

# Notions of Diaspora and Ethnic Kinship in the Activities of Jewish, Armenian and Turkish Sports Associations in Interwar Bulgaria

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(Summary)

This study analyses various mechanisms for constructing and experiencing the ideas of Diaspora and transnational ethnic kinship in the specific historical context of three minority sports and gymnastics organisations in interwar Bulgaria (1918–1941): the Jewish Zionist gymnastics society “Maccabi”, the Armenian sports-scout organisation “Homenetmen” and the Turkish youth gymnastics club “Turan.” The theoretical framework is based on a critical and situational approach to the concept of Diaspora – one that avoids fixed definitions and instead takes into account the relevant political, cultural, and historical contexts. The essay argues that, while notions of Diaspora are clearly present in the activities and narratives of all three organisations, they are articulated in three distinct ways and carry different weights. While “Maccabi” directed most of its efforts toward the fostering of a sense of transnational Jewish solidarity and preparing for the colonisation of Palestine within the framework of political Zionism, “Homenetmen” focused on mobilising historical memory and ideas of a homeland in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide. The case of “Turan” reveals the most ambivalent interpretation of Diaspora, as far as the sense of belonging to a broader Turkish nation among Bulgarian Turks was still in the process of formation. Here, Diaspora consciousness required a prior process of cultural modernisation carried out by the Turanists under the ideological influence of Kemalism.

This article represents the second part of a broader research project dedicated to the relationship between sports activity, ethnic identity, and mechanisms of group consolidation in the cases of “Maccabi”, “Homenetmen,” and “Turan” during the interwar period.

**Keywords:** sports; Diaspora; identity; minorities; interwar Bulgaria (1918–1941)

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