

REPROACHING HÜSEYİN (İŞTİRAKÇI) HİLMİ: AN OTTOMAN SOCIALIST
IN EARLY 20th CENTURY

by
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Submitted to the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Sabancı University

June 2009

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DATE OF APPROVAL: 26.06.2009

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ABSTRACT

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History, M.A. thesis, Spring 2009

Thesis Supervisor: Fikret Adanır

*Keywords: Political Ideologies, Socialism, Second Constitutional Period, Hüseyin
(İştirakçi) Hilmi, İştirak Journal*

This thesis endeavors to reproach an early twentieth century political figure, a socialist: Hüseyin (İştirakçi) Hilmi. In doing so it also aims to raise critical questions about how history of Ottoman socialism is perceived and briefly addresses the problems of it. Hüseyin Hilmi was an important socialist in the Ottoman political life, he had central roles in two Ottoman socialist parties (Ottoman Socialist Party and Turkish Socialist Party) as their head, and he had been the publisher of several socialist journals and newspapers among which *İştirak* and *İdrak* are the most important. He had been a leader in before several workers' strikes; he paid a visit to his French brothers to improve socialist international solidarity. Finally he was assassinated due to his increasing political influence in Mütareke years. However, he was almost always considered as unimportant and naïve.

Hilmi was a “normal” socialist when his coteremporaries and the history of socialism in general are considered. This thesis tried to demonstrate that a critical reading of the history writing about Hüseyin Hilmi could help to normalize both narratives about who he was and the history writing of Ottoman socialism as well. That is to say Hüseyin Hilmi was as normal a socialist as his contemporizes in the Empire or Europe were. The fact that he was considered otherwise is due to a set of prejudices that consider Ottoman history a sui generis and incomparable phenomenon. Throughout the thesis I've tried to demonstrate that prejudices that distort how we understand Hüseyin Hilmi, weather due to modernist perspective, Orientalism, dominance of Marxism or methodological nationalism are also stopping us to understand history of Ottoman socialism completely and coherently.

ÖZET

Hüseyin (İştirakçi) Hilmi'yi Yeniden Değerlendirmek: Erken 20nci Yüzyılda Bir
Osmanlı Sosyalisti

Emre Erol

Tarih, Master Tezi, Bahar 2009

Tez Danışmanı: Fikret Adanır

*Anahtar Kelimeler: Siyasal İdeolojiler, Sosyalizm, İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi, Hüseyin
(İştirakçi) Hilmi, İştirak Dergisi*

Bu tez, bir erken 20'inci yüzyıl politik figürünü, bir sosyalisti, yani Hüseyin (İştirakçi) Hilmi'yi yeniden değerlendirmek amacını gütmektedir. Bunu yaparken de Osmanlı'da sosyalizmin tarihi ile ilgili kritik bir okuma yaparak bu alandaki tarih yazıcılığının sorunlarına atıflarda bulunmaktadır. Hüseyin Hilmi, Osmanlı siyasal hayatında önemli bir figürdü; o, iki Osmanlı sosyalist partisinin kurucusu ve lideri (Osmanlı Sosyalist Fırkası ve Türkiye Sosyalist Fırkası), aralarında İştirak ve İdrak'ın en önemli iki örnek olduğu çok sayıda sosyalist dergi ve gazetenin imtiyaz sahibi ve yarıncısıydı. O, birçok işçi eyleminin başındaki öncü lider olmuş, beynelmînel sosyalist dayanışmaya katkı için Fransız kardeşlerini ziyarete gitmişti. Sonunda, Mütareke yıllarında artan politik nüfuzunun bir sonucu olarak öldürüldü. Ne var ki neredeyse her zaman önemsiz ve naif bir sosyalist olarak düşünölmüştür.

Hilmi, dönemdaşları ve genel olarak sosyalizmin tarihi düşünöldüğünde “normal” bir sosyalistti. Bu tez, Hüseyin Hilmi ile ilgili olan tarih yazıcılığının tenkitli bir okumasını yapmanın, hem Hilmi hakkındaki anlatıları hem de Osmanlı sosyalizmi tarih yazıcılığını normalleştireceğini göstermeye çalışmıştır. Yani, Hüseyin Hilmi dönemdaşı olan İmparatorluk'taki yahut Avrupa'daki sosyalistler gibi normal bir sosyalisttir. Onun tersi olarak görülmesi olgusu Osmanlı tarihini nev-i şahsına münasır ve karşılaştırılmaz gören bir dizi önyargının sonucudur. Bu tez, Hüseyin Hilmi'yi nasıl anladığımızı, bozulmaya uğratan modernist bakış olsun, Şarkiyatçılık olsun, Marksçılığın sol üzerindeki ideolojik başatlığı olsun, metodolojik milliyetçilik olsun, tüm etkenlerin Osmanlı solu tarihini de tam ve tutarlı bir şekilde anlamamızın önünde engel olduğunu göstermeye çalışmaktadır.

Acknowledgements

I cannot express my deep gratitude enough to my thesis supervisor Fikret Adanır, who helped me with his guidance for this thesis and who also encouraged me to study our beloved Aegean town *Eski Foça*. Without his inspiration, attention, patience and feedbacks this thesis could not be written and my future PhD project about *Eski Foça* could not be formulated. I would like to particularly thank to Ayşe Kadioğlu and Cemil Koçak for the interest they showed in my work and their feedbacks that enriched my thoughts. In addition to her interest and feedbacks, I would also like to thank Ayşe Kadioğlu for her support and inspiration since I've formulated the topic of this thesis throughout the undergraduate courses that were lectured by her. I am grateful to Akşin Somel for his endless attention and guidance throughout my entire undergraduate and graduate years in the Sabancı University. His door was always open to me for my questions and he always patiently listened and answered them whatever they might be. I am also thankful to the whole faculty of arts and social sciences for everything they taught me during both my undergraduate and graduate years at the Sabancı University.

During my research process, I have had a chance to receive invaluable comments from some scholars. Here I would like to thank to Eric Jan Zürcher, Mete Tunçay and Yusuf Hakan Erdem. I am also indebted to the generosity of Yusuf Hakan Erdem who kindly shared and gifted books that were related to my interests.

I would also like to thank Hasan Karataş for teaching me Ottoman, sharing his office for relieving coffee talks and his friendship. I owe special thanks to Akut Mustak for his sincere guidance and support, both academically and as a friend, through all my graduate education. Along with him, I would like to show my gratitude to Muhammed Talha Çiçek for helping me in deciphering Ottoman texts and his relaxing *ud* performances, Tunç Şen for his patience in helping me through my application procedures and for his friendship, and Mehmet Kuru for his friendship and companionship in all my graduate days, home and abroad, sober and tipsy.

Many thanks to people in various institutes and libraries such as IISH archives in Amsterdam, ISAM in İstanbul, Leiden University library and Sabancı University Information Center who kindly and swiftly provided my demands and granted me easy access to their sources.

I would like to thank to my family, especially to my mother who was always supportive in my decision to be a social scientist, and to my aunt who is the reason why I choose Sabancı University. Without their care, support and belief I couldn't accomplish what I've accomplished.

Sabancı University gave me more than diplomas as an institution; it gave me the chance to meet my dearest beloved Nihal, who is the source of my endless love, motivation and happiness. Finally, I would like to thank to her for sharing this life together.

Nihal'ime, Anneme, Anneanneme ve Babaanneme...

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Introduction

A historical study of a modern ideology is a challenging task. That is because, unlike most other subjects of inquiry, ideologies speak for themselves. History is a reconstruction of a particular time from inside the boundaries of its writer's realities. Even this much is enough to make any historical inquiry a challenging task if one aims to be as truthful and objective as possible. In addition to that, studies of modern ideologies are more challenging with those very modern ideologies, which historians seek to analyze, retrospectively talking about their origins and histories. Therefore a historian has to be isolated from both his prejudices, resulting from the fact that him being historical, and from the self declarations of a given ideology for itself.

Aiming to analyze an Ottoman Socialist circle; the *İştirak* circle¹ and its leading figure; *İştirakçi* (Hüseyin) Hilmi, this thesis seeks to elaborate its subject of inquiry, within the broader context of socialist ideology, as much as analyzing its significance in the context of modern ideologies in the Ottoman Empire as well. Therefore it is a priority to discuss problems of studying socialism in general before proceeding further with Ottoman socialism in particular. This order of discussion will help me to support my approach of analyzing Ottoman socialism as any other socialisms, in contrast to what has been often done so far, which is perceiving Ottoman experience of socialism (or any other ideology for that matter) as *sui generis* and incomparable. Thanks to the “normalization” of Ottoman history, it is now possible to perceive it in a wider context of Eurasian civilizations rather than “Asiatic²”, self explanatory and unique. Problems in

¹ *İştirak* circle here and throughout the rest of the thesis is used to refer to the wholesome of people, journals and parties that Hüseyin Hilmi had been a part of both through Second Constitutional period and *Mütareke* (13 November 1918 to 23 September 1923) years. This circle consists of dynamic elements, people and journal that appear or disappear throughout Hilmi's career as a socialist.

² The use of term Asiatic here indicates the discussions of “Asiatic Mode of Production” raised around late 1970s which discussed the ways of finding compatibility for Ottoman history writing in Marxist scheme. Faroqhi in her book on how to study Ottoman history argues that despite Anderson have done his best to avoid it, his insistence on perceiving Ottoman sultans rule fundamentally different than that of European absolutists [in his book *Lineages of the Absolutist State*] made Asiatic Mode of Production discussions a central theme in academy. In addition to that she argues that the ongoing discussions about Asiatic Mode of Production is a proof that it was not Anderson's fault but rather Ottoman historians' whom Anderson referred to in his work. (Faroqhi, p. 259-260) The

studies of socialisms in general are evident in the study of Ottoman socialism in particular as well and I argue that this comparability has often been disregarded. In addition to problems rising from the historical study of a modern ideology there are also problems rising from the study of Ottoman history. That is to say there are two layers of discussions that have to be evaluated before trying to understand İştirakçi Hilmi or the *İştirak* circle as pieces of the history of Ottoman socialism. First layer of discussion is about history of socialism, and the latter is about the history of modern ideologies in the Ottoman Empire.

Following the above mentioned order of discussions, this thesis subsequently, and mainly, aims to make a critique of secondary literature that has been produced about İştirakçi Hilmi since its main unit of analysis is Hilmi. Furthermore it will try to analyze significance of the *İştirak* circle within the context of modern ideologies in Ottoman Empire since this circle the imminent context within which Hilmi can be understood. Finally, after having discussed *İştirak* circle's relations to socialisms, nationalisms, liberalism and Islam there will also be speculations about the *İştirak*'s comparability to its counterparts in other socialist histories.

crucial point for the purposes of this thesis is Faroqhi's emphasis about the ongoing use of this argument in academy. That is because as it will be elaborated further in the subsequent chapters, literature on Ottoman socialism is very much under influences of this perception of "Asiatic Mode" and its repercussions. See: Perry Anderson, *Lineages of The Absolutist State*, (London; New York: Verso press, 1979); Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Tarihi Nasıl İncelenir?*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999).

CHAPTER I

PROBLEMS OF STUDYING SOCIALISM IN GENERAL AND IN PARTICULAR

There are histories of socialisms rather than a history of socialism as it is the case for many modern ideologies too. For the purposes of this thesis discussion of socialism until mid 20th century is sufficient because the *İştirak* journal and *İştirakçi Hilmi* are products of late 19th and early 20th centuries. Therefore further discussions of socialisms, which would have taken several PhD studies to comprehend, will be avoided. That is to say histories of socialisms in general, up around 1920s, is important to understand since they provide significant insights in understanding why history of socialisms in general, and hence Ottoman socialism, have been narrated in particular ways. However, the rest of the history of socialism and its problems will be avoided, which should not be understood as considering them unimportant to the wider history of socialisms.

I.1) Problems Emerging from Study of Socialisms in General

“The history of socialism is the history of socialisms. Moreover, it is a history not of fraternal plurality, but of rivalry and antagonism. The battle lines have often changed (Marxists versus anarchists, collectivists versus syndicalists, reformers versus revolutionaries, communists versus social democrats, Trotskyists versus everybody else, new socialists versus old socialists), but battle lines there have always been.”³

For those politically against it, socialism may be perceived as the experience of Stalin’s dictatorship between the years 1920 and 1953, a failure and a proof that there is no future for socialist ideology. On the other hand, for those politically favoring socialism, socialism is what they believe to be “the true version” of it. Such tendencies are not limited to history of socialism in general; political allegiances also play a crucial

³ Tony Wright, *Socialisms: Old and New*, (London; New York: Routledge Press, 1996), p.1.

role in how Ottoman socialism was reconstructed. For those politically against it, it was “a lingering adventurous desire from the youth”⁴ or “rootless”⁵. Yet again, for “scientific socialists”, other varieties of socialisms were utopian attempts that were made even without understanding ideology in depth⁶. This thesis will try to avoid effects of such political allegiances, which often dominate scientific study of ideologies, and will try to build its narrative by accepting the vague and subjective nature of political ideologies. That is to say, there are no single definitions for nationalism, liberalism or socialism; lines differentiating them are not crystal clear yet these facts do not stop us from taking them as subjects of inquiry.

At the beginning of my thesis, I have stated that ideologies talk for themselves. They not only do that but also speak for their variations too. For example one can read the significance of Charles Fourier or Robert Owen from Frederick Engels who considered himself as a “scientific socialist” whereas Fourier or Owen were “utopians”⁷ for him. Reading Engels is good for understanding Engels and his reading of Fourier and Owen is

⁴ Çapanoğlu uses this sentences for Dr. Refik Nevzad who was also a socialist for some time and who represented the Paris bureau of the *İştirak* circle with his *Beşeriyet* journal. Münir Süleyman Çapanoğlu. *Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist Hilmi*. (İstanbul: Pınar Yayınevi, 1964), p.60.

⁵ The term rootless here is used to indicate an often encountered argument in evaluations of Ottoman socialism. To put it bluntly, it argues that socialist ideology was superficial and naïve from the beginning since it tried to establish an ideology, which originally arose in “Western realities”, on another reality that was not compatible with it, namely “Eastern realities”. Apart from the problems of West/East division and the placement of Ottomans in one of them, it is clearly not an operational argument since the “Westernness” of socialism is not an exception in the general history of ideologies and it is also the case for all modern ideologies such as Liberalism, Nationalism and Islam. *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* by Yusuf Akçura is a good example to see how most of the contemporary ideologies, including Pan-İslamism, were argued to be of “Western” origin too. Consequently all ideologies would have been “rootless” for the same reasons that socialism were. See: Yusuf Akçura, *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, VII. Dizi – Sa. 73, 1996), pp19-24.

⁶ In his introduction to Ottoman socialism there is a strange dilemma, a controversy made by Çapanoğlu. Initially he argues that Ottoman socialism was absurd and was superficial since there wasn't any working class evident in the Empire as it was in Europe. He further claims that it was the unnatural enthusiasm of 1908 that initiated a socialist party but not the material condition. He uses those arguments to prove that Ottoman socialism was theoretically shallow. His arguments are echoed in the literature on Hilmi and it will be discussed in detail on subsequent chapters. For the reference see: Münir Süleyman Çapanoğlu. “Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist Hilmi,” pp. 48, 49.

⁷ Fredrick Engels, *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*, tr. by Edward Aveling D. Sc., (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1932), pp. 1-28.

yet another reading among many, including that of the original writers'. Therefore, no claim of what other socialisms are, should be taken for their face value but should rather be analyzed within their historical context. How Marx and Engels wrote about socialists preceding them is a recurrent topic on studies on socialism⁸. This often referred discussion is crucial for the purposes of this thesis since I argue that the very mechanisms that made Fourier, Saint Simon or Owen “naïve utopians” has its repercussions in perceiving Hilmi and the *İştirak* circle likewise.

Sassoon underlines the fact that most of the socialist parties have been founded around late 19th / early 20th centuries and before 1914, all “European Left could invoke some national peculiarity to explain its own deviancy from what was thought to be the norm” therefore “deviancy and abnormality were the norm”⁹. As a result there are more than one, and often contradictory accounts for a given topic, person or event in what can be considered as the history of socialism. The outcome of this relativity and vagueness in what to consider as socialism, is brilliantly put by Michael Newman in his introductory work on socialism:

“...socialism has been both centralist and local; organized from above and built from below; visionary and pragmatic; revolutionary and reformist; anti-state and statist; internationalist and nationalist; harnessed to political parties and shunning them; an outgrowth of trade unionism and independent of it; a feature of rich industrialized countries and poor peasant-based communities; sexist and feminist; committed to growth and ecological.”¹⁰

It is often the case that a Marxist reading of Fourier, or *İştirakçi* Hilmi as well, are regarded as established facts despite they were merely accounts of how they were

⁸ One can encounter the discussion of how Marx and Engels wrote about “Utopian Socialism” and how that later became the norm in describing socialist predecessors of Marx and Engels. For instance Wright argues that “Marx emphatically and precisely saw the assault on, and defeat of, other available socialist traditions as an essential part of his original project...” and he further adds that this is why he choose to refer his movement as “communism”, which had revolutionary and proletarian connotations based on its previous uses by Babeuf and Radical French Left. See: Wright, “Socialisms: Old and New”, p.2.

⁹ Donald Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1996), pp: 14-15.

¹⁰ Michael Newman, *Socialism: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.2.

perceived by a particular interpretation of socialism. In accordance with that, a holistic consideration of all self defined socialisms gives an amorphous definition of what socialism is. However, we have no luxury to disregard any of such accounts since “no platonic authority exists that can provide us with a complete or ‘real’ definition of socialism. Instead, our understanding of it must be based on how people have used it in history, even if we find that they have used it with dismaying imprecision”¹¹. Compilation of how various socialisms defined socialism provides some parameters to build outlines in defining socialism for a comparative academic inquiry and that is the only way to avoid retrospective misreading.

My point in raising this discussion of problems in the definition of socialism derives from my willingness to demonstrate that works on Ottoman socialism has not been resistant to problems which affected the study of socialism in general. That is to say, inability to find one universal definition to socialism has often been a reason among others, which opened a way to the comparison of Ottoman socialism and ‘the true’¹² versions, that often resulted in the disdaining of the former. Such comparisons often followed a similar logic: Ottoman socialism was not what it had to be; yet it was there, and its existence had to be explained. And since socialism was never a major parliamentary power¹³, decisive in decision making, explanations about its existence retrospectively looked for the reasons of this perceived failure. However it is a question if parliamentary success is an accurate measure to be used solely in understanding appeal of an ideology. Did socialists in the Empire aim a parliamentary representation? If not, then what other parameters can be defined to test its appeal to people, if they even wanted to do that? The task of critical reading of works on the *İştirak* circle, which I undertook for

¹¹ Albert S. Lindemann, *A History of European Socialism*, (Binghamton, N.Y: Vail-Ballou Press, 1983), p.xi.

¹² For instance if an author wanted to declare Ottoman socialism as inferior or superficial he simply compared it with his perceived definition of what true socialism had to be. There are many examples of this in the works dealing with *İştirakçi Hilmi*. For some examples see: Çapanoğlu, “Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist Hilmi”; Aclan Sayılğan, *Solun 94 Yılı 1871 – 1965*, (Ankara: Mars Matbaası, 1968); Fethi Tevetoğlu, *Türkiye’de Sosyalist ve Komünist Faliyetler (1910-1960)*, (Ankara: n.a., 1967); İlhan Darendelioğlu, *Türkiye’de Komünist Hareketleri*, (İstanbul: Toker Yayınları, 1979).

¹³ Despite it was never a decisive power in parliament there were socialists in Ottoman parliament of 1908. Dimitir Vlahof, Vahan Papazyan (Van), Hamparsum Boyacıyan, Karakin Pastırmacıyan and Dagavaryab Efendis are the some of those names.

this thesis, can help formulate answers to those questions as well. These issues will be dealt with in more detail in the following chapters.

Underlining the problem of inability to create one single definition solves only one part of the problem. The other part, which is required to be solved in order to create a meaningful medium for comparison, is to define the outlines of what socialism as a modern ideology means. Only then it can be possible to make an assertion as to the widespread comparisons of Ottoman experience of socialism to that of contemporary others. Nevertheless one has to be cautious about it since it is often the case that “defining essentials or fundamentals of socialism degenerates into dogmatic assertions about “true nature” of socialism, which becomes a weapon to be used against heretics. However it is equally dangerous to define it so broadly that the subjects cannot be analyzed meaningfully”¹⁴. After stating its dangers and inevitable necessity, there arouses the need to set an outline for socialism that can be used to assert the *İştirak* circle’s socialism.

This thesis will use an outline to define common aspects, tendencies and aims of what one can refer as early socialism. That is to say socialism approximately before the end of World War I¹⁵. Even this much of a time period includes a variety of socialisms or ideologies associated with socialist thinking. Utopians, anarchists, Marxists, trade unionists or social democrats are some of the names for the prominent movements of socialism. It must be underlined that the lines between these variations are not clear today and they were much more vague or even non-existent to the mind of the late 19th and early 20th centuries’ intellectuals. Furthermore it was not only definitions of the

¹⁴ Newman, “Socialism: A Very Short Introduction”, p.2.

¹⁵ Choice of this particular demarcation stems from its referral as a milestone in studies on socialism. However that is not to claim that it exist as a result of a consensus. On the contrary it is debated whether or not there was already a major break right after Marx between socialists (now utopians or social democrats, not to mention renegades) and communists. For Sassoon 1914 marks the political rupture between Kautsky and Lenin which Comintern historiography later tried to forge as if this rupture was always there [Sassoon, “One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century”, p.20]. Therefore it is clear that Bolshevik Revolution and the subsequent ending of World War I with the Peace of Versailles, marks significant breaks among groups who defined themselves as socialist. In addition to above mentioned concerns, it is also significant for the purposes of this thesis in particular since the end of World War I also marked dissolution of the *İştirak* circle.

movements themselves that were vague and under construction, the vocabulary of socialist movements was also being shaped¹⁶. That is to say the difference between Utopianism, trade unionism and Marxism were less visible to socialists themselves such as İştirakçi Hilmi. Distinctions among various socialisms became more apparent depending on their relation to the seizure of political power, only then they wrote about their differences to what came before them¹⁷. Therefore the outline presented here has to consider common aspects of all such variations. That is also because the idea of what socialism is, was limited to ones ability to grasp available sources out there. Because this thesis aims to elaborate on İştirakçi Hilmi and the *İştirak* circle and since, it is crucial when we think of the late 19th and early 20th centuries capabilities to spread knowledge, a comparison of Hilmi's socialism to other socialisms cannot be practiced over a single definition. That is because what socialism meant was limited to Hüseyin Hilmi, and for any of his peers in varying levels as well, precisely because socialisms were under construction in their period.

Newman in his introductory book on socialism makes an attempt to set an outline for socialism. For him there are four fundamentals common in all forms of socialisms. First of all “commitment to the creation of an egalitarian society”: how it is going to happen is not agreed upon but “no socialist would defend the current inequalities of wealth and power”. Secondly, socialists have “a belief in the *possibility* of constructing an alternative egalitarian system based on values of solidarity and cooperation”. Subsequently, “this in turn depended on a third characteristic: a relatively optimistic view of human beings and their ability to cooperate with one another”. Finally for socialists, “it is possible to make significant changes in the world through conscious human agency”¹⁸. One can find further examples similar to that of Newman's approach among other studies of socialism. For example Lindemann argues that the “fundamental concern of all socialists has been

¹⁶ Arthur E. Bestor in his article *The Evolution of The Socialist Vocabulary* provides a very good analysis of evolution of the political vocabulary. He proves the fact that even very central terms like socialism, communism, community, communaute, Gemeinschaft, egalitarianism, radicalism or agrarianism are used in variety of ways and often interchangeably. See: Arthur E Bestor, “The Evolution of Socialist Vocabulary”, in *Socialism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, Volume I, (London; New York: Routledge Press, 2003), pp. 62-98.

¹⁷ A very good example of this is again what has been mentioned in the above footnote regarding Comintern historiography forging rapture between socialists and communists before Bolshevik seizure of power despite no such rupture existed.

¹⁸ Newman, “Socialism: A Very Short Introduction”, pp. 2-3.

for cooperation and social justice, with particular emphasis on the needs and rights of the community over the egotistical urges of the individual¹⁹”. As can be seen from the above mentioned quotation Lindemann’s emphasis of socialist tendencies points more on socialisms’ being critical to modern man rather than the modern system. For instance he argues that socialist’s “commitment to cooperation rather than competition, to fellowship, solidarity, and sympathy, rather than self seeking, is the most fundamental and abiding characteristic of the socialist tradition²⁰”.

Another attempt by Jeremy Jennings for a blueprint of socialist movement includes: *Utopian Imagination*, which searched for a place where “true and authentic” man, freed of his civilized vices can strive for a better world; *a progressive conception or philosophy of history; critique of modern economy* since it produced waste, squalor and misery while at the same time it was institutionalized robbery; *an aspiration to democracy* ironically since it was critical of parliamentary systems and finally focusing on *working class as the agent of change*²¹. In his canonized work, George D.H. Cole discusses a particular outline for “utopian” socialism as well. He sees Simonians, Fourierists and Owenists as similar socialists with the essential approach of regarding “social question” as the most important of all. For Cole, these essentials include: “The task of good man to promote general happiness and well-being”. For which “this [happiness] is wholly incompatible on any social order which rested on ... competitive struggle between man and man”. And yet all these “utopians” have “deep distrust to politics and politicians...” as a result of which they argue, “main control should be in producers”²².

In a contemporary analysis of socialism Tony Wright states that “socialism has presented itself as two kinds of doctrine, a positive doctrine of analysis and explanation and a normative one of morality and values”²³. With regard to various outlines presented so far, and with particular regard to early socialisms, it is clear that normative assessments play a central role as much as the positive attempts to analyze and explain

¹⁹ Lindemann, “A History of European Socialism”, p. xi.

²⁰ Ibid, p.xii.

²¹ Jeremy Jennings, *Socialism, Critical Concepts in Social Science*, Volume I, (London; New York: Routledge Press, 2003) pp. 1-4.

²² George.D.H Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought: The Forerunners 1789 – 1850*, Volume I, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 3.

²³ Wright, “Socialisms :Old and New”, p. 35.

society. Therefore socialists often attempted to formulate “logical and rational” moral arguments, which often ended up in using of or fighting with religion. Since they seek “general happiness and wellbeing” and since they base their assumptions on system being the source of problem rather than the individual, they imagined an “authentic and true” nature of man that longed for brotherhood and solidarity. Methodologically, I will be referring to this variety of outlines in criticizing how the *İştirak* circle and *İştirakçi Hilmi* were narrated as well as in their comparison to their socialist peers. However, as a brief introductory remark, Hilmi was very much a typical socialist of his times considering all of the above mentioned essentials of socialism.

So far, I have discussed the problems of defining socialism, a need for a vague definition / outline, the problems and dangers of creating such an outline and the outline itself. However, there is still one more methodological matter to be discussed concerning the definitions I am going to refer in this thesis. What are socialist movements? What social actors, groups and acts do they include? What are the prerequisites for socialism to develop in a country? These crucial questions have been answered partially in the paragraphs above. Stating that a researcher has no luxury to disregard various self declared socialisms is saying that there is no one answer to those questions above and our answers must comprehend all available data on the history of socialism. Before proceeding further, however, a brief discussion of the relation between concepts like industrialization, working class and socialism is vital for a further discussion of Ottoman socialism in particular. That is because Ottoman socialism, as well as other socialisms, has often been criticized or disregarded since Ottoman empire was perceived as having no industry and no working class subsequently, which for most meant that socialism was “groundless” even if it existed. Details of this line of argument will be elaborated in further chapters, the aim for this chapter is to present the fact that this line of argument is not unique to Ottoman historiography. Socialist historiography has been dealing with this problem too. What is aimed here is to present those discussions in the socialist history writing briefly in order to be able to apply them to Ottoman history writing.

What is a worker? What is working class? Are all countries with socialist movements necessarily leading industrial countries? What are the parameters to be analyzed when assessing the reach of socialist movements in a given country? Should such parameters be the size of workers federations or syndicates; number of socialist parliament members

or socialist newspapers; or number and frequency of workers strikes? To sum up can there be quantitative measures to discuss significance of socialist movements in a particular period? Numbers alone are meaningless and some concepts are not quantitatively testable. For instance the number of workers or the level of industrialization in a given context is hard to determine since they rest on predefined notions of what a worker or industrial enterprise are. Nevertheless the relation between socialism and working class and, working class and industrialization cannot be disregarded since the former relation constitute a central theme in all socialisms and the latter is a determinant of the former.

The need to discuss working class arose from the Marxist attempt to elaborate a theoretical definition of the working class, which was never seriously used to define the proletariat politically. Instead, self definition was always more important²⁴. That is to say, other than a Marxian type of working class (producers of surplus who do not have the ownership of means of production) ones voluntary submission to working class is often disregarded. However, this does not necessarily mean that all forms of socialism establish a similar relation with working class (that of ignoring certain groups as non-workers since they didn't fit the definition), as did the Marxists, neither before nor after Marxism came into the scene of socialist history. Even if a central role of working class is to be assumed for all varieties of socialisms, worker did not necessarily mean factory worker of heavy industry or even worker of any kind.

Discussions on the history of working class are as widespread and as voluminous as the discussions on the history of nations. That is to say how working class became a political class and how the meaning of the working people or the poor evolved into proletariat, is yet another example of how modernity affected social structures and how it evolved preexisting phenomena into new phenomena that often makes it impossible to trace genealogies of definitions. Working class is as constructed as nations or race, yet it is not also pure imagination. Sassoon puts this forward with rigor and precision:

“To say that working class was ‘invented’ is not to claim
that its members did not exist...What existed was a vast array

²⁴ Sassoon, “One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century”, p. 7.

of different occupations ranked by skills, divided by territories, separated by nationalities, often segregated sexually or racially, secluded from each other by religion, traditions, prejudice, constantly reorganized by technological developments. These fragments were given an ideological cohesion and an organizational unity. Class-consciousness was constructed by political activists, just as nationalism was constructed by nationalists, feminism by feminists, racism by racists. For activists to be successful, they must build on real foundations, not on thin air. The appeal must be recognized and interiorized. As Machiavelli explained, the Prince, to be successful, must rely not only on his own skills, his *virtu*, but also on objective circumstances, on his *fortuna*²⁵.

Bearing in mind that working class is as much an invention as it is reflection of how production takes place, it is not surprising to know the fact that “on 19 April 1891 in Castelfiorino, a small town in the heart of Tuscany, ... , a group of “workman” signed a May Day manifesto in which they invited local population to join them in a banquet to celebrate May Day, the feast day designated “exclusively” for workers, under the banner of “unity makes us strong”²⁶, and yet none of the organizers were factory workers, producers of surplus value or exploited by capitalists. They were rather a blacksmith, a printer, a bricklayer, a shoemaker, a carpenter and so forth²⁷.

In addition to above mentioned concerns about the definition of worker or working class, relation of those definitions to industrialization are also problematic. In the table provided²⁸ by Sassoon it is clear that there is no direct correlation between industrialisation and having a socialist party or electoral success of socialist parties²⁹. For instance a country such as Finland which had 11 percent of its population engaged in industry by 1910 had its socialist party since 1899. By contrast, in the United Kingdom where 44.6 percent of the population were engaged in industry, the socialist party had its electoral peak by 1911 of a mere 1.3 percent, whereas in Italy with only 26.8 percent of the population engaged in industry, 6.8 percent voted for socialists in year 1895.

²⁵ *ibid*, p.8.

²⁶ *ibid*, pp.7-8

²⁷ *ibid*, p. 8

²⁸ Table is provided in the appendix.

²⁹ For the see: *ibid*, p.10.

Therefore, the analyses of this thesis will not be based on definitions of “real” working class, “necessary” level of industrialization or “real” socialism for that matter. Instead, this thesis aims at a critical assessment of existing notions and assessments that were self declared by the subjects of socialist history by using tools of comparative study. Before proceeding further with the establishment and problems of methodology, there is one more crucial topic of discussion in the general history of socialism, which is particularly relevant to Ottoman socialism.

Pre-1914 socialist movements were mostly inspired by the German model: *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD)* until when World War I broke out to change this balance in favor of Russian socialists. For instance a discussion in *SPD* quickly spread and found its response among other socialist groups, as it was the case for Bolsheviks after the war. Nevertheless that is not to claim that Swedish, Spanish, Finnish, Dutch, Norwegian, Austrian, British or Italian socialisms were non-existent, it is only to underline the fact that most of the socialist movements across Europe were heavily inspired by the intellectual discussions of German speaking world. Ironically, France, which gave birth to French Revolution, the utmost inspiration of revolutionaries and a fundamental reference in socialist movements³⁰, was not as an influential center as Germany was.

The discussion of why French *Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (SFIO)* did not become *SPD* is vital for the purposes of this thesis. That will be dealt with in detail, but to make a long story short, precisely because France heavily influenced Ottoman intellectuals and most of them used French as the language of Western ideas, history of *SFIO* provides insights for understanding the *İştirak* circle. The *İştirak* journal and *İştirakçi Hilmi* were no exceptions in taking France as a role model and therefore in assessment of their socialism one must be able to draw parallels to French socialism. Sassoon argue that

³⁰ For many revolutionary ideas French Revolution was an inspiring example. It especially influenced German socialist movement since it was influential on theorists like Moses HeB, Karl Marx and Ferdinand Lassalle. For further reference see: Beatrix W. Bouvier, “The Influence of French Revolution on Socialism and the German Socialist Movement in the Nineteenth Century”, in *Socialism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, Volume I (London; New York: Routledge Press, 2003).

“... there are good reasons why French socialists could not offer a model to rival the *SPD*, in spite of French revolutionary tradition. They were weak in theory and organizationally divided. The painful and difficult revival of working-class activity in France after the crushing of Paris Commune, and the persecutions which followed, failed to help the socialist movement to cohere and develop”³¹.

This is one of the many reasons that have been discussed for the inability of French socialism to dominate socialist thinking. What was the significance of the crushing of Paris Commune for the Ottoman intellectuals? What other features of French socialism, which disabled it to be unitary inside and widespread outside, can be listed? Are such features also evident in the *İştirak* circle? These questions will be dealt in more detail in the following chapters.

I.2) Problems Emerging from Study of Ottoman socialism in particular:

It has been argued at the beginning that any study of Ottoman socialism would have two layers of problems to deal with. So far problems of historiography on socialism have been elaborated briefly in order to clarify methods of this thesis. It is crucial at this point, before proceeding further with problems of Ottoman historiography, to state that these two layers are not isolated from each other. For instance the role of political allegiances in writing biased histories of various socialisms and other ideologies is also evident in the history of Ottoman socialism and histories about *İştirakçi Hilmi* for that matter. That is to say biases of socialist history writing find their repercussions and reproduce themselves in the historiography of a modern ideology in the Ottoman Empire: socialism. Most of the problems included in this subchapter are going to be dealt with in more detail in the comprehensive critique of literature on the *İştirak* circle. Therefore, subsequent chapters of this thesis are designed to test initial chapter’s methodological concerns in practical examples of the *İştirakçi Hilmi* and *İştirak* circle.

For the purposes of this thesis history of a modern ideology namely socialism cannot be understood independently from the history of its’ context, which is between late 19th and early 20th centuries Ottoman Empire. Therefore discussions of the Ottoman history

³¹ Sassoon, “One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century”, p. 12.

writing in general, related to the period in question here, will also be considered to the limit that they are related to the subject under inquiry here. Bearing that in mind, history of Ottoman socialism has been under the influences of Orientalism (resulting with some sort of Ottoman exceptionalism, which is also a result of a wider Middle Eastern exceptionalism) and modernization theory (which assumed a progressive development trajectory³² for the “Sick Man of Europe” and saw exceptions to that logic [such as *İştirak*] as anomalies) in addition to influences of socialist history writing in general.

First of all, Orientalism is not the only reason why historians end up assuming that their subjects are unique, self-explanatory or *sui generis*. This is a general problem of history writing, which is much more evident in history writing of Ottoman Empire. Abou-El-Haj argues that if history is a science then its methods and tools for the history of a particular region must be applicable to Ottoman history as well. However he underlines the fact that it is still the case for European historians that they perceive their topic as unique and incomparable³³. This kind of essentialism makes it very hard to compare histories, it is a priority for this thesis to at least underline these problems before making suggestions about solving them. Abou-El-Haj argues that with the Ottoman specialists’ insistence on their topics “uniqueness” it has become even harder to make comparative works since this attitude stops the dialog between disciplines and different historiographies. To support his argument he puts forward the example of *İltizam*, which he argues to be a widespread phenomenon in other states and cultures yet it was perceived as unique to Ottomans³⁴.

One may think that the above mentioned examples of essentialisms are results of historians over emphasis or maybe even over liking of their topics. However, this perception of incomparability and uniqueness does not always carry positive

³² Such a teleological perception of history is also evident in Marxist theory as well; therefore history of Ottoman socialism is twice under the pressure of such teleological perception. For once it is because of modernization theory, and twice because of Marxist argument that assumed a certain teleological order of historical development for socialism and later communism to develop. Both assumptions gave historians a predetermination about phenomenon that was incompatible with the teleological scheme provided. All that are incompatible were mere anomalies and therefore finding the reasons of that anomaly became the task of historians.

³³ Rıfa’at Ali Abou-El-Haj, *Modern Devletin Doğası: 16. Yüzyıldan 18. Yüzyıla Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 2000), p. 19.

³⁴ *ibid*, pp. 21-22.

connotations. For instance in the case of the *İştirak* circle, *İştirak* circle was not “what it had to be” compared to its European contemporaries because of several reasons depending on a particular authors perception. That is to say it was not incomparable since it was original and good like in the example in which “Ottoman bureaucracy was so efficient yet so complex that it is often misunderstood and cannot be understood by referring to how other Empire bureaucracies work”³⁵. The *İştirak* circle’s incomparability had a more pejorative connotation like being “groundless or a youthful enthusiasm”³⁶ compared to the positive affirmation of Ottoman Bureaucracy.

Zachary Lockman also underlines the same problems for Middle Eastern labor history, which is affected by the above mentioned problems of Ottoman history writing and is also a wider context including, and related, to the subject of this thesis. He states that:

“As a framework for identity and action (whether individual or collective) in the Middle East, class was traditionally seen as very much subordinate to religion, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, village solidarity, regional origin and so forth. A certain “Middle Eastern exceptionalism”, a product of the lingering (and interacting) influence of both modernization theory and certain strands of Orientalism, was at work here”³⁷.

³⁵ An example of this can be given from the introductory chapter of Mehmet Genç’s precious work *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Devlet ve Ekonomi*. He argues that no “decline” can last around 240 years and the relative pace of Ottoman withdrawal from Europe [by emphasizing that it was not a successful industrial and colonial power as his enemies were] was slow compared to the time it took him to conquer those lands. He states that this long resistance to increasing European hegemony can only be understood in Ottoman bureaucracies unique success in dealing with problems [especially economically]. However the question of how other “long lasting” empires achieved a similar success and how that can be compared to Ottoman Empire stays unanswered. See: Mehmet Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Devlet ve Ekonomi*, (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2002), pp. 38-40.

³⁶ Such connotations and many others are often encountered in the literature on *İştirakçı Hilmi* and they will be elaborated in detail on the upcoming chapter. For an example see: Çapanoğlu, “Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist Hilmi”, p.60.

³⁷ Zachary Locman, *Workers and Working Classes in the Middle East: Struggles, Histories, Historiographies*, (New York: State University Of New York Press, 1993), p. xii.

Following the logic of Lockman’s argumentation; classes in the Ottoman Empire should not be regarded as an exception, self-explanatory or incomparable to classes elsewhere. The same logic must be applied to the study of a modern ideology as well: socialism. History of socialist ideology in the Empire was not a self-explanatory anomaly, it resembled similarities to socialisms elsewhere. Again in the same introduction, Lockman underlines another danger in the history of the workers of the Middle East:

“Middle Eastern workers’ history cannot and should not be forced to conform to some perceived norm derived from a certain narrative of European worker’s history especially because that narrative, and the metanarrative of modernity that underpins it, are themselves facing powerful challenges”³⁸.

This is also directly parallel to the concerns of this thesis. After accepting the comparability of the *İştirak* circle to other socialist movements elsewhere, one should avoid taking continental European experience of socialism (or the Marxian projection of it as was the case in dealing with the problems of history writing on socialism) as a teleological path to be followed. That is because a) such a path is also “facing powerful challenges”, as Lockman puts it, and b) isolating Middle Eastern history or Ottoman history into an essentialist regional historiography is as misleading as comparing it solely to a Western “role model”.

This thesis takes *İştirakçi* (Hüseyin) Hilmi as its subject of analysis, which will be elaborated within a wider context that consists of the *İştirak* journal, journals that were published as reserves of the *İştirak* with different names in times of its suspension of publish³⁹, the *İdrak* journal as *İştirak*’s continuum in *Mütareke* years (13 November 1918 to 23 September 1923), documents related to *Osmanlı Sosyalist Fırkası* (OSF), which is later *Türkiye Sosyalist Fırkası* (TSF) and various accounts on *İştirakçi* Hilmi. As it was stated before, this is not an undertaking of a comprehensive Ottoman socialist history, which must have included workers, workers unions, formation working class identity not to mention other socialists and socialist groups⁴⁰. The aim here is rather the assessment of

³⁸ *ibid*, p. xxv.

³⁹ In chronological order these journals are: *İnsaniyet*, *Sosyalist*, *Medeniyet* and *İdrak*.

⁴⁰ Some examples would be Avram Benaroya, A. Gabriel, Vlahof Efendi, Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Saloniki Socialist Workers Federation, O Ergatis journal etc.

a particular socialist İştirakçi Hilmi who characterized the *İştirak* circle with his overwhelming dominance as a leading figure. Nevertheless since other researches on Ottoman socialism will also be used for comparison, and since the context of this thesis is Ottoman socialism there is one more problem to be underlined with regards to the history of Ottoman socialism.

There is an often encountered problem in studies on Ottoman socialism with regards to the structure of their units of analysis. It concerns how the elements that constitute Ottoman socialism are defined. For instance, when talking about socialist movements throughout the Empire, would it be adequate to deal just with socialists who are Muslim and living in Istanbul? The answer must be clearly negative for empires, which are often multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-religious. However, most of the time, it happens to be the case where either Istanbul is at the center of the narrative, or it is some religious or ethnic group that is the sole unit of focus. This is unproblematic only if the author openly states his/her reasons for such a preference. Otherwise, disregarding of the provinces or of some portion of the society is a methodological error. That is to say one can declare limits of his/her research as a given part of a bigger picture only if it is pre-declared that he/she is aware of the bigger picture and this preference is for a particular reason. Otherwise, in the case of Ottoman socialism, misleading pictures can come out such as perceiving Armenian, Jewish, Greek or Bulgarian socialists as pieces of other socialist histories. It is a retrospective mistake to assume that different groups that were once a part of Ottoman Empire can be solely understood within the limits of their national histories. Therefore, one has to be cautious in assuming that such religious and ethnic groups can be analyzed in a vacuum, isolated from the society in which they existed. As a result, this thesis will concentrate on İştirakçi Hilmi, but will consider also other groups in the empire as far as they are relevant to the analysis of Hilmi's historical context.

These concerns are not new. A capital city bias and the problems of dealing with the histories of different ethnicities and religious groups separately have been pointed out frequently. According to Quataert there is a "capital-city bias" existing in the field of labor studies since it was easy for Istanbul to attract attention as the center of publishing and political activity. For both the history of socialism and for labor history in Quater's example, it is not possible to talk about a holistic picture without the inclusion of

Ottoman provinces into the narrative⁴¹. In his article about Ottoman workers and labor history, Quataert discusses the presumed relationship between ethnicity/religion and occupation. This is crucial for purposes of this thesis, since, if there is no clear evidence for such a division of occupations by ethnicity, then perceiving non-Muslim and Muslim workers as pieces of separate histories is misleading. Quataert sees the role of religion and ethnicity as an obstacle in the process of working class formation. Nevertheless, he shows us that despite there were reasons for inter-communal violence, such as an incident at 1860s (such as foreign merchants' biased hiring policies). There were also cases where many guilds' petitions were formulated by guilds having both Muslim and non-Muslim members of the guilds. Subsequent to his many examples, Quataert concludes that certainly there are "porous boundaries between identification by religion and occupation"⁴².

Finally, Quataert's rejection of the ethnic/religious division of labor finds a compliment in Cengiz Kırılı's Ph.D. in which he rejects such an ethnic and religious division from the standpoint of employers too. He argues that

"... given the frequency of titles associated with Muslim *esnaf* and the social and economic privileges attached to these titles, it seems that the Ottoman scholarship's portrayal of "humble farmer" Muslims as opposed to "wealthy and enterprising" non-Muslim *esnaf* should be revised, at least as far as the nineteenth century is considered"⁴³.

To sum up, the elaboration of İştirakçi (Hüseyin) Hilmi's socialism must take into consideration problems of both history of socialism in general and history of modern ideologies in the empire. The inability to define one true socialism, yet the need to define an outline leaves a historian with nothing else then to take all accounts of various self-

⁴¹ Donald Quataert, "Ottoman Workers and State: 1826-1914, in *Workers and Working Classes in the Middle East: Struggles, Histories, Historiographies*, (New York: State University Of New York Press, 1993), p. 22.

⁴² Quataert, "Ottoman Workers and State: 1826-1914", pp. 25-26.

⁴³ Cengiz Kırılı, *Struggle Over Space: Coffeeshouses of Ottoman İstanbul, 1780-1845*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, State University Of New York Binghamton, 2000, pp.117 - 119.

declared socialisms into account. These general problems have their repercussions on Ottoman historiography. Presuming a role model or teleological line of progress (weather it is Orientalism or Orthodox Marxism at work) for “true” socialism and then comparing it “Ottoman way of doing it” is similarly misleading as it is for a wider context of socialist history writing. Therefore discussions such as relationship between workers, industry and socialism in Ottoman context can not be understood without referring to how identical discussions have been resolved in a wider context. Finally socialism is an influential ideology in the Ottoman Empire and its true reach can only be assessed with the inclusion of the histories of all socialist groups in the empire such as Muslims, Armenians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Macedonians and Jews. Having stated all these concerns, following chapters are dedicated for the discussion of İştirakçi Hilmi who constitutes only a small portion of what can be referred as Ottoman socialism.



Figure I.1: The picture of Ottoman socialists celebrating May Day in İstanbul. A careful look at the picture reveals diversity of the participants with their different clothing, alphabet in pamphlets and physical appearance. The note under the picture says: “Pangaltıdaki “belvo” bahçesinde efrenji 1912 senesi Mayısının birinci günü Osmanlı Sosyalistleri tarafından idare edilen bir Mayıs bayramı”⁴⁴.

⁴⁴ İştirak, No:2, 25 Jue 1912, p. 24, MIL copy.

CHAPTER II

REAPPROACHING AN EARLY 20th CENTURY SOCIALIST: HÜSEYİN (İŞTİRAKÇİ) HİLMİ

II.1) İştirakçi (Hüseyin) Hilmi, His Environment and his Socialism:

Born in İzmir around 1880s⁴⁵, Hüseyin Hilmi was a journalist, a political thinker, a socialist, a revolutionary of his sort, and an unmistakable figure in front of many workers strikes with his red tie, waistcoat, flag and car. He is often assumed to have been naïve, superficial, lusting for power yet successful in making socialism a popular ideology and improving Ottoman workers conditions with his support to several of their strikes. He was not always a socialist from the beginning but when he became one he was associated with his ideas and the journal, which he founded to spread those ideas. That is how he came to be known as İştirakçi, a practice widespread among Ottomans, commemorating people with their distinguishing ideas or names of their journals⁴⁶. However, once he became a socialist, the publication of *İştirak* journal was only a beginning for him. He was among the initiators of the establishment of (Ottoman Socialist Party) *Osmanlı Sosyalist Fırkası* (OSF) and its leader. He was also dedicated to spreading of the celebrations of May Day as (Workers' Feast) *Amele Bayramı*. His socialist struggle was not only limited to the spread and development of socialist ideas through journals but he was also supporting workers in their strikes.

⁴⁵ This rough date of birth is from: Hıfzı Topuz, *Özgürlüğe Kurşun*, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2007), p.91. However in his book Topuz doesn't state his source or his logic for determination of İştirak's birth date.

⁴⁶ For instance another famous example of this would be Mizancı Murat.



Figure II.1: Picture of Hüseyin Hilmi⁴⁷

İştirakçi was assassinated when he gradually became very influential as a political figure under the conditions of *Mütareke* years in İstanbul. Reason of his assassination is uncertain; the accounts surrounding it are vague and controversial. His death is often referred as “not a surprise” because of his increasing lust for political power and his potential threat to the stability of the English and French commercial interests. He was assassinated in Istanbul on 15th of November 1922⁴⁸ most probably as a result of his

⁴⁷ İştirak, No: 1, 26 February 1910, p. 5, ISAM copy.

⁴⁸ There is also controversy on his date of death as there is on his date of birth. Different sources refer to different years. Çapanoğlu doesn't refer to a specific date, Mete Tunçay in *Osmanlılar Ansiklopedisi* refers to 1922 and Şehmuz Güzel in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* refers to 1923. Since he died as a result of assassination, it is important to know exactly when he died in order to make coherent speculations on the reasons of his assassination. Compared to Tunçay's account, Şehmuz's account is highly likely to be a result of a misprint. That is because Şehmuz's work is a wider article briefly mentioning İştirakçi compared to Tunçay's exclusive study

increasing influence on the workers movements. Whether he tried to concentrate political power in his hands for his personal lust or for his political ends is a discussion. When he died, he had been a socialist for approximately 13 years⁴⁹ and he was an outcast in his own movement. He had been the director of the *İştirak* journal and had taken leading roles in *İnsaniyet*, *Medeniyet*, *Sosyalist* and *İdrak* journals as well. He was among the founders of *OSF*, which later turned into *Türkiye Sosyalist Fırkası* (TSF) and he was the head of both parties. He lead several workers' strikes into success and finally he gave a political struggle to establish 1st of May as *Amele Bayramı*.

Sources about *İştirakçi* are very limited. They consist of his articles in various journals, political documents from the organizations that he had been a part of, memoirs and academic works that talk about him, documents in BBA (Baş Bakanlık Arşivi)⁵⁰, and reports of M.M. (*Mim Mim*) organization's spies⁵¹. Therefore most of the effort here will concentrate on these scarcely available sources. This thesis will try to reconstruct *İştirakçi* by using a) historical context of the period, b) secondary literature about him and c) above mentioned primary sources about him. Simultaneously, while trying to

on him. Furthermore many editions of Tunçay's later works on Turkish / Ottoman left keeps the same date as the date of death which suggests that he probably did not feel the necessity to chance it since he was sure about it. See: Mete Tunçay, *Hüseyin Hilmi Efendi*, in *Osmanlılar Ansiklopedisi*, (İstanbul : Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 1999), pp. 581-582; Şehmuz Güzel, *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e İşçi Hareketi ve Grevler*, in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Volume III, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), pp.803-827.

⁴⁹ Assuming that he was influenced by socialism shortly before he started to publish *İştirak* on 26th of February 1910.

⁵⁰ Rather than having an interpretive nature, this very small number of documents has more of a report structure such as report on Hüseyin Hilmi's death or declarations of establishment of *OSF* and *TSF*.

⁵¹ M.M. (*Mim Mim*) organization is a secret committee dedicated to help the resistance movement in Anatolia against Allies invasion of the country after Mondoros treaty. This committee was established in order to be in control of the events taking place in İstanbul that was under the control of Allies. For further reference: Hüsnü Himmetoğlu, *Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda İstanbul ve Yardımları*, Cilt I, (İstanbul: Ülkü Matbaası, 1975), pp. 125-156. I personally thank Cemil Koçak for bringing this book to my attention. The existence of these materials and their relation to Hilmi are emphasized by Tarık Zafer Tunaya and Mete Tunçay and they both provide in depth information about the significance of these documents in understanding *İştirakçi* Hilmi. This thesis relies on these accounts due to unavailability of these primary documents. See: Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler*, Cilt II: Mütareke Dönemi 1918-1922, (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1986), pp.398-411; Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar: 1908-1925*, (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1967), pp. 40-57.

reconstruct who İştirakçi was, already existing accounts will be referred and discussed critically by following the chronological order of İştirakçi's life. There are three distinctive periods of Hilmi's life when his relation to socialist ideology is considered. These are a) his years before the *İştirak* journal, b) his years with the *İştirak* journal and *İştirak* newspaper / *OSF*, and finally c) Mütareke years in which *İştirak* was replaced by *İdrak* newspaper and *OSF* with *TSF*. Subsequent chapters are structured accordingly.

II.2) Being a socialist in early 20th century Ottoman Empire

Hüseyin Hilmi was neither the first socialist, nor the first intellectual to talk and write about socialism in the Empire. By the time 1848 revolutions shook Europe, Ahmet Cevdet Paşa in his famous *Tarih-i Cevdet* was writing about how these *efkar-ı faside* (destructive ideas) had no place in *Memalik-i Mahrusa* (well protected domains) and that these revolutionary ideas brought nothing but Napoleonic *istibdad* (absolutism) as a result of *iğtişâşa* (chaos) they arose in public life⁵². As early as 1871 Marx appeared on *Hakayik-ul Vakayi* newspaper with his translated letter on Franco-Prussian war of 1870, subsequently he appeared on *Terakki* newspaper again in 1871, this time with a translation of his article on Paris Commune⁵³. Several more followed and Marx was not the only focus of interest for Ottoman public⁵⁴.

In addition to those, socialism was more than just a public interest for Ottomans. For instance Berge and Kocabaşoğlu reminds the *Paris sergüzeşt* (Paris adventure) of the youngest members of Yeni Osmanlılar (later as *İttifak-ı Hamiyyet*) Memet, Reşat and Nuri Bey'ler in which they fought together with Paris Commune revolutionaries against

⁵² Uygur Kocabaşoğlu and Metin Berge, *Bolşevik İhtilali ve Osmanlılar*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006), pp. 15-16.

⁵³ *ibid*, p. 17.

⁵⁴ Several other discussions about Paris Commune, socialism, Karl Marx, Icarian socialists and First International including contributions from names like Ahmet Mithat Efendi and Namık Kemal can be read from the voluminous and precious work of Kerim Sadi (or with his penname A. Cerrahoğlu). For further reference: Kerim Sadi, *Türkiye'de Sosyalizmin Tarihine Katkı*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994).

the Prussian offensive throughout the Commune period⁵⁵. In another account, according to Abidin Nesimi, first person to be associated with socialist ideas was Ottoman ambassador in Berlin Ethem Pertev Paşa. Approximately in office before 1871 Paris Commune and after 1848 revolutions, Nesimi argues that Ethem Pertev learned and liked socialism but also disagreed with its emphasis on *iştirak-i emval ve iyal* (sharing of properties and women)⁵⁶. In their book, Kocabaşoğlu and Berge argue that throughout the last quarter of 19th century *iştirak-i emval ve iyal* has been used as a synonym of socialism and communism⁵⁷. This is crucial on two levels. First of all, as it was stated in our first chapter the difference between socialism and communism, or the difference between “utopian” and “scientific” socialisms was not evident for an intellectual since it was then being constructed. This example is a proof that it was the case for Ottomans as well. Secondly there is a preoccupied notion in most of the introductory works on Ottoman / Modern Turkish histories of the Left that this misconception (sharing of properties and women) about socialism and communism was well established. Although it played a crucial role, there were also intellectuals like Şemsettin Sami Bey, who defended socialism extensively by arguing how “real” socialism was not sharing of properties and women. An example of his defense can be found in *Tercüman-ı Şark* journal on 10th of June 1878⁵⁸. As a result, assuming that all Ottoman public was ignorant to socialism or assuming that nobody wrote in its favor is misleading. Before Hüseyin Hilmi, there was already certain interest in different levels.

Other than examples of public interest or political submission to socialism there was also an academic interest in socialism. For instance Sakızlı Ohannes Paşa with his survey book for Mekteb-i Mülkiye-i Şahane, which was named as *Mebadi-i İlm-i Servet-i Milel*, was discussing the difference between socialism and communism⁵⁹. One of the Committee of Union and Progress’ (CUP) leading members Mehmet Cavit bey, with his *İlm-i İktisad*, has made the first comprehensive critique of socialism by differentiating

⁵⁵ Serol Teber, *Paris Komünü'nde Üç Yurtsever Türk: Mehmet, Reşat ve Nuri Beyler*, (İstanbul: De Yayınları, 1986), pp. 76-86.

⁵⁶ Abidin Nesimi, *Türkiye'de Sosyalizmin Teorik Sorunları*, (Ankara: Yücel Yayınları, 1976), p. 224.

⁵⁷ Kocabaşoğlu and Berge, “Bolşevik İhtilali ve Osmanlılar”, p.24.

⁵⁸ *ibid*, p. 25.

⁵⁹ Sadi, “Türkiye’de Sosyalizmin Tarihine Katkı”, pp. 165-171.

Marx from utopian socialists⁶⁰. These are followed by contributions from names like Ali Kami, Mithat Cemal, Yusuf Akçura and Dr. Abdullah Cevdet⁶¹ from late 19th century up to 1920s. Therefore when Hüseyin Hilmi started to think and write about socialism, socialist and communist ideas have already penetrated the Empire on several levels, and had their repercussions in Ottoman public. They must have been available to him from multiple sources.

All these examples must not be surprising since by late 18th century Ottomans had already developed a considerable interest in European ideas, affairs and culture not to mention all sorts of exchange going on for centuries on different levels. Therefore it was normal that in late 19th and early 20th centuries discussions about socialisms were also taking place in the Ottoman Empire. However this “normal” existence of socialism in *Osmanlı efkar-ı umumiyesi* (the realm of Ottoman public debate), as any other modern ideology, became a problematic in socialist history writing. Ottomans never had an equivalent of a German SPD, neither they had their Bolshevik revolution or revisionist “renegades”. Nevertheless socialism was not alien to Ottomans; there were parties, workers movements, committees, revolutionaries and intellectuals associated with socialism. Combined with examples that have been mentioned so far, below stated examples illustrate that socialism penetrated all segments of Ottoman social strata regardless of class, ethnicity and religion.

Through the end of the 19th century socialism has begun to spread in the Balkans and in Ottoman lands. Bulgarian Social Democrat Workers Party (BSDWP) in 1891, Romanian Social Democrat Party in 1893, Serbian Social Democrat Party in 1903 and later on Greek Socialist Union between 1909-1911 have been founded in Balkans. Simultaneously in the lands of the Empire, *Hınçak*'s Social Democratic Hunchakian Party (in 1887, and *Taşnak* [Dashnaktsutiun] clique around 1890), *L'amie du Travail Cemiyeti*⁶² in 1867, *Osmanlı Amele Cemiyeti* (or *Tophane İşçi Örgütü*)⁶³ in 1894-95,

⁶⁰ Kocabaşoğlu and Berge, “Bolşevik İhtilali ve Osmanlılar”, p. 30.

⁶¹ For further reference see: Sadi, “Türkiye’de Sosyalizmin Tarihine Katkı”, pp.165 255.

⁶² This organization is also known as “*Ameleperver Cemiyeti*”. Şehmuz argues that this was not a workers’ union but rather was more of a charity organization, which was dedicated to supply small producers with credit, poor workers with money and “*namuslu*” and unemployed workers with work. However he also underlines that these organizations (a different example being Greek *Omonia*) exclusively aimed to help workers different

Sosyalist Klübü in 1908, *Selanik İşçi Federasyonu* in 1909⁶⁴ and *OSF* in 1910 and later *TSF* in 1919 were founded. In addition to those there were also journals published throughout the Empire around late 1800s and early 1900s some of which were *İştirak*, *O Ergatis*, *Köylü*, *Medeniyet*, *İdrak*, *Soyalist*, *İnsaniyet* and publishing of *SSIF*⁶⁵.

If one is to talk about the highlights of socialism in the Second Constitutional period, following would be worth to mention. Debates raised by socialist parliamentarians⁶⁶ like Dimitir Vlahof⁶⁷ or Krikor Zohrab Efendi in *Meclis-i Mebusan*⁶⁸ of 1908, Alexander

than their contemporaries. For further information see: Güzel, “Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete İşçi Hareketi ve Grevler”, p.809.

⁶³ Şehmuz argues that this organization was the first known workers organization found secretly in 1984 or 85, which had a member number around 4.000 workers from war industries in Tophane, İstanbul. For further information see: Güzel, “Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete İşçi Hareketi ve Grevler”, p.810.

⁶⁴ Or as often remembered as the party Thessalonica Workers Federation. The word federation here is important since it reflects the federative and internationalist stand of SSIF.

⁶⁵ *Selanik Sosyalist İşçi Federasyonu* founded and administrated by Avram Benaroya. Those publications are *Journal Del Laborador* (1909-1912), *Solidariad Ovradera* (1911) and *Avanti* after Selanik occupied by Greece (1912). Formerly mentioned *Journal Del Laborador* was also named as *Rabotniçeski Vestnik*, *Efirmeris tu Ergatu* and *Amele Gazetesi*. It was also published in four languages initially (Ladino, Bulgarian, Greek and Turkish) but later on only Ladino and Bulgarian. For further information about SSIF and its publishing see: George Haupt and Paul Dumont, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Sosyalist Hareketler*, (İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1977).

⁶⁶ By the time Hüseyin Hilmi started to publish *İştirak*; socialists in the parliament have already discussed socialism and later the law of *Tatil-i Eşgal* in depth. For further reference about the discussions see: Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler*, Cilt I, (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1988), pp. 249-250.

⁶⁷ Dimitir Vlahof was born in 1874 in Aegean Macedonia and became an influential figure for both Macedonian nationalist movement and for Second Constitutional period. As opposed to the right wing members of Üsküp (Skopje) and Manastır (Bitola) region pan-Bulgarian revolutionaries, Vlahof was among the Broad (social democrat) Bulgarian socialists. Vlahof was in cooperation with both Jewish, Armenian and Turkish socialists and workers. Adanır in his article cites a piece from the memoir of Vlahof which shows us that he was participating into conferences for Muslim workers to raise their class consciousness and to support them in their strikes. For further reference about Vlahof see: Fikret Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu ve Dimitar Vlahof’un Anılarında 2. Meşrutiyet*, *Birikim* journal, Vol. 9, 1975, p. 14-26.

⁶⁸ Tarık Zafer Tunaya gives the names of some of the Armenian socialists members of the 1908 parliament as: Vahan Papazyan (Van), Hamparsum Boyacıyan, Karakin Pastırmacıyan and Dagavaryab Efendis. He also underlines a very crucial problematic. According to Tunaya, the existence of Turkish parliamentarians among these Armenian and Bulgarian members is still a question waiting to be resolved. He suggests that the

Parvus Helphand⁶⁹ publishing a book about the financial imprisonment of Ottomans; Turks, Bulgarians and Jews collaborating in worker strikes of *SSIF*, *İştirak* journal with its Muslim, Greek, Jewish and (probably) Armenian writers, finally Armenian revolutionary parties being the first sub-committee representative of Ottoman lands in the Second International. Even these brief highlights suggest that socialist ideas were diffusing in between the Balkan, Ottoman and European socialist circles⁷⁰.

There had been a considerable increase in the amount and affects of worker strikes in the Empire after 1908. Especially right after the declaration of constitution, worker strikes were swirling throughout the Empire. As was the case with the spread of socialist ideas, workers strikes were also spreading in the ethnic, religious and regional borders inside the Empire. In most of the cases Muslim and non-Muslim workers ended up in cooperation against their common enemies *sermayedar* (capitalist) and *fabrikator* (factory owner). According to Güzel between 1872 and 1907 there were 15 strikes with a total of 12.985 to 13.285 workers involved, in 1908 there were 30 strikes with a total of approximately 42.728 workers involved⁷¹. One year of 1908 almost doubled a thirty-five year period that it preceded. Another striking example of how serious the level of increase in workers' activities was, can be read in a French newspaper of the era. Writers of Stamboul's memories of Paris Commune, Reign of Terror or July days of 1848 were

speech given in honor of French socialist leader Jaurès in the parliament may provide some new evidence. (Tunaya, "Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler", 1988, pp. 249-250).

⁶⁹ Parvus was a very influential revolutionary he was influential on Committee of Union and Progress and he was probably influential on Ottoman socialists as well. However, accounts on him are fragmented this thesis ignores the discussions about his influence. For further reading see: Tunçay, "Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar: 1908-1925", pp. 46-48; Winfried B. Scharlau and Zbynek A. Zeman Devrim, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Bolşevik Teorisyonu: Parvus Efendi: Devrim Taciri*, tr. Süheyla Kaya, (İstanbul: Kalkedon Yayınları, 2007); M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, *Helphand-Parvus and his Impact on Turkish Intellectual Life*, Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Volume 40, issue 6, November 2004, pp. 145-165.

⁷⁰ For instance Yalimov argues that socialists movements in neighboring countries were influencing Ottoman socialists as well especially in the centers like İstanbul, Selanik and İzmir. He further states that many Jews, Greeks and Bulgarians were participating in socialist activities as a result of those influences. See: İbrahim Yalimov, *1876-1923 Döneminde Türkiye'de Bulgar Azınlığı ve Sosyalist Hareketin Gelişmesi*, in Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Sosyalizm ve Milliyetçilik (1876-1923), (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 1995), p.142.

⁷¹ Despite numbers with such precision cast doubts about their accountability, they are useful seeing the enormous level of increase in worker strikes. For further reference see the tables in: Şehmuz, "Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete İşçi Hareketi ve Grevler", pp. 803-830.

stirred up when they witnessed the increasing workers strikes in the Empire⁷². Following all those; the law that prohibited workers' strikes, *Tatil-i Eşgal* law, should be no surprise. The significance of this prohibition is still a historian's quarrel yet the very existence of it is a proof of two things: existence of some sort of class struggle and resolution of that struggle in favor of capital owners⁷³. To sum up, İştirak came into an atmosphere where many workers were already building up their "class consciousness" and there was already a public informed and active about socialist ideas across the various segments of the society.

There are particular reasons why a historical background of socialism in the Empire is provided (by considering all elements [Muslim and non-Muslim] of it) and the existence of socialism as a "normal" phenomenon is emphasized over and over. First of all, it is often the case that Ottoman socialism is considered to be the socialism of Muslim (or/and Turk despite this must have meant even smaller portion of the whole) subjects of the Empire. Following that, it is also often the case that this socialism is considered to be naïve and more superficial compared to both: socialism of minorities in the Empire and to European socialists. This is wrong in two folds: primarily, a history of Ottoman socialism includes history of all socialist subjects of the Sultan regardless of their identities; secondly, the presumption of Muslim (or/and Turkish) socialism being naïve, superficial and late comer is neither testable nor accurate in the light of the examples offered so far.

Secondly Hüseyin Hilmi often ends up being the first or the most influential Muslim (or/and Turk) socialist if the above stated presumptions are taken for granted. That is to say when history of socialism is artificially divided: as Muslim / non-Muslim, Hilmi ends up being a legitimate topic of inquiry for understanding the former. Hilmi cannot be understood solely without other socialists (who constitute part of his historical context) around him and there is no evidence that suggests lack of interaction between him and other socialists. On the contrary, there are considerable amount of evidence that suggest significant relations between different socialists irrespective of their ethic or religious identities. As a result, elaboration of non-Muslim socialists and Muslim socialists as separate and unrelated units is not an operational methodology.

⁷² Quataert, "Ottoman Workers and State: 1826-1914", p. 29.

⁷³ Atilla E. Aytekin, *Tarlalardan Ocaklara, Sefaletten Mücadeleye Zonguldak Ereğlisi Kömür Havzası İşçileri 1848-1922*. (İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2006), pp. 24-25.

The very effort to find a first Muslim or Turkish socialist is problematic from the very beginning precisely because it artificially limits the existence of a historical figure within a framework of an imagined national history; despite it belonged to a wider history of an Empire. Any attempt, which tries to understand Ottoman socialism and /or modern Turkish left (or modern Turkey in general), has no luxury to disregard legacy of the leftist minorities (such as Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Bulgarians or Macedonians). Unfortunately history writing of socialism in the Empire is very much dominated by such tendencies and perceptions. In a recent thesis by Aylin Arıcan⁷⁴, *İştirak* journal is considered as the first socialist *cemaat* despite that was not the case. The reason why she sees *İştirak* as “the first” socialist newspaper and the circle as the first group, is because of her disregard for the rest of the Ottoman socialist history. Furthermore throughout the chapters dedicated to Hilmi and his journals, existences of non-Muslim writers in Hilmi’s journals are reported but the nature of their existence are not questioned. Hilmi is portrayed as naïve, caricature like figure with little if no idea about “real” socialism. This is understandable since that thesis falls into a common mistake: taking primary sources about Hilmi in their face values. This mistake is widespread and will be analyzed in a more detailed way in the subsequent chapters.

On the other side of the coin, there is also the problem of disregarding socialism among Muslims. That is to say a perception of non-Muslims being more prone to socialism is as problematic as the disregarding of socialism among minorities. Feroz Ahmed in his article argues that it is a must to emphasize role of minorities in the Empire when studying socialism, since they were able to create a bourgeoisie and intellectuals capable of thinking in contemporary terms⁷⁵. By referring to the works of Cerrahoğlu, Tunçay, Dumont and Harris, he agrees on the assumption that minorities had better and closer connections with Europe in general and that is why they were first to initiate

⁷⁴ Aylin Arıcan, *İkinci Meşrutiyet Döneminde Sosyalist Düşünce ve İştirak Dergisi*, unpublished Master thesis, Hacettepe University, 2003.

⁷⁵ Apart from focusing on Non-Muslims this statement is also problematic since it sees bourgeoisie as a prerequisite for political thinking. This is a long discussion but briefly socialists in the Empire like Armenians fought their own bourgeoisie as well in formulating their national identity and socialist fight simultaneously in contrast to the usual scheme where bourgeoisie triggered nationalism.

ideologies such as nationalism and socialism⁷⁶. In his often referred works, Tunçay makes a similarly problematic approach. He regards history of socialism among minorities and among Muslims as two separate histories. This tendency is very evident in both his early and late works. For instance in an early work named *Türkiye’de Sol Akımlar (1908-1925)* his chapter structure is as follows:

İlk Türk Sol Akımlarının Tarihi:

I. İkinci Meşrutiyet’te Osmanlı Solculuğu

II. Milli Mücadele Anadolu’sunda Solculuk

III. İstanbul’da Aydınlik Çevresi⁷⁷

Despite he dedicates a brief introduction to give a general picture about post 1908 period as a proactive period in which he refers to minorities; he starts his narrative by elaborating on Hüseyin Hilmi immediately after the introduction. Throughout this early work he never disregards minorities but treats *Türk Sol Akımları* (Turkish leftist movements) as a single unit of analysis similar to the methodology of a much later master thesis by Arıcan and again he does not talk about Hilmi as a part of a bigger picture but rather treats him as a marginal case in a vacuum.

Again, in a much later work, Tunçay suggests a chronological scheme for the studies on Ottoman socialism. He divides Ottoman Socialism into four chronological categories by stating that they overlap:

1)Azınlıkların, yani gayrimüslim anasır’ın, Müslüman ve Türk olmayan etnik ve dinsel toplulukların Solculuğu.

2)Osmanlı Solu

3)Milli Mücadele Anadolu’sunda Solculuk

4)Marksist Sol⁷⁸

⁷⁶ See: Feroz Ahmed, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun Son Dönemlerinde Milliyetçilik ve Sosyalizm Üzerine Düşünceler”, in *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Sosyalizm ve Milliyetçilik: 1876-1923*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004). It must be underlined that the book in which this particular article of Ahmad is taken, structurally provides a more all-encompassing and holistic picture with regards to history of Ottoman socialism by including histories from different segments of the society.

⁷⁷ Tunçay, “Türkiye’de Sol Akımlar”, pp. ix-x.

First of all, with reference to what has been mentioned so far, if this is a chronological order than how Muslims, who were thinking and writing about socialism not to mention ones who fought with Commune revolutionaries, are going to be integrated into this order? Secondly he uses the term Ottoman Left as synonym of Muslim (or/and Turkish) left in parallel with his previous work. Finally naming the final stage as “Marxist Left” is very much parallel to a problem evident in history writing of socialism in general. This has been mentioned in depth previously and to put it bluntly it is teleological order in which finally ends up with Orthodox Marxism. What about the socialist Armenians who wanted to publish Karl Marx in Armenian in Ottoman press? How pre-*Türkiye Komünist Partisi* (TKP, Turkish Communist Party) references to Marx are going to be integrated into this scheme? All these problems call for a different scheme especially for understanding Ottoman socialism.

This thesis argues that if it is going to be purely chronological than it has to cover events that are significant for socialist ideology in general and Ottoman socialism in particular. Such a chronological periodisation for early socialists in the Empire would be like: the pre-1908 period, the post-1908 until the begin of the CUP’s dictatorship in 1913, from 1913 to the ceasefire of *Mondoros* (October 1918, which also slightly after Bolshevik Revolution that is crucial for socialist history in general), the *Mütareke* years of İstanbul until the city’s liberation with the success of the Anatolian resistance. Such periodisations have to consider all aspects of both Ottoman socialism in particular and the history of socialism in general as well. This was just a brief attempt to suggest to create more neutral chronologies.

According to Minassian, between 1887-1921 socialism and nationalism became inseparable pieces of Armenian liberation⁷⁹. This was approximately when Şemsettin Sami Bey was writing in defense of socialism and almost half a century later than Ethem

⁷⁸ Mete Tunçay, “Cumhuriyet Öncesinde Sosyalist Düşünce”, in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi*, Vol I, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), p.296.

⁷⁹ Anahide Ter Minassian, “1876-1923 Döneminde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Sosyalist Hareketin Doğuşunda ve Gelişmesinde Ermeni Topluluğun Rolü”, in *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Sosyalizm ve Milliyetçilik: 1876-1923*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), p. 165.

Perteve, whom Nesimi argued to be the first socialist. Therefore it seems that, so far, either wrong answers were given or wrong questions were asked. Since socialism influenced different subjects of the Empire more or less at the same time, then why it was more appealing to the minorities than to the Muslims? This is a legitimate question but does not necessarily mean that the histories of the minorities and the Muslim majority are separable or that one is essentially more prone to socialism than the other. What role does nationalism play in this context? It is certain that Turkish nationalism is a later construction compared to Armenian or Greek nationalisms. It is also the case that Turkish nationalism has digested socialist promises (such as appealing to social classes, national industry and anti-imperialism) when formulating the program of the party that led the republican revolution: *Halk Fırkası* (People's Party). Therefore socialism may have been more popular among the minorities precisely because it was compatible with their national aspirations, which was then simply non-existent for the Muslims. That is to say, if a thematic categorization rather than a chronological one is going to be employed, then different socialisms' relation to nationalism can be taken as a criterion. This assumption will be tested in the subsequent chapters.

II.3) A “Galat-ı Meşhur”: A belligerent Socialist or a Naïve Opportunist?

İştirakçi started to his career in a managerial position in the journal *İzmir*. Later, thanks to his family's wealth, he purchased the journal upon completing his military service. Instead of its former owner Bıçakçızade Hakkı, now İştirakçi Hilmi was publishing the journal with the name of *Serbest İzmir* (Liberal İzmir) in the years of Second Constitutional Period. It was only by 1910 that he started to publish *İştirak* journal in İstanbul and started his new career as a socialist. It is worth a discussion if he was a liberal or a socialist before that date⁸⁰. However, it is certain that after he had started to publish *İştirak*, he started to influence public mind, and came to be known as a socialist. After that, until the day he died, he was a dedicated man of his ideas. He became a socialist probably somewhere between 1908 and 1910, and it deserves to be discussed why he became so.

⁸⁰ Following the reference by Benlisoy and Çetinkaya, Alkan argues that Hilmi already wrote about his socialist ideas in *Serbest İzmir* journal and therefore his career as a socialist is neither a coincidence and nor he is an ignorant. See: Foti Benlisoy and Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, “İştirakçi Hilmi”, in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Sol*, Vol. VIII, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), pp. 165-183, at p.170.

Most of the accounts on Hüseyin Hilmi have pejorative connotations, Hilmi and more or less everything that he was associated with is perceived as naïve and superficial. This perception is evident in almost all accounts describing his life from how he became a socialist to why he was assassinated. Hüseyin Hilmi is often portrayed as passive, confused and superficial when it comes to discuss his intellectual capacities as opposed to his belligerent and opportunist personal qualities. Rather than evaluating him within his historical context and within the context of socialist history in general, most of these pejorative connotations emerge from a common mistake. That mistake is taking primary material as they are without critically analyzing them within their own historical context. Since there are no autobiographical accounts left by Hüseyin Hilmi himself, almost all historical reconstructions about him are based on a handful of memoirs⁸¹ that talk about him. These memoirs are reproduced with their face values that created an established mistake, a *galat-ı meşhur*⁸² in Ottoman terms, in which Hüseyin Hilmi was just a “kara cahil⁸³”: an uneducated ignorant.

“Sosyalist Hilmi bir tabiat fenomenidir. Onun politika ile, ilimle, edebiyatla, hatta Sosyalizm ile hatta şu veya bu toplumsal dava ile hiçbir ilgisi yoktu. Bir kara cahildi o. Ama ona bir kere Sosyalist denilmişti. Bir aralık kendi de inanmıştı buna. Sonra saptı, sapıtı. Hepsi bu kadar!”⁸⁴

The second earliest and the most influential of these memoirs, which is reproduced over and over in following memoirs and academic works, is a memoir by Münir Süleyman Çapanoğlu⁸⁵. Despite its name *Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist*

⁸¹ It was stated in the previous chapter that there is a scarcity of accounts on Hüseyin Hilmi. However, even within this scarcity, memoirs about him constitute only a part of the total material available. Therefore in addition to taking memoirs with their face values, disregarding the importance of other material (such as his articles, his historical context, etc.) in reconstructing Hüseyin Hilmi is also an often encountered mistake.

⁸² There is an anonymous Ottoman proverb that goes as: *Galat-ı meşhur lugat-ı fasihadan evladır*. It means that a popular, established mistake is more credible than an all inclusive dictionary. Hüseyin Hilmi’s portrayal as naïve and superficial based on what has been narrated in memoirs of his contemporaries is one such example of established mistake.

⁸³ Çapanoğlu, “Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist Hilmi”, p. 76.

⁸⁴ *ibid*, p. 76.

⁸⁵ He was an important figure from the press in modern Turkey and late Ottoman Empire. He was a graduate of Saint Joseph high school, he was conscripted in the World War I and finally he was working and writing in the newspaper of *İdrak* that was published by

Hilmi the book does not exclusively talk about Hilmi or socialism. On the contrary the book is a kind of political memoir, which reflects ideas of Çapanoğlu about the political life from around 1908 up until the assassination of Hilmi and the end of *Mütareke* years in İstanbul. Although there is one earlier memoir that talks about Hilmi, which written by Bezmi Nusret Kaygusuz in 1955 with the name *Bir Roman Gibi*, its main topic was not Hüseyin Hilmi and the parts which mentioned Hilmi were digested⁸⁶ into the work of Çapanoğlu. Çapanoğlu's significance comes from being the most quoted (if not plagiarized) source of work. Some of the memoirs and academic works that referred to Çapanoğlu's narrative with its face value are from Fethi Tevetoğlu, Aclan Sayılğan, İlhan Darendelioğlu and Hıfzı Topuz⁸⁷ not to mention many others as well. Hüseyin Hilmi's portrayal by Çapanoğlu has not been significantly altered and therefore a critical reading of his work will be central for the task of critically reading accounts on *İştirakçi*.

Çapanoğlu's book is structured in an approximate chronological manner. However, the last two chapters of the book constitute a different line of writing in which he dedicates two separate chapters for both to *İştirakçi* and Baha Tevfik where he tries to analyze them. That is probably why discussions of how Hüseyin Hilmi became a socialist often revolve around a similar theme: his friendship with Baha Tevfik. Tevfik was an important materialist, nihilist and wrote about socialist ideas. He was more of a public intellectual than a political activist of a particular ideology. Çapanoğlu argues that Baha Tevfik was responsible for introducing socialism to Hüseyin Hilmi and structures his book by dedicating the final chapter to Tevfik. Therefore after a long introduction where

İştirakçi Hilmi. This is important since it is highly likely that Çapanoğlu's personal history with Hilmi played a role in his biased account.

⁸⁶ Çapanoğlu refers to Kaygusuz in his mentioned book on pages 77 and 48. It is striking though; he had only partially taken Kaygusuz's text to the extent that it talked about how Hilmi was naïve, greedy and how Baha Tevfik had made him a socialist. This is critical since in the original text (Kaygusuz, 2002, pgs: 72-73) tone of Kaygusuz is quite different. For instance Kaygusuz talked about how Hüseyin Hilmi had a meeting with Jan Jaurès in Paris, which was cut in the quotation of Çapanoğlu. For the comparison see: Bezmi Nusret Kaygusuz, *Bir Roman Gibi*, (İzmir: İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Yayını, 2002).

⁸⁷ All these authors have published works on the history of Sol (Left), Communism or Socialism apart from Topuz whose work is semi-academic and more of a literary piece on journalist killings. However all these works share a common ground of talking about Hüseyin Hilmi (*İştirakçi*) and they all refer to him with the tone that is established in the memoir of Çapanoğlu. Again, all dedicate their earlier or introductory chapters on *İştirakçi* to answer a need of discussing the origins of Leftist movements in Turkey.

he talks about conditions of 1908, dictatorial policies of CUP, *Fedakaran-ı Millet Cemiyeti*, *Ahrar Fırkası* and *Osmanlı Demokrat Fırkası*; he finally talks about his main topic *OSF* and Hilmi, which constitutes slightly less than half of his book. Subsequently he ends up with a chapter on Baha Tevfik in which he argued that Tevfik was the mastermind behind Hilmi's ideas and that he should have been much more significant if he had lived longer. This had two important repercussions: one is Çapanoğlu's well established image of superficial, naïve and greedy Hilmi in contrast to intellectual teacher of him: Baha Tevfik. The second, emerging from the narrative and structure of his book, is Hilmi's (and *OSF*'s) affiliation with liberalism rather than socialism. That is because in Çapanoğlu's structure Hilmi is an abnormal attempt among many attempts against CUP's increasing political power that was concentrated on liberal opposition. These narratives by Çapanoğlu are often referred and taken with their face value⁸⁸.

As it has been repeatedly stated with several examples, it is highly likely that Hilmi was exposed to socialism from multiple sources⁸⁹ and socialism already influenced him before *İştirak* journal. Besides there are no clear accounts, other than those of Kaygusuz's and Çapanoğlu's memoirs that constitute the only sources claiming Hilmi to have any ideas about socialism. This is not to argue that he was very well informed or was the "real" intellectual among Ottoman socialists. Actually overwhelming emphasis on the question of how he learned socialism casts a shadow in understanding his time as a socialist. This is to underline how this initial presumption about Hilmi is misleading and distorts further analyze about him by accepting his naivety in the first place. As to his affiliation with liberalism, this theme is also recurrent in recent history writing and will be dealt in more detail when dealing with the relation of other ideologies with the *İştirak* circle.

⁸⁸ For examples of this see: Tunçay, "Hüseyin Hilmi Efendi", pp. 581-582; Tunaya, "Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler", Cilt I, pp. 247-255; Mete Tunçay, Sonuç Yerine, in *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Sosyalizm ve Milliyetçilik: 1876-1923* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1995), pp. 239-257, at p. 239.

⁸⁹ In addition to the numerous examples that have been provided as pieces of his historical context, even Çapanoğlu briefly states that there is also an "unlikely" probability that Hilmi may have learned socialism from a worker strike that he witnessed in Romania when he flee after 31st March incident. See: Çapanoğlu, "Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist Hilmi", p. 77.

In the introduction of his sub-chapter (*İlk Sosyalist Parti*) on *OSF* there is a strange dilemma, a controversy done by Çapanoğlu. Initially he argues that Ottoman socialism was absurd and was superficial since there wasn't any working class evident in the Empire as it was in Europe. He further claims that it was the unnatural enthusiasm of 1908 that initiated a socialist party but not the material conditions⁹⁰. First of all, in reference to the initial chapters dedicated to the problems of history writing of socialism, this assumption is not accurate and therefore cannot be the reason of *OSF* success or failure. In addition to that, just a page after, he talks about *SSIF* and Vlahof Efendi among which the former is the first Ottoman worker's federation and the latter a Bulgarian socialist member of the 1908 parliament. This time however, he argues that Vlahof was "a real socialist" and *SSIF* a real workers syndicate in Thessalonica⁹¹. With this self-orientalising statement he makes two mistakes at one time. First of all the very material conditions that made *İştiakçi* materially groundless and a fore comer is also valid for Vlahof and *SSIF* precisely because they are parts of the same history. Secondly, in the same page that he praises them, he accuses them of being "not real socialists" since they were supporters of Armenian and Bulgarian revolutionaries because they thought that the days of the "Sick Man" were counting⁹². This time as a result of his nationalism, he disregards their success since they were "traitors".

Finally for Çapanoğlu *İştirak*, *İştirakçi* and *OSF* were "lingering adventurous desires from the youth"⁹³. It is controversial how he perceived *İştirak* journal as a naïve but still an important attempt to be remembered since it at least it made the word socialism known to the public⁹⁴ whereas for other parties (*Fedakararı Millet Cemiyeti* and *Ahrar Fırkası*) of the Second Constitutional period he was far more enthusiastic and less critical. These,

⁹⁰ *ibid*, p. 48,49.

⁹¹ *ibid*, p. 51.

⁹² First of all Armenian and Bulgarian revolutionaries do not constitute a homogenous group. For instance Vlahof was a federalist since he was both close to the Broads clique of Bulgarian Socialists and to *SSIF* that was trying to unite the workers movement in the Empire and was pro-Balkan Federation too. Balkan Federation project included Ottoman Empire as well but was a dynamic and changing project that requires further attention. For further information about *SSIF* and the project see: Haupt and Dumont, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Sosyalist Hareketler".

⁹³ Çapanoğlu uses these sentence for Dr. Refik Nevzad who was also a socialist for some time and who represented the Paris bureau of *İştirak*. Çapanoğlu, *Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist Hilmi*. İstanbul: Pınar Yayınevi, 1964. (Page: 60).

⁹⁴ Çapanoğlu, "Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist Hilmi", p. 53.

combined with his increasing tone of criticism for İştirakçi after İştirakçi's use of *İdrak* newspaper as a pen for sale suggest that Çapanoğlu may have had a personal conflict with İştirakçi. Furthermore, regarding that he wrote his memoir in mid 60s his pure criticism to İştirakçi may be a reflection of the "zeitgeist" of the Republican period in which it must have been hard to write in favour of a party that was active in *Mütareke* years.

To sum up, even before proceeding with Hilmi's 13 years career as a socialist, a critical reading of the sources that talk about his early days stood out as a mandatory task. That is because most of the academic and non-academic accounts on him took his naïve but belligerent portrayal by Çapanoğlu as granted and this very preoccupation determined rest of their analyzes. Subjective reasons like being orthodox Marxist, anti-communist, republican or having personal problems with Hilmi often ended up with the employment of prejudices about Hilmi as historical realities. Hilmi was yet another socialist in the Empire who was different than others as he was an activist rather than a philosopher. He was opportunist and populist but not superficial or naïve. He placed his bet on allying his ideas with Islam and *Osmanlıcılık* (or some sort of constitutional and universal citizenship) rather than Turkish or any other nationalism for that matter. That is why he was more successful when Istanbul was under occupation. However his success did not last long probably because he became costly for Allied forces that tried to buy stability by bribing him to stop his leadership for workers.

One crucial thing to discuss before proceeding further is the meaning and use of the word *iştirak*. The word *iştirak* is verb originating from Arabic language. In its *iştirak* form it means to participate or participation, however in the form of *iştirakkiyet* it means to share, or common⁹⁵. Wahba argues that "the variety of connotations carried by the term "socialism" also exists in an Arab context. Socialism (translated as ishtirakiyyah)" and that it "carries too many connotations to be used on its own"⁹⁶. He further states that *iştirak* derives from the finding letters *ş-r-k* from which *şirk* is driven. In this form, *şirk* means partnership, polytheism, a joint stock or a communion. He argues that there are

⁹⁵ Robert Avery, Redhouse English-Turkish Dictionary. S.v. "iştirak", (İstanbul: Sev Matbaacılık ve Yayıncılık, 1998), p. 563.

⁹⁶ Mourad Magdi Wahba, *The Meaning of Ishtirakiyyah: Arab Perceptions of Socialism in the Nineteenth Century*. Journal of Comparative Poetics, No. 10, Marxism and the Critical Discourse. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1990, pp. 42-55, at p.2.

two modern uses of the term one of which is *iştirakiyyah* (equivalent of *iştirakiyet* in Ottoman) describing the theory of those wishing to generalize *iştirak* and a society based on this theory. The second connotation for him is more complicated. It has both negative and positive connotations. *Şirk* as polytheism and *şirk* as common ownership in a) Pre-Islamic times (like the example of legal arrangements in Yemen) or b) as “the system recommended by the Prophet and prevailing during the years of his government in Medina”⁹⁷.

Therefore as can be seen the word changes in meaning with the coming of modern ideologies into the picture and that it existed before in the language. Wahba traces the origins of this change in the meaning by looking at the interactions of Ottoman Empire with Europe. In his subchapter named “Early Encounters” he gives the examples such as 1845 governor of İzmir showing and English visitor a document he seized, “a socialist proclamation recently published in Paris” and a Hungarian refugee following 1848 revolution who had a bookshop in İstanbul providing Young Ottomans with latest political pamphlets and treatises from Europe⁹⁸. Agreeing with Wahba’s points it is no surprise that Hüseyin Hilmi was also using terms like socialism, sharing, participating and even communism interchangeably with the term *iştirak*. This is understandable having stated that he must have been confused about the differences between these terms as most of his contemporaries were.

II.4) Years from *İştirak* Journal to *İştirak* Newspaper and the Establishment of OSF

Starting from *Rumi* 13 *Şubat* 1325 (26th of February 1910) *İştirak* started to be published as a weekly journal (on Saturdays) with *sosyalizm efkarının müevvici* subtitle and *biri yer biri bakar kıyamet ondan kopar* as its initial motto. In the cover page of its very first issue it had a half page picture of its owner with a statement under it as follows: *Serbest İzmir ve İştirak gazeteleri müdürü Hüseyin Hilmi bey*. From 26th of February 1910 to 13 *Haziran*⁹⁹ 1326 (26th of June 1910), 17 issues of *İştirak* have been published

⁹⁷ *ibid*, pp. 3-4.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p.4.

⁹⁹ Despite the original date on the journal reads as *Mayıs* it is clear that it is a misprint since *Mayıs* (May) was already over by then.

until when it was banned by *Divan-ı Harb-i Örfi* because of its 17th issue's context: news about the assassination of Ahmet Samim. Journalist assassinations were a part of CUP's attempt towards the total seizure of power by silencing political opposition. Hilmi dedicated his 17th issue to this murder by condemning it and criticizing the existing atmosphere.

Subsequent to this initial ban the first reserve journal for *İştirak* started to be published. *İnsaniyet* published its first issue on 18th of August 1910 and the second on 25th of August 1910. After having published 2 issues, *İnsaniyet* turned back to reserves for future use since *Divan-ı Harb-i Örfi* had removed the ban on *İştirak*. On 19 Ağustos 1326 (1st of September 1910) *İştirak* came out with its 18th issue, this time with a minor change in its motto, it was: *milletim nev-i beşerdir vatanım ruy-i zemin*. Subsequently 19th issue starts with the announcement of *OSF*'s establishment and congratulates it's establishment. In this 19th issue *OSF*'s aims are briefly stated as:

“... amelenin yekdiğeri ile münasebetde bulunmasını te'min ve avamın mevki'-i siyasi ve ictimaiyesini ıslah...”¹⁰⁰

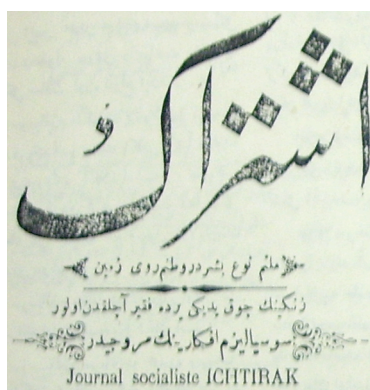


Figure II.2: The title line of *İştirak*'s 20th issue¹⁰¹.

On its 20th issue, there is again a minor change, an addition this time to its motto. Under its new motto *milletim nev-i beşerdir vatanım ruy-i zemin*, there is now also: *zengin çok yediği yerde fakir açlıktan ölür*. This is very a crucial issue because of two reasons. First of all it included *OSF*'s declaration of aims and party program. Secondly, *İştirak* was banned for a second time but the reason why reveals an important clue about

¹⁰⁰ “Tebrik”, *İştirak*, No: 19, 8 September 1910, p. 273, IISH copy.

¹⁰¹ *İştirak*, No: 20, 15 September 1910, p. 281, IISH copy.

the structure of the journal. Mete Tunçay, by referring to Çapanoğlu's original quote, discuss the reason that was stated in *İntikad* newspaper. In the last sentence of the quote, *İntikad* writer argues that most probably *İştirak* was banned as a result of Hüseyin Hilmi's critical article about Russian Tsar that was written on 18th issue¹⁰². Tunçay disagrees with that and argues that it was probably increasing power of a leftist opposition especially after they established OSF, which led the government to take measures against it. All these discussions about the second ban of *İştirak* reveals one more fact. It reveals the fact that most probably Hüseyin Hilmi was writing more than what is visible with his signature since that article did not have Hilmi's name under it. Moreover this may not only be the case for him only but use of pennames or nicknames may have been a widespread practice which stops us from understanding exactly who contributed and how much. This is why this thesis often refers to *İştirak* circle since the ideas, articles and political actions taken with the leadership of Hilmi cannot be traced back to their individual initiator. Therefore wholesome consideration of all available highlights of the circle is inevitable.

Following the second ban, another newspaper that served as *İştirak*'s reserve had emerged: *Sosyalist*. Published on 24th of November 1910 this newspaper was planned to be published twice per week but unfortunately ended after its 2nd issue because it was banned by *Divan-ı Harb-i Örfi*. Subsequently, *İnsaniyet* came into the picture again with its 3rd and 4th issues (following its old 2 issues) on 1st of December 1910 and 8th of December 1910. This time *İnsaniyet* was banned forever as a result of an article named *Caka ve Takakküm*. It is worth noticing that after the establishment of *OSF*, bans followed one another and *İştirak* circle did its best to deal with that. Tunçay argues that this was probably because they wanted to have their parties' voice heard by the public at all costs¹⁰³. After *İnsaniyet* and *Sosyalist* were banned, there came a new newspaper as a reserve: *Medeniyet*. There is no certain information about how many issues were published by name *Medeniyet* but it is highly likely that there were also only 2 issues.

¹⁰² For Tunçay's comments see: Tunçay, "Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar: 1908-1925", p.27. For the original quotation from Çapanoğlu see: Çapanoğlu, "Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist Hilmi", p.85.

¹⁰³ Tunçay, "Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar: 1908-1925", p.28.



Figure II.3: Front page of an *İştirak* journal that came after two years of silence. Text in the page talks about the establishment of a socialist library in İstanbul by the circle. The text under Karl Marx picture says: “*Almanyada sosyalizmin mucidi Karl Marks*”¹⁰⁴.

Following ban of *Medeniyet*, *İştirak* circle remained silent for almost two years. On 20th of June 1912, *İştirak* came back again as a once per fifteen days journal. This second set was published as a journal for 3 issues and on 27th of July 1912 it turned into a newspaper of *OSF* with 2 issues per week. This change was not only due to an increase in publishing per week but the context of the journal was different than that of *İştirak* journal. Tunçay argues that this last phase of *İştirak* as a newspaper included extensive coverage of daily news, comments related to the party and everyday matters in contrast with the old journal format where there were more theoretical debates and translations

¹⁰⁴ *İştirak*, No:1, 20 June 1912, p. 1, MIL copy.

from important socialists¹⁰⁵. Therefore the intellectual depth of the journal was lost in the everyday format of this twice a week newspaper. According to Duman, these 27 issues of *İştirak*'s second set of 20 issues (3 journals + 27 newspapers) are present as a full set in the Turkish National Library (*Milli Kütüphane*)¹⁰⁶. However they are no longer available and there are no other sources, which provide a full set of the second 20 issues as a full set. Therefore Tunçay's accounts stand alone as the only source.

Throughout the *İştirak* journal, Hilmi's visible contributions did not exceed a dozen. In addition to his articles he often had a paragraph length contributions throughout the journal there and now. He may have contributed more but there is no clear evidence to associate articles that had no names or other names under them with Hilmi. However it is worth noting that *İştirak* includes a considerable amount of articles without names under them or articles with only initials. That is to say it is almost impossible to understand exact contribution of *İştirakçi* Hilmi or anyone else for that matter. With regards to all that he has written, Hüseyin Hilmi was a socialist who avoided chauvinist nationalism since he perceived a civic unity among all members of the Empire, he was a patriot but called for fraternity among the globe as well, he was positivist and a modernist, he tried to use religion in order to popularize socialism among people, he was also a moralist, he emphasized the importance of individual freedoms, he was never a revolutionary but rather a reformist and finally, he was a constitutionalist. He was a socialist with all of its controversies.

Hüseyin Hilmi did not have a distinct political project or utopia that he formulated for Ottomans; he wanted to spread the idea of socialism through translations and grabbing people's attention by referring to their moral and humane side. He perceived socialism as an ideology that would bring progress to his society and to mankind. He never called for a revolution but he always defined his struggle as: *sunuf-u makhure-i amelenin şerait-i fikriyesini ulaa, hayat-ı maneviyeyi tenmiye, ittihad-ı ta'mim, mevcudiyetimizi tahkimdir*¹⁰⁷. He prioritized improvement of workers conditions and he defined the only

¹⁰⁵ ibid, pp. 40-41.

¹⁰⁶ Hasan Duman, *Başlangıcından Harf Devrimine Kadar Osmanlı-Türk Süreli Yayınlar ve Gazeteler Bibliyografyası ve Toplu Kataloğu*, Vol. 1-2, (Ankara: Enformasyon ve Dökümantasyon Hizmetleri Vakfı, 2000), p. 443.

¹⁰⁷ "Meslek", *İştirak*, No: 1, 26 February 1910, pp. 1-2, IISH copy.

legitimate and rightful way of that as *tatil-i eşgal*. He had a notion that the good of working class was both a moral task and was mandatory for the greater good of Ottoman society and of humanity in general. He was a *terakkiper* (supporting progressivism) as was most of his contemporaries, socialist or not. Furthermore he was a *peşrev-i terakki*: follower of an ever progressivism. His ideas were not static but Hilmi (and the *İştirak* circle as well) rather evolved in parallel with the general line of socialist history. The *İştirak* circle was initially under French influence and therefore had parallels with French socialist ideas. Later, following the change from *İştirak* to *İdrak*, it become somewhat more Marxist in parallel with the global conjecture thanks to the influence of Bolshevik revolution. Therefore he can be perceived as a reformist and that is probably why he was naïve for many orthodox Marxists.

Socialism constructed itself, as did working class, or nation, or nationalism. When this is the case history is often a useful tool since claiming an ideologies' "centuries old" existence always gives it legitimacy. Hüseyin Hilmi is no exception in claiming that socialism is a sleeping beauty waiting for its prince. For some it is working class, or enlightened vanguards, for Hilmi it was Ottoman public in general. This scheme is often the case for modern ideologies like nationalisms as much as it is for socialisms.

In his article, *İlk Sosyalist Kimdir?*, Hilmi refers to Plato as the first socialist, a very widespread practice in socialist historiography, and tries to explain his ideas. With making Plato the first socialist he proves that "...sosyalizm meslek-i muhteremi gayet kadim ve asil bir meslek-i içtimadır..."¹⁰⁸ What is striking is his closing remarks. Despite he recognized Plato as the earliest socialist he argues that since all sciences and social ideas gradually perfected, Plato was an early but mistaken example of a socialist since he disregarded individual freedoms. For Hilmi Plato was mistaken since his republic didn't leave any space for individuals but rather allocated social life by dividing people into groups and assigning them roles. Subsequently he argues that socialism in this gradual development found its most scientific and developed interpretation in Karl Marx. He finally thanks to all past time socialists who contributed to the gradual perfection and development of socialist with their mistakes¹⁰⁹. There are two striking thinks here: his emphasis on the freedom of individual as opposed to Plato's Republic since it was against

¹⁰⁸ "İlk sosyalist kimdir?", *İştirak*, No:1, 20 Haziran 1912, pp. 3-4, MIL copy.

¹⁰⁹ "İlk sosyalist kimdir?", *İştirak*, No:1, 20 Haziran 1912, pp. 3-4, MIL copy.

the individual freedoms. Secondly he perceives a gradual, unidirectional line of development for socialist ideology in which Marx represents the latest version for him. This is very much in line with how he perceived changes in society in general: progressive and teleological¹¹⁰.

This chapter aimed to deal with *İştirak* journal up until it turned into *İdrak* and *OSF* up until it turned into *TSF*. So far a detailed chronology of *İştirak* journal and some highlights from its content have been provided. Both Hilmi's and the *İştirak* circle's ideas will be referred more when their similarities and differences with other modern ideologies are discussed. However there is one more aspect to be dealt with for assessing the *İştirak* circle. That aspect is the discussion of *İştirak* journal's public reach. Having stated that Hilmi had a family fortune that helped him to buy *Serbest İzmir* it is logical to assume that his fortune may have helped him on the way when he started to publish *İştirak*. However it's highly unlikely that it always helped, and made the journal sustain itself. *İştirak* must have had a certain reader group that created the funds necessary to sustain the costs. Unfortunately there are no accounts to support or discredit such a possibility. *İştirak*'s ongoing publishing and its increasing writer variety over time can be taken as clues for assuming that he had an increasing number of audiences. Furthermore it is also often the case that memoirs about him stress his and *İdrak* journal's increasing popularity among workers since he helped the success of some worker's strikes. In addition to all those there is an article by Hüseyin Hilmi which suggest very wide range of audience which is crucial since if it is real than *İştirak* journal must have been read (or heard since literacy rate was still low in those times) by a significant number of audience.

In the article *Anadolu'da Açlık*, Hilmi writes about the situation of Anatolian farmers with reference to the mails he received from 7 different villages of the province of Sivas. After listing villages' names, he tells the reader how their representative in the parliament, Serdar Zade Mustafa Efendi, failed to help them in their request form Ziraat Bankası to take loans and how they suffer terrible draught as a consequence. Furthermore he also warns the villagers by saying that it was also partly their fault since instead of making their request over *İştirak* they've choosen to make the request from Serdar Zade Mustafa Efendi who failed to help them since he was among the rich who would not

¹¹⁰ "Meslek", *İştirak*, No: 1, 26 February 1910, pp. 1-2, IISH copy.

understand the poor¹¹¹. This is significant since this was not the first time or the last time that letters from the readers are published in the journal¹¹² and secondly from 1910 onwards it seems like *İştirak* had a significant number of readers if these letters were authentic.

Osmanlı Sosyalist Fırkası was established on September 1910 in İstanbul, Nuru Osmaniye. According to Tarık Zafer Tunaya, the initial *OSF* cadre consisted of Hüseyin Hilmi (leader and the owner of *İştirak*), Namık Hasan (owner of *Sosyalist*), Pertev Tefik (owner of *Muahede*), İbnül Tahir İsmail Faik (owner of *İnsaniyet*), Baha Tefik and Hamit Suphi. Tunaya states that the full list of *OSF*'s cadre is not available and the names that he came up with are results of his consultation with names like Münir Süleyman Çapanoğlu, Bezmi Nusret Kaygusuz, Dr. Refik Nevzat and Hasan Sadi Birkök¹¹³. *OSF* had never struggled for parliamentary success but it was rather a party that tried to propagate its ideology through journals, newspapers and direct support to workers on the street. *OSF* was always on the opposition. It was critical of CUP and of *Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası* as well. However it had much better relations with the latter since it was the only political opposition against CUP's increasing political monopoly. Tunaya argues that CUP was tolerant against the idea of socialism in general since it didn't want to scare its own left wing party members such as *Hizb-i Terakki*, which did not have any organic connections with socialism. However CUP was not tolerant to *OSF* as it was to socialism, they banned and arrested defenders of socialists, socialist clubs or socialist press. CUP also banned the establishment of syndicates¹¹⁴.

OSF sought the ways of international cooperation with other socialist organisations based on the internationalist ideas of its socialist ideology. Hilmi was central in this effort of the party as its leader, and went to Paris in search of international support and sharing of socialist ideas. In the 6th issue of *İştirak* on 2nd of April 1910, Hüseyin Hilmi's visit to Paris gives its fruit and the issue includes a translation of a letter by famous French

¹¹¹ "Anadolu'da Açlık", *İştirak*, No: 14, 23 March 1910, pp. 223-224, ISAM copy.

¹¹² There are other examples like that of women workers in *Bursa Harir Destgahları* (Bursa Textile Workshops) whose conditions were terrific and their letter consisted of their complains and cry out for help is published in *İştirak*. See: "Hayat ve Hakikat", *İştirak*, No: 2, 5 March 1910, pp. 23-26, IISH copy.

¹¹³ Tunaya, "Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler", 1988, p.247.

¹¹⁴ *ibid*, p. 251.

socialist leader; Auguste Marie Joseph Jean Léon Jaurès, who is shortly, know as Jean Jaurès. In his brief letter Jaurès refers to Hilmi and congratulates him on his political struggles, he tells him that he is ready for mutual support and sharing of ideas at all times. He concludes his letter by greeting his Turkish brothers¹¹⁵. *OSF* and Hilmi in particular were always closer to an internationalist, reformist and social democratic version of socialism rather than a Marxist or anarchist line. These will be elaborated in more detail but for now it is crucial to underline that his visit to Paris and Jaurès, combined with his party's declaration of commitment to Second International, signifies the *İştirak* circle's position among the various socialisms.

The level of *OSF*'s political reach, number of its members and the number of its supporters are not clear. This was also the case with *İştirak* journal and the *İştirak* circle in general. The number *OSF*'s bureaus (clubs) other than the center in Nuru Osmaniye, Hürriyet Matbaası, are not clear. Tunaya talks about two other bureaus in Galata and Selanik but states that there is no evidence of other domestic bureaus or the structure of the existing two¹¹⁶. There was however one international bureau in Paris which was established by Refik Nevzat on September 1911. There is no clear evidence of how and why he decided to establish Paris bureau of *OSF* and what was his relation with Hüseyin Hilmi. These questions are crucial since both Tunçay and Tunaya¹¹⁷ argue that Paris *OSF* and its journal *Beşeriyet*, were openly dedicated to scientific socialism and Marxist doctrine, and provided a more comprehensive part program compared to that of original *OSF*. Nevertheless neither Hilmi nor Dr. Nevzat ever proposed the separation of these two bodies probably as a result of their commitment to socialist solidarity. Furthermore Dr. Nevzat was again there when *OSF* turned into *TSF* in *Mütareke* years and he was *TSF*'s candidate for İstanbul in 1919 elections. All these suggest that despite their differences Hilmi and Dr. Nevzat worked together throughout Hilmi's socialist career.

¹¹⁵ “Fransa Sosyalist Fırkası Resise ve İnsanîyet (Lö Hümanite) Gazetesi Sermuharreri Paris Meclis-i Mebusan Azasından Mösyö Jures’in Mektubu”, *İştirak*, No: 6, 2 April 1910, p. 85, IISH copy.

¹¹⁶ Tunaya, “Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler”, 1988, p. 253.

¹¹⁷ Tunaya, “Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler”, 1988, p. 254; Tunçay, “Türkiye’de Sol Akımlar: 1908-1925”, pp. 38-40.

In *Osmanlı Sosyalist Fırkası Beyannamesi* (*OSF*'s party program), there is a paragraph that reveals the reason why Hilmi was often portrayed as less powerful in theory building but more successful as a political activist:

“Vatan ve insaniyet-i müşterekenin selamet ve saadeti ekseriyet-i azimeyi teşkil eden fikara sunufunun terfih iaşesiyle – yani buhran-ı hazır-ı iktisadinin ve binnetice sefalet-i umumiyenin izalesiyle – kaim olduğundan firkanın evvela nazar-ı dikkate aldığı amele ve fikaranın terfih ve temin-i maişeti kaziyesi olacaktır”¹¹⁸.

In this paragraph he prioritize the economic enhancement of workers and improvement of their conditions since they are the bulk of the society and their improvement means the peace and welfare of the motherland and humanity. His tone is more reformist than revolutionary. Although accounts like Kaygusuz and Çapanoğlu argue that he was more a political activist since he had no in depth idea about socialism; both Hilmi's articles and *OSF*'s declaration provide a different picture as can be seen from the above quoted paragraph. Hilmi prioritized improvement of the condition of the working class since it was vital for the improvement and safety of the general good of both his society and humanity in general. He knows that the poverty of the masses is a result of the existing order of economics. He also knows; and often warns workers and poor by saying “*servet fakiri sevmez*”, that workers condition can only be improved through their effort and by socialism. For him this socialism, among many things, meant the legitimate right of *tatil-i eşgal*, which was the only tool of bargain for the improvement of workers conditions as opposed to the rich who always wants to earn more for the cost of workers misery.

To sum up; in 1910 with a group of people, whom İştirakçi knew from İzmir as well, started to publish *İştirak* journal up until 1912 with several intervals filled by reserve journals such as *Sosyalist*, *Medeniyet* and *İnsaniyet*. Having started as a journal *İştirak* ended up as a newspaper when it was finally banned forever. Subsequent to its last ban, *İştirak* was replaced by *İdrak* newspaper that consisted of 33 issues published within the year of 1919. Çapanoğlu interprets the founding of *OSF* and later its follower *TSF* as a result of naivety and enthusiasm that resulted from the revolution of 1908. Since for him,

¹¹⁸ “Osmanlı Sosyalist Fırkası Beyannamesidir”, *İştirak*, No: 20, 15 September 1910, pp: 282-283, at 283, ISAM copy.

otherwise is unthinkable with a leader who knows not even an “S” of socialism and in a land of three hundred years of “*istibdad*” compared to Europe who is modernizing and therefore not surprisingly creating socialism¹¹⁹. Remembering the above mentioned discussions of how Hilmi became a socialist, this interpretation from Çapanoğlu completes the picture of naïve Hilmi who was thought to be a socialist by Baha Tevfik. Strangely enough, by the time it was over, none of *İştirak* or *İdrak* journals or newspapers ever included an article by Baha Tevfik despite for Çapanoğlu he was the one who thought Hilmi about socialism and since Hilmi was a puppet in Tevfik’s hands¹²⁰. Hilmi on the other hand, never gave up fighting for what he knew to be as socialist ideals. His articles demonstrated that he had significant amount of knowledge about socialism. He initiated *OSF*, international contact with socialists, several journals and several workers strikes through these years.

II.5) From OSF to TSF and from İştirak to İdrak: Mütareke Years

Following the traumatic atmosphere of the Balkan Wars (October 1912 – July 1913), CUP tried to concentrate political power in its hands by addressing the inability of the government to deal with Balkan Wars. On 23rd of October 1913 Enver Paşa and other CUP members successfully overthrew the government with a violent and imminent coup de état. Following years witnessed a one party dictatorship where it was impossible to make political opposition and Hüseyin Hilmi was among the dangerous figures for CUP who ended up in *Bahricedit* boat for his Sinop exile with around two hundred other names. Hüseyin Hilmi was away from İstanbul in exile until the allied occupation of İstanbul. He moved from Sinop to Çorum and than to Bala. The only existing account about his time in exile is from Çapanoğlu’s book. According to Çapanoğlu in his two years of Sinop exile, Hilmi was tranquil and had no interest in politics. He gives an account from their mutual talks when they met in Çorum exile in which Hilmi was mourning for the celebration of May Day with workers one day in the future¹²¹.

¹¹⁹ Çapanoğlu, “Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist Hilmi”, pp. 49-50.

¹²⁰ As stated before, emerging from the memoir by Kaygusuz, Hilmi is said to be a puppet whose strings were hold by Baha Tevfik. See: Kaygusuz, “Bir Roman Gibi”, p. 72. Nevertheless as it can be checked by the indexes of journal there is probably no article by Tevfik in *İştirak*. Since pen names are used throughout the journals one can not be sure of Tevfik’s contribution but nevertheless it is very little if it existst.

¹²¹ Çapanoğlu, “Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist Hilmi”, pp. 82 83.

Tunçay states that from Sinop exiles to the start of allied occupation (*Mütareke* years of 1918 and 1922) there were no leftist movements in the empire. He singles out the story of Parvus Efendi as the only significant event in this period of silence in the Empire. Briefly, Parvus ended up in İstanbul as a result of his exile from Russia and he influenced CUP policies on economic and political matters. Tunçay argues that he was among the reasons why CUP became close allies with Germany for the upcoming World War I and he suggested that Parvus probably helped CUP in its financial matters for a salary. Another significance of Parvus is his contribution to CUP's formulation of *milli iktisat* (national economy) since he theoretically convinced CUP about how imperialists were exploiting Ottoman economy and how they have to nationalize production¹²². Ironically although Parvus was a leftist, his influence was not on leftist movements in the Empire. Parvus was rather influential on nationalist circles. It was probably because in the political context of CUP's dictatorship no ideology other than nationalism was able to take the ground. This is crucial since the already existing presence of nationalism in *Osmanlı efkar-ı umumiyesi* have become the norm throughout the CUP's dictatorship period following the traumatic repercussions of Balkan Wars. When this period was over Hilmi was going to be in an environment in which being nationalist was not necessary for legitimization as it used to be.

As it is usually the case in post-occupational periods, there was an imminent power vacuum in İstanbul after 30th of October 1913 when Mondoros treaty was signed. As a result CUP government and the parliament was overthrown, a new government was formulated and CUP cadres fled from the center of political power. This meant that ones who were exiled or banned from politics by CUP had the chance to turn back to İstanbul that was not dominated by any political body yet. That is why occupying İstanbul provided a relative ease for opposition movements that were exiled. Tunçay sees conditions of this time interval similar to that of Second Constitutional period where there was a relative freedom¹²³. İstanbul of this period was free of nationalism's ideological dominance and internationally tides were turning in the favor of Bolsheviks,

¹²² Tunçay, "Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar: 1908-1925", pp.46-48. For further discussion of Parvus's influence on CUP see: Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de Milli İktisat 1908-1918*, (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1982), pp. 170-171.

¹²³ *ibid*, p. 48.

that is the revolutionary Marxists, who already started to break away with Second International through the years of war. In this environment Hüseyin Hilmi came back to İstanbul and started from where he left with *İdrak* instead of *İştirak* and TSF instead of OSF.

For both Çapanoğlu and Kaygusuz¹²⁴ Hilmi had good relations with other groups of opposition when they were all in exile and now it was time for him to gather its fruits when they were back to İstanbul. That is how *Hürriyet ve İtilaf* cadres supported Hilmi when he tried to establish *TSF* on February 1919. TSF had its headquarters in Sirkeci İstanbul and as it was the case in *OSF*, its head was again Hüseyin Hilmi¹²⁵. After the declaration of *TSF*'s party program on 10th of March 1919 on *Söz* newspaper, on 28th of April 1919 came *İdrak* newspaper as *TSF*'s party newspaper. According to Tunçay, *İdrak* consisted of a double sided single page and was published on a daily basis. However he states that *İdrak*'s publish was interrupted for once between 17th and 18th issues due to technical problems and later it stopped forever at its 33rd issue¹²⁶.

TSF and *İdrak* are often portrayed as intellectual improvements for the *İştirak* circle. Reasons of this improvement are discussed in some of the histories about the circle and its often the case that the reason is narrated as Marx's and Marxism's increasing appearance. This is directly related to a wider global phenomenon in the history of socialist thought: ideological empowerment of scientific socialism. That is to say the reason that made *TSF* and *İdrak* "more intellectual" was their increasing reference to Marx and Marxism. This is very evident in Çapanoğlu's account which than served as the fundamental reference for most other accounts. Çapanoğlu argues that both the party program and general awareness of the articles in *İdrak* were "*daha Marksistcesineydi*" (more Marxists)¹²⁷. It is true that Marx was referred more than it used to be in *OSF* / *İştirak* years and it is also the case that *TSF* had a much more detailed program than *OSF* but nevertheless these are not enough to make one more intellectual than the other. Hilmi

¹²⁴ Çapanoğlu, "Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist Hilmi", p.61; and Kaygusuz, "Bir Roman Gibi", p. 155.

¹²⁵ For further details of *TSF*'s cadre see: Tunaya, "Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler", 1986, p. 399.

¹²⁶ Tunçay, "Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar: 1908-1925", p.50.

¹²⁷ Çapanoğlu, "Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist Hilmi", p.61; and Kaygusuz, "Bir Roman Gibi", pp. 62-63.

and *İştirak* circle were influenced by Marxism much more than they used to be since globally Marxism was becoming more influential. Also their allegiance was still with Second International until the dissolution of the *İştirak* circle¹²⁸ whereas they would have shifted their allegiance to newly emerging Comintern (Third International).

Mütareke years represent a very crucial period in Hüseyin Hilmi's life. This brief period was both when he became very influential and condemned at the same time. First of all this period witnessed a similar increase in workers movements compared to post-1908 period. Occupation of Allied forces and the subsequent power vacuum artificially created an environment of freedom similar to that of the Second Constitutional freedom. According to Tunaya despite occupation governments went on with banning the syndicates, the environment of occupation triggered many workers clubs, committees and strikes to take place. For Tunaya, Allied forces were so concerned of the increasing numbers of worker activities that they felt the need of a state department for workers matters which didn't exist back then¹²⁹. Hilmi came into the picture in such an environment. First *TSF* was established, then he tried to seize the power within the party and then he became the party. Hilmi became very influential in and out of the party as a result of his successful leadership for workers strikes and then he abused his power and ended up by getting cast out of the party.

Apart from his increasing affiliation with scientific socialism in contrast to *OSF / İştirak* years, Hilmi's struggle for power, his success and his cast out from the party constitute the important themes of this *Mütareke* years. On 20th of July 1919 *TSF* had its first congress, which for Tunaya, resulted in a democratically structured socialist party that declared its allegiance to Second International in its regulatory clauses¹³⁰. The following two congresses witnessed the power struggle of Hilmi over the party and vice versa. On the congress of 1920 Hilmi made the necessary changes required for making him the center of decision taking in the party. In *TSF*'s regulatory clauses he was now an eternal head of the party who cannot be replaced. The central committee of the party was given the central role and it was decided that it would include seven worker members. To make a long story short this committee had all means of control from top to down.

¹²⁸ Tunaya, "Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler", 1986, p. 407.

¹²⁹ *ibid*, pp. 399-401.

¹³⁰ *ibid*, p. 403.

Hilmi's struggle for the control of the party is very much in line with the spirit of the era when Bolsheviks are considered. What characterizes the *İştirak* circle in this *Mütareke* years is these numerous examples of controversy in which it was getting closer to a Marxist, avant garde and more on the street kind of party, whereas simultaneously, it was trying to counter Hilmi's one man politics and consecutively declaring its allegiance to Second International that was the only alternative to Marxism and Comintern.

Following the congress of 1920, on the third congress of 1922, Hilmi's personal power on the party has ended and the general congress had seized the power again as it was the case at the beginning. It is worth underlying that Hilmi's acts to personalize political power coincide with *TSF*'s unsuccessful attempt in 1919 general elections. According to Tunaya, *TSF* participated in the elections with two candidates for İstanbul and it lost for both because İstanbul had chosen to support CUP's favored candidate from *Mesai Fırkası*: Numan Usta. He also states that Hilmi was very angry after this result¹³¹ and we can assume that he was disappointed by parliamentary methods. Following the defeat in general elections *TSF* had been much more active in the streets between the years 1920 and 1922. According to Tunaya, *TSF* played a central role on the May Day celebrations between 1921-1922 and it had very good relations with other workers' organizations between the given years. Tunaya lists some organizations that merged with *TSF* and concludes that *TSF* wanted safeguard the interests of workers by providing means to deliver their demands to the government and than monitoring government in delivering its promises¹³². This post electoral defeat period is where Hilmi got very powerful and seized the power of the party.

To sum up, when everything that has been stated so far considered, Hilmi may have changed to a more Marxist or / and an avant grade line whereas another fraction of *TSF* should have been closer to a social democrat line since they were already from *Hürriyet ve İtilaf* clique. Consequently the tension between these two groups in *TSF* may have been the reason of the struggle between Hilmi and the party in which the former has lost. That is to say there must be reasons why Hilmi wanted to seize the power after the electoral defeat and his personal qualities can not be the sole reason. However, none of these speculations are scientifically testable, since neither Hilmi nor other members of

¹³¹ *ibid*, p. 408.

¹³² *ibid*, pp. 405-406.

TSF left any accounts describing their positions in the party. The only existing accounts are the documents of *TSF* and Çapanoğlu's memoir (who was in this circle through *Mütareke* years) and those sources are not enough to test these speculations. Hilmi was never a dedicated Marxist, he was rather a dedicated socialist who was reconstructing his socialism continuously and he was therefore very eclectic. Since it is hard to define what he was given by the scarcity of accounts and his eclectic ideas, elaborating on his relation to other ideologies may reveal more clues by providing what he was not.

CHAPTER III

HÜSEYİN (İŞTİRAKÇİ) HİLMİ AND OTHER POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

III.1) Hilmi, the *İştirak* circle and other political Ideologies: Other Socialisms, Nationalism, Liberalism and Islam

The main purpose of this thesis is the reconstruction of Hüseyin Hilmi as one of the many socialist figures in the Ottoman Empire. So far his historical context, circles, parties and events that he had been a part of have all been mentioned to a certain extent in order to fulfill this task. Most of the existing accounts on Hilmi have often associated him with this or that ideology to a certain extent, underlined similarities or differences, for understanding who he was. Therefore elaboration of how he or the circles that he had been a part of perceive and relate to other modern ideologies has to be expanded. This chapter aims to discuss Hilmi's and the *İştirak* circle's relation with other socialisms, nationalisms, liberalism and Islam.

III.2) Hilmi, the *İştirak* circle and Other Socialisms

The differences between the *İştirak* circle and other socialisms are historical constructions that are built retrospectively. That is to say discussions that are going to take place here are not discussions that Hilmi and his friends made. It is highly likely that Hilmi would have defined all socialists as one since for him socialism was gradually perfecting itself over time in a progressive manner¹³³. For him past time socialists, whether Plato or Christ, were imperfect but also vital to socialism since they made the mistakes that later helped socialist movement to be perfected¹³⁴. Therefore he would probably define what he knew to be the true socialism out of what was available for him.

¹³³ “İlk sosyalist kimdir?”, *İştirak*, No:1, 20 Haziran 1912, pp. 3-4, MIL copy.

¹³⁴ For examples of such ideas by Hilmi see: “İlk sosyalist kimdir?”, *İştirak*, No:1, 20 Haziran 1912, pp. 3-4, MIL copy; “Şura-yı Ümmet’e Cevap”, *İştirak*: No: 4, 19 March 1910, ISAM copy, pp.49-51.

In addition, it is also clear that his definitions weren't stagnant and he dynamically changed what he knew as socialism. This subchapter initially aims the discussion of various socialist influences on Hilmi and the *İştirak* circle. Subsequently it will also elaborate on how other socialisms wrote about Hilmi.

According to Zafer Toprak, French Third Republic period was one of the most influential periods for Turkish intellectual life¹³⁵. For the *İştirak* circle; given its focus on the translation from French texts, emphasis of French socialists and Hilmi's visit to Paris in *İştirak*'s, influence of French socialism was overwhelming. Therefore the *İştirak* circle was also heavily inspired by French Third Republic period. That becomes more visible when arguments about contemporary French socialism and the *İştirak* circle are considered and compared. Sassoon asks why French socialism made no contribution to Marxism at all and why few of Marx's works had been translated and the socialist press hardly ever discussed them. For some it was because Marxism appealed to the factory proletariat and French "working class" consisted of a largely urban petty bourgeoisie and craft artisans. Sassoon opposes this by showing that Italian Marxism was much more powerful despite Italy was even less developed than France. Therefore he proves that there is no strong correlation between theoretical and economic developments. Another line of argument is French Marxists' necessity to compete with a vibrant republican tradition that stopped the movement from being powerful. However, Sassoon raises the question of why Britain failed to produce leading Marxists since it was as deprived as Germany from a republican tradition¹³⁶. Assuming that Hilmi and the *İştirak* circle were heavily under French influence, they had the same problem of ideological rivalry of another dominant ideology. It was nationalism in Ottoman case compared to republicanism of France.

To sum up, all those discussion surrounding why French revolutionary tradition failed to surpass German socialism also provide insights for understanding Hüseyin Hilmi. Sasson gives an example from Jean Jaurès; this example is striking when Hilmi's similar motivations are considered. "...Jaurès felt that socialism had to be adapted to 'our

¹³⁵ Benlisoy and Çetinkaya, "İştirakçi Hilmi", p. 175.

¹³⁶ Sassoon, "One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century", p. 13.

political and economic conditions, to the traditions, ideas and spirit of our country’.”¹³⁷ This was precisely how Hilmi tried to do with socialism and probably why many perceived him as naïve. He tried to localize an ideology that was internationalist at the same time by using notions such as religious morals, love for the motherland, fraternity, constitutionalism and progress. The organizational split, lack of overwhelming Marxism, theoretical discussions surrounding the lack of factory proletariat and finally the need to adopt socialism to particular realities of their society despite simultaneously being internationalist were the common aspects that are both visible in French and Ottoman cases.

However it cannot be argued that Hilmi or the *İştirak* circle was always under the French influence. Actually, as it was discussed in previous chapters, as the Bolshevik revolution approached and as Hüseyin Hilmi moved from *İştirak* to *İdrak* and *OSF* to *TSF* its ideological reference changed from social democratic to Marxist and French to somewhere else. It is hard to clearly define what the center of influence for the *İştirak* circle was in mütareke years since a) party and Hilmi were clearly different in what they perceived as socialism, and b) there was already a global tendency to shift from social democracy to Marxism which stops us from defining Russia as the particular source of influence for the *İştirak* circle. The best to be said is to say that it was no longer France centered.

There is no doubt that Hilmi was a socialist. However, since history of socialism is “a history not of fraternal plurality, but of rivalry and antagonism”¹³⁸, it is not surprising that other socialism often disregarded Hilmi as a socialist. Examples of how the literature about him presents a naïve Hilmi has been provided and criticized in previous chapters. Other than possible personal rivalries, judgment on Hilmi’s naivety arises from analyses that emerge from the perspective of orthodox Marxism, or scientific socialism. According to Benlisoy and Çetinkaya, perceiving Soviet model of socialism as the final stage for all socialist movement in a teleological order also played a central role in Hilmi’s profile. They give the example of Dimitir Şişmanov who, agreed on the importance of Hilmi and the *İştirak* circle, nevertheless perceived it as a reformist bourgeoisie failure since it

¹³⁷ *ibid*, p. 12.

¹³⁸ Wright, “Socialisms: Old and New”, p. 1.

didn't adopt Marxist methods¹³⁹. It is also a recurrent subject in this thesis that among many other things, ideological rivalry played a central role in how Hilmi was perceived and other socialisms were more negatively affective than let say Islam or Liberalism. Socialists disregarded socialists more than other ideologies did.

III.3) Hilmi, the *İştirak* circle and Nationalism

The border between nationalism and socialism has always been a vague one. Some socialist movements were and are nationalist to a certain extent. In so far Hilmi and the *İştirak* circle are argued to be more social democratic rather than Marxist until the years of the Allied occupation and even by then, it declared its allegiance to Second International rather than Communist International. This may be perceived as a reason to think that it was free of nationalist elements since social democrats were internationalists and they often were against nationalist socialists. Nevertheless both Hilmi and the *İştirak* circle had nationalist elements in their socialism and their relation to nationalism is a complicated one. It was also previously argued that this very relationship with nationalism can be used as a medium for comparing and contrasting different socialisms in the Ottoman Empire. That is to say how the *İştirak* circle or other socialist groups relate to nationalism or nationalist elements can be employed as a tool for categorization of Ottoman socialist movements. This subchapter will initially deal with the relationship between the *İştirak* circle and nationalism and then will elaborate on the proposed method of categorization.

Neither Hilmi nor the *İştirak* circle were nationalists of any sort like their Bulgarian, Macedonian or Armenian socialist contemporaries were. However, in both Hilmi's articles and in other articles of the circle throughout different journals, there was a recurrent theme about the love of the motherland and patriotism. Rather than an ethnic nationalist emphasize, this love was more civic in the sense that it was a love resulting from an urge to maximize common good of all Ottoman subjects living in this beautiful motherland. Socialism was often perceived as a "good" since it promoted fraternity and peaceful living by taking care of the less fortunate. In this motherland their equalities and fraternity was guarded by constitution whereas their security and peaceful existence was

¹³⁹ Benlisoy and Çetinkaya, "İştirakçi Hilmi", p. 170.

under the guardianship of state as a fatherly figure. These themes are tacitly evident throughout Hilmi's articles. In late 19th and early 20th centuries Ottoman context neither praising of the Ottoman motherland nor appealing to the mercy of the paternalist state were exceptions for Hilmi and the *İştirak* circle.

In his elaboration on Ottoman working class and the guild system Quataert argues that overall

“...workers fought a class war on two levels between 1826 and 1914. The first was on the level of language, using the language of the state and its elites to achieve goals and win victories and to protect themselves from being crushed by a state that always was more powerful. The second was on the level of direct action, violence in the workplace, a path that briefly had seemed likely to succeed between July and September 1908”¹⁴⁰.

He further states that on some occasions guild's petitions to Ottoman government “appealed not to rights but for merciful intervention by a paternalist state”¹⁴¹. Finally he concludes “there are strong elements of continuity in the ways that workers in guilds during the nineteenth century and those in unions after 1908 represented their interests before the state”¹⁴². All these arguments of Quataert, which portray guilds and workers as simultaneously appealing for the mercy of the state while at the same time using means of violence and strike to reach their aims in the workplace, is very much what Hilmi tried to do. In line with his articles and his actions, it can be argued that Hilmi used some nationalist elements in order to appeal what was local, and was doable considering the tolerance level of the central authority. As Quataert demonstrates, syndicates and socialist workers organizations played a role that was similar to that of guilds. In *İdrak* newspaper workers were differentiated from mediators like *değnekçi*, *kalfa* and *kahya*. Those were traditional middleman between the worker and the employer. *İdrak* had a very fierce campaign against one of these middlemen Ali Osman Ağa and articles were published that blame him for his unjust burden over workers. This was no surprise for a circle whose immediate aim was the improvement of workers conditions¹⁴³. Therefore it can be

¹⁴⁰ Quataert, “Ottoman Workers and the State, 1826-1914”, pp. 22-23.

¹⁴¹ *ibid*, p. 24.

¹⁴² *ibid*, p. 36.

¹⁴³ Benlisoy and Çetinkaya, “İştirakçi Hilmi”, p. 177.

speculated that Hilmi's emphasis on methods of improving workers conditions through strikes has continuities with old guild leaders tradition.

According to Benlisoy and Çetinkaya the *İştirak* circle had a very clear patriotism that was very much in line with the spirit of the Second Constitutional period. Some sort of Ottomanism was favored and for them socialists were people working for the good of the motherland¹⁴⁴. Nevertheless for Benlisoy and Çetinkaya the *İştirak* circle's ideas about nationalism are vague and more heterogeneous than clear and well defined. For instance the circle regarded itself as the defender of the rights of Turks in *İdrak* newspaper following the occupation of İzmir. They found the motivation for such a defense in the concept of international rights. However, there were also writers like Zenun (Ziyetullah Nuşirevan) who argued that nationalism and socialism were not contradictory but rather cooperative. Although he condemned chauvinism, nationalism for him was being for people and this was what socialism aimed¹⁴⁵. There are no earlier accounts that suggest support for nationalism than those texts emphasized in *İdrak* by Benlisoy and Çetinkaya. Therefore the *İştirak* circle was never nationalist but had nationalist elements in its ideas.

Existence of nationalist elements in a socialist circle such as *İştirak* was not a case particular to the Ottoman context. Social democratic movements across Europe also had such elements in their socialisms probably because nationalism was in line with the zeitgeist of the era. For instance despite French socialism was social democrat and despite social democrats not being nationalists but rather internationalists, French nationalism was not free from nationalist elements. According to Jean Jaurès, who was a prominent figure for Ottoman socialist including Hilmi, there was no contradiction between nationalism and internationalism. For him working class was the medium between the national and international. He was against chauvinism and aggressive foreign policy, on the other hand, he favoured nation states to a country divided by communes or guilds¹⁴⁶. Therefore Hilmi and the *İştirak* circle's nationalist elements are neither surprise nor proofs of their naivety since to their historical context nationalism was very central in political life.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid*, p. 174.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid*, p. 174.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid*, p. 175.

Throughout the thesis it has been argued that nationalism can be used as a parameter to categorize socialisms in the Ottoman Empire. It was also often stated that socialist history writing usually disregarded socialist histories of minorities in the Empire as a result of “methodological nationalism¹⁴⁷”. If a more holistic picture of Ottoman socialism will be drawn this thesis suggests that it can be categorized over particular socialism’s relation to nationalism. It was stated previously that neither an ideological (like Marxist vs Utopian) nor an ethnicity-based categorization would work. However, socialist organisations’, leaders’, groups’ or journals’ relation to nationalist question would provide an operational categorisation in which seeing “utopians” side by side with Marxists or Muslims with Greeks wouldn’t be surprising.

For instance it can be speculated that nationalism in Balkans has helped the spread of socialism since it provided the ideological tools for minorities for their anti-Ottoman and secessionist demands. For this argument a good example would be to remember the socialist movements in Bulgaria, their relation to Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (*MİDÖ*/ IMRO) and the role of nationalism in these movements. It can be speculated that since national question in Balkans was an urgent and important question socialist parties involved with it had a chance to find more public response, which also helped the spread of socialism¹⁴⁸. In addition to that for non-Muslims such as Armenians socialism provided the ideological tools with which both the Ottoman center and “collaborator renegades” (that is to say Armenians whose interest lied in the preservation of the Empire and who belonged to the higher echelons of wealth pyramid) would be pointed out as enemies. Such dynamics were not evident among Muslims and Jews. Therefore this was not a religious phenomenon but was rather related to which group belonged to where in the social hierarchy. This can help to explain the asymmetry between Muslim and non-Muslim intellectuals contributions to socialism in the Empire.

¹⁴⁷ For a detailed discussion of the concept see: Marcel van der Linden, *Globalizing Labour Historiography: The IISH Approach*, unpublished article, (Amsterdam: International Institute of Social History, 2002), pp. 1-3.

¹⁴⁸ For further reading on the role of nationalism in Bulgarian socialist movement see: Fikret Adanır, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Ulusal Sorun ile Sosyalizmin Oluşması ve Gelişmesi: Makedonya Örneği”, in *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Sosyalizm ve Milliyetçilik (1876-1923)*. eds. Tunçay, Mete and Zürher, Eric Jan, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 1995).

In the Ottoman context, what significantly differentiates movements like that of the *İştirak* circle or Thessalonica Socialist Workers Federation lead by Benaroya was their different approach to nationalism (or the national question) compared to Bulgarian Macedonian and Armenian socialists who found their best interest in merging with nationalisms. In the light of above mentioned examples and arguments this thesis states that nationalism can be used as an operational medium to categorize Ottoman socialism. However, this thesis does not undertake this categorization since it would require an in depth analysis of all movements concerned. Having Hüseyin Hilmi as its unit of analyses, this thesis argues that he cannot be understood without the consideration of his position among all other movements as more constitutionalist and Ottomanist with a love of motherland in contrast to its contemporaries like Armenian Revolutionary Federation of Dashnaktsutium.

III.4) Hilmi, the *İştirak* circle and Liberalism

The relationship between liberalism and socialism is complicated. Socialisms had elements from certain varieties of liberalism. For instance, as the following quote clearly demonstrates:

“Democratic radicalism was a variety of liberalism and thus not in any rigorous sense socialistic; it was emphatically distinct from revolutionary communism. Yet elements of it may be said to have had socialistic potential. Many democratic radicals developed into socialists, and even in embracing socialism as more “advanced” they often continued to agitate for democratic-radical reforms as a necessary first step on the way to socialism. At the same time, many socialists clarified their own position by exposing what they believed were inadequacies of democratic radicalism. Thus the first socialists were doubly marked by democratic radicalism, and socialism throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would carry unmistakable signs of these early associations”¹⁴⁹.

In line with the arguments in this quotation, in some works, Hilmi was portrayed as a “radical” liberal rather than a socialist. This argument goes hand in hand with what has been criticized so far. That is to say, following the assumption that Hilmi was naïve and his knowledge about socialism was superficial, it is consequently argued that than he

¹⁴⁹ Lindemann, “A History of European Socialism”, p. 26.

must have been more of a liberal since liberals in late 19th – early 20th centuries had many common points with socialists. It is often tacitly argued that Hilmi was liberal since his socialism was inadequate to be “real” and the next best guess would be to assume that he was liberal. For instance Tunçay argues that Hilmi and the *İştirak* circle must have been liberals since he regarded *OSF* party program as a very liberal rather than a real socialist document¹⁵⁰.

Tunçay accuses the *İştirak* circle for being theoretically shallow and he argues that even though they referred to workers often, it was never beyond a superficial level. Furthermore Tunçay marks journalist Ahmet Samim assassination as a milestone for the *İştirak* circle. He argues that this event marked circle’s integration to the liberal political opposition against the growing power of CUP, which made the circle’s political line shift to a more and more liberal stance¹⁵¹. Arguments similar to that of Tunçay have been echoed in the literature on Hilmi. For instance for Harris he was a “liberal reformist¹⁵²”, for Alkan he was a liberal before he was a socialist and he carried elements of liberalism later on as well¹⁵³ and for Sina Akşin Hilmi the movement was so shallow in theoretical depth that it could only be named as a worker-friendly organization whose ultimate purpose was to support liberal political opposition against CUP¹⁵⁴.

Benlisoy and Çetinkaya criticize all these arguments in their article on Hüseyin Hilmi. They argue that none of these arguments are relevant to each other when primary sources (*OSF* program, articles in the circle’s journals and newspapers) are considered which suggest a very prominent tone of socialism that is impossible to be mistaken with liberalism¹⁵⁵. *OSF*’s program¹⁵⁶ includes clauses demanding universal suffrage, freedom of speech and expression, abolition of death penalty, removal of the taxes from *ihtiyacat-ı tabiyye* (fundamental goods), introduction of a tax system based on income, nationalization of train, tram, banking, mine and insurance companies, right to vote for an

¹⁵⁰ Tunçay, “Türkiye’de Sol Akımlar: 1908-1925”, pp.30-31.

¹⁵¹ *ibid*, p. 36-37.

¹⁵² George S. Harris, Türkiye’de Komünizmin Kaynakları, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 1975), p. 30.

¹⁵³ Benlisoy and Çetinkaya, “İştirakçi Hilmi”, p. 175.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid*, p. 176.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid*, pp. 175-179.

¹⁵⁶ “Osmanlı Sosyalist Fırkası Programıdır”, *İştirak*, No: 20, 15 September 1910, pp: 282-283, at 283, IISH copy.

Ottoman citizen in all Ottoman lands, extension of primary education, establishment of professional (mercenary) armies in times of peace, abolition of aggressive diplomatic policies, non-cooperation with all alliances whose aim was not peace and prosperity, electoral success for socialist parliamentarians, participation to all demonstrations that work for the general progress of socialist ideas, abolition of laws and regulation that stop workers from their legal right to go to strikes, introduction of free higher and primary education for all social classes, removal of bureaucratic costs on matters of justice, one resting day per week for all workers, introduction of 8 hours working day, rejection of boys under 14 and girls under 16 from being workers, establishment of a ministry for workers, participation to all national and international socialist congresses and finally supporting of all worker syndicates both socially and materially. This statement of *OSF*'s program supports the point raised by Benlisoy and Çetinkaya. That is to say, although this program is often seen as the most superficial one, it is still clearly a socialist program an different than that of *Ahrar Fırkası* or any liberal contemporary of *OSF*.

Although it is clear that both Hilmi and the *İştirak* circle had liberal elements, it is a discussion if they are more liberals than socialist. First of all, to state it once more, socialisms were under construction back at that time and existence of liberal elements are related to the wider history of socialisms rather than being unique to the *İştirak* circle or Hilmi. Secondly since we have no other option to take self declared socialisms as chapters of socialist history (since otherwise we would have to define “the socialism”), value judgments on Hilmi’s socialism must be avoided. Thirdly underlining liberal elements is one thing but arguing a socialist group to be liberals is another thing. The latter is at best an over interpretation. A group that calls workers to unite and fight for their rights, which they gained by long hours of working, against their bosses who did their best to pay them less can hardly be referred as liberal¹⁵⁷.

To sum up Hilmi and the *İştirak* circle had a common enemy with liberal opposition in the Empire, which was CUP’s growing power that united them in political opposition yet the circle had always remained insistent in its socialist aims. Liberal elements existed in the movement and this was very much parallel to what was happening in history of socialism in general. However, even under those conditions both Hilmi and the circle

¹⁵⁷ Benlisoy and Çetinkaya, “İştirakçi Hilmi”, p. 176.

were very clear in calling all the workers for *mübareze-i sınıf*¹⁵⁸ (class struggle). Hilmi clearly demonstrates his plan for the future of workers from the very early onwards in *İştirak* journal which can hardly be interpreted as liberal. A quote from him is as follows:

*“Eskiden maatemi bir ömre merbut kalan işçiler nasıl ki üç beş mütefekkirin mücahidesiyle bir parça iktisab-ı hayat edebilmişler, nasıl ki tahakküm-ü sermayedaran zincirini kırmışlarsa yarında servet-i arz bilatefrik cins ve sınıf taksim olunacak”*¹⁵⁹.

III.5) Hilmi, the *İştirak* circle and İslam

Hilmi was as agile as his contemporaries in use of religion in order to popularize socialist ideas. Both Islam and Christianity were already narrated as pieces of the glorious past of socialism by the time Hilmi wrote his response to an article on *Şura-i Ummet* newspaper that criticized *İştirak* and socialism. To put it bluntly, though Marxism discredited religion as the opium of the masses, other socialisms often used religion and merged their ideas with religion. This is very understandable since early socialisms, as it was discussed in the beginning of this thesis, had a dominant moralist tone and religion was very appealing for finding moral legitimacies for socialist fraternity. This chapter will initially present some examples for the use of religion in early socialisms to argue that Hilmi was again not an exception and was similar to his contemporaries, and later it will discuss Hilmi’s and the circle’s relation to Islam.

Oscar Wilde in his book starts by criticising the concept of charity, virtuous poor and how private property robs one out of his individual capabilities¹⁶⁰. Description of his “New Individualism” under socialism and how that would free ones artistic capabilities are structured as the main promises of his book. The crucial point is that from early

¹⁵⁸ *ibid*, pp. 176-178. These pages include discussions by Benlisoy and Çetinkaya that clearly demonstrate how the *İştirak* circle called for a class struggle in various of their journals like *Sosyalist*, *İnsaniyet* and *İdrak*.

¹⁵⁹ “Sus”, *İştirak*, No: 3, 12 March 1910, pp. 45-46, IISH copy.

¹⁶⁰ Oscar Wilde, *The Soul of Man under Socialism*, (London: Privately Printed, 1904), pp. 12-14.

chapters onwards¹⁶¹ in his book Christ is recurrently introduced as the ultimate socialist and the ultimate individual for whom he often refers as his role model for new individualism. He reconstructs Christ and uses him as a tool of legitimacy for his ideas to appeal masses. Whether he distorts Christ or the history of Christian faith is a question for theologians and religion historians to discuss. What is important here is that for Wilde, Christ represented: the reason why marriage in its present form should disappear¹⁶², why we should be against all forms of authority and government¹⁶³ and why we should be outside the society as free standing individuals¹⁶⁴ as did Christ and the Nihilists who are the real Christians that welcome pain as outcasts of society¹⁶⁵. Therefore religion exists hand in hand with common themes of socialism like individualism, criticism of wage labour and private property in this crucial work of British socialism.

Approximately 8 years after Wilde, after Hilmi started to publish *İştirak*, this time an Indian intellectual named Kidwai who identified himself as the “Secretary of Pan-Islamic Society of London and the Commander of Osmanic Order of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan of Turkey” writes about socialism and Islam around year 1912¹⁶⁶. For Kidwai the real and the original socialist was Muhammed. In his book named *Islam and Socialism* Kidwai argues that in Muslim countries state (which is ruled by the Caliph by the guidance of Allah) had the ownership of land, which meant that private property was de facto non-existent and that Muslim states were state socialists. For him not only army but also civil service was “nationalistic” (state owned) as well, which also showed the control over resources¹⁶⁷ were not private as well. He states “his (Muhammad’s) socialism as ethical while modern socialism is materialistic¹⁶⁸”. Throughout the book he describes how the early Islamic communities were socialistic and how they are still socialist in most senses. He dedicates chapters to: “Muhammad’s Socialism”, “Muhammad’s

¹⁶¹ *ibid*, p. 22, 23, 28. Further examples can be seen here and there throughout the book.

¹⁶² *ibid*, p. 28.

¹⁶³ *ibid*, p. 31.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid*, p. 84.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid*, p. 85.

¹⁶⁶ The exact date of publish is not printed on the book. Library of University of Leiden assumes that the book is published in year 1912 because at the end of introductory chapter writer notes this date.

¹⁶⁷ S. Mushir Hosain Kidwai, *Islam & Socialism*, (London: Luzac & Co., 1912), pp. ii-iv.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid*, p. v.

Socialist Disciples”, “Muslim Imperialism” and “Instances of Islamic Socialism”. Like Wilde, Kidwai also points out Muhammad as the ultimate socialist but this time Quran as the ultimate book of his “ethical” and moral socialism¹⁶⁹.

Finally in his book surveying history of socialism; Muravchik start with the story of the Conspiracy of Equals lead by famous French socialist Babeuf who is considered by most as the first socialist activist. Muravchik demonstrates how Babeuf also tried to use religion. However this time, different than previous examples of Wilde and Kidwai, Babeuf and the Conspiracy of Equals were antagonistic to religion and they perceived it as a political tool to be bend as a means to reach their ends. They were planning to subject Church under government control¹⁷⁰. All these examples suggest that use or abuse of religion was not particular to the *İştirak* circle and by no means existence of Islam in Hilmi’s or the *İştirak* circle’s works suggest that they were not socialists or “wrong” socialists. Actually what they tried to do with Islam was very much in line with their contemporaries.

In its 4th issue on 19th of March 1910 Hüseyin Hilmi wrote a response to *Şura-i Ümmet*’s (a conservative, Islamist newspaper) article that described socialism as microbes and Ottoman socialists as followers of an ill motivated idea. After defending socialist cause as a cause that worked for the interest of the common good Hilmi counters accusations by arguing that religious people were among the first socialists already.

*“Sosyalistliğin en evvel hazret-i İsa tarafından vaz’ ve te’sis olunmuş ve Roma’nın milyonlarını üserasının tiranlıklarıyla kazanan eazım-ı zulmesine karşı teşkil ve tertip edilmiş bir dinin esas maksadı olduğu ve İslamiyet’de dahi nice ayatı kerime ve ehadisi şerife ile te’eyid ve tasdik olunan bu esasın zekat ameli bir surete dahi efrağı düşünülecek olursa ‘sosyalislerin’ maksadı yağmacılıktır’ gibi münasebetsiz sözler biraz zor ağıza alınır”*¹⁷¹.

¹⁶⁹ ibid, pp. 54-56. In this part of the book, as well as anywhere there and now, it can clearly be seen that he points out Muhammad and Quran as the sources of socialist spirit and the codes of ethical socialist behaviour.

¹⁷⁰ Joshua Muravchik, *Heaven on Earth / The Rise and Fall of Socialism*. (California: Encounter Books, 2002), pp. 19-20.

¹⁷¹ “Şura-yı Ümmet’e Cevap”, *İştirak*: No: 4, 19 March 1910, ISAM copy, pp.49-51

This was not the only time that Hilmi referred to religion. Both him and other writers of the *İştirak* circle referred to Islam and other religions here and there throughout their journals and newspapers. In the first issue of *İdrak* newspaper, in its first article it is argued that the Ottoman lands are and have always been socialist since sharia in the past ruled the people equally but over time this became impossible with the changes in social classes¹⁷². Benlisoy and Çetinkaya also argue that this use of Islam was similar to the scheme of creating a golden age in the past in order to legitimize the political actions in the present. They argue that socialism was proposed as a solution to restore the good old days¹⁷³. When considered all together, these examples of use of religion by Hilmi and the *İştirak* circle is similar to what their contemporaries like Wilde, Kidwai or Babeuf did. This use of religion by Hilmi is one of the many reasons demonstrated throughout this essay for why he was considered naïve and superficial. Nevertheless it is clear that he was not different that many other early socialisms and since considering early socialisms -that is to say pre-Bolshevik revolution history of socialism- as naïve is inaccurate, Hilmi's naivety is also groundless.

CONCLUSION

This thesis aims to understand Hüseyin Hilmi as a historical figure, his significance for the Ottoman socialism and his significance for his period in general. In order to fulfill a task like that Hilmi's historical context, journals he had been a part of, people around him, conditions of the society that he lived in and his relation to all those had to be considered. That is why this thesis referred to people like Baha Tevfik, Münir Süleyman Çapanoğlu, Bezmi Nusret Kaygusuz; newspapers and journals like *İştirak*, *İdrak*, *Medeniyet*, *Beşeriyet* and *Sosyalist*; parties like OSF and TSF, and many more but did not focused on any of those exclusively. This is precisely because they were used to the extent they are relevant in understanding Hilmi. Otherwise, a study of *İdrak* newspaper or Baha Tevfik would have required a much detailed work.

This thesis argues that in contrast to the established literature about him, Hilmi was very successful and significant socialist figure among many in the early 20th century

¹⁷² Benlisoy and Çetinkaya, "İştirakçi Hilmi", p. 173.

¹⁷³ *ibid*, p. 173.

Ottoman political life. All the arguments that portray him as naïve, superficial, weak in theory, confused, ignorant or more of a liberal than a socialist are more repercussions of certain bias and fallacies rather than reflections of who he was or to what extent he was influential. His personal qualities and his urge to concentrate political power in his hands especially during the *Mütareke* years probably made enemies among friends for him like Çapanoğlu or Kaygusuz. Then their accounts, which constituted the rare first hand material about him, were taken with their face value without considering his own articles and the history of the *İştirak* circle in general. Subsequently, literature on him which included works of influential authors such as Tunçay, Sayılğan, Darendelioğlu, Ahmad, Şişmanov and Zürcher can be highlighted as crucial examples that were echoed in most of the existing “biased” narratives. All those, combined with the general problems of the fields of socialist history writing and Ottoman history writing, distorted the interpretation of the material about Hilmi. The dominance of the orthodox Marxist interpretation in the history of socialisms, Orientalism, modernist misconception of a progressive historical projection, methodological nationalism, as well as taking accounts with their face value all contributed to a *galat-ı meşhur*, that is the ignorant naïve image of Hilmi and disregarding of the movement around him.

That is why, throughout the thesis, I have tried to demonstrate the sources of the misconceptions about Hilmi and simultaneously provided examples from histories of other socialisms or ideologies in order to prove that he was just a “normal” socialist as his contemporaries were. That is because I felt the need to normalize history of socialist ideology in the Ottoman Empire, which is often disregarded or considered to be unimportant. If the role of the socialist ideology as the “other” of nationalisms or liberalism in the Empire will be questioned, first of all histories of socialist figures like Hilmi have to be normalized. Çapanoğlu wrote of Hilmi that he was a predecessor of his time since he tried to propagate socialism in an unindustrialized country¹⁷⁴. Statements emerging from this argument and statements like this made Hilmi an abnormal phenomenon the reasons of which had to be explained. That is why this thesis tried to go over each such argument -such as “having no industry means having no socialism”- one by one. The conclusion arrived here is that Hilmi was very much like his contemporaries, whose ideas evolved parallel to the changes in socialist ideology.

¹⁷⁴ Çapanoğlu, “Türkiyede Sosyalizm Hareketleri ve Sosyalist Hilmi”, p. 49.

However, as it is the case in a typically scientific inquiry, there are more questions than answers about Hilmi and the *İştirak* circle. What happened to the writers in the *İştirak* circle? Did any of them write or participated in subsequent socialist circles such as *Kurtuluş* journal group, *Aydınlık* group or *Yeşil Ordu Cemiyeti*? What was the exact composition of people in the *İştirak* circle? Was French the only source for socialist material among Ottoman intelligentsia? How can the history of socialism be integrated with history of Ottoman political ideologies? Can it be considered as the fourth important ideology? Considering nationalization of economy and anti-imperial tones of Republican Turkish government would they be result of socialist ideology that was getting more and more powerful in World War I context? From what has been elaborated in this thesis, it appears that there were socialist groups like the *İştirak* circle and SSIF, which were closer to social democrats and Second International. They were all against national chauvinisms and aggressive diplomatic politics. This line of socialist groups ceased to exist following the conditions of Balkan Wars and World War I. What were the repercussions of those events in socialisms of the Empire following its collapse and the establishment of modern Turkey? All these questions require further collaborative effort in order to understand the history of socialist ideology in its fuller extent.

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¹⁷⁵ ISAM (İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi / İstanbul) holds both digital and printed copies of the *İştirak* journal’s first set of 20 issues. There are only minor printing problems in its collections.

¹⁷⁶ IISH (International Institute on Social History / Amsterdam) holds printed copy of the *İştirak* journal’s first set of 20 issues and some issues of its second set that was published in Mütareke years. There are also copies of *Beşeriyet*, *İdrak*, *Medeniyet* and *Sosyalist* journals and newspapers available in printed copies too.

¹⁷⁷ MIL (Milli Kütüphane / Ankara) lists the complete set of the *İştirak* journal’s second set in Mütareke years as available. However, almost all the set is unavailable and only 3 issues have survived.

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APPENDIX

I. Sassoon's table about European socialism

IO THE HARD ROAD TO POLITICAL POWER

Table 1.1 Socialist parties, basic data, c. 1880–1918

	Year founded	Universal manhood suffrage	Workforce engaged in industry (%)	Pre-1900 electoral peak (%)	Pre-1918 electoral peak (%)
Austria	1889	1907 ^a	23.5 (1910)	n/a	25.4 (1911)
Belgium	1885	1893 ^b	45.1 (1910)	8.5 (1896)	30.3 (1914)
Denmark	1876–8	1901	24.0 (1911)	19.3 (1901)	29.6 (1913)
Finland	1899	1906 ^d	11.1 (1910)	n/a	47.3 (1916)
France	1905 ^c	1848	29.5 (1906)	n/a	16.8 (1914)
Germany	1875 ^e	1871	39.1 (1907)	19.7 (1890)	34.8 (1912)
Holland	1894	1917	32.8 (1909)	3.0 (1897)	11.2 (1905)
Italy	1892	1919 ^f	26.8 (1911)	6.8 (1895)	21.3 (1904)
Norway	1887	1898 ^g	26.0 (1910)	0.3 (1894)	32.1 (1915)
Sweden	1889	1907	24.7 (1910)	3.5 (1902)	36.4 (1914)
UK	1900–6	1918 ^{b, h}	44.6 (1911)	1.3 (1900)	7.0 (1910)

Notes: ^a In the German-speaking parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (roughly corresponding to modern Austria). ^b Some double votes. ^c In 1905 various socialist groupings formed the SFIO. ^d Suffrage was granted to men and women, thus making Finland the first country in Europe to achieve true universal suffrage even though it was a Grand Duchy of the Tsar. ^e Year in which the Social-Democratic Workers' Party (the so-called Eisenachers), led by W. Liebknecht and A. Bebel, joined forces with the General Association of German Workers (which had been founded by Lassalle) to form the SPD. ^f The 1912 law enfranchised all men over 30, all those who completed military service and all literate men over 21. ^g Those in receipt of public assistance could not vote. ^h Women over 30 were enfranchised if they (or their husbands) were householders. Note that the 1884 legislation enfranchised five-sixths of the adult male population.

Sources: Year of foundation of the various socialist parties and organizations in Stefano Bartolini, 'I primi movimenti socialisti in Europa. Consolidamento organizzativo e mobilitazione politica', in *Rivista italiana di scienza politica*, Vol. XXIII, no.2, August 1993, p. 245. Electoral data in Thomas T. Mackie and Richard Rose, *The International Almanac of Electoral History*, Macmillan, London 1974. Data on industrial workforce in Peter Flora et al., *State, Economy and Society in Western Europe 1815-1975. A Data Handbook*, Campus Verlag, Macmillan Press and St James Press, Frankfurt, London and Chicago 1987, Vol. 2, chapter 7.

This table is taken from:

Donald Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1996), p. 10.

II. Transliterations from İştirak Journal

Title: ANADOLU'DA AÇLIK

Author: Hüseyin (İştirakçi) Hilmi

İştirak, No: 14, 23 March 1910, Saturday, ISAM copy, pp. 223-224.

Şu satırları ne gibi bir mecburiyet-i vicdaniye ile yazdığımızı aldığımız mektubların feryadamız satırlarını karyiin-i kiram bilse idi bizim gibi onlarda göz yaşlarını zabt edemezlerdi.

Çünkü insanca düşünen insanları pek büyük bilen eshab-ı vicdan elbette Anadolunun en ücra köşesinde açlıktan ölen kardeşlerini, ot yiyen insanları bütün vicdan-ı kalbiyle düşünür -sayfa- ve onların derdine iştirak etmeğe şıtab eder. Sivas vilayeti dahilinde Milasdan, Çavdardan, Rayliden, Burnazdan, Orta Oran, Kışlacık, Yeni Ersalan¹⁷⁸ karyelerinden aldığımız mektublarda deniliyor ki biz kışın samansızlıktan öküzlerimizi satdık şimdi de tarlalarımız tahammimsiz kadlı bu sene aç kaldığımız gibi gelecek seneye de birşey hazırlaya- madık. Ziraat bankasından istikraz için İstanbul'da mebuslarımıza adam gönderdik, müracaat etdik havale-i sem'-i itibar etmediler. Esasen mebusumuz Serdar Zade Mustafa edendi memlekete geldiğinde ziyarete giden köylülere bile yüz çevirmişdi.

Şimdi bizim halimiz ne olacak, bir kısmımızda İstanbul'da bir iş bulabilir ümidiyle gittiler onlarda kahve köşelerinde açlıktan sürünüyorlar kimiside hastanelerde tifodan ölüyorlarmış deniyor.

Ey millet-i Osmaniye artık Anadolu'nun hali tasavvur buyurulsun buna ağlamak mı gülmek mi lazım gelecek? Acaba mebus-u muhterem Ziraat bankalarının te'sisinden maksad ne olduğunu biliyor mu?

Kendisi onar para onar para toplanarak birikdiriken paradan aldığı elli lirayı kemal-i aaz ve afiyetle yerken ne için müntehiblerinin halini düşünmüyor?

Ey köylüler! Düşüğünüz hatanın seyyietini işte bu gün çekiyorsunuz. Bir saatçi hiçbir zaman bir doktor olamaz eğer sizde işinizi ehline mütehassısına tevdi etmiş olsa idiniz elbette ve elbette müracaatlarınız neticesiz kalmaz derdlerinize çare bulunurdu. Fakat sizin düşünemediğiniz düşünmeyerek rey verdiğiniz böyle aklınızı başınıza toplamazsanız sırtınız abasız; ayağınız pabuçsuz gezmekten ot yemekden kurtulamazsınız. Biz yalnız bu babda hükümetin nazar-ı dikkatini celb ederek diyoruz ki hafezallah bu açlıklar taaddüd ederse milletin aatisi için acı, hem pek acı neticeler tevlidine sebep olur.

İnsanlar insanlar daima aristokrat burjuvalar. Siz şen ve şuh kadınlar içinde emzar-ı hayat ederken diğer taraftan aç kalan, açlıktan ölen bi çare zavallı insanlar için kalbinizde bir his-i terahhüm duymazsınız.

¹⁷⁸ All those names of the places are transliterated as they were written in the original source material. However it is highly likely that all were not pronounced as I've transliterated them.

Ah sizlerde böyle bir his-i vicdani mevcut olsaydı elbette beşeriyet böyle müzayakalar içinde giryan-ı nalan çırpınmazdı.

Title: SUS

Author: Hüseyin (İştirakçi) Hilmi

No: 3, 12 March 1910, Saturday, IISH copy, pp. 45-46.

Her vakit söylüyoruz ki servet fakiri sevmez saadet, sefaletе düşmandır, zenginler; güruh-u fakiri tahkir eder, çünkü onların malik olduğu esbab refahı kaaşaaneleri, akarı amelenin, fukaranın sayii hasıl etmiştir ve adem-i müsaavaat gösteriyor ki: meşru' vasıtalarla ihza edilmiş kazanılmış görünen servet sermayedarın servet-i umumiye-i beşerden gasp olunmuş, hatta çalınmış şeylerdir.

Hak her vakit meydandadır, onu aadi rüzgarlarda deviremez, şule-i adlii rüzgar-ı zulm bu gün azaltsa bile istikbalde parlayacak ebediyyen şuledar olacak ve sönmeyecektir.

İstikbal ayinedir ve bu günün gizli kapaklı işlerini, entrikalarını zamanın tarihi gizlese bile; o ayına vazıh bir tablo gibi ensal-i atiyе'ye okuyacaktır.

Eskiden maatemi bir ömre merbut kalan işçiler nasıl ki üç beş mütefekkirin mücahidesiyle bir parça iktisab-ı hayat edebilmişler, nasıl ki tahakküm-ü sermayedarın zincirini kırmışlarsa yarında servet-i arz bilatefrik cins ve sınıf taksim olunacak. O zaman ne amele, ne sermayedar kalacak biz (iştirak)'ı halka takdim etmeyle, içtimayi bir çığır açtık, memleketimizde büyük bir noksanın -sütun- mühim bir meselenin ilk adımını atdık. Vatanın muhtac-ı saii, muhtac-ı himmet olduğu bir zamanda böyle bir mukaddeme ile işe girişdik. Evvela biliriz ki beğenmeyenler, hizmetimizi takdir etmeyenler bulunur biz bunla müteessif değil müteşekkir oluruz.

Nitekim memleketimizin en büyük zenginlerinden ve makamat-ı aliyyeden birinin en mümtaz mahalli işgal eden bir dahi-i siyasimiz bir yerde bahusus bir çok zevatın yanında gazetemizden bahis ederken sosyalist efkarının türkiye için muzır ve fenalığı mucib olacağı ve binaenaleyh iştirakın takib ettiği mesleğin naffi değil bilakis muzır olduğunu beyan etmiştir ki bunu biz vicdanına izhar-ı cihet emin olduğumuz mevs^uk ül-kelam bir zatdan işitdik. Orada bulunanlardan terakki perver ve fazıl bir zad kendisinin Avrupada bulunduğundan bahis ile bütün merakiz-i hükümatda ekseriyete karib bir mevkii işgal eden sosyalist ve amele partiler- inin terakki için en elzem fırkalar olduğunu, iştirak ve ittihad-ı sa'ıyan fikrinin mukaddes bir mevkii-i alalede bulunduğunu beyan ile İştirakı bu hususda peşrev-i terakki olarak kabul etmişlerdir ki birincinin terakki fikirlerini imha hakkındaki tasvirat ve muhafazakarlığıyla ikinci zatdın hayat-ı avamı müdafı' gazetemiz lehindeki beyanatı mukayese edilince mesele kaariyyin-i kiram nazarında vuzuh ile tebyin etmiş olur.

Biz memlekete hizmetle muktahiriz, ta'n-ı husud kıyl-u kal-i bisud bize göre hiçdir, biz aleyhdar -sayfa- bulunmakla iftihar ederiz, çünkü karşısında muarız bulunmayan herhangi bir meslek herhangi bir gazete daima yanılır.

Title: Meslek

Author: Hüseyin (İştirakçi) Hilmi

İştirak, No: 1, 26 February 1910, Saturday, IISH copy, pp. 1-2.

Milletim nev-i beşerdir, vatanım ruy-i zemin Temmuz inkilabından sonra memleketimize istibdad-ı siyasi mahvoldu, yeni bir devre açıldı, tarih-i beşeriyete kanla, zülüm ile bir mersiye-i lanet yazan devr-i mezalim ademe karşı, yalnız _____¹⁸⁰ derin noktalarında bir iz, bir leke bıraktı, işte o kadar... Hayır o kadar değil? İstibdad-ı siyasi Türkiye'yi baştan başa tahrib etmiş, hayat-ı maddiyeyi mahv ettiği kadar, faliyet-i fikriyeyi muattal bir hale koymuş; hasta adamın azayı müdrike ve mümeyyizesini gubar-ı vehim ile örtmüştü. Bu gün iki şeye fevkalade ihtiyacımız vardır ki: hasta adam için bunlar iksir-i sıhat olacak. Tahrib edilmiş kuvvasını tenmiye edecek onu kavi ve faal kardeşleri gibi yaşatacak, sahne-i cemiyetde ona bir mevki-i bülend ve muhteşem hazırlayacaktır.

Teşebbüs ve terakki...

Giyotin altında mevta muntazır iken teşebbüsün muavenet mezalim bir endazesiyile kurtulan mahkum teşebbüsle terakki edecek, ve bu itilasılardır ki eski insanıyetin eskimiş kavaidini mahv edecek, hayatı-ı fikriyesine yeni bir meydan-ı fesih incila bulacaktır.

Teşebbüs ve terakki iledir ki: bugünkü beşeriyet dünkü devre-i maziye ayan vermiş, dünkü kanlı safhalar unutulmuş bir rüyanın kabuslu dakikaları gibi kalmıştır. Teşebbüs ve terakki iledir ki : dünkü müteferrik ve muharib insanların bugünkü ahfad-ı mütefekkiresi artık birleşmek, bir toprakta yaşadıkları, bir topraktan kazandıkları hakde ittihad etmek luzumunu hissetmişlerdir. Teşebbüs iledir ki: bugün sunuf-ı müdrikeyi insanıyet rü'yet-i serbülendine milletim nev-i beşerdir, vatanım ruy-i zemin kelam-ı hikmet beyanını yazmıştır.

İşte Avrupa'da daima terakki eden, terakki ettiği kadar mazhar-ı tebcil olan bu fikr-i mukaddese tab'an biz de (İştirak)'ı halka takdim etmekle müftehiriz maksadımız terakki ve teali, sunuf-u makhure-i amelenin şerait-i fikriyesini a'la, hayatı-ı maneviyeyi tenmiye, (ittihad)'ı ta'mim, mevcudiyetimizi tahkimdir. İnsaniyete hizmet için olan şu teşebbüsümüz bizce büyük bir ehemmiyet-i haizdir, ümid ederiz ki bu adım terakkiye, ittihadı doğru olan hareketin girizgahı olacaktır.

¹⁷⁹ This is probably a proverb that is not accurately transliterated. After consultation this version is the best I can come up with.

¹⁸⁰ The word here was not transliterated due to inability to find a proper transliteration.

Title: Şura-yı Ümmet'e Cevap
Author: Hüseyin (İştirakçi) Hilmi
İştirak, No: 4, 19 March 1910, ISAM copy, pp.49-51

Geçen hafta neşr olunan Şura-yı Ümmetde ‘yeni fırkalardan: sosyalistler’ ser levha-i acibi altında iki sütunluk yeni bir gazez numunesi intişar etti. Bu makalede memleketimizde bir de sosyalist fırkası teşekkül etmek üzere bulunduğu zikr olunduktan sonra ikmal-i telaş ve heyecanla zavallı sosyalistlerin dahili ve zehirli birer mikrop oldukları, anarşistlerin sud biraderleri buldukları ve daha bilimum muharrerinin dimağ-ı herze-zadenden doğmuş neler neler sayıklıyor. Sosyalistlerin evham ve hayalaatdan başka hiç bir programları yokmuş, onların mesleği başkalarının ağzındaki kaptuk, servet-i umumiyenin tesavü-i tevziini te'min etmek ve nihayet yağmacılık imiş. Fakat teşekkür olunurmuş ki Avrupa'dan bu taraflara doğru akıp gelen bu fesad karşısında kuva-i hissiyesi sağlam, muazzam bir devlet, bir millet varmış!...

Şüphesiz ki bir maksad-ı hafi ile yazılan yahud yazdırılan bu makaleye cevap vermek büyük bir şindir. Fakat halkı irşad etmekten ibaret olan vazifemiz bize bize o şini de irtikab ettirecek ne yapalım kendimizden ziyade ebna-i cinsimiz için çalışıyoruz.

Sosyalistliğin en evvel hazret-i İsa tarafından vaz' ve te'sis olunmuş ve Roma'nın milyonlarını üserasının tiranlıklarıyla kazanan eazım-ı zulmesine karşı teşkil ve tertip edilmiş bir dinin esas maksadı olduğu ve İslamiyet'de dahi nice ayatı kerime ve ehadişi şerife ile te'eyid ve tasdik olunan bu esasın zekat ameli bir surete dahi efrağı düşünülecek olursa ‘sosyalistlerin’ maksadı yağmacılıktır’ gibi münasebetsiz sözler biraz zor ağıza alınır.

Bugün hiç bir sosyalist yukarıdaki muharrer makalenin dediği gibi ugniyadan birinin kapısını çalsın da ben sosyalistim servetinin nısfını bana ver, desin eğer biçare Alaüddin Cemil bey böyle zannediyorsa pek çok aldaniyor demektir.

Bir taraftan erbab-ı servete tröstler, sendikalar vesair her türlü vesait-i mürabaha teşkili hakkı verilip dururken fakir ve aciz ameleye bi muavenet-i müteakabile sandığı te'sisini çok görnek günde milyonlar kazanan ve hiç şüphe yok ki amelesinin uykusundan, rahatından, hatta hayatından her gün zara zara çalarak gayrı meşru bir surette kesb-i servet ve saman¹⁸¹ eden bir zengine karşı ‘biz günde ikişer kuruş fazla isteriz’ diyen ve bu mütalebetini ta'til-i eşgal gibi gayet meşru ve son derecede hukuki bir surette telvih itdirmeğe çalışan bir amele niçin anarşist niçin mikrop olsun!...

Ey bi insaf ve lakayt olan zenginler hatırlayınız ki siz bankalarınızda ve kasalarınızda hıfs ettiğiniz o mebalığı azimeyi kendi sa'y zannınızla, kendi kendinizle kazanmadınız siz yazıhanenizin bir köşesinde yaldızlı cigara nızı içerek gazetelerin borsa sütunlarını mütala ederken aşağıda ameleniz, o binlerce aç sefil, hasta, aciz mahluklar kimisi evde nafakasızlıktan kıvranan zavallı yavrucuklarını kimisi kundurasız mektebe giden evladını, ciğer parasını düşünerek çalışmışlar, toz toprak içinde gözleriyle, tırnaklarıyla, bütün mevcudiyetleriyle didinmişler ve sonra akşam üzeri o zavallılar bu sa'y-i tahribkarı olarak onar kuruşla beşer kuruşla sefaletanelerine dönerlerken, siz; akşama kadar geçirdiğiniz saat-i istirahat mukabil milyon kazanarak köşklerinize konağınıza avdet buyurmak için lastik tekerlekli Arap atlı büyük ve müdebedeb landonuzu

¹⁸¹ This word is approximated as “saman” because the word was originally misprinted.

bekliyorsunuz fakat yarın o amele ‘size biz on kuruşa çalışmayız, on ikişer kuruş isteriz’ dirlerse biliniz ki haklarıdır. Ve her hak mutlaka yerini bulacaktır.

Ey muharir-i gafil... Şimdi siz söyleyiniz bakalım. Ashab-ı servet bu parayı nasıl bulmuş diye bir sual varid olursa ne diyeceksiniz. Meşru bir suretde cemi ihtimali olmayan mebalîği azime için verilecek cevap şudur:

-Çalıştım kazandım.

Bu iki kelimedede büyük bir hakikat vardır ki o da budur:

-Meşru, gayrı meşru, madamına kazandım artık bu servet benimdir, sen de çalışsa idin, sen de bir kolayını bulsa idin?...

Evet bende bir kolayın bulsa idim değil mi? İşte bizde şeriat garayı Ahmediye'nin hepimizi kardeş ad idilen bir emr-i şerifine tab'an ittifak ve ittihad ideceğiz, kimseye zararımız dokunmayacak, daha az çalışarak yani biraz rahat ederek fazla kazanmanın kolaylıklarını arayacağız. İcab ederse büsbütün terk-i mesai edeceğiz ve bu suretle gayrı meşru bir surette iktisab edilen servetlerin hiç olmazsa bir kısmı kalilini sa'yimize, hareket-i makbule-i insaniyetkarımıza mukabil istirdad eyleyeceğiz...

İşte bizim bildiğimiz sosyalizm, iştirak, uhuvvet-i beşeriye budur. Bize anarşist diyenler asıllarını araştırmak ve kendilerinin ne olduklarını anlamak lazımdır. Eğer Alaüddin Cemil beyin makalesi pek zannettiğimiz gibi bir ifal yahut bir teşvik üzerine yazılmış ise zarar yok - çünkü o zatın bu hakikatleri bilmediğine hüküm edemeyiz - yalnız vatandaşlarımıza karşı pek feci bir suretde irtikab edilen bu hatanın tamirini bekleriz.

Title: İlk Sosyalist Kimdir?

Author: Hüseyin (İştirakçi) Hilmi

İştirak, No: 1, 20 June 1912, MIL copy, pp. 3-4.

Bu sualın cevabını pek yakınlarda aramak son birkaç asrın müellif ve diplomatları arasında bulmağa çalışmak asla doğru olmaz.

Sosyalizm meslek-i muhteremi gayet kadim ve asil bir meslek-i içtimaidir ki ilk menbağı kurun-ı ûlâ felasife-i meşhuresinden alır. Tarih-i mazbudun ilk sosyalist olmak üzere tanıdığı zat Yunan hükemasından Eflatundur.

İhtimal ki daha evvel de iştirakın efkarını serd ve beyan etmiş bir takım hakimler gelmiş, geçmişdi. Fakat bizim ilk sosyalist olarak âsar ve akvâliyle tanıdığımız zat ancak bu büyük hakim, bu büyük filosofdur.

Eflatunun nazarında ferdin hiç bir ehemmiyeti yoktu. Her şey bir hükümet-i müştereke tarafından idare edilmeli idi. Siyasete büyütülmüş bir ilim ve ahlâk nazarıyla bakar idi ki bu ahlâkda ilim-i ruh üzerine istinad ederdi.

Yine bu hakîm; hâkimleri hükümetin aklı, muharibleri kalbi ve kuvveti, sanatkarları ve rencberleri iştihası olmak üzere kabul eylemişti. Fakat bu suretle ayırmak, yani sanatkâr, hakim ve muharib gibi vasıflar husule getirmekle bir ihtilafın vücuduna sebebiyet vermemelidir. Hükümetle ferdi yekdiğerinden ayıran şey hak-ı mülkiyet ile ailedir. “Senin ve benim” kavgası ve bin-netice hususiyet ve şahsiyet-i hükümetin vahdeti nokta-i nazarından gayet muzırdır. Aile dahi hususiyete, hodbiniyye ve bu suretle inkısama yol açar. Bunları katiyyen ref etmelidir. Ve hiç olmazsa muharibler ve vatan müdafileri, askerler hakk-ı mülkiyetden uzak kalmalıdır. Kadınlar onların nezinde umumi olmalı, fakat bu umumiyet bir şehvet-i umumi olmaktan ziyade vatanperverlik ve ahlâk-ı menfaate hizmet edecek bir umumiyet olmalıdır.

Çocuklar dahi umumi olmalı ve hükümet tarafından talim ve terbiye edilmelidirler. Bu çocuklar cimnastik ve raks vasıtasıyla kuvvetlendirileceği gibi, mûsikî vasıtasıyla da ruhlarında bir itidal hasıl edilecektir. Bunun için de onlara gösterilecek bir takım şairlerin ve sanatkarların eserleri üzerlerinde şiddetli bir sansür icra edilmelidir. Siyasetle terbiye-i etfal yekdiğerinden asla ayrılamazlar. En iyi hükümet iyilerden müteşekkil olan hükümetdir. En iyi millet de en iyilerden müteşekkil olan millettir. Çünkü böyle bir hükümetde ve böyle bir millette ancak akıl ve zekâ hükümet eder. İşte aristokrasi budur. Fakat te’sûf olunur ki böyle bir hükümet asla uzun müddet devam edez de. Mukratlığın (Demokratlığın) ifrâtı demek olan zulm icra-i hükm etmeye başlar. Bu ise tahkire şayan olan bir takım hırsların itidali aşması demektir, bir takım, insanların en adisidir. Yine zaman hükümet-i hakiki ilme ve hakîki siyasete vakıf olan kimseler idare ederlerse insanlar o zaman mes’ud ve bahtiyar olacaklardır.

Eflatun aynı zamanda kanun-u cezaya dair dahi mütalalar yürütmüştür. Nazarında ceza bir kimsenin tahlisidir. O kimsenin gayb edilmesi değildir. Mücrim ıslah edilmelidir, fakat ona işkence edilmemelidir.

Yukarıdan beri en mühim fikirlerini serd etmiş olduğumuz bu kurun-ı ûlâ hakîmi bu gibi sözleriyle ve bilhassa “herşey umumi olmalıdır, hatta eller, hatta gözler...” gibi pek ifradkarhane bağzı tavsiyeleri ile sosyalistliğin ilk esaslarını vaz’ etmişti. Fakat herşey gibi Eflatun’un sosyalistliğide ibtidasında hatalı ve muzırr bir halde bulunuyordu. Çünkü ferdin ve nazariyab-ı ferdiyenin tamamıyla aleyhinde bulunuyor ve bu suretle şahsa hiç ehemmiyet verilmemek kaidesini tesis etmiş oluyordu. Halbuki hali hazırda sosyalizm böyle alel’umya bir iştirakdan ibaret değildir ve olmamak iktiza eder.

Bütün ulüm ve fûnun ve bütün mesalik-i içtimaiye tedricen terakki ettiği ve ıslah olduğu gibi sosyalizm silk-i mebcili de tedricen terakki eylemiş ve ahiren Karl Marks gibi hükema-i içtimaiye tarafından tamamıyla fenni bir şekilde icra’ olunmuştur. Bunla beraber mesleğimizi şu şekl-i umûmi ve mükemmele isal edenlere nasıl medyun-u şükran isek yine bu mesleğin hatalı olmakla beraber ilk defa olarak esasını vaz’ edeb büyük Eflatuna dahi öylece medyun-u şükranız ve bunun için onun nam-ı muhteremini neşriyatımıza bir mukaddeme-i şükran ittihaz eyledik.

Title: Damadlara Maaş
Author: Hüseyin (İştirakçi) Hilmi
İştirak, No: 11, 7 May 1910, IISH copy, pp. 161-163.

Kuvve-i Teşriye kararından rücuğ ediyor.

Damadlara Maaş.

Öteden beri memleketimiz garabetin merkez-i yeganesi olmuştur. Bunu herkes söyler ve söylemeyenlerde tasdik ederler.

Geçen hafta kuvve-i teşriye yağni meclis-i mebusan damadlara tahsis edilen maaşların kat' edilmesine karar vermişdi aradan bir hafta mürur etti ve garib bir halet-i ruhiye neticesi olarak şimdi de kararın feshi cihatine gidilerek damadlara maaş tahsis etmek için mebuslarımız ekseriyet-i ârâ ile karar veriyorlar. Yağni hakk-ı teşrilerini iskât etmek gibi bir hareketde bulunanlara soralım: hangi memleketde bu gibi mesail ile iştigal edilir; hangi mebusan verdiği karardan rücuğ ider? Burada akli, hükmi, mantıki bir cihet var mıdır? Tekrar soralım kuvve-i teşriye ile kuvve-i icraiye arasında ne fark vardır?

Eğer kuvve-i icraiye millet vekillerinden müteşekkil bir heyet-i muazzama-i teşriye üzerine icra-i te'sirden hâli kalmayıp kuvve-i teşriye dahi daima sâkin daima ebkem kalacaksa artık meşrutiyet nerede kalır kuvve-i icraiye ne suretle müstakildir, kuvve-i teşriye ne vakit kuvve-i icraiye üzerine haiz-i nüfuz ve te'sir olabilir? Biz bunları eğer Avrupa kavanîn-i meşrutiyesine tadbik edersek hiç bir had-i fâsıl bulamayacağız.

Kuvve-i icraiye ikide birde istifa edeceğiz tehdidatıyla millet meclisimizi korkutmak istiyor ve zan olunur ki mebusan bu tehdidatdan korkarak "aman sizin dediğiniz olsun, nasıl isterseniz öyle yapınız" a delalet eder zımnî bir hareket gösteriyorlar millet-i Osmaniye ile kuvve-i icraiye kuvve-i teşriye arasında adeta bir mel'abe bir bazice olmuştur her memleketde kuvve-i teşriye kuvve-i icraiyeden hakimiyet-i milliye nokta-i nazarınca daha mümtaz, daha âli bir mevki ihraz eder. Yağni meşrutiyet kuvve-i teşriye ve kuvve-i teşriye dahi meşrutiyetle kaimdir. Kuvve-i icraiye millet meclisi mukarreratının ve tanzim etmiş olduğu kavanin ve nizamatin tatbikine memurdur. Lakin mea't-tesüf li sebab-i minel esbab bizde her zaman kuvve-i icraiye kuvve-i teşriye üzerine icrai te'sir ediyor, bu neden! Biz buna cevap veremezden evvel hürriyetperver olduklarını beyan eden millet vekillerimize soralım. Milletın damadlara maaş vermeğe ne mecburiyeti vardır? Hangi memlekette böyle bir usûl cayidir? Onlarda bizim gibi efrad ve evlad-ı milletden olub bizim gibi saî ve amelleri ile te'min-i mâîşet etmeğe mecbur iken li hükmeten mecanni nimetlere nail oluyorlar. Bu damadlar hanedan-ı saltanata mensub değildir. Kuvve-i sülûse-i meşrutiyetin reis-i yeganesi olan padişahımız efendimiz hazretlerinin maaş-ı şahanelerini luzumu kadar tezyid ederek o maaştan damad paşalara ve bunlara maaş tahsis edilirse milletin hiç bir itirazı kalmaz. Fakat hususi bir kayd ve şart veya daha doğrusu yeni bir kanun vaz' ederek o kanunun ahkâm-ı mucibince damadlara doğrudan doğruya hazine-i maliyeden yağni milletin cebinden maaş tahsis etmek keyfiyetini hikmet-i hülûmete hiç bir suretle muvafık göremiyoruz. O paralar efrad-ı milletin müteadid eza ve işkenceler ile çalışıp kazanmış oldukları onar paradan hasıl olmuştur. O paraları millet devletin terakkisi için veriyor. Onları fuzuli sarf etmektense milletin cebinde kalsa daha iyi olmaz mı? Hiç olmazsa hükümferma olan müthiş felaket ve sefaletlere nihayet vermiş oluruz. Millet damad ile kontrat mı etmiş? Şimdi herşeyi bertaraf edip meseleyi vicdan nokta-yı nazarından düşünelim. Damadların

cümlesi muktedir, gayyur ve sahib-i servetdirler. Onlar hiç bir vakit milletin muavenetine arz-ı ihtiyaç etmezler etseler bile millet onların şahsi ihtiyaçlarını tesviye ve tehvin etmeye mecbur mudur? Mecbur ise o mecburiyet hangi kanun ile ta'yin edilmiştir taşraya atf-ı nazar edelim: gözlerden kanlı yaşlar dökülüyor, her ağızdan bir beranın-i felaket çıkıyor millet zebun-u sefalet ve izmihlal olmuştur. Acaba li sebeb-i minel esbab damadların hukukunu muhafaza etmek mecburiyetini his eden maliye nazırı Cavit bey fukaranın feryad ve figanını işitmiyor mu? Acaba millet vekilleri vicdandan, kalb-i merhametden ârîmidirler? Adalet merhamet, hakkaniyet bu memleketden büsbütün kalkmış mıdır? Kan ağlayan fukaradan cebren külli tazyikatla aldığımız parayı neden damad namıyla maaruf olanların ceblerine dolduralım. Hangi akıl hangi mantık; hangi hikmet bunu tecviz eder? Millet vekillerimiz sıfatlarını tedbil etsinler verilen karardan bir hafta sonra rücuğ etmek istiklalîyet-i teşriiyeyi bayımal etmek demektir. Buna bir misal gösterebiliriz bizde kaniğ olalım. Maliye nazırı ve meclis-i vükela reis-i meclis-i milliyi tehdid ediyorlar, yağni adeta muallim gibi ders veriyorlar. Günahdır, bu millete günahdır. Birazda mütenebbih olalım; yoksa bu hal üzere devam edersek halimize merhamet edenlere değil yüzümüze bile bakmağa tenezzül edecek erbab-ı izara tesadüf etmek kabil olmayacaktır.

Evhamı bırakalım. Söze mağlub olmayalım. Te'sirden ârî kalarak evlat-ı erbea-i meşrutiyeti ciddiyet ve hakkaniyet dairesinde muhafaza etmeğe gayret edelim. Mebuslar! Mebuslar! Bu millet sizi muhafaza-i hukuk için intihab etmiştir. Siz hala nüfuz ve tesir tahtında iş görüyorsunuz milyonlarla gözler felaketden yaşarmış; artık onlarda kan akıyor; kan! Aklınızı başınıza toplayınız.