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RESİMLİ AY MAGAZINE (1929-1931)
THE EMERGENCE OF AN OPPOSITIONAL FOCUS
BETWEEN SOCIALISM AND AVANT-GARDISM

by

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Submitted to

the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

Boğaziçi University

2004

“Resimli Ay Magazine (1929-1931)

The Emergence of an Oppositional Focus Between Socialism and Avant-Gardism”,
a thesis prepared by Mehmet Fatih Uslu in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts degree at the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History.

The thesis has been approved and accepted by:

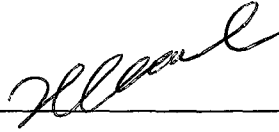
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An abstract of the Thesis of Mehmet Fatih Uslu for the degree of Master of Arts degree from the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History to be taken September 2004

Title: *Resimli Ay* Magazine (1929-1931): The Emergence of an Oppositional Focus Between Socialism and Avant-Gardism

This thesis focuses on the two-year period of *Resimli Ay* magazine between 1929-1931, which was published between 1924-1931. This period bore witness to the magazine's transformation from an American-like popular magazine to a left-wing literary one. As a result of this transformation, not only the content of the magazine changed, but also the staff of magazine, which was leading by Nâzım Hikmet, involved in political struggles. These struggles are grouped in two in the study. The first one corresponds to the position of the magazine in radical left and the second one implies the magazine's challenge to the Single Party government. The thesis, focusing on the literary content of the magazine, attempts to analyze those political tensions; in other words, tries to define political equivalents for literary dynamics that sprouted through the publication process of the magazine. The literary content of the *Resimli Ay* was shaped by the interaction of socialist and avant-garde concerns of the period and thus it had an eclectic structure. Employing socialist and avant-garde formations and concepts that eclectic structure is analyzed and it is showed that the magazine was the house of a unique experience of transformation into an oppositional formation. This experience takes importance because of its housing a critical approach both to the populist discourse of the Single Party which prevented the development of radical left and to the rigid attitude of the Turkish Communist Party that was totally dependent on Soviet Russia.

Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü'nde Yüksek Lisans derecesi için Mehmet Fatih Uslu tarafından Eylül 2004'de teslim edilen tezin kısa özeti

Başlık: Resimli Ay Dergisi (1929-1931): Sosyalizm ve Avangardizmin Arasında Muhalif Bir Odağın Doğuşu

Bu tez 1924-1931 yılları arasında çıkmış bir dergi olan *Resimli Ay*'ın 1929-1931 arasını kapsayan dönemine odaklanmaktadır. Söz konusu dönem derginin, şehirli insana seslenen Amerikanvari bir magazin dergisinden sol bir edebiyat dergisine dönüşümüne tanıklık eder. Bu dönüşüm neticesinde sadece derginin içeriği değişmekle kalmamış, Nâzım Hikmet'in başını çektiği dergi kadrosu somut siyasi mücadelelere de dahil olmuştur. Bu mücadeleler çalışmada iki temel eksenle konumlandırılır. Bu eksenlerden birincisi derginin radikal sol içindeki, ikincisi ise tek parti iktidarına karşı tutumuna tekabül eder. Tez, dergide yayınlanan içeriğe, ağırlıkla da edebi içeriğe odaklanarak söz konusu siyasi gerilimleri çözümlemeyi dener; yani edebi unsurların dönem için siyasi karşılıklarını araştırır. *Resimli Ay*'ın söz konusu yıllardaki edebi içeriği sosyalist ve avangard kaygıların etkileşiminde şekillenmiştir ve eklektik bir yapı taşımaktadır. Bu eklektik yapının edebiyat alanındaki toplumcu ve avangard oluşumlara ve kavramlara atıfta bulunularak çözümlenmesi aracılığıyla derginin söz konusu iki yılının, dönem için eşi bulunmaz bir muhalifleşme tecrübesine işaret ettiği gösterilir. Bu tecrübe hem tek parti iktidarının solu halkçılık içinde eriten söylemine hem de Türkiye Komünist Partisi'nin Sovyet Rusya temelli katılığına eleştirel bir tavrı barındırmasıyla önem kazanır.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis advisor, Asst. Prof. Duygu Köksal, for her valuable assistance. Her constant support and confidence proved highly determining and were truly appreciated.

I am also grateful to Asst. Prof. Zeynep Uysal and Assoc. Prof. Asım Karaömerliođlu for their helpful suggestions. The Atatürk Institute provided an efficient and friendly atmosphere through the formation of the thesis. Kathryn Kranzler, who spent hours editing my work, gave me support and suggestions towards the end of my period of study.

I am truly indebted to the staffs of Bođaziçi University Library and Atatürk Library who were always helpful and kind.

I am deeply indebted to my nice friends, Ali, Barış, Mine, Mustafa, Adem, Erdem, Iğın, Vahit, İbrahim, Kürşat and Volkan for their twenty four-hour friendships, which terminated the depression of the writing process.

And finally, I would like to thank my family. They always supported me.

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INTRODUCTION

The lack of a conceptual and theoretical comprehensive analysis of the literary production and the literary viewpoint of the Turkish left-wing intellectual circles, despite the availability of a huge material collection of publications of years—especially between 1960 and 1980 when the Leftist movement was powerful—is an evident fact. Literary magazines have published numerous special issues and articles focusing on socialist literature providing a broad reflection base for the students of the area.¹ Not only has this broad base not been exploited, but also the most important figures, books and magazines have not been studied from a conceptual and academic view that concentrates on the meaningful tension between politics and literature—that is the very characteristic of socialist literature.² However, I will not address the reasons for this disinterest, as the present study focuses on a segment of early Turkish radical left and its literary viewpoint, and seeks thus to supply a source for the discussion of that meaningful tension in the example of Turkey.

One of the very few exceptions³ to the above judgment of disinterest is Ahmet Oktay's comprehensive work *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları* (The Origins of Socialist Realism).⁴ In this work, Oktay attempts to expose the origins of socialist literature in Republican Turkey, focusing on the period between 1925 and

¹ For very recent examples of this special issues: *3 Nokta Edebiyat: Toplumcu Edebiyat Özel Sayısı*, May-June-July (2004: 2); *Adam Sanat*, June (2002: 198). Another magazine *Ya-Ba Edebiyat* also published a long series of articles in 2003. However, it must be noted that any attempt in order to grasp what has been happened and thought is very rare.

² I employ this concept of socialist literature in a general sense, so that I try to abstain from a restricted meaning as “the literary products that have obvious socialist aims”. It must be thought as the whole literature that is produced by socialist individuals.

³ Although there isn't any other work that have broad theoretical and contextual concerns, some works are helpful in this framework: Asım Bezirci, *Halk, Sosyalizm, Kültür ve Edebiyat* (İstanbul: Sanat Emegi Yayınları, 1979); Suphi Nuri İleri, *Sosyalist Gerçekçilik* (İstanbul: Scala Yayıncılık, 1998); Metin Cengiz, *Toplumcu Gerçekçi Şiir* (İstanbul: Tüm Zamanlar Yayıncılık, 2000).

⁴ Ahmet Oktay, *Sosyalist Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları* (İstanbul: Tüm Zamanlar Yayıncılık, 2000 (1986)). Interestingly, he is an ex-journalist and an influential poet, not an academician.

1940. The study is extraordinarily both conceptual and contextual with its comprehensive analyses of the evolution and the theory of Socialist Realism, different approaches of Marxist aesthetics, and the mentality and origins of early socialism in Turkey. Thus, Oktay presents a broad scrutiny on the axis between the Turkish left and literature.

The study presented here can be put under the voluminous work of Oktay because of its attempt to analyze the story of *Resimli Ay* magazine, focusing on the issues or the period between 1929 and 1931. *Resimli Ay* was the first long-term and popular magazine to publish literary products and articles inscribed under a socialist perspective founded and shaped to a great extent by Nâzım Hikmet, the most famous and the most influential literary figure of the Republican era, who had returned from Soviet Russia, where he had borne witness to and joined in the lively literary/artistic atmosphere after the Revolution. As an addition to Oktay's work, a discussion on avant-garde literature and theory focusing on Russian Futurism completes the analysis of the study, which is a necessity demanded by the material itself.

Resimli Ay, as a monthly journal, housed a two-dimensional opposition during its transformation from a popular magazine to a literary and political one: on the one hand, as an advocator of a new literature it attacked past literary forms and figures without neglecting to attempt to theorize this new literature and to give examples which were almost evident imitations of Russian avant-gardism. On the other hand, it criticized the government's deeds from a perspective that positioned itself among the oppressed people of workers and peasants. This two-dimensionality inspires the main question of the present thesis: How did these two exist

simultaneously, and what did this simultaneous existence mean in terms of the Turkish radical left and Turkish politics in the early Republic?

In the framework which is, to a certain extent, constructed by Oktay and which inspired the present study, it seems logical and meaningful to claim that the very first years of Turkish radical left can be more efficiently understood through the analysis of its perception of literature. Two powerful assumptions underpin this opinion. As the first of two it can be claimed that the diversities in terms of literary ideas represent some political positions on the constellation of socialist revolutionary thinking and movement of which the Turkish radical left was a part. Second, literature had a special importance for Turkish radical left because of their lack of opportunity to declare and spread their ideas due to the widespread political intolerance of their views.

The first of these deductions paves the way for the construction of the theoretical base of this study, which is based on the counter-positioning of pre-socialist realist and avant-garde perspectives of art in 1920's Soviet Russia. Thus, the literary agents and their ideas of early Revolutionary Russia will be employed as a kind of code to understand *Resimli Ay*'s political positioning, and so that to find a way from literature to politics in the early Turkish Republic. Surely, this attempt presupposes that the meaningful relationship between literary perspective and political position in 1920's Soviet Russia is also valid for the Turkish radical left's approach to literature. This inference has two reasons. The first of which one is a general contention about the Turkish radical left that its early formation and first decades of experience cannot be thought of separately from the influence of Soviet Russia.⁵ As Mete Tuncay points out, especially Stalin's harsh attitude in Comintern

⁵ Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları*: 24.

and the Soviet Russian Communist Party deeply influenced the Turkish Communist Party and it strove to obtain the confirmation of those important organs. In this way, their practices find direct projections on the Turkish communist movement.⁶ The second inference is specific to *Resimli Ay*: Nâzım Hikmet, who guided the magazine to a great extent between 1929 and 1931, was influenced deeply by the literary contentions and disputes of 1920's Soviet Russia.

The dialogue, the counter-positioning and the relation of art and politics is not only a real controversial area of study in terms of political science, aesthetics, literary criticism and so on, but also it is the most tragic question the twentieth century artist asked himself/herself. The path between being a political figure and being an artistic producer or writing a literary text and thinking about the political implications of this text simultaneously is under tension because of the two different spheres' widely accepted uncongeniality. Politics generally tends to control artist and artistic production, and to be intolerant when this production transgresses its values, whereas artistic production is generally accepted to lose its value when it comes under the direction of political concerns.

The tension of this controversy is augmented especially when Marxist politics enters the scene. The twentieth century history of Marxist politics and thinking invoked an intensive discussion on this topic, especially focusing on the preceding years of the Socialist Realism experience in Soviet Russia beginning with the 1930's. Indeed, the 1920's were like a boxing ring of various literary trends which had a harsh struggle in order to have an influential place in the Revolution's course, which would be eventuated in Socialist Realism. The scene of this discussion

⁶ Mete Tuncay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar II (1925-1940)* (İstanbul, BDS Yayınları, 1992): 11-12.

included various controversial opinions about the role of the artist in society, the constitution of artistic production and its social function, the dialectical place of artistic production's form with respect to its content,⁷ and, maybe as the spring of all discussions, the position of the artistic sphere against the political one. Eagleton writes that,

What is at stake is no longer the biological basis of the aesthetic faculty but whether art should be openly tendentious or 'objectively' partisan, whether avant-garde experiment is a way of figuring the revolutionary future or merely of alienating the unsophisticated masses, whether art should tell it as it is or as it should be, whether it should be mirror or hammer, cognitive or affective, beamed in unabashed class terms at the proletariat or imaging forth the 'universal' socialist being already in the making. Should the literature of class society be dumped, re-fashioned or disseminated amongst the people in cheap popular editions? Was a bad poem by a worker better than a good one by a bourgeois? Should art be scaled down to the present level of the masses, or the masses elevated to the current level of art? Was it elitist to use pen and paper rather than scribbling your poems on people's shirt-fronts in the street? Was any literary form compatible with a committed art, or was realism to be given a special privilege?⁸

Socialist Realism, which denotes a specific period in Soviet Russia and of the formal beginning of which is accepted to have been 1934, the First Writers Congress⁹ during the Stalinist period assessed literature and art as direct reflections of the base that is shaped by the economic mode of production and as a direct medium of class struggle,¹⁰ in this way it gave certain answers to the questions

⁷ Form and content, as the basic categories of any kind of text are the main conveyors of literary criticism. Indeed, Eagleton postulates that although form and content are not inseparable in practice, they can be accepted as theoretically distinct (Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1997): 22). Under this perspective, it can be put that content (or maybe substance) is the social constituent of the text, whereas form is artistic one.

⁸ Terry Eagleton "Marxist Literary Theory," in *The Eagleton Reader* ed. by Stephen Regan (Blackwell: 1988): 252-53. In order not to forget Eagleton's context, it is to be noted that all these questions have their roots in pre-Revolution years' discussions.

⁹ In this Congress, the trend was accepted as the government's and Party's formal literary understanding and kept its strict dominance until the end of Stalinist period.

¹⁰ Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları*: 11.

enumerated above. Leaning towards this perspective it represented a marginal position with its transforming the artist into a functionary of the Party in the way of people's liberation, or the construction of the future's communist society, with a radical rejection of varieties and fundamental changes, especially in terms of form in the constitution of the artistic product, and with its repudiation of the existence of any possible, relatively independent artistic sphere out of the political one. In this way, it presents a strict systematization and methodology of the writing/production and the reading/interpreting of the literary/artistic product under the strict direction of the Communist Party.

That the writer has a political responsibility to correct the false consciousness of the audience defines the base of this methodology.¹¹ Unlike the capitalist countries in which literature has to be subversive, literature in a country where the Revolution and the dominance of the Party eliminated all contradictions had to be functional in the entrenchment and progressing of the socialist revolution. Oktay comments that, "In the country of the Revolution, literature has to undertake the enlightenment and directing of the worker class, must be a guide."¹² Surely, the Party as the conscious agent is the entity that decided the way and content of the process, and thus how art had to be produced in terms of form and content. In this way, it demanded various things from writers: to explain and popularize the Party's policies, to employ basic literary forms which had a general acceptance among public and to abstain from experiments on form, to employ positive heroes and a romantic narration to make Revolutionary enthusiasm continue and other such objectives. Obviously all these demands circumscribed the writer and bound him/her with certain rules that could not be transgressed. Thus, literature in particular, and art

¹¹ Ibid. 23.

¹² Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları*, 145.

in general were reduced to formal political practice; writer and artist were to be committed functionaries and agents of the Party.¹³

Theoretically, Socialist Realism had a contradictory existence: on the one hand, it claimed to be realist, so that it bound itself to the reflection of objective reality; on the other hand, it intended the transformation of reality with the manipulation of the writer and the text by an outer political organ, the Party. In other words the coexistence of a deep belief in realism stemming generally from perceiving literature as the direct reflection of base, and revolutionary romanticism that undermined any objective reflection possibility with its aim of transforming the reader's mind, or to change his/her of false consciousness and motivate him/her for his/her serving the Revolution was clearly contradictory. Because the former was prevented by the latter, if a text was engineered by planned desires that were out of the text and writer, then there was no place to reflect the objective reality.¹⁴

¹³ Sholokhov, the most famous writer of the Socialist Realism after Gorky, puts commitment to the Party as the primary rule of Socialist Realism: "Socialist realism, for me, is art's perception and interpretation of life's truth with respect to the point of view that committed to the principles of the Party" ("*Sosyalist gerçekçilik, sanatın parti ilkelerine bağlı görüş açısından yaşamın gerçekliğini algılaması, yorumlaması sanatıdır diyorum.*") (Sholokhov, in *Sanatta Sosyalist Gerçekçilik*, edited by Parkhamenko and Myasnikov: 8)

¹⁴ All of three great figures of Marxism, Marx, Engels and Lenin perceive literature on a reflectionist base. This perception comes from a belief in the existence of an objective reality in the final analysis and goes to the perception of art as a kind of knowledge (Murat Belge, *Marksist Estetik* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1997): 32). However, especially Marx does not constitute a one-to-one relation between economic mode of production and art, accentuates the disharmony between historical era and the profundity of literary production, so that rejects the direct determination of the base which is assumed by Socialist Realism (Mikhail Lifshitz, *Marx'ın San'at Felsefesi* (Ararat Yayınevi: ?, ?): 112-113). Therefore, reflectionism that is assumed by Marx is not as vulgar as the one of Socialist Realism. The same tolerance to literature is valid in point of view of both Marx and Engels when the autonomy of writer takes the scene. They accentuate *the principle of contradiction* that claims a distinction between the aim of writer and the function of text in social and historical spheres, or the distinction between the subjective meaning and objective one of the text (Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları*: 83; Murat Belge, *Marksist Estetik*: 39). Under this perspective, they never call the writer to be a militant, although this does not mean that they demanded a complete neutrality from the writer which is an impossibility according to them. Lenin's ideas, which are more clearly supports reflectionism and realism in art, are employed as a basis for Socialist Realism in 1930's. His famous article "Party Organization and Party Literature" (V. I. Lenin "Parti Örgütlenmesi ve Parti Edebiyatı," in *Sanatta Sosyalist Gerçekçilik*) and his demand for construction of a literature that is committed to the Party there are the most referred points of Socialist Realists, especially by Zhdanov the formal establisher of the trend (Murat Belge, *Marksist Estetik*, 70). Although Lenin suggests a certain control of literary texts by the Party and repudiates the concept of neutral writer in his article, generally Socialist Realists are charged of manipulation of the article because of his specially

Realism had a broad discursive base in Russia that made it the fundamental feature of literature in Russia, thus it was thought of a great tradition. Although there were various disagreements on art's function, the pattern of reflection, the autonomy of writer and such. among important literary figures critics of nineteenth century, realism was a kind of obsession that "[was] the very air one breathes, a basic postulate impossible to call into question."¹⁵ Socialist Realism assumed this heritage without any hesitation.¹⁶ However, to be only realist was not enough for Socialist Realism, as stated above; additionally, the produced text had to be useful for the people. On the basis of this concept of the *usefulness of art*, it embraced a very strong emphasis of revolutionary romanticism, as Lunacharsky, the most important man of the Revolution on cultural issues declared: "Socialist realism cannot be thought without a certain amount of romanticism... Socialist realism is realism-plus-enthusiasm-plus-a militant attitude."¹⁷ The basis of this development depended on the determined role of art and artist. They created the motivation in the way of a great future target and they recounted the meaning of the transformation towards this target to the people at large. Thus, exaggerating and romanticizing the facts did not denote a negative attitude if they served to the Revolution. Gorky said, "Our real hero, the hero that is the creator of socialist culture, is greater and more sublime than the protagonists in our novels and stories... In literature this man must be represented as even greater and more sublime than what he really is. This is not only

abstaining from any certain formulation of writing and reading literary texts unlike Socialist Realism. Indeed, he states in different writings that the writer has to be free in the production of his work in the way of "complete freedom of self-determination in the field of art" (Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977): 202). All of three in the final analysis, however, pay an obvious priority to literary content against literary form which means material life determines the thing of aesthetics.

¹⁵ Régine Robin, *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic* (California: Stanford University Press, 1992): 160.

¹⁶ Ibid. 161.

¹⁷ ("Sosyalist gerçekçilik belirli bir oranda romantizm ögesi bulunmadan düşünülemez... Sosyalist gerçekçilik, gerçekçilik-artı-çoşku-artı-militanca bir tutumdur.") A. Lunacharsky, in *Sanatta Sosyalist Gerçekçilik*: 30.

the necessity of life, but also the necessity of socialist realism.”¹⁸ Gorky’s words heralded the birth the of *positive hero*¹⁹ which is a common feature in socialist realist works and refers to extraordinary protagonists who generally work in the name of the Revolution among the people.²⁰

Socialist Realism, whatever its formal beginning, represents a very powerful literary perspective of the 1920’s²¹ which more or less emphasized the superiority of

¹⁸ (“Bizim gerçek, canlı kahramanımız, yani sosyalist kültürün yaratıcısı olan insanımız, roman ve hikâyelerimizdeki kahramanlardan çok daha büyük, çok daha yücedir... Edebiyatta bu insan olduğundan da büyük ve yüce gösterilmelidir. Bu, sadece yaşamın değil, sosyalist gerçekçiliğin de gereğidir.”) Maksim Gorky, in Parkhmenko et al. 49.

¹⁹ “The principal function of the Soviet socialist writer was to provide legitimizing myths for the state, to ‘show the country its heroes’... the ‘positive hero’, an emblematic figure whose biography was to function as a model for readers to emulate.” Katerina Clark, “Socialist Realism in Soviet Literature,” in *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature* (London: Routledge, 2001): 176.

²⁰ Indeed, the origins of this long journey that arrived to Socialist Realism can be fixed at the last decades of the tsarist period. Russian social democrat writers like Chernishevsky, Belinsky and Dobrolyubov pave the way for the concept of useful art. According to them literature is a way for generating the knowledge of reality and in this way social criticism and analysis, so that artist must become a missionary towards the enlightenment of people abstaining from and stripping all unnecessary aesthetical games and torments: “... literature should disdain elaborate aesthetic techniques and become an instrument of social development.” (Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1997): 43) Besides these ideas Plekhanov influences Marxist circles with his ideas that attempt to evaluate the literary text as a basis to find and analyze the social facts, although he doesn’t believe propaganda in literature. According to him, literary product is the laboratory of *social* for the critic and audience. In this point of view, there isn’t any place for the autonomy of artistic product, therefore for superstructure, because of his assessment of artistic production as a pure reflection. This means the unchallenging determinism of base and a dark economic determinism (Murat Belge, *Marksist Estetik*: 53). In this picture individuality lost its originality: “For Plekhanov,... the writer reflects reality most significantly by creating types; he expresses ‘historic individuality’ in his characters rather than depicting just individual psychology.” (Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*: 44). These two important intellectual currents of pre-Revolution years are composed of the very base of Socialist Realism: art must be useful and the mirror of social reality.

²¹1920’s housed a very interesting and vivid milieu in terms of literature. After the civil war and *war communism* finished, Lenin promulgated his famous New Economic Policy (NEP), which means a partial restoration of bourgeois economy. The relative freedom came by NEP launched a lot of new publications and groups. However, the veiled control of Communist Party was felt through the Associations of Proletarian Writers. After MAP (Moscow Association, 1923), RAPP was established in 1925 and dominated the scene as the representative of *general line*. This domination of RAPP strengthened the demand of elimination of other artistic groups which did not have a proletarian background, and which produced things remembering bourgeois art including Futurists. When the end of New Economic Policy (NEP) period came an end in 1928, RAPP increased its dominance. In 1932, RAPP was dissolved, and instead of it Soviet Writers Union, which was under the direct control of Stalin was established. All writers had to be a member of the Union. This was the definite end of the period relative artistic freedom (Vera Alexandrova, *A History of Soviet Literature 1917-1964* (New York: Anchor Books, 1964): 28-32; Gleb Struve, *Russian Literature under Lenin and Stalin 1917-1953* (Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1971): 31-39, 76-92, 204-221.

literary content against literary form and embraced the long realist tradition,²² adding a militant face that was legitimized by charging anything that did not serve the Revolution directly.²³ However, it did not have a dominance that was free of problems. Among Revolutionary circles it is easy to discover an oppositional line that is identified with the name of Trotsky that have three main objections to pre-Socialist Realism, in spite of a general acceptance of realism and realist tradition. The first and technical –in terms of literature and art– objection was to the idea of content’s direct determination of form. Instead of this, a dialectical relationship between both was preferred, so that an autonomy was attributed to artistic sphere.²⁴ This postulation paved the way for the second objection: the manipulation of the writer by the Party was not a true act. Thus, partisanship in art was a highly contradictory issue. The third rejection emerged in the approach to the Russian avant-garde that tried to adapt the Revolution without leaving aside their radical ideas based on the rejection of the literature and culture of the past and the strong emphasis on a revolutionary attitude, especially in terms of literary/artistic form. The general tendency in Socialist Realism evaluated avant-gardist circles as the agents of “inharmonious modernist commotion”²⁵, and this is not very different in the 1920’s.

²² Marx is a real admirer of Balzac, whereas Engels praises Tolstoy intensively. Lenin is furious to who suggests to leave aside the past literature in order to form a new Proletarian culture. Thus, it is very natural that a very large group who continues to sublime the “great realism –especially Russian realism– of 19th century exists.

²³ “Thus as we seen over and over, it is incorrect to state that socialist realism arrived brutally on the scene, imposed from above upon reluctant writers. From the 1917 Revolution to 1932-34, what the literary and critical scene shows in its obsessional foot-stomping and repetition of formulas is exactly the opposite.” (Regine Robin, *Socialist Realism, An Impossible Aesthetic*: 210.

²⁴ Of course, the main line in Marxist thinking, as generally accepted, postulates content’s priority leaning towards the idea that every content creates its form. However, it is a strong idea that Marx himself suggested the same dialectical relationship instead of a direct determination. (Murat Belge, *Marksist Estetik*: 44)

²⁵ Parkhemenko and Myasnikov, *Sanatta Sosyalist Gerçekçilik*, 11. Even in 1963, Konstantin Fedin, one of the leading of the trend claims that Soviet avant-garde is a pseudo creation of Westerners. However, according to him, avant-garde is the historical product of the West. “Soviet literature is committed to its genre” (“Sovyet edebiyatı kendi türüne bağlıdır”) (Konstantin Fedin, in *Sanatta Sosyalist Gerçekçilik*: 74).

However, the counter-ideas were not as intolerant of avant-garde trends of which members were designated as “fellow travelers” by Trotsky.²⁶

The era between two World Wars bore witness to a catastrophic polarization in which the most radical and the most conservative eliminated the middle way especially in intellectual and artistic circles. In the atmosphere of deep disappointment after the bloody First World War a crazy mobility was dominant and it did not intend to give a chance to tolerant or moderate solutions. On the contrary, the scene was dominated by clashes of extremes: who rejected the past radically or who hated modern “immoral” products; who sublimed the city and cursed the peasant life or who advocated a to return to the village and brought up a boundless hatred for the city life and so on. This catastrophic milieu was maybe best represented by Avant-gardist movements like dadaism, surrealism, futurism and so on, which were very active in artistic circles both in Europe and Russia during the era.

The birth of avant-garde art, indeed, revealed a deep crisis in the arts. According to Peter Bürger’s Avant-garde theory, art, especially that beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century²⁷ gradually became autonomous against political and social spheres– that is, the sublimation and strengthening of the independence of art and the artist from social practices, art’s turning into an institution, and the formation of aesthetics which defined itself as a closed area of values implying the sense of being timeless. Aestheticism and symbolism, which did

²⁶ Of course there are many different literary and artistic groups and thinkers that differentiate from each other in many different ways (For example there are groups both rejecting political manipulation and avant-garde trends like Lukacs postulated in 1930’s). Nevertheless, this generalization makes sense if we take care of parallel political polarization that will be expounded below.

²⁷ Ali Artun “Kuramda Avangardlar ve Bürger’in Avangard Kuramı,” in *Avangard Kuramı* by Peter Bürger (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003):

not take care of or overlooked the historical and social dimension of the arts represented the highest point of this autonomy. This genesis of avant-garde may be interpreted as a way of challenging the cultural and artistic crisis that reached its peak in the late nineteenth century.

The practical and productional implication of this process, on the other hand, was form's dominance over content, which more or less meant the dominance of technical elements of the text against its "word", or the dominance of the aesthetic sphere over the social-historical one. This is how the artistic sphere acquired an autonomy, which meanwhile meant art's rupture from daily-social-political practice. However, becoming autonomous and institutionalized meant, at the same time, an ineffectiveness of art. Where art became autonomous in a strictly institutionalized framework, it lost all its capacity of transformation the social practices. At this point Bürger suggests that the birth of the avant-garde trends be interpreted as a critique of this autonomous and ineffective art in bourgeois society.²⁸

In this perspective, however, Avant-garde was not an attempt to reconcile, but to identify the relationship between practical life and art. It did not have any demand to bring back social content to art. It is much more radical. Avant-gardists sought to organize a new social practice in which art was totally dissolved, so that it put to an end to its autonomous, but ineffectual, existence.²⁹ Thus, Avant-garde trends had a strong emphasis on the total rejection of the artistic forms of past.

The harder question is about the meaning of the politics of the Avant-garde. Although to discuss avant-garde is meaningful to rethink the relationship between art and power,³⁰ and to be an artistic revolutionary and to be a social revolutionary

²⁸ Bürger, 62-63.

²⁹ Bürger, 105.

³⁰ Krzysztof Ziarek, "The Turn of Art: The Avant-garde and Power", *New Literary History* (2002:33): 94.

overlap to a certain extent,³¹ the politics of avant-garde is controversial if one noticed the diametrically opposed courses of different avant-garde trends. The most tragic example of this was the opposite political positions of Russian and Italian Futurism. The former took sides with Communism whereas the latter strongly supported Fascism, although they had almost the same ideas on art and literature.³² To establish a rapport between this state and these trends' heavy anarchistic and individualistic tendencies explains the fact to a great extent.³³

Russian Futurism fit Bürger's framework especially if one focuses on its development until the October Revolution. It had a great hatred and revulsion for bourgeois art that reached its peak with Russian symbolism. This hatred was too strong and too broad to have any respect for the some part of past production. Their famous manifesto "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste," which was published in 1912, declared this total rejection and disrespect enthusiastically: "The past is restricted. The academy and Puškin are more incomprehensible than hieroglyphs. Let us throw Puškin, Dostoevskiy and Tolstoj, etc. etc, off the Ship of Contemporaneity."³⁴ The new age, according to them, needed a radically new literature and literary forms. Under their radical program, they wanted to save the poetic language from the metaphysical abstractions of the symbolists; to leave aside the dilapidated emotions, images, thought, and forms that became disgusting with all their heavy poetical "beauty"; and to create a new poetical language that had got rid

³¹ This is common deduction of the two greatest avant-garde theoreticians, Bürger and Poggioli. Ann Gibson, "Avant-garde," in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. by Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (London: University of Chicago Press, 1992): 158.

³² To see their very same pattern of ideas: Anna Lawton, "Russian and Italian Futurist Manifestoes," *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 20, No: 4 (Winter, 1976).

³³ Renato Poggioli, "The Avant-garde and Politics," *Yale French Studies* (1967, no: 39): 182-84.

³⁴ *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste* has very different translations. For example, in another one there are important differences in the same sentences: "The past is too tight. The academy and Pushkin are less intelligible than hieroglyphs. Throw Pushkin, Dostoevksy, and Tolstoy etc. etc. overboard from the Ship of Modernity."

of outmoded associations.³⁵ This radical approach, at the same time conveyed heavy individualistic and anarchistic tendencies— that verified Poggioli: the sublimation of war, the despising of woman, the call to destroy syntax, grammar and such.³⁶

However, Russian Futurism³⁷ cannot be evaluated without referring to its change after the Revolution, especially in the 1920's.³⁸ Although some members of different Futurist groups were eliminated due to their anti-revolutionary attitudes,³⁹ the central figures of the trend, like Mayakovsky and Krucenykh, supported the Revolution enthusiastically, so that paved the way for *communist futurism*. Indeed, the Revolution, in their point of view, could be a real opportunity to realize the Avant-gardist program of Futurism, which assumed a radically new society that totally rejected its past come true. The new society's name was proletarian, and new art had to be also proletarian,⁴⁰ as Osip Brik stated: "Art shall be proletarian, or there will be no art."⁴¹ They even hoped "to gain official recognition as the single representative of the Revolution in the aesthetic realm" with their totally new poetic language which was offered as proletarian literature.⁴²

³⁵ Selahattin Hilav, *Edebiyat Yazıları* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1995): 27.

³⁶ Lawton, 407-10.

³⁷ Russian Futurism has variances in itself, but here it is enough to mention only dominant line.

³⁸ I didn't encounter a book-length study on Futurism after the Revolution, and surely this kind of a study could be very helpful for my study. Bürger also underlines this deficiency.

³⁹ Renato Poggioli, *The Poets of Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960): 239.

⁴⁰ Interestingly, *Proletkult* movement which had its origins before the Revolution and "regarded art as a class weapon and completely rejected bourgeois culture; recognizing that proletarian culture was weaker than its bourgeois counterpart, it sought to develop a distinctively proletarian art which would organize working-class ideas and feelings toward collectivist rather than individualist goals" (Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1997): 39) shares the ideas Russian Futurism in this aspect with a complete rejection of bourgeois culture (yet, it must be noted that avant-gardism is also interpreted as a bourgeois attitude by a lot of important socialist thinkers, for example Lukacs) and the forming of society of future. Nevertheless it is eliminated in 1920's like avant-gardists, although it has a large popularity among workers. The disputes between Bogdanov, the inspirer of Proletkult, and Lenin are very famous and generally interpreted as clash of two different social visions. (For a critical interpretation of this opinion and analysis of Proletkult: Lynn Maly, *Culture of the Future: The Proletkult Movement in Revolutionary Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990)).

⁴¹ Osip Brik, quoted by: Struve, *Russian Literature Under Lenin and Stalin*: 20. Surely, here Brik presents another evidence for Bürger's thesis on avant-garde which postulates that avant-garde targeted to dissolve art in new social practices.

⁴² Poggioli, *The Poets of Russia*: 244.

In this line, Futurism lost its negative and destructive vision, its anarchistic attitude transformed into a positive one that was enthusiastic in the way of the construction of a new culture for the people. However, it did not stop insist on the total rejection of the past, and artistic forms belonged to past. Thus, they did not have a certain confirmation in the Revolutionary circles and could not save themselves from be charged as bourgeois. After 1925, when the Party called upon literature to have role in the construction of socialist society under the dominance of Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP) and its strictly realist and uncritical past-respected discourse,⁴³ their situation rapidly worsened. In the late 1920's *the literature of fact* becomes dominant in Futurist circles. This concept, which rejected *imaginative literature*⁴⁴ of RAPP targeted a totally new art which appraised the writer as a craftsman working for “journals, newspapers, and factories” and writing “sketches, diaries, reports and memoirs.”⁴⁵ Thus, art became a daily and close-to-fact event, and therefore a direct tool of the formation of so called proletarian literature. However, the Futurists' proletarian literature was not accepted as proletarian by the orthodoxy. The Party's antipathy towards Avant-garde groups which becomes obvious in 1925, ended in their total elimination in 1930— that was the date of Mayakovksy's suicide.

Resimli Ay published Futuristic poems, stories from a socialist perspective, and literary articles that claimed to constitute a new literature that did not respect past literature, claimed the necessity of radically new forms and designated itself as dialectical materialist. This eclectic pattern was not only interesting and new for the

⁴³ Vahan D. Barooshian, “Russian Futurism in the Late 1920's: Literature of Fact,” in *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Spring, vol. 15:1 (1971): 41.

⁴⁴ This can be understood as a realist literature that has a classical fictive structure.

⁴⁵ Barooshian, 38.

Turkish audience, but also hard to interpret in terms of trends in modern literature.

The only obvious fact here is the existence of an opposition, which had a counterpart in political articles, against dominant literary trends and approach.

The partial avant-gardism of *Resimli Ay* signed a very different position in the Turkish radical left, which was represented mainly by the Turkish Communist Party. This different position was not as radical as early Russian Futurism. While assuming the radical rejection of past literary and literary forms, they continued to employ and even praise realist literature, which appeared especially in short stories– which is a very clear sign of its eclecticism. *Resimli Ay* was also in search of a proletarian literature, however, with a more Trotskyist vision: emphasis on form and more freedom for to writer. Nevertheless, a certain amount of partisanship was also felt from some literary products, and this fact lessened the vision's strength.

The interesting historical fact that propels my attempt to determine *Resimli Ay*'s literary position was the secret initiative to form another communist party lead by Nâzım Hikmet, who had been discarded from the official party. The details of this initiative and discard are unknown to us. The present study claims to put a partial explanation to this unknown by displaying the difference in political views of both sides, but with focusing on their perception of literature. Accordingly, *Resimli Ay* housed a very different and libertarian radical left-wing formation which was not directed by Soviet Russia, but developed through the one-to-one experiences of the magazine. Moreover, it will be claimed that the avant-garde position of *Resimli Ay* positioned it far away from the general illnesses of Turkish left: populism and peasantism.

Additionally, *Resimli Ay*'s literary perspective displayed a very different position in terms of early Republican art. The very common feature of the artistic

trends of the early Republic was their containment by the Kemalist government. It will be argued that the different understanding of avant-garde and socialist art in *Resimli Ay* prevented this containment and this made the magazine as a real opposition focus that is unique in its time.

Above, the formation of both a theoretical framework and historical context at the same time was attempted. The disputes in Russian literature of the 1920's provide the basic analytical tools of this discussion: form vs. content; rejection of the past vs. respect for the classics; new literary forms vs. classical realism or search for a new realism; autonomous aesthetical sphere vs. aesthetics under the direct control of political organs and aims. The acceptance pattern of these artistic categories defines historical and political positions.

Chapter One of the present study intends to introduce the founders of the magazine, the Sertels on the one hand; and give a short sketch of *Resimli Ay*'s seven-year publication story on the other. In this way, the two-year period, which will be analyzed in this study, will be tried to put a context in terms of the magazine's development.

In Chapter Two, I will focus on the transformation of *Resimli Ay* between 1929-1931 from a nationalist-popular magazine to a socialist-oppositional one referring to non-literary articles. In fact, *Resimli Ay* was a sincere democratic and progressive magazine that was also sensitive to social problems. However, most of the contents were related to popular issues like woman's beauty, Hollywood movies, relations between men and women and so on. Hence, it is impossible not to be astonished by the change, which eventuates in a call to workers and peasants to form a political party and the owner of the magazine's participation in the municipality

council elections with a program that was to a great extent shaped through the process analyzed here.

On the other hand, *Resimli Ay* transformed into a literary magazine, which published radically new products that were very unfamiliar to the Turkish audience. In the third chapter, the literary products published in the magazine will be analyzed in terms of their content and form. To reach a healthier result, Nâzım Hikmet will be on the focus of this chapter, and to his poetry, in addition to his life story, will receive attention. In the last part of the chapter, the parallelism of the opposition in the literary and political spheres will be disclosed and analyzed.

Chapter Four, the last chapter of the study, offers an evaluation part of the results compiled in the first two chapters. The meaning of this oppositional transformation which appeared in ordinary articles and literary products at the same time will be assessed in terms of the Turkish radical left and early Republican politics and literature. As said above, it will be claimed that *Resimli Ay* corresponded to an alternative radical left position that was liberalistic and subversive for the Turkish Communist Party, the official representative of the power in Soviet Russia. As the main sign of this, the closeness of literary perspective to the Trotskyite one will be suggested. And also it will argued that *Resimli Ay* had an original literary position that was subversive for Kemalist government in the early Republic.

Surely this study refers a large area of investigation and cannot be accepted as complete without a detailed analyses of the political and social states of Turkey and Soviet Russia especially during the interwar period; the long history of Marxist literature and literary criticism; the controversial area of avant-garde arts and the course of modernism; and even the complex contents of literary concepts like realism, content, and form. Nevertheless, its aim, to display the relation between a

very contradictory and eclectic literary approach and an oppositional positioning against both the central state and the Communist Party that was under the direction of Soviet Russia can be helpful for a more clear understanding of the Turkish radical left and the early years of the Republic.

Incidentally, I want to note that the deepest aim and intention behind this study is to reflect on the possibility of an oppositional modern art/literature in today's world in which artistic circles have lost almost all of their capacity to influence the daily and political practices both on the global and the local levels. However, to suggest a comprehensive answer to this question requires an erudition of years. Nevertheless, to recount the story of a constitution of a literary formation that had an obvious oppositional character and that tried to meet literature and political opposition presents an opportunity and provides an area to rethink the possible answers of the question for later studies by the author and others.

CHAPTER I

THE SERTELS AND RESİMLİ AY

Resimli Ay, as a popular magazine, was published between 1924 and 1931 by Zekeriya and Sabiha Sertel, two famous journalists and writers of the early Republic. They had just turned from the USA, and Zekeriya Sertel was planning to publish a popular magazine, which would be an equivalent of magazines published in the USA. This magazine would be a totally new one for Turkey in terms of form and content.

Zekeriya Sertel was born in Usturumca, a town of Salonica, in 1891. His father was an *ağa*, a member of the gentry. Zikri¹ was the oldest of two brothers and two sisters. When he was a young man, he was sent to Edirne, and one year later to Salonica, for high school (*idadi*). Then, he passed to the law faculty, which had just opened in Salonica. After a depressing childhood –her mother died when he was eight, his father married another woman who would be remembered with only bad remarks, and his father died when he was sixteen– and the cruel years of the Balkan Wars, which brought about occupation of Salonica by the Greeks, he left for İstanbul.

His first experience in journalism was in *Rumeli* newspaper, which was published with respect to ideas the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), in Salonica. The owner of this newspaper was Yunus Nadi who would become a very important figure in Turkish journalism. Then, Sertel published *Yeni Felsefe* (Novel

¹ His original name was Zikri. When he was going to high school (*idadi*) in Salonica, he himself changed his name because of his feeling about strangeness of the name: “I thought that my father had given this name out of ignorance. I felt that there was a mistake in that. I converted my that beautiful name into Zekeriya” (“*Babamın bilmeyerek böyle bir ad taktığına hükmettim. Bunda mutlaka bir yanlışlık var sandım. O güzel adımı Zekeriya'ya çevirdim*”). Zekeriya Sertel, *Hatırladıklarım* (İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1977) p. 31.

Philosophy), which was inspired by Ziya Gökalp. Meanwhile, he was learning French at night in a French school. In 1913 and 1914, he attended university in Paris where he majored in sociology. World War I, however, put an end to his university education. He had to return to İstanbul.

In İstanbul, Zekeriya Sertel married Sabiha Sertel who was born in Salonica in 1895. She moved to İstanbul after the Balkan Wars. Her father was a customs officer. Sabiha's childhood was also terrible, with a tough father who had divorced his wife and left her with six children. Their marriage became a political event. Because Sabiha Hanım was a member of a *dönme* family -people of Jewish origin who converted to Islam in the seventeenth century- and as we learn from the memoirs of Zekeriya Sertel that the CUP paid special attention to this marriage due to its probable contribution to the assimilation of *dönmes* in Muslim society. The witnesses at the ceremony were two very important figures of the Union and Progress: Talat Paşa and Tevfik Rüşdü (Aras). Dr. Nazım, who was also a very important person in the CUP, said to Zekeriya Sertel: "You have hit a fatal blow to the caste of *dönmes*."²

Sabiha Sertel, in spite of the poor conditions for women in the Empire, was insistent on having an influential role in public life. Through their marriage, enjoying his husband's intellectual circle and tolerant approach to her desires, she would be a figure as important as her husband.

The Sertels became important intellectual and political figures, especially during the Mudros Armistice period. Zekeriya Sertel published *Yeni Ses* (New Sound), a dissenting newspaper, with his close friend Nebizade Hamdi. *Yeni Ses* was closed due to its oppositional stance. Then, the important intellectual figures of the

² ("Dönmelik kastına ölüm yumruğu indiriyorsun.") Zekeriya Sertel, *Hatırladıklarım*, p. 80.

capital began to meet at the Sertels' house to publish another oppositional magazine, *Büyük Mecmua* (The Grand Journal). Among the writers of the magazine were Ömer Seyfeddin, Ali Canip, Falih Rıfkı (Atay), Yusuf Ziya (Ortaç), Orhan Seyfi (Orhon), Faruk Nafiz (Çamlıbel), Köprülüzade Fuat, Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul), İsmail Hakkı, Tekin Alp (Moiz Kohen), Reşat Nuri (Güntekin), and Ruşen Eşref. Then, Halide Edip also joined this group. Zekeriya Sertel was arrested and held in The Company of Bekriağa, which was full of notables of the CUP, for one week because of one of the meetings. This group of intellectuals was also connected with people who tried to support the nationalist movement in Anotolia. Because of intensive censorship, *Büyük Mecmua* did not take an aggressive attitude in its early issues. However, its voice sharpened parallel with the increasing strength of the Anatolian movement. Eventually, it was closed by the *Matbuat Umum Müdürlüğü* (General Press Directorate), which was in the service of British authority.

Just after Mustafa Kemal went to Anotolia, the Sertels decided to go to the United States for university education on Halide Edip's suggestion. Neither Zekeriya Sertel nor Sabiha Sertel gave a complete evaluation of this choice in their memoirs. Sabiha Sertel wrote only "the possibility of joining the war for us had decreased. Meanwhile, we had an opportunity to go to the United States for education. We decided to enjoy this opportunity and go to the States. To study and to have a high education was one of my greatest wishes."³

Zekeriya Sertel enrolled in the department of journalism, and Sabiha Sertel attended the sociology department of Columbia University. Before beginning their classes, they had to learn English, and Sabiha Sertel earned a high school degree. While they were continuing their education, they were active in the social

³ ("Bizim için savaş imkânı azaldı. Bu sırada Amerika'ya tahsile gitmek için bir imkan elimize geçti. Bu imkandan faydalanarak Amerika'ya gitmeye karar verdik. Okumak, yüksek tahsil görmek en büyük isteklerimden biriydi") .Sabiha Sertel, *Roman Gibi* (İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1969) pp. 37-38.

organizations of people who had come from the lands of the Ottoman Empire. Sabiha Sertel, who was attending social work courses, led the organization of *Türk Teavün Cemiyeti*, which was the sole organization of Turkish immigrants. Additionally she organized some campaigns among Turkish and Kurdish immigrants to aid children of Anatolia. The money collected by immigrants later used for the construction of *Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu* (Association for the Protection of Children) buildings. Zekeriya Sertel wrote articles in American newspapers and journals about the Liberation War. They returned Turkey, after they had graduated, in June 1923.

At first, they both received posts in government service in Ankara. Zekeriya Sertel was appointed as *Matbuat Umum Müdürü* (General Press Secretary). Sabiha Sertel was planning to go to the countryside and conduct some research. However, this was not a possible option in the poor conditions of the Republic. Then, she joined to *Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu* as an expert. However, these tasks disappointed them. Zekeriya Sertel realized that he could not work to establish democratic press; the upper levels of the government did not respect Sabiha Sertel's preliminary studies for some research. Sabiha Sertel resigned from her post, whereas Zekeriya Sertel was dismissed. Both complained about the new government's approach in their memoirs, but not harshly. "What wonderful dreams I had when I returned from the United States to my country. I was preparing to work in the interior of Anatolia to be useful to the people. Now, however, all dreams have faded away, and life confronted us with its real face."⁴

They went to İstanbul. Zekeriya Sertel, Yunus Nadi and Nabizade Nazım decided to publish a new newspaper in İstanbul, called *Cumhuriyet* (The Republic). Sabiha Sertel was among the writers of the newspaper. However, Zekeriya Sertel

⁴ ("Amerika'dan memlekete ne zengin hayallerle dönmüştüm. Halka faydalı olmak için Anadolu'nun içlerinde çalışmaya hazırlanıyordum. Şimdi hayaller sönmüş, hayat gerçek çehresiyle karşımızda duruyordu") Ibid. pp. 85-86.

departed from the partnership when the newspaper needed more capital. At this point, the Sertels decided to publish their own magazine, *Resimli Ay*.⁵

Resimli Ay was published from January 1924 to January 1931.⁶ Seventy-eight issues of the magazine were published during this period. Fifty-seven issues of these were in the Ottoman alphabet and the rest were in the Latin alphabet.⁷ Its publication was interrupted a few times due to various reasons, but the government did not close it.

It is very clear that *Resimli Ay* had two different periods. The Language Reform of 1928, interestingly, was the event that separated these periods. Through this process, *Resimli Ay*, which was a popular magazine supporting Atatürk's reforms intensively, was transformed into an oppositional and almost socialist literary journal, and acquired an interesting position in a milieu in which oppositional activities were not often tolerated.

At first, Zekeriya Sertel was planning to publish a magazine, which was an equivalent of American magazines, which dealt with the ordinary people and their daily lives. Zekeriya Sertel claimed that magazines published before *Resimli Ay* were irrelevant to the life and the needs of the ordinary people. "The magazines being published at that time mostly were being published to spread the ideas of their

⁵ I compiled all these biographical information from three main sources: Zekeriya Sertel, *Hatırladıklarım*; Sabiha Sertel, *Roman Gibi*; Yıldız Sertel, *Annem* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1994).

⁶ Another *Resimli Ay* was published between March of 1936 and July of 1938. However this had not any connection with Sertels. In fact, this new *Resimli Ay* claimed that it was heir of the older one; in its first page, it has a slogan that "Resimli Ay is rising again" ("*Resimli Ay tekrar doğarken*"). The publisher was Emin Refik Müslümoğlu (Uzman) who had been manager of the older *Resimli Ay* in its last few months. Some writers of the older version were among writers of the magazine.

⁷ Different libraries have different number of issues. Gazanfer İbar, however, answered the question of how many issues of *Resimli Ay* was published. My numbers were taken from his research. Gazanfer İbar, "Resimli Ay Dergisi Kaç Sayı Çıkmıştır?" *Simurg*, no:2-3 (2000). Moreover a master thesis, which focus on the classification of articles in the magazine, is available: Uğur Değirmenci, *Resimli Ay Mecmuası*, unpublished master thesis (Erzurum: Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Eğitimi, 1996).

owners, or to satisfy their whims. These magazines were not interested in the reader, the people, and the people's lives and needs. Therefore, the magazines were distant from and stood above the people, and did not have circulations of more than two or three thousands."⁸ *Resimli Ay* would be different, both in style and content: a colorful and beautiful cover, a new type of composition and page-setting, and topics related to everyday and social lives of the ordinary people.

Both Zekeriya Sertel and Sabiha Sertel put a strong emphasis on the struggle for democratization in their memoirs, and articles in *Resimli Ay*. This was their unchanged motto in the publication of the magazine. They believed that Turkey had to pass to democracy after the Liberation War. However, they were uncomfortable in this aspect: "There was no sign of a road to freedom and democracy, although the Republic had been declared. People did not attach importance to it. The people who had sacrificed their lives and blood in the Liberation War were forgotten. At that time, the authorities tried to constitute a sultanate for themselves. The people were abandoned with their poverty."⁹ Therefore, *Resimli Ay* was to undertake the mission of democratization of ordinary people: "*Resimli Ay* went into publication life to lift the cultural level of the people-- to enlighten the eighty percent of the people who didn't know how to read and how to write at that time, who were left with a half education and neglected by the intellectuals; and to teach what democracy is to them was the first aim... *Resimli Ay* was partially a popular magazine, but a magazine that

⁸ ("Çıkan dergiler daha çok sahiplerinin fikirlerini yaymak ya da kaprislerini beslemek için yayımlanırdı. Okur ile, halk ile, halkın hayat ve ihtiyaçlarıyla ilgilenmezdi. Bu nedenlerle dergiler halktan uzak ve halkın üstünde kalır, satışları iki-üç bini geçmezdi") Zekeriya Sertel, *Hatırladıklarım*, p. 137.

⁹ ("Oysa Cumhuriyet ilân edilmiş olmasına rağmen, memlekette hürriyet ve demokrasiye gidildiğini gösteren hiç bir işaret yoktu. Halka önem verilmiyordu. Kurtuluş Savaşında kanlarını ve canlarını verenler unutulmuştu. Şimdi başta bulunanlar, kendilerine bir saltanat kurmaya çalışıyorlardı. Halk yine sefaletiyle baş başa bırakılıyordu.") Ibid. p. 138.

tried to elevate the cultural level of the people.”¹⁰ In the editorial of the first issue of the magazine this aim was publicized:

Until today we have two kinds of magazines. The first of these two is the literary magazine, which addresses a few readers; articles are written with respect to the literary taste of the writer. On the other hand, there are second-class magazines, which are published by booksellers or amateurs to gain fame. *Resimli Ay* belongs to neither the former nor the latter. Our target is to satisfy the readers’ reading needs, and to form a real people’s magazine. In our opinion, the real value of an article comes from its being read by many, not from the signature of the writer. The articles, short stories, and writings in general will not be writings that are for the tastes of a narrow group; they will be writings, which satisfy people’s sentimental, intellectual, mental and aesthetic needs. This form is a new route in the world of magazines.¹¹

In this way, *Resimli Ay* became the most important magazine of the day. Most of the articles were related to daily life. Stories about love and adventure constituted the literary side of the magazine. Political articles were rare, in spite of Sertel’s critical standpoint. There were different estimates of the magazine’s circulation. The Sertels talked about thousands, but only in his account of Nazım Hikmet, Sabiha Sertel did give a specific number: 15.000.¹²

Sertels wrote most of the articles, in this first period. However, the writings of many different people appeared in the pages of *Resimli Ay*. The most important of

¹⁰ (“*Resimli Ay* basın hayatına halkın kültür seviyesini yükseltmek amacıyla atılmıştır. O vakit yüzde sekseni okuma yazma bilmeyen memleketimizde yarım bir eğitimle kalmış, aydınlar tarafından ihmal edilmiş olan yüzde sekseni aydınlatmak, onlara demokrasinin ne olduğunu anlatmak, ilk hedefti.... Bir bakıma *Resimli Ay* bir magazindi. Fakat halkın kültür seviyesini yükseltmeğe çalışacak bir magazin.”) Sabiha Sertel, *Roman Gibi*, p. 88.

¹¹ (“Bizde şimdiye kadar iki şekil dergi çıkmıştır. Bunların birincisi, sayısı az bir okuyucuya hitabeden edebi mecmualardır, yazarlar, yazarın edebi zevkine göre yazılır. Bir de ikinci sınıf mecmualar vardır ki, bunları para kazanmak ve şöhret sağlamak amacıyla kitapçılar ve amatörler çıkarırlar. *Resimli Ay* ne birinci, ne de ikinci zümreye dahildir. Bizim hedefimiz okuyucuların, okuma ihtiyaçlarını doyumak ve memleketimizde gerçekçi bir halk dergisi kurmaktır. Bizce bir makalenin değeri altındaki imzadan ziyade, çok okumasındandır. Özellikle *Resimli Ay*’da yayınlanacak makaleler, hikâyeler, genel olarak yazılar, yalnız dar bir zümrenin edebi zevkine cevap veren yazılar değil, fakat insanların hissi, fikri, dimağı, bedii ihtiyaçlarını doyuran, genel nitelikte yazılar olacaktır. Bu şekil, mecmuacılık aleminde yeni bir yoldur.”) Quoted from: Sabiha Sertel, *Roman Gibi*, pp.87-88.

¹² Yıldız Sertel, Sabiha Sertel, Zekeriya Sertel, *Sertel’lerin Anılarında Nâzım Hikmet ve Babıâli* (İstanbul: Adam Yayınları) p. 11.

these writers were İbnürrefik Ahmet Nuri, Münire Handan, Hakkı Süha, Selim Sırrı, Ahmet Rasim, Mehmet Rauf, Burhan Cahit, Sait Tevfik, Fahrettin Kerim, Reşat Nuri, Kemal Kâmil, and Nigâr Salih. Moreover, we see some famous names like Halide Edip, Yakup Kadri, Falih Rıfkı, Ali Canip. Names like Hakkı Süha, Münire Handan, Mehmet Rauf, Burhan Cahit, Reşat Nuri who were often seen in the magazine, published stories or serialized literary work. However, literary works did not outnumber non-literary ones, and poetry did not have a place in the magazine.

Articles about the rights of women, marriage and family problems, children and youth, education, missionary activities, psychology, sports, and health composed the general contents of the magazine. In all these issues, a progressive view was dominant. Sabiha Sertel, as the most important writer of these articles, demanded more rights for woman, tried to introduce contemporary techniques in childcare and education, and suggested some cures for common social problems. Some other writers were joined in an effort to give information about health care and sports. In all these writings Kemalist reforms were supported and the institutions of the past were harshly criticized. *Resimli Ay* demanded a democratic society composed of healthy, conscious, learned people in its first period.

The Sertels encountered important problems during the publication of *Resimli Ay*. The most important one came after *Takriri Sukün Kanunu* (The Law for the Maintenance of the Order). Zekeriya Sertel was arrested and brought before the İstiklâl Mahkemesi (The Court of Independence) due to an article of Cevat Şakir.¹³ The Court of Independence sentenced Zekeriya Sertel to exile—three years in Sinop. During this period, Sabiha Sertel struggled to publish *Resimli Ay* under very difficult

¹³ The title of the article was “Hapishanede İdama Mahkum Olanlar Bile Bile Asılmaya Nasıl Giderler?” In his memoirs Zekeriya Sertel claims that the article was in *Resimli Ay*. However, according to Sabiha Sertel, it was an article that was published in *Resimli Perşembe*. Actually, the article was published in *Resimli Hafta*, which was another publication of Sertels. *Resimli Hafta* was closed after this article. See: Gazanfer İbar, “Resimli Ay Dergisi Kaç Sayı Çıkmıştır?”, p. 128.

conditions. Due to some legal problems with their partners, *Resimli Ay* could not be published with its original name. Then, Sabiha Sertel split from their partners and published the magazine with a new name for one year: *Sevimli Ay* (Pretty Month (Moon)). The readers of the old magazine also admired the new one. In 1926, a law of general amnesty was promulgated, and the penalty of Zekeriya Sertel fell in the purview of amnesty law. He returned to İstanbul one and a half years later. In 1927, *Sevimli Ay* regained its original name, *Resimli Ay*.

Both Zekeriya and Sabiha Sertel thought that this penalty, in fact, had been due to the articles, which were published in *Resimli Ay*, although the declared reason had been different. Accordingly, Cevat Şakir's article had been only a pretext. In the issue of September 1924, Zekeriya Sertel had published an article titled "In the Monument of the Unknown Soldier" (Meçhul Askerin İbadesinde). In this article he had emphasized the importance of ordinary soldier in the Liberation War and bravely wrote that: "Until this time pashas and sultans have appropriated the share of the foot soldier for themselves. They praised themselves by portraying the heroism of the foot soldier and the victory of foot soldier as their own."¹⁴ One of the men closest to Atatürk, Kılıç Ali, gave an answer to this article, and emphasized Atatürk's role in the Liberation War and declared the article as being against Atatürk. Probably, Zekeriya Sertel's penalty was a result of that article.¹⁵

After the Language Reform, in November 1928, the publication of *Resimli Ay* was temporarily stopped. Until March 1929, *Resimli Ay* was prepared to be published in the new alphabet. However, this period marked not only a change of alphabet for

¹⁴ ("Şimdiye kadar kendini beğenmiş paşalar ve padişahlar, Mehmetçiğin zaferdeki hakkını kendilerine maletmişler, Mehmetçiğin kahramanlığını, kendi kahramanlıkları, Mehmetçiğin zaferini kendi zaferleri gibi göstererek övünmüşlerdi.") Quoted by: Sabiha Sertel, *Roman Gibi*, p. 101.

¹⁵ Zekeriya Sertel believed that Atatürk himself wrote this article in the name of Kılıç Ali. Zekeriya Sertel, *Hatırladıklarım*, p. 140.

the magazine; it paved the way for the second phase of *Resimli Ay*, a phase of transformation.

The young poet Nâzım Hikmet had just turned from the Soviet Russia, and he needed a job. His close friend Vâlâ Nureddin took him to Zekeriya Sertel. Sertel liked the young man, and Nazım Hikmet began to work at *Resimli Ay* as a proofreader. Nobody could predict how this new employee would change the course of the magazine.

Nâzım Hikmet was a very interesting figure. His thoughts had been shaped among the members of an aristocratic family in İstanbul on the one hand, and on the other among avant-garde artists and socialist activists in Soviet Russia. After university education in Soviet Russia between 1921 and 1924, he had tried to return Turkey, but he had had to go back due to some political reasons. In 1928, after the law of general amnesty, he was able to turn and began his *Resimli Ay* career. At *Resimli Ay*, his influence increased rapidly. At first, the young poet affected the Sertels. This opened the pages of *Resimli Ay* for the friends of Nâzım Hikmet. Zekeriya Sertel wrote that “Nâzım came to *Resimli Ay* with his group of friends. His leftist friends, old or new ones, were revolving around him as satellites, and were dropping in our printing office almost everyday.”¹⁶ “From this time on, *Resimli Ay* became a magazine in which leftist writers met and wrote their stories.”¹⁷ Sabiha Sertel’s words summarized this change’s political counterpart: “To *Resimli Ay*’s democratic platform was added a socialist one.”¹⁸

¹⁶ (“Nâzım *Resimli Ay*’a tayfasıyla beraber gelmişti. Eski yeni ne kadar solcu arkadaşı varsa, peyk gibi etrafında dolaşır, hemen hergün matbaaya uğrarlardı.”) Z. Sertel, *Hatırladıklarım*, pp. 160-161.

¹⁷ (“*Resimli Ay* artık sol yazarların toplandığı, hikayelerini yazdıkları bir dergi olmuştu.”) S. Sertel, *Roman Gibi*, pp. 129-30.

¹⁸ (“*Resimli Ay*’ın demokratik platformuna bir de sosyalist platform eklenmiş oldu”) Z. Sertel, S. Sertel, Y. Sertel, *Sertellerin Anılarında Nâzım Hikmet ve Babıâli*: 11.

Truly, the writer staff of the magazine changed to a great extent. Instead of classic Ottoman writers like Reşat Nuri and Mehmet Rauf, young leftist writers and poets began to publish their works in the magazine. İlhami Bekir, Sadri Ertem, Suat Derviş, Sabahattin Ali, Nizamettin Nazif, Nail V. and some other young artists became the important figures at the magazine. Therefore, the number of literary figures and works increased.¹⁹ *Resimli Ay*, then, transformed into nearly a literary magazine.

In this path, not only *Resimli Ay* changed, but also Sertels. In the first issues of the magazine with the Latin alphabet, it seems that magazine had two parts that were clearly separated. The first part belonged to the Sertels, and especially to Sabiha Sertel, who wrote articles about topics such as women, their social life, health and childcare. Moreover, there were also some writings about Hollywood movies, actors and actresses, popular science, and economic issues, and others on missionary activities, foreign schools and foreign capital in which a nationalist and anti-imperialist tone was clearly felt. In all these, it is not too possible to find a socialist standpoint. The other part was full of literary works– poems, stories and literary critiques. The poems were all written in the style of Nâzım Hikmet. İlhami Bekir, Nail V. and some other young poet candidates were trying to imitate him. His poems that were published in *Resimli Ay* had political connotations and a critical tone. “The revolutionary poems of Nâzım which were written during his *Resimli Ay* period were like communist declarations,” the Sertels wrote.²⁰ Moreover, literary critiques, which were generally written by Nâzım Hikmet, were really influential. He wrote about the relation between form, style and content, literature and social life. Sadri Ertem,

¹⁹ Interestingly, Sertel states that he didn't like poems before Nâzım. In fact there was no poem published in the first period of the magazine. Zekeriya Sertel, *Mavi Gözlü Dev* (İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1969) p. 165.

²⁰ (“Nâzım'ın *Resimli Ay* devrinde yazdığı inkılapçı şiirlerin herbiri birer komünist beyanname idi.”) Z. Sertel, S. Sertel, Yıldız Sertel, *Sertel'lerin Anularında Nâzım Hikmet ve Babıâli*, p. 26.

Sabahattin Ali, and Suat Derviş were influenced by these reflections and wrote socially critical stories. His famous campaign of *Putları Yıkıyoruz* (We Break the Idols), which claimed that Abdülhak Hamid was not a genius and Mehmet Emin was not a national poet, raised clouds of dust in intellectual society. The proportion of literary works in the magazine increased in the last issues and they almost gained homogeneity in terms of their political and stylistic attitudes.

In these later issues the Sertels began to write clearly oppositional articles as well, so that a third channel was opened in the magazine. Parallel to the decreasing number of ordinary topics, especially Sabiha Sertel increased her voice on some social subjects. She began to write articles in a column entitled as “We See and We Hear” (*Görüyoruz... Duyuyoruz*). In these socially sensitive articles she had harsh criticisms for the government, and demanded some social rights for workers, peasants and other lower class people. These articles appeared in the first pages of the magazine and had brave titles written in large fonts: “We see that people are driven away from hospitals because they do not have money, and we hear that there are people who are beaten cruelly in police stations”;²¹ or “We see that peasants who insist on their rights are bound with ropes, and we hear that workers who work in Mecidiye Köy are exploited as animals, as slaves.”²² These were really harsh criticisms at that time.

This opposition especially escalated after a lawsuit in which Sabiha Sertel and Emin Türk were accused due to their articles. Emin Türk had written an article describing the bad conditions in the countryside, and Sabiha Sertel had translated an

²¹ (“*Görüyoruz hastanelerden parasız diye kovulan insanlar olduğunu ve duyuyoruz polis karakollarında ağızlarından kan gelinceye kadar dövülen insanlar olduğunu*”) Sabiha Sertel, “*Görüyoruz Duyuyoruz*” *Resimli Ay*, June (1930).

²² (“*Görüyoruz hakkını arayan köylülerin iplere bağlandığını ve duyuyoruz Mecidiye Köyünde çalışan amelelerin hayvan gibi, uşak gibi istismar edildiğini.*”) Sabiha Sertel, “*Görüyoruz Duyuyoruz*” *Resimli Ay*, September (1930).

article about the features of an ideal leader which the public prosecutor had perceived as a vague criticism of Atatürk. They were found guilty, and in the later issues, beginning with April 1930, the opposition of *Resimli Ay* became more evident. Ahmet Rıza, Namık Kemal and Tevfik Fikret were analyzed in the pages of the magazine. It seems that Sertels were trying to remind other great men of which names were forgotten in the period. About Namık Kemal it was written that “We want a statue and monument also for Kemal of freedom”²³

However, this gradually increasing opposition brought about the end of the magazine. As written by Sabiha Sertel, the magazine was under the regular surveillance of the police. The other partners were not in comfortable about the changing character of the magazine, and they demanded the dismissal of Nâzım Hikmet and other leftist writers from the magazine. The Sertels rejected this suggestion, and the shareholders stopped publishing the magazine. The Sertels left the publishing company and began to publish *Resimli Ay* independently. However, they were unable to continue, and after being sued by their ex-partners they had to stop publishing after two issues.

Sabiha Sertel described this second period as “a new period that signalled the birth of a new literature... Short stories, poems were not written to satisfy the tastes of the writers, but to reveal the facts of society. We can say that these years constituted the first period of the birth of Realist literature in our country”.²⁴

Moreover, Zekeriya Sertel claimed that, “[for Nâzım] to spread his ideology, and to

²³ (“*Hürriyetin Kemal’i için de heykel ve abide istiyoruz*”) No name, “*Hürriyetin Kemali İçin de Heykel ve Abide İstiyoruz*,” *Resimli Ay*, May (1930).

²⁴ (“... yeni bir edebiyatın doğuşunu gösteren bir devre olmuştur... Hikâyeler, şiirler, eskisi gibi yazarların zevkini doyumak için değil, toplumun gerçeklerini ortaya koymak amacıyla yazılmıştır. Bu yıllar memlekette realist bir edebiyatın ilk doğuş devresi olmuştur diyebiliriz”) Sabiha Sertel, *Roman Gibi*, pp. 89-90.

use poetry in this vein was his greatest target. Form was always a secondary problem for Nâzım. He, indeed, attached utmost importance to be revolutionary in terms of content.”²⁵

These statements, although they sign a real transformation, can be thought as a little exaggerated and misunderstood. Firstly, there was indeed a new literary approach, but it cannot be described only as Realist. Moreover, Realist novels and stories had been written in the last fifty years, as we especially see in novels of Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil. A social or socialist realism and avant-garde trends were the real missing elements in this interpretation, and interestingly these sharpened the literary perception of the magazine’s writers by Nâzım Hikmet. Second, Sertel’s comment on Nâzım’s ideas about the relation between form and content, despite his perceptive comprehension, did not wholly reflect the truth. In fact, Nâzım Hikmet’s products in *Resimli Ay* presented a new approach in Turkish literature largely due to its revolutionary formalistic approach.

Before the detailed analysis of this revolutionary approach in the third chapter, let’s look at the transformation of *Resimli Ay*.

²⁵ (“[Nâzım için] ideolojisini halka yaymak ve bunda şiirden yararlanmak onun en büyük hedefiydi... Biçim Nâzım için daima ikinci derecede bir mesele olarak kalmıştır. O, asıl özde devrimci olmaya önem veriyordu.”) Zekeriya Sertel, *Hatırladıklarım*, pp. 167-68.

CHAPTER II

FROM A POPULAR MAGAZINE TO AN OPPOSITIONAL ONE

In this chapter, the transformation of *Resimli Ay* from a popular magazine to an oppositional socialist one will be demonstrated. *Resimli Ay*, at its first phase between 1924-1928, was a socially sensitive magazine, and tried to suggest cures for social problems. It mainly focused on the problems of children, the rights and the questions of women, and poverty; in other words it had a welfare discourse. However, in spite of the fact that some suits were brought against the Sertels in constituting this discourse, it did not directly confront the state; on the contrary, the magazine openly supported the Republican reforms. It always advocated democracy and national development.

To a certain extent, the Sertels' education in the United States influenced this formation. They clearly admired, and were influenced by, American democracy and welfare institutions. Moreover, they gave an important place to articles that were original to American magazines. The maintenance of the body especially for women, relations between modern men and women, questions about childcare, and news about Hollywood stars composed of an important part of the magazine. All these were presented with photographs and pictures. Furthermore the short stories of appealing subjects like love and adventure accompanied them. Therefore, *Resimli Ay* was a real popular magazine in its first phase.

In its second phase after the Alphabet Reform of 1928, although all these popular issues continued to be featured, they lost space on behalf of literary products and writings on socio-political issues. Within a process of two years, the emphasis on welfare policies began to be transformed into a call for the struggle of lower classes;

nationalist attitude into an anti-capitalist one; and the desire for national development into a critique of domestic politics. At the final point, *Resimli Ay* was almost for a socialist struggle of the lower classes, and was on the way to interrogate the identification with the whole nation, and national development. The call for a political party of workers and peasants was repeated more than one time in the last issues of the magazine. Interestingly, Zekeriya Sertel participated the elections of municipality assembly elections with a program that exactly reflects the agenda of the magazine. The turning point for this transformation, if we have to fix a certain date, may be put as the sentencing of Sabiha Sertel and Emin Türk due to their articles.

The articles on popular issues in *Resimli Ay*, however, maintained their places to a certain extent. In this way, news from Hollywood, articles on woman's beauty and simple health care and such continued to be published. Sometimes, the magazine took the shape of two different magazines published in one. Nevertheless, this lack of synthesis could not reduce the value and meaning of the magazine's new face. In this chapter, I will focus on the details of this change. In the first part of the chapter, the qualities that made *Resimli Ay* a popular magazine will be analyzed. In the second part, I will examine the elements and the course of the transformation from a popular magazine to a socialist-democratic literary journal.

It must be noted that literary products were decisive in this new positioning of the magazine. The We Break the Idols campaign, politically satirical poems, stories about the people of lower classes not only fostered the change in *Resimli Ay*, but also manipulated it. I will analyze the mutual relation of these two spheres –political and literary- in the last part of the Chapter Three.

I) *Resimli Ay* As a Popular and Socially Sensitive Magazine

As a popular, widely read monthly, the most interesting characteristic of *Resimli Ay* was its publication line that contained both social criticism and the features of an ordinary magazine. Behind this line, possibly a conception of the ideal society lay. This society consisted of democratic and rational individuals that were healthy, well cared for, interested in social problems, active in social events, and believed in the sciences so forth. This conception, to a large extent, overlapped with Mustafa Kemal's nationalist-progressive-industrialist discourse. On the other hand, the criticism of the state appeared when problems in democratic and welfare practices emerged.¹

On this base, it is not very easy to differentiate the critical discourse from the features of an ordinary magazine; they, to a certain extent, overlapped. Nevertheless, it can be said that the social critical discourse of the magazine emerged especially in some articles on women, children and some social practices. In all these social structure was designated as the source of all related problems and some changes in this structure were suggested as suitable cures for the problems. On the other hand, articles and information notes on everyday the lives of ordinary people shaped the ordinary magazine identity of *Resimli Ay*. Articles on beauty, relations between the sexes, body maintenance, childcare, sports fashion, interesting anecdotes from other cultures, news about amazing technological innovations had an important space in the magazine and in this way it resembled contemporary American magazines with its colorful pages that were full of pictures and photographs. It was as if the audience of *Resimli Ay* is composed of modern Western individuals who had close concerns

¹ At this point, an old and permanent tension between the magazine and the government is obvious even if we consider the first period. Look at Chapter I.

about their health, paid attention to the beauty of their body, followed the lives of famous people like Hollywood stars, dressed with respect to changes in fashion, acted freely in the relations with the other sex, followed and enjoyed technological developments. As a result, the combination of these two spheres formed the ideal society of the Sertels- a democratic society of socially responsible, vivid, healthy and beautiful people. Although this image itself is worth analyzing, it is beyond the boundaries of this study.

I.I) Modern Woman's Image and Woman in Social Life

Articles on woman issues are the most obvious signs of the combination of those two spheres. On the one hand, Sabiha Sertel had many articles on woman's subordinate position in the society, and she raised her voice boldly and criticized society and the state when some related problems emerged about the social practices of women. On the other hand, there were articles on body beauty and fashion, of which potential readers can be assumed to have been women. Moreover, every issue had many photos and pictures belonging to beautiful modern women. Those photos and pictures show them in modern places and in settings like parties, luxury restaurants with special evening clothes, swimming pools and other sport areas so on. At this point it is not false to claim that this new face of woman represented Resimli Ay's, or the Sertels', perception of modern life.

In an editorial under the title of *Cici Anne* (Sweet Mother), Sabiha Sertel replied questions from the readers of which the majority were women. In this editorial she, on the one hand, advised some cures for marriage and other relational problems between men and women. She even took a poll about the pleasure levels of married couples and published their letters in three issues. At the same time as this

poll, *Resimli Ay* published some translated articles that suggested practical solutions for the problems of couples. For example, in July 1929 in an article the name of which was *Aşkın 10 Şartı* (10 Preconditions of Love) there were some suggestions on how to have a sustainable relationship. There were no unusual suggestion here and generally an indoctrination of positive communication –like love each other, don't criticize each other harshly, be friends, be cheerful and so on- dominated the article.² Or in another one, the constant struggle between man and woman was represented with various photographs and it was declared that this struggle was an endless issue.³

On the other hand, in *Cici Anne*, she replied young girls' letters and encouraged them in claiming their personal freedom. In answer to a letter of a young girl who didn't want to marry due to the her fear of loss of freedom, Sabiha Hanım brought the point to a criticism of patriarchal culture and lack of freedom for women: "What is the meaning the word of freedom that you used falsely? Do you think that you will be as free as a man when you are single? ... You are first a female, you are first a woman in office; this is how they perceive you... When you go outside with a man.whom you want, your family excludes you."⁴ In another article of the same column, again a letter from a young girl was answered. This time the complaint was about parents' restrictions on their daughters. Sabiha Hanım criticized this kind of parent and called them to realize that the era had changed.⁵ In another article of the column in the same issue was a long letter from a seventeen year-old girl who had escaped from her house to be a movie star. According to the story narrated in the letter, the girl has made some decisions without any rational plan. However, Sabiha

² No name, "Aşkın Evamiri Aşeresi- Aşkın 10 Şartı," *Resimli Ay* July (1929): 18-19.

³ No name, "Erkek ve Kadın Kavgası," *Resimli Ay* March (1929): 20-21.

⁴ ("Hürriyet diye yanlışlıkla kullandığın kelimenin mânası ne? Bekâr kalmakla bir erkek gibi hür mü yaşayacaksın zannediyorsun? ... Memur olarak girdiğin dairede her şeyden evvel dışısın, kadınsın, sana o gözle bakarlar ... İstedığın erkeği koluna takıp sokağa çıktığın gün aile kapısını sana kapar.")

No name, "Cici Anne," *Resimli Ay* April (1929): 33.

⁵ No name, "Cici Anne, Yeni Günler, Yeni Âdet," *Resimli Ay* November (1929): 32.

Hanım did not criticize the girl, even she had a vague tone that appraised girl's bravery in her deeds. According to her, the decision of preferring home's comfort or outdoors' amazing unexpectedness must belonged to the individual, even if she was a young girl.⁶

There were more serious articles on the society's biased attitude against women leaning towards some moralistic values. In this kind of articles, generally individuals were not charged with anything; on the contrary always society was charged with its terrible processing. In an article the subject was the murder of a young girl by young men of the village because of a secret relationship. According to Sabiha Hanım the true criminals were not these youth: "Hacer wasn't killed by the youth of the village; the considerations of society killed her. The society, which constructed one-sided morals under the idea of sexual morals... This idea is a remnant of periods when woman was counted as private property and sold in the market as a commodity."⁷ In another article the demand of equality in morals was repeated. In that one, a letter from a reader that tried to prove the necessity of "woman's holiness" was criticized. This phrase met with Sabiha Zekeriya's harsh rejection and she tried to explain that that kind of phrases was socially constructed and there was nothing like "woman's holiness." According to her, those beliefs allowed moral inequality to survive in the new society.⁸

The implications of the assumption of moral equality found practices in some popular articles on the relations between man and woman. These articles attributed an open equality to the women in their relations to men. Accordingly woman was an

⁶ No name, "Cici Anne, Dışarı mı Eve mi?" *Resimli Ay* January (1930): 30-31.

⁷ ("Haceri köyün gençleri değil, cemiyet telakkileri öldürdü. Cinsî ahlâk telakkisi altında yalnız bir taraflı bir ahlâk tesis eden cemiyet... Bu telakki, kadının şahsi bir mülk addedildiği bir mal gibi pazarlarda satıldığı devirlerden kalmıştır.") No Name, "Bir Cepheli Ahlak, Bir Cepheli Demokrasi Olmaz; Erkeğe Ayrı Kadına Ayrı Ahlak Olmaz," *Resimli Ay* March (1929): 6.

⁸ No name, "Cici Anne Diyor ki: Âhlakı Musavâtı Tanımayan Dünkü ve Bugünkü Cemiyettir," *Resimli Ay* May (1930): 7-8.

equal agent in the public sphere even in terms of sexual relations. An example of this was in the issue of March/April 1930. In the issue there were three pages of different men's photographs and an open question to women: "Which of these men do you like?"⁹

As said above, *Resimli Ay* was not only interested in the freedom of women, but also it encouraged them to be full-fledged *modern* women. In this way there were popular articles about topics such as body beauty, health, and fashion. For example, in an article ten conditions to beautify were declared: be healthy, put on make-up intelligently, dress aesthetically, and make daily exercises were some of the ten conditions.¹⁰ Another article was about how to have appealing eyes; a detailed analysis was given on the topic.¹¹ In an entertaining article, women's efforts to beautify themselves were compared with torture, and older ways of these kinds of efforts were described.¹² In another one, to be rejuvenated some exercises were suggested. According to the writer, getting exercises was necessary to losing weight, to save oneself from clumsiness or depressions.¹³ Another piece of writing was denoted to the question of what the ideal weight of a girl was.¹⁴

Resimli Ay also showed a great interest in the Turkish Beauty Contest of 1929. Not only were there articles on and interviews with the champion of the contest, but also whether the champion represented Turkish beauty was discussed between famous intellectuals. The serial of articles were published for four months. In the last article, Peyami Safa and Mehmet Zekeriya had an interesting discussion. Peyami Safa thought that the champion of the contest was a good model of Turkish

⁹ No Name "Bu Erkeklerin Hangisini Seviyorsunuz?" *Resimli Ay* March/April (1930): 32-34.

¹⁰ No Name, "Güzelliğin 10 Şartı" *Resimli Ay* January (1930): 29.

¹¹ No Name, "Gözler," *Resimli Ay* December (1929): 14-15.

¹² No name, "Kadınlar Nasıl Güzelleşiyor?" *Resimli Ay* May (1930): 21-23.

¹³ No name, "Genleşmenin Yolları," *Resimli Ay* June (1930): 28-29.

¹⁴ No name, "Kızlar Kaç Kilo Olmalıdır?" *Resimli Ay* July (1939): 30.

girls, whereas Zekeriya Sertel evaluated her as oriental, and so far from the modern beauty criteria.¹⁵ It would not be absurd to say that Sertel looked for a Western type woman the photos of which were published and whose life style was propagated by the journal. This interpretation can be accepted as a result of the magazine's general outlook.

A large place in the magazine was assigned to news about movies and movie stars. On the one hand, there were popular articles on Hollywood productions and stars; on the other hand there were pieces about other countries' cinema experiences. These were two clearly separate areas. The former was probably composed of translated articles and mostly about the interesting lives of actresses, whereas the latter were more or less cultural articles on different appearances of cinema in different countries of the world. These two different poles represented two different discourses about cinema, one was popular and the other was critical.

I will analyze the critical one in one of the later subsections; however, the popular one is crucial for this section. To put the articles on Hollywood under the title of woman's issues leans toward the content of articles that clearly addressed to women to a great extent. The famous actresses of the era like Norma Talmatch, Dolores Del Rio, and Corianne Griffith were seen in the pages of *Resimli Ay* frequently, especially with their interesting life stories and appealing photographs. They were some kind of role models or representatives of powerful and free modern women. By the way, the Hollywood culture's dominance in woman issues in *Resimli Ay* was not only made up of those. Additionally, there are articles about beauty, make up, self-care, and so on that mainly refer to the practices of Hollywood stars:

¹⁵ Mehmet Zekeriya [Sertel] and Peyami Safa "Kraliçe Türk Güzelliğini Temsil Eder mi?" *Resimli Ay* February (1930): 2-3.

“Woman According to Actresses in Love,”¹⁶ “Marriage According to Actresses,”¹⁷ “Why Do Marriages Collapse in Hollywood?”¹⁸ “New Dresses of Movie Stars,”¹⁹ “How Do Movie Stars Lose Weight?”²⁰ were some of the article titles that showed the wide range of Hollywood culture in *Resimli Ay*.

I.II) Children, Education, and Other Points of Social Criticism

Another topic that was on the focus of social criticism was the problems of children. In two issues, which were published after the 23 April Children Festival, most of the articles were about child problems. In May 1929, different children from different social classes were recounted and in this way their problems were disclosed. In the part of “The Wishes of Children” articles conveyed messages to adults about the problems of all children the society such as: “Driver stop!” “Don’t beat me!” “Keep me from malaria,” and “Heal me from illness.” Some other articles in the same issue were about oppressed children and had titles like “Child in the Street,” “Prisoner Child,” “Working Child.” Moreover, there were two articles about the harm of missionary activities to Turkish children. Another article was made up of interview with the mothers of famous authors of the era.

In May 1930, the articles had a harsher tone and mainly oppressed children were the subjects of articles. In all these, society, which did not care about its children, was boldly criticized. At that time, the articles were only about “the step-children of the country.” Additionally, Sevim Zekeriya, the daughter of Sertel was the child editorial writer of the issue and had an article the name was “Why Did They

¹⁶ No Name “Aşık Artistlere Nazaran Kadın,” *Resimli Ay* December (1929): 30-31.

¹⁷ No Name, “Artistlere Göre Evlenmek,” *Resimli Ay* February (1930): 27-28.

¹⁸ No Name, “Hollywood’da İzdivaçlar Neden İflas Ediyor?” *Resimli Ay* June (1930): 21-24.

¹⁹ No Name “Sinema Yıldızlarının Yeni Elbiseleri,” *Resimli Ay* June (1930): 26-27.

²⁰ No Name, “Sinema Yıldızları Nasıl Zayıflar?” *Resimli Ay* September (1930): 8-9.

Deceive Us?”²¹ In this article, little Sertel defended the exactly same things as his mother. She repeated the emergent necessity of the protection of orphan children, equality between poor and rich children, prevention of their working in hard jobs etc. Interestingly, especially Turkish Hearth was criticized for its insufficiency in these issues.

Education problems had an important place in the magazine. Lower educational techniques, teachers who did not know pedagogical details and thus harmed children were harshly criticized. For example, in May 1929, Zekeriya Sertel emphasized the backwardness of teaching reading syllable by syllable and mentioned the new techniques applied in other countries.²² In the following issues, a campaign against grammar teaching in schools has an important space. Again, it was claimed that the unnecessariness of grammar was a newly found scientific fact; even a poll was taken on the issue and intellectuals generally confirmed the validness of this new scientific fact.²³ In another article it was declared that Decroli method had to be lifted from education.²⁴

The negative behavior of educators was also the point of criticism. Apart from Münire Handan’s short stories, which will be discussed in the next chapter, some articles emphasized the necessity of special care for children. In this way, their behaviors were not to be punished harshly even if they harmed the teachers’ pride.²⁵ Criticism of university education is also not absent. In December 1929, the

²¹ Sevim Zekeriya [Sertel] “Niye Bizi Aldattılar?” *Resimli Ay* May (1930): 39. The difference of those two issues can be accepted as another sign of the transformation, which will be analyzed in the next section.

²² M. Zekeriya [Sertel] “Benim Yıldızım da Kurtulmadı, Memleketin Yıldızı da,” *Resimli Ay* May (1929): 8.

²³ No Name “Grammere Lüzüm Yok,” *Resimli Ay* September (1929): 1; No Name, “Lisanı Öğrenmek İçin Gramere Lüzüm Var mı?” *Resimli Ay* September (1929): 2-3. ; No Name, “Lisanı Öğrenmek İçin Gramere Lüzüm Var mı?” *Resimli Ay* October (1929): 14-15.

²⁴ No Name, “İlimden İnhisarım ve İhtikârım Kalkmasını İstiyoruz,” *Resimli Ay* October (1930): 11.

²⁵ No Name “Mektepler Muallimler İçin midir, Yoksa Talebe İçin mi?” *Resimli Ay* December (1929): 21.

Darülfunun was criticized and American universities were praised.²⁶ In the next two issues, two more articles were published and the backwardness of the education at the *Darülfunun* was tried to reveal referring to the memoirs of an ex-student.²⁷ The education and especially the literacy of the general public was also an issue that received attention. In August 1929, an analysis of why the general public did not read newspapers, magazines, or books was published.²⁸ In another article, the topic was how one hundred percent rate of literacy could be achieved.²⁹

Prostitution and people who were being under sentenced were other social criticism topics. The main line of the related articles was to analyze the conditions that pushed these people to those bad states. Their rights and the necessity of their returning to acceptable social practices were frequently underscored and society's negative attitude against them was put as the real source of all those terrible individual fates. Gerzeli Ayşe was one of the felons who had been pushed into her bad destiny due to society's disinterest in her problems. She was dragged into prostitution after she had left her village and gone to city. She was arrested multiple times, but she wasn't kept in prison because of her young age. When she turned 18, she received a license for prostitution. In the article, society was criticized for giving this license instead of making effort to contain her in society.³⁰ In another article, it was emphasized that prostitution would not cease to end and prostitutes could not be saved with moral rules. The solution was a change in societal attitudes.³¹ In the same line, prisoners were put as the victims of society in another article that had some

²⁶ No Name, "Bu Nasıl Darülfunun?" *Resimli Ay* December (1929): 29.

²⁷ No Name, "Darülfünuna Lüzum Var mı?" *Resimli Ay* January (1930): 2-3; No Name "Darülfünunda Ne Gördüm?" *Resimli Ay* January (1930): 4.

²⁸ No Name, "Halk Niçin Okumuyor?" *Resimli Ay* August (1929): 39.

²⁹ No Name, "Halkı Yüzde Yüz Okutmak İçin Neler Yapılmalıdır?" *Resimli Ay* September (1930): 16-18.

³⁰ No Name, "Gerzeli Ayşe," *Resimli Ay* May (1929): 12-14.

³¹ No Name, "Bu Kadını Nasıl Kurtarırız? Fuhsun Ötüne Nasıl Geçilir?" *Resimli Ay* 1 January (1931):

interviews with some jurists.³² The thing to do was to unload the prisons; to correct prisoners instead of imprisoning them.³³

The most intensive social criticism in *Resimli Ay* was in Sabiha Sertel's column "We See and We Hear." This column will be analyzed in the second part of this chapter, because it conveys the most important sign of the transformation of the magazine.

I.III) Industry, Science and Psychology

A boundless admiration for industrialization and science was another feature of *Resimli Ay*. Popular technological news, photographs of amazing industrial goods, and the lives of famous scientists were frequently seen in the pages of the magazine. In three pages, for example, a giant transatlantic ship was presented with photos in an enthusiastic manner.³⁴ In another article, the innovation of television was announced and it was underlined that this new innovation would become a part of houses.³⁵ A new theory about the formation of the world was topic of another article.³⁶ Albert Einstein's daily life was presented as "how the greatest man in the world lives" in another column.³⁷ The love of industrialization had a reflection on national development. This point will be discussed in the next part of the chapter.

Psychological articles had an important space in the magazine. Apart from writings on the analysis of psychological states, there were various pieces that made reference to psychoanalytic theory. In one of those, Freud's main categorization between the conscious and subconscious was explained with a metaphor of a two-

³² No Name, "Kabahat Mücrimde mi, Cemiyette mi?" *Resimli Ay* September (1930): 32-33.

³³ No Name, "Pek Mühüm Bir Mes'ele. Hapishaneleri Boşaltmak Lâzım" *Resimli Ay* August (1930): 4-6.

³⁴ No Name, "Bahri Muhitleri Aşan Bir Transatlantiğin Hayatı," *Resimli Ay* June (1929): 27-30.

³⁵ No Name, "Televizyon Yakında Evlere Girecek," *Resimli Ay* May/April (1930): 13.

³⁶ No Name, "Dünya Nasıl Doğdu? Fen Adamları Dünyamızın Kalbini Dinliyorlar," *Resimli Ay* April/May (1930): 11.

³⁷ No Name, "Dünyanın En Büyük Adamı Nasıl Yaşar?" *Resimli Ay* June (1930): 30-32.

floor house.³⁸ A Freudian explanation was used to explain the boredoms that have no apparent reasons.³⁹ In another article, this time Jung, another important psychoanalysis theoretician was referred to as an answer to the question of whether the basis of relations between man and woman was only sexual.⁴⁰ In the same topic there was also a Freudian article.⁴¹

Additionally, there were other psychological articles, which had no psychoanalytic context. How to be a leader and a guide in society was an important title in the magazine. Guiding articles on the topic are seen on the pages of magazine more than rare. On the other hand, there were articles that ran down romantic love and a commitment to the past and memoirs.

I.IV) Magazine of Cultural⁴² Information

The rest of the magazine consisted of information of cultural events, articles about foreign cultures, and older traditions of Turkish society. Articles about foreign cultures included topics like the traditions, life style of various different countries from both East and West. The most important group of these belonged to the United States and showed the controversial image of American culture and life in the magazine. In one article, American democracy was characterized as hypocritical; and the legends about it labeled exaggerated. American democracy had a terrible face with its prisons, police and court system.⁴³ However, in another article, the American image was promoted with the depiction and praise of how the American stock

³⁸ No Name, "Beynimiz İki Katlı Bir Eve Benzer," *Resimli Ay* August (1929): 9.

³⁹ No Name, "Sebepsiz Can Sıkıntıları Nereden Gelir?" *Resimli Ay* September (1930): 26-27.

⁴⁰ No Name, "Kadın ve Erkek Muhabbetlerinin Esası Yalnız Cinsi midir?" *Resimli Ay* September (1930): 30-31.

⁴¹ No Name, "Aşk Nedir?" *Resimli Ay* February (1930): 10

⁴² Here I want to imply both meanings of culture: culture as a way and perception of life on the one hand, and culture as art on the other. Look at: Andrew Millner *Literature, Culture and Society* (New York: New York University Press, 1996): 9.

⁴³ No Name, "Amerikan Demokrasisinin İçyüzü," *Resimli Ay* March (1929): 8.

exchange market was useful.⁴⁴ In another one, an article by former American president, Coolidge, on being the American president was published.⁴⁵ Obviously, the images of American democracy and culture were indecisive and faltered. Surely, the majority of the articles about Hollywood, fashion, self-care etc. can be accepted as belonging to American culture, and those were more influential in the magazine. Their total elimination never came, so that is impossible to say that *Resimli Ay*'s transformation into a socialist platform engendered the hatred of American culture.

The other countries' cultures also were featured in the magazine. The cultural habits of natives of Africa, the cultural history and contemporary situation of Far East and Soviet Russia and other Soviet Republics appeared in different issues. For example the funeral and marriage traditions of different cultures were introduced in two long articles.⁴⁶ However, the most interesting aspect of this topic was the increasing interest in Soviet Russian culture especially in the last issues of the magazine.

Additionally, the articles on traditional elements Turkish culture constituted an important part of writings on culture. These were, in general, introductory articles. Karagöz,⁴⁷ Hacivat,⁴⁸ Caucasian girls in the Court,⁴⁹ Ahi brotherhood,⁵⁰ the invention of "ortaoyunu"⁵¹ are introduced in these articles. These were not serious articles, but they tried to give popular information of older past.

Resimli Ay gave an important place to the nascent Turkish theatre, Western classical music and painting. The young and important performers like Muhsin

⁴⁴ No Name, "Cihan Sermayesinin Kalbi: New York Borsası," *Resimli Ay* October (1929): 4-7.

⁴⁵ No Name, "Amerika'da Reisi Cumhur Olmak Ne Demektir?" *Resimli Ay* August (1929): 20-21.

⁴⁶ No Name, "Başka Milletler Ölümleri Nasıl Gömerler?" *Resimli Ay* February (1930): 14-15; No Name, "Başka Milletlerde Nasıl Evleniyorlar?" *Resimli Ay* March (1930): 22-24.

⁴⁷ No Name, "Karagöz Kimdir?" *Resimli Ay* September (1929): 8-10.

⁴⁸ No Name, "Hacivat Kimdir?" *Resimli Ay* October (1929): 30-31.

⁴⁹ No Name, "Saraylarda Hüküm Süren Çerkes Kızları" *Resimli Ay* September (1929): 11-13.

⁵⁰ Enver Behnan, "Ahiler Kimlerdir?" *Resimli Ay* August (1930): 14-15.

⁵¹ Enver Behnan, "Ortaoyunun İcadı," *Resimli Ay* October (1929): 29-31.

Ertuğrul, Cemal Reşit Rey, Saip Bey, Ali Sezai etc. were introduced to the audience in the pages of *Resimli Ay*. Generally they were praised enthusiastically and their international achievements underlined. Especially Ertuğrul Muhsin was frequently seen in the pages of the magazine. Besides his ideas on local and foreign theaters and cinemas, he gave information about his own works.⁵²

Articles on cinema had an important place in the magazine. Not only attempts to establish cinema in Turkey were announced, but also different countries' experiences were analyzed. For example in April 1929, the first Chinese film was reported and it was showed as a sign of development in China.⁵³ Moreover, in a number of articles, movies were evaluated in terms of their propaganda capacity. In one of those, the manipulation of French movies' of African and Asian struggles against exploiters was criticized. Additionally, the habit of putting French subtitles to the films in Turkish motion-picture theaters was assessed as unacceptable.⁵⁴ The different propagandistic ways of different countries' movies were evaluated in another article with an objective language.⁵⁵

II. *Resimli Ay* As a Socialist Oppositional Magazine

In the issue of September 1930, Zekeriya Sertel tries to answer the question of a reader which was articulated as "What is the side of *Resimli Ay*?" ("*Resimli Ay*'in Cephesi Nedir?") in his editorial. He enunciated the magazine's socialist perspective for the first time in this article:

⁵² Ertuğrul Muhsin, "Ankara Postasını Nasıl Çevirdim?" *Resimli Ay* November (1929): 20-21.

⁵³ No Name, "Çin'de Sinemacılık," *Resimli Ay* April (1929): 19.

⁵⁴ No Name, "Sinemalarımız Fransız Emperyalizminin Aleti mi?" *Resimli Ay* March (1929): 25-16.

⁵⁵ No Name, "Sinema ile Gelen Propaganda," *Resimli Ay* November (1929): 16-18.

Resimli Ay is not a political magazine. However, it has a political side due to the point of view that social issues belong to politics. *Resimli Ay*, as we have stated in the columns of “We See and We Hear”, is only one side of political formations which are based on a certain class. It does not believe in groups that come together around individuals, but parties gathered around certain ideas. And, because the majority of people are composed of peasants and workers, it only supports the union of these two and their establishment of a formation under the guidance of the worker.⁵⁶

Until that time, he had abstained from this kind of a pronouncement. In October 1930, the audience encountered with a municipality program that was written by Sabiha Sertel and an analysis of Municipality assembly elections by Zekeriya Sertel. Indeed, the process of becoming oppositional in the magazine produced a practical political movement. The program was including various points that are against capital holders. Interestingly, in the hot days of the campaign of “We Break the Idols” Zekeriya Sertel had clearly and insistently rejected the charges of communism, labeled these charges as demagogy and routed democracy as the fundamental motivation of *Resimli Ay*: “*Resimli Ay* has had only one side since its first publication. That is to advocate the democracy. I got my strength from this ideal in this magazine for which I have endured all kinds of evils.”⁵⁷

However, in the issue before the last one, talking about their problems with the capital holders of the magazine, he declared the enemy in a clear-cut manner: “I don’t write these lines to show that it is impossible to separate *Resimli Ay* and us. I

⁵⁶ (*Resimli Aysiyası bir mecmua değildir. Bununla beraber siyasiyatın içtimaiyat çerçevesi dahilinde bulunması noktai nazarından siyasi cephesi vardır. Resimli Ay, görüyoruz ve işidiyoruz sütüründe söylediğimiz gibi, ancak muayyen bir sınıfa istinat eden siyasi teşekküllere taraftardır. Şahıslar etrafında toplanan zümrelere değil, muayyen fikirler etrafında toplanan fırkalara inanıyor. Ve memleketin ekseriyeti toprağa bağlı olan köylü ile tezgâhları döndüren işçi olduğu için, ancak bu iki kuvvetin birleşmesine ve işçinin rehberliğiyle bir teşekkül haline gelmesine taraftardır.*) Mehmet Zekeriya [Sertel], “Baş Muharririmiz: *Resimli Ay*’ın Cephesi Nedir?” *Resimli Ay* September (1930): 36.

⁵⁷ (“*Resimli Ay*’ın inışarı gününden bugüne kadar bir cephesi vardır. O da demokrasiyi müdafadır. Parasızlığa, her türlü kahrta tahammül ederek çıkardığım mecmuada ben kuvvetimi bu idealden aldım.”) No name, “Baş Muharririn Köşesi,” *Resimli Ay* August (1929): 33.

write these to show how this iron heel which is articulated as interest and capital violate the men and women who make a living out of their labor and effort.”⁵⁸

Until this time, *Resimli Ay* had experienced a fast transformation period in which an alternative literary approach and political criticism intertwined. On the other hand, the transformation accelerated as a result, or in spite of, lawsuits and punishments. I say as a result, because the anti-democratic deeds of the government alienated the Sertels from the Republican government, and created a decision point for them. In this line, their increasing unrest augmented their dissent and opposition. This attitude –increasing the tone of the opposition, rather than withdrawal– instigated the annihilation of the magazine. The joint partners of the magazine were uncomfortable with this situation, and then came the obligation to close the magazine despite the great effort of the Sertels against their partners, as recounted in the first chapter.

At this point, we will trace the footprints of the transformation story. Thus, different points of focus will be analyzed respectively.

II.I) The Kink Point: Sabiha Sertel and Emin Türk in Court

In December 1929, *Resimli Ay* published two articles which would result in the suing of the magazine. One of these articles was a translation from an American psychology magazine. The title of the article is *Savulun Geliyorum* (Get out of the Way! I Will Be There) and it analyzed a good leader’s features, especially in a backward Eastern society. Accordingly, it supposed that a leader must be one with his people, be close to them and their sorrows, and must be on the level of ordinary

⁵⁸ (“Size bu satırları *Resimli Ay*’la birbirimizi ayırmanın mümkün olmadığını göstermek için yazmıyorum. Size menfaat ve sermaye denen demir ökçenin, emeğiyle, sayıle geçinenleri nasıl çığnediğini göstermek için yazıyorum”) No name, “*Resimli Ay*’ın Hikâyesi,” *Resimli Ay* 1 January (1931): 1.

people to feel their real situation.⁵⁹ The court counted this article as a vague criticism and accusation of Atatürk.

The second article was from a villager writer who was a teacher and had the title as “Köyümde Neler Gördüm” (What Did I See in My Village?). It was about the poverty of an Anatolian village. The subtitle of the article was explanatory for the content of the article: “Peasants are in horrible conditions due to diseases and poverty. Isn’t there anyone there that listens to peasant’s problems and cures them?”⁶⁰ According to the court, Emin Türk had provoked the peasantry in the article.

These two articles caused the suing of Sabiha Zekeriya, Emin Türk and the official manager of magazine, Behçet Bey. Emin Bey and Behçet Bey were imprisoned until the end of the lawsuit. They were accused of “making publications that insult Turkishness and the President of the Republic, his Excellency.”⁶¹ Four hearings in this lawsuit were handled and in the end all three suspects were punished with short-term prison sentences and these sentences were converted to fines. In these hearings some intellectuals for Sabiha Hanım and some villagers for Emin Bey testified. Moreover, both suspects defended themselves before the court enthusiastically and advocated the freedom expression. Sabiha Hanım said that the translated article was only a scientific one and any punishment for this was against science and intelligence. Emin Bey claimed that every word written in his article had

⁵⁹ No name, “Savulun Geliyorum,” *Resimli Ay* December (1929): 5-6.

⁶⁰ (“Köylü hastalıktan sefaletten kurtuluyor. Onun derdini dinleyen ve ona çare olan yok mu?”) Emin Türk, “Köyümde Neler Gördüm?” *Resimli Ay* December (1929): 7-9.

⁶¹ No Name, “Birinci Muhakeme,” *Resimli Ay* February (1930): 18.

witnesses and that he had only mentioned the very reality of the Anatolian countryside.⁶²

These law cases were the signs of the government's restlessness against *Resimli Ay*'s critical stance, and can be interpreted as a kind of warning. However, the result of this adjudication process would be an obvious increase and clarification in the oppositional attitude of the magazine. Indeed the sign of the way of opposition can be seen in an article on the lawsuit: "Witnesses were forming an appealing whole. On the one hand, people who come from the intellectual and thinker classes of the country came to testify for two intellectuals; on the other hand, peasants were ready to testify for their fellow countryman who defended their cause. It was seen first that the intellectual and peasant became united and advocated the same cause."⁶³

In the next issue Sabiha Sertel repeated the same idea in an article under the title of "We Lost Our Lawsuit, But We Didn't Lose Our Cause".⁶⁴ This cause and power alliance would be transformed into a call of a party of oppressed people. Surely, I don't want to say that *Resimli Ay* shifted to a diametrically opposed position after the lawsuit. Indeed, *Resimli Ay*'s eclectic structure between a socially sensitive magazine and popular one lasted after that lawsuit. However, between these two, a socialist-democratic side that conveyed a demand for the construction of new political party dominated the scene. The lawsuit can be accepted as the origin point of this course- the dynamics, which had sprouted before it, turn into concrete political demands after it.

⁶² All texts of the hearings were published in two issues of *Resimli Ay*: February 1930 and March/April 1930. Indeed, due to the lawsuit, no issue was published in March. This had been the first disruption in the publication of *Resimli Ay* since its first issue.

⁶³ (Şahitler çok dikkate şayan bir küll meydana getiriyorlardı. Bir tarafta memleketin münevver ve mütefekkir sınıfına mensup kimseler iki münevvere şehadet etmeye gelmişlerdi. Bir tarafta da köylüler kendi davalarını müdafaa eden hemşehrileri hakkında hüsnü şehadete hazırlanmışlardı. Münevverle köylünün birleştiği ve ilk defa olarak aynı davayı müdafaa ettiği görülmüyordu.) No name, "Üçüncü Muhakeme," *Resimli Ay* February (1930): 25.

⁶⁴ Sabiha Zekeriya, "Muhakemede Kaybettik Fakat Davamızı Kaybetmedik," *Resimli Ay* March/April (1930): 1.

Now I will analyze the different paths of this transformation story.

II.II) The Traces of the Transformation

The path of transformation is not very clear in this two-year period. In the publication pattern of *Resimli Ay*, two main ways of change can be put: on the one hand, the increasing and decreasing proportions of different kinds of articles and other products without the total discarding of one certain type; and on the other hand, the changing tone in the same kind of articles. In my effort to reveal the transformation, I focus on the former, whereas I mention proportional changes when necessary.

II.II.I) The Combative and Sharp Voice of Sabiha Sertel

In *Resimli Ay*, most of the articles on social issues, like the freedom of women, the insufficiency of social services, and the social problems of children, belonged to Sabiha Sertel. In these articles she did not eschew harsh criticism of the problems. In June 1929, as mentioned above, she started to write in a regular section in the magazine, called “Görüyoruz... Duyuyoruz” (We See and We Hear). Articles under this title generally had two parts, and Sertel criticized two different social problems in every article. Even, the firm name of the section was one of the signifiers of the intention and the claim that lay behind its preparation. The Sertels were probably planning to form a kind of informer article series that would reveal some important problems of social life. They gave a great deal of significance to “Görüyoruz... Duyuyoruz” articles; thus most of the articles published under this

title were on the first page of magazines.⁶⁵ Under this title, in eleven different issues eleven articles were published.⁶⁶

This article series reflects the general tendency of the magazine: incrementally augmenting voice of oppositional positioning of which the tone changed from a nationalist-democratic-socially sensitive one to a socialist democratic one, and a shifting interest to the problems of workers and villagers instead of the social problems of the general public. However, a reaction to the social problems that showed increasing inequality was always present in all of these articles, but in the earlier issues a more populist approach was dominant; thus in the initial articles of this series pretentious consumption, and prodigality were harshly criticized. In that way, these first articles had more or less an amalgam structure like the whole of the magazine. There was a coexistence of some nationalist concerns, which were sometimes expressed in an anti-imperialist discourse, and social welfare problems, which would transform into a defense of the socially oppressed lower groups, and intensive criticism of state policies, therefore this type of amalgam structure would change, in the following issues.

The first article of this series reflected the magazine's intensive occupation with missionary activities: "We see of whom missionaries are the means; we hear the slyly advancing footsteps of the missionaries."⁶⁷ In fact, this article can be evaluated as one of the writings attacking missionary activities. In this one, the authorities were warned against this danger—*Resimli Ay* assessed these activities as the greatest

⁶⁵ "Görüyoruz... Duyuyoruz..." articles may be assessed as signing a change in Sabiha Zekeriya [Sertel]'s writing style. I suggest that the change would stem from Nazım Hikmet's influence. It is as if, his sharp, combative and challenging style transformed Sabiha Zekeriya [Sertel]'s.

⁶⁶ In the issue of October 1929, we don't see the title of "Görüyoruz... Duyuyoruz..." However, in this issue we have an article with the same style of accusing that was published in the first pages of the magazine like other articles of this series. I, therefore, did not hesitate in categorizing the article of this issue under title "Görüyoruz... Duyuyoruz..."

⁶⁷ ("GÖRÜYÖRÖZ... Misyönerlerin Türkiye'de kimlerin aleti olduklarını; DUYUYÖRÖZ: Misyönerlerin memleketimizde sinsi sinsi ilerleyen ayak seslerini")

danger in the magazine's second phase. According to the article, missionary activities not only involved the spreading of Christianity, but also were an imperialist activity, furthering the interests of the imperialist countries. Sabiha Sertel, additionally related these activities to international capital's interests: "Missionaries are the vanguards of invasion and capital through out their lives".⁶⁸ At this point she did not give an analysis of this relation between missionaries and capital.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, this interpretation may be evaluated as a struggle to reach a criticism of capital, but it has to be noted that in this stage of *Resimli Ay* the criticism of capital was not sought in relations between the oppressed and the oppressor in the country's itself. In this picture, the problem was, in the final analysis, transnational and arose from others nations' evil deeds. Therefore, it was a danger for the whole nation. It was shown above, and also will be shown again, that when those relations became an explicit object of criticism, the emphasis on missionary activities lost its strength.

The four articles after the June issue featured various critiques of social policies. In July 1929, attitudes to students in schools were criticized as violent, insensitive, and false in child raising; and it was strongly emphasized that in fact children needed understanding and tenderness. It was strongly declared that Turkish education needed experts in this subject who approached children consciously. In October 1929, Sabiha Sertel, addressing the authorities of the municipality, wrote on the poor and sick, and complained of the lack of interest in them. However, this article was not much harsh or attacking. Her tone rose in the next issue where she talked about socially excluded people. Some homeless people had begun to sleep in

⁶⁸ ("Misyonerler bütün hayatlarında istilânın ve sermayenin piştarlığını yapmışlardır") Sabiha Zekeriya [Sertel], "GÖRÜYÖRÜZ... Misyonerlerin Türkiye'de kimlerin aleti olduklarını; DUYUYÖRÜZ: Misyonerlerin memleketimizde sinsi sinsi ilerleyen ayak seslerini," *Resimli Ay* June (1929): 4.

⁶⁹ As will be showed below, *Resimli Ay*'s emphasis about missionary activities acquired the dimension of critique of capitalism, in the process. Sabiha Zekeriya [Sertel]'s this article exactly reveals this dimension.

the basins of fountains, and two of them had been found dead due to starvation in one of these basins. She, as in most of her articles, accused all of society in this article, and declared that this kind of a situation was a real shame for and guilt of a society. It was argued here that when Resimli Ay's opposition sharpened, the social welfare discourse, of which the most important part was the accusation of whole society with reference to social troubles, became less dominant, and the criticism of state policies and the call of oppressed people for struggle took its place.

An article in the issue of December 1929, Sabiha Sertel directly attacked Hamdullah Suphi, the president of Turkish Hearth (*Türk Ocağı*), for the new and pretentious central building of the Hearth. One million Turkish liras had been spent on the construction of building, and it was called as "the palace of Hamdullah Suphi" (Hamdullah Suphi'nin Sarayı) in the article. Indeed, a few months ago, Hamdullah Suphi and *Resimli Ay* had entered into a sharp dispute especially because of the "We Break the Idols" campaign. However, now he was accused not by literary argument, but more politically. The luxury of the building was considered unnecessary, especially in the time of poverty. It was argued that the real members of the Hearth would not go to this building; and only degenerated intellectuals would. Indeed, the new building was in the European style, and had a good stage for theatre plays. It was said that some foreign theatre groups would come to this building give plays. The Sertels, however, were very resolute about their position: if there were primary and urgent needs of the public, investments in art and other secondary things were to be stopped. Therefore, this kind of building was the place of the degenerated intellectual who was not interested in people's real needs.

Then, for six months, "Görüyoruz... Duyuyoruz..." articles were not published. The reason of this pause must have been the Sertels' intensive focusing on

the *Resimli Ay*'s lawsuit. After the loss in the lawsuit, *Resimli Ay*'s opposition clearly sharpened as the articles of "Görüyoruz... Duyuyoruz" section clearly reflected this. Yet the next two articles of the section more or less had the same style of the older articles. In June 1930, it was declared that poor people were turned away from hospitals, and were tortured in the police stations. Sabiha Sertel stated that she was not against private hospitals, but added that the medical treatment of seriously ill people who had no money was a moral and humane obligation even for these private hospitals. Her last words had the same emphasis: "Science, health, life, hospital—everything belongs to the wealthy".⁷⁰ The issue of July 1930, the topics of Sabiha Sertel's article was the lack of social organizations for the care of working women's children, and the indifference to war veterans. She related two stories about these topics, one in which the child of a working woman had died by accident in their house, and the other in which a war veteran had to live with his wound that he had received in war. In the end, she again accused the society: "A civilized nation is directed by social organizations and scientific methods, not by accident or by fate."⁷¹

The last four articles of the section are more important to proving the claim suggested here, because three of the four articles were about workers and their problems, and the last article was a direct challenge to state policies. In August 1930, she mentioned some complaints about workers, porters and some children sleeping and lying down on the streets during noon breaks. The owners of the complaints asserted that this was a terrible image especially for foreigners, and demanded the prohibition of this habit. Sertel was furious at this assertion, and claimed that the real

⁷⁰ ("Fen, sıhhat, hayat, hastane her şey cebi dolgun olanın") Sabiha Zekeriya [Sertel], "Görüyoruz... Hastanelerden parasız diye kovulan insanlar olduğunu. Duyuyoruz... Polis karakollarında ağızlarından kan gelinceye kadar dövülen insanlar olduğunu," *Resimli Ay* June (1930): 39.

⁷¹ ("Medeni bir cemiyeti kaza ve kader değil, içtimai teşkilat ve fenni usüller idare eder") Sabiha Zekeriya [Sertel], "Görüyoruz... Annesi işte çalışan çocukların ateşte yandıklarını ve Duyuyoruz... Mafûl gazilerin sefaletten süründüklerini." *Resimli Ay*, July (1930): 2.

fault had to be attributed to the employers. She harshly attacked this elitist attitude: “As you see, this is the logic of those who look from above at wounds.”⁷² On the other part of the article she criticized the halting of the activities of the Union of Women (*Kadınlar Birliği*). In a time full of women’s problems, this decision was incomprehensible.

The dose of the opposition escalated in the article of September 1930. In the first part of the article, Sabiha Sertel described struggle of some villagers against an international wood company that wanted to cut trees in the forest in which the villagers had the right to cut wood. The villagers did not allow this, and after some incidents they themselves imprisoned the manager of the company. Eventually, the gendarmes came and took the twenty villagers. Naturally, Sertel criticized this event, and claimed that the villagers only defended their private land, and in any case gendarmes should have taken the companies’ men. She, in this way, also attacked foreign capital. In the second, and more important part of the article, Sertel told of a worker who came to *Resimli Ay*’s office and took her to his work place, a liqueur factory in Mecidiyeköy. She saw and listened to the different exploitation cases there. The food of the workers was little, although its price was high, and all workers were obliged to eat this food. Moreover, many of the workers were homeless. She told the story of a man who sent his daily wage to his wife who had just gave birth to a child. The worker, thus could not eat anything that day, and developed sunstroke while he sitting under sun with an empty stomach. This man said to Sertel: “What do the People’s Party or the Free Republican Party mean? If you establish a worker and peasant’s party for us, then maybe the meaning of party would become

⁷² (“İşte yaralara tepeden bakanların mantığı”) Sabiha Zekeriya [Sertel], “Görüyoruz... Öğle Sıcağında Sokakta Yatan İşçileri ve Duyuyoruz... Kadın Birliği Faaliyetinin Tamam Olduğunu,” *Resimli Ay*, August (1930): 2.

understandable.”⁷³ The interpretation of these words by Sertel is very important:

“This was a sincere complaint from this peasant. I listened to him, and acknowledged him to be right. I think the same as this peasant.”⁷⁴

In October 1930, the article of the section, especially its second part, may be assessed as a continuation of the article in the previous issue. In the first part, the poverty of elderly people was described, and the lack of social security was criticized. In the second part, a letter from a fired worker was mentioned. This worker was an employer of the *Bomonti* spirits factory. When some dirt was found in the bottles, the company tried to make the workers sign an official report that declared some workers as guilty of this event. However, the workers rejected the report and one of them wrote the said letter to Sabiha Sertel. Then the man who signed the letter and two other workers were fired. It was added that the man responsible for the firing order was also the Republican People’s Party Beyoğlu director. Later, the fired workers were rehired; however, other workers did not want them stating that if the fired workers continued to work, the others could not take free beer. Three workers therefore had to leave their jobs. Sertel’s lesson from this case was clear: “to avoid this kind of situation, the establishment of unions and associations should not be obstructed.”⁷⁵

⁷³ (“*Halk Fırkası, Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası ne demek? Bize bir köylü ve amele fırkası yaparsanız, o zaman belki fırkadan bir şey anlarım*”.) Sabiha Zekeriya [Sertel], “Görüyoruz... Hakkını arayan köylülerin iplerle bağlandığını ve Duyuyoruz... Mecidiye köyünde çalışan amelenin hayvan gibi, uşak gibi istismar edildiğini,” *Resimli Ay*, September (1930): 3. It should be remembered that from this issue –only two issues– Sertels published *Resimli Ay* by themselves because of the problems with shareholders.

⁷⁴ (“*Bu köylünün içinden gelen çok samimi bir şikâyeti. Dinledim, hak verdim. Ben de bu köylüyle hemfikirim...*”) Ibid. 3.

⁷⁵ (“... böyle hallerin önüne geçilmesi için de sendika ve birliklerin teşekkülüne mâni olunmamalıdır.”) Sabiha Zekeriya [Sertel], “Duyuyoruz İhtiyarların Sokakta Süründüğünü ve Duyuyoruz Fabrikalarda Amelenin İstismar Edildiği,” *Resimli Ay*, October (1930): 38.

The last article of “Görüyoruz... Duyuyoruz...” in the issue of 1 January 1931⁷⁶ was like a manifesto. There was no special subject; the article can be assessed as a final and summarizing one. The growing inequality between the upper classes and the lower ones was strictly criticized, and it was declared that that the scenes of social failures had no change. Starving workers, villagers who sold their beds to pay taxes, hopeless unemployed people constituted one side of the picture; rich, degenerate people who crowded bars, restaurants, theatres, and other entertainment places constituted the other side. Sertel described this picture in a rain of furious words. The end of the article revealed *Resimli Ay*'s new position maybe most clearly:

It is said that a certain party is going to the every part of the country and opening hearths.

It is enacting and seeking a cure for the troubles... Taxes are going to be compensated, poverty is going to be fought, hungry men are going to be fed, the road that goes to the heaven is going to be found, etc. etc.

Many parties have come in different periods. Programs have changed in different periods. People have changed in different periods.

But, you, the man who remains an observer of all these, do not look at me bewildered like this:

Everything passes; these scenes remain permanently. You will change the paint on these scenes, not men from above.⁷⁷

In the last issue of *Resimli Ay* “Görüyoruz... Duyuyoruz...” did not appear.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that *Resimli Ay* had declared its oppositionary position to Atatürk's Republican People's Party, and with this last article demanded a political

⁷⁶ Last two issues were published in the same month. Sertels had decided to publish the magazine in a fifteen days basis.

⁷⁷ (Bir fırka, saçaklarından sefalet akan bu memleketi bucak bucak geziyor, ocak açtırmış Kanun yapıyor, derilere deva arıyorum... Vergiler tanzim edilecek, sefaletle mücadele edilecek, açlar doycak, akan gözyaşları duracak, cennete giden yol bulunacak, cak, cak... miş... Devir devir fırkalar geldi. Devir, devir programlar değişti. Devir devir insanlar değişti... Fakat, uzaktan yakından, içten dıştan bunu seyreden adam, yüzüme şaşkın şaşkın bakma: Herşey geçer, hepsi fânidir, bakı kalan bu tablolarıdır. Tabloların boyasını tepeden inenler değil, sizler değiştireceksiniz”) Sabiha Zekeriya [Sertel], “Görüyoruz... Değişmeyen tabloların faciasını; İşidiyoruz... Barlarda kadın, şampanya sesleri,” *Resimli Ay*, 1 January (1931): 4.

movement from below that was owned by especially workers and villagers. It was stated earlier that Zekeriya Sertel in one of his articles that published one of the last issues of the magazine enunciated the journal's side as socialist. Actually, Sabiha Sertel's articles are more combative and franker in terms of socialist stance.

II.II.II) On Missionary Activities

Articles on missionary activities were allotted significant space in *Resimli Ay*. In an article -possibly by Zekeriya Sertel- about the previous year performance of the magazine, it was stated that *Resimli Ay* had featured two notable article series that had determined the main agenda of the magazine: one was the campaign of "We Break the Idols," and the other was articles about missionary activities. He proudly asserted that, "The struggle that we embarked upon against the missionaries had important effects throughout our country. Our efforts helped to enlighten people who did not have knowledge about missionary schools so far. But, most importantly they helped to act in the way that the government wanted to act."⁷⁸

These words should not be forgotten. From April 1929 to August 1930, thirteen articles were published on missionary activities especially publishing and education. These articles had both nationalist and anti-imperialist tones, and in the late issues the later theme was accentuated against the former. However, both lines, despite the changing weights, existed throughout the whole process. Moreover, it is important to note the changing perspective and the disappearance of this interest in

⁷⁸ ("Misyonerler aleyhinde açtığımız mücadele, memleketin her tarafında büyük akisler yaptı. Şimdiye kadar misyoner mekteplerinin faaliyetleri hakkında malumât sahibi olmayan birçok kimseleri tenevire yardım etti. Fakat herşeyden ziyade Hükümetin bu hususta atmak istediği adımın atulmasını tesire hizmet etti"). No name, "Geçen Sene," *Resimli Ay*, January (1930): 1. However, what these steps would be was not touched in any issue of the magazine. This is an interesting point especially thinking about the magazine's intensive interest in the topic.

missionary activities in the last issues revealed an important transformation in the magazine.

Two articles that were published in the issue of April 1929 are important to seeing the initial nationalist attitude of *Resimli Ay*. In the first article, it was told that the missionaries had appealed to *Resimli Ay* for the publication of a journal that would convey the ideas of Bible House: “However, they didn’t consider that the young administrators of *Resimli Ay* are free-minded men and do not make the religious propaganda. They also didn’t consider that no one exists that knows better about their genuine intentions.”⁷⁹ After the refusal of this offer, they went to another printing house and began to publish a journal. According to the article, among the writers of the journal of the Bible House were some Turkish writers; in this way, the Bible House tried to hide its real face. Its intention in publishing this journal was interpreted in a hard-nationalistic tone:

I am talking as a man who has born witness to the missionaries’ propaganda in America, that for each piaster that is collected by Bible House, a Turk is despised one thousand times. Money is collected as if for the education of naked and orphan children that remain from the hundred thousands of Armenians, and each collection of money brings about more disgracing of Turks. Some part of the money that is collected in this propaganda which represents us badly, and which is not possible to repair even we spend millions, is sent to here to save the Armenian orphans who do not exist in reality, and to convert some people to Protestantism if possible.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ (“Yalnız düşünemediler ki *Resimli Ay*’ın başında bulunan gençler serbest fikirli adamlardır ve din propagandası yapmayacak adamlardır. Yine düşünemediler ki, bu memlekette onların hakiki maksatlarını bizim kadar iyi bilen kimse yoktur.”) Without a name, “Fikir Hayatımız Kimin Elindedir? Misyonerler Çocuklarımızı Nasıl Zehirliyor?” *Resimli Ay*, April (1929): 21. Although there is not a signature, writer of the article is Mehmet Zekeriya [Sertel] as understood from the words.

⁸⁰ (“Amerika’da misyonerlerin para toplamak için yaptıkları propagandaya şahit olmuş bir adam sıfatıyla söylüyorum ki, orada Baybul Havuzun topladığı her kuruş için Türk bin defa tahkir edilir. Göya katledilen yüzbinlerce Ermeni’nin bıraktığı çıplak ve yetim yüzbinlerce çocuğun okutulması ve her toplanan para türkün biraz daha terzil edilmesi hesabına elde edilir. Amerika’da bizi fena tanıtan ve senelerce zaman ve milyonlarca para sarfetsek tamiri mümkün olmayan bu propagandan neticesinde toplanan paranın bir kısmı da göya o yetim kalan fakat hakikatta mevcut olmayan Ermeni

In the second article the problem was the dominance of minorities in the publication sector. Weakness, insufficiency, and low quality in published materials were assessed as the result of this dominance. In the article, Ankara Street in İstanbul, which was the street of most of the publishing houses and other subsidiary publishing companies, was displayed shop to shop by the nationality of the shopkeepers. If, it was claimed, Turkish people wanted to have good and cheap school books, meet the ideas and the sciences of Western civilization, raise their children better, and read books of good quality, then there was only one way to resort: “Save the Turkish publications from the yoke of ignorant Armenians, charlatan Iranians, trickster Jews. Save Ankara Street which is the backbone of Turkish thought, from the hands of the enemies of Turkish culture. Leave the Turkish publications to Turks.”⁸¹

In the next issue, May 1929, Sertels’ interest in missionary activities continued and even increased. In this issue, there were three articles. The first two of these were related to the foreign high schools in İstanbul; two different stories were told about children who were students of these colleges. In the first one, main issue was the frightening atmosphere of a French girl’s school. The nuns in the school resembled black devils, and the children endured in the torture of an intolerant administration that forbade games, talking, novels, and so on. The other article was about American Girls College, and a father’s complaints about his daughter’s transformation there. The father had preferred this school due to its nice

yetimlerini kurtarmak ve mümkünse birkaç kişiyi protestan yapmak üzere buraya gönderilir.”) Ibid. 38.

⁸¹ (“*Türk neşriyatını cahil ermenilerin, şarlattan acemlerin, hilekâr yahudilerin boyunduruğundan kurtarınız. Türk fikriyatının amudu fikarîsi olan Ankara caddesini türk harsına düşman olanların elinden kurtarınız, türk neşriyatını türklere bırakınız.*”) No name, “Babıali Kavafı,” *Resimli Ay*, April (1929): 39.

environment, buildings, and widespread fame. Despite the first good days, the daughter started to change in a negative way. She became aloof from her family, and acquired some “cosmopolitan” qualities from the “cosmopolitan” friendship atmosphere. Now, she wanted to dress like a saloon woman, and even her education was horribly terrible. The reason for the transformation was clear: “The place that was articulated as an American Girl College was nothing more than a monastery that was hidden among splendid buildings.”⁸² The worst result of the transformation was her alienation from her country: “Under all these influences, my daughter has been transformed into a different thing, after she left the school. At that time, she was suffering from depression. She wasn’t pleased with anything or anyone, she didn’t have any concern for her country, and she was living in a completely strange world. Of course, she wasn’t happy with her life in the house. My daughter was a Turk when she went to school; however, she was a cosmopolitan when she left.”⁸³ It is interesting to note an intensive complaint about education level of these schools, which were famous in terms of this criterion. Even if, it was claimed, a graduate of these schools saved himself from “Christianity terrorism” he could not be an important man in society due to his poor education.

The third article of the same issue was about Bible House, and included an open letter to its administrator, Mr. Birch. The magazine *Muhit* was revealed as being published with the financial aid of the Bible House. Mr. Birch and two other Turkish shareholders of the magazine were invited to explain the situation.

⁸² (“Amerikan kız koleji denilen yer, muhteşem binalar içinde gizlenmiş manastırdan başka bir şey değildir.”) No name, “Kızımı Amerikan Kolejine Nasıl Verdim, Ne Halde Aldım?” *Resimli Ay*, May (1929): 18

⁸³ (“Bütün bu tesirler altında kızım mektepten çıktığı zaman büsbütün başka bir şey olmuştu. Şimdi ruhunda bir buhran vardı. Hiç kimseyi ve hiçbir şeyi beğenmiyor, memlekete karşı hiç bir alâka duymuyor ve tamamen yabancı bir alemde yaşıyordu. Tabii evdeki hayatından memnun değildi. Kızım mektebe gireken türktü, fakat çıkarken kozmopolit olmuştu.”) *Ibid.* 18.

In the issue of June 1929, *Resimli Ay* continues to attack missionary activities with two articles. The first one was about the French high schools, especially St. Joseph. The very same ideas, which were identified in the earlier issues were repeated here; in these schools, the teachers were missionaries, the attitudes towards students were inhumane and harsh, the education of the school was very low quality, and protection of one's own identity was nearly impossible. The other article involved a more sensational story. İsmet Hanım who was Granddaughter of Cevdet Paşa, the famous writer of *Mecelle*, and the daughter of the first woman novelist, Fatma Aliye Hanım, had been converted to Christianity. In the article, this fact was evaluated as the result of İsmet Hanım's education in Dame de Sion, a French high school for girls in İstanbul. Interestingly, her story had two parts. The first one was about lesbianism, which she also had acquired from the same school. In this way, missionary activities had a sexually perverse dimension that, to a certain extent, worsened their already dreadful image.

Two issues later, with the title "A New Sacrifice" (*Yeni Bir Kurban*), another case was related. Here, an orphan girl whose father had just died had been taken in the name of protection by Dame de Sion high school. It was claimed that the people who saw this act as a philanthropic one have veiled eyes: "Those who have veiled eyes see this as such. This veil over the eyes of the cosmopolitan generation is especially very thick."⁸⁴ The staff of these colleges did not follow a platonic law; they had real and terrible purposes which were mainly three: "1) to spread Christianity, 2) to spread their culture, and 3) to uphold the imperialism of to which

⁸⁴ ("Gözünde perde olanlar bunu böyle görürler. Hele kozmopolit neslin gözündeki bu perde çok kalındır.") No name, "Yeni Bir Kurban," *Resimli Ay*, Ağustos (1929): 13.

the country they belong.”⁸⁵ It is important thing to note this emphasis on imperialism, which had a clear nationalist and colonialist implication.

In September 1929 another case was narrated. This article, which was written by Sabiha Sertel, in fact, was a sort of a summary about the intentions and deeds of missionaries. Therefore, it seems to have functioned as a clarification of *Resimli Ay*'s position on the discussion. Fevzi Raşit, after finishing İzmir American College had been sent to the United States by missionaries, and had converted to Christianity there. Then he returned to Turkey, and began to work at some missionary activities. On the one hand, he was shown as an example of an intellectual type that was only harmful to Turkish people; on the other hand, by exploring his story Sabiha Sertel sought to reveal the main feature of missionary activities. She proposed four basic aims of the missionaries: religion, internationalism, Americanization, and humanism. These four aims were different parts of the same game. In this way, young people acquired the Christian spirit, cosmopolitan spirit under the mask of internationalism; came to believe in the American ideals of which main features are pseudo-democracy and pseudo-freedom; and identified humanism and Christianity. A critique of American ideals and their identification with Christianity are important, especially if we consider Sertels' admiration of democracy and life in the United States.

In the issue of October 1929, the adjective used for missionary activities was clear-cut: imperialist. Sabiha Sertel in her article investigated these imperialist organizations' worldwide activities. Referring to an article from an American magazine about missionary activities in China, Sertel once more tried to reveal the veiled intentions of missionaries. Now, missionaries were mediators of American

⁸⁵ (1) *Hristiyanlığı yaymak*, 2) *Kendi kültürlerini yaymak*, 3) *Mensup oldukları milletin imperyalizmine bir mesnet taşı olmak.*) Ibid.

economic interests, and naturally American capital. Therefore, American democracy that was attempted to be reached by other poor countries was only a pretext. At this point, *Resimli Ay* no longer perceived missionary activities as an attempt to spread Christianity. Now it was only a tool of imperialism; and there was nothing cultural: “If the most important duty of missionaries is to guard the American capital in China, that has nothing to do with culture. This is not more than a direct application of the imperialist policy of the United States— policy of economic exploitation”⁸⁶

However, in the next issue (November 1930) the emphasis on imperialism and of being missionaries the mediator of capitalism was not seen, and two articles that more or less resemble to first articles on missionary activities were published. One is about the magazine, *Muhit*, whose secret owner was Mr. Birch; and some Turkist writers like Mehmet Emin, Yusuf Akçora, Yakup Kadri and Reşat Nuri were criticized for writing in this magazine. In the article, it was asked that, “Do they believe that missionaries regard light to Turkish youth?”⁸⁷ Once more time, the ideas and information about Mr. Birch and *Muhit* were enumerated. At this point, it is unintelligible why the above-mentioned nationalist figures did cooperate with the missionaries. At the same time, in the other article of the same issue were complaints that priests did not teach objective history in the missionary schools.

Then, for a few issues there were no more articles on missionary activities. After the adjudication process of Sabiha Sertel and Emin Türk started, only one article was published on these activities. This article was a about a dialogue between a missionary, a merchant, and a journalist. It was published in two issues, June and

⁸⁶ (“*Misyonerlerin en büyük vazifesi Çin’deki Amerikan sermayesini beklemekse, bundan da harsla hiç alâkası yoktur. Bu doğrudan doğruya Amerika’nın takip ettiği imperyalist bir siyasetin, iktisadi istismar siyasetinin tatbikinden başka bir şey değildir.*”) Sabiha Zekeriya [Sertel], “Bütünlü Cihanı Saran Emperyalist Hristiyan Tekkeleri,” *Resimli Ay*, October (1929): 10.

⁸⁷ (“*Misyonerliğin Türk gençliğine ışık verdiğine mi inanıyorlar?*”) No name, “Maskeler İnsin Efendiler,” *Resimli Ay*, November (1929): 18

July of 1930. In this dialogue, the merchant and the missionary unintentionally revealed their harm to African countries, although, as stated, they were parts of the same economic interests. The narrator of the story, the journalist, interprets this argument as conveying traces of an old dispute which they had had in the first days of their invasion. Last words of the journalist were allusive: “Western civilization wants as such... Because of this, Haitians suffer or die... Who cares?... The missionary and the merchant fill their pockets, isn’t that enough?... and we journalists find original topics as you see... That’s enough.”⁸⁸

It is obvious that *Resimli Ay*’s attitude on this problem was not very different from that of the government’s. The sole tension between the administration and the magazine was that Zekeriya Sertel’s efforts to form *Misyonerleri Kovma Cemiyeti* (The Society to Get Rid of Missionaries) were hindered by the government.⁸⁹ In the end, it is not possible to say that the Sertels changed their minds about missionary activities. They remained opposed until the end. However, as seen above, the emphasis on religious propaganda or the missionaries shifted to their imperialist, and more importantly, capitalist aspects. Therefore, the nationalist attitude of the magazine weakened as its anti-capitalist tone strengthened. We will see the same trend in other articles on other topics.

II.II.III) The Disappearance of Nationalist Discourse

As showed in the articles on missionary activities, the emphasis on these activities’ harm on the nation weakened, whereas their function in international

⁸⁸ (“*Garp medeniyeti öyle istiyor... Bu yüzden Haytililer ıstırap çekiyor, ölüyorlarmış... Ne çıkar... Misyonerlerle tüccarın cebi doluyor a... Biz gazeteciler de orjinal mevzu buluyoruz ya... Kâfi.*”) No name, “Tüccar ve Misyoner İptidai İnsanlar Arasında Nasıl Çalışırlar, Meraklı Bir Macera,” *Resimli Ay*, July (1930): 4.

⁸⁹ Mehmet Zekeriya [Sertel] mentions these efforts in the issue of June 1929. In June 1930, he writes about negative attitude of the government against this endeavor with a disappointed tone: “*Biz fikir sahasında mücadele ederek bizi istismar için gelen bu emperyalizm aletlerine karşı cidal açacaktık, onu da reddettiler.*” Mehmet Zekeriya [Sertel], “Baş Muharririn Köşesi,” *Resimli Ay*, June (1930).

capitalism was accentuated. Other than the articles on missionary activities, especially in the first year, a nationalist discourse with an enthusiastic belief in economic development and industrialization cannot be underestimated. Indeed there were an important number of articles about national industrial establishments without referring to any relation between the worker and the boss. In these articles the successes of national industry were praised enthusiastically and the consumption of indigenous goods were promoted.

In an article on “Süreyya Cloth Factory” the writer’s observations from a trip to the factory were related.⁹⁰ The technological development level of the plantation received enthusiastic comment, and its owner was praised as a full-fledged exemplary industrialist. The exportation of the factory’s goods to Balkans was mentioned proudly. In another article, the situation of local industry was analyzed; information on different industries was enumerated.⁹¹ Moreover, the development line of Turkish industry after the Lausanne Treaty and abolishment of tariff prerogatives were enthusiastically praised and the lack of capital was a matter of complaint.

A few issues later a more serious article on the topic was published.⁹² Various statistics about local production, export and import were analyzed, and the harm of high import rates was tried to discussed. Accordingly, local production and the consumption of local production were promoted. At the same time luxury expenditures were criticized.

However, the praise of national industrial capital was abandoned when the exploitation of workers dominated the agenda of *Resimli Ay*. Both in Sabiha Sertel’s articles and some poems and short stories the exploitation issue especially in

⁹⁰ No Name, “Süreyya Kumaş Fabrikası,” *Resimli Ay* June (1929): 10-11.

⁹¹ No Name, “Potinimize, Lavantamıza, Kumaşımıza: Rağbet,” *Resimli Ay* June (1929): 16-17.

⁹² No Name “Kendi Yağımızla Kavrulacağız,” *Resimli Ay* November (1929): 13-15.

factories became the main focus of blunt criticism. Now the more important thing was to put an end to exploitation, not fostering national development and industrialization.

II.II.IV) Remembrance of the Great Names of the Near Past

After Sabiha Sertel and Emin Türk were sentenced in the court, *Resimli Ay*'s opposition became clearer and more intense. In the magazine's issue of March 1930, the issue which was just published after the court's decision, Sabiha Sertel had a determined tone in speaking of their oppositional position and their strong intention to remain oppositional –surely with a reference to their recent punishment: “If the villager is starving in his village, if he is so helpless as to be unable to buy worthless corn bread, if there is a power exploiting him, then to shout against this power with our strongest voice, to demand the right of the villager is both the right and the duty of every citizen.”⁹³

In the same issue, the defenses of Sabiha Hanım and Emin Türk, and the text of the court's decision were published. In the next issue, May 1930, twenty pages were devoted to Ahmet Rıza and Namık Kemal, who were among the most important figures of Ottoman-Turkish modernization of the recent era. As a popular magazine, this kind of interest in these kinds of individuals cannot be evaluated as other articles in the magazine. Moreover, *Resimli Ay* hasn't been published anything about recent past. I think that *Resimli Ay* was trying to call attention to the forgotten heroes of the national struggle of sixty years; and to a certain extent, this attitude may be thought as a subversive one to the rule of Atatürk, which emphasized the victory of one man.

⁹³ (“Köylü köyünde açsa, üç kuruşluk mısır ekmeğini almaktan acizse, onu istismar eden bir kuvvet varsa, bu kuvvete en gür sesimizle bağırarak, köylünün hakkını istemek, her vatandaşın hem hakkı hem vazifesidir. Vazifesini yapan adam mahkum olursa, bu onun için mağlubiyet değil zaferdir.”) Sabiha Zekeriya [Sertel], “Muhakemede Kaybettik Fakat Davamızı Kaybetmedik,” *Resimli Ay*, March (1930): 1.

In one of the articles, it was declared that to bring light the dark pages of revolution history was a social mission, and now *Resimli Ay* undertook it. New generations had to be introduced to heroes of the revolution history.⁹⁴

The opening article of the issue was about the death of Ahmet Rıza and how he had been left to die in terrible conditions. This situation was harshly criticized: “In our opinion, the death of Ahmet Rıza was a death of a silent hero, and this death is more sorrowful than the deaths of heroes whose heroisms are known by everybody.”⁹⁵ He was praised for his struggle for the sake of freedom and called as “the first freedom hero” (*ilk hürriyet kahramanı*). In other articles about Ahmet Rıza, it was lamented that the real freedom fighters had been forgotten, whereas the pseudo ones had become the new authoritarian leaders: “People always bear witness to the hero’s ascending the gilded throne of despotism and sultanate in the river of blood, after they have sacrificed plenty of their blood beside those pseudo idealists”⁹⁶ It is inevitable to ask that who the pseudo heroes were here.

Moreover, some subtle and vague analogies were established between the periods of Abdülhamid II and that of Atatürk. During the Hamidean period, Turkish intellectuals, like Ahmet Rıza, had fled to Europe and published newspapers there: “To make the voice of the truth to be heard, distances are nothing. Going different places of the world, the Turkish advocates of freedom who could not write and talk as they want, published a lot of newspapers, explained the truth to people and

⁹⁴ (“*Bizce Ahmet Rıza'nın ölümü, yaptıklarını aynuka çıkaran kahramanların ölümünden daha fazla teessür veren bir sessiz kahramanın ölümüdür.*”) No name, “İlk Hürriyet Kahramanı Ahmet Rıza,” *Resimli Ay*, April (1930) : 2. Both Ahmet Rıza and Namık Kemal are told in relatively long biographies in the very same issue.

⁹⁵ No name, “Ahmet Rıza Öldü,” *Resimli Ay*, April (1930) : 1.

⁹⁶ (“*Halk daima bu sahte idealistlerin arkasında, hürriyet kavuşacağı diyerek, sel gibi kan döktükten sonra, kahramanın bu kan nehri içinde yaldızlı istibdat ve saltanat kayığına kurulduğunu görür.*”) *ibid.* p. 1.

overthrew an eminent crown.”⁹⁷ It was, as if the writers of *Resimli Ay* were contemporary freedom fighters in this sort of analogy.

Namık Kemal was also abundantly praised and called “the poet of freedom” (*hürriyet şairi*). The opinions of some men of letters were asked about Namık Kemal in the same issue. All had the same idea: “They all accept that Namuk Kemal is the first and last poet of freedom.”⁹⁸ Apart from some ten pages of laudatory writing, there were two more important short articles, which seem more significant for us. In one, Namık Kemal and Abdülhak Hamid were compared in the political and literary senses, and it is stated that Namık Kemal was clearly the superior. In this picture, Abdülhak Hamid was the one who was lazy, supine and political coward, whereas Namık Kemal was patriotic, original and combative.⁹⁹ In the other short article, there was another comparison, although not an overt one, a subtle comparison between the Kemal of Republic and the Kemal of freedom. In this short article, it was stated that Namık Kemal’s tomb had been destroyed in an earthquake and it had not been repaired. After a complaining part, the article finished with a surprisingly explicit demand: “We ask a statue and monument also for the Kemal of freedom”¹⁰⁰ It is unnecessary to state that this “also” is dangerously meaningful. One more related point was the publication of Tefvik Fikret’s famous poem “95’e Doğru”, which was a criticism of Union and Progress administration.¹⁰¹ Again, the selection of this poem was meaningful, that a vague similarity was established between CUP and Atatürk’s government.

⁹⁷ (“*Hakikatın sesini duyurmak için mesafenin hiç ehemmiyeti yoktur. Kendi öz topraklarında istediklerini yazıp söyleyemeyen Türk hürriyetperverleri, dünyanın dört köşesine dağılarak, birçok gazeteler çıkardılar, millete hakikati anlattılar ve koca bir tacü tahtı devirdiler.*”) No name, “İlk Hürriyet Kahramanı Ahmet Rıza,” *Resimli Ay*, April (1930) : 6.

⁹⁸ (“*Namuk Kemal’in ilk ve son hürriyet şairi olduğunda herkes müttefiktir.*”) No name, “Hürriyet Şairi Namık Kemal,” *Resimli Ay*, April (1930) : 17.

⁹⁹ Without a Name, “Namık Kemal and Abdülhak Hamit,” *Resimli Ay*, April (1930) : 19.

¹⁰⁰ (“*Hürriyetin Kemal’i için de heykel ve abide istiyoruz!*”) No Name, “Namık Kemal için Heykel ve Abide,” *Resimli Ay*, April (1930): 19.

¹⁰¹ Tefvik Fikret, “95’e Doğru,” *Resimli Ay* September (1930): 19.

Additionally, for this section a change is noted during this second phase in the perception of past. In 1929, some articles came out about the perception of the past both in individualistic and social terms. In general, the main theme was that warding off the past and turning one's face to future was a fundamental necessity in modern age. At this point, *Resimli Ay* had clear support for the Republican reforms, and did not have a criticism about the negligence of the past with the radical Republican attitude towards past. Even the campaign of We Break the Idols, which will be discussed in the next chapter, defended a radical renovation in literary terms.

However, after the suit in 1930 some articles advocating some figures or customs of the past were published. As it was showed, Namık Kemal and Ahmet Rıza were presented as great, but forgotten heroes. Even if this may be accepted as a solely political step to remember the alternatives of Mustafa Kemal and other protagonists of the Liberation Movement, a contradiction in the *Resimli Ay*'s perception of past can be revealed intuitively. That instead of a sectarian rejection of the past, a critical evaluation was later preferred does not seem to me an illogical inference.

II.II.V) Writings on the Soviet System

As said in the first section of this chapter, *Resimli Ay* protected its feature of being a popular and cultural magazine till the end of its publication. Nevertheless, both popular and cultural issues reveal traces of the transformation. The increasing number of articles on Soviet Russian and Soviet Republics' culture was the most explicit sign of this claim.

In these articles Soviet Republics of Uzbek and Azerbaijan were introduced in various ways.¹⁰² Their economic, social and cultural states were assessed and the writer of the articles claimed that these two Republics were experiencing their best times. Indeed, the real praise was for Soviet system because the emphasis was on how these sibling countries had reached a high level in economic, social and cultural issues. In this way, the poverty and inequality during the Tsarist period, and the diametrically opposed situation during the Soviet period were compared.

Another article praised the changes in the marriage system in post-Revolution Russia. The easiness and speed of marriage and divorce processes were shown as the signs of how people had saved themselves from the yoke of weary laws. Accordingly, for marriage or divorce to go to the related office was enough. This was the success of “the country that the greatest revolution of the world.”¹⁰³ In another article, how the Turkish boxers were shown hospitality in Russia during their stay for a match was described.¹⁰⁴

Additionally, an interesting poll among famous European writers about launching a war against Soviet Russia was published in the magazine.¹⁰⁵ The answers belonged to Bernard Shaw, Stefan Zweig, Romain Rolland, and Martin Andersen Neksen who disliked the idea explicitly. They cursed the efforts for creating an atmosphere of hatred against Russia.

¹⁰² No Name, “Özbeklerin Hayatı,” *Resimli Ay* August (1930): 26-28; No Name, “Azerbeycan,” *Resimli Ay* October (1930): 20.

¹⁰³ No Name “Bir Amerikalı Muharririn Rusya’da Gördükleri, 10 Dakikada Evlenme 9 Dakikada Boşanma,” *Resimli Ay* June (1930): 4-6.

¹⁰⁴ No Name, “Türk Boksörleri Moskova’da,” *Resimli Ay* 15 January (1931): 7.

¹⁰⁵ No Name, “Bir Edebiyat Cemiyetinin Anketi,” *Resimli Ay* August (1930): 31.

II.II.VI) Faltering on Popular Issues and the Falling Down of Woman Image

Indeed, *Resimli Ay* always hesitated in the presentation of popular issues.

There were frequently explicit contradictions among the pages of the magazine.

Whereas on one page, there were photographs of well-dressed and fancy people from the upper classes presented with an article on modern life, on the next page it was not surprising to encounter a criticism of the luxury life in Şişli. Or, an article about a very famous Hollywood actress could be followed by an article on American imperialism or the peasantry's poverty in Turkey.

These contradictions had had equivalents within the presentation of popular articles themselves since the beginning of these two years. For example, a colorful article about a French revue group "Folie Berger" of three pages, a line under a photograph is surprising: "These girls are never as happy as they seem in these photographs"¹⁰⁶ This sentence splits the article down the middle: Although there is a deep doubt about the state of these revue girls, why this colorful pages full of photographs were published?

Another example of faltering was seen in the article of "The Most Greatest 10 Women of the World".¹⁰⁷ Cleopatra, Helen of Troy, Jan Dark, Russian empress Katrina etc. composed of the list. However, the article had unrest about the list, as seen from its last sentence: "Indeed, if we think about Madam Curry, Rosa Luxemburg, Ellen Kay, to articulate these woman as great is sinful."¹⁰⁸ It was promised that these real great women would be analyzed in an article in the next issue, but no analysis would be published. The contradiction between the title, the content of article and last paragraph is again bewildering.

¹⁰⁶ (Bu Kızlar aslında hiç de göründükleri kadar mutlu değildir.)

¹⁰⁷ No Name, "Dünyanın En Büyük 10 Kadını," *Resimli Ay* January (1930): 23-24.

¹⁰⁸ ("Madam Curry, Rosa Günxenburg, Elen Kay gibi kadınlar varken bunlara büyük demek günah olur") Ibid. 24.

A very same controversy can be seen on the covers of one of some issues. *Resimli Ay* generally published modern women photographs or pictures on its cover. However, this preference exposed unrest in the last issues to a certain extent. The cover of June 1930 showed a woman servant drying her lady. The subtitle of the picture is ironic: “Woman-about-town after bath?”¹⁰⁹ Indeed, this kind of women-of-town is frequently on the pages of *Resimli Ay* until this date. In the issue of September 1930, again a modern woman of the type frequently seen in the pages of magazine, with clothes, make-up and jewels was on the cover. The subtitle of the cover is again surprising: “This parasitic woman kind will disappear in near future.”¹¹⁰ In the next issues, the fancy women really disappeared from the covers of *Resimli Ay*; instead the pictures of working poor, or more ordinary women were featured.

This hesitation on the covers of *Resimli Ay* implies a strong change in the scope of the magazine on issues about woman. Surely the call of freedom for women was as powerful as the first days of the two-year period. However, the focus was now on the oppressed and especially worker women. In June 1930, how the women and children were exploited in the industrial plantation was the subject of a long article. Their long working hours (eleven to twelve hours) and very low salaries were assessed a kind of slavery.¹¹¹ In September 1930, it was asserted that the success of a social movement or a revolution depended on the containment of workingwomen, and Soviet Russia’s success in this issue was suggested as an example. Surely, September 1930 bore witness to the hottest opposition period of *Resimli Ay*, and with this article the issue of woman was encapsulated by the agenda of opposition. At the same time, the last sentence of the article revealed the shift of the magazine in terms

¹⁰⁹ (“*Salon Hanımı Banyodan Sonra?*”)

¹¹⁰ (“*Bu tufeyli kadın cinsi yakında ortadan kalkacaktır.*”)

¹¹¹ Sabiha Zekeriya, “*Sınai Hayatta Kadın ve Çocuk,*” *Resimli Ay* June (1930): 18.

of the topic: “The woman of soil and iron, who is without rouge and face powder, is progressing. Open the way for her!”¹¹²

Another article on this subject was published two issues later. In this one, it was underlined that none of the laws that arranged the working conditions of women and children were applied. The writer gave a summary of rights and explained how these rights had no validity in practice.¹¹³ Indeed a photograph in the same issue revealed the dimension of change. In this photograph a man and a woman were shown working in a factory together, unlike the earlier photographs and pictures that showed them in luxury restaurants, attending balls, or engaged in other such idealized activities.¹¹⁴

At the same time, in last four and five issues articles that suggested pragmatic solutions to daily problems especially of woman increased, pedagogical writings had a relative increase, articles on Hollywood decreased and had a change in tone. It was as if *Resimli Ay* was trying to curb its popular elements, which presented a kind of American style of life, and substituted them with more practical articles. A declaration about the future issues of magazine, which would never be published, proved this fact: “By 1 February, *Resimli Ay* will be an excellent magazine of thought, art, world movements, novel, useful information, science, pedagogy. This is the desire of our real, constant readers. We trust in them in undertaking this project.”¹¹⁵

¹¹² (“*Toprak ve demirin alliksiz ve pudrasiz kadini ilerliyor. Ona yol açınız!*”) No Name, “Toprak ve Demirin Kadını,” *Resimli Ay* September (1930): 4-5.

¹¹³ No Name, “İşte Çalışan Kadın ve Çocuk: Nerede Nasıl Çalışırlar?” *Resimli Ay*, 1 Kanunisanı (1931): 13-14.

¹¹⁴ No Name, “Hayat Kavgasında Erkek ve Kadın,” *Resimli Ay* October (1930): 29.

¹¹⁵ (“*1 Şubat'tan itibaren Resimli Ay haftalık olarak yep yeni bir şekilde, mükemmel bir fikir, san'at, Dünya hareketleri, Roman, faydeli, fen, ilim pedagoji mecmuası olacaktır. Bunu bizden öz, daimi okuyucularımız istedi. Onlara güvenerek bu yeni teşebbüse girişiyoruz.*”) *Resimli Ay* 15 January (1931): 7.

Nevertheless, it is one more time to be noted that the most important sign of faltering was proportional decrease in popular issues, when literary and political issues had increase in number and page.

II.III) Conclusion

Through the publication of *Resimli Ay* between 1929 and 1931, the audience bore witness to the sprouting of an oppositional focus. This focus was a purely left-wing one and defined itself with the critique of the single party government. Indeed, *Resimli Ay* always had a point of criticism due to the lack of democratic conventions during the era. However, at the end of 1930, there was a more powerful motivation for opposition: the struggle of the workers and peasants, in other words: class politics. Thus, a shift of emphasis changed the whole appearance of the magazine.

In this way, the main political actor with which *Resimli Ay* identified itself also changed; instead of the whole nation, the class of oppressed took center stage. The interrogation of nation brought about a catastrophic change in the face of the magazine. The image of ideal society, which I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, now was also on the chair of interrogation. Indeed, this image included the belief in national development, democracy, and commitment to American life style and welfare policies simultaneously. Now, the question was which elements of this ideal society would be eliminated. The hesitation to answer this question was the main reason of eclecticism in the last issues of the magazine. In fact, the total clarification of *Resimli Ay*'s mind in the next issues seems not impossible. It is no doubt that the annihilation of the magazine killed a nascent formation.

The program of municipality, which was published in October 1930 immediately afterwards Zekeriya Sertel lost in municipality assembly elections, was the first and last attempt of Resimli Ay's nascent opposition to politicize literally. The program's demands were not strange to the audience of the magazine: first of all people was superior to the governors. In the elections the main determiner had to be their will. Other parts of the program stipulated that the exploitation of the rich should be ended; nursing homes for workers' children, soup kitchens for poor people, free hospitals should be built; poor people should be exempt from taxes; and fewer hours for work, and better pay.¹¹⁶ In fact, in the same issue Zekeriya Sertel claimed that he was the candidate of workers and peasants.¹¹⁷ In the same article, he accused the RPP of misusing its authority in the elections. According to him also the laws of elections were insufficient and not democratic. He thought that he had been made candidate from Beyoğlu deliberately, and surely this was the most inconvenient place for him.

In the next chapter, I will analyze literary side of the transformation. In this way, to understand the place of Resimli Ay's opposition more clearly is possible.

¹¹⁶ Sabiha Zekeriya, "Belediyecilikte İstiyeyeğimiz Şeyler: Program ve Programın İzahı," *Resimli Ay* October (1930): 4-7.

¹¹⁷ Mehmet Zekeriya, "Baş Muharririn Köşesi: Namzetliğimi Niçin Koydum" *Resimli Ay* October (1930): 40.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE IN RESİMLİ AY

Resimli Ay, under the leadership of Nâzım Hikmet, provided a showcase for new literary forms, which were entirely revolutionary in Turkish literature. In a short period, many poets emerged who tried to imitate Hikmet's style, and mainstream intellectuals had a real curiosity about him. Nâzım Hikmet had borne witness to the hottest post-years of the Russian Revolution as a young poet, and as generally accepted was influenced by the avant-garde art of Russian Futurism and the socialist transformation in Soviet Russia.¹ He returned to Turkey with a new and critical literary outlook that should be analyzed in terms of both Futurism and the incrementally petrifying socialist realist perception of art as the elements of his poetry entailed.

As shown in the previous chapter, the magazine became positioned along a more or less socialist-democratic opposition platform during the period Nâzım Hikmet worked and wrote there. It is important to examine the literary side of this transformation, which seems me a more important point as the other side kept pace with literary one. To reveal this aspect may be helpful in the evaluation of the complex modality of the relationship between the political and artistic spheres in the case of the Turkish radical left and Republican Turkey. In this way, the concepts of avant-garde art that dominated modern world in those years, and the changing

¹ It is largely believed that that Nazım Hikmet was deeply impressed by famous Russian futurist Vladimir Maiakovsky; and Maiakovsky's influence can be observed in different points of Hikmet's life and literary products. However, this influence hasn't been analyzed in a detailed manner in literary terms, although many articles have been written denoting this relation.

perception of literature in post-revolution Russia have to be employed in order to understand *Resimli Ay*'s position and originality.

At this point, therefore, two general questions that accompany this study *Resimli Ay* must be asked: To what extent did Marxist reflections on literature, which had worldwide influence, affect literary production in *Resimli Ay*? And second, was there some sort of avant-garde art, avant-garde perception, or did production of avant-garde art seem possible in the literary perception of the magazine?² On the one hand, referring to possible answers of these questions, I will try to designate the original place of literary thinking declared in *Resimli Ay*. On the other hand, as *Resimli Ay* gives an important opportunity to consider the possible answers of this questions, I will analyze the magazine as a creator of the discussions on these topics in radical left-wing circles and in the whole cultural life of the early Republic. I should once more emphasize that *Resimli Ay* was one of the most important periodicals of its time, and its literary divergence was more obvious than in any other one. Therefore, to put the literary production published in *Resimli Ay* in place may give an opportunity of rethinking the interplay of these contemporary currents and Turkish art circles.

The political implications of this literary challenge will be dealt with in the last chapter of this study.

I) Nâzım Hikmet

Probably the most famous poet of the Republican era, Nâzım Hikmet was the person who manipulated *Resimli Ay* into an oppositional literary magazine. His poetry and stormy political life have been discussed for years, and many biographies have been published, especially after the 1960's when his poems and plays became

² And, the complex relationship between avant-garde art and Marxist approach has to stay at the back of one's mind.

available to the Turkish people. Before examining his literary products in *Resimli Ay*, let's take a look at his interesting life story, focusing on his years before *Resimli Ay*.

Nâzım Hikmet was born on 20 November 1901 in Salonika to an aristocratic family, which had roots from different national backgrounds. One of his mother's paternal ancestors was from Poland, and one other branch of his family was from a French family. At the same time, his lineage contained important and famous figures like Ali Fuat Cebesoy (one of the heroes of the Liberation War), Mehmet Ali Aybar (the leader of the Turkish Worker's Party later), Oktay Rifat (another very significant poet of the Republican era). Thus, Nâzım Hikmet was a definite member of the upper class.

His paternal grandfather, Mehmed Nâzım Pasha, was an important military figure, and at the same time a well-known poet. His mother, the daughter of another pasha, was an extraordinary woman who played piano, spoke French, and painted. These both influenced Nâzım Hikmet deeply, and thus he grew up in an environment in which artistic abilities were treated as invaluable. At the same time, as a child he was talented in both poetry and painting. There are many fantastic stories about his early poems, which exaggerated his great competency in poetry.³

He entered the Heybeliada Navy School (*Heybeliada Bahriye Mektebi*) in 1917, but he had to leave in 1920 because of health reasons. In these years, he began to gain fame among the poets of syllabic meter. However, İstanbul was under occupation, and his famous rage, which always would be a motivation for his poems, at that time, was for revenge against the invaders. In this way, he wrote some nationalist poems. Then, he passed over to Anatolia with his close friend Vâlâ

³ Especially Vâlâ Nureddin's *Bu Dünyadan Nâzım Geçti* has interesting and legendary stories.

Nureddin, and two other famous poets, Faruk Nafiz and Yusuf Ziya, in the early days of 1921.⁴

This was a watershed for Nâzım Hikmet. They met a Turkish Spartacist group, come from German and led by Sadık Ahi (later a congressman of the Republican People's Party) in İnebolu. These Spartacists introduced Marxism and important Marxist figures to these young men. Incidentally, they weren't allowed to go to the frontiers, instead they were appointed as teachers to Bolu, a Central Anatolian city. In Bolu, another man who had socialist tendencies, a judge in the Bolu Criminal Court, Ziya Hilmi Bey was to have a deep influence on them. After a short period in Bolu, saying they were going to Kâzım Karabekir's region, which was devoid of teachers as a pretext, they left Turkey.

Nâzım Hikmet's preference, at this point, has been discussed intensively and used as ideological material in Turkey. He and Vâlâ Nureddin went to Batum; however the motivation behind this decision is not clear. In all biographies and research, three main reasons are enumerated as, they desired higher education; they wanted to learn the theory and the practice of the socialist revolution, and they were uncomfortable due to their exclusion from the fronts. Also it is known that they were not received well in Bolu, because the local people felt uncomfortable due to their transgressing behaviors and attitudes. As a final reason, Vâlâ Nureddin's pessimistic words about their hopelessness of the Liberation movement's future are notable. He declared that the Liberation movement would fail, and a new army would be organized in the Caucasus.⁵ From all this information it can be concluded that, as young and enthusiastic poets, they had been influenced by stories about the

⁴ But the latter two syllabic poets weren't accepted and had to return.

⁵ Vâlâ Nureddin, *Bu Dünyadan Nâzım Geçti* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1975): 164.

Revolution in Russia, and their excluded position as teachers in Bolu made them less enthusiastic about the Liberation War.

In Batum, they constituted a close friendship with professor Ahmet Cevat and Şevket Süreyya. As Ahmet Cevat was invited to Moscow to teach at Eastern Laborers Communist University (KUTV), the three young men accompanied him and registered at this university. In Moscow they had an active life including not only lessons, but also various social and artistic activities. There, Nâzım Hikmet had a chance, to take part in Russian modern literary circles, including Futurists and Constructivists, and his socialist friends from many different countries influenced him. The learning activity and discussions on Marxism in the university fostered his experience.

In October 1924 Nâzım Hikmet decided to return to Turkey.⁶ He wrote in the publication organs of the Turkish Communist Party, *Aydınlık* and *Orak Çekiç* once he way back in İstanbul. After the Şeyh Sait Rebellion, these two journals were closed and the members began to be investigated. Nâzım Hikmet had to go İzmir, but he was unable to take shelter there. He was sentenced to fifteen years by the Court of Independence (*İstiklâl Mahkemeleri*) in absentia. Then, he fled to Soviet Russia.

His second sojourn in Russia was different from the first. The milieu of the country and the revolution was changing gradually. Avant-garde trends more or less had lost their influence, and the party became dominant in art issues. He becamed involved in theatre, and worked with the famous Russian play director Nicolay Ekk in the METLA (broom) troupe. Moreover, he met Turkish director Muhsin Ertuğrul in his Moscow days with whom he would cooperate in the future.

⁶ Or, Turkish Communist Party decided that Turkish students in KUTV should return. Different sources claim different things at this point like in many other ones. For example Vâlâ Nureddin thinks that another student influenced Nâzım Hikmet in this decision, whereas Emin Karaca claims that the decision belonged to Şefik Hüsnü and Sadrettin Celal, leaders of Turkish Communist movement.

In July 1928, he again returned to Turkey. Although his punishment had been cancelled after the general amnesty, he faced a three-month jail term as a result of the famous “communist roundup” of 1927. He and his friend Laz İsmail, another Turkish communist, were arrested in Hopa where they had come secretly across the border from the Soviet Union. Their arrest was big news for the national newspapers, as was their adjudication process. About the accusation that he was a communist, Nâzım claimed that he was only interested in communism’s manifestations in literature. After seven months under arrest, he travelled to İstanbul. He had real difficulty in finding a job until his old friend Vâlâ Nureddin introduced him to the Sertels. From this time on, he was the proofreader of *Resimli Ay*.⁷

II) Nazım Hikmet’s Poetic Development and Literary Thoughts up to *Resimli Ay*⁸

It is largely accepted that the most innovative side of Nâzım Hikmet was his perception of form in poetry. Ladder-like and broken lines, sentence as the unit of poem instead of line, and the organization of lines without meter but with rhyme made up his basic poetic structure. His development began from experiences with syllabic meter and continued with the influence of the modern elements of form in contemporary literary trends.

His poems with syllabic meter, as a very young boy were written under the influence of his grandfather. Afşar Timuçin writes that, “Nâzım Hikmet is an exact

⁷ I used these sources in writing of this short biographical sketch: Vâlâ Nureddin, *Bu Dünyadan Nâzım Geçti* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1975); Saime Göksu and Edward Timms, *Romantik Komünist* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2001); Zekeriya Sertel, *Mavi Gözlü Dev* (İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1969); Emin Karaca, *Sevdalınız Komünisttir* (İstanbul: Gendaş, 2001); Memet Fuat, *Nâzım Hikmet* (İstanbul: Adam Yayınevi, 2000); Ekber Babayev, *Yaşamı ve Yapıtlarıyla Nâzım Hikmet* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1976).

⁸ I will discuss the main constituents of Nâzım Hikmet’s poetry in a detailed manner later. However, in this section, I want to picture his literary perception, even if vulgarly, for a more effective analysis of his products in *Resimli Ay*.

syllabic poet in his first poems. He has the common feature of all syllabic poets: a clear and luminous narration, an aloof position from social topics or an emotional approach to these topics, artificial metaphors, exclamations etc. His themes are vulgar also: death, transitoriness, dreams, love, longing, greatness, forgetfulness, complaining etc.”⁹ However, his poetry canalizes to a slightly different way as a result of the occupation years. These poems do not have any alternative position in terms of form, but they have an important change in terms of content. From this time on, they have more or less a social sensitivity and a nationalist view. Moreover, his enthusiastic and strong voice was assessed and praised as an antidote of the feminine voice of recent Turkish poetry.¹⁰

The influence of Anatolia is seen as a furious voice against the poverty and the unconsciousness of the peasantry in his poems of 1920 and 1921. These are interpreted as the first reflections of his nascent revolutionary emotions.¹¹ On the other hand, he claims that he began his search on form in Bolu, when he heard the names of Marx and Lenin, and encountered the peasantry:

When I came to Bolu, had an intimate contact with peasants and heard what was happening in Russia and became aware of names of Marx and Lenin I understood intuitively that new things, which hadn't been uttered until that day, had to be uttered by poetry. In this job, I took the care of finding a form that was convenient to the new substance at first. Generally, to make innovations in form is easier. I began with rhyme.¹²

⁹ (“Nâzım Hikmet ilk şiirleriyle tam bir hecedir. Bütün hececilerde ortak olan şeyi o da sürdürür: açık ve aydınlık bir anlatım, toplum konularından uzakta kalış ya da bu konulara duygusal yöneliş, yapmacıklık benzetmeler, haykırışlar... Temalar da pek kabasabadır: ölüm, ölümlülük, düş, sevgi, özlem, yücelik, unutus, yakınma vb.”) Afşar Timuçin, *Nâzım Hikmet'in Şiiri* (İstanbul: Kavram Yayınları, 1978): 23.

¹⁰ Ekrem Babayef, 25. This last point is important. Because, the femininity of the poetry, its disappointed, disesased voice is one of the most important hatred objects of Futurist poetry which would influence Nâzım Hikmet later. Moreover, in these years the same hatred was dominating the souls of Turkish poets especially under the influence of the Liberation War.

¹¹ Zekeriya Sertel, *Mavi Gözlü Dev.*

¹² (*Bolu'ya gelip halkla, hele köylüyle yakından temasımda ve Sovyet Rusya'da olup bitenleri duyup, Marks'ın, Lenin'in isimlerini filan işittiğimde, şiirle yeni şeylerin, şimdiye dek söylenmemiş şeylerin ifade edilmesi gereğini sezdim. Bu işte ilk önce beni yeni öze göre bir şekil bulmak meselesi*

This awakening would find its real practice with some impressions in Soviet Russia. Although he did not know Russian, he was aware that Russian poetry was experiencing a revolution in terms of form. In the Russian poets' works lines had a different sequence and syntax, word instead of line became the unit of a poem, the phonetics of words were very different than Turkish poetry as if they had an orchestration of various voices, and rhyme lost its significance and meaning. The most important thing was to catch the rhythm that the new life entailed. In this way, they used the voices of city life, especially machines. Moreover, now the vision of the poem was important. Constructivist poetry, as a cousin of Futurism, influenced Nâzım Hikmet in the page setting issue.¹³ Thus, Nâzım Hikmet wrote some poems with using bigger and smaller fonts, or writing words and letters in a bold or thin style. To sum up, an orchestrated rhythm and the appearance of the poem became main formal elements of his poetry.

At the same time, he was a committed socialist and wanted to serve the Revolution in a passionate mood. Through his education at the KUTV, he joined social and political activities in Moscow. Among all these, his poetry came under the deep influence of the process of the Revolution. Babayef writes that, "In the 1920's the poems of the young poet [Nâzım Hikmet] are imbued with a revolutionary romanticism and desire to contribute to the formation of new society"¹⁴

ilgilendirdi. Şekilde yenilikler daha kolaylıkla yapılır genel olarak. İşe kafiye den başladım.) Ekrem Babayev, 67.

¹³ "To create influence out of letters is a practice of the poems that follow Constructivism trend. Constructivism began with Vladimir Tatlin around 1910's. Its evident feature is an addiction of material, technology, functionality, contemporary industrial products made of materials like plastic and glass." ("Harflerle etki yaratma arayışı Yapımcılık akımını izleyen şairlerin bir uygulamasıdır. Yapımcılık 1910'larda Vladimir Tatlin'le başlamıştı. Belirgin özelliği sanatlarda malzemeye, teknolojiye, işlevselliğe, plastik, cam gibi çağdaş sanayi ürünlerine düşkünlüktü.") Memet Fuat, *Nâzım Hikmet*: 52.

¹⁴ ("1920 yıllarında genç şairin şiirleri devrimci bir coşarlık ve yeni toplumun kuruluşuna kendi katkısında bulunmak isteğiyle doludur.") Ekrem Babayef, 91.

Memet Fuat lists Nâzım Hikmet's widely known poems under the influence of Constructivism: *Açların Gözbebekleri* (The Eyes of Greedies) (1922), *Orkestra* (Orchestra) (1922), *Makinalaşmak* (To Be Mechanized) (1923), *Güneşi İçenlerin Türküsü* (The Song of Sun Drinkers) (1924), *Gövdemdeki Kurt* (Worm in My Body) (1924), *Piyer Loti* (1925), *Salkımsöğüt* (Weeping Willow) (1928), *Bahri Hazer* (The Caspian Sea) (1928). There is no poem in the list that was written after 1928. It should be remembered that from this time on Nâzım Hikmet was a member of *Resimli Ay*.

III) Nâzım Hikmet's Literary Perspective in *Resimli Ay*

Nâzım Hikmet wrote articles, reviews and notes in *Resimli Ay*. In all these, he tried to express his "revolutionary and totally new" approach, and attempted to explain the factors that differentiated him from others in terms of literature. Thus, he tried to introduce his perspective to the audience in a clearly Marxist terminology that did not exclude some avant-gardist concerns. Although dialectical materialism was the fundamental concept and generic name of this approach, he had a two-sided perception of literature: whereas he advocated realism in prose, he had an avant-gardist perception of poetry. In this way, his articles on prose have a stronger and direct political emphasis and their most important evaluation criterion was the success in the reflection of social reality. However, his revolutionary understanding of form in poetry under the Futurist concerns brought about a more complex discussion that went beyond the reflection problem. Indeed the real novelty of his ideas was in the sphere of poetry.

As said above, his basis in developing his literary perspective was dialectical materialism. In nearly all of his articles an emphasis on dialectical and historical

materialism appears generally without satisfactory explanations, although he insistently used these concepts as general evaluation criteria. At this point only one of his articles was perceptive, in which he undertook to explain the content of *dialectic* and place of the *revolution* in the eternal flow of matter. As the main emphasis of the article, he sought to explain that revolution was not the enemy of culture. Referring to Heraclitus, he emphasized an eternal flow and the impossibility of unchangingness. In this eternal flow, movement was realized by the crash of opposites, and this crash, as the basic mediator of endless change, conveyed the moment to a very new content. This was what dialectics. He assessed this flow as creative, progressive, and unpreventable. Everything in nature and history was subject to this change. Revolutions had special places in the endless flow as leaping phases to rise to a higher stage. They, furthermore, symbolized the most creative times. Therefore, he underlined that revolutions were the keys of higher cultural levels.

Clearly, in this article, Nâzım Hikmet targeted and criticized *reactionaries* who evaluated revolutions as negatively destructive. In that, his explanation seems to have been an effort to soften the perception of revolution as only a moment of destruction. He, therefore, tried to reveal the creativity in the destruction. In this article, the ideas which were expressed were designated as “our philosophy,” and clearly two different sides were defined—progressivists who defended dialectical materialism, and reactionaries. In the picture the reactionaries who characterized the revolution as only destructive and horrible are presented as the real enemies of the culture: “For people who accept eternal movement, a final aim is not possible. Therefore, to be contented with present stage and to be insistent on it, is reactionary; and this means trying to hinder the rising of culture.”¹⁵

¹⁵ (“Ebedi hareketi kabul edenler için mutlak, nihai bir gaye olamaz. Bundan dolayı varılan merhaleyle iktifa etmek ve bu hususta müsir olmak irticadır, kültürün yükselmesine mani olmaya

Thus, the dialectical materialist approach in literature must be a method was used in order to improve the culture, or in other words a method that paved the way of revolution, the highest point of culture. In an article by Sadri Ertem, effort was made to explain Nâzım's dialectical materialist literary approach. It seems he had undertaken to write this article in answer to Peyami Safa's ideas about Nâzım Hikmet's poetry.¹⁶ In December 1929, Peyami Sefa had written a commending critique for Nâzım Hikmet's book *Jokond ve Si-Ya-U*. In this critique, however, he had rejected Nâzım Hikmet's ideas on poetry, and thus exposed a political challenge. According to Safa, a great work was superior to its society's social conditions and historical period. In this way, the great artist transcended his society and time, and therefore he had to have special and original features different from that of the ordinary man. Nâzım Hikmet was a superb example of this great artist. "Nâzım Hikmet, who seems to write for the public and general, is on the contrary very private and personal."¹⁷ The title of the article which was published in June 1930, discloses Sadri Ertem's intention of giving an answer to Safa: "Is It Possible to Be Both a Materialist and a Poet?" (*"Hem Materyalist Hem Şair Olmak Kabil mi?"*). He did not attempt to explain the complex structure of materialist poetry, but strongly emphasized that for Nâzım Hikmet, his philosophical belief, which was of course materialism here, was the most significant and shaping factor: "Nâzım is a person who bound his art and life to a philosophical system... The notion which knotted

çalışmaktadır.") S. Süleyman, "İnkilap ve Kültür Birbirinden Ayrı Şeyler midir?" *Resimli Ay*, June (1930): 8 (Süleyman was one of the nicknames Nâzım Hikmet used).

¹⁶ Peyami Sefa and Nâzım Hikmet were on the same side in these years, although they had a clear discrepancy in their idea. They were both defenders of a new literature, as will be seen in "We Break the Idols" campaign. A few years later, but, Peyami Safa would become an arrogant and ardent critic of Nâzım Hikmet and Sertels.

¹⁷ ("*Halk için ve çok umumi yazar gibi görünen Nâzım, bilakis çok hususi ve şahsidir.*") Peyami Sefa, "Jokond ile Si-Ya-U, Nazım Hikmet'in Yeni Kitabı," *Resimli Ay* December (1929): 28.

Nâzım's soul is materialism."¹⁸ Therefore, his literary production could not be thought of independently: "For Nâzım, Poetry and consciousness do not function independently".¹⁹ At the same time, Sadri Ertem argued that Nâzım Hikmet constructed his poetry as a popularization tool for his ideas: "*Jokond ile Si-Ya-U* is Nâzım's most recent work that popularize his ideas and philosophy."²⁰ It is obvious that Sadri Ertem failed to explain the real content of dialectical materialism, and instead of giving an explanation he focused on Nâzım Hikmet's commitment to the philosophy of materialism. Therefore, his emphasis was clear: philosophical belief in materialism preceded artistic concerns for Nâzım Hikmet. Moreover, it could be claimed that Ertem's materialism corresponded to a body larger than the philosophical meaning of materialism. Thus it had a political implication of socialism.

Dialectical materialism in Nâzım Hikmet's words implies a new kind of realism in prose that signalled a novelty in literature. In his article on Peyami Safa's *Dokuzuncu Hariciye Koğuşu* (Ninth Surgical Ward), he praised the book as an example of this new realism: "This novel by Peyami is realist, but it is not photographic realism in the old sense. It is dialectical realism which makes a monument of facts and which forms a composition of a group of analyses and compounds in the making of this monument."²¹ He thought that documentarism had won a victory everywhere in the world. In this trend, a dynamic composition of facts dominates the artistic product: "Art, from cinema to poetry, is going to have a state of

¹⁸ ("Nâzım sanatını ve yaşayışını bir felsefe sistemine sınımsız bağlamış bir insandır... Nâzım'ın ruhunu düşümleyen fikir materyalizmdir") Sadri Ertem, "Hem Materyalist Hem Şair Olmak Kabil mi?" *Resimli Ay* June (1930): 35.

¹⁹ ("Nâzım'da şiir ve şuur ayrı işlemiyor.") Ibid. 35.

²⁰ ("*Jokond ile Si-Ya-U*, Nâzım'ın fikir ve felsefesini popülerize eden en son eseridir.") Ibid. 35.

²¹ ("*Peyami'nin romanı realisttir, fakat eski manada fotoğraf realizmi değil, şeniyetlerin abidesini yapan ve bunu yapmak için bir sıra tahlil ve terkiplerden mürekkep bir kompozisyon vücuda getiren diyalektik bir realizm.*") No name, "Yeni Kitaplar: 9'uncu Hariciye Koğuşu," *Resimli Ay* February (1930): 32.

making compositions and syntheses out of the documents of realities. This architecture of realities sometimes exposes such great meanings, so that intriguing novels, emotional poems seem poor and ridiculous.”²² However, it is hard to say this explanation was enough to explain the difference between the new realism and the classical one.

Without any detailed discussion, Nâzım Hikmet translated his perception of dialectical materialism into an historical one. The concepts of dialectical materialism, historical materialism, and dialectics were used as more or less interchangeable. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Nâzım Hikmet suggested a strictly historical determinism as the basic category of literary criticism. Thus, historical conditions determined a literary work, and a literary work was a document and a direct result of its historical conditions. The strength of the literary work largely depended on its reflection level of the historical phase and social reality in which it was produced, and its perceiving capacity of the coming phase. This brought a dual analysis. On the one hand, the success of the work in terms of the reflection of the social reality was analyzed. In this phase, the work was a source, which opened the doors of the understanding of social reality. In the second one, it was thought on the basis of its future conception, so that the transformation power of the work was analyzed. Surely, the second one implied a more political position in which the work had a political agency of promoting the next historical level. Let’s analyze these ideas referring to his articles.

Nâzım Hikmet’s historical determinism formed the main explanatory factor in some important articles. Thus, in this view, history enclosed the area of possibilities.

²² (“Sanat, sinemadan tutunuz da şiire kadar, şeniyetlerin vesaikinden kompozisyonlar, terkipler ve besteler yapmaya doğru gitmektedir. Bu hakikatlerin mimarisi bazen öyle müthiş bir mana alıyor ki, onların yanında entrikalı romanlar, kalbin miriltularını heceleyen şiirler filan, zavallı ve gülünç kalıyor.”) Ibid.

In a historical phase, which was mainly determined by the dominant mode of production, the boundaries of being were certain. Work and the artist were shaped in these conditions directly. In a critical article about Tevfik Fikret, in which Hikmet criticized Fikret's bourgeois character, it was said that Fikret's efforts could not produce more: "In general, HUMANIST –in its positive sense– Tevfik Fikret could not be different in the period and in the milieu in which he lived. Fikret was at the best possible and the most progressive possible point of his period and milieu."²³

With this approach to history, Nâzım Hikmet, in some articles, strongly underscored that all nations encountered the same phases of historical development; thereby a great work which recounted this historical transformation successfully, had a universal value. In his famous polemical article on Abdülhak Hamit, he praised Shakespeare in this way: "Shakespeare, on the one hand, was a critical narrator of the social formation in which he lived; on the other hand, he felt the 'coming' phase and revealed its main lines. For all nations, as a matter of fact, encounter such a development phase, Shakespeare's protagonists and character types reached a universal state."²⁴ Surely, this meant that Realism alone was not sufficient to make a work great; it also needed a critical outlook of social reality, and future perception.

Nevertheless, in terms of Nâzım Hikmet's criteria, a good literary work strongly symbolized the class from which it sprang, and disclosed its mentality. In his article on Nizamettin Nazif's novel, *Kara Davut* (Davut the Black), he tried to show the main reasons for the high sales of the novel. In this way, he claimed that these reasons had to be explored in the social content of the novel. In fact, *Kara Davud* was

²³ ("Büyük ve ana hattında, iyi manada İNSANİYETÇİ şair Tevfik Fikret'in, faaliyet gösterdiği devirde, içinde bulunduğu muhitte, başka türlü de olması mümkün değildi. Fikret yaşadığı devirde, bulunduğu muhitte, en iyi ve en ileri ne olmak mümkünse onu olmuştur.") Süleyman, "Tevfik Fikret," *Resimli Ay*, September (1930): 34.

²⁴ ("Şekspir bir taraftan, içinde yaşadığı içtimai teşekkülün tenkitçi bir ifadecisi olmuş; diğer taraftan, "gelen"i istikbali sezmiş ve ana hatlarıyla düsturlaştırmıştır. Halbuki böyle bir inkişaf merhalesinden esas itibarıyla, bütün milletler geçtiği için Şekspir'in tipleri, karakterleri de beynelminel bir mahiyet almıştır") No name, "Putları Yıkıyoruz, No: 1 Abdülhak Hamit," *Resimli Ay*, June (1929): 25.

a novel about the conquest of İstanbul by Mehmet II, and as claimed in the article, it had been designated as a pulp fiction by some other critiques. However, Kara Davut, as it was claimed, represented the emerging bourgeoisie and its mentality, and revealed its contradictory psychology. N. Hikmet thought that Nizamettin Nazif emphasized the priority of Kara Davut, so an ordinary and nameless man, over Sultan Mehmet II; in this picture the Sultan symbolized feudality, and Kara Davut incrementally getting richer, the middle class peasantry. At this point, Nâzım Hikmet explained that he perceived the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of the Republic as a transformation from feudalism to the bourgeois mode of production. This coincidence of the content of the novel and social reality (i.e. the emerging bourgeois mode of production) was the main reason that lay behind the high admiration of the novel: “The conscious readers of *Kara Davut* are the enemies of the collapsed feudal social order. Only they consider Kara Davut a hero.”²⁵ It is obvious that Nâzım Hikmet tried to change the perception of a widely read adventure novel, and gave it a political position. Furthermore, we see his commitment to the idea that the bourgeois social order had to be experienced to reach a higher stage, one more time.

Another novel, *Bağrıyanık Ömer* (Ömer the Heartsick) of Mahmut Yesari was characterized with similar terms. This work seemed to be a dramatic, touching story of a child whose parents did not love sincerely. Nonetheless, the novel was evaluated as describing the sorrow of the whole peasantry, and as revealing the mentality of the dominant elements of village life: “In this simple subject, we see an analysis of the

²⁵ (“... *Kara Davut*’un şuurlu okuyucuları, yıkılan derebeylik içtimai nizamının düşmanı olanlardır. Ancak onlar *Kara Davut*’u bir kahraman telakki ederler”). İmzasızdan, “Yeni Çıkan Kitaplar: *Kara Davut*,” *Resimli Ay* June (1929): 34.

mentality and psychology of rich peasants, village notables and agas.”²⁶ The analysis and narration of this sorrow was so successful that Nâzım Hikmet designated it a universal work. Therefore the same criterion was again valid here: a good literary work reflected the historical phase of a society, presented an realistic analysis of society’s socio-economic situation, and so that gave the chance of penetrating into reality by the audience.

Another example of this approach comes from an article on Sabahattin Ali. In this article, Sabahattin Ali was praised for his successful disclosure of social reality: “In my opinion, this writing is a rarely seen one among us. We see all of the conservative and progressive sides of peasant psychology, and we see the evolution of Capitalism, which at that time makes primitive accumulation, in a smart clarity.”²⁷

The concept of thesis, which is used by Nâzım Hikmet in some of his writings, corresponds to second point of his realism approach described above. A literary work with a thesis idealizes a future imagination, besides its historical and social analysis. This is taking a political positioning of both the writer and the text: “*Kara Davut* is a novel with a thesis on the whole. It is a proponent of a movement and rebellion of certain group of people, and it idealizes this movement.”²⁸ In another article on Sadri Ertem’s story, *Bacayı İndir Bacayı Kaldır* (Lower the Chimney, Lift up the Chimney), the thesis was presented as a natural element of a literary work: “We think that, there isn’t any work of art without a thesis. A work either consciously defends a thesis, or unconsciously makes the same... The author cannot be

²⁶ (“Bu basit mevzu içinde, bütün bir kadınlı erkekli, zengin köylü, köy eşrafı, köy ağası zihniyetinin, ruhiyatının tahlilini görüyoruz”). Süleyman, “Yeni Kitaplar: Mahmut Yesari “Bağrıyanık Ömer”,” *Resimli Ay* June (1930): 36.

²⁷ (“Benim kanaatimce bu yazı bizde örneğine az tesadüf edilen bir eserdir. Köylü ruhiyatının bütün muhafazakâr ve ileri taraflarını, iptidai sermaye terakümünü yapan sermayedarlığın inkişaf yolunda köylülüğü nasıl dağıttığını... zeki bir aydınlık içinde görüyoruz.”) No name, “Bugünün İstidadı, Yarının Kuvveti,” *Resimli Ay* September (1930): 35.

²⁸ (“*Kara Davut* heyet-i umumiyesiyle tezli bir romandır. İçtimai hadiselerde muayyen bir insan camiasının hamle ve isyanına taraftar olan, bu hamleyi idealize eden bir romandır.”) İmsasızdan, “Yeni Çıkan Kitaplar: *Kara Davut*,” *Resimli Ay* June (1929): 34.

completely unbiased and objective against any event. To save oneself from the influence of black soil and live without gravity hasn't been possible for any human being."²⁹ Nevertheless, he did not assign a strict political mission to this concept of "thesis," so that it seemed as a secondary element with respect to his realism concern. Additionally, this concept does not include any implication of propaganda. It is the natural result of the writer's worldview.³⁰

As the result of these critiques it can be concluded that Nâzım's assessed literature as a source that gave the knowledge of social reality, which was determined by the economic production that belonged to a certain historical phase. In this way, he strictly underlined that the content and agents of the present literature had to be changed according to the change in the economic mode of production:

Today, when someone mentions folk literature we have to understand not only the literature of peasants and artisans, but also one of city workers and laborers. The literature of peasants and artisans, today, is not the literature of Dertli³¹. Additionally, there is a difference between the city worker and laborer literature and peasants and artisans literature. Consequently, folk literature is to explain and depict life and universe under the light of a view that is strained from the economic and social environments of certain strata and classes with the highest and most excellent technique."³²

²⁹ ("Kanaatımızca muayyen bir mânâda tezsiz eser zaten yoktur. Yalnız, şuurla bir tezi müdafaa eden eser, yahut bu işi farkında olmaksızın, gayri şuuri olarak yapanlar vardır... Muharrir herhangi bir hadise karşısında tam manasıyla bitaraf, afakî olamaz. Kara toprağın tesirinden kurtulup havada yaşamak hiç kimseye müyesser olmamıştır.") No name, "En Güzel Hikâye Hangisidir?" *Resimli Ay* September (1929): 33.

³⁰ As a matter of fact, this concept is a very important tool to construct some relations between Socialist Realism, and the literary thoughts in *Resimli Ay*. As we seen later, this concept is used more intensively in some other writings of which writers are not definite.

³¹ A famous folk poet.

³² ("Bugün halk edebiyatı denilince, yalnız köylünün ve esnafın edebiyatı değil, mesela şehir işçilerinin, amelenin edebiyatını da anlamak lâzımdır. Köylü ve esnafın bugünkü edebiyatı artık Dertlinin edebiyatı değildir. Bundan başka bir şehir işçisiyle, amelesiyle, köylü ve esnaf edebiyatı arasında da fark vardır. Binaenaleyh; Halk edebiyatı demek, en yüksek ve mükemmel bir teknikle, halkın muhtelif tabaka ve sınıflarının iktisadi ve içtimai muhitlerinden süzülen bir görüşle hayatı ve kâinatı izah ve tasvir etmek demektir.") No name, "En Güzel Hikâye Hangisidir?": 34.

On this basis, Nâzım Hikmet declared the born of a new literature in the Republican Turkey, which he discussed mainly in terms of poetry. In putting this change its place, he looked for an historical explanation with a transformation in social structure: “The literary kinds that belonged to Turkish Republic’s certain strata and classes of course differ from the literary kinds that belonged to Ottoman Empire’s certain strata and classes.”³³

Because of a progress in historical phase and change of economic medium, so in the content of literary production, poetic form had to be changed in order to adapt itself to content:

Aruz and syllabic meter and rhyme systems, which were composed of the form of poetry in certain social periods and economic environments, began to collapse with the development of social stage and the change of economic media. This collapse, at first, realized in very themselves of old forms. Lines, although they stayed as lines in terms of technique, fragmented in terms of the flow of content. Tevfik Fikret’s poems with an *aruz* meter and Faruk Nafiz’s poems with a syllabic one are the best witnesses of this... And therefore, there is a difference between reading and writing of Fikret’s poems.³⁴

Through revolutionizing form, the new poetry cancelled this difference. The new economic mode of production’s natural result was cities and older forms were insufficient in reflecting the newly emerging facts of the city; on the contrary, new forms belonged to the city: “this new poetry of the city has a more compound synthesis and technique. Instead of the monotonous voices of peasant and shepherd

³³ (“Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun muhtelif tabaka ve sınıflarına ait olan edebiyat nevileriyle, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin muhtelif tabaka ve sınıflarına ait olan edebiyat arasında elbette fark olacaktır.”) No name, “Yeni Şairlere Dair,” *Resimli Ay* November (1929): 40.

³⁴ (“Muayyen, içtimai devreler ve iktisadi muhitlerdeki şiir şekli olan aruz ve hece vezinleri ve kağıye sistemleri, içtimai devrenin inkişafı, iktisadi vasatların değişmesiyle, yıkılmaya başladılar. Bu yıkılış ilk önceleri bizzat eski şekillerin içinde oldu. Mısralar, teknik itibarıyla mısra olarak kaldıkları halde, içlerindeki muhteva akışı itibarıyla parçalandı. Aruzda Tevfik Fikret’in şiirleri, hecede Faruk Nafiz’in şiirleri bunun en güzel şahididir... Ve bundan dolayıdır ki Fikret’in şiirlerinde yazılış ile okunuş arasında fark vardır.”) No name, “Mecmuamıza Şiir Gönderen Şairlerle Hasbıhal,” *Resimli Ay* October (1929): 35.

economics, came the great symphony of the city.”³⁵ Therefore, form had to be reproduced with respect to the criteria of this great symphony of city. In his famous poem, *Yeni Sanat (Orkestra)*, which was published in an issue of *Resimli Ay*, he signified his opinion. The poem, which was written in 1921, shouted about the insufficiency of the old instruments of art in an aggressive and agitative manner:

Üç telinde üç sıska bülbül öten
üç telli saz
dağlarla dalgalarla kütleleri
ileri
atlatamaz!³⁶

At the same time, the poem expressed the expectation from this new art– to make people progress. Therefore Nâzım Hikmet here again constructed a dual structure: poetry was shaped by the social being on the one hand; and it had a social mission or function on the other hand. The page of this poem in the *Resimli Ay* can be easily designated as a manifesto of this new art. In the same page there are two more poems, one again belonging to Nâzım Hikmet with a nickname of Selami, and the other belonging to Nâzım’s young apprentice Nail V.³⁷ These two poems exemplified this new art notion.

On this basis, the past literature was symbolized as Baudelairism, and was criticized for its extreme and exaggerated sensitivity, sublimation of loneliness, and

³⁵(“... şehrin şiiri olan yeni şiirin terkibi ve tekniği daha mürekkep olmuştur. Köylü ve çoban iktisadiyatının muttarit sesleri yerine şehrin muazzam senfonisi gelmiştir.”) Ibid.

³⁶ This poem is like a manifestation of Nâzım Hikmet’s ideas on new art. He publishes it in different magazines. Turkish reader encounters it in *Aydınlık*, publishing organ of Turkish communists in 1923. Look: E. Karaca, *Sevdalınız Komünisttir*. An anecdotal note about his reading this poem in famous Maeyerhold Theater is told in Timms and Göksu, *Romantik Komünist*: 84.

³⁷ Selami “Arefe,” *Resimli Ay* October (1930): 15; Nail V. “Habe Dalgalar,” *Resimli Ay* October (1930): 15.

aloofness from people. Nâzım Hikmet assessed this situation as the fear of growing and spreading city life. The new literature, however, had to save itself from this pathological disease, and embraced the new conditions of life. He shrewdly expressed his ideas on this topic in an article on İlhami Bekir's poetry book, *24 Saat* (24 Hours). After fixing a change in İlhami Bekir's poetry, and establishing contact with this change and change of social environment, he enunciated the new vision of a contemporary poet:

Degenerate Baudelairism and its equivalent symbolism are the effects of cities, which are very swiftly changing and gaining more domination day to day, on intellectuals. The intellectual is left hungry in the city, is afraid of the city, hates the dominance of material and industry; and this mood appears with fear, nightmares, metaphysics, etc. He thinks the city with its giant houses like a hell and women like a vampire witch. Indeed, this state and this bohemian artistic vagrancy have positive and progressivist elements. However, it has also reactionary and degenerate sides; and these sides reify in Baudelairism, symbolism and surrealism. İlhami Bekir saves himself from being degenerate by saving himself from symbolism. Now he is the writer of the working and hungry people of the city, not its intellectual vagrants.³⁸

A review article on Nâzım Hikmet's *835 Satır* (835 lines) implied that the contemporary poet mentioned above passage was exactly Nâzım Hikmet. It is obvious that the Sertels were aware of Nâzım Hikmet's ideological position. After some words about his differences in terms of form, the writer of the article emphasized the importance of his ideological ideas in his poetical perspective:

³⁸ ("Mütereddi Bodlercilik ve ona muvazi olarak sembolizm, dev adımlarıyla değişen, günden güne hâkimiyeti artan şehirlerin, serseri münevverler üzerindeki aksülamaledir. Münevver, şehirde aç kalıyor, şehirden korkuyor, maddenin, sanayinin hâkimiyetinden nefret ediyor ve bu halet-i ruhiyesi korku, kâbus, mabadet-i tabiaya, maziye hasret temayülleriyle meydana çıkıyor. Şehri dev evleriyle, karanlık kaldırımılarıyla bir cehennem, kadını kan içici bir cadı şeklinde görüyor... Filhakika mevcut şeraitin bu bohemin sanatkar serseriliğinin müspet, inkılapçı tarafları vardır. Fakat aynı zamanda bunun geri, mütereddi cepheleleri de vardır ki, bu cihet Bodlercilikte, sembolizmde, surrealism cerayanlarında kendini buluyor. Bu itibarla İlhami Bekir sembolizmden kurtulmakla tereddiden kurtulmuştur. Şimdi o, çalışan şehir açlarını yazıcısıdır. Yoksa münevver şehir serserisinin değil.") No name, "Yeni Neşriyat '24 Saat'," *Resimli Ay* August (1929): 35.

However the original novelty is in the poet's spirit and art. Nâzım is a full-fledged poet. Poetry is only a medium for him to explain his ideas. The forms, which he has known since the old days, were not enough for him, so that he invented new forms that can explain his ideas. Therefore, we bear witness to a novelty which we cannot understand at the first. He is a new poet that is rid of the troubled and cudgeling atmosphere of Turkish poets. A new and energetic vitality exists in his poems.³⁹

There were some other articles on literature –mainly literary critiques of newly published works– whose writers are not known to us. They, more or less, expressed similar ideas to Nâzım Hikmet. Nevertheless, in these the most important concern was Realism, and literature was never thought of as a political tool. The very same emphasis of rejection of recent past literature's symbolism, however, was seen in those articles too: "Among our poets, the one who can reflect his material life to his writings will be one hundred percent successful. Not to run away from reality, not to fall into a pathological area, and to acquire their subjects from their own environments are obligations for every sensible poet."⁴⁰

This critique of symbolism simultaneously corresponded to a disrespect for the literature of past. In his critique of Peyami Safa's *Dokuzuncu Hariciye Koğuşu* (The Ninth Surgical Ward), he openly asserted, "I don't feel any respect for the literary generation before us."⁴¹ At the same time he charged these poets with being the accomplices of the dominant power and of being aloof from the people. Nâzım Hikmet's and his friends' claim about his novelty and their hatred of older

³⁹ ("Fakat asıl yenilik şairin ruhunda ve sanatındadır. Nazım içi dışı dolu bir şairdir. Şiir onun için fikirlerini ifade eden bir vasıttan ibarettir. Nazıma eskiden beri tanıdığı bir takım kalıplar dar gelmiş, o kendi fikirlerini ifade edecek yeni kalıplar icat etmiştir. Onun için Nazım'ın şiirlerini okuduğumuz zaman ilk hamlede kavrayamadığımız bir yenilikle karşılaşyoruz. O türk şairlerinin mağmum ve mariz havasından kurtulmuş yepyeni bir şairdir. Şiirlerinden yeni ve zinde bir canlılık vardır.") No name, "Yeni Çıkan Kitaplar," *Resimli Ay* May (1929): 35.

⁴⁰ ("Şairlerimiz içinde, yaşadıkları maddî hayatı yazılarında aksettirebilenler için muvaffakiyet yüzde yüzdür. Realiteden kaçıp marazî bir sahaya düşmemek ve mevzularını muhittlerinden almak her aklı başında şairimiz için farz olmuştur.") No name, "Son Neşriyat," *Resimli Ay* April (1929): 34.

⁴¹ ("Bir evvelki edebiyat nesline karşı içimde hiçbir hürmet hissi yok.") No name, "9'uncu Hariciye Koğuşu" *Resimli Ay* February (1930): 32.

generations' famous poets caused a harsh and famous polemic between the *Resimli Ay* writers and leading intellectuals of the early Republic with the campaign of *Putları Yıkıyoruz* (We Break the Idols).

However, before a detailed analysis of this famous literary event, it must be noted that, although a historical realism discourse covered the whole literature understanding, there was a clear-cut difference between the perception of prose and poetry as noted at the beginning of this section. This is a very important and meaningful difference for the present study, so that I will express the pattern of the difference in a more detailed manner after the analysis of all of the literary works published in the magazine.

IV) We Break the Idols

In June 1929, *Resimli Ay* began a campaign which harshly criticized the legendary figures of recent Turkish literature. The campaign lasted only two months, but its influence was great, so that a heated discussion was set off among the important figures of the time. The name of the campaign *Putları Yıkıyoruz* (We Break the Idols), in fact, tells a lot in terms of the aim of the campaign. The very exalted figures of recent literature were analyzed to reveal how they were worshipped in an exaggerated way.

The first article's subject was Abdülhak Hamit⁴² who was called as *dâhi-i âzam* (the great genius). This title was the main criticism point of the article. It was claimed that to characterize Abdülhak Hamit as the great genius was to manipulate the new generations who did not know how to read in Ottoman Turkish. This meant, accordingly, an intention in the way of the falsification of literary history. "Because

⁴² As shown in first chapter, Abdülhak Hamit was in the agenda of *Resimli Ay* as a comparison element and again with a negative reference.

Mr. Abdülhak Hamit is not the great genius.”⁴³ According to the article a genius must explain and narrate his society’s historical development phase in a universal manner and with stating his society’s originalities. If society was in the last moments of this phase, the genius disclosed the contours of the next phase. This makes him universal because every society experiences the same historical phases with differences in the details. Although Abdülhak Hamit lived in a time when the Ottoman Empire experienced the death of feudality and the birth of a new social structure, he, not touching on the peculiarities of his society, only imitated Shakespeare, Racine and Corneille:

If Mr. Hamit had expressed features of the social transition epoch that he lived in original in the East and Ottoman Empire at an international level, and if he had made this more successful than the ones produced before him, the name of an Ottoman artist could have been among the gallery of geniuses. But he was not successful in this task of expression.⁴⁴

One of the important criteria of being universal for a work of art was to be translatable without any loss of meaning to another language. However, it was underlined that Abdülhak Hamit’s works could not be translated into other languages. Even if they were translated to modern day Turkish, they would be seen as stumpy things.

The second and last article of the campaign was on Mehmet Emin who had a reputation as the *Millî Şair* (National Poet). Mehmet Emin had received this title due to his pure Turkish and the nationalistic tone in his poems. This time, Nâzım Hikmet

⁴³ (“Çünkü Abdülhak Hamit Beyefendi dâhi-i âzam değildir.”) No name, “Putları Yıkıyoruz, No:1 Abdülhak Hamit,” *Resimli Ay* June (1929): 24-25.

⁴⁴ (“Eğer Hâmit Bey, içinde yaşadığı içtimai intikal devresinin Şarka, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’na mahsus hususiyetlerini beynelmînel bir derecede ifade edebilmiş olsaydı ve bunu o zamana kadar yapılanlardan daha muvaffak bir surette yapabilseydi, dâhiler galerisinde bu isimde bir Osmanlı sanatkârı da bulunabilirdi. Halbuki o bunu yapamadı.”) Ibid. 37.

opposed Mehmet Emin's title, and claimed that he was not a national poet, first because his language was not national. The national language was the language of the people, but Mehmet Emin employed an artificial language, which had bad effects on the development of Turkish. Second, his poems, even if they were accepted as natural Turkish, did not reach the level of folk poetry. Having this huge body of literature, then, why did we need appreciate Mehmet Emin? Third, Nazım Hikmet again bound his criticism to the phases of historical materialism.

The era in which communities become nations and bring up national poets is the one in which they struggle against feudal system, or fight against imperialism for liberation, or they began both. A national poet is who displays this struggle, at least for one period, which is important for whole people. You see this feature in the national poets of the Russians, Bulgarians, Indians... However Mr. Mehmet Emin hasn't got even a small piece of this feature.⁴⁵

In the same issue Zekeriya Sertel tried to give an explanation of the campaign. He thought that Abdülhak Hamit was not advocated intensely and this showed the appropriateness of the campaign. The last part of the article where he referred to the idea behind the campaign is important for showing *Resimli Ay*' conscious intention:

We don't believe in the past. The past is the force that binds us to back. But we don't even look at the back. We look at the future. For us, the previous one hour is even past. The nations, which have respect for past, are not busy with their futures. The characteristic of the new generation is its obliviousness of the past. We don't want to praise our past; we are proud of the things that we will do. The duty of youth is not being respectful of the past; but destroys it.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ ("Camiaların millet haline gelip milli şair yetiştirdikleri devir; derebeylikle mücadele ettikleri, yahut emperyalizme karşı kurtuluş kavgasını yaptıkları ve yahut da bu iki dövüğe birden giriştikleri devirdir. Milli şair, bir zaman için olsun, bütün milletin alakadar olduğu, bu mücadeleyi gösteren şairdir. Rusların, Bulgarların, Hintlilerin, Almanların milli şairlerinde bu vasfı görürsünüz... Halbuki Mehmet Emin Beyde bu vasfın zerresi yoktur.")No name, "Putları Yıkıyoruz, No:2 Mehmet Emin Beyefendi," *Resimli Ay* July (1929): 20-21.

⁴⁶ ("Biz maziye inanmıyoruz. Mazi denen şey bizi arkaya bağlayan kuvvettir. Biz ise arkaya bakmak bile istemiyoruz. Bizim gözümüz ileridedir. Bizim için bir saat evvelki an bile mazidir. Maziye hörmet eden milletler istikballeri ile meşgul olmayanlardır. Yeni neslin mümeyyiz vasfı maziye tanımamasıdır.

The series of article caused an increasing reaction, especially after the article on Mehmet Emin. Various writers, including Yakup Kadri, Hamdullah Suphi and Yusuf Ziya, accused the magazine of being impudent and presumptuous, and try to prove that Abdülhak Hâmit and Mehmet Emin had deserved their reputations. Their responses had direct or indirect charges of communism, although there was no kind of socialist attitude in the articles. On the same day Hamdullah Suphi's article was published in *İkdam* with a charge of communism that implied that Nâzım Hikmet's going to Russia in the days of the Liberation War,⁴⁷ a group of boys, who were probably from the Turkish Hearth, even came to *Resimli Ay* to show their displeasure because of the campaign. Zekeriya Sertel wrote that they persuaded the boys and they left the *Resimli Ay*'s office in a pleasant mood.⁴⁸

In August, the campaign was over, but two different articles about the campaign were published. The first one was on the first page of the magazine and had a title of "Why Do We Break the Idols?" (*Putları Niçin Kırıyoruz?*). It was once more said that not only did these idols not represent today's literature and society, but that also prevented new literature's improvement. Thus, to break them was necessary. Moreover, it was stated that Yakup Kadri and Hamdullah Suphi were named as provocateurs of youth, and their charges were evaluated as their fear of losing their throne.⁴⁹ The other article, which has photos of Yakup Kadri and Hamdullah Suphi with a multiplication sign on them, belonged to Sadri Ertem. He accused these critics

Biz mazimizle iftihar etmek istemiyoruz, yapacaklarımızla övünüyoruz. Gençliğin vazifesi maziye hürmet etmek değil, onu yıkmaktır.") No name, "Baş Muharrir Diyor ki," *Resimli Ay* July (1929): 33.

⁴⁷ ("Memleketimizde harp günlerinde topraklarımız istila altında iken memleketin bütün delikanlıları harp cephelerine damarlarındaki kanı getirirken, vazife saatinde devlet bütçesinden işgal ile aldıkları paralarla Bolşevik topraklarına kaçanlar, yani asker ve vatan kaçkınları, her kandan ziyade Türk kanına bulaşmış kızıl lokma ile beslenenler... Karşımızdakiler kimdir? Bolşevik kapısının müseccel küpekleri! Putları kıranlar bunlardır.") (Hamdullah Suphi [Tanrıöver], *İkdam*, 7 June (Quoted by Göröl, 205)).

⁴⁸ Mehmet Zekeriya [Sertel], *Hatırladıklarım*.

⁴⁹ No name, "Putları Niçin Kırıyoruz?" *Resimli Ay* August (1929):1.

of using articles to turn a literary dispute towards a political one. He called on them to prove the falseness of the ideas articulated in the campaign and to leave aside their political clamor.⁵⁰ Additionally, Zekeriya Sertel one more time referred to the campaign in his editorial and, like Sadri Ertem, charged Y. Kadri and Hamdullah Suphi with manipulating the dispute. He insisted that there was no discussion of communism here; the discussion was about a literary dispute between the old and the new.⁵¹

The two *Cevap* (Reply) poems of Nâzım Hikmet can be added to the content of the campaign. He wrote these famous poems, to satirize Yakup Kadri and Ahmet Haşım in the hot times of the early days of 1930 in answer to their charges about him and his friends. He criticized these canonical writers in a quarrelsome style. The first one was about Yakup Kadri and published in the same issue of the article on Mehmet Emin. In this poem Nâzım Hikmet defined a polarization between himself and Yakup Kadri— on the one pole, Nâzım with his hatred of the poets of the state and so, close to people, on the other, Kadri near the rich and the dominant and so, against the people:

Behey!

Kara maça bey!

Halka ahmak diyen sensin.

Halkın soyulmuş derisinden

sırtına frak giyen sensin.⁵²

On this line Yakup Kadri's elitist attitude and closeness to the focuses of power were harshly criticized. The second poem, which was about Ahmet Haşım, had

⁵⁰ Sadri Ertem, "Putlar Etrafında Kopan Gürültü," *Resimli Ay* August (1929):2-5.

⁵¹ No Name, "Baş Muharrir Köşesi," *Resimli Ay* August (1929): 33.

⁵² Nâzım Hikmet, "Cevap," *Resimli Ay* July (1929): 25.

the same tone of harshness. The focus of the poem was Haşım's position on the board of directors of the Adana-Mersin railways that had been constructed with French capital.⁵³ In the insulting words of Nâzım Hikmet, the contours of criticism corresponded only to one point: to serve the profits of the dominant. Therefore, the targets of a literary dispute were criticized, not in terms of their literary perspective, but with literary tools. Consequently, we have a double polarization— one between old and young men of letters, and the other is between oppositional and conformist ones. In conclusion, these poems added a concrete political dimension, or at least strengthened it.⁵⁴

Göral interprets the campaign as a sign of the existence of avant-garde concerns in the early Republic.⁵⁵ The disrespectful rejection of past literature really resembled Futurist's furious and disdainful attitude toward Russian literature before them. However, to put the campaign its place in *Resimli Ay*'s literary perspective, without leaving the very political dimension in the *Cevap* poems and other avant-garde dimensions aside, will be more meaningful in evaluation of this parallelism. For this, it will be better to analyze the literary products published in the magazine.

Resimli Ay featured the very important authors and poems of the early Republic. Among them there were the most important left-wing writers of the young generation— Sabahattin Ali, Suat Derviş and Nail V. (Çakırhan) published some of their very first stories and poems in *Resimli Ay*. At the same time, some other important writers like İlhami Bekir and Sadri Ertem were on the writer staff. These

⁵³ Nâzım Hikmet, "Cevap No:2," *Resimli Ay* September (1930): 10.

⁵⁴ For a very detailed description of the discussion between these two sides: Özgür Sevgi Göral, "Patlamaya Hazır Bir Şimdi: Putları Yıkıyoruz," *Toplum ve Bilim* (2002:94): 189-211.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

two were the most prolific writers of the magazine— the former in poetry and the latter in short story. Among the other writers Mahmut Yesari, Münire Handan and Fahri Celalettin (Celal) had an important number of short stories in the magazine. Nâzım Hikmet influenced especially the first five names enumerated above as is easily seen in their products. Moreover, some young poets works' that imitated Nâzım's style were published. Finally, there were a great number of translated stories from different nations' literatures. In this section the works of these authors and poets will be examined. Let's look at the poems and poets first, and then the short stories and their writers secondly.

V) Poetry in Resimli Ay

After all these words, it is not surprising to claim that the most important poet of the magazine was Nâzım Hikmet. But it is more important to note that under his leadership, *Resimli Ay* had a very homogenous discourse of poetry that defined itself in terms of form, style and content. Thus, the magazine had a sound positioning in the contemporary literary disputes.

Indeed, Nâzım Hikmet's poems of that time can be separated into two groups. His earlier poems, which had a clear Constructivist bent —these are enumerated above— and which were published in *835 Satır* (1929) belong to the first group. His poems written after he had returned to Turkey were mostly published in his books, *Varan 3* (1930) and *Sesini Kaybeden Şehir* (The City that Lost its Voice) (1931). The poems of Nâzım Hikmet that appeared in *Resimli Ay* were generally from the second group except his famous *Yeni Sanat* (New Art). This means his hard-core constructivist poems, which follows the constructivist directions in the issue of vision of poetry,

were not dominant in the magazine, although the other poets produced in the line of this constructivism, as will be shown below.

In terms of form, nevertheless, his poems were under the explicit influence of Futuristic concerns. First of all, the pattern of lines protected their ladder-like constitution. The unit of poetry was sentence as was in Futurist poetics, and the traditional usage of lines as the unit of poems were not seen in his poems. Additionally, the technical words belonged to mechanical world on the one hand, the voices of the city, machines etc. on the other, were frequently seen on his poems published in *Resimli Ay*.

In terms of content, the most important point about his poems was the encapsulation of the city into poetry. Whereas the city was the vital decoration, the poet himself was the protagonist of the poem. Generally, all themes of these poems had their roots in the life of the poet. He was an epic character – the opposite of the bohemian and pathological poet of the earlier decades– who was wandering and feeling the city, touching its rapid transformation, its noise, its mechanization and its poverty and exploitation. At this point there was a crash between the poet's spirit and the city's atmosphere. They reproduced each other and the intermobility between them formed the deep pattern of the poem.

For example, in his poem *Sesini Kaybeden Şehir*,⁵⁶ he referred to a taxi strike in İstanbul, and recounted the silence and the complete lack of vitality of the city. Moreover, this character, in other poems, was as if a wanted revolutionary, sometimes waited for the police, sometimes had a walk in the city and observed people. We see that Nâzım Hikmet sometimes referred to himself in some of these poems. He, as a

⁵⁶ İmzasız Adam, "İmzasız Adam'ın Yazılarında No:2: Sesini Kaybeden Şehir," *Resimli Ay* July (1929): 13.

proofreader threw himself into the street with the dark stains of printing ink on his face.⁵⁷

The influence of Nâzım Hikmet was most clearly realized in the poems published in the magazine. To understand his evident dominance in the selection of poems it is enough to look at the forms and styles of the poems published. Almost all of those poems imitated his style; and this means he, as the poetic authority of the magazine, generally published poems which were written with respect to his poetic criteria. As will be shown in the conclusion of this section, he tried to constitute a group of poets with his approach, thus he supported new poets imitating him and harshly criticized older poets, who were outside of his small group.

The most important poet in the magazine, other than Nâzım Hikmet, was İlhami Bekir who published eight poems. He clearly imitated Nâzım Hikmet's Constructivism, and employed bigger and smaller fonts, used bold and italic letters, preferred broken lines, and chose his words according to their phonetics to create rhythmic urban poems, which had a wavy voice order, like those of Nâzım Hikmet:

Bakmazdım

Bakamazdım;

Yakama ne siyah

ne sarı ne kır-

mızı bir gül

Takamazdım.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ İmzasız Adam, "İmzasız Adam'ın Yazılarından No:1: Yarıda Kalan Bir Bahar Yazısı," *Resimli Ay* June (1929): 23.

⁵⁸ İlhami Bekir, "Yollarda," *Resimli Ay* September (1929): 21.

He generally described poverty and starvation, and referred his own life in most of his poems. His voice was not as revolutionary or combative as that of Nâzım Hikmet, however. In İlhami Bekir's poems, the city constituted the background of the poet's severe life. His life is was as violent and dramatic as that of the oppressed people of the city. Thus, the poet, or the hero of those poems, rushed from one place to another in a hurry and revealed the different faces of city life and embraced a passion for fight:

Koşuyorum
Adamları,
Adımlarile,
Evleri kaldırımlarile
Yürütmek istiyorum sokakları,
Koşuyorum..
Yıkabilsem bir kâğıt balkon gibi,
Yıkabilsem diye konakları.⁵⁹

It is worthwhile, in terms of the magazine's evolution, to note that his poem, which was published in the penultimate issue of *Resimli Ay* seems to had a stronger voice. The place described in the poem was a factory, and he called for a riot after an unnamed event in which 500 hundred workers had died.⁶⁰

Another important poet, Nail V., the famous young apprentice of Nâzım Hikmet with whom he wrote a joint book, published his first poems in *Resimli Ay*. He again imitated Nâzım's style and form like İlhami Bekir. He portrayed a protagonist –

⁵⁹ İlhami Bekir, "Yollarda II: 101 Senelik," *Resimli Ay* October (1929): 26.

⁶⁰ İlhami Bekir, "Halk Havaları," *Resimli Ay* 1 January (1931): 17.

probably the poet himself– in the harsh conditions of city, who prepared himself for a struggle too. In this picture, his woman was designated as a comrade in fight;⁶¹ his work, which was likened to a day in night, was a mace out of flames;⁶² and his head was a bomb, which will be exploded at a convenient time in that city where workers “croaked” in factories.⁶³

The other members of these small groups were young poets who sent their works to *Resimli Ay*. Nâzım Hikmet not only criticized and promoted these works, but also he published some of them. İsmail Suphi was his favorite. This young poet also imitated Nâzım Hikmet in his poem formation. Moreover, his poems had more direct references to people from the lower classes and their dreadful lives.

Anam ırğatmış
babam bir derebey uşağı⁶⁴

In conclusion, the homogeneity of poems is clearly visible. All of them were convenient to the new poetry’s criteria, which were introduced by Nâzım Hikmet. Nâzım Hikmet disclosed this conscious formation in an article about İlhami Bekir’s last book *A Birinci Forma*. He claimed that İlhami Bekir had won a real success in his experience of new poetry in the previous one or one and a half years; surely, this meant in the second phase of *Resimli Ay*. Then, he enumerated the features of a poet of this new formation which were found in İlhami Bekir: the new poet used simple language, or language of the people; he did not recognize any difference between spoken and writing languages. More importantly, for the poet, poetry was not a

⁶¹ Nail V. “Kadın Telakkisi,” *Resimli Ay* 1 January (1931): 17

⁶² Nail V. “Sokakta Kalan Adam,” *Resimli Ay* July (1930): 11.

⁶³ Nail V. “Odam,” *Resimli Ay*, 15 January (1931): 17.

⁶⁴ İsmail Suphi “Annenin Ölümü,” *Resimli Ay* March (1930): 31.

hygienic sphere separated from daily life; on the contrary, it was his weapon in the reconstruction of life: “For us, the poet is not a different person when he writes than when he speaks, fights, eats. For us the poet is not a degenerated person who imagines himself over the clouds groundlessly; he is a citizen who organizes life in the midst of life.”⁶⁵

At the same time he was the man of “a certain comprehension of the way of the world” (“*belirli bir cihanı telakki tarzı*”). He did not articulate the name of this way, but the reader understood from his sentences that it was dialectical materialism: “The new poetry has an outlook which progresses permanently, rejects tranquility, and knows that a movement arises from the unity of its opposites.”⁶⁶ İlhami Bekir was celebrated for the intensive infiltration of this comprehension to his poetry.

IV) Short Story in *Resimli Ay*

Short story had a very important place in *Resimli Ay*'s content– in the first year of the second period, every issue had two or three short stories from different writers. The number of short stories decreased in the first issues of the next year besides the change in terms of content. Thus, it is important to note that the transformation of the magazine in the second period can be observed more easily through an analysis of published short stories. They did not have a technical and discursive homogeneity unlike the poems, but they gained a clear oppositional character especially in the last issues of the magazine. On this basis, we can divide the stories into three groups in terms of their contents. The first group is composed of

⁶⁵ (“Bize göre şair, şiir yazarken başka şahsiyet, konuşurken, tabiiyle kavga ederken, yemek yerken başka şahsiyet değildir. Bizce şair bulutlara uçtuğunu vehmeden bir dejenere değil, hayatın içinde hayatı teşkilatlandıran bir vatandaşır.”) Süleyman, “Yeni Kitaplar: A Birinci Forma,” *Resimli Ay* June (1930): 37.

⁶⁶ (“Yeni şiir müttemadiyen ilerleyen, sükûnu reddeden, hareketi şiar edinen, hareketin tezatlarının vahdetinden vücuda geldiğini bilen bir görüş zaviyesine maliktir”)İbid. 37.

stories that don't have a critical or political point of view. These, generally, narrate some incidents of daily life, which are mainly about love, interesting adventures etc. In those some interesting and amazing incidents or characters are described, and the main intention of these stories is to entertain audience. In the second group there are socially sensitive stories, especially about children and women, in which the general social problems disclosed and criticized. Third group consists of clearly oppositional stories, which are about the exploitation of workers and peasants. In this diversification the first group can be assessed as corresponding to the older *Resimli Ay*, whereas the third is that of the new one. It is important to note that the second group has common elements for both.

In the process of second period between 1929 and 1931, the third group gradually became dominant, and after issue of June 1930, this type of story even completely eliminated the others, especially the stories from first group. In this way, the stories of the most prolific writer of the magazine, Sadri Ertem, acquired a more critical approach; Suat Derviř, Sabahattin Ali, Enver Behnan and Nâzım Hikmet's stories replaced the stories of Fahri Celal, Münire Handan, and Celalettin Ekrem. This implies a transformation from entertaining social stories to socially critical and oppositional ones; and surely this was concordant with the total change in the magazine.

It is possible to summarize the gradual change in five main features especially referring the stories in the third group. First, it is important to note that there was not stylistic/technical change in the published stories from the earlier to the later ones. Second, the later stories had open political referents like the phrases "the proleterization of peasantry" or "the exploitation by feudal lords." Third, almost all protagonists of the later stories were from lower classes. Fourth, there were clashes

between the lower and upper classes in those later stories. And finally, almost all of those stories conveyed an emphasis on the necessity of struggle and on the realization of the exploitation. To understand the structure of change more deeply, let's look at the writers and their stories.

Fahri Celal was the most important author of the first group. As a known master short story writer of the early Republic, he was generally interested in the strange psychological states of various individuals from different social levels, or recounted social types from a humoristic perspective. He intended to arouse curiosity among his readers, especially referring to the relations between man and woman of the city. For example, in one of his stories, a girl who fell in love with an very ordinary old man and committed suicide when she felt disappointed because of the actions of the protagonist of the story. The presentation of the story is not surprising for a popular magazine: "The story of a deep and dark young girl heart" ("*Derin ve karanlık bir genç kız kalbinin hikâyesi*").⁶⁷ One other story was almost an erotic, about a rigid woman lawyer and her interesting love adventure.⁶⁸ In another story a famous social type, a tax collector was described with humoristic details.⁶⁹

Two stories of two different writers exemplify the first group pretty accurately. The story of a woman writer, Saime, was composed of a young woman's letters to her husband. The reader followed Saime's unfaithfulness to his husband step by step.⁷⁰ The other story, which belonged to Faruk Nurettin, had the title of "The Story of a Neglected Woman" ("*İhmal Edilmiş Bir Kadının Hikâyesi*").⁷¹ The story was narrated by a woman protagonist, too. She depicted how her husband neglected her and how she became very near being unfaithful to him. These two stories surely

⁶⁷ Fahri Celalettin, "Bir Muammayı Elîm" *Resimli Ay* July (1929): 6-9.

⁶⁸ Fahri Celalettin, "Arukarya, Bir Aşk Hikâyesi," *Resimli Ay* August (1929): 11-12.

⁶⁹ Fahri Celal, "Tahsildar, Hepimizin Tanıdığı Bir Tip," *Resimli Ay* December (1929): 10-11.

⁷⁰ Saime "28 Gün," *Resimli Ay* October (1929): 25.

⁷¹ Faruk Nurettin, "Alev Saçağı Sardı," *Resimli Ay* October (1929): 28.

not only exemplify the first group but also prove *Resimli Ay*'s liberal perspective which did not abstain from transgressing moralistic rules about women.

Another writer of this group was Celalettin Ekrem who preferred subjects akin to Fahri Celal's. Celalettin Ekrem's stories were also related to interesting events encountered by insignificant people, but mostly in the countryside. Interestingly two of his stories were about religious officials and showed them in comic situations.⁷² His other story was about a man who had an addiction to backgammon!⁷³

The most obvious writer for the second group was Münire Handan whose stories had obvious social criticisms. She published three stories, two of which were the criticisms of the education system. She tried to describe how children's lives could be destroyed by the irresponsible behavior of their educators, as understood from the subtitle of one of these stories: "A Story Which Shows the Painful Results of False Acts in School" ("*Mekteplerde Yanlış Hareketlerin Tevhit Ettiği Acıklı Neticeyi Gösterir Bir Millî Hikâye*")⁷⁴ The second story about education had the very same topic and criticizes the teachers who acted in a pedagogically false way towards their students.⁷⁵ In the third story, she narrated the dramatic story of a worker woman who could not send her children to school because of her working all day and who was punished in the end due to her act. The story ends with these words: "Good, but what can working mothers do? Why do the makers of the law and schools not consider these results?"⁷⁶ Here, it is important to note that the emphasis was not on being a worker woman, but on the insufficiency of social services for working women.

⁷² Celalettin Ekrem, "İmanı Bütün," *Resimli Ay* November (1929): 8-11; Celalettin Ekrem, "Helvalı Yasin," *Resimli Ay* February (1930): 11.

⁷³ Celalettin Ekrem, "Gele," *Resimli Ay* January (1930): 11-13.

⁷⁴ Münire Handan, "Müdürün İzzeti Nefsi Kurtuldu Amma," *Resimli Ay* September (1929): 4-7.

⁷⁵ Münire Handan, "Bir Mektep Müdürünün Odasında Gördüğüm Facia," *Resimli Ay* November (1929): 35-36.

⁷⁶ ("İyi ama işte çalışan analar ne etsinler?... Kanunu yapan, mektebi yapanlar bunları düşünseler ne olurdu?") Münire Handan, "Mahpushane Penceresinden Uzanan El," *Resimli Ay* June (1929): 39.

One story by M. Rasim followed more or less the same path as Münire Handan. The protagonist of the story was a young girl who had to come to city from her village. She encountered the terrible face of the city and lived bad things: she was raped, became a prostitute, caught a disease etc. Here again, the reader was invited to social criticism.⁷⁷

It should be noted that all stories of the same writers cannot be grouped under a sole category. For example, the stories of Mahmut Yesari, who was one of the most important realist writers of the early Republic, can be distributed in the first and second groups. His three stories were published in *Resimli Ay*. Two of them were description of small incidents that did not have a critical point of view.⁷⁸ However, the other story, which was written as a play focused on patronage relationships in bureaucracy, and presented a picture of state institutions in which only people who do not any protégée work in these institutions.⁷⁹

Another important and famous writer, and later a political figure, of the early Republican era, Suat Derviş, published two stories in the magazine. Like Mahmut Yesari and Sadri Ertem, her stories are difficult to classify. In her first one, she narrated a pathetic story about a little orphan girl with a fluent style.⁸⁰ The other story was about an unlucky and oppressed woman who had to steal due to her horrible living conditions.⁸¹ Derviş, in this story tried to warn people that to accuse somebody without knowing her real conditions could be a totally wrong act and disclosed the hypocrisy of the society. In the result, although she sometimes moved closer to the third group, her stories seem more fitting to the second one.

⁷⁷ M. Rasim "Mala Konmuş," *Resimli Ay* December (1929): 3-4.

⁷⁸ Mahmut Yesari, "Perili Bağ," *Resimli Ay*, March (1929): 14-15; Mahmut Yesari, "Rüveyde Hanımın İzni," *Resimli Ay* May (1930): 24-26.

⁷⁹ Mahmut Yesari, "Daktilo Kız," *Resimli Ay* March (1930): 14-16.

⁸⁰ Suat Derviş, "Emine," *Resimli Ay*, February (1930):

⁸¹ Suat Derviş, "Hırsız," *Resimli Ay*, November (1930): 33-35.

A similar inbetweenness is valid for the most prolific writer of the magazine, Sadri Ertem. Among the writers of the second period, he was the only one who also had had stories in the first period of the magazine other than Münire Handan. Those stories and the some others he published in the second period were either ordinary adventure and love stories or the ones that described interesting moments in the lives of ordinary people. He preferred a dramatic narration to an interpretative one, so that almost all of his short stories were of incidents. He employed short sentences and short depictions for the sake of a fluent narration.

Nevertheless, in the second period, among his sixteen stories some differ from others in terms of their content. In these stories, a social realism which endeavored to picture some scenes from peasants' and workers' lives and which was very convenient for the literary thoughts of *Resimli Ay*, was dominant. That he had socialist concerns in his short stories probably under the influence of Nâzım Hikmet is no coincidence. For example, in one of his short stories, which was dedicated to Nâzım Hikmet, he narrated the tragedy of a working class family. When the father of the family, a painter in a factory, heard that his wife had died in an industrial accident, he wanted to go to seeing her, but his chief did not allow him to go. In great confusion he got electricity cables mixed into each other, so that he was burned. He was brought home instead of to the hospital because of his hopeless situation. In the house, the grandmother looked after their children, and could not find any bread because her son and bride have met those disasters. She went to work some place, and this time her grandchild played with the brazier in the house and burned. The next day, the newspapers charged the woman with negligence.⁸² In this slightly exaggerated story, Sadri Ertem tried to reveal the incalculable cruelty of the powerful

⁸² Sadri Ertem, "Bir Kayış Koptu 3 Adam Öldü," *Resimli Ay* August (1930): 29-30.

and the rich in society. It is obvious that he took sides with Nâzım Hikmet. This is an interesting change for an author who wrote about small incidents without taking any side or political position. Moreover, this story is very important for making the factory and worker life a part of literature.⁸³

In another story, which was published in the next issue, Sadri Ertem described the disappearance of a mechanic, who was known to despise workers, when a big capital company opened a big repair-shop. Then the man had to become a worker in this place tragically.⁸⁴ In another short story, the manipulation of laborers' moral values by riches' limitless hedonism was recounted.⁸⁵ There were some other stories about the difficult life of the peasantry, but most of them were far from being critical like above. It is important to note that all these stories were published in the last issues of the magazine, whereas the earlier ones were less critical.

Especially after June 1930, the third group became dominant. There were no longer stories from the first group, and the stories from the second group would decrease. Sabahattin Ali, with his two successful stories, was the shining star of the last issues. In his first story, "*Orman Hikâyesi*" (A Forest Story) he mentioned the struggle of forest villagers against a company which had seized the forest that was the place where the villagers earned their living. Soon, this struggle was transformed into one against the state, which supported the company. Finally all of the villagers were jailed.⁸⁶ In the second story, "*Gemici Hikâyesi*" (The Story of a Sailer) the topic was again a struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor. In that one, a young stoker in a ship who worked under very hard conditions provoked his friends into a rebellion

⁸³ The first short story about factory life was written by Refik Halit Karay. His book *Memleket Hikayeleri* which had this story was published in 1919. However, Refik Halit does not take sides in this story. Here, this is the most distinctive point.

⁸⁴ Sadri Ertem, "Kaybolan Adam," *Resimli Ay* September (1930): 6-7.

⁸⁵ Sadri Ertem, "6 Günde Biten Oyun," *Resimli Ay* 1 January (1931): 5-6.

⁸⁶ Sabahattin Ali, "Orman Hikâyesi," *Resimli Ay*, September (1930): 22-24.

against the captain of the ship. The protagonist of the story realized that the source of all evil was the strict belief in the power of happenstance which can be thought of as an equivalent of “false consciousness” in Marxist terminology: “He suddenly realized that which impedes him, his friends and even all people who resemble him from a rebellion is to ‘believe in happenstance’.”⁸⁷ After the stoker and his friends rebelled, they gained some rights, but they were fired when the ship arrived at port. Whatever the result was, the writer evaluated the rebellion of the ship workers as a benefit: They learned how to struggle and how to demand their rights. This meant a blow to false consciousness.

Nâzım Hikmet, with the nickname Orhan, had two stories in the magazine. His stories followed the same path as those of Sabahattin Ali. Sabahattin Ali had a better style and technique whereas Nâzım Hikmet had a more obvious aim in the way of the popularization of his ideas. In his first story, Süleyman came to the city, after he had lost job due to the “proleterization of the peasantry” and began to work in a factory.⁸⁸ He fought with Mehmet, who tried to be closer to foreman who was an accomplice of managers. His act, on the one hand, was designated as “class cooperation” and he was criticized for having a “peasant mind,” which was an individualistic type of mind. On the other hand, Süleyman was presented as an example of the true worker, whereas Mehmet was the false one who betrayed his class. At the end of the story, Mehmet lost everything he had.

The place of his second story was China.⁸⁹ After a long while, missionaries appeared on *Resimli Ay*'s pages with this story. The protagonist of the story who was the son of an honest, poor peasant was adopted by a missionary who went to China

⁸⁷ (“O zaman birdenbire farkına vardı ki, kendisini ve arkadaşlarını hatta bütün kendine benzeyenleri bir hareketten bir kabağıstan men eden bu ‘tesadüfe inanmak’ tır”) Sabahattin Ali, “Gemici Hikâyesi,” *Resimli Ay*, October (1930): 10.

⁸⁸ Orhan, “Kendi Hunumla Yazdım Ben Hükümü İdamımı,” *Resimli Ay* August (1930): 22-24.

⁸⁹ Orhan, “Bir Çin Hikâyesi,” *Resimli Ay* September (1930): 26-29.

for known aims. The main line of the story was this child's transformation- he became an English spy who fought against the Chinese communists and executed 500 of them by shooting. Here, not only the missionaries were charged as being the tools of imperialism and capitalism, but also the struggle of the reds was obviously sublimated.

The last story of this group is from Enver Behnan. In this story, Behnan described the famous Şeyh Bedrettin rebellion. The struggle of Şeyh Bedrettin and Mustafa were designated as a rebellion of the peasantry against feudality. After the first success of the rebellion, the peasants shared the land, which was owned by the state. However, the Empire repressed the rebellion and killed thousands of peasants. Behnan's last words reveal the story's emphasis: "In the end, feudal lords again dominated the peasants and again began to rob and to milk them like a dairy cattle."⁹⁰

VII) A General Evaluation of the Literature in *Resimli Ay*

Referring to the above depiction of the literature in *Resimli Ay*, two important deductions seem clearly dominant in the evaluation of this part: First, Nâzım Hikmet's style, form and ideas deeply influenced and informed other literary products in the magazine; and second, there was a clear-cut distinction between the approach to poetry and short-story in terms of form and content.

This distinction in the second deduction has key importance since it reveals the two-edgedness and eclecticism of the magazine's general literary approach that was directed by Nâzım Hikmet. It is clear that the poetry in the magazine had its own discourse out of a new form, a new style, the rejection of past poetry and poets, and

⁹⁰ ("Netice itibarile yine derebeyleri köylünün başına bindiler, tekrar soymaya ve sağmal bir inek gibi sağmaya başladılar.") Enver Behnan "Kayaların Üstündeki Adam," *Resimli Ay* September (1930): 17.

such. Prose in the magazine, on the contrary, maintained the general story-writing pattern of the Republic that was a kind of first person or third-person realism previously exemplified by famous short story writers of the early decades like Ömer Seyfettin, and Refik Halit Karay.⁹¹ Indeed, the main difference of prose in *Resimli Ay* was its clear change in content, as explained above, towards a more political and oppositional story-writing which did not imply any change in form. Nevertheless that point is again a sign of Nâzım Hikmet's influence due to its political dimension.⁹² Let's look at this two-edgedness.

It was showed that as Nâzım Hikmet advocated in his articles that “dialectical materialism” gave the unchanged rules of the eternal flow of the material and determined the historical flow. This was to employ the classical Marxist understanding of history, and so that it could be directly translated to the ineluctableness of the socialist era. In this perspective he interpreted the Atatürk Revolution as a bourgeois revolution, which had put an end to the feudal mode of production. Under this periodization, he evaluated the prose published in the magazine and some new books according to their place and location in terms of these historical eras. He praised the products which reflected its own historical era sufficiently and which made the reader perceive the coming historical phase.

This approach implied a crude reflectionism tendency that had a boundless belief in realism and that is widely seen in Marxist perception of literature, especially before the World War II. Raymond Williams summarizes this approach as: “Art reflected reality; if it did not it was false or unimportant. And what was reality? The ‘production and reproduction of real life’, now commonly described as ‘the base’,

⁹¹ This contradicts the contention of Sabiha Zekeriya [Sertel] that *Resimli Ay* had housed the born of a new realist literature.

⁹² At this point one must not think that the cadre of the magazine became against the kind of prose published in earlier issues. As will be shown in the last section of this chapter this transformation in content was probably a political choice concomitant with the rapid politicization of the magazine.

with art part of its 'superstructure'.⁹³ Therefore, art produces the knowledge of the base, which can be easily translated as the mode of production in Nâzım Hikmet's terminology.

In this perspective Nâzım Hikmet celebrated documentary realism, which revealed the dialectical change of facts and gave the knowledge of the facts. These ideas, to a certain extent, reflected the ideas, dominant in Soviet Russia and the ideas of the leader of the Revolution, Vladimir Lenin. Scherbin summarizes Lenin's ideas on art as:

The imaginative content of a work of art has to correspond to objective image of the reality. According the Lenin's theory, the level of authenticity, in which the reality is represented, is the primary criterion of art and the sublime law that it has to obey... Lenin considers every serious literary work as a live human document that reflects the era's actual historical processes and events. Therefore, it is natural for him to emphasize literature's informative value when he talks about it.⁹⁴

In this perspective, literary form naturally had a secondary position against content and its lack of any kind of autonomy, or this autonomy was not important enough to mention. It was determined by the requirements of content. Accordingly, the very immanent function of literature was to provide the knowledge of the social being. Thus, any concern about form could be harmful in the narration and the providing the knowledge of social being.

Indeed, if we only focus on the prose works and reflections on prose works, more or less the same idea was dominant in Resimli Ay, so that literary form was

⁹³ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977): 96.

⁹⁴ ("Bir eserin imgelemsel içeriği gerçekliğin nesnel imgesine tekabül etmelidir... Lenin'in teorisine göre gerçekliğin temsil edildiği sahicilik derecesi sanatın başlıca ölçütü ve uyması gereken yüce yasadır... Lenin her ciddi edebiyat eserini dönemin edimli tarih süreçlerini ve olaylarını yansıtan canlı bir insani belge olarak görürdü. Dolayısıyla edebiyattan söz ederken her zaman onun bilgisel değerini vurgulamış olması çok doğaldır.") Vladimir Scherbin, *Lenin and Problems of Literature* (Quoted by Murat Belge, in *Marksist Estetik* (İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları)).

thought of as a direct reflection of content. On this basis, a good literary work's success was determined by its content's reflection capacity of the social reality that was totally shaped by the era's mode of production, as pointed out above. However, in the area of poetry, to reach the same result is not as easy. Indeed, Nâzım Hikmet's ideas on the necessity of a revolution in poetical form were theoretically convenient in terms of classical historical materialism. According to historical materialism society has a material base and superstructure that is depended on that base. The means of production and the relations between these means are composed of the base. These are economic relations and they directly determine the relations in the superstructure like legal, political, and artistic ones. Sometimes, when economic relations develop, patterns belonging to the superstructure become belated according to these developments in the base. To recover from this backward state in superstructure a revolution comes and superstructure adapts itself to the base.⁹⁵ As seen in Nâzım Hikmet's explanation on Tevfik Fikret's poetry, form had to be revolutionized in order to adapt to content in the new historical phase Turkey had entered. Accordingly, the poetical form that came from Futurist and Constructivist experiments was the revolutionary form that was needed by new economic medium, or the industrial age.

However, his poetic approach had nothing to do with the knowledge of reality, or social being, so that this was a violation of general approach that constituted literary approach on a reflectionist and realist base. The natural question here is: What is the difference of poetry? Nâzım Hikmet had an answer to this question:

First of all, I want to say that the feature that differentiates poetry and prose, or poem and story, novel, play etc. is not one's being metrical

⁹⁵ For one of the numerous good accounts of the topic: Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar I (1908-1925)* (İstanbul: BDS Yayınları, 2000): 17-23.

and rhymed and the other's being non-metrical and non-rhymed. There are a lot of metrical and rhymed texts which are not to do with poems. The feature that relatively differentiates literary kinds like poem, novel, short-story is content more than form, atmosphere, the difference of profundity, hence their function in the spheres of idea and sentiment. The same event is presented in different proportions, with different atmospheres and profundity by poem, novel, play and script; that is their difference.⁹⁶

In this quotation, his attempt to differentiate literary kinds from each other passing beyond apparent formal features was important, however, this does not answer some basic questions: Why then poetry was the area of revolutionary form whereas prose did not need this kind of renovation? Or why did the effects of city life reflect on the formal constituents of poetry, whereas they did not in the area of prose? Nâzım Hikmet had no answer to the question in above quotation, or in any other one. Emphasizing this point, his eclectic literary approach can be proved. I believe that this eclecticism was the essence of his and *Resimli Ay*'s real difference. At this point, the employment of Futurist form and Futurist attitude are more crucial than anything else.

Indeed *Resimli Ay*'s literary approach had six important Futurist emphases. The first one was the encapsulation of images such as city, machines, factories etc. into poetry. As showed in poetry section, factories, crowds of the streets, the rapid life in city and others were the constituent elements of poems published in *Resimli Ay*. This fact exactly came from the Futurist perception of art as seen in Mayakovsky's words:

⁹⁶ (Evvvela şunu söyleyeyim ki, şiirle nesri, hikâyeyi, romanı, tiyatro ve saireyi ayıran şey, birisinin vezinli ve kaftiyeli olması, diğerlerinin vezinsiz ve kaftiyesiz olması değildir. Nice vezinli kaftiyeli yazular vardır ki, şiirle hiçbir alakası yoktur. Şiir, roman, hikâye vesaire gibi edebiyat şubelerini yekdiğerinden nisbi olarak ayıran şey, şekilden ziyade muhteva, hava, derinlik farkı velhasıl (fikir ve his) sahasında gördükleri iştir. Aynı hadiseyi şiir, hikaye, roman, tiyatro ve sinema senaryosu başka miyaslarda, hava ve derinliklerde verirler, aralarındaki fark buradan gelir.) No Name, "Mecmuamıza Şiir Gönderen Şairlerle Hasbıhal," *Resimli Ay* October (1929):

The city enriched our experiences and impressions with new urban elements, which the poets of the past did not know... Telephones, airplanes, expresses, elevators, rotating machines, sidewalks, factory chimneys, stone colossi, soot and smoke— these are the elements of beauty in the new urban landscape... the main thing is the rhythm of the life has changed. Everything acquired the speed of the lightning... Frenzy is the symbol of the tempo of contemporary life... Poetry must correspond to the new elements of the contemporary city's psyche."⁹⁷

In all poems of Nâzım Hikmet, İlhami Bekir and Nail V. the main aim was to touch this psyche, as it was showed in the section on poetry in *Resimli Ay*.

The second one was the Futurist poetic form. Obviously, Futurists had a position against realism, as discussed above. In the second half of the 1920's, when they were not tolerated by the Communist Party, they continued to defend their main poetic approach, whereas, in prose, they suggested a "literature of fact" that depended on biographies, newspapers and such. In this way, they sought to construct the proletarian literature demanded by the Party. *Resimli Ay* shared more or less the same view in terms of poetry, but accepted realist literature in prose, unlike the Futurists. As said above, this new poetry had a strong emphasis on the city and the mechanization of life. The rhythm, words, and rhyme pattern all depended on the new mechanics of the new urban life; or in other words, the future's life needed radically new formal, stylistic and linguistic elements. In this way, the broken lines, the creation of visual elements with new orthography, the deconstruction of harmony, and putting the orchestration of the voices of the city instead were dominant dynamics of the poetry in *Resimli Ay*.

The passionate love for machines, electronics, and speed i.e. the modern city's atmosphere simultaneously corresponded to a radical demand for the rejection of past art. A totally new society required a totally new art, which was beyond all

⁹⁷ Maiakovsky said all these in a lecture that was delivered in Polytechnical Museum in Moscow in 11 November 1913. Quoted by Anna Lawton, "Russian and Italian Futurist Manifestoes," *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 20, No: 4 (Winter, 1976): 408.

conventions. The remnants of the past had to be put their true place: garbage. The famous manifesto of Russian futurism underlined this idea: “Only we are the image of our time ... The past is restricted. The academy and Puškin are more incomprehensible than hieroglyphs. Let us throw Puškin, Dostoevskiy and Tolstoj etc. etc. off the Ship of Contemporaneity.” *Resimli Ay* with its We Break the Idols campaign implied the same emphasis. Moreover, the necessity of elimination of past was mentioned more than one time in the magazine. This was the third common feature.

The fourth point was Nâzım Hikmet’s emphasis on the unity of poet’s ordinary acts and poetical production, or poetry and consciousness.⁹⁸ Thus, his poetry overflowed from the poet’s life itself; and acts of the poet also constituted his poem. The cancellation of the difference between life and art implied the avant-garde concerns of Futurism. As Bürger points out, avant-garde trends attempted to eliminate the discrepancy between art and everyday life. Their most important concern was to identify art and life. In this way, the artistic work had to be an act of everydayness, or an ordinary act had to be an artistic work.⁹⁹

As fifth point, to mention the special place of the “poet’s psyche” and poetry’s superior position in Futurist perception is crucial. Almost all of the poems in *Resimli Ay* accentuated the “poet’s psyche”; all inputs from the city formed the poem through this psyche. Therefore, no objective narration of life in the modern city was present here; instead, this life reflected upon “poet’s psyche”. In this way, we see the figure of poet in the poems of all poets of *Resimli Ay* while observing, wandering, and

⁹⁸ Look at the quotations from his article on İlhami Bekir, and Sadri Ertem’s article on his poetry’s dialectical materialist character.

⁹⁹ Indeed, “the literature of fact” of Lef in 1920’s is the most important manifestation of this idea. Brik, Mayakovky and others were claiming that their works are newspapers, posters, report etc. This was the total elimination of earlier forms.

struggling in the city. This poet was “the creator of human soul” as Kručenyx put it.¹⁰⁰

Finally, it is possible to mention Futurists’ anti-feminist attitude and aesthetization of war. In some articles of Maiakovksy in 1914, the sublimation of war as an aesthetical object is obvious: “As an artist, I have to think that, maybe, war was invented only to give somebody the possibility of writing a good poem.” His another sentence about war is more notable: “So, from the soul of the new man the awareness arose that war is not a senseless murder, but a poem about the liberated and enlarged soul”.¹⁰¹ The masculinity of the language and poetry were also sublimated. In this society of speed and machines the poet spoke with a masculine tone. In Vadim Šeršenevič, this aspect reached feeling of contempt for women. One of the most important figures of the trend, Kručenyx shared the same idea: “because of our contempt for women and children, in our language there will be only the masculine gender.”¹⁰² Surely, Nâzım Hikmet and others were not radical as Šeršenevič and Kručenyx, but their poems were praised for having a masculine tone, which earlier poetry had lacked totally. Moreover the emphasis of fight was close to Russian Futurists’ praise for war.¹⁰³

Surely, the complete identification of literature in *Resimli Ay* with Russian Futurism, if we have a large scope, is not possible. Even so, there were differences in terms of Futuristic points. Nevertheless, that the influence of Futurism was a main creator of dynamics and tension of literature in *Resimli Ay* is an indisputable fact. Surely the other main creator was a collection of socialist concerns, which appeared especially in prose and the criticism of prose. These two areas had a contradictory

¹⁰⁰ Lawton, 415.

¹⁰¹ Quoted by: Lawton, 408-09.

¹⁰² Ibid. 409.

¹⁰³ Especially look at the part about İlhami Bekir and Nail V.

unity, even if Nâzım Hikmet tried to eliminate it, employing a dialectical materialist schema. The symbiosis of a kind of classical realism and radical avant-gardism was the most important manifestation of this contradictory structure.

However, it is to be noted that the literary concerns of *Resimli Ay*, although it employed different avant-garde tools and points, were dominantly socialist. Two articles published in the journal reveal this dominance. The first article belonged to Nâzım Hikmet, and it was written after the suicide of the most famous Russian Futurist poet Vladimir Mayakovsky. In this article, Nâzım Hikmet accused of some interpreters who had tried to show Mayakovsky's suicide as a sign of the collapse of the Russian Revolution. According to him, Mayakovsky had been an ardent supporter of the Revolution and his suicide had been because of a sudden crisis of loneliness, some personal sorrows and the awakening of his individualistic instincts that were belonged to his personal experience before the Revolution. In this way, Nâzım Hikmet showed that he is insistent in advocating the Revolution, even if his role model's personal tragedy was the subject.¹⁰⁴

The second important article was a translation from famous French socialist writer Henry Barbusse. The article was on proletarian literature in construction. The most important point of the magazine was its emphasis on the indefiniteness of the features of proletarian literature; accordingly the period was one of search. At the same time, his ideas emphasized the importance of form and style in literary production; accordingly these two had to have perfection. He praised Futurism and Cubism due to their contribution at this point, although he underlined the negative effect of their exaggerated formalistic tendencies. Moreover, he attacked bourgeois perception of art and "art is for art" approach. However at the same time he did not

¹⁰⁴ Süleyman, "Muazzam Şair Mayakovsky Neden İntihar Etti?" *Resimli Ay* July (1930):

sublimate realism as the sole literary way.¹⁰⁵ I think here Barbusse's ideas were very close to Nâzım Hikmet's. The clearly dominant thing was to find the literary pattern of new society; and then came a search of the most convenient literary medium, and the inputs of this search were various tools of avant-garde art, realist heritage, socialist political concerns, the practical needs of the Revolution and so forth.

Here, to digress a little, to touch on Constructivism, which was pointed out in the page setting issue above, is meaningful. Indeed this current was a faction of Futurism. They adapted "the Futurists' mystique of machine and their worship of technology". However, it can be assessed as an attempt to reconcile literary novelty and artistic experimentation with the demands of socialist administration. In this way, they tried to "correct" Formalist ideas, which presupposed content's determination by content; and targeted functional forms, which were shaped by the features of content. According to Poggioli this was an attempt to pass to the viewpoint of an engineer from one of an architect. In this way, material convenience and practical utility were thought as the most important criteria.¹⁰⁶ Barbusse's emphasis on technical excellency was reminiscent of the Constructivists' approach. However, I prefer to use Futurist as a generic name for poetry in *Resimli Ay* due to the hardness of differentiating the poetry of Constructivism from the poetry of Futurism only referring to this fact.¹⁰⁷

As a last point to mention the political function of a literary work is necessary. As pointed out in the section about Nâzım Hikmet's article, the concept of "thesis" emerged as an expression of political intention of literary text in prose. However,

¹⁰⁵ Henry Barbusse "Dünyanın En Büyük Yazarlarından Henry Barbusse Proleterya Edebiyatını Nasıl Tarif Ediyor?" *Resimli Ay* September (1930): 37.

¹⁰⁶ Renato Poggioli, *Poets of Russia*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960): 318-321; Selahattin Hilav, *Edebiyat Yazıları*: 28.

¹⁰⁷ Nâzım Hikmet uses the term of Futurist for his articles and poems when he mentions about his youth. However, we encounter his participation to both poem performances of both groups.

against the work's informative value, it was put as a secondary element. At the same time, thesis was not a propagandistic activity; on the contrary it tried to explain a worldview.¹⁰⁸ Surely, this meaning was more or less convenient with the text's feature of being informative. At this point, Sabiha Sertel and Sadri Ertem's words about Nâzım Hikmet's art's being only a popularization tool for his ideas seem exaggerated. These words become more exaggerated in particular, if we pay attention to poetic works in *Resimli Ay*. Surely, instead of employing revolutionary forms, using familiar forms -like forms of folk poetry- would make much sense in order to popularize ideas.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, the literary matrix of *Resimli Ay* and Nâzım Hikmet has to be founded upon the complex modality between literature, society, and politics, instead of suggesting the direct determination of a political dimension.

In conclusion, the literary perception of *Resimli Ay* seems as made up with different points. An amalgam of realism in prose and avant-garde concerns in poetry were far away from being a synthesis; they had different literary discourses, although a vulgar dialectical materialist explanation was employed in the explanation of both. Therefore, the main inference of this section was the existence of an eclectic structure in the literary perspective of *Resimli Ay*. Nevertheless I want to focus on the political meaning of this eclecticism, rather than to reveal its literary contradictions. But, before this let's focus on the overlapping of literary and political developments in *Resimli Ay*.

¹⁰⁸ In Nâzım Hikmet's case this is dialectical materialism.

¹⁰⁹ This is what Socialist Realism did in Soviet Russia.

VIII) The Parallelism Between the Literary and Political Spheres in *Resimli*

Ay

The above sketch of the literature in the magazine established the parallelism between the political and literary spheres: While the political opposition was hardening towards a demand for a party of workers and peasants, the share of literature in the magazine increased and gained a more clearly articulated socialist perspective. The call for a new political party based on the coalition of the peasantry and the workers accompanied the call for a revolution in literature, or a new literature.

Indeed, Zekeriya Sertel declared in one issue of that the magazine would publish more literary products and social articles as a result of the wishes of the readership. Although popular topics like the Hollywood articles were not totally eliminated, the content of the last issues of the magazine clearly embodied this fact. Especially the issues of September and October 1930, which are the peak points of transformation, show the changed direction of the magazine. In September, three stories, one from Sadri Ertem, one from Orhan (Nâzım Hikmet) and one from Sabahattin Ali, a poem from Nâzım Hikmet, Tevfik Fikret's famous "95'e Doğru" in which he criticized the CUP, Barbusse's article on proletarian literature, Süleyman's (again Nâzım Hikmet) on Tevfik Fikret were composed on the literary side. Surely all these products were not simply literary things, but also they had open political connotations. The political sphere of the issue included Sabiha Sertel's column of We See and We Hear, which was about exploited peasants and workers, most likely another article belonging to her on working women in factories and fields, an article on French imperialism in the East, and Mehmet Zekeriya's editorial where he answered the question "what is the stance of *Resimli Ay*?" Moreover, three social

articles were important: one about philanthropic associations, one about how 100% percent of literacy could be achieved and the last about prisoners.

The next issue maintained the same pattern. Four poems, two from Nâzım Hikmet, one from Nail V. and one from İsmail Suphi, four short stories, one from Sabahattin Ali, one from Enver Behnan, one from Sadri Ertem and one from Suat Derviş were made up the literary side. On the other hand, Sabiha Sertel's We See and We Hear column about homeless old people and exploited workers, Emin Türk's a furious and oppositional article on the exploitation of the peasantry, an article on demands from the municipality, an article on Azarbeijan in which the socialist government praised, an article on the cooperation of man and woman in the harsh struggle of life, and Zekeriya Sertel's editorial were pieces on the political side. Two articles on education, one article on an irresponsible mayor, a letter from Northern Anatolia are worth attention too. In these two issues all popular topics, but especially ones belonging to American style magazines, decreased in number. The two next issues, which were published by the Sertels independently, reflected the same tendency, although the magazine's dimensions diminish.

In terms of becoming oppositional, however, the unchanged element was the magazine's approach to poetry. From the very first articles on the issue, an emphasis of revolution in form was dominant. Interestingly, the magazine's first important political challenge was the campaign of We Break the Idols, which in fact was only literary, as claimed by the magazine. Nevertheless, this revolutionary perspective reflected on the whole position of the magazine- in the end, *Resimli Ay* was also politically revolutionary with a call to a political party of workers and peasants.

Surely, these two spheres –literary and political– had a reciprocal relationship; they fed and encouraged each other. The revolutionary attitude in poetry and

literature created the substance of a revolutionary identity; and the increasing tone of political opposition brought about a great change in the content and selection of prose.¹¹⁰ In the last issues, surely *Resimli Ay* still conveyed its paradoxes: the position of popular issues against political demands and avant-gardism in poetry against a realist attitude in prose were the expressions of a search.

As will be argued in the next section, Nâzım Hikmet and *Resimli Ay*'s two-edged understanding of literature, which can be summarized as socialist on the one hand and futurist-constructivist on the other, implied the possibility of a more democratic socialist politics in radical left on the one hand, and in Turkey on the other. Far away from Soviet Russian orthodoxy and the early Republican government's ideology that could adapt left-wing concerns to itself successfully with the instruments of populism and peasantism, *Resimli Ay* indicated an alternative position formed in the experience between 1929-1931. In the next chapter, the details of this inference will be examined.

¹¹⁰ Interestingly Sabahattin Ali's "A Story on Foresters" ("Ormancı Hikâyesi") resembles to an event, which is criticized by Sabiha Sertel in the column of "We See and We Hear". That Sabahattin Âli narrated a real event, which is dealt with in the magazine, is a reasonable claim.

CHAPTER IV

LITERATURE, TURKISH LEFT AND RESİMLİ AY

I) A Relatively Liberal Era: 1929-1931

The publication years of *Resimli Ay*'s second period are generally evaluated as a period of search on the part of government in terms of economic and political policies. 1929 was an important watershed, especially if we take economic concerns into consideration. Indeed, after a six-year period of relatively liberal economic policies, a change towards more protective policies¹ came onto the agenda, especially due to the unsuccessful picture, which became more unsuccessful with the influence of the Great Depression. Between 1929 and 1932 many different laws were promulgated and some related institutions were established to form a national protected economy, the external relations which were fully under the control of internal agents. Interestingly etatist and interventionist policies, which would take the scene after 1932, did not accompany these deeds. Thus, national private industry found an opportunity to make good short-term profits under the high-tariff barriers.²

The change in political sphere was again due to the catastrophic picture of 1929. Against a furious public, the government had to choose one of these two ways: it would either prefer a relatively liberal politics that allowed opposition to a certain extent, or it would increase the tightness of the regime. The establishment of The Liberal Party (*Serbest Firka*) can be evaluated as part the government's choice of the

¹ Turkey gained the right of determining new tariff rates in this year, as stipulated in the Lausanne Treaty.

² Korkut Boratav, "Kemalist Economic Policies and Etatism," in *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State* Edited by Kazancıgil and Özbudun (Hamden, Conn: Anchon Books, 1981): 170-72.

former.³ Feroz Ahmad interprets the permission granted for the publication of *Resimli Ay* as a result of the relatively liberal milieu of these years.⁴

However, this period did not last long. Whereas a full-fledged etatism was launched in 1932 after the realization of the insufficiency of private sector, the relative freedom was brought to an end, especially due to the people's unexpected favor of the Liberal Party in 1930. In the period between 1929-1932, the economic conditions of the low-income groups deteriorated rapidly, whereas private industrialists enjoyed high profits, which created an atmosphere of profiteering and corruption, and an increase in the income of particular parts of the bourgeoisie and bureaucracy. No doubt there was a clear relation between adverse economic developments and the public's increasing reaction that was became visible with the rise of the Liberal Party. Thus, economic initiative was undertaken by the government after 1932 and the voices of complaint were prevented with the abrogation of the Liberal Party⁵ and with some harsh laws like one about te press, which gave the government the right to suppress the newspapers publishing items "against the general policies of the state," promulgated in 1931.⁶ Therefore, *Resimli Ay*'s publication stopped when the relative freedom was brought to an end.

As shown in the first chapter of the present study, *Resimli Ay* claimed to be representative of the workers and peasants. It is important to emphasize that in this period both groups encountered a serious deterioration in terms of economic income. The prices of agricultural goods declined dramatically due to the decreasing international demand under the influence of the Great Depression. The increasing internal terms of trade of industrial goods were not reflected in the wages of workers;

³ Ferdan Ergut, *Modern Devlet ve Polis* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004): 332.

⁴ Feroz Ahmad, *Modern Türkiye'nin Oluşumu* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1999): 77.

⁵ Boratav: 173-74.

⁶ Ergut: 337.

on the contrary, wages even decreased.⁷ Thus, there was a growing disquiet among peasants and workers. Workers were among the most important supporters of the Liberal Party.⁸ On the other hand, the period was a relatively liberal era as indicated above. Thus *Resimli Ay* was able to continue publication for two years.

II) The Turkish Radical Left and the Challenge of Nâzım Hikmet during the Publication Years of *Resimli Ay*

The Turkish radical left had not a long history when *Resimli Ay* was published. The Turkish Communist Party (TCP), which was an underground organization, was the most important agent of radical left politics.⁹ It had close links and relations with Communist International and was more or less directed by instructions from the Soviet Russian Communist Party. In 1930, or in the hot oppositional year of *Resimli Ay*, Nâzım Hikmet was dismissed from the Party. He was accused of forming of another party that tried to undermine the official Communist Party. On the 8 December 1930, the first issue of *Kızıl İstanbul* (Red İstanbul) newspaper, which was closed to TCP, contained a striking paragraph about Nâzım Hikmet and *Resimli Ay*:

I see that some friend workers think that '*Resimli Ay*' magazine and '*Son Posta*' (Latest News) newspaper are close to the workers, occupy themselves with the interests of the workers and write articles for them; and I see that some friends have sympathy for these masked foes of the workers. Nâzım Hikmet, who is the leading figure of *Resimli Ay* magazine, has been dismissed from the Party and has been declared that he has no relation to the Party with the

⁷ Boratav: 173.

⁸ Feroz Ahmad, "Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Sınıf Bilincinin Oluşması, 1923-1940," in *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sine İşçiler* ed. by D. Quataert and E.J. Zürcher (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1995): 145.

⁹ Mete Tuncay underlines that no other left-wing movement emerged between 1925 and 1940 in the Republican period. He thinks that the period before 1925 is a period of politics, whereas after is a period of administration. Mete Tuncay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar II (1925-1940)*: 11

open letter by the central committee of the Party because of his features of being a petit bourgeois politician, social democrat and trying to convert our real class struggle into opportunism under the direction of the bourgeoisie. The policy of enjoying freedoms that is being followed by Nâzım Hikmet and his companions is a way that takes the working class away from its struggle and makes it a medium of the perpetuation of bourgeois dominance.¹⁰

Before focusing on the content of this clash, let's look at the recent history of communist movement. The First Congress of the Turkish Communist Party was held in 1920 in Baku. The leading figures of the Party were invited to Turkey, but they were killed during their journey in 1921. After this, the Turkish communist movement remained in an organizational crisis, although a few socialist formations were established, especially in Anatolia, and the main publication unit *Aydınlık* (The Lightness) continued to be published under the leadership of Şefik Hüsnü [Deymer]. The crisis came to an end with the second congress in 1925. Different groups participated in the congress and the main organs of the Party were formed. Accordingly, Şefik Hüsnü became the general secretary of the Party, whereas Nâzım Hikmet was selected for the Central Committee.

However the legal existence of the Turkish Communist Party lasted only one and a half months. After the Şeyh Sait Rebellion of 1925, the Law for the Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sükûn Kanunu*) was promulgated and then came the arrests of communists. Both Şefik Hüsnü and Nâzım Hikmet fled abroad and both were sentenced to fifteen years in absentia. In Vienna in May 1926, the third

¹⁰ (*Amele arkadaşlardan bazılarının 'Resimli Ay' mecmuası ve 'Son Posta' gazetesini amelece, amelenin menfaatini düşünen ve onlar için yazılar yazan adamlar olduğunu zannettiklerine bazı arkadaşlarında bu maskeli amele düşmanlarına karşı bir teveccüh beslediklerine şahit oluyorum. 'Resimli Ay' mecmuasının belli başlı şahsiyeti Nâzım Hikmet, firkamız merkez komitesinin neşrettiği açık bir mektupla, küçük burjuva politikantı, sosyal demokrat, firkamız içinde hakiki sınıf mücadelesi siyasetimizin burjuvazi hesabına oportünizme tahviline çalışan bir adam sıfatı ile firkadan tardedilmiş ve komünizm ile hiçbir alaka ve rabtası olmadığı ilân edilmiştir. Nâzım Hikmet ve hampalarının takip ettiği yalnız serbest imkânlardan istifade siyaseti, amele sınıfını hakiki kurtuluş mücadelesinden uzaklaştıran ve onu burjuva hakimiyetinin devamını temin için, bir alet haline sokan bir yoldan başka bir şey değildir.*) Quoted by: Emin Karaca, *Sevda'nın Komünisttir*: 137.

congress was assembled with four members from Turkey and four from abroad. Nâzım Hikmet also attended this congress. There are some claims, which do not depend on documents that the first clashes between Nâzım Hikmet and Şefik Hüsnü began at this congress. Accordingly, there was a struggle between the two groups. Moreover, the fact that there would be no congress in the next years, as it is claimed, would worsen the relations between the two groups.¹¹ However, the real nature of and reasons for the conflict are not clear due to the lack of documentation.

Indeed, the real clash between Nâzım Hikmet and the Turkish Communist Party began in 1929 when he held a secret meeting on Pavli Island near Pendik. The exact date of the meeting is unknown. As claimed, seven Turkish Communist Party members, other than Nâzım Hikmet, participated. This was an oppositional organization against the center of the TCP; however again it is hard to enunciate the reasons of the conflict. The main interpretation is to accept it as an internal clash of the Party. Accordingly, Nâzım Hikmet tried to have his its oppositional formation accepted by the Communist International instead of the Party under the control of Şefik Hüsnü. Nevertheless, in 1930 he and friends were dismissed from the Party with the approval of Comintern. In a magazine, *İnkılap Yolu* (Way to Revolution), which was published by the TCP, an open letter from Comintern that declared this decision, was published:

The executive committee of Communist International declares to all the members of Turkish Communist Party and all workers that the group, which attacked to Turkish Communist Party Central Committee, in the name of 'opposition' is not a communist group. This 'opposition' is composed of former bourgeois, the defeatist that was dismissed from the Party in 1927, Trotskyites, and some

¹¹ Emin Karaca, *Nâzım Hikmet'in Şiirinde Gizli Tarih* (İstanbul: Çınar Yayınları, 1995): 99.

spies that are explicitly polices; all these are the men of Kemalism, who were smuggled into the lines of worker class.¹²

In this letter, interestingly Nâzım Hikmet was identified with Vedat Nedim (Tör) and Şevket Süreyya (Aydemir), who had left the Party and joined the Kemalist government. These two famous figures of the the Early Republic would form the Kadro movement, which attempted to be the theoreticians of the Republican ideology and had an important influence in the period.

One other claim about the event is that Comintern's call, before the decision of dismissal, to abolish the oppositional group and join official TKP was rejected by Nâzım Hikmet. After this rejection, he continued his activities and his oppositional organization formed some secret groups in Anatolia. In this way, the position taken by Nâzım Hikmet can be thought of as having been even against the Communist International, although the documentary evidence is not sufficient to prove this claim.¹³

Mete Tuncay claims in his invaluable book about Turkish left-wing movements that the challenge of Nâzım Hikmet probably was not a direct challenge to Comintern. The main accusation for Nâzım Hikmet is to be Trotskyite, but according to Tuncay, he was not seem as a Trotskyite in terms of his ideas. Because being a Trotskyite meant either to be related to the Trotskyite organization, or to

¹² (...Komünist Enternasyonalinin İcra Komitesi 'Muhalefet' namı altında Türkiye Komünist Fırkasının Merkez Komitesi aleyhine saldıran grubun bir komünist grubu olmadığına bütün Türkiye Komünist Fırkası azalarının ve bütün işçilerin nazarı dikkatini celbeder, bu 'muhalefet' firkanın sabık küçük burjuva anasırından , daha 1927 senesinde firkadan tard edilen bozgunculardan, Troçkistlerden ve açıktan açığa polis olan bazı haftiyelerden mürekkeptir. amele sınıfının saflarına sokulmuş Kemalizmin adamlarıdır.) Quoted by: Emin Karaca, *Sevdalınız Komünisttir*: 136.

¹³ Interestingly most of these notes are from Karaca's study on Nâzım Hikmet's political life. This work depends not only on newspapers, magazines and other written documents but also memoirs, personal connections etc. However the most important on Turkish radical left, Tuncay's study does not include these interpretations. Nonetheless, this does not implies that Karaca's explanations are not objective.

adopt to his ideas, especially his doctrine of permanent revolution.¹⁴ However, it is hard to get any kind of impression that confirms this idea, in Tuncay's opinion. Therefore, the problem must have been an internal conflict.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Tuncay does not give a full explanation here and he confesses that in this state the only possible act is to guess. Here I propose that Tuncay's interpretation can be rethought if we consider *Resimli Ay*'s literary divergence, so that the ideas in *Resimli Ay* can provide an explanation for this formation, to a certain extent.¹⁶

Before, discussing political implications of literary views in *Resimli Ay*, let's look at the Turkish radical left's literary understanding, focusing on Ahmet Oktay's evaluation.

III) Literature for the Turkish Radical Left

There is a real lack of material about radical left-wing circles' literary approach. In the early Republic there wasn't any theoretical text that sought to explain radical left's possible literary perspectives until 1939, when *Edebiyatı Cedide'nin Otopsisini* (The Autopsy of the Trend of 'New Literature') by Hikmet Kuvılcımlı was published. To Ahmet Oktay, this unproductiveness was not special to the literary sphere; indeed there were years of disinterest in theoretical issues among the Turkish left. Until the 1960's, even the basic theoretical books of Marx, Lenin and Engels had not been translated. The Turkish left-wing intellectual paid his attention rather to political activities without any contemplation of their philosophical basics.¹⁷

¹⁴ Nâzım Hikmet's *Benerci Kendini Niçin Öldürdü?* have the reflections of this accusation.

¹⁵ Mete Tuncay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar II (1925-1936)*

¹⁶ Here, Tuncay touches upon *Resimli Ay* too, but he doesn't give an elaborate analysis.

¹⁷ Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekliğin Kaynakları*, 231-37. Oktay points out the reasons of the fact in intellectual traditions and intellectuals position in Ottoman Empire. Accordingly due to the lack of tradition of philosophy, Ottoman intellectual is not interested in philosophical problems behind

This insufficiency of intellectual deliberation on Marxist fundamentals and the illegal position of Marxist politics made Marxist theory a closed sphere of information that traveled on the grapevine. On that basis Turkish left wing circles reduced Marxism into only a problem of poverty. At the same time, the complete adjustment to the Soviet Russian Communist Party and Comintern made the radical left unable to produce alternative left-wing perspectives. Consequently came rote learning of some harsh principles and intolerance of other contentions. Under these ideas, falling into theory was interpreted as intellectualism and the populism of the RPP could not be challenged.¹⁸

Under these conditions, the entrenchment of Marxism in Turkey came into existence with literary tools, not scientific-theoretical ones until the 1960's. Surely one of the reasons of this state was the government's harsh pressure against left-wing organizations and the censoring of leftist intellectual production. Consequently, an over-romanticizing and over-simplifying tendency dominated the scene and harmed both theoretical and literary production. Left-wing literature became the house of simple binary oppositions such as good peasant/bad aga, oppressed worker/oppressing boss.¹⁹

The 1920's and 1930's are the years when this left-wing literature sprouted. The very first realist fictions that had social concerns were published in these years.²⁰ Surely, the said insufficient theoretical production and translation is very valid for this period. Neither sufficient production on Marxist thinking nor Marxist literary

Marxism. They are not open to any novel and therefore destructive contentions. On the other hand, at the time of crisis in the 19th century, their position is to produce the idea that will save the Empire. They pay attention to any idea if and only if this idea is helpful for the survival of the Empire. These two conditions inform their position against Marxist thinking. Although the fact about insufficiency of theoretical productions is unhesitatingly true, Oktay's interpretation can be labeled reductionist to a certain extent.

¹⁸ Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumcu*, 252-53.

¹⁹ Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumcu*, 249.

²⁰ According to Attila İlhan *Çıkrıklar Durunca* of Sadri Ertem is the first example of this category in Turkish fiction. The novels of Sabahattin Âli and Mahmut Yesari can be put under this category also.

approach and methods was available. For example, as emphasized above, there was no translation from Marx, only Engels's *The Root of Private Property and State*. One book from Lenin, one from Kautsky and one from Bebel completed the picture.²¹ This theoretical disinterest was reflected on the literary sphere directly- the scene was completely lack of the attempts of theoretical reflection on literature.

To express the Turkish left's perception of literature in the early Republic, Ahmet Oktay looks at some articles of Şefik Hüsnü [Deymer]. Here, the ideas of Şefik Hüsnü are important for the present study because of his being the leader of Turkish Communist Party. In these articles Şefik Hüsnü, attributed a secondary role to literature and art. His articles had a strict approach that claimed that the only real art was that, which was understood by the people. According to him everybody could understand a good artistic product and this did not require any kind of knowledge. Therefore, aesthetic perception was reduced into a dogmatic, primordial category. Surely, this explanation was far removed from any kind of materialist explanation. Oktay explains this interesting state referring to the general lack of theory among Turkish left. As a political leader, Şefik Hüsnü did not look for the peculiarities of artistic production, or even the art of a socialist society. In this way, he did not refrain from applying Soviet Russian Communist Party's instructions and remained away from criticism.²² In this way, in the year 1930, it doesn't seem possible to say that Turkish Communist Party differentiated from its Soviet Russian counterpart in terms of literary perspective. Therefore, further the *Resimli Ay*'s literary perspective from Soviet Russian orthodoxy, further from Turkish Communist Party.

In the next two sections I want to position Resimli Ay between the radical left of the Turkish Communist Party and other left-wing elements that compromised with

²¹ It is interesting to note that Sabiha Sertel made translations of Bebel and Kautsky. For a list of all these books: A. Oktay, *Toplumcu*, 317.

²² Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumcu*: 255-262.

Republican government. In this picture, TKP is viewed as the representative of Communist International or the Soviet Russian Communist Party.²³ On the other hand, some other elements had a symbiosis with Kemalist administration and identify themselves with nation, within the ideological sphere of populism and peasantism. In differentiating *Resimli Ay* from the former to evaluate the literary perspectives is meaningful. The latter can be differentiated referring both literary perspectives and *Resimli Ay*'s political agenda.

IV) The Difference of *Resimli Ay* in terms of Literary Perspective and the Political Implications of This Difference in Turkish Radical Left

Resimli Ay's first important point in literary sphere was its efforts to construct a theoretical base. That base contained both concerns of realism in prose and revolutionary form in poetry. As showed in Chapter Three, that base was certainly eclectic and did not constitute an uncontroversial whole. Nevertheless, as being a theoretical approach to literature in the radical left, it was completely unique.²⁴ In this theory, art's societal root and function was firstly emphasized beyond the vulgar politics. The magazine's microscope focused on the relational area between the author's politics and literary production.²⁵ In this way they opened a way to reflect on literature's original conditions and rules with respect to the social and political milieu. Although, they stuck to the explanation of direct determination of base approach, this attempt was significant where literature as a medium of politics approach was dominant in left-wing circles.

²³ This idea is not reductive; in those years all decisions of Turkish Communist Party are under the direct control of Comintern. As seen from the accounts in Tuncay's book, Turkish Communist Party always adapts itself to the demands of central organizations.

²⁴ Indeed, according to Ahmet Oktay, in the early Republican period Nâzım Hikmet is the only one left wing man of letters whose ideas are valuable in terms of theoretical thinking, in spite of the explicit insufficiencies.

²⁵ Ahmet Oktay thinks the same for Nâzım Hikmet's literary thinking in 1930's. Oktay, *Toplumcu*, 355.

This point becomes more significant if we think about Nâzım Hikmet's choice of Futurist and Constructivist forms in his poetry because, one of the main tendencies, which had a deep source in Lenin's ideas, among socialist literary circles was being against formalist ideas which attribute a special importance to literary form in the analysis of literature and naturally repudiates the direct determination of form by content.²⁶ Indeed the Futuristic trends manifested a deep influence of formalist thinking, and they were criticized frequently due to this fact.

The six Futuristic points of literature in *Resimli Ay*, which were explained in previous chapter, have explicit controversies with the dominant and supported discourse of realism in literature in Soviet Russia of the same years. As we seen in the previous chapter, Nâzım Hikmet tried to legitimize the employment of this form employing the historical materialist framework. However this kind of legitimization was not possible in Socialist Russia in the same year when Futurism lost almost all of its influence as it explained in the Introduction chapter. At that time, indeed all experiments and divergences in form were accepted as heretical and remnants of bourgeois culture. According to the circles close to the Party, the formalistic search of Futuristic schools had two negative points: on the one hand, it harmed the informative value of literature; on the other hand, to reach the populace, common and general forms were much more efficient. This negative attitude against formalistic concerns was the most important reason in the elimination of Futurist, Constructivist and other avant-garde schools after 1925.

As a second reason of the elimination, the Futurist demand of constituting a new literature with eliminating all remnants of past was treated as overshooting the mark. On the contrary, under the of the praise of realism, the great nineteenth century

²⁶ In this way, very important theoreticians like Mikhail Bakhtin who tried to find a middle way between Formalism and Marxism were neglected or overlooked in Soviet Russia.

Russian realism was put in possession of the Revolution, so that instead of the repudiation of the past, its canonization was preferred. Thirdly, the author was called to be a clerk of the Party, which was the conscious element of the society in theory. In this way, he had to be the applicant of the Party's policies; the content and form of the product was directly depended on the Party's control. However, this situation completely barred the poet's epic experience, which is one of the fundamentals of Futurist poetry.

The thought of Trotsky, who was eliminated and exiled by Stalin, seems to me important at this point. Indeed, Trotsky had a position that was very different from that of the socialist perception of art. First of all, it must be noted that Trotsky did not assume a one-to-one relation between base and superstructure. According to him art had its own rules and these rules were not the rules of Marxism. Thus, art should pave its way with its own tools. Accordingly, artistic form had autonomy and its own rules to a certain extent. Moreover; he was against crude reflectionist tendencies, so that he once more repudiated the direct determinism of base approach. At the same time, he did not confirm the efforts to construct a proletarian literature. Proletarian literature could be only a transitory one; the important thing is to constitute the literature of future's socialist society. Thus, on the one hand he rejected partisan acts to construct a proletarian culture and literature; and on the other hand, he did not look at past literature something to be eliminated unlike Proletkult and avant-garde trends.

These ideas brought about his opposition to the Party's intervention in artistic issues: "Art is not an area where the Party is called for making decision. The Party can protect, can help and should help; but only indirectly steers it."²⁷ His approach to literature paved the way for tolerance for avant-garde schools, which were harshly

²⁷ ("Sanat partinin komut vermeye çağrıldığı bir alan değildir. Parti, koruyabilir, yardım edebilir ve etmelidir, ama yalnızca dolaylı olarak yönlendirir onu.") Leon Trotsky, *Edebiyat ve Devrim*, (İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayınevi, 1986): 182-83.

attacked by the majority of revolutionary circles, which closer to the Party. According to him, avant-garde schools generally contributed to the process of the construction of socialist literature.

During the war and when the Revolution began, Futurism, like other novel literary schools in capitalist cities, was still bohemian. As a result of events, Futurism canalized its development into the Revolution's new canals. As a matter of course, this process couldn't produce a revolutionary art. However, Futurism has a more influential and greater share in the formation of new art, although it stayed a revolutionary extension of old art.²⁸

Thus, he did not reject the concept of "revolutionary" or "socialist literature"; and he had no tolerance of bohemian-symbolist (in Nâzım Hikmet's terminology Baudelairism) schools. However, his attribution of relative autonomy to art distanced him from the acceptance of abolishing the literary schools, which are assessed as heretic by the political authority of the Revolution.

Nâzım Hikmet of *Resimli Ay* did not have an argument about the mutual relationship between literary form and content in his articles, so that form's influence on content; thus, he did not think about literature's own rules, he did not define an autonomous sphere for literary production, which revealed itself in the transformations of form on an independent basis, or in a dialectical relationship with content. Therefore, his scope was not as deep as Trotsky. However, literary form had crucial point in his poetry. To find the most suitable form to social reality demanded was the focus of his literary perspective, so that any intervention of the Party or another authority was not an acceptable thing for him. Surely, he wanted to be a poet

²⁸ ("Savaş ve ardından da Devrim başladığında kapitalist kentlerdeki bütün yeni edebiyat okulları gibi Fütürizm de hâlâ bohem durumun sürdürüyordu. Olayların sürüklemesiyle Fütürizm, gelişmesini Devrim'in yeni kanalları içinde akıtmaya başladı. Eşyanın doğasına uygun olarak, bu sürecin devrimci bir sanat çıkarması olanaksızdı. Ama eski sanatın bohem devrimci bir uzantısı olarak kaldığı halde Fütürizm'in, yeni sanatın oluşumunda, diğer bütün eğilimlere göre daha dolaysız, daha etkin, daha büyük bir payı vardır.") Leon Trotsky, *Edebiyat ve Devrim*, (İstanbul: Kabcacı Yayınevi, 1986):

of socialist literature, and the construction of socialist society preceded any artistic concern. However, this did not mean the authority had the right of determining the form and content of a product. This is the same of what Trotsky said in his *Literature and Revolution*. Literary sphere could not be the area where the Party made the decision; the product was already and spontaneously political with his producer's political concerns.

The content of poetry proved the validness of these ideas anyway. Poems neither housed a crude reflectionist tendency, nor a propagandist agenda under the direction of a program. On the contrary, they directly overflowed from the poet's life. The personal experience, in these poems, which was under the direct and intensive influence of speedy and mechanized city life, combined with socialist concerns in the spirit of the hero. Neither a weakness nor a hesitation was needed to be hidden.

Here, I argue that the literary search of *Resimli Ay* had points from Trotskyite viewpoint, and thus it differentiated from the dominant orthodox ideas of the Communist Party of Soviet Russia, and so its Turkish counterpart which accepts all instructions coming from the central Party. As pointed out earlier, two main concerns created this difference: the tolerant view of avant-gardist experiments and its aloofness from literature's reduction to propaganda directed by the Party. Instead, *Resimli Ay* put avant-garde trends as the necessities of modern day and politics in literature as a larger concern than the propaganda-politics naturally and spontaneously appeared in literature through the writer's worldview. Surely this does not mean that *Resimli Ay* was a Trotskyite journal. Here the important point is to underscore the difference of *Resimli Ay* from the orthodox part of Turkish radical left. According to the analysis here, the literary perspective was closer to Trotskyite concerns and this implies a direct proportion with being far away from the events in t

the Soviet Russia of Stalin. Surely, this does not mean Resimli Ay's being against Soviet Russia; it only implies a differentiation.²⁹

In conclusion, the literary publication in *Resimli Ay* gives some powerful clues about the clash within the TCP. Here, my claim is that the challenge and dismiss of Nâzım Hikmet was not only a result of a power struggle within the Party. The difference of literary perspective in *Resimli Ay*, which was against position according to the course of the Revolution in Russia, implies an ideological contrast. At this point the question that emerges here is about the rapport between *Resimli Ay*'s and Nâzım Hikmet's oppositions. Indeed the relation between political demands of Sertels and Nâzım Hikmet is not clear to us even from their memoirs. Therefore, the relation between the call of *Resimli Ay* to establish a new left-wing political party and Nâzım Hikmet's oppositional communist party is not easy to interpret. Nevertheless, the literary and political sides of *Resimli Ay* had harmony and unity, so that it is hardly possible to say Nâzım Hikmet and his friends opposed the political formation in *Resimli Ay*.

V) *Resimli Ay* and the Single Party Era

As showed in two previous chapters, *Resimli Ay* had an opposition, which sprouted gradually, against Republican government. Again as claimed here, this opposition signified an alternative left-wing position that was unique in the early Republican period. This uniqueness came from the eclecticism made up with

²⁹ The articles on Soviet Republics were praiseful as showed in the Chapter Two.

socialist and avant-garde concerns. Literary perspective of the magazine presented the mapping of this uniqueness.

Indeed, the single party era did not evidence a monolithic character in terms of cultural modernization. Although the state was the dominant agent in cultural sphere, there was a relative freedom in cultural production. According to Köksal, an unofficial nationalism and social realism were active during the era and produced works even in the common magazines with artistic contentions that were not dominated by the official argument of the state.³⁰ Moreover, there were more or less avant-gardist attempts in the same era by different groups.

Surely, the single party era did not resemble to Nazi Germany or Stalin's Soviet Russia in terms of politics in art. The boundaries of artistic sphere, the features of forms and contents of literary products were not directly determined by official policies. However, this does not mean a real freedom in artistic production. Indeed, the criterion was explicit: no political subversion. Thus, if the ideology of the state was successful in the containment of socialist or avant-garde inclinations, a relative autonomy in art was allowed. The case of *Resimli Ay* proves this fact.

Köksal indicates the general acceptance of Modernist influence in art in the early Republican period writing that, "the early Republican cultural scene never displayed a harsh and uncompromising rejection of Modernism in art or literature."³¹ However, modernist point in Turkish art and literature generally serves the national program as showed by Bozdoğan.³²

³⁰ Duygu Köksal, "The Role of Art in Early Republican Modernization," in *La Multiplication des Images en Pays d'Islam* eds. Bernard Heyberger and Silvia Naef (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2003).

³¹ Duygu Köksal, "Art and Power in Turkey: Culture, Aesthetics and Nationalism During the Single Party Era," unpublished paper, 2004: 14.

³² Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building, The Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001):

The same was true of for left-wing literature. The important ideological dynamics of Republican governments, populism, peasantism and progressivism create areas of conciliation between leftist circles and Kemalist ideology. Populism was the most important ideological tool here. As showed by Tekeli and Şaylan, populism had a long history in Turkish lands and had both the direct and indirect effects of Russian Narodnism.³³ In the single party era it reached a larger content, merging with reformism, and this paved the way for an elitist approach that attributed no agency to the ordinary member groups of general public.³⁴ To make the people progress, or to make them develop was an attractive mission for the left-wing intellectual; this paved the way for the conciliation, and this conciliation brought about identification with nation, instead of class-based politics.³⁵ To attribute the same function to peasantism seems also possible. It serves an ideology that overlooks the social differences and represses the movements from below. It has a clear nationalist and anti-socialist agenda.³⁶

On this picture to show the place of *Resimli Ay* requires paying attention to both its political and literary novelty. The increasing dominance of avant-gardism and socialist approach in *Resimli Ay* accompanied the fall of a nationalist discourse and rise of a clear support for oppressed classes without any nationalist emphasis. Surely, on the one hand, the boundaries of socialism are not easy to understand although Zekeriya Sertel published a municipality program when he was a candidate for the Municipality Assembly. On the other hand, socialist concerns had an important degree of influence on avant-gardist approach in the magazine. Nevertheless, between the eclecticism of two sides and during the incremental

³³ İlhan Tekeli and Gencay Şeylan "Türkiye'de Halkçılık İdeolojisinin Gelişimi," *Toplum ve Bilim* no: 5-6 (1978): 55-56.

³⁴ Ibid. 80.

³⁵ Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumcu*: 240-41.

³⁶ M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "Türk Edebiyatında Köylüler," *Doğu Batı* no: 22 (2003): 105.

transformation of the journal into an oppositional focus one thing is apparent: The magazine had a politically subversive character and its eventual call was towards the lower classes for assuming their political agency.



CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the appealing transformation experience of *Resimli Ay* magazine in a two-year period between 1929 and 1931. In this process the magazine became the house of a novel literary approach on the one hand and an oppositional political demand for the establishment of a political party of oppressed people on the other; indeed it had been a popular magazine under a strong influence of American equivalents before the period. Thus, it is an experience that implies a useful and informative base for various different topics. In the present study, I tried to concentrate on the content of literary side of this transformation and its political connotations especially with respect to Turkish radical left's position.

Resimli Ay is the agent of a two-sided tension; one with the Turkish Communist Party; the other is with the single party government. In 1930, Nâzım Hikmet formed an alternative communist organization and as a result of this he was dismissed from the Party charging with Trotskyism and being the agent of Kemalist government in the Party. Although, we know the existence of this clash, the real reasons are not very clear due to the lack of documentary evidence. This study tries to shed a light on this problem focusing on the difference of literary perceptions of both side.

The second tension is to do with the challenge of *Resimli Ay* to the single party government. Unlike the first tension, this is a very clearly seen fact in the transformation path of the magazine. Step by step, *Resimli Ay* prepared a ground for the construction of a socialist party of workers and peasants. This depended on a direct criticism of the policies of the government. The interesting point here is that the audience bore witness to the sprouting of this ground's formation. The suing of

the magazine, the demands of audience, and most importantly the influence of magazine's having a very different outlook in terms of literature contributed the formation. Indeed, the main line in Kemalist politics was to reconcile the left-wing elements with the central government's policies especially with employing of populist ideology. Here again, the difference of literary perspective is crucial to understand how *Resimli Ay* saved itself from the containment of Kemalism ideology and populism. To reveal this relation the study refers to the avant-gardism of the magazine.

Therefore, to disclose the literary perspective of *Resimli Ay* is the main effort of this study. In this way, 1920's Soviet Russian experience is employed as both a theoretical and historical base. Surely, the rationale behind this is Turkish radical left's being under the direction of the Soviet Russian Communist Party, and *Resimli Ay*'s leading by Nâzım Hikmet who turned from Russia in 1929 and was influenced by its literary and political atmosphere.

The study uses four double conceptual categories in the construction of this base: base vs. superstructure, political sphere vs. literary sphere (art as a medium of political manipulation vs. autonomy of art), content vs. form, and realism vs. avant-gardism. These four can be translated into each other, although they are concepts of different levels. Three main points of views exist according to the positions and preferences on these categories: First, the Communist Party's partisan outlook that embraces direct determination of base, realism, the priority of content and makes artistic production as a practical political too on the one hand; and assaults and excludes a dialectical relationship between base and superstructure, any kind of formalistic and avant-gardist concerns charging with bourgeois remnant. Against these preferences the Trotskyite point of view presents a more tolerant viewpoint that

rejecting the direct determination of base and the Party's intervention in artistic production, attributes a relative autonomy to literature and art, and tolerates of avant-gardist trends. The third party is the avant-gardist perception of art, Russian Futurism in our case. Russian futurism as an attempt to reconcile life and art, tries to make artistic action a natural part of everydayness like other avant-garde groups. In this way, it suggests new artistic forms and totally repudiates the ones belong to past. This means the rejection of realism and the certain priority of content on the one hand; on the other, reducing to artist a worker in the constitution of future's society. Although Russian futurists wanted to be a part of the construction of proletarian culture demanded by the Party, their methods and approach were labeled as heretic and bourgeois. In the year 1930, when *Resimli Ay* experienced its most important times, second and third parties had been already eliminated from the scene.

That under this mapping, *Resimli Ay*'s political position can be designated is the claim of this study. The analysis made here puts that we can assess *Resimli Ay*'s this two years as the sprouting of an original left-wing movement which was saved itself from Kemalist ideology's containment and Soviet Russia Communist Party's direct control. This signs the possibility of a democratic socialist politics, which was absent both in Republican Turkey and Soviet Russia under Stalin.

In the Introduction chapter, I tried to expose the theoretical and historical context of the study. This two-sided context depends on Soviet Russian experience of 1920's as said above. In this way, socialist realism, or the Party's official literary attitude, Trotskyite alternative and avant-gardist perception of art are tried to map. The main tools of discussion are introduced in the chapter: base vs. superstructure,

political sphere vs. literary sphere (art as a medium of political manipulation vs. autonomy of art), content vs. form, and realism vs. avant-gardism.

In the Chapter I, general information on *Resimli Ay*'s publication between 1924-1931, and Zekeriya Sertel and Sabiha Sertel, the publishers of the magazine are presented. The general features of the magazine, Sertels' relation with the single party government, the magazine's main writer staff, and important historical points in the publication procedure are introduced here. Moreover, rough information on magazine's transformation is given. The main sources of this chapter are the Sertels' own memoirs.

The details of transformation, from a popular magazine to an oppositional one are discussed in the Chapter II. *Resimli Ay* seems a combination of two different journals in its second period 1929-1931. As being a more or less American style magazine and a socialist journal, it has an interesting symbiosis. However, this second period has also two main sub-periods. In the first one, the features that makes the magazine a popular one are dominant, whereas a political opposition dominates the scene in the second period, so that to demonstrate solely the symbiosis is not sufficient. The parts that form the symbiosis have different weights in different periods. In this chapter, *Resimli Ay*'s being a literary magazine is not mentioned; instead this can be thought as a preparatory chapter before the literary analysis of the magazine.

In the Chapter III, the detailed analysis of literature comes. A special attention is paid to Nâzım Hikmet here, because of his strong influence on the magazine. Primarily, his life story and poetical background are summarized, and his works in *Resimli Ay* are analyzed in a special section. Then the prose and poetic works published in the magazine are analyzed separately and their difference in

terms of perception of literature is disclosed. At the end of the chapter, a general evaluation of literature in terms of the theoretical base constructed in the Introduction chapter and the relation between political and literary sides of the magazine in the transformation process are tried to put its place.

The political implications of the literary point of view are the issue of scrutiny in the last chapter, Chapter IV. Before the analysis the years *Resimli Ay* published are accounted in terms of economic and political state. A section on Turkish radical left's, or Turkish Communist Party's, past years and state in the related period is followed by a part on the literary viewpoint of radical left. At the end of the chapter *Resimli Ay*'s difference is exposed with referring to relative positions of Turkish radical left and Kemalism's ideological containment of left-wing elements.

I think *Resimli Ay* is an important case to reflect on the complex modality between literature and politics. Although this modality was the deepest problematic of my motivation for this study, I realized immediately that it requires the erudition of years. Indeed, *Resimli Ay* presents an experience of transforming into an oppositional focus, and so that allows to the students of area bearing witness to a vital change that was born between literary disputes and political dissents that belonging to universal discussions in the era. Moreover, being the house of a two-sided dream of a new society, on the one hand socialist and on the other avant-garde, makes the magazine valuable for all students. That avant-gardism and the socialist perception of art are the two most productive grounds to reflect on the modality between politics and art is a reasonable claim. At the same time, *Resimli Ay* gives chance for rethinking both Turkish left's and the single party era's ideological

structure. As a special case on the margin, the political tolerance and perception of literature in the early days of Turkish Republic can be analyzed referring to *Resimli Ay*.

Nevertheless, I hope my study will help to the students of area who are inspired by the relationship between literature and politics; and I also hope researchers, who work in this topic, will focus on *Resimli Ay* in their studies.



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