- bear the original architectural features of their era. With this aspect, People's Houses are the product of the New Republic era that supports modernization on a regional basis.

One of the most important features of these structures is that they are cultural spaces that contribute to the ideological and political structure of the New Republic. People's Houses are institutions where individuals of all ages (men, women, children) and all social classes can receive public education. In addition to all these features, People's Houses are architectural structures designed with the efforts of the New Republic that envisioned to create a modern society.

The People's Houses were first established in 1932, but they were closed down as a result of the political changes of the 1950s, being replaced by Public Education Centers or Evening Art Schools. Due to the socio-political and socio-cultural changes that developed over time, the People's Houses --which have an important place in history-- were deprived of their resourcefulness, becoming almost non-operational, some being completely eradicated. These structures are worth examining due to their architectural features and their contribution to the cultural and social structure of the society in the history of Turkey.

This study examines these institutions --which can also be called "public schools"-- by giving Izmit People's House as an example. In addition to the architectural features of this particular House, the contributions of the social-cultural developments of the period will be emphasized as well. In this context, our goal is to create a conceptual framework based on relevant research and literature in order to contribute the public's social memory.

Keywords: People's House, People's House Plan Typology, Educational Spatial Organizations, Izmit People's House.

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Introduction

The establishment of the New Republic has brought along some major revolutions that aimed at creating changes in the social, economic and social structures. Many public institutions and organizations were launched in order for the public to adopt, internalize and get-educated-on these new revolutions which focused on modernization. In particular, many organizations such as People's Houses, Public Chambers, Village Institutes, and Language History Institution are the leading values of the New Republic. One can say that the Turkish people's struggle in the War of Independence had now continued in the social plane. People's Houses and Public Chambers especially contributed in terms of public education and were highly instrumental in creating a modern and capable nation.

At this point, the concept of education should be mentioned first, because it is extremely important in understanding the importance of public education. The concept of education has been one of the most important factors that have created societies throughout human history. Only educated societies can reach advanced civilization levels and create healthy living conditions for individuals who make up the community. In such societies, people can live without worry and ensure prosperity for their future.

"The aim of education is to ensure the personal development of people, to make their lives easier/more functional, and to help them so that they can develop their talents and use them at the highest level" (Tanır, 2006, 6).

According to Tanır's definition, the education facilitates the lives of individuals first and then the lives of societies through these individuals.

"Public education on the other hand (also known as adult education, non-formal education, community education) is a regular and organized educational effort directed at adults and those who are out of school" (Geray as cited in Türkoğlu and Uça, 2011, 49).

Dolanbay (2014, 18) on the other hand, collects the content of the concept of public education within the framework of education and training activities, and he lists goals such as providing citizens with knowledge and skills, increasing the level of welfare, providing national identity, and improving human virtues. If we examine the studies on public education within the historical context, it was aimed to educate the public even before the Republican period and various public education organizations were launched.

Public education organizations are divided into two categories: Before the Republican Era, and the Republican Era. Public education organizations before the Republican era: *Medrese* (Madrasah), *Enderun* (Palace school), *Ahilik* (Turkish-Islamic Guild), Training Hearths, Army, Apprentice Schools, *Tekke* (Islamic monastery), *Zaviye* (A small Islamic monastery), *Sıbyan mektebi* (elementary school), Turkish Hearths and some voluntary organizations. Public education organizations of the Republican period are defined under two categories: educational organizations in single-party period and educational organizations in multi-party period. Public education organizations in the single-party period: Public Training Branch (1926), Public Classrooms (1927), Nation Schools (1928), Public Reading Rooms (1930), People's Houses (1932) and Village Institutes and Village Training Courses (1936). During the multi-party period, Public Education Centers were established (1956) in an effort to organize public education (Tanır, 2006, 77-78).

In the first years of the republic, studies on public education was carried out by the Turkish Hearths. However, these studies were not considered sufficient. Bayraktar (1999, 27), attributes this to the fact that the Turkish Hearts lacked scientific prospects for the future and avoided suggesting a new way of life. Uluskan (2010, 20) states that, as a result of understanding the importance of non-governmental organizations that play an important role in the development of the idea of democracy, Atatürk decided to continue the public education efforts with People's Houses, instead of the Turkish Hearths.

As a result of understanding this educational need in the social structure, the planning and preparation processes began and in 1932, the first People's Houses were established in the following cities: Afyon, Ankara, Aydın, Bolu, Bursa, Çanakkale, Denizli, Diyarbakır, Eminönü, Eskişehir, İzmir, Konya, Malatya ve Samsun. Later, the number of People's Houses increased day by day according to the increasing demands and needs and reached 478. The number of Public Chambers were also established in regions that could meet the establishment standards of the People's House and their number has reached 4322.

People's Houses, with the efforts they carried out all over the country since the the time they were established --being active mostly in education, but also in fields such as art history, culture, sports music for



the development of society-- ensured that the new Turkish nation become cultured, educated, nation-conscious, social-conscious, self-aware, self-supporting and self-sufficient individuals in every way. People's Houses have many branches such as Language-Literature Branch, Fine Arts Branch, Stage Arts Branch, Sports Branch, Social Aid Branch, Public Classrooms and Courses Branch, Librarianship and Publishing Branch, Villagers Branch, History and Museology Branch, an these branches have been serving the nation in every region of the country. In the regions that do not meet the establishment standards of the People's Houses, this service was delivered to the public through the Public Chambers.

However, the fact that the People's Houses were serving the nation in care of the state became a frequently discussed topic in parliament after the start of multi-party life in 1946. It was claimed that the People's Houses worked as a branch of the Republican People's Party and it was requested that they become independent and after nearly two decades of functioning, the People's Houses were closed in 11 August, 1951 by the Democrat Party with the law numbered 5830 published in the official newspaper, and all their assets were transferred to the state treasury. Some of the evacuated People's Houses were given to different public institutions and organizations, while others were demolished and completely deleted from the social memory. The main reasons for this to happen were that the educational role of the People's Houses was ignored, they were seen as a purely ideological tools and so they were marginalized, and the fact that they are examples of national architecture was not taken into consideration.

The essence of this study is to determine and analyze the use of space and spatial functions that changed in the process of transforming the People's Houses into Public Education Centers. In this context, both past and present uses of Izmit People's House will be discussed. In the study, Izmit People's House was evaluated by examining the spatial programs and plan typologies of Izmit Public Education Center and Evening Art School.

In terms of the scope of the literature review, we scanned the previous studies, written theses, published books/magazines and archives on People's Houses, People's Houses spatial programs and public education. We obtained some of the periodicals published by the People's Houses through the internet, and from the Prime Ministry Republic Archive we gained access to documents related to People's Houses and Izmit People's House. In the study, by obtaining the necessary permissions, we observed and photographed the Izmit People's House which now serves as Izmit Public Education Center (IHEM). Then, we reached the floor plans of Izmit People's and IHEM buildings. In the examinations made on spatial programs, the analyzes that take into account the plan plane focus only on the ground floors of these institutions.

In the study, we will first discuss the concept of People's Houses and explain the architectural forming principles and plan typologies of the structures of these Houses. Next, we will briefly talk about the history and services of Izmit People's House. Finally, in the light of written and visual documents, we will analyze the change and transformation phenomenon in the People's Houses by focusing on Izmit People's Houses.

1. The Concept of People's House

If we examine the period when the idea of the People's Houses emerged, we can immediately see the disconnection between the people and the government, and the lack of a structure that would encourage public revolutions. After the alphabet revolution that took place in 1928, Nation Schools were established to teach the public the new Latin letters. Thanks to Nation Schools, a literacy-based educational mobilization was launched all over the country. However, the activities of this new Turkish Republic institution were not sufficient for goals such as creating national consciousness and bringing the nation to the level of contemporary civilizations. In addition, the Great Depression was felt all over the world, and Turkey was adversely affected also, and as a result of the political upheaval of the era, it became even more important to ensure national unity. So it is clear that all these events were socio-economic and socio-cultural factors that paved the way for the establishment of People's Houses.

People's houses were officially opened on February 19, 1932. On this date, 14 Houses started to operate actively. At the end of one year, the number of People's Houses across the country reached 34. In the following years, "in an effort to establish a Public House in each city, the number in the entire country reached 478" (Çeçen, 1990, 108). As a result of the literature review, many statements regarding the purpose, importance and establishment of the People's Houses were made as follows:

"People's Houses were established to develop the national unity and to take the first step towards modernization" (Kurnaz Şahin, 2014, 23).



"People's Houses are the areas of reform to create a national culture and to implement the ideas of disseminating this culture" (Bayraktar, 1999, 153).

"People's Houses were first founded by intelligentsia in our history of civilization; but it is a people's institution based on the values of the people" (Kara, 2006, 32).

"The purpose behind launching the People's Houses was to fill the gap between the people and the state." (İlgazi, 2002, 17).

When the People's Houses and Public Chambers Directive is examined, the following statement is found regarding the purpose behind the People's Houses: "Always maintaining and improving the reform and social progress actions in the country" (*People's Houses and Public Chambers 1932-1942, 1942, 3*).

First People's Houses: "Afyon, Ankara, Aydın, Bolu, Bursa, Çanakkale, Denizli, Diyarbakır, Eminönü, Eskişehir, İzmir, Konya, Malatya, Samsun. After those, the number of People's Houses opened across the country has increased very rapidly (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Public Houses distribution on a provincial basis between 1932-1935 (From the Journal of Municipalities (Durukan, 2006, 91).

According to Durak (2014, 425), the People's Houses emerged as an important means in the modernization process of the Turkish state and nation, and thanks to these Houses, the innovation efforts that have been applied from top to bottom for centuries could now come from the *bottom* in the shortest way possible. People's Houses targets a state-intelligentsia-public integration and with this structure, it has opened the way for the political, economic, social and cultural demands to come from the public.

There are nine branches of the People's Houses (as defined in the *People's Houses Directive, 1932, 10*): Language-Literature-History Branch, Fine Arts Branch, Stage Arts Branch, Sports Branch, Social Aid Branch, Public Classrooms and Courses Branch, Librarianship and Publication Branch, Villagers Branch, Museum and Exhibition Branch. Later, the History Branch was taken from the Language-Literature Branch and added to the Museum Branch. Thus, the History and Museology Branch emerged.

Language and Literature Branch activities were as follows: organizing ceremonies, conferences, performances, concerts and various events; to contribute to the spreading of the native Turkish language and its adoption by the people in their regions; to talk about the history, arts, traditions and customs of the current region through the People's Houses magazines they publish; to allow many aspiring young writers to gain recognition with the People's Houses magazines and thus find the opportunity to work in bigger magazines (*People's Houses Public Chambers 1932-1942, 1942, 4*).

Fine arts was considered as the most important element in the education and development of society, and the Fine Arts Branches activities were as follows: organizing tours of famous painters; promoting painting / photography exhibitions; arranging "People's Houses Art and Folklore" nights periodically on the radio to promote folk music, dances and customs through. Thanks to all of these activities, the natural connection between the Turkish nation and Fine Arts could emerge. In a sense, with this national cultural accumulation introduced to the public, many artists found the opportunity to excel in this national wealth. In the Music activities of Fine Arts Branches, western technique and folk motifs were prioritized. Thanks to the activities of this branch, People's Houses bands and orchestras took an active role in many public meetings and holidays all over the country (*People's Houses Public Chambers 1932-1942, 1942, 5*). National holidays have been very important for People's Houses. In fact: "People's Houses have undoubtedly paved the way for large masses to celebrate national holidays in an enthusiastic atmosphere"



(Arikan, 1999, 277). Through these national celebrations, individuals saw themselves as a part of the society and thus social awareness on an individual scale was created. Findıklı (2014, 45) approaches the issue from a different perspective, and according to him, the content of such events organized by the People's Houses is welcomed mainly because a local part of the society has already shown interest in their region from the very beginning, and with these events they wish to recognize --or discover and resolve-- the language and the code of a particular ceremony and demonstration culture. However, we do not find Findıklı's approach realistic, because the People's Houses are each a taskforce that offers activities and national goals that appeal to people from all strata.

And the first activities of the Stage Arts Branch was to organize theater plays, *karagöz* or puppet shows, light comedy and movies. Thanks to Stage Arts Branch, many successful actors were trained --even in regions where stage performances was not welcome-- and they qualified to enter the State Conservatory. Many citizens met with the Theater for the first time in their life through People's Houses, and this clearly shows the success of this Branch at the social level (*People's Houses Public Chambers 1932-1942, 1942, 5-6*). And in fact: "Many rural Turks living in small towns first met with theater plays, classical music concerts, books and art exhibitions in People's Houses (Bozdoğan, 2002, 110).

And the activities of the Sports Branch were as follows: primarily to promote sports and body training; to spread national sports and dances to the whole public; to emphasize the healing effects of sport on morals and character; to promote sports activities such as wrestling, shot-put, equestrian javelin, boxing, fencing, sea sports, mountaineering and skiing, cycling, athletics, volleyball, basketball, tennis, sports trips and various competitions. (*People's Houses Public Chambers 1932-1942, 1942, 6-7*).

The activities of the Social Aid Branch were as follows: primarily to find and help local citizens who are in need (In 1939, 45,870 poor patients were helped, and in 1940 this figure reached 52,967. While the cash aids provided by the branch were around 40,000 TL in 1939, it reached around 50,000 TL in 1940); to give clothes and fuel to the poor; to deliver hot meals to students; provide books and other texts for prisoners; to assist villagers and orphans in their official work with the government; to help those who are affected by natural disasters. (*People's Houses Public Chambers 1932-1942, 1942, 8-9*).

The activities of the Public Classrooms and Courses branch were as follows: Turkish reading and writing courses; physics-chemistry courses; vocational courses on practical life; fine arts courses; foreign language courses; and courses that train students who have failed during formal education. In 1939, 223 classrooms with an attendance of 14,047 citizens were opened for illiterate citizens who passed the formal education age. By 1940, the number of classrooms opened was 472 with an attendance of 22,551 citizens. (*People's Houses Public Chambers 1932-1942, 1942, 9-10*).

Librarianship and Publishing Branch; in addition to the reading rooms in their own buildings, they opened reading rooms in neighborhoods and villages that are far from the local People's House, and in prisons. The people who came to these rooms not only fulfilled their need for reading, but they also had heart-to-heart talks with each other, and told each other what they had read. According to the 1940 data, 116 reading rooms were opened by 31 People's Houses and 90 of them were in villages and 5 in prisons (*People's Houses Public Chambers 1932-1942, 1942, 12-13*).

Type of Activity	Number of Participants	Number of Activities
Conference	917.724	2835
Book reading	2.030.761	349.093
Theatre	918.104	2921
Movies	615.206	1557
Concert	362.685	1241
Art Exhibitions (painting, photography, other)	618.352	104

Table 1: Some People's Houses activities carried out in 1940 in overall Turkey (*C.H.P. People's Houses 1940, 1940: 19-20*)
(Statistics are taken from this particular source and presented in a table format).

Villagers Branches; in the ten-year period since the establishment of the People's Houses, 325 out of the 383 Houses had Villagers Branches. The activities of this branch were as follows: to organize trips to local



villages; to provide information and assistance to villagers on various topics through these trips; to bring villagers together with branch member doctors, dentists, teachers, farmers and veterinarians (*People's Houses Public Chambers 1932-1942, 194, 14*).

Activities of the History and Museology Branches are as follows: to conduct researches that will shed light on the history of the local region and to record these researches; to protect the historical monuments of the region and to report the newly-discovered historical buildings to the related institutions; to investigate the local traditions such as fairy tales, folk songs, folk art and to deliver them to the public through the People's Houses magazines (*People's Houses Public Chambers 1932-1942, 1942, 16*).

In the Anatolian soil, there were many historical values and important artifacts left from ancient civilizations, but during the Ottoman period, most of these historical values were either looted or smuggled abroad. But thanks to the People's Houses, these values were adopted by the people and passed on to the next generations. Thus, great contributions have been made to encourage the preservation of the national history and national identity.

Aside from that, during the historical studies conducted in the People's Houses, serious and important efforts were made to identify, repair, re-functionalize the architectural works and transfer them to the next generations in each region. "All the historical values unearthed were presented to the citizens of the entire country through magazines, and thus an historical consciousness was created" (Bayraktar, 1999, 117-118).

In these branches, studies to shed light on the Turkish history were also carried out and one of these studies is the Turkish History Thesis; Bayraktar (1999, 92). According to this thesis, the Ottoman history may have started with the life of Osman and his father Ertuğrul, however Turkish tribes are taken as the beginning of Turkish history, and these researches towards the pre-Ottoman era have been defined as the efforts of forming "national history".

According to some views in the literature, the People's Houses' efforts to create new individuals and nations is an assimilation exercise. Bu according to Özer (2011, 261), interpreting the efforts of the Houses to develop a Turkish national identity as an "assimilation exercise" is nothing but an unfounded and malicious claim. In order to strengthen his claim, Özer draws attention to the concept of "volunteerism" in the activities of the People's Houses. No citizen is ever forced to participate in the activities of the People's Houses. It is not even necessary to become a member of the House to benefit from some of their services such as library or reading room.

Another purpose of the People's Houses is to bring ordinary citizens and intelligentsia under the umbrella of same culture and values. In addition, the need to absorb all the revolutions in order to create a modern and civilized Turkey, the value of the People's Houses' efforts in that direction was even more appreciated. People's Houses have been operating not only in the area of cultural responsibility, but also in the area of social responsibility. Providing social enlightenment without making a discrimination between the city and village scales has been the main objectives of the People's Houses.

With the start of multi-party life, the Democratic Party entered the parliament in the 1946 elections. Thus, the existence of People's Houses --which were seen as an extension of the Republican People's Party (CHP)-- was often discussed in the parliament. The opposition parties were against the allocation of state budgets to the People's Houses, and when the Democratic Party came to power in the May 1950 election, the reactions grew even stronger. Eventually, with the law numbered 5830, which was accepted on 8 August 1951 and published in the official newspaper on 11 August 1951, some of the assets of the People's Houses were transferred to the re-opened Turkish Hearths and the remaining funds were handed to the state treasury, and all of the People's Houses were closed (URL-1).

According to the report of Erşan (2018, 306), countless books and stage, music and sports equipment belonging to the People's Houses were given to the Ministry of National Education, and many other historical items were seized by the related government departments. Libraries, archives, documents, photos and many other valuable materials that were accumulated by the People's Houses were not preserved and thus a great cultural background was put at risk of being completely destroyed. According to the report of Çeçen (1990, 12), the publications and the documents of the People's Houses were sent to paper factories to be re-cycled into paper.

Many valuable artists, musicians and writers were trained at the People's Houses. These include: Ruhi Su, Zihni Göktay, Suna Pekuysal, Münir Özkul, Avni Dilligil. When the People's Houses were closed,



many of such writers and state artists expressed their opinions on the issue, and so including some of these views in our study can be useful in understanding the social function of the People's Houses (URL-2):

"When I read the closure of the People's Houses, I was sad as if I lost my mother or father" (Nejat Uygur; actor).

"I saw some kids exchanging something around the corner. So I asked my friend who was next to me, 'What are they exchanging?' And his answer was, 'Books!' That was the first time in my life that I met with books. Until that day no newspapers or books had entered our house. And after that day, I started going to the library every single day" (Muzaffer İzgü; writer).

Hazım Körmükçü, Temel Karamahmut, Sadri Alışık, Orhan Elçin... They were like our older brothers and sisters whom we first saw at the People's House. For example, Nadiye Bulaner --the mother of Suna Pekuysal whom I love very much today-- and her father Reşat Bulaner; these are some of the people who worked very hard at the Eminönü People's House. I always told everyone how painful it was to see this place go and how I wished they'd never closed it. I believe that the People's Houses really had taken the place of various educational institutions and state conservatories, because that's where we were brought up educationally (Gazanfer Özcan; actor).

After the closure of the People's Houses, "Education expert Dickerman was brought to Turkey from UNESCO, and in his 1951 report he recommended the establishment of the 'Public Education Department; this department would be within the body of the Ministry of National Education and they would carry out non-formal education activities in the local fields, (Binbaşıoğlu as cited in Dolanbay, 2014, 29). "In 1951, the foundations of the Public Education Centers were laid and in 1952 Public Education Offices were opened within the body of the Ministry of National Education. In 1953, Public Education Rooms were also opened in villages and towns" (Kurt as cited in Vezne, 2017, 58).

In 1963, People's Houses were reopened but this time they were no longer funded by the government. In 1980, however, they were again closed in 1980, but re-opened in 1987 by court order.

In this part of the study, in order to make an accurate spatial examination on the sample chosen from the community houses, first we created a conceptual and cognitive infrastructure on the subject and so we discussed the spatial program and plan typology in the People's Houses buildings.

2. Spatial Program and Plan Typology in People's Houses

During the Ottoman period, there was a discriminatory approach towards spatial understanding which made a distinction between the high class and the low class groups/individuals, but when the Republican era came, spatial formations started to emphasize on the principle of social equality. So in this regard, the People's House is a spatial expression that emphasizes the concept of social equality. From another point of view, with the beginning of the People's Houses, spatial understanding of Ottoman culture was being exchanged with the spatial understanding of the new Republic of Turkey. In this sense, the buildings of the People's Houses provide strong visual messages with both their spatial programs and material selections/uses. And they convey their goals and objectives to their users in this way.

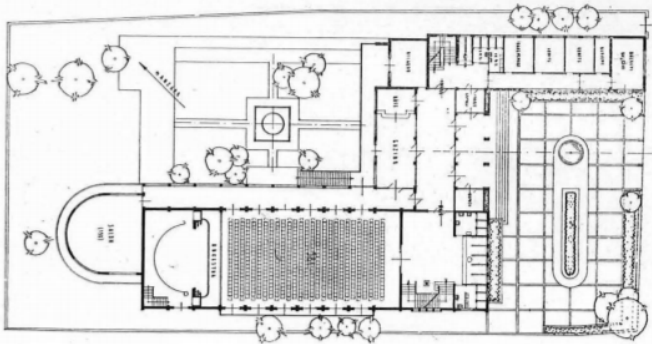
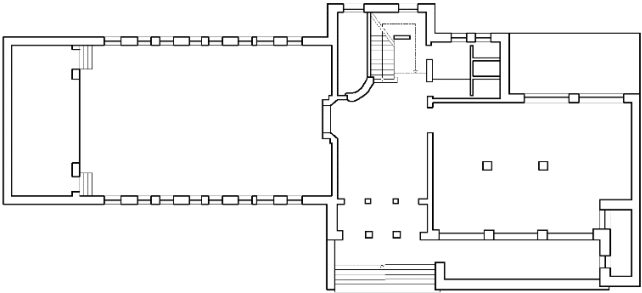
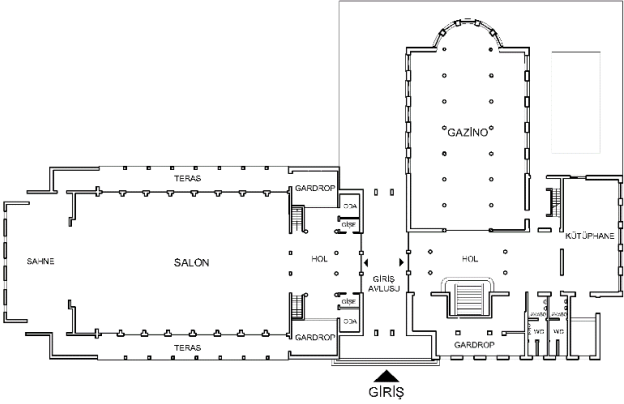
In general terms, "the buildings of the People's Houses were seen as an important architectural and social archetype of the period, an architectural intermediary of social engineering and one of the spatial components of the modernization project" (Çetin and Kâhya, 2017, 134).

In order to meet the demands and needs of the People's Houses buildings, and to ensure that they are built properly and have an aesthetic value in terms of art and architecture, a Consultant Architecture Office was established in the general secretariat of the Republican People's Party. In this office was prepared the projects, construction plans and detailed pictures of the People's Houses buildings to be established all over Turkey. Since this was a general secretariat office, all the purposes and needs of the People's Houses were closely examined and supervised. The construction location of the People's House buildings were chosen with meticulous care. After a Consultant Architect review was made, the projects were prepared in accordance with the plot (land). It was important that the building location was in the city center. In addition to the main functions of the People's House, large gardens and playgrounds were also organized around the building (*People's Houses Public Chambers 1932-1942, 1942, 19*).

The People's Houses buildings were shaped according to the functions of the spaces that make up the building. In this respect, building programs are divided into two parts: the first part consists of a hall, and the second part consists of an education department consisting of branches and a library (Yeşilkaya,



1999, 165). By combining these elements in different ways, various types of plans were created. There are four types of plans used in the People's Houses (L, I, T and U types as seen in Table 2) and some of the cities with these plan types are as follows: Plan type L: Çankırı, Kadıköy, İzmir, Kayseri, Eminönü, Gerede and Karamürsel; plan type I: Çorlu; plan type T: Kırklareli, İzmit and Isparta; plan type U: This type is seen in the projects that are created for small Houses and Konya and Bartın Public Houses fit this plan type (Durukan, 2006, 144).

Plan Type Type-Structure Name	Building Ground Floor Plan
<p data-bbox="325 600 416 633">L Type</p> <p data-bbox="220 712 517 745">Kadıköy People's House</p> <p data-bbox="201 790 536 857"><i>(Kadıköy People's House project competition, 1938, 45).</i></p>	
<p data-bbox="325 981 416 1014">I Type</p> <p data-bbox="236 1093 501 1126">Çorlu People's House</p> <p data-bbox="201 1171 536 1305"><i>(It was redrawn using the ground floor plan of Çorlu People's House in the study of Durukan (2006, 185)).</i></p>	
<p data-bbox="325 1373 416 1406">T Type</p> <p data-bbox="240 1485 496 1518">İzmit People's House</p> <p data-bbox="209 1563 528 1765"><i>(It was redrawn by making use of the ground floor plan of İzmit People's House, included in the work of Cengizkan (2012, 133)).</i></p>	



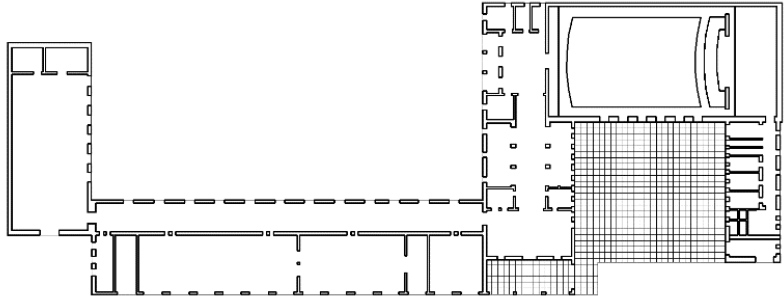
<p style="text-align: center;">U Type</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Konya People's House</p> <p>(It was redrawn by making use of the original plan drawing of Sabri Oran in <i>Konya People's House building project</i> (1940, 200)).</p>	
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Table 2: People's House Plan Type Types and Building Examples

Cengizkan (2012, 127) asserts that; when we examine closely the productions that are underrated by the label of "one-party period", evaluations should focus not only on the end result products, but also on the emergence of these products as a thought, on the production of their programs, as well as on the planning, execution and acquisition of the production processes. Cengizkan, with the inference he made here, he supports the idea that these productions are examples of modern architecture of a society that aims modernity and cares about the future by being organized. In the light of these expressions, we can say that the architectural programs of the People's Houses --which assumed the duty of social architecture-- were carried out with great care for the benefit of this social architecture.

3. Izmit People's House

The Izmit People's House building is regarded as an urban symbol and a triangulation point for the city of İzmit. As a spatial image with its location, it is deeply impinged on everyone's minds. Therefore, the structure has a very important place in the public memory of the city.

Izmit People's House was opened on Friday, June 24, 1932 with 8 branches. It was one of the first People's Houses, the number of which reached 32 at the time. The Museum and Exhibition Branch, which was incomplete during its establishment, started its operations in 1933. At the end of the first month of opening, the number of members reached 434 (42 of these members were female and 392 were male). In 1936, the number of members was 1221 (Kaya, 2008, 39).

The Izmit People's House did not have its own building in the first years it was established; due to location problems, they first served in the CHF building, and then later in a secondary school allocated for them (Türk Yolu as cited in Kaya, 2008, 39). However, these remedies were not sufficient in solving the location problem and the construction of a People House in İzmit was brought to the agenda of the city authorities. "As a result, the construction started in 1938 and it was designed by Architect Seyfi Arkan. The construction was suspended for a while in 1941 due to contractor problems, but the building was finally completed on 21 February 1943; on the 11th anniversary of the foundation of the People's Houses" (Şenyurt, 2015, 1671).

Izmit People's House building consists of two blocks. It has two floors and ten rooms and two halls (meeting or conference rooms). The building is 4096 m². There is a movie theater on the west wing of the building. There is a public education service building in the other part of the building; there are administrative departments and private teaching institutions here. The lighthouse, which can be accessed even today, was built on the upper floor (north-west corner) of the building (Figure 2) (Aksoy, 2011, 127). The structure is in a close connection with the E-5 highway and the shoreline (Figure 3).



Figure 2: Izmit People's House during its first years. The lighthouse is in the north-west corner (IHEM archive).



Figure 3: The photo showing the close connection between E5 Highway, the shoreline and Izmit People's House (Yeşildal, 2013, 107).

From its very first day to its unfortunate closure, Izmit People's House, like all other Houses around the country, carried out many activities through their multiple branches to benefit the public in numerous ways. Some of these activities were as follows:

Language-Literature branch put Turkish words under protection. During the holidays, teachers conducted word researches in the villages of Izmit and forwarded them to the Language-Literature branch (Türk Yolu as cited in Kaya, 2008, 51). Again through this branch, informative public conferences were held on various subjects, especially on literature and Turkish language.

At the Fine Arts Branch, various music activities and educational events were held. Thanks to these activities, folk music and western music were taught to the public. Many exhibitions were organized, especially on art (paintings) and photography.

The Stage Arts Branch organized many performances not only in Izmit but throughout the country. For example, in 1940, the branch organized 76 various stage performances (Türk Yolu as cited in Kaya, 2008, 78).

At the Sports Branch, many sports and body training activities were carried out for the benefit of the public. Many competitions in marine sports and wrestling were also held.

Social Aid Branch identified and helped the needy people. They gave lectures for the promotion of public solidarity.

At the Public Classes and Courses Branch, various courses were held; especially foreign language courses and Turkish literacy courses.

At the Librarianship and Publishing Branch, collaboration was made with the Villagers Branch and reading rooms were opened in the villages.

At the Villagers Branch, it was aimed to create a close bond between the villagers and the urban dwellers. Various village visits were organized and studies were carried out to determine and meet the



needs of the villagers. Informative films on agriculture were shown to the villagers and related conferences were held.

At the History and Museology Branch, studies were carried out to identify and preserve the historical monuments of the region. Various conferences on history were also held.

As we mentioned earlier, the People's Houses all over Turkey have undergone many changes and transformations in their historical process. The ones that have not been demolished after closure, served as city halls, cultural centers, theaters and health centers (Durukan, 2006, 181-182).

Izmit People's House also served as a venue for institutions and organizations such as City Restaurant (Figure 4-5-6), Tourism Directorate, Teachers' Club, Music Society, Provincial Directorate of National Education, Directorate of Primary Education. Since 1980, the building has been serving as Izmit Public Education Center and Evening Art School Directorate (IHEM Archive).



Figure 4 (Left): People's House City Restaurant garden in 1957.

Figure 5 (Right): The view of Izmit People's House Restaurant garden from the waterfront in the 50's (Turgay, 1998).



Figure 6: Restaurant staff in front of the eastern wing which was used as the city restaurant of the Izmit People's House (URL 5).

4. Transformation Process of the People's Houses into Public Education Centers, with the Example of Izmit People's House

In this part of the study, we will try to evaluate the transformation process of the People's Houses into Public Education Centers, and we will review the changes that occurred in spatial constructions during this process, and for this we benefited from the ground floor plans of Izmit People's House and IHEM and visual documents related to these institutions.

According to the People's House building program, a House needs to be located within the city center. And Izmit People's House building is among the People's House institutions that fulfill this requirement. According to the People's House building program, a House building should have a garden. When we examine the current settlement of the building in the light of ground floor plan and visual documents we obtained, we see that there is a functional and public garden in Izmit People's House (Figure 7-8).

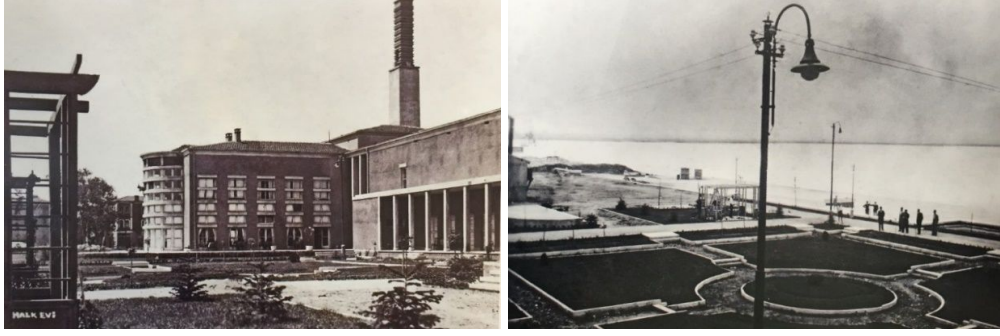


Figure 7 (Left): Izmit Community Center building from Halkevi Park, 1939 (Yeşildal, 2013: 347)

Figure 8 (Right): Halkevi Park view 1945 (Yeşildal 2013: 348).

When we examine the IHEM building in the light of ground floor plan and visual documents we obtained, we see that the majority of the garden now functions as a car park (Figure 9). In another observation, we saw that the entrance door on the E-5 highway side of the garden has no public access and it serves as a parking lot door (Figure 10).



Figure 9 (Left): Parking lot operation in IHEM garden

Figure 10 (Right): Entrance door with no public access, in the direction of E-5 highway (2019).

In the study we discovered that Izmit People's House building was not disconnected from the road by walls or wire mesh. This connection was *correctly* resolved with a proper landscape (Figure 11-12). In this way, the building was easily observed from the shoreline and thus a close connection was established between the building and the shoreline.

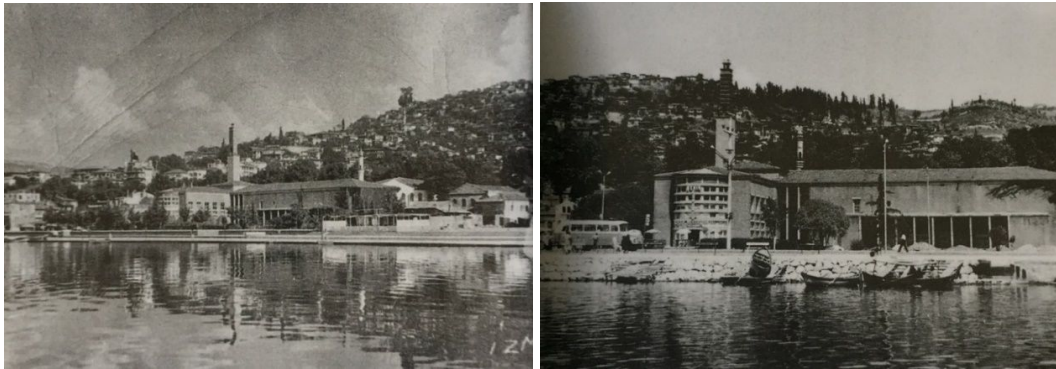


Figure 11 (Left): Photo showing the close connection of Izmit People's House building with the surrounding area (1950) (Turgay, 1998).

Figure 12 (Right): Izmit People's House front view (Turgay, 1998).

Over time, the garden of the Izmit People's House shrunk due to the expansion of the E-5 highway, and this situation naturally caused the garden of IHEM to shrink. In addition, the billboards around the building cut off the building's close connection with the highway (Figure 13-14). In this case, IHEM (as opposed to Izmit People's House) cannot be fully observed from the E-5 highway.



Şekil 13-14: IHEM front views and billboards (2019).

When we examined Izmit People's House, we saw that the region organized as a library had a separate entrance (Figure 15). This was probably done in order to provide a more comfortable access to the library. However, this library has been turned into a classroom and today there is taxi stand in front of this entrance and the door is no longer in use (Figure 16).



Figure 15 (Left): Izmit People's House frontal view and the library entrance (URL-4).

Figure 16 (Right): IHEM frontal view with the taxi stand and the unused library door (2019).

When the interior is examined, we see that the stairs that provide the connection between the floors have undergone a serious structural change. With this appearance, the staircase emphasizes modernity and functionality with its ornament-free arrangement (Figures 17-18).



Figure 17 (Left): Izmit People's House ground floor stairs view (IHEM Archive, URL-6).

Figure 18 (right): IHEM ground floor staircase view 2019.

As mentioned earlier in this study, the People's House building program can be analyzed in two parts: the hall and the branches; and the education department consisting of the library. In that respect, the Izmit People's House was shaped within the framework of this program as well. Izmit People's House was constructed according to the Plan Type T and it consists of two main blocks. By the examination of Izmit People's House and IHEM ground floor plans, we can obtain information about the spatial constructions of the buildings, their inter-space relations and space designs (Figures 19-20).

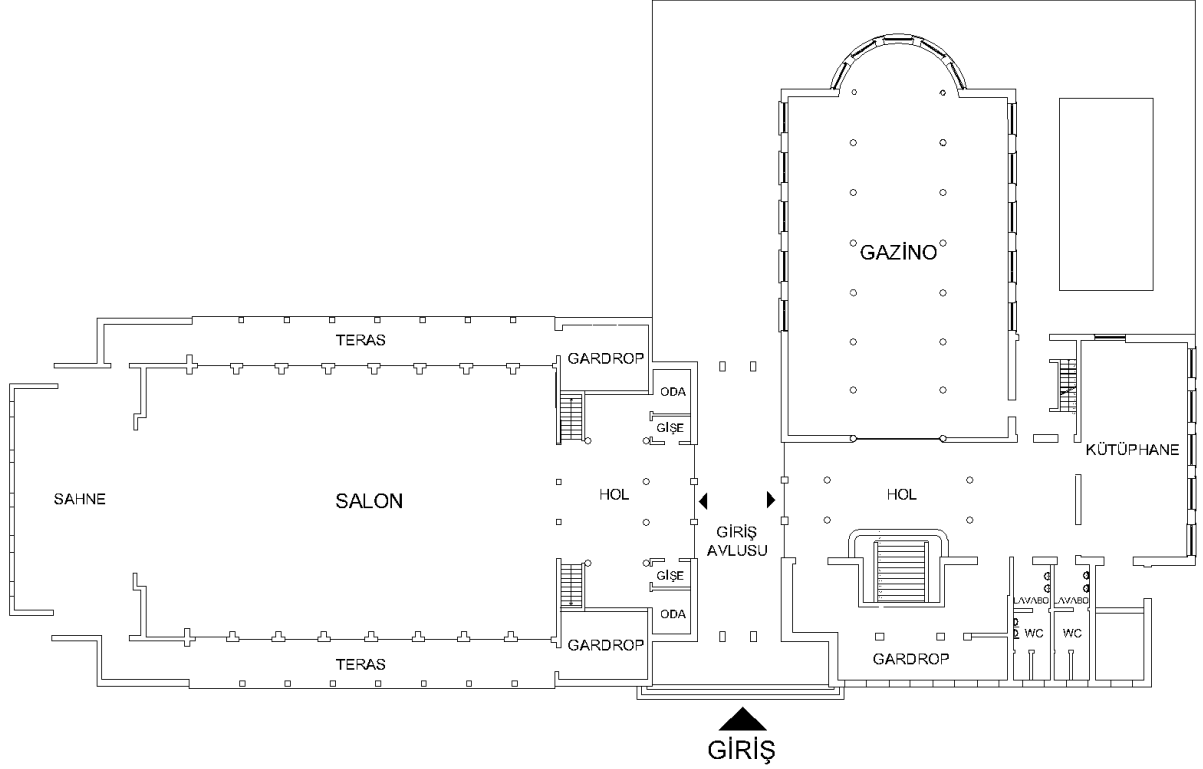


Figure 19: Izmit People's House ground floor plan (It was redrawn by making use of the ground floor plan of Izmit People's House, included in the work of Cengizkan (2012, 133)).

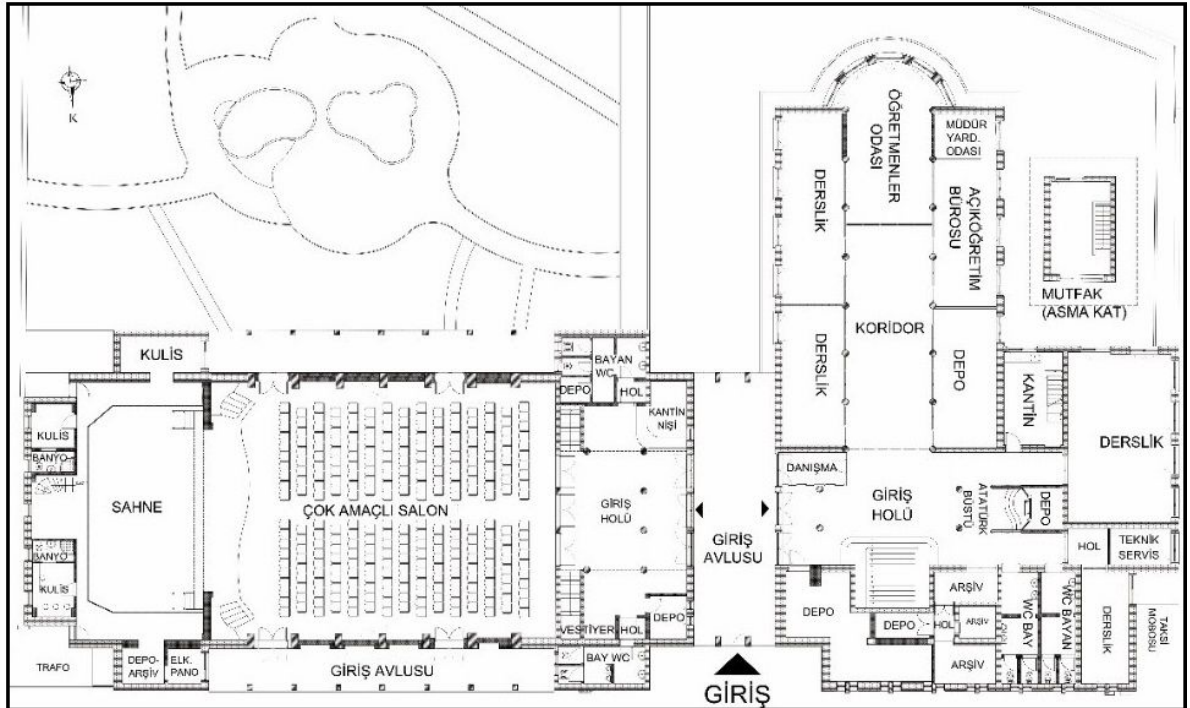


Figure 20: IHEM ground floor plan (Serimer Architecture Archive).

When the ground floor plans (Figure 19-20) and visual documents (Figure 21-22-23-24) of the buildings are examined, it is seen that there is a casino structure (a large gathering hall that serves refreshments) in the Izmit Community Center. Here, all family members could gather and socialize with each other and thus integrate with the society. However, in IHEM, this region was divided into units such as teachers' room, assistant principal's room, open education bureau, classrooms and warehouse. Considering



the first years of the Republic, there were only few places where people could socialize and spend time together, so the casino section of the People's House played an important role in that aspect. Nevertheless, at the end, the casino section --which responded to many different functions and appealed to the general public-- was rendered non-operational with the establishment of administrative divisions in the IHEM institution.



Figure 21 (left): Izmit People's House casino hall (IHEM Archive URL-6)
Figure 22 (right): View of the open education office from IHEM stairs (2019).



Figures 23-24: IHEM open education office (2019).

When we examine the Izmit People's House conference hall on the plan plane (Figure 19-20) and in the light of the visual documents obtained (Figure 25-26), the wardrobe and box office units that were located here draw immediate attention. The wardrobe idea was a symbol of modernity of the time, but today it has lost its validity. However, the fact that the box offices have been removed means that this place is no longer a venue where ticketed seminars, theater plays and other shows are carried out. Indeed, today this hall is closed to the use of the public and non-governmental organizations; it is only available to schools when needed. This situation completely opposes the holistic approach of the People's Houses to education, and as a result, the conference hall has become non-operational. Apart from this, in the IHEM structure where the wardrobes were located, now we see wet surfaces, cloakrooms and warehouse units. Looking at the plan plane, it can be seen that the box offices were replaced by the canteen and warehouse units.

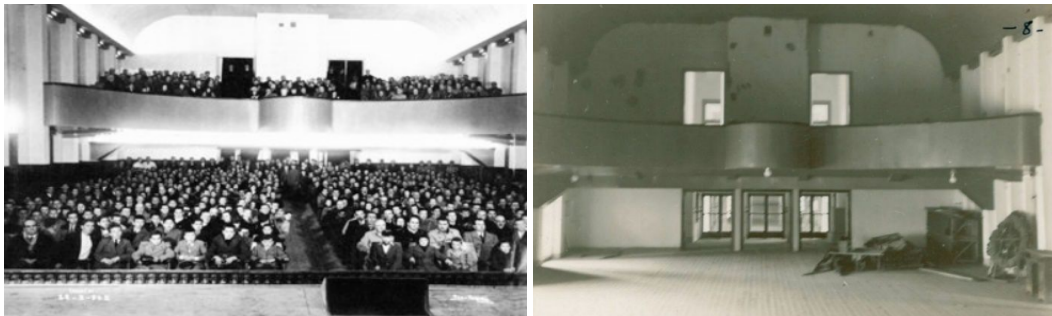


Figure 25 (Left): Izmit People's House conference hall and its audience (URL-5).
Figure 26 (Right): Empty view of the conference hall (IHEM Archive, URL-3).

When we look at the plan plane (Figures 19-20), we can see that the wardrobe in the block where the casino was located is also used as a warehouse and archive in IHEM. In addition, when we examine the entrance hall in the light of the visual documents obtained (Figure 27-28), we see that there are no major



structural changes in this area today, but an information desk has been situated in the entrance hall. An information desk was not needed to establish spatial orientation in the People's Houses. With numerous entrance doors located in different parts of Izmit People's House, the emphasis was placed on accessibility. As we mentioned earlier, a separate door was used for the library section. And the doors of the conference hall opening to both the street and the garden are examples of this accessibility emphasis. However, none of these entry points are used today.



Figure 27 (Left): View of Izmit People's House entrance hall (IHEM Archive, URL-6).

Figure 28 (right): IHEM entrance hall (2019).

Evaluation and Conclusion

During the Ottoman period, there was a discriminatory approach towards spatial understanding which made a distinction between the high class and the low class groups/individuals, but when the Republican era came, spatial formations started to emphasize on the principle of social equality. The aim of the principle of populism is to deem all individuals (who make up the society) as one and equal, and to maintain all their political and legal rights and equality in the social life. In this context, People' Houses were a spatial expression of the principle of populism, and their structural approach also emphasized this principle. In addition, with the Republican revolution, the education of the society became an imperative, and in that regard, the People's Houses functioned as a spatial factor in achieving the targeted high-level civilization.

According to various circles, Public Education Centers can actually perform the functions of the People's Houses. However, this study --which analyzes the process of transforming People's Houses into Public Education Centers and the spatial changes that occurred during this process-- shows that; Public Education Centers do not have the holistic approach of the People's Houses towards creating social cultural value and public education. Today's Izmit Public Education Center and Evening Art School cannot meet the majority of different functions that Izmit People's House once had. In this new establishment, the library was transformed into a classroom, and the garden and conference hall have become non-operational. Public Education Centers lack casino areas that aim to integrate and socialize the public. Instead of removing such functions all together, it would be more appropriate to adapt them to today's conditions and thus make these spaces more attractive. So in Izmit People's House, which reflects the architecture of an important era, it would be more beneficial to provide activities related to public education. The functional sustainability of the People Houses means continuing an education era that can bring the nation to the level of contemporary civilizations and make them capable in every sense.

In the light of this study, we can see that the Public Education Centers today are more active in helping people get jobs rather than aiming to provide a cultural unity. In addition, the institution appeals to only a limited audience; it is no more than a public classroom for those who are preparing for state exams and those who want to attend a vocational courses. We find it saddening that the People's Houses that had multiple functions and appealed to all segments of the society are now reduced to such single-function establishments. We believe that these structures could easily be adapted to today's conditions and turned into spaces that can respond to multiple functions and thus appeal to the whole society.

As a result: the People's Houses --which provided free education for many years to individuals with no access to educational activities due to their socio-economic status, and which provided many other socially beneficial events-- should not be seen just as tools of ideology and be marginalized; instead, they must be considered as heritage sites reflecting the culture of a period and they must be protected.

Besides all this, the purpose of the People's Houses and all their works should be known and understood correctly by today's society; every individual should be aware of how the People's Houses



wanted to create a common language and historical awareness on a social scale by targeting social unity in the early years of the Republic, and how they aimed to raise the nation to the level of contemporary civilizations! Social development is only possible by never forgetting the past values on the way up.

In this study, we evaluated the transformation of the People Houses into Public Education Centers and the spatial changes that occurred in this process, using the Izmit People's House as an example. Future researchers also can be encouraged to work on different examples of People's Houses; this way, the more People's Houses are studied, the more accurate analysis can be made. In addition, in the light of this study, it is recommended that evaluations are made between different institutions as well.

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