

Suat Derviş (1905-1972): A Friend of the Soviet Union

By

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Submitted to

Central European University

Department of Gender Studies

*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of European Master in
Women's and Gender History*

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Budapest, Hungary

2017

Abstract

In this thesis, I examine Suat Derviş's life story and trace the course of Derviş's intellectual and political journey, from being an aristocratic Ottoman woman with an unavoidable distance from society to becoming a journalist whose writing was informed by a sense of social justice. Her literary career and political ideas witnessed a courageous and rather an unconventional transformation. After being trained by private tutors in Turkey, Suat Derviş continued her education in Germany. She started her career as an author with her first novel at the age of sixteen and she went on to work as a journalist in Turkey and different countries in Europe. Her visits to the Soviet Union in 1937 and 1939, and her work in Turkey as a journalist conducting street interviews enabled her to confront different social realities and had a huge impact on her political ideas and her writing.

In 1944, Derviş wrote a booklet called *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* (Why am I a Friend of the Soviet Union?) which constitutes the primary focus of this thesis. Derviş wrote this booklet in response to accusations made in anti-communist writer Reha Oğuz Türkkan's booklets *Kızılar ve Sollar* (Reds and Leftists) and *Kızıl Faaliyet* (Red Activity), with the aim to explain and justify her admiration of the Soviet Union. Derviş's booklet has been ignored in Turkish history and there is no comprehensive study of it. Nonetheless, expressing support for communism and the Soviet Union and being written by a woman in a period in Turkish history of pronounced anticommunism, this booklet has an important place both in Derviş's life and in Turkish history. By studying and exploring Suat Derviş's unconventional life and career, and by focusing on her ignored 1944 booklet, I aim (i) to examine Derviş's distancing herself from the dominant state ideology and to illustrate how she amalgamated feminist and socialist discourses, (ii) to analyze how and why mainstream/official historiography of the Turkish left and feminism overlooked Suat Derviş' political ideas and her booklet. In doing so, I aim to review the political and literary journey of an exceptional Turkish woman writer and journalist within the historical context of her time.

Declaration of Original Research and the Word Count

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

I further declare that the following word count for this thesis are accurate:

Body of thesis (all chapters excluding notes, references, appendices, etc.): 27,633 words

Entire manuscript: 30,886 words

Signed ____Nazlı Eylem Taşdemir____

(Signature appears on the hard copy submitted to the library)

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor Prof. Francisca de Haan for her guidance, advice, criticism, and encouragement throughout my thesis. I have been amazingly fortunate to have an advisor who is always inspiring and supportive in every stage of this difficult process. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for my MA study.

I am thankful to Ahmet who provided brilliant comments and suggestions and Şeyma for giving editing and translation support. I also thank Esra and Cem for helping me with footnotes and Başak and Berkant for styling advice.

I am lucky enough to have amazing friends who have made my journey enjoyable. I would like to thank my friends at CEU, Ghazaa, Sahar, Elaheh, Monika, Rimple and Hjalmar. I thank Erman, Tuğçe, Işın, Hazal, Emrah, and Emir for making both Budapest and Istanbul full of amazing memories. I also thank Yasemin, Burcu and Vildan for always supporting me and Şebnem, Muhammed, Taha and Ece for making my journey enjoyable.

My family is my great fortune, and as I have realized the importance of family in shaping one's life, I become more and more grateful. I would like to thank my family. I owe a deep gratitude to Ebru and Kurtuluş, my pacemakers, for always supporting and encouraging me to finish my thesis.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Hazal who always supported me throughout writing this thesis and my life in general. This work would not have been possible without her patience, foresight as well as her encouragement and support. Thanks to her, today I have the honor of presenting this thesis.

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Introduction

In this thesis I will examine the political and literary career of an Ottoman Turkish feminist, Suat Derviş (1905-1972), whose writings exemplify how feminist and socialist movements can interact. Suat Derviş was born into an aristocratic family, she deceased during the dark days of the March 12, 1972 military memorandum in the Turkish Republic. Having published her first novel at the age of sixteen, Suat Derviş studied in Germany, and worked as a reporter both in Turkey and different countries in Europe. In 1930, she joined the oppositional Liberal Republican Party, which advocated for women's suffrage. She ran in the local elections together with Nezihe Muhiddin, a leading political figure. Both were unsuccessful in the elections and the party itself was shortly thereafter banned.¹ In 1940, she married Reşat Fuat Baraner (1900-1968), the leader of the illegal *Türkiye Komünist Partisi* (Communist Party of Turkey) and between 1940 and 1941, Derviş published book reviews and critiques in *Yeni Edebiyat* (New Literature), a semi-official publication of the *Türkiye Komünist Partisi*, together with Nazım Hikmet, Abidin Dino, Sabahattin Ali, and Hasan İzzettin Dinamo. In 1944, together with her husband and other party functionaries, Derviş was arrested on the grounds of “illegal communist activity”. With the changing political atmosphere and attitude towards the Soviets in the late 1930s and early 1940s, she received harsh criticism for being a communist. In 1944, Derviş published *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* which stood as her response to the criticism and provided her justification for admiring the Soviets.

Scholars on the Turkish Left and the women's movement have been mostly silent about left-feminists until the period of 1980s; instead, exclusively focusing either on the male members

¹ Fatmagül Berktaş, “Suat Derviş,” in *Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms in Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe: 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Francisca de Haan et al. (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2006), 110.

of the leftist political parties or on liberal women and Kemalist feminism.² According to the historian Francisca de Haan, these ideological biases, which stemmed from the Cold War, can be traced in the works of scholars who study Third World women's movements.³ These ideological biases towards left feminist women affected both the Turkish Left movement and feminist historiography. Dominance of the national perspective in the Turkish Left and feminist historiography led scholars to overlook the radical and influential women of the early 20th century, like Suat Derviş. In this thesis I will analyze Derviş's political engagements and work within the wider context of the anti-communist period in Turkey, by focusing on her ignored booklet *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* and her column *Istanbul-Moskov-Tahrân Seyahat Notları* (Istanbul-Moscow-Tehran Travel Notes).

Central to choosing Suat Derviş is the desire to show the merger between feminist and socialist identities —freely interpreted and harmoniously co-existent in her worldview. As a woman deeming herself “a revolutionist and socialist who advocated social justice,” she deserves to be presented as such.⁴

Born in Istanbul to an aristocratic family in 1905, Suat Derviş was oriented on her books and writings while going through drastic conversions in her literary career. In the 1930s, she

² The Turkish Republican state itself evolved into what later scholars called a feminist state, a male-dominated state that made women's equality in the public sphere a national policy. The new government radically changed laws, encouraged women to unveil, to enter the universities and professions, become air-plane pilots, and run for parliament-in many cases before other European societies did. However, these state reforms represented only the vision of a single charismatic leader, the founder of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and the values and interests of a small group of urban, middle-class citizens. The Republican state determined the characteristics of the ideal woman and set up a monopolistic system to propagate this ideal in a population that held often quite different values and perceptions of ideal women's behavior. While these reforms created a generation of powerful, emancipated women, they did so at a cost. Since the new Republican woman represented the modern, secular, Westernized state, she was expected to behave and dress in what the state defined as a modern, Western manner. The ideal Republican woman was a "citizen woman," urban and urbane, socially progressive, but also uncomplaining and dutiful at home. Modernity, as defined by the Turkish state, included marriage and children as a national duty for women. For more information see: Jenny White, “State Feminism, Modernization, and the Turkish Republican Women,” *NWSA Journal* 15 (2003): 145-159.

³ For the impact of the Cold War on the mainstream Western feminist historiography see Francisca de Haan, “Continuing Cold War Paradigms in Western Historiography of Transnational Women's Organizations: The Case of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF),” *Women's History Review* 19, (2010): 574-73.

⁴ Zihni Anadol, “Suat Derviş ile Konuşmalar,” *Yazın* 59 (1994): 16-17.

underwent major intellectual and political changes: from being an upper-class female writer with an unavoidable distance from society to becoming a journalist speaking up for social issues within a leftist framework. Despite these changes, Suat Derviş had two main intertwined axes which she remained loyal to and never deviated from: womanhood and class. Women are always in the foreground of her books, interviews, and in her journal and newspaper articles.

Suat Derviş's thoughts and activism will be analyzed in two periods, which are distinguished according to the historical conditions of the time. The first period starts with her first novel *Kara Kitap* (Black Book) which was published in 1920 and the second period starts from the early 1930s when she started to work as a journalist.⁵ It will analyze Suat Derviş's intellectual path by means of the circumstantial conditions and transformations of the time, as this will illustrate the major transitional stages of her life, and furthermore display commonalities with major social and political transformations.⁶ Having examined Derviş's intellectual journey in relation to the social and political context, the second period I will focus on is the 1930s and 1950s, when the political and cultural atmosphere was extremely unfavorable towards any socialist or communist activity.⁷ For the second period, I will concentrate primarily on Suat Derviş's understudied booklet: *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* published in 1944 by Arkadaş Matbaası. Derviş wrote this to defend herself against the criticism levied by the anti-communist Reha Oğuz Türkkan, a Turkish lawyer and historian, in his booklets *Kızılar ve Sollar* (Reds and Leftists) and *Kızıl Faaliyet* (Red Activity). Derviş furthermore aimed to provide her justification for admiring the Soviets. However, the booklet was banned by the

⁵ Saliha Paker and Zehra Toska, "Yazan, Yazılan, Silinen ve Yeniden Yazılan Özne: Suat Derviş'in Kimlikleri" *Toplumsal Tarih* 39 (1997): 11-22.

⁶ When she published, "Why I am a Friend of Soviet Union?" in 1944, she was defined as red-hot communist and she got fired from *Tan* newspaper. She started to use different pseudonyms to publish her writings.

⁷ For the Cold War and anti-communism in Turkey see, Yüksek Taşkın, "Anti-Komünizm ve Türk Milliyetçiliği: Endişe ve Pragmatizm" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce IV: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora (Istanbul: İletişim, 2002) 618-635.

state on March 9, 1944 on the grounds that it contained communist propaganda and it was removed from the bookstore.⁸ In *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* Derviş referred to her two visits to the Soviet Union. Derviş made her first visit to the Soviet Union was in 1937 when she was sent by journal *Tan* (Dawn) to monitor the political and social changes following the 1917 Revolution in the Soviet Union. Her travel notes *Istanbul-Moskova-Tahran Seyahat Notları* were subsequently published in the journal *Tan*. In 1939, Suat Derviş went to the Soviet Union for the second time, now as a member of committee to attend the Soviet Agriculture Fair together with Ministry of Agriculture and Village Affair Muhlis Erkmen, Republican People's Party General Executive board member and Deputy of Sinop Cevdet Kerim İncedayı, Deputy of Kütahya and also journalist Sadri Ertem in 1939. Derviş could not publish neither her experience in the Soviet Union nor her notes about her visit to Soviet Agriculture Fair upon returning home, because WWII had broken out and there was no interest in her Moscow report.⁹ However she benefitted her notes in *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* together with her travel notes which were published in the journal *Tan*. This booklet is unique as it is the only document about the Soviet Union in the early Republican period, which was written by a woman who is expressing her admiration for the Soviet Union.

Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum? was re-published in 2012 in a book by *Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Arastırmaları Vakfı* (Turkish Social History Research Foundation- TÜSTAV), I used this as a primary source in this thesis.¹⁰ The name of the book is *Kırklı Yıllar-1* (The Forties-1). This book also includes Faris Erkman's *En Büyük Tehlike* (The Greatest Danger) booklet, which aimed to draw attention to the serious dangers of propaganda created by extreme right-wing groups in Turkey in 1943.

⁸ B.C.A. 30..18.1.2 Yer 104.16..12.

⁹ Liz Behmoaras, "Efsane Bir Kadın," 137-138.

¹⁰ Suat Derviş, "Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?" in *Kırklı Yıllar-1* (Istanbul: TÜSTAV, 2012).

There is one page presentation of *Kırklı Yıllar 1* to briefly introduce the texts. The book is 163 pages in total and *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* is 51 pages. In the appendix of the book, there is an article written by Rasih Nuri İleri in August 1969 and published in *Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergi* (Enlightenment Socialist Journal), for the first anniversary of the death of Reşat Fuat Baraner. In addition, the book contains another article about Suat Derviş, written by Rasih Nuri İleri and first published in the journal *Tarih ve Toplum* (History and Society) in 1986.

Sources, Methodology and Terminology

The sources I refer to in this thesis consist of primary and secondary sources. To grasp the interactions between personal, political, and gender related spheres, I employ the method of content analysis of the primary sources, which are Derviş' own writings such as novels, articles and travel notes. I aim to scrutinize her political stance as well as her worldview against the backdrop of the early Republic of Turkey. In addition, I will incorporate relevant newspaper articles she authored and make use of secondary literature including literary anthologies and historical accounts of the era.

My principle objective is to closely analyze *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* and I will also use her travel notes *Istanbul-Moskova-Tahran Seyahat Notları* published in the newspaper Tan to comprehend Derviş's perception of the Soviet Union in 1937. I utilize a large selection of secondary sources pertaining to Turkish-Soviet relations. In doing so, I problematize the ongoing neglect of Derviş's contributions to the foundation of the leftist ideology in Turkey and draw attention to the silencing of her bold, idiosyncratic and subjective merger of the left and the women's movement through her authorship. I collected

the relevant materials from the archives of *Atatürk Kitaplığı* (Atatürk Library) and *Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Arastırmaları Vakfı* (Social History Research Foundation of Turkey) in Istanbul.

Yeni Edebiyat 1940-1941: Sosyalist Gerçekçilik (New Literature 1940-1941: Socialist Realism) which was published in 1998, is one of my primary sources. This book is a republishing of the writings issued in 1940 and 1941 in the journal *Yeni Edebiyat* with an introduction by Rasih Nuri İleri. This source is important for my study because *Yeni Edebiyat* was a semi-official publication of the *Türkiye Komünist Partisi* which included Derviş's book reviews and critiques.

Additionally, I use periodical press as a primary source. I reviewed the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* (Republic) from 1935 to 1937. I have benefited from the interviews that Derviş conducted with women and workers from different socio-economic backgrounds. These sources helped show the continuity as well as the turning points in both Derviş's intellectual formation and political ideology between 1935 and 1937.

In this study, a separate chapter is reserved for Derviş's life story and her experiences as they have considerable significance. Thus, the aim is to demonstrate the ways in which personal and political spheres interacted and helped Derviş to develop her own feminist and leftist conceptions. It is therefore significant to understand how her personal life experiences affected her political stance, worldview, and literary output. With this token I also used as a primary source a short autobiography by Suat Derviş that she sent to Behcet Necatigil, a Turkish author and poet, in 1967. This short autobiography, which she wrote at the age of 62, provides her own perspective on her life story. In addition, I used biographical fiction *Suat Derviş: Efsane Bir Kadın ve Dönemi* (Suat Derviş: A Legend Woman and Her Period) written by Liz Behmoaras (2008).

Throughout this work I have used the word “feminist” for Suat Derviş and other leading women figures. My definition of feminism is based on Kumari Jayawardena’s definition. In her definition, feminism “goes beyond movements for equality and emancipation which agitate for equal rights and legal forms to readdress the prevailing discrimination against women”.¹¹ She states that “while such movements often advance the struggle for equality, they do not challenge the existing framework of men-women relations in which the subordination of women is located”.¹² Jayawardena takes this idea further and claims that feminism is not a “recent phenomenon, rooted in Western society [... and] was not imposed on the Third World by the West, but rather that historical circumstances produced important material and ideological changes that affected women.”¹³

In this thesis, I use the term “socialism” as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary’s definition: “A theory or system of social organization based on state or collective ownership and regulation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange for the common benefit of all members of society; advocacy or practice of such a system, esp. as a political movement.”¹⁴ When referring to Suat Derviş’s political stance, I often use the term socialist feminist. The Historical Dictionary of Socialism explains this term as follows: “Socialist feminism attempts to show that economic factors and others must be taken into account if we are to get a true picture of sexual inequality in capitalistic society. Hence, socialist feminists have been concerned with the relationship between two types of oppression – those of class and those of sex.”¹⁵ Given Derviş’s explicit use of the term socialism, and her struggle to

¹¹ Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1986), 2.

¹² *Ibid.*, 2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁴ “Socialism,” in *Oxford English Dictionary 3rd Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

¹⁵ Peter Lamb and James C Docherty, *Historical dictionary of Socialism* (Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 318. For more information and the differences between Marxist feminism and Socialist feminism see: Rosemarie Tog, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2014), 93-123.

speak up against “two types of oppression – those of class and those of sex,” I believe Suat Derviş was a socialist feminist in Turkey.

Overview of the Chapters

In chapter one, I address the literature related with the topic of this thesis. First, I focus on the historiography of socialism in Turkey. Then I investigate the literary anthologies in Turkey to show how they handle Derviş’s work by either including or excluding it. I also cover the recent work on Suat Derviş’s life story and other documents, which show the current approaches used for studying her and her work.

In the second chapter, I provide a brief overview of the history of the late Ottoman Empire and the early Republican Period from 1876 to 1935. In what follows, the feminist movement in the Ottoman Empire and the early Republican Turkey will be scrutinized within the historical, social and political *milieu* of the period it aroused between 1876 and 1935.¹⁶ In what follows, I aim to present a brief historical panorama of ever developing feminist movements from Ottoman Empire to the Early Republican Era of Turkey.

In chapter three, I focus on Suat Derviş’s life story and trace the course of Derviş’s intellectual and political ideas, from an aristocratic Ottoman woman to a socialist realist female author with a sense of social justice. To that end, I start by analyzing the family and social milieu in which Suat Derviş was brought up and explore how these helped shape her identity. Investigating Suat Derviş’s life story with a particular focus on the period between 1920 and 1940 enables us to see the influence that the historical background of the Ottoman modernization and the formation of a Turkish bourgeois class had on her ideologies. Focusing

¹⁶ 1935 is the date when Turkish Women’s Association (TWA) was closed. More information about the TWA will be providing in this chapter.

on this period also allows us to see how she departed from her initial beliefs. In the second part of this chapter, I primarily focus on Derviş's experience of living abroad as a woman. Focusing on her political and social encounters, I observe how she interpreted and responded to the ascending fascist ideologies. Secondly, I concentrate on her experience of being a journalist and elaborate on her encounters with different social classes and their living conditions. By doing so, I aim to show the influence that these encounters had on her political and literary identities, and later how these were reflected in her novels and writings.

In the final chapter, I focus on the booklet *Neden Sovetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* which was written in 1944 by Derviş. Considering the limits of this thesis, I provide a brief historical background to anti-communist politics, propagandas and stereotypes/symbolic constructions, starting from the late Ottoman era until the 1950s. In what follows, I aim to portray the manipulative maneuvers of the Turkish government around the phobia of "Moskof". This is to illustrate the implications of the anti-communist ideology coinciding with the Kemalist model for social transformation. Thereby, I highlight the ways in which Derviş developed her own set of 'ideals' around the Soviet lifestyle instead of limiting herself to the Kemalist identity. This, I will argue, gave her an important place in the history of the socialist women in Turkey.

In short, through this thesis I will study Suat Derviş's adoption of core feminist and leftist ideas into her ideologies. I will present her as one of the leading figures in the history of socialist and feminist women through a thorough analysis of her forgotten work *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* Consequently, I problematize the ongoing neglect of Suat Derviş contributions to the leftist ideology in Turkey and the silencing of her authorship.

CHAPTER 1: Literature Review

This chapter is used to address the literature that is related with the topic of this thesis. First, I focus on the historiography of socialism in Turkey. Then I examine the major literary anthologies in Turkey to show how they either incorporate or exclude Derviş's work. Following a literary chronology, I illustrate how and why Derviş has been excluded from Turkish literary history. In this respect, I also review contemporary academic studies and theses on Derviş to demonstrate how academia has approached her.

While reviewing publications on Suat Derviş, it is important to note that there is a plethora of works aimed at “remembering” this “forgotten” author, and many which focus on her life and memoirs for that purpose. These sources seldom give information about Derviş' work, but rather deal with the question of why Derviş is not given much interest in Turkish literature. As for *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* it appears that most historians and feminist literary scholars either ignored it completely or rapidly dismiss it. Moreover, this booklet has also been neglected in Turkish literary history and until now there is no comprehensive study on it.

Being one of the prominent socialist feminist women in the early Republican era, Derviş deserves a significant place in the Turkish historiography. However, as I review Turkish historiography I realize that her political contributions have thus far been neglected. The exclusion of women from the main body of leftist and feminist historiography, and also Turkish literary history is significant in two ways; first because it reflects the androcentric perspective that existed and still persists; second because it also reflects the impact of the Cold War.¹⁷ Although Derviş has a significant place in the history of Turkish literature and

¹⁷ For the impact of the Cold War on the mainstream Western feminist historiography see Francisca de Haan, “Continuing Cold War Paradigms in Western Historiography of Transnational Women's Organisations: The

socialist tradition, and furthermore in the history of women, there has been a disregard of her literary and political contributions. Neglect of Derviş's literary as well as political contributions dates back to her own time and unfortunately is ever-present. How do we make sense of the systematic neglect of Derviş's contributions to the Turkish literary history? More importantly, how do we explain the silencing of the booklet *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* One should remember that whom to include or exclude from historiography is a political choice, thus requiring analysis. This silencing suggests a different means of oppression for female activists born in Derviş's time, as explained in the following section.

1.1 A Brief Overview of Historiography on Socialism in Turkey

The mainstream historiography of socialism in Turkey shares the core assumption of the official historical narrative, namely, that the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 was a rupture from the previous Ottoman state. This perspective tends to exclude different ethnic groups, specifically Armenian, Greek and Kurdish, from the historical narrative. This turkification of socialist historiography also overlooks the role of other ethnic groups in the formation of the socialist movement in the Ottoman Empire.

Notably, there are some authors investigating the legacy of Ottoman socialism. Paul Dumont's book *The Workers' Federation of Thessaloniki* (1994) is a comprehensive study of the Armenian revolutionary movement during the late Ottoman era.¹⁸ Feryal Saygılıgil's work *Kadınlar Hep Vardı: Türkiye Solundan Kadın Portreleri* (Women Were Always There: Women Portraits from Turkish Left) (2017) uncovers short biographies of women who played

Case of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF)," *Women's History Review* 19 (2010): 547-73.

¹⁸ Paul Dumont, "A Jewish, Socialist and Ottoman Organization: The Worker's Federation of Thessaloniki," in *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1923*, ed. Mete Tunçay and Eric Jan Zürcher (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1994).

important roles in the Turkish left but were nonetheless excluded from the dominant androcentric and nationalistic historiography of Turkish socialist movement. The women portrayed also include socialist and feminist women of Armenian descents like Armenian socialist feminists Mari Beyleryan and Zabel Yaseyan, and Greek socialist feminist Athina Gaitannou-Giannou, alongside Suat Derviş.¹⁹ Yet, the scholars who write on the history of socialism in Ottoman Empire and Turkey continue to have the tendency to ignore the role of non-Muslim communities, and especially women, in the formation of the socialist movement in the Ottoman Empire.

There have been numerous publications contributing to the field of historiography of socialism in Turkey; however, most of them cover after the 1970s. Moreover, none of these publications have considered gender as a category of analysis. Mete Tuncay's comprehensive work on the emergence of socialism as political movement in Turkey, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar 1908-1925* (Leftist Tendencies in Turkey 1908-1925) which was published in 1967, is regarded as a fundamental contribution to the historiography of socialism in Turkey.²⁰ There has been no comprehensive study on the role of women in the socialist history of Turkey. Most biographical studies focus on the male figures of the Turkish Left. In this regard, the field is still over-represented by male dominated historiographies and gender is perpetually ignored as a category of historical analysis.

In *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Sol* (The Encyclopedia of Political Thought in Modern Turkey, Left), which is part of a broader series of encyclopedias of modern political thought in Turkey, there are only two articles that directly address issues related to the analyses of gender through the relations between Turkish left and feminism. These are Gülnur Acar Savran, *Feminist Eleştiri Karşısında Marxist Sol* (The Marxist Left Against Feminist

¹⁹ Feryal Saygılıgil, *Kadınlar hep vardı: Türk solundan kadın portreleri* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2017).

²⁰ Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar 1908-1925* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2009)

Criticism) and Yaprak Zihnioğlu *Türkiye’de Solun Feminizme Yaklaşımı* (Approaches to Feminism by Turkish Left). Feminist scholar Gülnür Acar Savran in her article criticizes Marxist left-wing political activism in Turkey on the bases of gender, gender hierarchy and class struggle. The latter provides a feminist critique of socialist movements in Turkey.

Historian Yaprak Zihnioğlu in her article *Türkiye’de Solun Feminizme Yaklaşımı* analyzes the contentious relationship between the Turkish left and feminism and the women’s movement in Turkey. Zihnioğlu reviews the approach of the Turkish left towards women questions/feminism in two main periods. The first period, “the Classic Period” as she calls it, encapsulates the period between the 1920s, from the foundation of the Turkish Communist Party, to the early 1980s, the time when the second wave of feminism impacts Turkey. This time span also coincides with a period of high militarization, accompanied by male chauvinism, which served to further reinforce the gendered social hierarchy. According to Zihnioğlu, this period is the “socialism’s men half-century”. Though Zihnioğlu’s periodization gives us the opportunity to analyze the relationship of the left with feminism, it does not provide a comprehensive account, as it comprises an extended period, which is uncondusive to detailed analysis.

In the second period, Zihnioğlu mentions two different leftist groups influenced by the second global wave of feminism: An anti-feminist group who perceived feminism as a bourgeois ideology; another group, though few in number, who advocated for feminism as a democratic and anti-capitalist movement. In her article, Zihnioğlu mentions Suat Derviş among the prominent socialists and calls for comprehensive research on the lives and works of socialist women. Through this thesis I aim to present a contribution to fill in this gap.

1.2 Suat Derviş's Place in Turkish Literature

Examining the major contributions in Turkish literature will help position Suat Derviş and her writings within the mainstream perspectives. It will demonstrate which works of Derviş were included in literary collections and thus help us understand how her political stance and literary work were selectively recalled between 1940 and 1990.

From the 1920s until the early 1940s, critics have mostly evaluated her writings not on the bases of her authorship but rather on her being a “woman.”²¹ In many anthologies, her name is not even mentioned. For example, the writers that İsmail Habib choose as the prominent litterateurs of the Constitutional Monarchy period in his book *Tanzimattanberi II Edebiyat Antolojisi* (II. Literature Anthology Since Tanzimat) are Halide Edip, Yakup Kadri, Ahmet Haşim, Refik Halit, Falih Rıfkı, Ruşen Eşref, Aka Gündüz, Ebubekir Hazım, Ali Fuat, Ağaoğlu Ahmet. Authors who wrote after 1920 and who were included in the anthologies are Reşat Nuri and Peyami Safa. In this book, there was no mention of Suat Derviş.²²

In Alemdar Yalçın's book titled *Sosyal ve Siyasal Değişmeler Açısından Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Romanı* (Turkish Novel During the Republican Period With Respect to Social and Political Changes), only a list of Suat Derviş's books written between 1920 and 1928 in the old alphabet - *Ne Bir Ses Ne Bir Nefes* (Neither a Voice Nor a Breath), *Kara Kitap* (Black Book), *Hiç Biri* (None), *Gönül Gibi* (Like Heart), *Ahmet Ferdi* (Ahmet Ferdi), *Behire'nin Talipleri* (The Suitors of Behire), *Ben[i] mi?* (Is It Me?) were given.²³

Cevdet Kudret, renowned for his studies on the history of Turkish Literature lists the “major novelists and story writers” of the 20th century such as Halide Edip Adivar, Yakup Kadri

²¹ Gül Uluğtekin, “İzlek ve Biçem İlişkisi Açısından Suat Derviş Romanlarının Türk Edebiyatındaki Yeri” (PhD diss., Bilkent University, 2010).

²² İsmail Habib, *Tanzimattanberi II Edebiyat Antolojisi* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitapevi, 1943).

²³ Alemdar Yalçın, *Siyasal ve Sosyal Değişmeler Açısından Çağdaş Türk Romanı 1946-2000* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2003)

Karaosmanoglu, Ömer Seyfettin, Resat Nuri Güntekin, Falih Rıfkı Atay, Peyami Safa and Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar in *Türk Hikaye ve Roman Antolojisi* (Anthology of Turkish Novels and Stories). Under the subtitle of “other novelists and story writers” of the era, Suat Derviş is mentioned alongside Aka Gündüz, Ercüment Ekrem, Selahattin Enis, Mahmut Yesari, Osman Cemal, Sadri Ertem, Necip Fazıl, Ahmet Hamdi, Sabahattin Ali, Sait Faik and Kemal Bilbasar.²⁴ Cevdet Kudret gives information about the life stories and works of the writers who are in the “major novelists and story writers”. However, Kudret only mentions the names of those names under the subtitle. In his book *Türk Edebiyatında Hikaye ve Roman* (Novel and Story in the Turkish Literature), which covers the years between 1923 and 1959, he does not mention Suat Derviş’s name or her accomplishments.”²⁵

In Fethi Naci’s book *100 Soruda Türkiye’de Roman ve Toplumsal Değişme* (Novel and Social Development in Turkey in 100 Questions), the novels are organized with respect to their historical periods. Suat Derviş is again absent in this book.²⁶ There is also no mention of Suat Derviş’s works in the book first published in 1969 by İbrahim Tatarlı and Rıza Mollof, *Hüseyin Rahmi’den Fakir Baykurt’a Marksist Açıdan Türk Romanı* (From Huseyin Rahmi to Fakir Baykurt Turkish Novel from Marxist Perspective).²⁷

In Ahmet Oktay’s book *Toplumcu Gerçekliğin Kaynakları* (The Sources of Social Realism), Suat Derviş’s name appears only as a pen name that Reşat Fuat Baraner used in the magazine “*Yeni Edebiyat*”²⁸ which was published between 1940 and 1941. According to Oktay,

²⁴ Cevdet Kudret Solok, *Türk Hikaye ve Roman Antolojisi* (Istanbul: Nebioğlu Yayınevi, 1945), 171.

²⁵ Uluğtekin, “İzlek,” 9.

²⁶ Fethi Naci, *100 Soruda Türkiye’deki Roman ve Toplumsal Değişme* (Istanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1990).

²⁷ İbrahim Tatarlı and Rıza Mollof, *Hüseyin Rahmi’den Fakir Baykurt’a Marksist Açıdan Türk Romanı* (Istanbul: Habora Kitabevi, 1969).

²⁸ The authors of the New Literature, rather than discussing on literary theory, prefer to assert literary views with economic and political propositions. So, they mainly aim to spread the main ideas of the theory. They were primarily concerned with explaining and propagating the dialectic and historical materialist philosophy. In this respect, literature is seen as a tool to spread the socialist worldview. These features do not only distinguish New

critiques in the magazine signed as “Suat Derviş”— which should be considered as the first examples of “socialist literature criticism”— in fact belong to Reşat Fuat Baraner.²⁹ Rasih Nuri İleri, in the prologue of *Yeni Edebiyat 1940-1941* (New Literature 1940-1941), as well asserts that the book reviews in the *Yeni Edebiyat* magazine might actually belong to Suat Derviş, whereas columns written by Reşat Fuat Baraner in *Yeni Edebiyat* were published under the name of Suat Derviş to educate party militants.

This book (New Literature Socialist Realism) includes majority of Suat Derviş’s writings from the magazine (New Literature), some composing book reviews, which I will not discuss here. The rest of Derviş’s writing is composed of short columns. These pieces are significant as they consist of didactic essays written under Reşat Fuat Baraner’s influence or with his contribution aiming to educate party militants. These are not personal writings, but party writings. They were written on the order and under the control of the party and the political responsibility for these writings was on Reşat Fuat Baraner, who was the General Secretary of the party in that period.³⁰

According to the letter that Suat Derviş sent to Behçet Necatigil on January 26, 1967, the critiques in the magazine *Yeni Edebiyat* belonged to Derviş herself.

Reviewing the New Literature collection, on one hand, reveals my contribution to the emergence and development of realist literature in Turkey, on the other hand, reflects my literary understanding through my signed short features and reviews on Turkish novels.³¹

Behçet Necatigil’s article published in 1977 named *Dünya Kadınlar Yılında Suat Derviş Üzerine Notlar* (Notes on Derviş in the World Women’s Year) is quite significant in many ways. This is ratified by Saliha Paker, Professor of Translation Studies, and Zehra Toska, Professor of Turkish Language and Literature in their jointly written article *Yazan, Yazılan, Silinen ve Yeniden Yazılan Özne: Suat Derviş’in Kimlikleri* (The Subject Who Writes, is

Literature from its contemporaries, but also endows it with a specific worldview while locating it in opposition/ within the literary world. Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları* (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2003), 458.

²⁹ Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumcu Gerçekçiliğin Kaynakları* (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2003), 498.

³⁰ Rasih Nuri İleri, introduction to *Yeni Edebiyat 1940-1941: Sosyalist Gerçekçilik* by Suphi Nuri İleri, (Istanbul: Scala Yayıncılık, 1998), 11.

³¹ Behçet Necatigil, “Dünya Kadın Yılında Suat Derviş Üzerine Notlar” in *Nesin Vakfı Edebiyat Yıllığı* (Istanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1977), 608.

Written, Deleted, and Re-written: Suat Derviş's Identities), in 1997. This article provides a record of literary history resources, including Derviş's works, until the late 1990s. It as well problematizes Derviş's exclusion from the history of Turkish literature. In fact, Derviş was very much aware of, and saddened by, her exclusion from literary history in Turkey, despite her acknowledgement in Europe as a popular and well-known writer:

Numerous anthologies published in foreign countries as well as the encyclopedias, which do not even deal with the writers alone, do mention my name, my works. However, it makes me so sad that my name is rarely mentioned in such works produced in my own country.³²

1.3 Placing Suat Derviş in Recent Scholarship (Post 1990s)

According to historian Arzu Öztürkmen, the history of women has been underrepresented in mainstream Ottoman studies. She argues that the focus of historians was on the roles women had in the Palace as mother-sultans. Additionally, historians have examined the harem and its relation to stately power.³³ One type of literature which did focus on women was that of national historiographies written during the Republican period. Here publications focused on how women contributed to the Turkish Independence War.³⁴ Yet according to Arzu Öztürkmen, the historiographical approach focused mainly on the Turkish-Muslim experience. It ignored to great extent the experience of the non-Muslim and Muslim migrant

³² Ibid., 694.

³³ Arzu Öztürkmen, "The Women's Movement under Ottoman and Republican Rule: A Historical Reappraisal," *Journal of Women's History* 25, no. 4 (2013), 255. See Ahmet Refik Altınay, *Kadınlar Saltanatı* (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2000); Muhaddere Taşcıoğlu, *Türk Osmanlı cemiyetinde kadının sosyal durumu ve kadın kıyafetleri* (Ankara: Akın matbaası, 1958); Nimet Arzık, *Osmanlı sarayında yabancı kadın sultanlar* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1969); Turhan Oflazoğlu, *Kösem Sultan* (İstanbul: Adam Yayıncılık, 1982); Çağatay M. Uluçay, *Harem* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1985); Pars Tuğlacı, *Osmanlı saray kadınları* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1985).

³⁴ Cahit Caka, *Tarih Boyunca Harp ve Kadın* (Ankara: As. Fb. Basımevi, 1948); Aynur Mısıroğlu, *Kuva-yı Milliye'nin Kadın Kahramanları* (İstanbul: Sebil Yayınevi, 1976); İnci Enginün, Müjgan Cunbur, and Cahide Özdemir, *Milli Mücadele'de Türk Kadını* (Ankara: Türk Ticaret Bankası, 1983).

communities who spoke languages other than Turkish.³⁵ For example, initial scholarship on Ottoman feminism primarily covered women's journals in Turkish. The visibility of Armenian women's journals or the Kurdish women present in Ottoman feminism were issued not considered until the 2000s.³⁶

Recent scholarship has come to a changed understanding of Derviş's works and her exclusion. The first academic study that problematizes the mislead information related to the private life of Suat Derviş is historian Fatmagül Berktaş's article: *İki Söylem Arasında Bir Yazar: Suat Derviş* (A Writer Between Two Discourses: Suat Derviş). In her study, Berktaş goes beyond a mere analysis of Derviş's life and authorship. She illustrates how Derviş was situated between both feminist and leftist discourses. Berktaş asserts that it is critical to understand Suat Derviş real life as it helps illustrate how Derviş was not torn between feminist and leftist discourses but rather, how she went beyond both.³⁷

Suat Derviş, who was not ashamed of her womanhood. She was a brave woman who stood against the judgmental standards of her time, both in her political and private life.³⁸ As Berktaş underlines, Derviş paid the price for this by "being excluded from intellectual circles in general and literature in particular during her lifetime... and by being forgotten after her death".³⁹ As Fatmagül Berktaş states, Derviş is a woman whose personality and authorship coincide with one another. For her, Derviş "is aware of herself, cares about her emotions as much as her mind, is confident and not afraid of stepping out of the line. She reflects her dreams, ideals about humanity, womanhood in her novels".⁴⁰ In addition, Berktaş believes

³⁵ Öztürkmen, "The Women's Movement," 255.

³⁶ Ibid., 257.

³⁷ Fatmagül Berktaş, "İki Söylem Arasında Bir Yazar: Suat Derviş" in *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Problemler, Araştırmalar, Tartışmalar* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998), 292.

³⁸ Nazan Aksoy, "Suat Derviş Muhalif Bir Yazar mıdır?" in *Günseli Sönmez İşçi, Yıldızları Seyreden Kadın: Suat Derviş Edebiyatı* (Istanbul: İthaki, 2015), 52.

³⁹ Fatmagül Berktaş, "İki Söylem," 292.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 290.

that what makes Derviş different from her contemporaries is her combination of “the position of sex with that of class”. She furthermore claims that Derviş stands out due to her sensitive attitude towards these concepts.⁴¹ Therefore, Fatmagül Berktaş concludes that, “[Suat Derviş] deserves a significant place in history of our literature and our socialist tradition, and the history of women”.⁴²

Saliha Toska and Zehra Paker further these notions by problematizing the exclusion of Suat Derviş in 20th century Turkish literature in *Yazan, Yazılan, Silinen ve Yeniden Yazılan Özne: Suat Derviş’in Kimlikleri* published in 1997. For them, “When the body of literature is examined, it turns out that rather than her works in literature memory, Suat Derviş is mostly alive through a deficient imagery of what has been said, written or not written about her”.⁴³ This article, which positions Suat Derviş within the Turkish literature, problematizes the partial information related to her. It also offers possible reasons explaining her systematic exclusion from the Turkish literary world. Leaving agendas and potential political barriers aside, there were practical reasons for her silencing, as this article elaborates: (i) Derviş excluded her own publications between 1920 and 1930 from her oeuvre since she thought these were mere childhood works; (ii) most of her newspaper articles were never published in the form of a book; (iii) she was forced to use pseudonyms after the 1930s; and finally, (iv) she lived abroad between 1953 and 1963 which might have caused her to be distanced from the literary scene in Turkey.⁴⁴

In making sense of the disregard of Derviş’s works, several graduate theses have made important contributions. Gül Uluğtekin’s Ph.D. thesis in the Department of Turkish Literature, *Izlek ve Biçem İlişkisi Açısından Suat Derviş Romanlarının Türk Edebiyatındaki*

⁴¹ Ibid., 292-293.

⁴² Ibid., 297.

⁴³ Paker and Toska, “Yazan, Yazılan,” 11-22.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 21.

Yeri (Contextualizing Suat Derviş Novels in Turkish Literature in Terms of Theme and Style Interrelatedness), points to a general and misleading effort of classifying Derviş's books as popular fiction in 2010. Despite Derviş's motivation to demonstrate class differences, she was regarded as a popular fiction writer. A further example is by Turkologist, İnci Enginün who asserts in her book *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Edebiyatı* (Republic Period Turkish Literature) that there are more women writers among "popular writers" and mentions Suat Derviş as one in 2001.⁴⁵ Likewise, Ahmet Oktay, a Turkish poet, journalist and writer, mentions Suat Derviş as popular writer in his book *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Edebiyatı 1923-1950* (Republic Period Turkish Literature 1923-1950) in 1983.⁴⁶

In her doctoral dissertation, Gül Uluğtekin focuses on three novels of Suat Derviş that were published as series between 1943 and 1945; *Fosforlu Cevriye* (Radiant Cevriye), *Çılgın Gibi* (Like a Mad) and *Sınır* (Border). She attempts to contextualize Derviş within the history of Turkish literature based on the interrelation of theme and style. Uluğtekin concludes that Derviş's contribution to Turkish literature was mainly ignored due to her being labeled as a popular fiction writer and her non-appearance in the Turkish literary histories.⁴⁷

Similarly, Çimen Günay analyzes in her postgraduate thesis in 2001, the place of Suat Derviş in Turkey's "Socialist Realist" literature. She examines three novels which each correspond to a different era in Derviş's career as a novelist, namely, *Hiç Biri* (None), *Bu Roman Olan Şeylerin Romanı* (This is the Novel of Things That Are Novels) and *Aksaray'dan bir Perihan* (Perihan from Aksaray).⁴⁸ In doing this, she shows shifts concerning epistemology and

⁴⁵ İnci Enginün, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Edebiyatı*. (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2001) 256.

⁴⁶ Ahmet Oktay, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Edebiyatı 1923-1950* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1983)125.

⁴⁷ Uluğtekin, "İzlek," 16.

⁴⁸ Çimen Günay, "Toplumcu Gerçekçi Türk Edebiyatında Suat Derviş'in Yeri" (Master's Thesis, Bilkent Üniversitesi, 2001).

ideology are present in Derviş's literary works. Günay shows the ways in which Derviş resolved the dilemmas between socialist realism and Marxist aesthetics.⁴⁹

One final contribution is Liz Behmoaras's (2008) biographical fiction *Suat Derviş: Efsane Bir Kadın ve Dönemi* (Suat Derviş: A Legend Woman and Her Period). This book greatly contributes to the existing literature by providing comprehensive biographical information on Derviş. Yet even in this book, Derviş's political stance and activism are eclipsed by her husband Reşat Fuad Baraner's political accomplishments.⁵⁰ This is despite the fact that Derviş made conscious efforts to differentiate her own political and professional carrier from that of her husband. In the early 1970s, at a meeting organized by *Demokratik Devrim Derneği* (Democratic Revolution Association) where she is introduced to the audience as the wife of Reşat Fuat Baraner – the General secretary of the *Türkiye Komünist Partisi*, she corrects: “No, I am Suat Derviş, the writer.”⁵¹ Prioritizing her own labor above being identified as a man's wife or as from an elite family, she very bravely embraced her author identity. She expresses this in one of her writings: “I am not ashamed of being a woman and I am proud to be an author. This title is my only possession, my precious pride and my bread and butter”.⁵² This remark shows that she is one of the most fascinating examples of a mixture of identities; feminist, woman, leftist, and artist.

In addition, in 2013 Yeni Yüzyıl University held a symposium on Suat Derviş: *The 3rd Symposium of Women Writers: Suat Derviş*. At this symposium, various academics studied the different novels of Suat Derviş in depth from feminist and literary perspectives. Derviş's

⁴⁹ One last work to mention is an MA thesis called A Biography of Suat Derviş written by Handan Öz in 1994 at the Atatürk Institute of Bogazici University. However, this thesis is not available neither at the institute nor the YÖK thesis database.

⁵⁰ Liz Behmoaras, *Suat Derviş: Efsane Bir Kadın ve Dönemi* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2008).

⁵¹ Fatmagül Berktaş, *Tarihin Cinsiyeti* (Istanbul: Metis, 2003), 205.

⁵² Kemal Tahir, Suat Derviş, and Ahmed Cevad, *1936 Modeli Gençler ve Zavallı Peyami Safa* (Istanbul: Selamet, 1936), 22, quoted in Fatmagül Berktaş, “Suat Derviş,” in *Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms in Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe: 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Francisca de Haan et al. (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2006), 111-112.

role in Turkish modernization, the way her political stance and Marxist views influenced her work, and where it stands in Turkish literature were among the main topics of the conference. In 2015, conference papers were published as a book, *Yıldızları Seyreden Kadın, Suat Derviş Edebiyatı* (The woman who watches the stars, Literature of Suat Derviş).⁵³ At about the same time, İthaki Publishing started to republish her works and several magazines prepared special files on Derviş, all of which points to an increasing interest in Suat Derviş in Turkey. However, it needs to be noted that both the symposium and the magazine issues focused on her work from a literary point of view, leaving her political ideas in the shadow.

The existing studies on Suat Derviş either focus on specifying Derviş's status in Turkish literature or on exploring the socialist and realist aspects of her novels in a compartmentalized manner. Most of the available literature has a focus on the socialist, realist statue of Derviş in Turkish literature, her authourship and her position in literary history. These studies all underline the fact that Suat Derviş is a writer and journalist, whose political stance toward the Soviet Union and her booklet *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* have remained under-researched as compared to her author identity. However, none of these studies have examined the reasons behind the elimination of Suat Derviş.

As an engaged author in leftist circles, Suat Derviş was a very important figure in Ottoman-Turkish feminism. Despite her recognition in the literary world, there was a silencing of her political stance. Both Feminist scholars and Leftist circles have ignored Derviş's contributions to women's history. The reason behind this silence, according to Fatmagül Berkay, is twofold. On one hand, Leftist circles did not easily accept Derviş's political views

⁵³ Günseli Sönmez İşçi, *Yıldızları Seyreden Kadın: Suat Derviş Edebiyatı* (İstanbul: İthaki Yayınları, 2015)

and her feminism.⁵⁴ On the other hand, feminist scholars give priority on Kemalist feminism, which inevitably silenced feminists, which did not cooperated with the ruling power.

Unlike the previous studies, which have focused exclusively on her literary works, I place the emphasis on Derviş's political stance and her synthesis of socialism and feminism. In doing so, I demonstrate the political silencing of a socialist feminist woman. First, I argue that this silencing is problematic and then provide a detailed analysis of *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* This booklet, I argue, portrays Derviş's distance from the dominant state ideology. It also displays that Derviş's political ideas were an amalgamation of feminist and socialist discourses, which then motivated and shaped her work in the political sphere. This amalgamation, I argue, bears testimony to the heterogeneity of women's movements in Turkey, which took different shapes in response to multiple forms of oppression against feminist movements. Considering this, I represent Derviş as one example —among many— of how women wished to be political and social actors and how they constructed politics as a category.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Fatmagül Berktaş, "Suat Derviş," 111.

⁵⁵ Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003), 17.

CHAPTER 2: Ottoman Turkish Feminism

In this chapter, I aim to provide a historical background of the late Ottoman era and early Republican Period. In what follows, the feminist movement in the Ottoman Empire and the early Republican Turkey will be scrutinized within the historical, social and political *milieu* of the period between 1876 and 1935.⁵⁶ In what follows, I aim to present a brief historical overview of the ever-developing feminist movements from the Ottoman Empire to the Early Republican Era of Turkey.

The Kemalist Revolution gave emergence to the new and modern Turkish Republic in 1923. The official historiography records state that the Kemalist modernization had "given" important rights to women. These include a variety of political and social rights: the right to divorce and civil marriage in 1926, the right to access higher education in 1926, the right to vote in 1934, etc. For a long time, it was claimed that the founder of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal, was the pioneer of these reforms. This perspective was challenged by feminist scholars who focus on women's voices in the Ottoman society and demonstrate that the roots of the feminist movement in Turkey date back to the late Ottoman era. The comprehensive work of Serpil Çakır, entitled *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (The Ottoman Women's Movement)⁵⁷ confirms this thesis and reveals that in the late Ottoman Empire women mobilized for their rights, primarily for political rights, before the emergence of the Republic. Furthermore, prominent feminist scholars including Nükhet Sirman, Yaprak Zihnioğlu and Yeşim Arat, Şirin Tekeli, have argued that women's demands and activism were underestimated by the

⁵⁶ 1935 is the date when *Türk Kadınlar Birliği* (Turkish Women's Union) was closed. More information about the TWA will be provided in this chapter.

⁵⁷ Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*. (Istanbul: Metis, 2010).

Kemalist feminism according to which women were granted with certain rights, not because of their demands but as one of the modernization projects of the new Republican regime.⁵⁸

In this chapter I will present a brief history of the late Ottoman era and early Republican Period, and a brief historical survey of the Ottoman Turkish feminist movement. Based on the historical background, I will identify the shifts in the motivations of the forerunners of the Ottoman feminist movement vis-à-vis their social and political situation in the society. Initial studies of the feminist history in Ottoman society primarily focused on critically reviewing the official Turkish-Ottoman historiography, but overlooked the intrinsic ethnical paradigm. For example, there was little interest in the Armenian⁵⁹ and Greek women's movement, and these movements were unequivocally excluded. Therefore, these early studies failed to provide a comprehensive account of Ottoman feminist history. This leaves a need to study different feminisms emergent in the Ottoman society, in their plurality and integrity, and independent from male dominated state discourses.

In the feminist literature, there have been different accounts offered of the periodization of the history of the feminist movements in the Ottoman Empire of Turkey. I will be following the anthropologist Nükhet Sirman's periodization, which distinguishes three crucial historical moments in the political agendas and ideologies of the Ottoman and Turkish states: (i) the first period refers to the era starting from the second half of the nineteenth century, when educated reformist Ottoman men raised their concerns about the position of women in society; (ii) the second period covers the early Republican Era. During this period, a new image of Turkish women was constructed under the Republican ideology. The leader of the nation tried to create new patriotic women who complied with their duties as wives and

⁵⁸ Fatmagül Bertay, "Türkiye'de 'Kadınlık Durumu'" in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: Yayınevi, yıl), 760; Erol, "Feminism in Turkey", 111-112.

⁵⁹ See Lerna Ekmekçioğlu and Melisa Bilal, *Bir Adalet Feryadı- Osmanlı'dan Türkiye'ye Beş Ermeni Feminist Yazar (1862-1933)* (Istanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2006).

mothers, but who also have a duty of educating the nation; (iii) the last period is focused on the reaction to Kemalist feminism, which emerged after the military coup in 1980.⁶⁰ Sirman's periodization tracks the changes in women's statues across these timeframes and illustrates the development of different feminisms in Turkey. In this chapter I will focus primarily on the first two periods, which correspond to Suat Derviş's lifetime.

2.1 A Brief Overview of the History of Turkey Between 1876 and 1935

Starting with the late eighteenth century and continuing through the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire's agenda aimed to reorganize society and the state through a series of reforms. The Tanzimat period (1839-1876), which started with the Edict of Gülhane or *Hatt-ı Şerif of Gülhane* (Noble Edict of the Rose Chamber) in 1839, began an era of reform. The modernization of the Ottoman Empire was founded upon these reforms.⁶¹ Nonetheless, these reforms were highly contested by Muslim and non-Muslim religious leaders on the basis that they threatened religious authority.

In general terms, reforms aimed to prove that, despite its current state of weakness, the Ottoman Empire belongs to the modern European nations; and in this sense, reforms were the epitomized examples of the Ottoman's commitment to transform the Empire based on the European models. Reforms entailed a restructuring of the Ottoman state and marked an inclination towards secularism. Henceforward, as opposed to being defined as Muslim,

⁶⁰ I endorse Nükhet Sirman's classification. For further information see: Nükhet Sirman, "Feminism in Turkey: A Short History," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 3 (1989).

⁶¹ For more information about the Tanzimat Era see Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Reform, Revolution and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

Christian or Jewish, Ottoman subject was to be defined on equal terms. *Thereto, d'himni*⁶² status, refering to non-muslim Ottoman subjects, has been abolished.⁶³

This era of reform ended shortly after the proclamation of the *Birinci Meşrutiyet* (First Constitution) in 1876, which set forth a brief period of constitutional monarchy. The constitution was suspended in 1878 by Sultan Abdülhamit II (1876-1909) upon the dissolution of the parliament and restoration of the absolute monarchy in 1877. The autocratic reign of Abdülhamit II lead to a reform of the bureaucracy, which increased state control.⁶⁴ Furthermore, reforms that intended to modernize the educational system were abandoned and substituted by increased Islamic content in the school curriculums.

Abdülhamid II perceived the previous reforms as European infiltration and believed them to be a celebration of the separatist aspirations of his non-Turkish Muslim subjects. Therefore, he aimed to restore the order through Muslim solidarity, calling upon non-Turkish Muslims like the Albanians and the Arabs, to unite with a common loyalty to the caliphate. Nevertheless, he continued with a series of reforms, under his own terms, and encouraged infrastructure projects. Though limited by his financial caution, he fostered improvements in finance, trade, mining, agriculture, education, civil administration, security, military affairs, etc. Unlike the Tanzimat period, he avoided alliances with the Great Powers (the British Empire, France, Italy and Russia) and maintained a diplomatic neutrality or non-commitment.

⁶² A dhimmi refers to a non-Muslim subject of the Ottoman Empire. Derived from Islamic legal conceptions of membership to society, non-Muslims 'dhimmis' were afforded protection by the state and did not serve in the military, in return for specific taxes. The dhimmi status was legally abolished in 1839 with the *Hatt-ı Şerif of Gülhane* and was formalized with the 1869 Ottoman Law of Nationality as part of wider Tanzimat Reforms. Regardless of these official changes, in various places within the Empire non-Muslim subjects faced various forms of institutional discrimination. Harvard Divinity School Religious Literacy Project, "Dhimmi," accessed April 15, 2017, <https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/faq/dhimmi>.

⁶³ M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) 72-108.

⁶⁴ For more information about the Hamidian era see: Selim Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011). For a more general overview of the processes of Ottoman modernization and Turkish modernization project see: Eric Jan Zürcher: *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: Tauris, 1993).

His non-commitment distanced the Empire from its former protector Great Britain, and healed the relationship with the empire's oldest enemy, Russia. This period also marks the longest peace period in Russo-Ottoman relations for more than a century. Moreover, Abdülhamid II also established a close relationship with Germany during this time.⁶⁵

Despite some of the positive changes implemented by Abdülhamid II, a group of students namely the *Genç Türkler* (Young Turks) who benefited from previous reforms while studying at leading schools formed the major oppositional group against the reign of Abdülhamit II.⁶⁶ The name "Young Turks" was given to the group by the European audience. This name ignored the true diversity of the group, which in reality also included Jews, Albanians, Arabs, and in its early period, Greeks and Armenians. These diverse individuals formed a common oppositional front against the rule of Abdulhamid II. Contrary to the popular belief, the Young Turks movement was not a nationalist movement. The group members rather aimed to implement significant reforms, by preserving the Empire and the sultanate. The Young Turks were inspired by leading positivist Augusto Comte's motto 'Order and Progress' which became "Love as principle, order as basis, progress as end".⁶⁷ In general, the Young Turks called for scientific advancement, modern administration and elite rule.⁶⁸

These youths formed the core of İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti⁶⁹ (Committee of Union and Progress), which soon transformed into the Young Turks who were known as Unionists in the Ottoman Empire. The Young Turk movement was a heterogeneous unit consisting of well-educated intellectuals from different backgrounds who came together to overthrow the reign

⁶⁵ <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0611>

⁶⁶ For more information on the Young Turks See: Şükrü M. Hanioglu, *Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁶⁷ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, accessed April 10, 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/comte/>

⁶⁸ Murat C. Mengüç, "Young Turks," *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, ed. Richard C. Martin (New York: Thomson Gale, 2004), 739-740.

⁶⁹ İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti was established in 1889.

of Abdülhamit II.⁷⁰ In 1908 the Young Turks declared the *İkinci Meşrutiyet* (Second Constitution), which was meant to restore the constitutional monarchy by reviving the Ottoman Parliament, the General Assembly of the Ottoman Empire.⁷¹

Once the parliament was reinstated in 1918, two factions within the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) emerged; the unionists and the liberals. The unionists were backed by Islamic nationalists and called for a strong central state to implement modernizing reforms; whilst the liberals called for decentralization and an autonomous rule that would benefit non-Muslim and non-Turkish Ottomans. Multi-religious and multinational Ottomanism⁷² appeared as a compromise, until the liberals took power following a military coup in 1912.

The Balkan Wars (1912-1913) shook the Ottoman Empire, causing the loss of almost entire Balkan territories. After the war, a significant number of Muslim people fled from the Balkans to migrate to different parts of the Empire. The demographic change also caused a political shift, as the unionist defeated their liberal opponents and took over the Empire.⁷³ As historian Hasan Kayali underlines, following the Balkan Wars, unionists did not turn to Turkish nationalism, but rather to Islamism. They perceived Muslim solidarity as the means by which to safeguard the unity of the Empire. Thus, Islam was acknowledged as the main ideology of the supranational Ottoman Empire.⁷⁴ On the other hand, historian Taner Akçam

⁷⁰ For Young Turk Revolution See Sukru M. Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁷¹ For the subjects of press in the Second Constitutional Era and therein the issue of gender see: Palmira Brummett, *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman revolutionary press, 1908-1911* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000).

⁷² Ottomanism was a political trend popular in the 1870s and 1880s in which loyalty to the sultan was replaced with loyalty to the Ottoman state, the fatherland (*vatan*). A single Ottoman citizenship was intended to replace religious, ethnic, and linguistic divisions among the Empire's diverse subjects. Administratively, Ottomanist policies emphasized a strong central state to which all subjects were bound. Kemal H. Karpat, "Historical Continuity and Identity Change or How to be Modern Muslim, Ottoman, and Turk," *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, ed. Kemal H. Karpat (Boston: Brill, 2000), 1-28. I took it directly from Harvard Divinity School Religious Literacy Project, "Ottomanism," accessed April 15, 2017, <https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/faq/ottomanism>.

⁷³ Menguç, "Young Turks," 739-740.

⁷⁴ Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 15.

asserts that, CUP was quite flexible in combining different pan-Islamic, pan-Turkic and Ottomanist discourses and ideas as it suited their purposes. Akçam claims that the Unionists had a similar pragmatic approach; they used one discourse at the expense of another, depending on the circumstances.⁷⁵

The period towards the fall of the Ottoman Empire was turbulent. Particularly, the Young Turk era ended as the War of Independence (1919-1923) started in 1919. However, the political and social infrastructure conceived by the Young Turks was implemented by the new Republic of Turkey.⁷⁶

2.2 The Footsteps of the Ottoman Women's Movements (1879-1923)

During the Second Constitutional Period (1908-1920) women benefitted from the spirit of modernization in terms of their status. From the beginning of the Second Constitutional Era, the position of women was fiercely debated within the context of modernization as an important component of progress.⁷⁷ The status of woman became one of the main concerns of the Ottoman reformers, as the subordinate role of women was considered a sign of societal backwardness.⁷⁸ Accordingly, Ottoman reformers viewed women as significant constituents of modernization and made important reforms to improve their conditions in society. As Sirman argues, during this period the emancipation of women was regarded as a synonym of progress. The Empire wanted to achieve the liberation of women primarily through education.

⁷⁵ Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act*, (London: Macmillan, 2007), 53-54.

⁷⁶ Harvard Divinity School Religious Literacy Project, "Young Turks," accessed April 20, 2017, <https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/faq/young-turks>

⁷⁷ Sibel Erol, "Feminism in Turkey," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 8 (1992), 109-121.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 109-121.

Women, as mothers and wives, were responsible for the well-being of the Ottoman men and for the creation of future enlightened generations.⁷⁹

Despite this paternalistic approach, first aspirations of feminism emerged within the context of modernization. During this period, women's meetings were organized in small upper-class circles. Publications about women enabled women to discuss and exchange ideas, not only on women's and family affairs, but also on political and social issues concerning the Empire as a whole.

The relative lack of censorship and the spread of liberal ideas in the Second Constitutional Period offered visibility to a number of political movements including those of women. According to Serpil Çakır, the first generation of feminists published journals and established associations, which provided them with a degree of visibility and solidarity. At the turn of the twentieth century, there were many publications on Muslim women's issues and women's demands.⁸⁰ Some of the Ottoman women's magazines are as follows; *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (Ladies' Own Gazette) was published from 1895 to 1908; which was the longest standing journal of the women's press in the Ottoman Empire. It was primarily aimed to educate women on women's problems. *Kadın* (Woman) was another periodical, which served as the institutional locus of women's activism in Salonika (1908-1909), and contained a considerable number of articles by women. These articles dealt with a wider range of issues, some of which were women's role and status in society, marriage, divorce, women's nature, and national progress. *Demet* (Bouquet), which appeared in 1908 as a weekly journal, also was aimed to enlighten Ottoman women about scientific and political issues. These

⁷⁹ Sirman, "Feminism," 6.

⁸⁰ Serpil Çakır, "Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi: XX. Yüzyılın Başında Kadınların Hak Mücadelesi" in *Türkiye'de Toplumsal Cinsiyet Çalışmaları: Eşitsizlikler, Mücadeleler, Kazanımlar* (şehir: yayınevi, yıl) sayfa? ; Hülya Durudoğan. *Türkiye'de toplumsal cinsiyet çalışmaları: Eşitsizlikler, mücadeleler, kazanımlar* (İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi, 2010), 103-105.

magazines covered a variety of topics from homemaking and fashion to health⁸¹ Moreover, some had political content and expressed women's disappointment with this new era of "freedom,"⁸² which, in Sirman's terms, is "only for men."⁸³

Together with these publications, several associations were established to promote a women-friendly political agenda and advocate for women's rights, particularly for access to education and entrance to the labor market. Through women journals and networks, women had the opportunity to appear in the public sphere and develop female activism. Serpil Çakır categorizes the emerging associations into six categories; philanthropic, feminist, culture oriented, political, national and those aiming at educating women. These categories show that women developed interests in different fields and expressed various demands. Çakır's study therefore challenges the tendency to take the women's movement of the era as homogenous.⁸⁴ These associations include the *Asri Kadın Cemiyeti* (Association of Women of the Century), *Osmanlı Müdafaa-i Hukuk-u Nisvan Cemiyeti* (Association for the Defense of the Rights of Ottoman Women) etc. The latter had its own publication, *Kadınlar Dünyası* (Women's World) (1913-21) which deserves special recognition because of its longevity and feminist content.⁸⁵ Through these publications, Ottoman women acquired a platform to exchange and develop ideas around variety of important issues and hence constructed elements for a women's agenda. This agenda was put forward within the associations, solidarity groups and networks, and became the foundation for the emergent women movement.

⁸¹ Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2011), 55-90.

⁸² See Tülay Keskin, "Feminist/nationalist discourses in the first year of the Ottoman revolutionary press (1908-1909): readings from the magazines of Demet, Mahasin and Kadın (Salonica)" (MA Thesis: Bilkent University, 2003)

⁸³ Sirman, "Feminism," 6.

⁸⁴ Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı*, 55-90.

⁸⁵ Arat, "Contestation," 391-392.

2.3 Women's Movements in the Early Republican Period (1923-1935)

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk founded the Republic of Turkey⁸⁶ in 1923 and ruled the country until his death in 1938. He was also the leader of the *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party). During the Early Republican Period, the Ottoman modernization continued with significant changes, as the Kemalist government implemented a series of reforms with a top-down approach. This rendered 'the Turkish Revolution' as one of the most salient examples of social engineering projects in the world.⁸⁷

The Early Republican Period witnessed important legal and constitutional reforms in all domains of society. The main objective of these reforms was to eliminate the Islamic basis of the Ottoman past and to develop a modern secular nation-state. National reformers expanded women's civil and political rights in order to promote women's full participation in the making of the nation-state.⁸⁸ In 1926, the new Turkish state dismantled the Islamic legal code and adopted the Civil Code, modeled after the Swiss Civil Code. They also "granted" important civic rights to women such as: abolition of polygamy, right to divorce, and equality in inheritance rights. In addition, in 1934, women were "granted" the right to vote. This was particularly significant in demonstrating the modern face of new Turkish Republic, as Turkish women were granted the right to vote before their counterparts living in developed European countries like France, Portugal, etc.

⁸⁶ For a biography of Atatürk see Şükrü M. Hanioglu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

⁸⁷ For more see: Resat Kasaba and Sibel Bozdoğan, eds. *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

⁸⁸ Kathryn Libal, "Staging Turkish Women's Emancipation: Istanbul, 1935," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4 (2008): 35.

2.3.1 Women's People Party 1923

Through the initiative of Nezihe Muhiddin, a leading feminist figure, and a group of twelve women, *Kadınlar Halk Fırkası* (Women's People Party) was established on June 15, 1923.⁸⁹ It was the first political party of the Republic of Turkey. Nevertheless, given the fact that women did not have right to vote at that time, this initiative was rejected by the government on February 7, 1924 and the party had to transform into a union: *Türk Kadınlar Birliği* (Turkish Women's Union).⁹⁰ However, as required by law, the association could have no relation to politics.⁹¹ Zihnioğlu argues that there are two reasons behind the ban on the Women's People Party. At the time, women were seen as the symbols of the modernization project. As such, the government was primarily concerned with women's symbolic representation and had their own agenda for granting women's rights. In this regard, the Women's People Party was an unwanted intruder for the government's project. Secondly, the leading political discourse argued that women were granted their rights by the Kemalists initiatives. This allowed them to take all the credit for the reforms and subsequent progress in women's conditions in the early Republican era.⁹² Correspondingly, as historian Zafer Toprak has argued, the establishment of the Women's People Party was also criticized by the media. The media claimed that the party diverted the attention away from the major issues faced by the country and created political divisions.⁹³

It is important to note that the *Kadınlar Halk Fırkası* was established even before the *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası* (Republican People's Party), which was established by Mustafa Kemal on September 9, 1923. However, to this day the official history acknowledges the

⁸⁹ Yaprak Zihnioğlu, "An Ottoman Turkish Women's Rights Defender: Nezihe Muhiddin" (MA Thesis, Bogazici University, 1988), 101.

⁹⁰ Zihnioğlu, "An Ottoman," 132-139.

⁹¹ Ecevit, "Women's Rights," 188.

⁹² Zihnioğlu, "Nezihe Muhiddin," 148-149.

⁹³ Zafer Toprak, "Kadınlar Halk Fırkası," *Tarih ve Toplum* 9 (1988): 158-159.

Republican People's Party of Mustafa Kemal, as the first and "the founding party of modern Turkey".⁹⁴ This does not only repudiate the true chronology of events, but also entirely ignores the existence of the *Kadınlar Halk Fırkası*.

In 1927, the *Türk Kadınlar Birliği* launched a campaign to demand women's political rights at the municipal level. However, these demands were not accepted by local politicians. Nevertheless, Nezihe Muhiddin was determined, as she declared in her speech:

We have not given up our goal to obtain our electoral rights. Because if we gave up, there will be no *raison d'être* for our union to exist. We shall work for our cause until our death. If our life span is not sufficient, we will nevertheless pave the way for the next generation.⁹⁵

In the same year, Istanbul municipality accused Muhiddin of misusing her authority and mismanaging her position in the *Türk Kadınlar Birliği*. This allegation was linked to the Union's 1927 campaign for women's rights as they accused Muhiddin of violating the law banning unions from being politically active. Muhiddin was attacked in the press and also arrested several times. This led to her resignation in 1927. After leaving the union, she was isolated and discredited because of the continuing attacks and accusations. According to researcher Zihnioğlu, the reason behind the arrests and charges against Muhiddin was the fact that the government wanted to silence her and deter others in the Turkish Women's Union from making such 'radical' demands.⁹⁶

As women were granted the right to vote in 1934, eighteen women representatives were elected to the National Assembly in the 1935 elections.⁹⁷ On the one hand, the government encouraged women's participation in politics through the granting of women's political rights

⁹⁴ Sinan Ciddi, *Kemalism in Turkish Politics: The Republican People's Party, Secularism and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 2009), 95.

⁹⁵ Zihnioğlu, "Nezihe Muhiddin," 103-110.

⁹⁶ Zihnioğlu, "An Ottoman," 132-139.

⁹⁷ Ayten Sezer, "Türkiye'deki İlk Kadın Milletvekilleri ve Meclis'teki Çalışmaları," *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi* 14, no.42 (November 1998) 889-905.

in 1934. Yet, the government did not allow women to form their own associations, stating that the expression of feminist ideas might threaten the image of the new national order. This meant that the nature of women's participation in politics continued to be strictly regulated by the patriarchal ideologies of a single-party regime (1923-1950).⁹⁸ Dismissing women's self-organization, the government imposed its leadership on the women's movement. An example of this is the closure of the *Kadınlar Halk Fırkası* which was followed by the silencing of women's voices and demands. The women's agenda concerning their demands for rights was subsumed by the immediacy of the country's grave problems.⁹⁹

After Nezihe Muhiddin's resignation, Latife Bekir Çeyrekbaşı became the president of the *Türk Kadınlar Birliği*. Latife Bekir Çeyrekbaşı was close to ruling power and she became Deputy of İzmir in 1946. Between 1927 and 1934, the Union mainly focused on philanthropic work and no longer demanded women's political rights. The exclusion of Nezihe Muhiddin and the pacification of other women leaders like Halide Edip Adivar, Şükufe Nihal, and Sabiha Sertel left the political space free for the Kemalists. In order to understand how the granted electoral rights were perceived by state-centered feminists in that period, Latife Bekir's interview with *Zaman* (Time) newspaper in 1935 is helpful:

The Women's Union did nothing on this issue. Nevertheless, the Turkish woman carried out her duty to her nation, served unobtrusively and self-sacrificingly for her nation. The Turkish women deserved to become enfranchised and to stand for election, this rights was given to them without them requesting it.¹⁰⁰

The phrase "without requesting it" illustrates that Bekir overlooks the women's struggle in gaining their rights and instead gives all the credit to the state.

⁹⁸ Fatmagül Berktaş, "Gendering Modernization and Nation-Building: Turkey," Göteborg University, accessed April 27, 2017, 3.

http://ips.gu.se/digitalAssets/1271/1271842_gendering_modernization_and_nationbuilding_turkey_.pdf.

⁹⁹ Feroz Ahmad, *Modern Türkiye'nin Oluşumu* (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2006), 120-125.

¹⁰⁰ Ecevit, "Women's Rights," 190.

Although the Republic granted women new political rights, women remained “pawns” in the hands of Republican ideology. The new regime did not intend to liberate women as “individuals”. It is clear that the Turkish Republic expanded women’s social, political and economic rights and that middle-class urban women benefitted from them at least at the symbolic level. Yet, women’s emancipation was controlled by the founding fathers whose primary aim was to establish a modernized nation-state. As sociologist Deniz Kandiyoti argues, Turkish women were “emancipated” but not “liberated.” Indeed, one of the main objectives of the emancipation of women was to integrate women into society with ascribed roles which would benefit the newly established nation.¹⁰¹

In May 1935, the Congress of International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship was hosted in Istanbul by the *Türk Kadınlar Birliği*. Latife Bekir, as the president of the union, gave a speech in the opening ceremony:

“There is no woman question in Turkey anymore. Women can work as well as men, under the management of a single leader for the good of the country.”¹⁰²

It is clear that from the viewpoint of Bekir, women’s quest for equality had been accomplished. A couple days after the Congress, the Turkish Women’s Union announced its dissolution. In the following quote, Bekir explains the reasons behind this decision:

The Woman’s Union reached its goal. Women have been granted all their rights [by the Turkish Republic]. We have been working for twelve years. There is no more need for this Union and no need for a separate women’s organization. Therefore, I propose to close down the Union.¹⁰³

In this quotation, Bekir’s use of the passive tense is quite telling. The choice of the passive voice –“women have been granted all their rights”- emphasizes that it was not the women who advocated for their rights, but rather the government who furnished women with rights.

¹⁰¹ Deniz Kandiyoti, “Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflection on the Turkish Case” *Feminist Studies* 13 (1987): 317-338.

¹⁰² Ecevit, “Women’s Rights,” 190.

¹⁰³ Ecevit, “Women’s Rights,” 190.

The ban on the Women's People Party, the eradication of Nezihe Muhiddin from the Union, and finally, the dissolution of the Union entirely, removed women from the official historiography. Moreover, it manufactured the prototypical attitude, which is ever-present: "Women never struggled for their rights in Turkey; we furnished them with women's rights".¹⁰⁴ Though this view is still promulgated by many social scientists and female politicians, a new generation of women social scientists are challenging this perspective by revealing the activism of early feminists.¹⁰⁵

During the early Republican period, women did acquire significant rights and gained an important visibility in the social and political arena. However, women were only seen as beneficiaries of the republican reforms. Worse still, women with divergent voices were passivized and excluded from the official historiography. By focusing on Suat Derviş, I aim to give voice to a silenced and forgotten feminist and illustrate her literary and political journey. The silencing of Derviş's literary and political writings as well as the disregard of her political engagements reveals the bias of historical accounts. The silencing of powerful women figures of this time, particularly Suat Derviş is thus the primary focus of inquiry for this thesis. In the next chapter, her life story will be investigated in detail.

Conclusion

Starting from the late eighteenth century and continuing through the nineteenth century, Ottoman modernization brought along a series of reforms which restructured the social and political life in the Ottoman society. As feminist scholarship has demonstrated, upper-class

¹⁰⁴ Zihnioğlu, "Nezihe Muhiddin," 99.

¹⁰⁵ This attitude and view, starting with Sirin Tekeli has been abandoned by the new generation of the women social scientists. She played a pioneering role in establishing a woman's perspective in the social sciences. For further information see; Sirin Tekeli, "Women in the Face of Political Power," *Toplum ve Bilim* 3 (1977): 69-107; and Şirin Tekeli, *Kadınlar ve Siyasal Toplumsal Hayat* (Istanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 1982).

women benefited from these reforms, which particularly increased their access to education. As Serpil Çakır states, early examples of the women's movement took the forms of publications, associations, networks and solidarity groups, thereby contributing to the creation of a civil public space.¹⁰⁶

The newly founded Turkish Republic extended women's civil and political rights but hindered women from self-organizing. Despite the visibility of women's agenda in the late Ottoman and early Republican historiography, the agenda itself was mediated by the State's interest. In other words, the women's campaign for equality remained within the power struggle among males in the Ottoman and Turkish states. The case of the Women's People Party and its evolution to the *Türk Kadınlar Birliği* reflects the state domination on women. The new Republicans benefited from the symbolic value of women's emancipation since it supported the image of the Turkish Republic as a "modern nation". The Kemalist reforms were not intended to dismantle the patriarchal structure that governed both the private and social spheres. Rather, they were utilized to transform the mode of patriarchy into a republican form, which better suited the new political order.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, women with divergent voices were systematically silenced and isolated by the Kemalists, causing their ultimate obscurity from history.

¹⁰⁶ Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları), 55-90.

¹⁰⁷ Fatmagül Berktaş, "Gendering Modernization," 3.

CHAPTER 3: Suat Derviş: From an Ottoman Elite Woman to a Street Journalist

Through this chapter, I aim to focus on Suat Derviş's life story and trace the trajectory of Derviş's intellectual and political ideas from an aristocratic Ottoman woman to a socialist realist author with a sense of social justice. I intend to show how Derviş developed interests in the suppressed, marginalized and stigmatized groups of society. This is thanks to her socialist awareness and how she understood social realism. In the first part of this chapter, I will analyze her family and social *milieu* to show how her identity and intellectual formation were shaped. In the second part, I will focus on Derviş's encounters as a journalist, both in Turkey and abroad, to illustrate the influence of these encounters on her political and literary identities and writings.

Suat Derviş was born in 1905 during the last days of the Ottoman Empire, and passed away following the March 12, 1971 military memorandum - the second military intervention to take place in the Republic of Turkey, after its 1960 predecessor. Having her first novel published by the age of sixteen, she entered into the male-dominated areas of literature and press world during the early stage of her life. From then onwards, she experienced many intellectual transitions. One of the most crucial transitions for her was from being an upper-class writer with an unavoidable distance from society, to becoming a journalist advocating for the social issues of the working class. Throughout her life, she expressed a large degree of resistance to social norms. Based on this background, I will trace the trajectory of Suat Derviş's career path, to show the development of her intellectual persona. I will argue that from journalism to poetry,¹⁰⁸ her story involves numerous changes, which led to her becoming one of the major figures of the history of feminism and socialism in Turkey.

¹⁰⁸ Suat Derviş's first poem *Hezeyan* (Delirium) published in *Alemdar* newspaper in 1918.

3.1 The Intellectual Formation of Suat Derviş

Born in Istanbul in 1905¹⁰⁹ to an upper-class family, Suat Derviş¹¹⁰ was one of the prominent women of the time due to her intelligence, good educational background and authorship. Her mother was Hesna Derviş and her father was Dr. Ismail Derviş (? -1932) - a professor at the Istanbul University Medical Faculty. Dr. Ismail Derviş was one of the six Turkish teenagers chosen to participate in the Young Turks which was an opportunity to travel to Lyon and gain European medical education. Dr. Ismail Derviş's grandfather Derviş Paşa was also one of the founders of the *Darülfünun* (House of Multiple Sciences) an academy based on the Islamic tradition of higher education. This project later evolved into *Istanbul Üniversitesi* (Istanbul University) in 1933. Suat Derviş's mother was the well-educated and respected daughter of Mr. Kamil, who was one of the chamberlains and musicians of the Ottoman sultan, Abdülaziz I (1830 -1876). Coming from this aristocratic background, Derviş's education started at a very early age with a tutoress from France. Upon her French tutoress' return to France after WWI, she continued her education with a local tutoress. Derviş received French and German language education with private tutors, similar to the daughters of other upper-class Ottoman families. Her education continued in the form of private education¹¹¹ taught by family intimates at home in the company of her sister, Hamiyet (1902? -1968). The two daughters were privately tutored by their relatives Mrs. Abdülhak Hayri, one of the poets of *Fecri-ati* (Dawn of the Future),¹¹² in the field of Turkish, Arabic, and Persian languages, as well as history. Their uncle Tevfik gave them lessons in arithmetic and their father provided home schooling in chemistry, zoology, botany, exhibition, physiology, geography, and

¹⁰⁹ There are different dates at various resources regarding Suat Derviş' date of birth. According to some sources, Derviş was born in 1904.

¹¹⁰ Suat Derviş used different pseudonyms like Emine Hatip, Saadet Baraner, Hatice Hatip, Suveyda H., Suzet Doli and Suat Suzan.

¹¹¹ At that time, it was such a usual thing that high-class families used to have their daughters privately educated at home.

¹¹² Encyclopedia Britannica, "Fecr-i Âti," accessed April 20, 2017, <https://global.britannica.com/topic/Dawn-of-the-Future>.

cosmography. Derviş's sister Hamiyet was one of the few Muslim women hired by the French Constantinople Telephone Company.¹¹³ Hamiyet worked for a year as a telephone operator until the company shut down in 1914.¹¹⁴

Derviş's father played an important role in her intellectual formation and education. Dr. Ismail Derviş was an enlightened man, who would have liked his daughter to attend foreign schools such as the American College or the German High School in Istanbul. However, family elders opposed it due to the possibility that Western education might alienate Suat Derviş from the traditional ideal of being a wife and mother.¹¹⁵ Suat Derviş emphasized her father's role in developing her personality and giving her the strength to make courageous life choices. She also stated that her family was the most important source of her courage to handle the difficulties she faced in life. Illustrative of her affection for her father is the following quote taken from her incomplete autobiography, which she wrote as a letter in 1968 to Behçet Necatigil titled *Hayatımı Anlatıyorum* (I am Telling My Life):

Pedagogue, progressivist, thinker and scientist... Professor Doctor Ismail Derviş. My teacher, my father, my beloved father supported me until the year I wrote these lines. I have lived on what I learned from him... I wonder if I were not your daughter, would I be this woman.¹¹⁶

Between 1919 and 1920, Derviş and her sister Hamiyet were enrolled in the Sternisches Conservatory. Derviş however realized that musical education was not her passion and so enrolled at the Berlin University Faculty of Letters where she attended classes in philosophy and literature. Nevertheless, in her letter to Behçet Necatigil, she makes known that she did not graduate.¹¹⁷ Between 1927 and 1933, she worked as a reporter and she wrote about Turkey for German newspapers including *Scherl*, *Mosse*, and *Ullstein*, which were the most

¹¹³ Behmoaras, "Suat Derviş," 38-39.

¹¹⁴ For more information, see; Yavuz Selim Karakışla, "Dersaadet Telefon Anonim Şirket-i Osmaniyesi ve Osmanlı Kadın Telefon Memureleri 1" in *Tarih ve Toplum* 212 (2001): 29-37.

¹¹⁵ Behmoaras, "Suat Derviş," 39-42.

¹¹⁶ Suat Derviş, "Hayatımı Anlatıyorum," *Tarih ve Toplum* 29 (1986): 18-24.

¹¹⁷ Behçet Necatigil, "Dünya Kadın," 602-603.

famous newspapers in Germany at that time. She worked at *Die Vossische Zeitung*¹¹⁸ and *Querschnitte*¹¹⁹ which were distinguished newspapers in Berlin. While living and working as a journalist in Berlin she gained first-hand experience in pre-war Germany, where complex social, religious and economic factors were operating upon the society.¹²⁰ In 1933, the Nazi Party won the majority of the votes in the Federal election. Following the national election, Hitler gained more power and banned not only other political parties but also newspapers and journals which were not pro-Nazi.

Her personal life was tightly linked with her political stance and literary career. Derviş first marriage was to Seyfi Cenap Berksoy (? -1974), a wrestler and one of the establishing members of *Türkiye Idman Cemiyetleri Ittifaki* (Turkish Alliance of Training Societies). As Behmoaras states, this marriage did not last long. Her second husband was Selami Izzet Sedes (1896 -1964) –a writer for famous journals at the time, including *Servet-i Fünun* (The Wealth of Knowledge)¹²¹ and *Yeni Mecmua* (New Magazine). This marriage also did not last and was quickly followed by a marriage to Nizamettin Nazif Tepedelenlioğlu (1901 -1970). However, this third marriage was also not long and she later divorced. In 1940, Suat Derviş married Reşat Fuat Baraner (1900 – 1968), the leader of the illegal the *Türkiye Komünist Partisi*. This political party was established in 1920, but was soon banned until 1946 (the beginning of the multi-party period of the Republic of Turkey). There is little information about her first three marriages; however, her last marriage – with Reşat Fuat Baraner- is relatively better documented. According to Çimen Günay, this could stem from the fact that Baraner was

¹¹⁸ The *Vossische Zeitung* was the well-known liberal German newspaper.

¹¹⁹ *Der Querschnitt* (The Cross Section) was an art magazine.

¹²⁰ Çimen Günay-Erkol, "One Nation, Two Exiles: Displacement of Halide Edip Adıvar and Suat Derviş from Turkey's Literary Scene," in *21. Yüzyilin eşiğinde kadınlar: değişim ve güçlenme: Türk kadınının seçme ve seçilme hakkını alışı'nın 75. yıldönümünde Uluslararası Multidisipliner Kadın Kongresi*, October 13-16, 2009.

¹²¹ "Servet-i Fünun means "an avant-garde journal that he and the other writers of the new literature published to inform their readers about European, particularly French, cultural and intellectual movements". Encyclopedia Britannica, "Servet-i Fünun," accessed April 15, 2017, <https://global.britannica.com/topic/Servet-i-Funun>.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's maternal cousin and the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Turkey.¹²²

During her stay in Berlin from 1927 to 1933, Derviş frequently returned to Turkey. Starting in 1930, Suat Derviş actively engaged in political issues and wrote extensively on her political ideals, both for German and Turkish newspapers. Additionally in 1930, Derviş joined the oppositional *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (Liberal Republican Party), which advocated for women's suffrage. *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası* was founded by Turkish diplomat and politician Fethi Okyar¹²³ on August 12, 1930 upon Mustafa Kemal request. This opposition party was the second attempt to transition to a multi-party democracy in Turkey.¹²⁴ Together with Nezihe Muhiddin and Atatürk's sister Makbule Atadan, Suat Derviş was a candidate for party membership in the parliament.¹²⁵ Initially, this controlled-opposition attracted wide spread support from the impoverished masses; however, sympathy to it quickly diminished. This experimentation of the multi-party democracy ended with *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası* dissolving on November 17, 1930 because of concerns about the stability of the regime and Islamist-rooted fears.¹²⁶ The one-party period (1923-1945) continued until the establishment of the *Milli Kalkınma Partisi* (National Development Party) in 1945 and the *Demokrat Parti* (Democratic Party) in 1946.

Upon her father's passing in 1932, Derviş suffered serious economic problems. Furthermore, she faced troubles at work because journals opposing the Nazi regime were under close watch

¹²² Günay, "Toplumcu Gerçekçi," 9.

¹²³ Fethi Okyar served as the Prime Minister of Turkey between 1924 and 1925, and he was the second Speaker of the Turkish Parliament after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

¹²⁴ The first attempt for oppositional party was Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası (The Progressive Republican Party). It was established by a Turkish officer Ali Fuat Cebesoy, a Turkish general Kazım Karabekir, an officer of Turkish Army Refet Bele, an Ottoman born Turkish naval officer Rauf Orbay, a Turkish medical doctor Adnan Adıvar upon Mustafa Kemal Atatürk request on November 17, 1924. After the Sheikh Said Rebellion, a Kurdish rebellion aimed at reviving the Islamic caliphate, the party was banned on 5 June 1925.

¹²⁵ Fethi Okyar, *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası Nasıl Doğdu, Nasıl Fesh Edildi* (Istanbul: n.p, 1987) 41-42.

¹²⁶ Cem Emrence, "Politics of Discontent in the Midst of the Great Depression: The Free Republican Party of Turkey" *New Perspectives on Turkey* 23 (2000): 31-52.

in Germany. She came back to Turkey in 1933 and started to work as a journalist for different journals including *Vatan* (Nation), *Cumhuriyet* (Republic), *Haber* (News). Derviş was a very productive writer, and between 1920 and 1932 she would succeed in publishing ten novels.¹²⁷ In addition to the novels she published in the late 1930s - such as *Istanbul'un Bir Gecesi* (A Night in Istanbul), *Hiç* and *Bu Roman Olan Şeylerin Romanıdır*. Suat Derviş wrote a number of journal articles demonstrating her political views. Starting in the 1940s, the political atmosphere gradually became more oppressive for the leftist intelligentsia. This led Derviş to write several critical articles in the socialist realist journal *Yeni Edebiyat*, a semi-official publication of the *Türkiye Komünist Partisi*. In 1944, Derviş published a booklet called *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* This booklet was subsequently published by Arkadaş Press. Derviş wrote this booklet in response to accusations made in anti-communist writer Reha Oğuz Türkkan's booklets *Kızıklar ve Sollar* and *Kızıl Faaliyet*. In her booklet she aimed to provide her justification for admiring the Soviets. This booklet and the allegations against Derviş will be investigated in the next chapter in detail. In this booklet, she clearly established that she admired the Soviet Union and Soviet system while the major political view of the time was anti-communism. Thus, she had great difficulties in finding a job and getting her work published under her real name.¹²⁸ During this period, she used different pen names to publish her works such as Emine Hatip, Suzet Doli, Saadet Hatip.¹²⁹

Derviş experienced a short period in custody because the pro-German government began arresting leftist intellectuals in 1944. Reşat Fuat Baraner got sentenced to seven-years nine-months while Suat Derviş received a penalty for eight months in jail on the grounds of their political engagements with the *Türkiye Komünist Partisi*. Unfortunately, this lead to Derviş

¹²⁷ Fatmagül Berktaş, "Suat Derviş," 111-112.

¹²⁸ Çimen Günay, "Suat Derviş," 11.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 11

having a miscarriage in prison.¹³⁰ Reşat Fuat Baraner received a further ten-year prison sentence in 1953 encouraging Derviş to leave Turkey and live in exile.

Suat Derviş lived abroad - primarily in France - between 1953 and 1963 when her husband Fuat Baraner was in prison. In Derviş's own words, this was a "voluntary exile"¹³¹ and upon her husband released in 1963, she returned to Turkey. Fuat Baraner in fact supported Derviş to go and live abroad while he was in prison.¹³² However, Derviş was criticized for leaving her husband behind and not conforming with the norms a "wife" should conform with. For some, this was a sign of Derviş's "manliness".¹³³ Contrary to her fame and good reputation in France, according to Berktaş, she was not welcomed by leftist or literary circles, when she returned to Turkey in 1963.¹³⁴ According to Berktaş, this unfriendly treatment shows the boundaries against expressing one's political views and feminism as Derviş did. Her feminism or embracement of womanhood worked as if they were barrier to being a part of leftist circles. Her great synthesis of feminist and socialist identities put her in an unusual and lonely place and she surely was ahead of her time. This, I argue, shows that having a critical and independent mind and being brave to live on her own terms made Suat Derviş unpopular among the leftist circle.¹³⁵

During her time in France, she continued to write and earn money in that way. Her books *Le prisonnier d'Ankara* (The Prisoner from Ankara) (1957) and *Les Ombres du Yalı* (The Shadows of the Yalı), (1958) were published in France and were welcomed there. In 1958, only one year after its first publication in France, *Le prisonnier d'Ankara* was translated to Bulgarian, and it was translated to Russian in 1960. Derviş' stories were also published by

¹³⁰ Rasih Nuri İleri, "Suat Derviş- Saadet Baraner," *Tarih ve Toplum* 29 (1986): 17-18.

¹³¹ Berktaş, "İki Söylem," 89-90.

¹³² Liz Behmoaras, "Efsane Bir Kadın," 200.

¹³³ Berktaş, "Suat Derviş," 111.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 111.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 111.

Les Lettres Françaises, *Horizon*, *Les Femmes d'Aujourd'hui*, *Les Femmes Françaises*, *Eve*, *Antoinette* in France, *Kölnischer Anzeiger*, *Morgenpost*, *Bild* in Germany, and *Volksstimme* in Austria.¹³⁶

After losing her husband Reşat Fuat Baraner in 1968, Suat Derviş again faced difficult financial times. However, she continued writing and her involvement in politics. She published her renowned novel *Fosforlu Cevriye* in 1968 when there was an uprising of fierce leftist student riots in Turkey, which seems not to be a coincidence. In 1971, she took an active role in the establishment of *Devrimci Kadınlar Birliği* (The Association of Turkish Revolutionist Women) together with Neriman Hikmet, Mediha Özçelik, Asiye Elçin, and Fikret Elbe. Nevertheless, *Devrimci Kadınlar Birliği* was closed by the government in 1971. Suat Derviş passed away on July 23, 1972.¹³⁷

In summary, Derviş had a critical mind ready to question and resist any sort of imposition or stigmatization. In 1917, as Turkish poet Nazım Hikmet¹³⁸ put it in his poem *Gölgesi* (Her Shadow) which he dedicated to her, Derviş was a woman who did not lower her head and refused to give up. Even the hard political conditions of the 1940s, which forced many leftist writers to use pseudonyms, did not stop Suat Derviş from writing. Derviş found her own way and learned through experience, which led her to developing a perspective towards social and economic injustice. She went through major periods of transition, which led to her awakening to leftist ideas. These ideologies motivated her journalism and led to the production of some of her writings such as *Fosforlu Cevriye*, *Bu Roman Olan Şeylerin Romanı* and *Neden Sovyetler Bilğinin Dostuyum?* Her literary works can be read as a journey of a woman in Turkey from liberalism to socialism.

¹³⁶ Liz Behmoaras, "Efsane Bir Kadın," 231.

¹³⁷ Fatmagül Bertay, "Suat Derviş," 111-112.

¹³⁸ Nazım Hikmet Ran (15 January 1902 – 3 June 1963) was a very well-known Turkish poet, novelist, and playwright.

3.2 Journalism: Getting to Know Yourself, Getting to Know the Other

Journalism was Derviş's passion and main occupation. In 1923, she was the first Turkish female reported sent to Europe. Thanks to her language capacity, she attended the Conference of Lausanne in 1923 and the Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits in 1936. She was also the editor for the first women page in the newspaper *İkdam* (Progress) in 1926. Her experience as a journalist in Berlin, her work as a street journalist and conducting interviews with people from different classes and her travels to the Soviet Union all played an important role in shaping not only her understanding of journalism and but also her writings and novels.

In 1933, she started earning money by writing for different journals and newsletters. In the letter in which she wrote her autobiography to Turkish poet and author Behçet Necatigil, Suat Derviş stated that she wrote “in all the Istanbul and most of Ankara, Adana and Izmir newspapers except for the newspapers *Akşam* (Evening), and *Hürriyet* (Liberty) and also the journals and newspapers published after 1953.”¹³⁹

During and after the Congress of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship in 1935, Derviş conducted interviews with participants and reported them in the daily newspaper *Cumhuriyet*. Rosa Manus, Mary Cook, Linda Littlejohn, and Nezihe Muhiddin are among some the women she interviewed about abortion, disarmament, war, peace and asked for their opinions regarding the situation of women in Turkey.¹⁴⁰ Historian Aslı Davaz underlines that, today we have these invaluable interviews thanks to Derviş's brave stance in her job and her feminist curiosity.

¹³⁹ Necatigil, “Dünya Kadın,” 607.

¹⁴⁰ Aslı Davaz Mardin, *Eşitsiz Kız Kardeşlik: Uluslararası ve Ortadoğu Kadın Hareketleri, 1935 Kongresi ve Türk Kadın Birliği*. (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2014) 675.

In the chapter three, the International Alliance's 12th Congress, held in April 1935 in Istanbul, was investigated. Within this framework, I (Aslı Davaz) asked on four questions: How did TKB and feminists from all around the world organize the congress together? Did 1935 achieved to build a milestone in establishing an internationalist sisterhood between the West and the East? Did the Peace Struggle of the International Alliance have a determinant influence on preventing the war? What did the leading Suffragists of the time think of this? In order to understand how they conceive of their era and feminism, their experiences and their interpretations of the world's economic and political agenda, especially within the context of discussions during the congress, one ought to give them the floor. Thanks to Congress reports and Suat Derviş's brave journalism, this was made possible. Following her feminist curiosity, she asked relevant questions to the delegates. As opposed to other journalists reporting daily news from the Congress, Derviş was raising questions about American suffragist position on abortion.¹⁴¹

What makes Suat Derviş distinctive is that she conducted interviews on the streets of Istanbul with various people from different backgrounds, in particular with those who had a lower socio-economic status. She mostly attended to the voices of the unemployed, porters/hamals, tradesman, child labourers, and women. By working as a street journalist and conducting interviews with "the others" of society, Derviş challenges not only the gender roles in this traditional society but also the male dominated public space.¹⁴² In her interviews at the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* she proposes solutions for the problems, which resonated during her interviews. One of her interviews, published between 26 March and 18 April 1936, entitled *Güne Gününe Yaşayanlarımız* (The Ones Live From Day to Day), Derviş accompanies an unemployed man through his search for a job to demonstrate the kind of obstacles he faced. In the same essay, she proposes establishing employment and labor exchange institutions so that all unemployment can be documented. She writes that unemployed people could also seek jobs through these institutions.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 668-678.

¹⁴² Feryal Saygılıgil, "Sokakta Bir Gazeteci," *Fe Dergi: Feminist Eleştiri* 1 (2014): 21-23.

¹⁴³ Suat Derviş, "Günü gününe yaşayanlarımız," *Cumhuriyet Gazetesi*, April 13, 1936.

Between 1 and 17 May 1935, in *Nelere Sinirlenirsiniz?* (At What You Get Angry?) she prepares an interview series asking famous people of the time what makes them angry. For this she conducted interviews with individuals such as Nezihe Muhiddin, journalist Peyami Safa, educator and sport official Selim Sırrı Tarcan, and professor ordinarius and physician Fahrettin Kerim Gökay. This interview series was done to attract attention to different social classes, to demonstrate how people from different classes understand life and their lives and to show how their problems depending on different socio-economic realities.¹⁴⁴ Working as street journalist and conducting many interviews with different people had an immense impact on Derviş. Later, she said the following about these interviews:

The interviews I made when working as a journalist made me face the realities of life. I started to write my real works after I became a journalist and of all my novels that I like the most are the ones that I wrote at that time.¹⁴⁵

In the quote which follows, Suat Derviş explains how working as a journalist in Turkey influenced her writings:

“My job [journalism] influenced me [Suat Derviş] so much. I am not only a writer but also a journalist. After I started working as a journalist I learned my country and my people. As I know Istanbul’s most luxurious neighborhoods, I also entered the most remote corners. I saw the misery and prosperity not far from each other in the same city but within the borders of the same municipality.”¹⁴⁶

Having been born and raised in a wealthy upper-class family, she had not witnessed such harsh conditions and realities in life before. Working as a journalist and conducting street interviews enabled her to see the different social realities, and these experiences had an immense effect on her literary style and political stance.

¹⁴⁴ Suat Derviş, “Nelere Sinirlenirsiniz?” *Cumhuriyet Gazetesi*, May 1-17, 1935.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 604.

¹⁴⁶ A. Köklügiller and I. Minnetoğlu, *Şair ve Yazarlarımız Nasıl Yazıyorlar* (İstanbul: Minnetoğlu Yayınları, 1975), 138, quoted in Paker and Toska, “Yazan, Yazılan,” 17.

The left-wing journal *Tan* also had an important impact on Suat Derviş's journalism and the reframing of her political thoughts. In 1937, *Tan* wanted to publish a series about political developments in foreign countries. Thus, Suat Derviş was sent to the Soviet Union to report on the country's political developments. Suat Derviş wrote her impressions in her column *Istanbul-Moskov-Tahran Seyahat Notları*. Upon her return from the Soviet Union in 1937, she published *Bu Roman Olan Şeylerin Romanıdır*. This novel is the first example of socialist realism in her works with an emphasis on the working class.¹⁴⁷

3.3 A Woman-Oriented Socialist Realist Author

According to historian Fatmagül Berktaş, Derviş's literary style and choice of subjects separates her work from the two mainstream genres of her time: national and village-themed novels.¹⁴⁸ Her first novels delve into human psychology instead of promoting nationalistic goals. Her writing also differed from the other mainstream genre of village-themed novels. She wrote neither Anatolia-themed novels, nor did she take a populist stance against the hardships of the village life. She instead preferred doing something unusual by depicting those marginalized, 'the others' of the city that she witnessed. As a woman who witnessed social and economic inequalities among the lower classes, her social realism¹⁴⁹ embraced those destitute in the ghettos of the cities.

As previously explained, Derviş's political stance was influenced by her journalism and travels to the Soviet Union. Çimen Günay argues that Derviş's novels refer to class both as

¹⁴⁷ Günay, "Toplumcu Gerçekçi," 15.

¹⁴⁸ Berktaş, *Tarihin*, 204-217.

¹⁴⁹ How to name her efforts and whether to see her canon 'social realist' however are controversial. According to Erendiz Atasü, for example, Derviş was a social realist. She presents Derviş as an expert in telling the stories of passion from a social realist angle and questions the reasons why Derviş has not been considered to be equal to Orhan Kemal— the master of social realism in Turkish literature.¹⁴⁹ I also endorse Paker & Toska, however, the works of Suat Derviş were hardly evaluated as "social realism", but rather as the starting point of "women oriented socialist realist fiction" in Turkey. See: Paker and Toska, "Yazan, Yazılan," 11-22.

social existence and economic reality. The novels vividly portray the transformation of Turkish economy and immigration of uneducated and impoverished masses to the bigger cities.¹⁵⁰ In her novel *Aksaray'da Bir Perihan* (1962), Derviş depicts the interest of the middle-class in upper-class neighborhoods and residences. The protagonist Perihan, ashamed of residing in Aksaray -a conservative and middle-class district of Istanbul-, “has a hatred for the house she was born in. While the neighborhood was modernizing with construction of modern comfortable residential zones, the house was conserving its old façade and resisting the change. The wealthy started living in these new residential areas”.¹⁵¹ The coexistence of the slums and modern housing in the same neighborhood is reflective of societal discrepancy between different classes.¹⁵²

Due to her transition from a liberal to socialist stance, her understanding of literature also changed. She started to use her writings as a tool for creating change in society and propagating ideals such as “equality,” “freedom” and “society without class differences”. Her goal of ‘getting to know the other,’ and to depict social and economic injustice as realistically as possible manifested itself best in her novels. From the late 1930s onwards, she wrote novels about the other. In other words, those who were neglected by society. By doing so, Çimen Günay states that Derviş started to emphasize the differences between social classes and to discuss the problems that these disparities create. During this period, she uses her novels as a means to motivate her readers to change the existing social order and to resolve injustices.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Günay, “One Nation,” 216.

¹⁵¹ A. Ömer Türkeş, “Romanda Kentleşme: Gecekonduyan Villakentlere,” *Birikim Dergisi*, no. 123 (July 1999) accessed May 10, 2017, <http://www.birikimdergisi.com/birikim-yazi/6444/romanda-kentlesme-gecekonduyan-villakentlere#.WUqmPuuGPDC>

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Günay, “Toplumcu Gerçekçi,” 3.

Upon her travel to the Soviets, between 12 March and 10 May 1937, Derviş published her series *Bu Roman Olan Şeylerin Romanıdır* in the journal *Tan*. According to Günay, *Bu Roman Olan Şeylerin Romanıdır* is a melting pot in which Derviş's identities as a journalist and novelist merged. In the novel, the setting is a factory and for the first time the Turkish working class and their problems are touched upon. The main characters of the novel are Arif, a worker in a tobacco factory, who lost his leg in an accident and moved from rural to urban; Namık, a socialist apprentice mechanic; the snob general manager who grew up in Germany; the good hearted administrative manager who supports the workers' rights; Osman, a poor and alcoholic veteran, and Nazlı, who was flirting with upper-class men in her pursuit of wealth. As can be seen, all the characters in the novel are people who represent the different realities of the Turkish society. Through their characters, Derviş not only outlines the different social classes of the Turkish society but also reflects the complexities and conflicts in the classes. As Günay underlines, Derviş conveys her propaganda messages of a better world and a more humane life both as narrator and through her novel's characters.¹⁵⁴ For instance, in her novel *Bu Roman Olan Şeylerin Romanıdır*, Derviş does not represent all the workers as good and virtuous or all the managers as evil and pitiless. Derviş, implicitly, reveals her position through her descriptions of the characters. For example, she depicts the snob general manager as "grumpy and surly" and the good hearted administrative manager as "a nice looking guy with a pretty face and a perfect athletic body".¹⁵⁵

Derviş's political ideas were also influenced by the social changes of the time. As Çimen Günay claims, it is therefore better to follow her transformation alongside the social changes of her time. From that perspective, the novels in which she tells the stories of people's everyday lives, based on first-hand observation, provide a background on Turkish modernization between the 1920s and 1940s with respect to the formation of the Turkish

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 59.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 56.

bourgeoisie, gender relations, patriarchy, life in the seaside residences and social injustice. For example, Derviş's initial works focused on the threat that the powerful and demanding "new woman" posed to late-Ottoman society.¹⁵⁶ *Hiçbiri* (1923), *Fatma'nın Günahı* (1924), and *Emine* (Emine) (1931), for instance, were dealing in their writing with upper-class lives, their love affairs and their emotional struggles. Whereas in Derviş's post-1930 works she questioned the patriarchal culture of Turkey. One such example is *Fosforlu Cevriye*, which explores a young prostitute in the slums of Istanbul who fell in love with an educated upper-class man who was sought by the police because of his leftist political ideas.¹⁵⁷ These changes, observed in Derviş's novels, reveal the change in her perception of literature as a writer. By the late 1930s, socialist realism became the dominant style of literature for her. In the 1940s, Derviş effectively used the genre of novel as a "means" to spread political views to the masses, and political ideas became one of the "core" elements of her novels.¹⁵⁸

Derviş wrote an article called *Türk Ermeni Kızkardeşlerimle Hasbihal* (Conversation with my Turkish Armenian Sisters) in 1935 in the Armenian weekly journal *Nor Houys* (New Hope). In this article, Derviş defines literature as a common language with which people can communicate. She suggests the idea of unifying literature that can be experienced as a shared "culture" without an emphasis on ethnicity. Derviş, who believes that Turks and Armenians need to know more about their literature, invites all the women to take responsibility. Claiming that art can bring people with different ethnic backgrounds closer, Derviş suggests creating a union to achieve these goals.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Günay, "One Nation," 215.

¹⁵⁷ Günay, "One Nation," 216.

¹⁵⁸ Günay, "Toplumcu Gerçekçi," 3-5.

¹⁵⁹ Lerna Ekmekcioglu, "Suad Derviş and Hermine Pakgönül", paper presented at the "Turkish Armenians after 1915" Panel at MESA Annual meeting on November 22, 2009; taken from Arzu Öztürkmen, The Women's Movement Under Ottoman and Republican Rule: A Historical Reappraisal, *Journal of Women's History* 25, Number 4, winter 2013, 255

Fortunately, it is possible to read what Suat Derviş herself said about her understanding of literature through various interviews and in her own writings. Derviş considers her literary career as divided into two distinct phases. According to this division, the serial novel *Bu Roman Olan Şeylerin Romanıdır* (1937) can be considered as her first socialist realist novel.¹⁶⁰ In her letter to Necatigil, Derviş deemed her five works *İstanbul'un bir Gecesi*, *Yalının Gölgesi*, *Ankara Mahpusu*, *Fosforlu Cevriye* and *Aksaray'dan Bir Perihan* as her favorite novels in 1967.¹⁶¹

Derviş also stated that her novels from 1937 onwards were to be viewed within the realm of “realism.” She called her early novels “childhood experiences” and asked the reader to ignore them:

I call what I wrote as books “childhood experiences”. And how I would love my readers to see them that way too so they would tolerate them... I have created babies, babies that have nothing to do with life, the truth or spaces... I created them... And I directed their lives according to my inner fantasies... [Now] I am no longer interested in fantasies, but in life. That is because life and the truth are richer and more interesting than the most beautiful lies and the brightest dreams.¹⁶²

As she underlined, journalism had an immense impact on her intellectual development and her authorship. Her understanding of reality was shaped through listening to the stories of a diverse group of people from different backgrounds including the unemployed, porters/hamals, tradesman, child laborers, young girls, homeless which, according to her, are the true representations of life.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 6.

¹⁶¹ Behçet Necatigil, “Dünya Kadın,” 602-603.

¹⁶² Paker and Toska, “Yazan, Yazılan,” 18.

3.4 The New Literature

The magazine *Yeni Edebiyat* was published between October 5, 1940 and November 15, 1941 with the aim of providing a theoretical framework for Socialist Realist literature. It featured many leftist activists in Turkey including artist Abidin Dino (1913-1993), novelist Sabahattin Ali (1907-1948), writer Hasan İzzettin Dinamo (1909-1989). Published in 26 volumes, the magazine was a means for analyzing art starting with the fundamentals of social realism. It was also intended to shape the public opinion by detailing specific topics chosen by the editors. The magazine provided young and dissenting writers the opportunity to express themselves. When Reşad Fuad Baraner took an active role in the magazine, the magazine started to be perceived as a semi-official publication of the Communist Party of Turkey. Suat Derviş played an active role in this journal. Here, however, her writings included more political elements than her previous publications for other magazines. Yet, Rasih Nuri İleri claims that these articles were in fact written by Fuad Baraner instead of Suat Derviş. It is thought that due to the danger of dissenting with the major political views of the time, Fuad Baraner used Suat Derviş's name to publish his own political writings.¹⁶³ However, in the short biography Derviş wrote for Behçet Necatigil, she states that she herself wrote the articles published in *Yeni Edebiyat*.¹⁶⁴

In *Yeni Edebiyat*, Derviş also wrote several book reviews. She wrote critiques of new releases of the time such as *Yaban* (The Strange), *Bir Tereddütün Romanı* (The Novel of a Hesitation), *İçimizdeki Şeytan* (The Demon Inside of Us), *Çete* (The Gang), *Posta Yolu* (Mail Route), *Fahim Bey ve Biz* (Mr. Fahim and Us). These reviews serve as good source for uncovering Suat Derviş's understanding of literature and literary works, as well as her opinions on class conflict and the current political dynamics at the time of WWII. In her 1941 review of

¹⁶³ Rasih Nuri İleri, "Yakın Tarihimizden Portreler-I: Suat Derviş- Saadet Baraner" in *Kırklı Yıllar-I*, (TÜSTAV: İstanbul, 2012), 130.

¹⁶⁴ Behçet Necatigil, "Dünya Kadın," 593-609.

Albülhak Şinasi Hisar's novel *Fahim Bey ve Biz*, Suat Derviş explains what literature means to her and what should be expected from a work of literature:

Literature is described in the truest way possible when it is taken as the art of reflecting life in a specific way (...) There is no use for an artwork that doesn't reflect social life and doesn't include any argument or thesis (...) When there is no real scene from life to be seen in the spaces that the work describes or no real characters surrounding the social life as a result of that life, one cannot help but feel pity for the time wasted reading such books. Even if the piece is well-crafted in an exquisite style, one still regrets reading it and becomes upset with the writer.¹⁶⁵

Marxist criticism in art is founded upon the economic relations and class conflicts in which the work is created. It identifies art, movements of art, styles and their relationships with economic backgrounds and class conflicts, and thus tries to explain the reasons for these connections. Similarly, Suat Derviş emphasizes that good artwork needs to grasp / question the social reality, that the artist should be conscious of the socio-economic foundations of society (i.e. to have class-consciousness) and should deal with these concepts from a critical perspective. Therefore, according to her, a novel that does not fulfill these criteria is useless.¹⁶⁶

Fosforlu Cevriye is Derviş's well-known novel, and is a hallmark of her endeavor 'to grasp/question the reality of society' through art, certainly. This novel was published successively in the *Son Telgraf* (Last Telegram) journal between 1944 and 1945 and later published as a book in 1968. According to Atasü, *Fosforlu Cevriye* embodies Derviş's mixture of political views and the social realities of the era. For him, Derviş, poured her 'free spirit and honest soul' into *Fosforlu Cevriye*.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, according to Berktaş this novel depicts Derviş's efforts to romanticize and eulogize the marginalized, 'the other' like

¹⁶⁵ Suat Derviş, "Fahim Bey ve Biz," in *Yeni Edebiyat 1940-1941: Sosyalist Gerçeklik* ed. Suphi Nuri İleri (İstanbul: Scala Yayıncılık, 1998). 340-342.

¹⁶⁶ Suat Derviş, "Fahim Bey ve Biz," in *Yeni Edebiyat 1940-1941: Sosyalist Gerçeklik* ed. Suphi Nuri İleri (İstanbul: Scala Yayıncılık, 1998). 341.

¹⁶⁷ For further discussion see: Erendiz Atasü, "Suat Derviş'te Tutku ve Siyasal Bilinç: Fosforlu Cevriye ve Ankara Mahpusu Romanları Üstüne Bir İnceleme" in *Yıldızları Seyreden Kadın: Suat Derviş Edebiyatı* ed. Günseli Sönmez İşçi (İstanbul: İthaki, 2015), 35-39.

homeless, criminals, beggars within society. She used Armenians and Greeks as secondary characters of this novel. Such efforts stand for her humanism and idealism despite all the inequalities and the pain that she very much was aware of.¹⁶⁸

Conclusion

Suat Derviş's family and social *milieu* had an impact on her intellectual and political development. Born and raised in an aristocratic family, she was privileged to have an elite lifestyle. This lifestyle was reflected in her novels like *Fatma'nın Günahı*, *Ne Bir Ses Ne Bir Nefes* and *Hiçbiri*. However, working as a journalist, both in Turkey and abroad, and conducting street interviews enabled her to see the different social realities she had not confronted before. These encounters contributed to the development of her political ideas and affected the content of her novels. From then on, she developed an interest in the suppressed, marginalized and stigmatized groups of society. Furthermore, she developed a deep sense of social justice. In her novels, she critically questioned social inequalities. In this respect, both *Fosforlu Cevriye* and *Aksaray'dan Bir Perihan* question the patriarchal culture and class differences in Turkey. In her understanding, the aim of artwork is to create awareness about the existing social injustice to encourage readers to take action. Derviş's novels and interviews testify her political and literary transformation, and simultaneously reflect a socio-political panorama of early Republican Turkey.

¹⁶⁸ Berktaş, *Tarihin*, 204-217.

Chapter 4: A Friend of the Soviet Union in the 1940s

In this final chapter, I focus on the booklet *Neden Sovetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* which was published in 1944 by Suat Derviş. In the first part of this chapter, I will describe the relations between Turkey and the Soviets from a historical perspective. This will help to explain the intricacies of the complex history that led to the development of anti-communism in Turkey. Considering the limits of this thesis, I analyse the anti-communist politics, propaganda and stereotypes/symbolic constructions, starting from the late Ottoman era until the 1950s. In what follows, I aim to show the manipulative manoeuvres of the Turkish government based on the phobia of “Moskof.” This is to illustrate the implications of an anti-communist ideology in conjuncture with the Kemalist model for social transformation. Thereby, I highlight the ways in which Derviş developed her own set of ‘ideals’ around the Soviet lifestyle instead of limiting herself to the Kemalist identity. This, I will argue, gave her an important place in the history of the socialist feminist women in Turkey.

4.1 A Turkish Woman in the Soviet Union

In 1937, the left-wing journal *Tan* wanted to publish a series about political developments in foreign countries. Journalist Suat Derviş was sent to the Soviet Union to report on the country’s political and social developments took place after the 1917 October Revolution. Suat Derviş wrote her impressions in her column *Istanbul- Moskov- Tahran Seyehat Notları* published in *Tan* in 1937. The first article of the series “Travel Notes” published on June 4, 1937 was *Odesa Yolunda* (On the Way to Odessa). These writings constitute her first reportings from the Soviet Union. The journal *Tan* presented Suat Derviş’s travel writings as follows:

Having traveled in Soviet Russia on behalf of *Tan*, Suat Derviş began to submit her writings. She will take you from Istanbul, show you around in the Soviet Union, and then Iran. Follow Suat Derviş for sweet and free travel.¹⁶⁹

When Derviş visited the Soviet Union for the first time in 1937, she also stopped in Azerbaijan and Iran on her way back to Turkey. She introduced these countries to her readers in the series “Travel Notes” which she penned for *Tan*. Not only did she give historical and touristic information about the places she visited, but also made detailed assessments about the sociological, cultural, economic, and political structures.

In 1939, Suat Derviş went to the Soviet Union for the second time, now as a member of the states research committee to attend the Soviet Agriculture Fair together with Muhlis Erkmén - the Ministry of Agriculture and Village Affairs, Cevdet Kerim İncedayı - Republican People's Party General Executive board member and Deputy of Sinop, and Sadri Ertem - Deputy of Kütahya and journalist. Derviş's reportings from her second visit to the Soviet Union and her notes about Soviet Agriculture Fair-Derviş's experience in the Soviet Union and her notes about her visit to Soviet Agriculture Fair were not published, as WWII had broken out and the magazine had no interest or capacity to publish information about her Moscow visit.¹⁷⁰ At that time, the main concern of the newspaper was the war. For Derviş, these trips started a phase of transformation in her writing as a novelist as she gave prominence to socialist sentiments in her literature. Having written about elite life and bourgeois love affairs, hereafter Derviş was interested in writing about outcasts and underdogs, about unspectacular but real life stories.

In *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* Suat Derviş compared her 1937 and 1939 visits to the Soviet Union and broadly analyzed them from the contexts of economy, politics and culture. Comparing her two visits, she emphasized that the Soviet Union had grown and

¹⁶⁹ Suat Derviş, “Odesa Yolunda,” *Tan*, June 4, 1937, 7-8.

¹⁷⁰ Liz Behmoaras, “Efsane Bir Kadın,” 137-138.

modernized in the two years between her visits. Her sentiments towards the Soviet Union had also changed during this time. She explains that during her first visit her feelings towards the Soviet Union were more of a friendly and loving nature. Her second visit in 1939 turned her appreciation and friendship into admiration. She indicates that seeing how the people of the Soviet Union defended their country against German invaders in 1941, she felt great respect towards the Soviet Union:

Before my first visit to the Soviet Union what I felt in my heart were friendship and love as any conscious Turkish citizen would feel. But when I first had the chance to get to know this country a deep sense of appreciation was added to this feeling of friendship. On my second visit this appreciation was raised to the level of admiration, and ever since 1941, that is, since the armies of invaders attacked their country like ravenous wolves, I have been feeling much respect for the peoples of the Soviet Union.¹⁷¹

These newspaper notes and the booklet *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* -which will be analyzed in the next subchapter- constructs Derviş's main reporting from the Soviet Union. The newspaper articles were written shortly after the trip and include her direct observations. However, as noted, Derviş did not have the opportunity to publish her travel notes from 1939. However, some part of these notes are in the booklet which was to be published in 1944. In this sense, the booklet has been built on these travel notes, but nurtured with Derviş's vocal partisanship and informative reporting.

4.1.2 Why am I a Friend of the Soviet Union?

In the context of the historical developments of the time, Suat Derviş wrote her booklet *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* while anti-communism was gaining power in Turkey. Her booklet declaring her admiration for the Soviet Union was published in 1944 by Arkadaş Matbaası amidst this growing anti-communist propaganda. In her booklet, Suat Derviş's

¹⁷¹ Suat Derviş, "Neden," 69.

writing was inspired by her two visits to the Soviet Union. She also benefitted from own travel notes in *Istanbul- Moskov- Tahran Seyehat Notları* which she had made when she was sent by the journal *Tan* to monitor the political changes in the Soviet Union in 1937. These travel notes were subsequently published in the journal *Tan*. Her second visit to the Soviet Union was in 1939 with a state sponsored research committee to attend the Soviet Agriculture Fair.

This booklet is unique as it is the only written document about the Soviet Union in the early Republican period, which is written by a woman who is expressing her admiration for the Soviet Union. The booklet was banned by the state on March 9, 1944 on the grounds that it contained communist propaganda, resulting in its quick removal from bookstore shelves.¹⁷² In fact, the booklet was written by Suat Derviş to defend herself against the criticism levied by anti-communist Reha Oğuz Türkkan's booklets *Kızılar ve Sollar* and *Kızıl Faaliyet*. Türkkan accuses Derviş of being a friend of the Soviet Union and "shedding crocodile tears" because of the invasion of the Soviet Union by German forces in 1941.¹⁷³ In response, Derviş boldly declares her support for the Soviet Union in the preface of her booklet and explains her reasons for developing this attitude.

I do not feel the need to hide my friendship towards the Soviet Union and that is such a feeling of mine I want to show soberly. I am writing this booklet not to fend myself off "I do not have feelings of friendship toward the Soviet Union" rather I want to show how sound it is to be a friend of Soviet Union and analyze the reasons and basis behind this friendship.¹⁷⁴

She attacks Türkkan's writing and claims that it was written upon an "order". In essence, she sees these attacks as part of the government's anti-communist propaganda aimed to breed a phobia of "Moskof". However, she later indicates that she does not know the writer of the "Kızılar ve Sollar" personally and she does not know if and what he makes out of such

¹⁷² B.C.A. 30..18.1.2 Place 104.16..12.

¹⁷³ Suat Derviş, "Neden," 57-58.

¹⁷⁴ Suat Derviş, "Neden," 60.

“business.” She writes; “in my opinion, he is a poor puppet, a wretched puppet in the hands of others”.¹⁷⁵

By confirming and explaining the nature of her befriending in the preface of her booklet, Derviş emphasizes that this is not a favoring of the Soviet regime, as it was claimed, but rather a humane sympathy for a nation fought for its independence:

On the piece they have written upon an order, the accusation these men try to put forward and prove on the basis my writing is my befriending of the Soviet Union” and my shedding of “crocodile tears” when that country was ridden under the enemy’s boots. (...) I felt heartbroken and worn out, not only when Soviet Union was attacked, but wherever and whenever raving fascist gangs cut across the whichever border of a free country and set an eye on its independence; killing its women, cutting out its women, killing its children; destroying its livelihood, its villages and burning its cities. Because I am against tyranny, and domination of a nation over another and applying to cruelty, ferocity and barbarity to establish such domination.¹⁷⁶

4.2 A Brief Historical Background of Turkish- the Soviets Relations

The year 1877 marked the outbreak of a war between the Ottomans and the Russians, which left the rule of Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909) under great jeopardy. By the time Abdülhamid II ascended to the throne, the treasury of the Ottoman army had been depleted. Increasing nationalist agendas developed on the peripheries of the Empire (especially in Bosnia, Serbia and Bulgaria). Russian claims on the protectorate of the Orthodox population turned, what started out as internal crisis, into a broader international issue. In this study, I approach the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78 (which is referred to in Ottoman history as ‘93 Harbi (‘93 War) because it was fought during the year 1293 in the Islamic calendar) within the historical context outlined above to trace the shifting meaning of the phobia of “Moskof.” The shifting construction of this phobia was also about keeping the state intact – for the Ottoman past of

¹⁷⁵ Suat Derviş, “Neden,” 59.

¹⁷⁶ Suat Derviş, “Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?” in *Kırklı Yıllar-1* (Istanbul: TÜSTAV, 2012).

the newly-founded Turkish Republic was laden with moments of crisis as it was in the core of the Eastern Question which dated back to the Russo-Turkish War (1768-74) and ended in defeat for the Ottomans until after WWI – i.e. the European Great Power's involvement with the military weakening and there was political as well as economic instability in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁷⁷

After the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), World War I (1914-1918) and the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923), the newly born Turkish Republic had a limited foreign policy agenda. Forming alliances with major European powers was a top priority to gain support for the Republic. Nonetheless, the Turkish leaders had a lot of suspicion about the policies of Western powers and their intentions of further partitioning the former Ottoman and new Turkish lands.

Around 1920, there were three main organizations of the Turkish communist movement: *Türkiye Komünist Partisi* under the leadership of Mustafa Suphi in Baku; *Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası* (People's Participation Party) which was formed by Binbaşı Salih and *Türkiye İşçi ve Çiftçi Sosyalist Fırkası* (Turkish Workers and Peasants Socialist Party) under the leadership of Şefik Hüsnü and Ethem Nejat. *Aydınlık* (Enlightenment) was the journal of *Türkiye İşçi ve Çiftçi Sosyalist Fırkası*, which was later called as *Türkiye Komünist Partisi*, since the leader Mustafa Suphi and many of the important members of the first *Türkiye Komünist Partisi* were murdered in 1921. Nazım Hikmet, Şefik Hüsnü, Sadrettin Celal, Şevket Süreyya, İsmail Hüsrev, Vedat Nedim, and Burhan Asaf were prominent members of *Aydınlık* group. Some of the members of this group studied in Germany and were inspired by the Spartacists, a Marxist revolutionary organization later formed to Communist Party of Germany, while some of them studied in the Communist University of the Toilers of the East

¹⁷⁷ For more information see: Anderson, M.S. *The Eastern Question, 1774–1923: A Study in International Relations* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1966).

(KUTV) in Russia. Since Mustafa Suphi and Green Army of Binbaşı Salih were removed within a short time, the party of Şefik Hüsnü was the only communist organization which managed to resist vanquishment until 1925. There was another, a “formal” *Türkiye Komünist Partisi* which was formed in 1920 by request of Mustafa Kemal to control the communists and to please Russia but it did not last long.¹⁷⁸

Meanwhile, Mustafa Kemal perceived communism as threat to the country. In a speech he made on January 22, 1921 he explained the precautions to be taken:

Gentlemen, there might be two kinds of precautions. The first: To crush those who talk about Communism immediately, to utilize fierce, destructive measures such as not allowing any man coming from Russia to step on the land if he is coming by ship or expelling him directly if he is coming by road. We have recognized such precautions as useless in two respects: Firstly, the Russian Republic which we deem good political relations as a necessity is entirely communist. If we have taken such radical measures, under no circumstances we should have any relation with and had any interest in the Russians. (...) Therefore, we considered the most effective remedy as explaining our people, as enlightening the public opinion of the nation that Communism is unacceptable for our country in view of our religious requirements.¹⁷⁹

Soon after this speech, in 1921, the Communist Party leader Mustafa Suphi and other fourteen communists were assassinated. In December 1921, to counter balance the influence of the Turkish Communist Party and please Russia, Mustafa Kemal requested to establish a “formal” communist party, *Türkiye Halk İştirakkiyyun Fırkası*. Though the party was designed to be a puppet party under his control. The establishment of the *Türkiye Halk İştirakkiyyun Fırkası* provided a legal platform for the activities of the *Türkiye Komünist*

¹⁷⁸ Mete Tunçay, "Türkiye'de Komünist Akımın Geçmişi Üzerine," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce 8: Sol*, ed. Murat Gültekinil and Tanıl Bora (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), 349-355; Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar 1908-1925* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009).

¹⁷⁹ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, "21 Ocak 1921 Tarihli Tbmmler Gizli Celse Zabıtları - Mustafa Kemal Paşa," accessed May 24, 2017, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001136.pdf> (1921).

Partisi. However, the legal arrangement was soon to be lost, as the *Türkiye Halk İştirakiiyyun Fırkası* was banned the next month and its members arrested.¹⁸⁰

Mustafa Kemal's successor İsmet İnönü, who took office after his death in 1938, undertook difficult tasks as the Second World War broke out in his first year in office. On one hand, he had to continue Atatürk's modernization agenda in domestic affairs; on the other hand, he had to manage foreign affairs in a way that would keep the country out of the war. Until the very last days of the Second World War, İnönü maintained diplomatic neutrality, carefully balancing the external pressures he faced from other nations. As political scientist Mustafa Aydın attests, during the Second World War, İnönü was convinced that if Turkey entered the war, the Soviets would occupy the country "either as a member of the Axis or as a liberator."¹⁸¹ In this respect, İnönü foresaw the Soviet domination in Eastern Europe following the Second World War and he was determined to keep Turkey away from it.

During WWII, the Soviet Union foreign policy towards Turkey changed. These changes included new arrangements to favor Soviet control at the Straits (Bosphorus and Dardanelles) and for the annexation of two Turkish cities -Kars and Ardahan- on its borders. Despite Turkey's neutrality and non-alignment, the Turkish rejection to Soviet demands deteriorated Turkish-Soviet relations and invited Soviet pressure. Turkish leadership was also aware that a new world order is going to be established as a result of WWII.¹⁸² Faced with the Soviet pressure, Turkey abandoned its policy of neutrality that it had maintained during the interwar period and aligned with Western powers and the USA. This was a major shift in Turkish foreign policy and started Turkey's "western vocation." This vocation had significant

¹⁸⁰ Mete Tunçay "Türkiye'de Komünist Akımın Geçmişi Üzerine", in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Sol*, (İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2007), 349-355.

¹⁸¹ Mustafa Aydın, "Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Changing Patterns and Conjunctures During the Cold War," *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 1 (2000). 104.

¹⁸² Baskın Oran (ed.) (2002) *Türk dış politikası: Kurtuluş savaşından bugüne olgular, belgeler, yorumlar*, İstanbul: İletişim, vol. 1 (1919–1980), 502.

consequences for Turkish-Soviet relations as both countries were gradually turned into proximate enemies during the Cold War (1947-1991).

Turkey was geographically significant to Western powers since any possible Soviet invasion of Turkey would mean direct Soviet contact with the Middle East. If Turkey fell, this could mean an expansion of communism and their domination of the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The period between the end of the Second World War and 1947 witnessed the rise of the Soviet's interest in conquering Turkey. Given Turkey's economic hardship following the Independence, it was clear that the country could not defend itself against such intentions. Meanwhile, the rise of the communist fraction in Greece invited US president Harry Truman to take action. Truman administration economically supported Turkey and Greece along with its own political interest against Soviet expansionism.¹⁸³ President Truman defined the framework of US aid to be primarily economic and financial targeted at establishing "economic stability and orderly political process."¹⁸⁴ On May 22, 1947, the Truman Doctrine came into force, providing significant monetary assistance to Turkey and Greece. This was a major milestone in Turkish-American relations and *a priori* aimed to strengthen the country against the Soviet threat. American intentions to protect the region increased, as demonstrated by their founding of the European Recovery Plan, also referred to as the Marshall Plan, in 1948. On 4 July 1948, Turkey officially participated in the Marshall Plan to receive immediate economic assistance. Combined with the Truman Doctrine, Turkey received 2 billion dollars in military assistance and 1.4 billion dollars in economic assistance from the USA.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Mustafa Aydin, "Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Changing Patterns and Conjunctures During the Cold War," *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 1 (2000). 108.

¹⁸⁴ Fahir Armaoglu, *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi, 1914-1980* (Istanbul: Is Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1984), 440.

¹⁸⁵ Fahir Armaoglu, *Belgelerle Turk-Amerikan Munasebetleri* (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu, 1991), 168-181

During these years, Turkey also had a democratization agenda and Turkish one-party rule was replaced by a multi-party system. In 1950, the *Demokrat Parti* (DP) won a surprise victory over the long-ruling Republican People's Party. The new ruling party was eager to maintain close relations with the United States of America. In the period between 1945 and 1964, Turkish-American relations deepened further.¹⁸⁶ In the hope of taking part in Western security, Turkey sent troops to Korea in support of its American allies in 1950. This move was aimed to demonstrate Turkey's willingness to support its Western allies and also paved the way to Turkey's adhesion to NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in 1952. Turkish adhesion to NATO was a milestone for Turkey's integration into the Western world and its institutions.¹⁸⁷

The gradual rapprochement and alliance with the United States on the grounds of the Soviet threat increased anti-Soviet sentiments and intensified anti-communist policies within the country. Continuing its western propensity, Turkey performed its "duties" to eradicate communist propaganda and stall the Soviet expansion. The Turkish Communist Party and its cadres, as well as other pro-Soviet sympathizers, were badly affected by these new policies which resulted in devastating consequences for the party and its members.¹⁸⁸

4.3 Anti-Soviet Propaganda¹⁸⁹ from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic

Over all else, *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* is a response to anti-Soviet propaganda in the 1944. In this era, Turkey went through a major alteration in its stance vis-à-vis the

¹⁸⁶ See: Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy, 1950-1975* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1977)

¹⁸⁷ Aydin, "Determinants," 110.

¹⁸⁸ Isa Afacan, *Turkish-American Relations in the Post-Cold War (1990-2005)*, 2011. FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 28-40.

¹⁸⁹ In Turkey, anti-communism and anti-Sovietism are almost identical.

Soviet Union. In the 1930s, the relations with Soviet Russia ‘remained excellent’ in Zürcher’s words. These relations reached their peak when a ten-year treaty of friendship was resigned in 1935.¹⁹⁰ However in 1945, the treaty lapsed when the Soviet Union declared that it would not renew its membership. This was a response to the gradual change in the Turkish foreign policy regarding the Soviet Union during the Second World War. This was followed by conciliation between the Turkish and American governments, as previously detailed above.

Given the historical background, Suat Derviş opens her booklet with an image of “Moskof” - the unspeakable enemy in Turkish history and a symbol of communism in Russia - Derviş gives references to many anti-communist stereotypical/symbolic constructions in Turkey. This chapter will trace the shifts in the state authorities’ perception of “Moskof” – and Suat Derviş’s reactions to them – during two time periods: (i) from the late nineteenth century to the first decade of the Turkish Republic; and (ii) from the early 1930s to the Cold War era. Given the fact that the recent Turkish historiography, this chapter will attempt to construe historical resorts of the phobia of “Moskof”. The recent Turkish historiography on the image of “Moskof” has mostly neglected the effects of the Ottoman past.¹⁹¹ However, the phobia of “Moskof” in the early republican period of Turkey was linked with the late nineteenth-century clashes with the Russian Empire (the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78) which resulted in disastrous consequences for the Ottomans.¹⁹²

In *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* Suat Derviş’s befriending of the Soviet Union is marked primarily through her demystification of the phobia of “Moskof”.¹⁹³ For Suat Derviş,

¹⁹⁰ Erik J Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 202.

¹⁹¹ Güven Gürkan Öztan, “‘Ezeli Düşman’ ile Hesaplaşmak: Türk Sağında ‘Moskof’ İmgesi in *Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri* eds. İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu and Güven Öztan (Istanbul: İletişim, 2012), 78.

¹⁹² Ibid.78

¹⁹³ Derviş, “Neden,” 62-63.

what was being eliminated was not only the absolute rule of the Tsars, but also the mentality of evil “Moskof” which was replaced by that of a new honorable and invaluable state. In *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* Derviş points to the fact that the “Moskof” Tsars had long been the most fearsome enemies of the Turkish people. However, the people of the Soviet Union were able to earn their freedom from the “Moskof” Tsars as well as “guarding the Turkish people, who had suffered acutely and miserably during the disastrous years of warfare and who were still resisting for their existence and sacred future, from the wrath of the calamitous “Moskof”:¹⁹⁴

The Turkish nation has been living in fear of "Moskof" for centuries. The peoples of the Soviet Union with their victory, in ending the oppression of the Moskof tsars which set eye on the Turkish entity, and in breaking the essential principles of the "Moskof" policy (...) also gets the “Moskof” calamity shet of our gallant nation. For the first time, upon the foundation of this new and young state [Soviet Russia] in 1917, showed its friendship to us in a declaration addressed to Muslim workers in Russia and in the East as they announced that Soviet Russia dismissed the secret treaties of the Tsar administration aiming at taking of Istanbul and the Straits. This neighbor, who was our greatest enemy yesterday, supported us in our youngest years [the Republic of Turkey], not only by ending this hostility but also by showing a close friendship.¹⁹⁵

From the beginning of the Republic until the end of the Second World War, Turkey’s foreign policy made a pragmatic shift towards achieving a strategy of balance instead of assuming any ideological position. The Second World War was the catalyst that ended the amicable relations between Turkey and the Society Union. The Security and Friendship treaty signed between the two countries in 1925 was not renewed. Thereafter, Turkey increasingly allied itself with Western nations.¹⁹⁶ After 1947, Turkey started to become close with the US as a part of the Truman Doctrine. The Turkish government distributed pro-American propaganda of the late 1940s and maintain internal anti-communist doctrines most of which were because

¹⁹⁴ Suat Derviş, “Neden,” 62-63.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 62-63

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 2-3.

Turkish nationalists were supported by the aid of the US.¹⁹⁷ This led to Turkey and the US working together against communism.

From the late 1930s onwards, marked the return of the “phobia”. The relatively good the Soviet Union and Turkey relations between 1920 and 1930 did not completely erase the previous mistrust of Russians among the Turkish people.¹⁹⁸ In this period, the phobia of “Moskof” combined the old anti-Russian sentiments stemming from Russian pan-Slavist policies on Ottoman lands with the communist Soviet threat bolstered by the anti-communist propaganda. After the Second World War, the Turkish state increasingly adopted anti-communist sentiments. The Kemalist successors no longer viewed the Soviet Union as a peaceful ally, but rather as a potential aggressor.¹⁹⁹

In this political atmosphere, different political groups discredited their respective adversaries by labeling them as communist. For example, the *Demokrat Parti* - the first right-wing opposition party which was in power between 1950 and 1961 – was often accused of being the “communist enemies” by some of the members of *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası*. Similarly, major institutions such as *Halkevleri* (Community Centers), Turkish state sponsored ‘Enlightenment’ houses for weakening the influence of conservative groups, were often accused of spreading communism as well as *Köy Enstitüleri* (Village Institutes), a rural development project founded in 1940 to train teachers in the villages.²⁰⁰

It is important to note that the anti-communist rhetoric has often found an expression through attacks on the “lifestyle” of Soviet society. The attack on the bases of the existing sociopolitical order, which can be defined on the axis of prosperity, status and power

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 34.

¹⁹⁸ Güven Gürkan Öztan, “‘Ezeli Düşman’ ile Hesaplaşmak: Türk Sağında ‘Moskof’ İmgesi in *Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri* eds. İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu and Güven Öztan (İstanbul: İletişim, 2012), 5.

¹⁹⁹ Çağdaş, “The Birth,” 2-3.

²⁰⁰ Asım Karaömerlioğlu, *Orada bir köy var uzakta: Erken Cumhuriyet döneminde köycü söylem* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2006), 126.

relations, creates anxiety and uneasiness concerning an insecure future. In his study of the local press in Turkey between 1945-1954, Gavin D. Brockett suggests that public opinion has been shaped through local media channels and this has contributed to the formation of a national identity.²⁰¹

The anti-communist propaganda in Turkey was often on the topics of sexual freedom and property rights. It was argued that communism aimed to destroy the institution of marriage, would make it possible for a woman to be the “property” of thousands of men and abolish the concept of the man being the head of the family. The implications of this type of disinformation are still prevalent in the Turkish society. Dehumanization was used for creating such propaganda; communism was said to be a barbarous ideology and communists were “creatures” who would act solely based on their animal instincts.²⁰²

Anti-communist propaganda was spread through various magazines during and after the single-party era- two of the most salient distributors being *Çınaraltı* (Under Plane Tree) and *Sebilürreşad* (Sebilürreşad). For example, well-known conservative and nationalist journalist and columnist Peyami Safa (1899-1961) claimed that communism deceived people by keeping them ignorant, in *Çınaraltı*.²⁰³ Safa added that the Soviet Union did not have communism; it was instead “Russianist” and “Pan-Slavist”. The articles published by *Sebilürreşad* mostly argued that communism in its’ rejection of “God, family and morality” presented a major threat to Islamic rule. Accordingly, the journalist repeatedly emphasized the importance of religion in the face of communism.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ Gavin D. Brockett, “Betwixt and Between: Turkish Print Culture and the Emergence of a National Identity 1945-1954” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2003) 31,78.

²⁰² Mustafa Oğuzhan Çolak, İ. Enes Aksu, and Y. Emre Tapan, “Antikomünist Propaganda: Büyük Doğu Mecmusa Örneği,” in *1960-1980 Arası İslamcı Dergiler: Toparlanma ve Çeşitlenme*, eds. Vahdettin Işık et al. (İstanbul: İlem Kitaplığı, 2016), 209.

²⁰³ Ibid., 209.

²⁰⁴ C. R. Atılhan, “Sebilürreşad” (paper presented at the Siyonizm, komünizm ve farmasonluğa karşı beynelmilel dünya teşkilatı kongresi, İstanbul, 1948).

As part of a press crackdown in 1923, the Turkish government accused several Soviet-Turkish newspapers of making Soviet propaganda. These included *Yeni Fikir* (New Idea),²⁰⁵ *Yeni Hayat* (New Life), *Rençber* (Farmer), *Komünist* (Communist), and *Başkurt* (Bashkir).²⁰⁶ In later years, the government increased the censorship policies and banned the Vienna edition of the International Press Correspondence, the official publication of the Third International (Comintern).²⁰⁷ The government thereby showed its hesitance to develop closer relations with the Soviet Union.²⁰⁸

Between 1940-1960 marked the climax of the phobia of Communism as evidenced by mass imprisonment, banning of publications, and surveillance over newspaper and authors. The newspaper *Tasvir-i Efkar* (Picture of Ideas), *Tan* and *Haber* was banned in 1941.²⁰⁹ The leftist intelligentsia, who defended Communism and were in opposition to official state discourse, were imprisoned or assassinated.²¹⁰ Nazım Hikmet, Reşad Fuat Baraner, and Suat Derviş herself are among those imprisoned and Sabahattin Ali was assassinated. In 1944, Derviş was arrested on the grounds of “illegal communist activity” together with her husband Reşat Fuat Baraner, secretary-general of the *Türkiye Komünist Partisi* and other party functionaries.²¹¹

The anti-Soviet propaganda in Turkey was based on the continuity of the antagonistic “Moskof” image, which was mainly infested in the Ottoman Empire and especially under the influence of Pan-Slavism, imprinted on the memories of the Turkish people by the great defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkan Wars.

²⁰⁵ T.C. Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi (hereafter will be cited as BCA) [Republican Archives of the Turkish Prime Ministry] (Ankara), Fon Kodu: 30.18.1.1, Yer No: 7.25.18.

²⁰⁶ BCA, 30.18.1.1, Yer No: 7.30.11.

²⁰⁷ BCA, (Ankara), Fon Kodu: 30.18.1.1, Yer No: 13.25.12.

²⁰⁸ Çağdaş, “The Birth,” 19.

²⁰⁹ B.C.A. 30.18.1.2. Yer 92.85.17.

²¹⁰ Güven Gürkan Öztan, “‘Ezeli Düşman’ ile Hesaplaşmak: Türk Sağında ‘Moskof’ İmgesi in *Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri* eds. İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu and Güven Öztan (Istanbul: İletişim, 2012), 38.

²¹¹ Berktaş, “Suat Derviş,” 111.

As mentioned earlier, this anti-Soviet policy, which has changed and accelerated in accordance with the political conjuncture of the post-WWII era, has also promoted an anti-communist agenda in concert with Turkey's "western vocation". In this context, the Turkish government has encouraged and actively participated in the production of perceptions that breed the "Moskof" phobia and create Soviet stereotypes, particularly concerning family life and property rights on moral grounds.

On political level, the consequences of anti-Soviet policies, as epitomized by the trajectory of the Turkish Communist Party, were harsh and heavy. The assassination of Mustafa Suphi and his comrades proves the government's unwavering determination concerning anti-communism.

Anti-Soviet politics also manifest themselves in the field of literature through censorship, arrests and assassinations. Within this framework, all pro-Soviet writings have been censored; their authors were arrested and sometimes even killed. Both Suat Derviş and her befriending adventure with the Soviet Union were affected of these policies.

Hereby, it is also important to highlight the long-term effect of these policies. In addition to the fact that the sanctions of these policies were heavy during the period, they also had long-term effects in the history. In a sense, the silencing and forgetting of Suat Derviş shows the long-lasting effects of these policies. Derviş was not only silenced through accusations of communist propaganda, arrests, and censure of her pro-Soviet writings, but at also through her selective remembering and forgetting. As a result of these policies and selective recollection of historical accounts, Suat Derviş, who was censured and imprisoned, was to be partly remembered and largely forgotten.

4.3.1 First Encounters in the Soviet Union

Recalling early Turco-Russian alliance during the Independence War, Derviş declares that she had positive feelings towards the Soviet Union prior to her trip to the Soviet Union. Following her visits, she reports that her feelings transformed into respect and admiration.

According to Suat Derviş, the Soviet Union differs from other countries in terms of the systems and societal values, and the journey there gives a sense of excitement. The following excerpt from her booklet is how she describes her impressions of the Soviets:

The Soviet Union is a completely different world. There everything we know was destroyed and instead a brand new life was established based on new values. And as we cannot compare it to the world we know, there is not one image but a thousand images in our minds that we are not able to image in our consciousness. Images that are totally different from and contradictory to each other.²¹²

In the series “Travel Notes” that Suat Derviş wrote for Tan, she gave historical and touristic information about the places she visited. Additionally, she made detailed assessments about the sociological, cultural, economic, and political structures she encountered. The people and behaviors that she observed during her journey influenced her thoughts on the political and social systems of the Soviet Union:

One of the peculiarities of this boat is that the voyagers are completely free of formalities. For instance, there is a beautiful woman sitting at the far end of the table with a plump baby on her lap... The baby is constantly reaching for the fork and the dishes, screaming, and trying to touch the food. I believe it would be quite a rare scene where a mother would eat her food with her baby on her lap on a first class boat in Europe.²¹³

Even before arriving at Odessa, Derviş tries to identify its social traditions and habits, and compares it to Europe. Though she tries to develop a critical perspective, she reports mainly the positive aspects of the Soviet system that she witnesses during her journey. In *Neden*

²¹² Ibid., 70.

²¹³ Suat Derviş, Odesa Yolunda, *Tan*, June 4, 1937. 7.

Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum? she describes people's appearances and clothing. The following is her description of the clothes she observed in Odessa:

Odessa seemed to me spotless and vivacious... Everybody was dressed nicely –without much frippery – most of the young women had beret hats and wore simple make-up, I did not see any extravagance in the make-up. I did not encounter a single person on the streets who had the look of a “loafer”. This city gave all of its observers the impression that every single person had something important to do and so no time to waste.²¹⁴

In the article *Istanbul-Moskova-Tahran Seyehat Notları: Moskova'da İlk Geceyi Nasıl Geçirdim?* (Istanbul-Moscow-Tehran Travel Notes 5: How I Spent My First Night in Moscow?) she relays her observations on the clothing of Muscovites:

Among the crowd overflowing from the pavement, there are none elegantly dressed women or men that we are accustomed to see in other countries. Neither are there people who are in rags and tatters or barefoot. Everyone is dressed simply and more or less the same.²¹⁵

The fact that Derviş encounters people whose clothes are similar and yet their basic need for clothing is met, reflects the Soviet principle of “social and economic equality.” Derviş describes women's clothing in more detail:

Almost all women wear powder on their face, paint their lips and cheeks. Only the ones with trimmed eyebrows are relatively fewer than in other countries... The dresses are not in line with the fashion of Europe for 1937. These simple dresses have a trace of the trends of all the years starting from 1917... I cannot seem to spot a particularly pretty hat. The shoes and especially the socks are not good... I do not see a single fine and silk stocking or an elegant pair of shoes. Most of the people are bareheaded...²¹⁶

Derviş finds the women's clothes antiquated. She compares them to the European fashion of the time and claims that the Soviet women are twenty years behind the current trend.

I visited Russia, Ukraine and Azerbaijan from USSR countries and witnessed the diligence of people and the happiness and evolution of that the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is the source of great successes and the reason of my admiration and appreciation is that. Because, great triumphs

²¹⁴ Derviş, “Neden,” 71.

²¹⁵ Suat Derviş, “İstanbul-Moskova-Tahran Seyehat Notları: Moskova'da İlk Geceyi Nasıl Geçirdim,” *Tan* June 22, 1937, 7.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

are get not by persons, but by masses. How happy is that countries whose masses work as a single person.²¹⁷

In her writings, Derviş gives detailed information on her encounters with Soviet people. She is also well aware of the featured stereotypes about the Soviet people. For this reason, in her booklet, she tackles the phobia of “Moskof” which feeds speculations about the Soviet life and citizens. As mentioned before, these speculations were mainly articulated on moral grounds about family life, women’s and children’s status, etc. In her booklet, Derviş takes a close look to the Soviet family life.

4.3.2 Anti-Imperialism

The condition of the international system after WWI leant itself to an alliance between the Soviet Union and the Turkey, both of whom considered themselves anti-imperialist. They both embarked on similar constitutional projects - building a new society from the ground up in the early 1920s.²¹⁸ Throughout the booklet, Derviş identifies the Turkish Republic with the Soviet Union, underlying the struggles of both nations against imperialist occupation, and recalls the Soviet aid to Turkey with gratitude, as “the only hand outstretched.”²¹⁹ Suat Derviş also have an anti-imperialist political stance and expressed it in the booklet:

Much like what happened in our country, the Soviet Union was founded not only against reactionism but also as a result of the struggle against imperialism. It set a brilliant example for all humanity in escaping from foreign domination and oppression. It had a bounty of all the raw materials and natural resources necessary for the founding socialism all by itself on a land that holds one sixth of the world; there would be no reason to think that they would need to have their eyes on the lands of others... Turkey also founded its national republic on its own national land after its heroic fight against imperialism. With its maxim “peace at home, peace in the world”, it had the sole intention of progressing in the areas of economy and culture,

²¹⁷ Derviş, “Neden,” 96.

²¹⁸ Nazım Arda Çağdaş, “The Birth of Anti-Soviet Image in the Turkish Press Following the Second World War and Its Reflections After the Death of Stalin (1953 - 1964)” (master's thesis, Bilkent Üniversitesi, 2008), 2.

²¹⁹ Derviş, “Neden,” 59.

and becoming financially independent. Just like its grand neighbor, Turkey also did not have any interest in imperialist goals.²²⁰

Suat Derviş highlighted that both the Soviet Union and the newly founded Turkish Republic were completely anti-imperialist. She mentioned that given the rich resources of the Soviet Union, both in natural resources and raw materials, the country had no need or intentions for an expansionist policy. Suat Derviş also underlines the importance of the Russians' help defending against other imperial powers like France, Britain in Anatolia and Istanbul. By providing guns and money, she asserted, the Soviet Union helped during the Turkish Independence War between 1919 and 1923.²²¹ As Derviş justifies the nature of her befriending of the Soviet Union, we also witness the transformation of her sympathies from identification and gratitude to respect, and admiration. Derviş was grateful to the Soviet Union for its support to Turkey during the Independence War. Following her visits, her sympathies to the Soviet Union transformed into respect and admiration:

They do not have any imperialist intentions, they only want to effectuate their revolutions within their borders, reform their country which were underdeveloped due to bigotry and oppression. They are both young and new, so they understand each other and follow their efforts with high interest.²²²

Furthermore, in her booklet, Derviş talks about the Disarmament Conference and at the Montreux Convention in 1936, where the Soviet Union acted in favor of Turkey. She also mentions the Soviet supports for the development of the national industrialization in Nazilli and Kayseri, provinces in Anatolia. The Soviet Union, according to Derviş, not only helped to establish the factories but also provided abundant spare parts for the machines. This ensured that the factories operated properly.²²³ Derviş compares the attitude of the Soviet Union with those of other countries who established factories in Turkey. She asserts that, from the very

²²⁰ Derviş, "Neden," 64-65.

²²¹ Derviş, "Neden," 63.

²²² Derviş, "Neden," 65.

²²³ Derviş, "Neden," 67.

beginning, these countries aimed to pauperize Turkey as they did not provide spare parts or auxiliary equipment. She claims that this situation hindered Turkey's economic development.²²⁴

In addition, she also includes a communiqué, written by the Soviet Union addressed to the Turkish government in 1941. It states that the Soviet Union could be depended on in terms of its full "comprehension" and objectiveness.²²⁵ Despite this support and good relations there was a drastic change in the second half of the 1930s. Suat Derviş narrates the changes happening between the both nations:

There was, without a doubt, no lunatic in our time (1930s) who would accuse a Soviet-friendly citizen of the crime of being Pro-Soviet and then go through the trouble of finding evidence to prove such a claim. Because in Turkey, the thing to be surprised of is not befriending of the Soviet Union, but antagonising of it. Friendship with the Soviets was helpful not only in the relations between the two nations but also in the international policies of these two states.²²⁶

Derviş shared a scene she witnessed from a ball that was held for the 10th anniversary of the foundation of the Turkish republic in 1933. According to Derviş, this scene she witnessed states that since the 1920s the relationship with the Soviets had always been cooperative and friendly. She passes her remark as she saw Atatürk being consorted with two Soviet marshals. She believes this friendship was not only due to a personal sympathy but also due to political support. Derviş underlies that she has not forgotten those days:

Like many others, I also saw Atatürk coming out of the ball that was held at Ankara Palace for the 10th anniversary. On each arm he had one Soviet marshal with whom he had discussed the entire night. Atatürk passed us walking between those two. Clearly, as the great Turk he was, he did not do it just because of some personal sympathy he had for them. The fact that he was arm in arm with these Soviet marshals had significance. This should not be forgotten. At least, I have not forgotten it.²²⁷

²²⁴ Derviş, "Neden," 67-68.

²²⁵ Ibid., 69.

²²⁶ Ibid., 67.

²²⁷ Derviş, "Neden," 64-66.

This observation from the 1930s epitomizes how tactics changed according to the political, economic and social needs of the time. Derviş was surprised to see the changes that had taken place in only ten years. The good relationship that she herself had observed was replaced by a political atmosphere where being friendly with the Soviets was associated with treason.²²⁸

Derviş's sympathy for the Soviet Union transformed into respect during the Soviet War, as she witnessed how the Soviet people fought against imperialist and fascist forces in solidarity:

After the events took place in 1941, I respect for that country and the people under that flag. Because Soviet War showed me that the Soviet Union is the country of the most patriot, bravest and the biggest admirers of freedom and Soviet country. In 1941, the Soviet children resisted the sudden and the most severe attack of the enemies as a single and brave force. There were no cowards, no betrayers. Everyone did their bests and that triumph belongs to all Soviet people fought against fascist and imperialist forces as a single hearth.²²⁹

She commemorates the Stalingrad heroes who, “changed the fortune of all humanity besides defending their hometown. They were the first to beat the cruelty threatening all humanity”.

Derviş highly appreciates the heroic war that the Soviet fought against and triumphed over fascists. As Derviş expresses in the beginning of her booklet, she is against the domination of one nation over another and supports independence. She underlines that both the Turkish Republic and Soviet Union are examples of countries who fought bravely to maintain their independence and glorifies the “fundamental principle for all Soviet people”:

Our country is our liberty. It is our honour and power; all rights we won by our blood, honour and power, reflect the clearance of our ideas and consciences. Our country is our life, there is no life without country.²³⁰

Patriotism is ingrained in Derviş's understanding of independence. She writes that the war taught her “the Soviet Union is the homeland to those most patriotic and the most invincible heroes of liberty and independence”.²³¹

²²⁸ Ibid., 66.

²²⁹ Derviş, “Neden,” 75.

²³⁰ Derviş, “Neden,” 103.

Derviş also highlights the patriotism of women in the Soviet independence. She emphasizes that none of the Soviet women hesitated to fight for their country when their hometown was invaded in 1941. Soviet women, Derviş reports, did not only encourage men to fight in the war, but also participated in the war directly as warriors, workers, nurses, locomotive drivers, etc. She conveys that some women undertook the most difficult roles and worked in positions that are traditionally defined as inappropriate for women. Derviş narrates the story of some women heroes as told by Soviet newspapers.

Anna started to work in a gun plant to help her husband fighting in battlefield and increased the production by 600%, exceeding all men in the plant. Soviet women even went into shafts to substitute for the warriors. Women were highly needed in transportation works. Zahide is the first woman to be a locomotive driver. These perfect women will be commemorated not only in their own countries, but also in all countries with their patriot and brave efforts.²³²

Derviş highly values this patriotism and sense of ownership because, “great triumphs are not won by persons, but by masses.” She writes that “Each Soviet citizen felt himself/herself as the owner of that giant country and adored their country to bits.” Thus, she does not only appreciate that people participated as masses in the independence war, but she also acknowledges that they worked for the wellbeing of the country “as a single person”.

Derviş's anti-imperialism is more popular and patriotic than nationalist. The most fundamental fear of Derviş, which constituted a great threat for both the Soviet Union and Turkey until the recent past, is when foreign powers intervene in the borders of other nations to establish their domination over them. Peoples' patriotic struggle for independence, all together, and as a single soul and heart, forms the basis of Derviş's anti-imperialist vision. Derviş glorifies the brave struggle of the Soviet people against the German invasion in 1941 and declares Soviet Union as the homeland of anti-imperialism.

²³¹ Ibid., 103.

²³² Derviş, “Neden,” 104.

4.3.3 Arts and Culture

Derviş was also impressed by the development and sociocultural progress of the Soviet Union. In the booklet, she writes that this “constitutes the unique aim of the people” and people work together “to build a beautiful, comfortable, happy, peaceful and tangibly and inwardly progressive country”. Within this framework, Derviş reports about social services and progress in education, arts and culture as well as industrial innovations.

Suat Derviş, in her booklet, also provided information on Soviet art and culture. She asserts that Soviet literature constitutes the basis of the Soviet system; the literary works produced in the Soviet Union have an important role in the formation of the new order and the new human being created in the country. She sees Gogol, Pushkin and Tolstoy as the pioneers of this realist literature which is outgrowing from the Soviet Union:

It is clear that Soviet literature has a big role in the foundation and defence of Soviet lifestyle. Soviet writers not only defined the foundation of their new country, but also exemplified the new lifestyle and the good people created by that new life to emphasize the excitement, joy, importance and value of that new country. Maybe they showed how to struggle with daily problems while studying on new country affairs and helped the people of that new structure with their books and articles. That realistic literature, drawing the most vivid and true form of the difficulties and successes in building a new country, inherited its humanistic dimension from the important Soviet writers as Pushkin, Gogol and Tolstoy. Soviet writers devoted not only their books, but also their lives to the building of their countries. Soviet philosophers and writers fought in battlefronts besides distributing their own books and articles to other fighters to provoke and stimulate their combative dimensions towards the fascist and imperialist forces. Soviet women writers also participated in the war and draw the most clear and true picture of the war.²³³

In the booklet, Derviş also writes about the life stories and works of several other writers who took active roles in the formation and foundation of the Soviet Union. These include Nikola Ostrovski, Cugene Petrov, and Tikhanov. Derviş underlines that, besides male writers, there are also woman writers who were equally involved in the foundation of the Soviet Union.

²³³ Derviş, “Neden,” 90.

In this race, the woman writers of the Soviet Union are not at the back. Since the beginning of the war, these women writers has drawn the most impressive and authentic pictures of the battleground and the hinterland. M. Chaguinian, Seyfaulina A. Karavia, V. Keltinskaia, Heleve Konenkeve Vanda, Vasilevska are the ones who are the most outspoken among these writers.²³⁴

Derviş gave information about the art education centers for children. There were 130 residences in the Soviet Union established for the purpose of giving art education to children. There were 100 theaters for children, 130 music schools, 22 theaters of puppets and dolls, 150 children's cinema, film theaters at 6500 schools, 25 children's radio stations and 50 fine arts studios. In addition, there were conferences, concerts and shows held in 25000 different schools. Deeply impressed by such activities, she devotes considerable space to her interview with the director:

Our institution is not only for theater but also for all types of art. Piboyner children's residence is active in all of schools and also outside of them. We publish many methodical works on our activities. We publish a monthly review... We have different branches for collective children's plays, dances, music, painting and sculpture. Whatever the child's disposition he/she develops herself in that direction. A while ago we launched a painting exhibition and brought children's paintings from all around the world. Unfortunately, they sent very few of them from Turkey. We would have liked more. We showed 350 thousand children's paintings.²³⁵

In her travel notes *Istanbul-Moskov-Tahran Seyahat Notları* Derviş devoted considerable space to art and culture. In her article *Istanbul-Moskov-Tahran Seyahat Notları: Sovyet Çocuklarına Sanat Terbiyesi Nasıl Veriliyor?* (Istanbul-Moscow-Tehran Travel Notes: How do the Soviet Children Receive Art Education?) she writes about how the art education of the children at the Rubnoz School of Art Education for Children aimed to improve children's intellectual and moral development. This was done through organizing children's theaters; opening puppetry shows for them so children can develop their art skills.²³⁶

²³⁴ Derviş, "Neden," 91.

²³⁵ Derviş, "Neden," 85-89.

²³⁶ Suat Derviş, *İstanbul-Moslova-Tahran Seyehat Notları: Sovyet Çocuklarına Sanat Terbiyesi Nasıl Veriliyor?* *Tan*, June 30, 1937, 7.

Derviş presents these institutions as the embodiment/epitome of how much the Russians value art and their investment for children's cultural development. Another advantage that socialism provided in Russia was the rise in the literacy rate. Derviş gives detailed information about the number of students registered per year in Soviet Russia and compared it to that of other countries in Europe. Furthermore, she also compares Soviet Russia and the Tsardom of Russia based on the number of newspapers published, the readership rates and the number of languages they were published in. She describes the people's literary habit as "people line up to get the newspaper as if it were a necessity like bread and water".²³⁷ She observed that the people showed such great interest in reading: "Despite the circulation of 1 million, it is never enough for the people. That is why you see all these people waiting at every corner to get the daily paper".²³⁸

Suat Derviş gives detailed information on the Soviet Union's investment in culture and arts in Armenia and Uzbekistan. She compares them numerically and statistically with those realized before the times of the Soviet Union:

In czarism, there were neither a high school nor a theatre in Uzbeksitan and 2% of people were literate... Now, there are 4000 schools there... The first university founded in Tashkent in 1920 and in Samarqand in 1927. But the revolution was bigger for women... The revolution in women's life is even bigger. The Uzbek women rescued from illiteracy and slavery now. 6400 female students are educated in high schools and there are 13.000 student-training colleges in Uzbekistan.²³⁹

In her booklet, Derviş also reports her observations during the Agriculture Exhibition she attended in 1939. Visiting an exhibition held within the scope of the Agriculture Fair, Derviş notes that everyone who works for this exhibition was interesting for her. Analyzing the people she encountered, she talks about the genesis of a new type of person.

²³⁷ Derviş, "Neden," 89.

²³⁸ Derviş, "Neden," 86.

²³⁹ Derviş, "Neden," 94-95.

Paintings hanging on the walls allow us to understand that in this country no business is despised, whether it is doing scientific research or milking an animal, whether you drive a tractor or a driller, as long as you work with your heart and soul, during your shifts with the token to be useful to the community you belong to, you are considered as a folk hero.

The best and the most productive workers and employees in this kind of work were numerous: You might suppose that all the citizens of the Soviet Union are competing with each other in their efforts to be useful to their country.²⁴⁰

4.3.4 Marriage and Children

The anti-communist propaganda in Turkey was conducted especially in areas that were socially sensitive such as sexuality, sexual freedom and property rights. As a result, such propaganda created serious disinformation and negative sentiments against communists in society. For instance, one of the arguments made was that communism was going to destroy the institution of marriage, making women a “commodity for men” and would abolish the concept of men being the “head of the family”: “The husband comes home, sees another man’s hat on the coat hanger and leaves the house; there we have communism.”²⁴¹ This anecdote is the most widely known in terms of representing both sexual freedom and communism as making women something that everybody ‘used’ collectively.

Suat Derviş expands on those subjects in her booklet by referring to the speculations in Turkey about life, marriage, motherhood and women of the Soviet Union:

As a result of my studies on family relations, I discovered that all speculations about the family lives of the Soviet people are untruthful. It is said that Soviet people do not prefer marriage and the illegitimate children are grabbed from their family and appropriated for the country. But, as far as I have seen, marriage is a holy relation for Soviet people and the children

²⁴⁰ Derviş, “Neden,” 100.

²⁴¹ Tekin Erer, *Kızıl Tehlike* (Istanbul: Ak Yayınları, 1966), 12-13, quoted in Kerestecioğlu and Öztan, *Türk Sağı*, 125.

are the most valuable gifts to their families... Consequently, I got the impression that, contrary to the speculations, children are the most valuable wealth for Soviet people. Soviet parents wait for their baby impatiently and affectionately and make their best for their children. All babies are sources of happiness, in everywhere, from cities, villages, and collective farms to plants.²⁴²

By observing statistical data, she provides an explanation for these developments in the Soviet Union. Thus, it becomes clear that Suat Derviş was highly impressed by the welfare of the Soviets as well as their cultural and social welfare institutions:

In 1936-37, only in Moscow, more than 100 kindergartens, 10 actors' palaces, 4 children theatres and 221 schools were built. All plants and collective peasant cooperations have kindergartens. Babies of working mothers are carried to their mothers' offices in special baby carriages and back home; so as not to miss out being fed by breast milk. The aim of children organization is to provide a baby to all Soviet families and to raise good citizens. Thanks to that organization, each woman has the opportunity to have one, two or more children depending on her choice. Children are not seen as hindrances. Kindergartens raise the children based on knowledge. After the children are three years old, day care centers take care of the children. Day care centers take care of not only the feeding, but also the education of them... The developments on children education encouraged the young couples and birthrate increased by 2,5 in Moscow and 3,5 in Leningrad in 1913. And children death rate decreased by half in 1918.²⁴³

The following excerpt from her booklet *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* is how she describes her observations on the social welfare system especially for pregnant women and children in the Soviets:

In Moscow and other Soviet cities, the first two chairs in buses and trams are allocated for pregnant women and women with children. Some special compartments are also devoted to only pregnant women and women with children. As the Soviets spread a big area, travels last for long hours. In that frame, as pregnant women and little children are not strong enough for these long trips, children help organisation in the stations help women to feed or replace the diaper of their children. In a station in Moscow, I saw a department designed for children. There were lots of toys, a library and a stage there. The actors have the opportunity to stage a play while travelling

²⁴² Derviş, "Neden," 79.

²⁴³ Ibid., 78-82.

and consequently children and families in the station can listen these famous people.²⁴⁴

In response to disinformation against communism as part of the anticommunist propaganda in Turkey, Suat Derviş focused on the themes of family, children, and marriage in the Soviet Russia. She emphasized that marriage held a sacred meaning for the Soviet people and that both the state and families treated marriage in investing devoted manner. In emphasizing this, she attempted to correct common misconceptions. In dealing with such subjects, she gave examples from the speculative discourses of the time, her personal observations and the statistical information she gathered.

4.3.5 Women

Suat Derviş was interested in women's position in Soviet Russia and gave wide coverage to how women fought for the Soviet victory of independence. Soviet women played a major role in the victory because they not only encouraged men but also, when necessary, were armed like soldiers, took charge of the machines, and had an active role as workers, nurses, locomotive conductors and drivers.²⁴⁵ Derviş states that there are many heroic stories of women and narrates several of them in her booklet. She tells the heroic stories of Anna Dessionova who actively helped her husband at the front, and Zenaide Troitskaia a locomotive driver and Tamara Kalnin, a nurse. Derviş associates these stories of heroism with Soviet women's notions of homeland, liberty and honor:

Our homeland is our liberty. It is our honor and power, the rights that we won fighting with our blood, our thoughts and the brightness of our consciousness. Our land is our life; there is not life without land.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Derviş, "Neden," 77.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 103.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 103.

Derviş claims that these women who struggled for the independence of their country would always be remembered not only in their own country but also by all the people who held such patriotic passion for independence.²⁴⁷

In Istanbul-Moscow-Tehran Travel Notes II: How Do Soviet Couples Marry and Why They Separate? Derviş gives detailed information on the Zaks institution and how it works. She covers a wide range of topics from eligible marriage age to divorce, from maternal leave to women's freedom in choosing their last name. She also asks questions about civil court cases:

There are such cases between a husband and a wife. According to the Napoleonic Code a husband could beat up his wife. But now in the Soviet Russia if a woman makes a complaint even about a man who only insults her, let alone beats her up, he gets a severe penalty. According to the same code, if a woman has an illegitimate child she has no right to claim anything from the father. But here if a woman meets a man and has a baby with him, he is obliged to take care of the baby, as if it were his fully legitimate child. If he does not do so, he is considered guilty.²⁴⁸

Derviş is highly impressed by the judicial system in Soviet Russia that protects women's safety as well as their economic and social rights, and she tries to explain the benefits of such a system.

Suat Derviş depicts Soviet Russia based on a wide range of topics such as education, children, the legal system, social life, and gender relations in *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* This booklet carries particular significance as it gives us an opportunity to see Soviet Russia from a Turkish woman's perspective. It also shows where the Soviet Union stood in that period both locally and in the international context. Like many others of the time who visited Soviet Russia out of curiosity, Derviş was a "political tourist".²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 106.

²⁴⁸ Suat Derviş, "İstanbul-Moskova-Tahran Seyahat Notları 12: Rusyada Mahkeme," *Tan* July 11, 1937.

²⁴⁹ Sheile Fitzpatrick, "Australian Visitors to the Soviet Union: The View From the Soviet Side," in *Political Tourists: Travellers from Australia to the Soviet Union in the 1920s-1940s*, eds. Sheila Fitzpatrick and Carolyn Rasmussen (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2008), 2-3.

In general, the narratives of those who visited the Soviet Union were based on political issues. Liberals, economists, socialist writers, politicians and actors all wanted to witness the land where the great Socialist Experiment took place.²⁵⁰ Among the visitors are the well-known writers Bertolt Brecht, and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and the conductor Leopold Stokowski.²⁵¹ There were also many women who went to the Soviet Union to witness the current events. For example, in 1941, Katharine Susannah Prichard, an Australian author and the co-founding member of the Communist Party of Australia, published a book *The Real Russia*.²⁵² Like Suat Derviş, Prichard also focused on the culture, social welfare institutions, divorcee marriage and so on. There were also the subjects Suat Derviş touched upon in her booklet and the reason why she admired the Soviet Union. Derviş explains the reasons why she, as a Turkish citizen, is right in being a proud friend of the Soviet Union:

And I'm accused of being a friend to these hard working, honest, patriot heroes, as if I am someone who hides her emotions. I never masked my love and will never need to mask my emotions. Yes, I'm a friend of Soviet Union. I love, admire and appreciate that country as a Turkish citizen, a citizen that belongs to a country that knows the importance of freedom, patriotism and courage, and thus I admire the epic heroism showed by Soviet people in defense of their country. Yes, I'm a Soviet admirer, as I know that Soviet Union is a friendly nation to my country and that preserved friendship is advantageous for my country. As a good Turkish citizen, I'm one of best friends of the Soviet Union."²⁵³

Conclusion

In this chapter, I focus on Suat Derviş's booklet *Neden Sovetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* In an attempt to make a contextual analysis of the genesis of the booklet, I made an overview of the historical development of Turkish-Russian relations from late Ottoman Empire to Turkish

²⁵⁰ Ibid. 2-3.

²⁵¹ Ibid. 5.

²⁵² Katharine Susannah Prichard, *The Real Russia* (Sydney: Modern Publishers, 1935)

²⁵³ Derviş, "Neden," 107.

Republic and onwards, and scrutinized the phobia of “Moskof” and anti-communist propaganda as peculiar expressions of this relationship. I presented historical accounts in politics and literature which epitomizes heavy and relentless consequences of anti-Soviet propaganda in Turkey.

Published in such a time, Derviş’s booklet declaring her admiration for the Soviet Union was soon to be banned on the grounds of communist propaganda. Republished in 2012, *Neden Sovetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* compiles Derviş’s travel notes and impressions on her visits to Soviet Union, and presents her justifications for befriending of the Soviet Union. In this booklet, Derviş does not only give historical and touristic information about the places she visited, but also makes detailed assessments about the sociological, cultural, economic, and political structures. More specifically, she aimed at demystification of the phobia of “Moskof” by providing human encounters and factual information about Soviet system, people and lifestyle. Crashing the stereotypical and symbolic constructions on marriage, childcare and women’s status, Derviş through her pen, claims to provide a factual image of the Soviet Union, free from fear of “Moskof” and anti-communist propaganda. Her reportings on anti-imperialism, marriage, childcare and women’s status, art and culture and education justifies her befriending of the Soviet Union to her readers.

This booklet is unique as it is the only written document about the Soviet Union in the early Republican period, which is written by a woman who is vocally expressing her admiration for the Soviet Union. Examining the content of the booklet helps us to understand on what grounds Derviş defended her political stance, whereas examining the history of the booklet allows us to observe the long-lasting effect of anti-Soviet politics. Disregarded within the official historiography, Derviş’s pro-Soviet work is also sidelined by the leftist historiography due to internal conflicts between feminism and socialism. In this sense, I argue, Derviş comes to the forefront as a woman author with vocal political ideas which go beyond feminism and

socialism. This, I argue, accords her an important place in the history of socialism and feminism in Turkey.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I presented Suat Derviş as a prominent figure in the history of socialism and feminism in Turkey. Suat Derviş was born into an aristocratic family in 1905 during the last days of the Ottoman Empire, and passed away in 1971. After being trained by private tutors in Turkey, she continued her education in Berlin between 1919 and 1920. In 1920, she started her literary career as an author with her first novel *Kara Kitap*. Between 1927 and 1933, she worked as a reporter for both Turkish and German newspapers such as *Scherl*, *Mosse* and *Querschnitte*. Working as a journalist in Berlin enabled her to gain invaluable experience in pre-war Germany. Nonetheless, the rising of the Nazi regime in the early 1930s made it difficult for her to find work in Germany as a journalist.

In 1930, Suat Derviş joined the oppositional *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, which was established on August 12, 1930. This party was established upon the request of Mustafa Kemal who had the agenda to transition to a multi-party democracy in Turkey. Suat Derviş, Nezihe Muhiddin and Makbule Atadan were candidates for party membership in the parliament, but the party was dissolved on December 17, 1930.

In 1932 Suat Derviş's father, İsmail Derviş who had a special importance and influence on Derviş's life, passed away. She saw her father as a pedagogue and progressivist, who was influential in shaping her identity. Upon her father's passing, Suat Derviş returned to Turkey and started to work as a journalist for different journals such as *Vatan*, *Haber* and *Son Posta*. Journalism was Derviş's passion and main occupation. In 1923, she was the first female Turkish reporter sent to Europe. She attended the Conference of Lausanne in 1923 and the Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits in 1936. In 1926, Derviş also became the editor for the first women page in the newspaper *İkdam*.

Between 1935 and 1936, Derviş published a series of interviews in the newspaper *Cumhuriyet*. She conducted interviews on the streets of Istanbul with various people from different social classes. By working as a street journalist and conducting interviews with “the others” of society, including the unemployed, hamals, tradesman, and young woman factory workers, Derviş was confronted by the reality of the streets, which she had not known previously due to her aristocratic background. Her understanding of reality was shaped through listening to the stories of a diverse group of people and this greatly impacted her authorship. Derviş’s street interviews with those previously silenced by society, was a testament to her challenge of the male-dominated public space.

Thus, in the second half of the 1930s, Derviş underwent major intellectual and political changes: from being an upper-class author with an unavoidable distance from society to becoming a journalist speaking up for social issues within a leftist framework. Even though all her intellectual and political ideas underwent significant changes, womanhood and class remained her focus. In her initial literature between 1920 and the early 1930s, Derviş focused on upper-class lives, their love affairs and their emotional struggles in urban cities. These novels such as *Hiçbiri*, *Fatma’nın Günahı*, and *Emine* provide an overview of the Turkish modernization and bourgeoisie. Starting in the late 1930s, Derviş begins to question the patriarchal culture and social inequalities in Turkey. In her renowned novel *Fosforlu Cevriye*, a female sex worker is the novel’s protagonist who falls in love with a leftist man. Cevriye, the sex worker, was the epitome of a free spirit. Considering this, I believe that central to the silencing of Suat Derviş’s contributions to the leftist movement, is her nonconformity with the dominant state norms of her time. Her resistance was nurtured by her desire to be herself, as a proud author who was not ashamed of being a woman. Her vocal and nonconforming womanhood, along with her antithetical political stance, could be the important-indeed the main-barriers between her and the leftists, as well as the nationalist patriarchy.

By the late 1930s, socialist realism became her dominant style of literature. In the 1940s, Derviş effectively used this genre of novels as a “means” to spread political views to the masses, and political ideas became one of the “core” elements of her novels.²⁵⁴ Due to her transition from a liberal to socialist stance, her understanding of literature also changed. She started to use her writings as a tool for creating change in society and propagating ideals such as “equality,” “freedom” and “society without class differences”.

In 1940, Suat Derviş married Reşat Fuat Baraner (1900-1968), the leader of the illegal Communist Party of Turkey. Between 1940 and 1941, together with Nazım Hikmet, Abidin Dino, Sabahattin Ali, and Hasan İzzettin Dinamo, Suat Derviş published book reviews and critiques at *Yeni Edebiyat*, a semi-official publication of the *Türkiye Komünist Partisi*. In 1944, together with her husband and other party functionaries, Derviş was arrested on the grounds of “illegal communist activity”. With the changing political atmosphere and attitude towards the Soviet Union in the late 1930s and early 1940s, she received the harsh criticism of being a communist.

In 1944, Suat Derviş’s wrote *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* which was published by Arkadaş Matbaası. This booklet was written by Derviş to defend herself against the criticism levied by anti-communist Reha Oğuz Türkkan in his booklets *Kızılar ve Sollar* and *Kızıl Faaliyet*. Derviş furthermore aimed to provide her justification for admiring the Soviets. However, the booklet was banned by the state on March 9, 1944 on the grounds that it contained communist propaganda and thereupon it was removed from bookstores.²⁵⁵ In *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* Derviş benefited from her two visits to the Soviet Union. Derviş made her first visit to the Soviet Union in 1937 when she was sent by the journal *Tan* to monitor the political changes in the country. Her travel notes *Istanbul-Moskova-Tahran*

²⁵⁴ Günay, “Toplumcu Gerçekçi,” 3-5.

²⁵⁵ B.C.A. 30.18.1.2 Yer 104.16.12.

Seyahat Notları were subsequently published in the journal *Tan*. In 1939, Suat Derviş went to the Soviet Union for a second time as a member of the state-sponsored committee attending the Soviet Agriculture Fair.

Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum? is an uncommon booklet which illustrates Derviş's political stance and socialist feminist tendencies. Examining the booklet helps us to understand how Derviş developed her objection to social inequalities -which was central to her socialist realist reporting and storytelling, with anti-imperialist and pro-Soviet ideals. Amidst the phobia of “Moskof” and prevalent anti-communist propaganda, Derviş declared her admiration for the Soviet system. Her befriending of the Soviet Union was not welcomed by the government, and the booklet was soon to be banned on the grounds of being communist propaganda. Nevertheless, a detailed examination of the history of the booklet reveals the silencing of an exceptional woman by nationalists as well as in the leftist historiography. This booklet remains largely forgotten and ignored. To understand the selective recall and disregard of Derviş's works in official and leftist accounts of historiography, as well as in literary anthologies, this booklet is the focus of inquiry and a primary reference point for this thesis. The booklet, I argue, accords Derviş an important place in the history of the socialist feminist women in Turkey.

I traced Suat Derviş's life story and career to understand her growing distance from the dominant state ideology and to illustrate how she amalgamated feminist and socialist discourses. Her journalism, appropriation of social realism and admiration of the Soviet regime make her one of the major figures in the history of the women's movement and of socialism in Turkey. Nonetheless, today her literary production is either selectively recalled or overlooked, and her political contributions are devalued or ignored in the official historiography. This thesis represents an attempt to increase our understanding of her life story and works, and to investigate the reasons behind her silencing.

Having explored Suat Derviş's role in the history of the Ottoman-Turkish women's and leftist movements- through her socialist realist novels, journalism and admiration for the Soviet Union - I now return to my initial question: How do we explain the disregard of Derviş's written contributions to the leftist and women's movement? In particular, why was *Neden Sovyetler Birliğinin Dostuyum?* ignored? I put forth the hypothesis that her unconventional socialist realist work, oppositional political stance and pro-Soviet engagements, her amalgamation of feminist and socialist discourses which goes beyond the acknowledged frameworks, and additionally her insistence on highlighting her womanhood and independent character, led to her continued silencing.

In this thesis, I addressed the question of where to place Suat Derviş within the political and historical context. I also illustrated how to contextualize Derviş within the Ottoman-Turkish left and feminist history, in consideration of her political contributions and literary works. Endorsing Berktaş's analysis of Derviş, I emphasized Derviş's resistance to any imposition on herself as she navigated between-and above- feminist and socialist discourses. I argued that the main reason behind the disregard of Derviş's contributions to the socialist feminist movement and in particular to the political left, was her persistence to be a politically engaged woman, who vocally embraced her womanhood. Given the critical stance of the Turkish leftist movement against feminists, as Zihnioğlu argues, this vocal womanhood was unwelcomed. At a time when it was fashionable to write about compassionate conservative mothers of the nation, Derviş preferred writing about marginalized women like sex workers or different ethnic minorities like Armenians, Greeks and she challenged the patriarchal structure in the society through her novels characters. Under the influence of state feminism and its nationalistic interpretations of womanhood which revolved around discourses of chastity, motherhood and compassion, Suat Derviş's unconventional stance, far from being celebrated,

was conceived as a threat to the Kemalist rule; a threat to be repressed, silenced and eventually made forgotten.

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