

THE LIMITS OF PLURALISM: HOW ANTI-SEMITISM FIGURES
IN THE OPPOSITIONAL IMAGINARIES IN TURKEY

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2017

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Thesis submitted to the
Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Critical and Cultural Studies

by
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Boğaziçi University

2017

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Hazal orak, certify that

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ABSTRACT

The Limits of Pluralism: How Anti-Semitism Figures in the Oppositional Imaginaries in Turkey

This thesis interrogates the limits of pluralism in Turkey's left by focusing on the concessions towards the anti-Semitic discourse in this realm. Through an analysis of *Birikim*, the longest standing pluralist leftist journal in Turkey and interviews with Jewish intellectuals and activists, the author aims to account for the historical transformations of Turkey's left vis-à-vis the tension between pluralism and anti-Semitism. By considering neither Jewishness nor the pluralist left in Turkey as monolithic structures, this thesis also offers a dynamic approach to understanding the interactions between these spheres. Considering the radical pluralist critiques towards liberal multiculturalist assumptions, provided by thinkers such as Judith Butler and Donna Haraway, the author also problematizes the notions of invisibility and silence which are often attributed to the Jewish community of Turkey.

ÖZET

Çoğulculuğun Sınırları: Türkiyeli Muhalif Tahayyüllerde

Antisemitizmin Yansımaları

Bu tez Türkiye sol siyasetlerinde çoğulculuk söyleminin sınırlarını sorgulamak üzere bu alanda anti-Semitist söyleme verilen tavizlere odaklanan bir çalışmadır. Tezin yazarı, Türkiye'nin en uzun soluklu çoğulcu-sosyalist yayım mecrası olan *Birikim* dergisinin tarihsel bir incelemesi ve Türkiye solunda yer alan Yahudi entellektüel ve aktivistlerle yaptığı mülakatlar aracılığıyla Türkiye solunun özellikle de çoğulculuk ve anti-Semitizm gerilimi bağlamındaki dönüşümünü irdelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ne Yahudiliği ne de Türkiye çoğulcu solunu yekpare yapılar olarak ele alan bir anlayış aracılığıyla bu tez aynı zamanda bu iki alan arasındaki etkileşimlere dair dinamik bir yaklaşım sunar. Judith Butler ve Donna Haraway gibi düşünürlerin liberal çokkültürcü varsayımlara karşı getirdikleri radikal çoğulcu eleştirileri de göz önünde bulundurarak yazar aynı zamanda Türkiyeli Yahudi topluma sıklıkla atfedilen sessizlik ve görünmezlik gibi kavramları da sorunsallaştırmaktadır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Praise for Hitler is a bit presumptuous but really, enough with this! I do not like the Jews either... I cannot remember even a single Jewish person who stood with us in our solidarity with the oppressed of the world.”¹ This was the reaction of my friend upon reading the news about Yıldız Tilbe’s² tweets “May God bless Hitler” and “If God allows, it will be again Muslims who will bring the end of those Jews, it is near, near” in response to the recent Israeli bombardment of Gaza in the Summer of 2014. At the time we read the news and I heard my friend’s comments we were in Armenia, as a crew of feminist women who are active in the realm of pluralist politics in both countries. Thus, the environment and this person’s self-identification as a ‘pluralist leftist’ contributed to my astonishment once I understood that she was serious.

This comment raises many problems and questions about which groups of people can be regarded as oppressed, who can participate in the relations of solidarity, and who constitutes the outside of those relations for the leftist imaginaries in Turkey. Similarly, how do Turkey’s pluralist leftists deal with the threats of anti-Semitism? Are there well-established practices of dealing with these or are they excluded from the networks of solidarity and resistance within the pluralist leftist sphere in Turkey? The primary motivation of writing this thesis stems from these questions. Regarding the above-mentioned comment as a rare case, yet concatenating its conditions of possibility with the relative lack of regard towards the anti-Semitism in the struggle for pluralism in Turkey, in this thesis I will try to

¹ “Hitler övgüsü biraz fazla kaçmış ama yani cidden yeter artık! Ben de sevmiyorum Yahudileri... Dünya’nın ezilenleriyle dayanışmamızda yanımızda durmuş tek bir Yahudi bile gelmiyor aklıma.”

² A pop singer from Turkey.

concentrate upon how anti-Semitism figures in the oppositional imaginaries of pluralist leftists in Turkey considering not only the direct appeals to anti-Semitic discourses but also concessions³ that give way to them.

According to the 2015 world survey of the Anti-Defamation League,⁴ Turkey's anti-Semitism index score is 71 which means that the 71% of the adult population in Turkey 'harbor anti-Semitic attitudes'.⁵ This score secures a position for Turkey in the list of the 20 most anti-Semitic countries in the world (occupying the first rank in the European continent) while the reflections of these attitudes in everyday life occurrences are excessive. Especially with the ease that cyberspace provides for the circulation of the ideas of any kind, it became more facile to realize that the experience of any social and political phenomena in Turkey—from Valentine's Day to the Mother's Day, from the May Day celebrations to the 2017 constitutional referendum, from the closure of the satirical magazine *Gırgır* in 2017 to the coup attempt in the Summer 2016 and the crisis about the construction of a thermal power plant in Soma, Manisa—come along with immediate anti-Semitic reactions attached to them.⁶

These reactions come not only from the ordinary citizens of the Turkish Republic but also from those who occupy high ranked positions in the executive,

³ Throughout this thesis 'concessions towards anti-Semitism' refers to different types of tolerance towards anti-Semitic discourses and incidents such as the lack of immediate responses. I will separate these from direct appeals to anti-Semitic discourses.

⁴ A US-based organization which aims to keep various forms of racism and especially anti-Semitism on the watch.

⁵ The research is based on surveys which were conducted in 102 countries and which measure the reactions towards eleven widespread anti-Semitic stereotypes. The list of stereotypes include: 1) Jews are more loyal to Israel, 2) Jews have too much power in the business world, 3) Jews have too much power in international financial markets, 4) Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in Holocaust, 5) Jews don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind, 6) Jews have too much control over global affairs, 7) Jews have too much control over the United States government, 8) Jews think they are better than other people, 9) Jews have too much control over the global media, 10) Jews are responsible for most of the world's wars, 11) People hate Jews because of the way Jews behave. For further information about the survey results, see "An Index of Anti-Semitism: 2015 Update on 19 Countries" (2015).

⁶ See the constantly updated "Afedersin Antisemit" section (n.d.) of the internet journal *Avlaremoz* for further examples.

legislative, and juridical branches of the Turkish State. For instance, the environmental struggle to prevent the construction of the thermal power plant which also requires cutting down six thousand olive trees in Soma is widely condemned through the farcical yet common argument that the olive tree is a Jewish tree, and it will serve for the Jewish interest as opposed to the Muslim interest at the time of the apocalypse (Korucu, 2017). Moreover, during a briefing that Hüsni Aldemir, the attorney general of the Cankiri region, held in order to respond to the criticisms about the trials concerning the coup attempt of the June 15 2016, Aldemir described the group that organized the coup attempt as a very intricate and well-planned Jewish structure to the core (“Başsavcı: FETÖ tam bir Yahudi örgütlenmesi”, 2017). Earlier, Dursun Şahin, mayor of the Edirne region, announced his decision not to let the Jewish community to use the historical Edirne Synagogue and harshly criticized the endeavors for renovating this structure, as a response to the violent practices of the Israeli Defense Forces in Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (“Edirne valisi Dursun Şahin’den önce nefret söylemi, sonra özür geldi”, 2014). Such recent reflections of anti-Semitism in Turkey that come from various sections of the society are numerous, and these examples can be easily multiplied. Moreover, behind these, there is a long history of anti-Semitism which escalated especially due to the oppressive minority politics in the Republican-era, which will be discussed in the third chapter. In the scope of this thesis, I will focus on the pluralist leftist groups which aim to struggle against various forms of racism, in order to analyze how they deal with the constant threats of anti-Semitism, what practices they have cultivated for fighting against it, in what ways they disengage themselves from the anti-Semitic discourse that is quite common in various sections of the society and how they fail to do so.

The hypervisibility that is imposed upon the gradually shrinking Jewish community⁷ in Turkey creates a landscape of fear that marks the everyday lives of Turkey's Jews. The politics of visibility that Turkey's Jews are forced to engage with in order to survive the burden and dangers of this imposed hypervisibility impacts various aspects of the daily life from the use of religious symbols to naming practices and architectural designs of community centers and synagogues. For instance, many Jewish families tend not to give their children 'Jewish-sounding' names, or they tend to use double names. In this process, 'Albert' turns to 'Alper', 'Izak' to 'Ishak', 'Eliezer' to 'Ilyas', 'Avram to Ibrahim' or they are used together: while the first one is used within families and inside the community, the second one is preferred for non-community spaces. Similarly, many families preferred to change their 'Jewish-sounding' last names with 'Turkish-sounding' ones in the 1930s⁸, turning 'Elmaleh' to 'Almelek,' 'Adato' to 'Adatoz,' 'Behar,' to 'Bahar.'⁹ Also, as Brink-Danan shows putting the *mezuzah*¹⁰ on the inside or outside of the door frames appears not only as a religious question but also as a safety concern due to the possible dangers that might stem from the public display of difference (2012, p. 2). Similarly, most of the community centers, Jewish schools, and synagogues in Turkey are quite difficult to spot for outsiders, and the entry of the non-Jews into these spaces are relatively rare. For instance, before conducting my research, I decided to gain some familiarity with the prominent cultural and political debates within Turkey's Jewish community in order to better understand the current dynamics and to be able to design my interview

⁷ According to the 1927 census data, there were 81,872 Jews in the early-Republican Turkey (Gabay, 2016a) whereas the current Jewish population is estimated to be between 18,000 and 20,000.

⁸ Especially during the registries after the Surname Law of 1934, non-Muslim minorities are also encouraged by the population officials to Turkify their last names (Türköz, 2004, p. 5). However, considering that the Surname Law which obliged every Turkish citizen to register their last names passed in the aftermath of the infamous and often-times violent 'Citizen, Speak Turkish' campaigns, it would not be wrong to expect 'voluntary' changes as well.

⁹ Also, see Ender (2016) for a detailed analysis of the non-Muslim naming practices in Turkey.

¹⁰ A ritual object that contains Hebrew verses and which is affixed on the door frames.

questions in congruence with them. While the community newspaper *Şalom* offers a significant opportunity to achieve this goal, I also decided to attend some meetings, conferences and book talks that take place in the Alef Culture Center. Alef is a quite active cultural, political, and intellectual space. However, the events that are organized in Alef are never publicly announced and in order to gain access, each time I needed to go there with a Jewish friend who can present a state ID card (to the security staff that welcomes and checks you in the main entrance) the religion section of which indicates that s/he is *Musevi*.¹¹ While these are the outcomes of a long history of anti-Semitic attacks in Turkey, the safety measures that mark these spaces as ‘gated communities’¹²—and as landscapes of not only vivid cultural, social, intellectual, and political interactions but also of fear—became even more stringent in the aftermath of the 2003 synagogue bombings in Istanbul which killed 28 people, wounded more than 300 and caused a major trauma in the collective memory of Turkey’s Jewish community (Gabay, 2016b). The politics of (in)visibility which appears within this context and which is practiced by various members of the Jewish community in distinct ways will also be interrogated throughout this thesis in relation to the pluralist leftist practices, or the lack thereof, that are developed for solidarity against anti-Semitism. In other words, I will also question the dynamics of pluralist leftist solidarity networks and the tension between these dynamics and the politics of (in)visibility which is revealed in the opening quote of this thesis.

Obviously, direct appeals to and concessions towards anti-Semitism are not the problem of only the pluralist leftist sphere in Turkey. On the contrary, the broadness of Turkey’s conspiracy landscape which mainly targets Freemasons,

¹¹ *Musevi* means a follower of the prophet Moses. This word is used as a religious denominator for referring to the Jews in Turkey.

¹² See Low (1997) in which the author describes the gated communities as landscapes of fear (p. 53).

Armenians, Jews and Dönmes (converts)¹³—regarding these groups as internal enemies that hold strong international connections which would endow them with a multi-scalar economic and political power that is disproportionate to their population—shows us that this type of racism is the problem of various groups in Turkey. Moreover, as Türkay Salim Nefes shows in his in-depth analysis of Turkey’s conspiracy landscape, such practices are more common within the right-wing political realm in Turkey (2013, p. 247). However, compared to the rather more obvious anti-Semitism of the right-wing Islamist groups or the nationalist left, I believe that the concessions towards anti-Semitism within the pluralist left offer a more intriguing dilemma as they index the limits of pluralism in Turkey. Throughout my analysis, I will also endeavor to not regard the leftist pluralist sphere in Turkey as a stable or monolithic realm. For this reason, I will try to trace the different trends in this sphere that are in interaction with each other as well as registering the transformation of this sphere throughout different periods.

In the second chapter, I will discuss my methodology and tell about my reasons for the choices that I have made while delimiting the scope of my analysis. I will also put forward the conditions under which I have conducted my interviews for a better contextualization of my findings and finally express how my bidirectional research which combines a review over the socialist journal *Birikim* with semi-structured interviews held with Jewish activists who participate in Turkey’s pluralist left helped me in making sense of how anti-Semitism figures in the oppositional imaginaries in Turkey.

¹³ Also known as Shabbateans (*Sabetayist*) and Salonicans (*Selanikli*), these are the followers of the self-acclaimed Jewish messiah Shabbatai Tzevi’s (*Sabetay Sevi*) religious beliefs and practices based on conversion from Judaism to Islam. In various conspiracy theories, they are referred as ‘crypto-Jews.’ For a detailed analysis, see Baer (2010) and Bali (2001).

In the third chapter, I will very briefly present certain demographics about the Jewish community in Turkey and provide information about its formation. Then, I will proceed to a discussion of the history of anti-Semitism in Turkey. I will also discuss the myths of ‘Turkish hospitality’ towards Jews by providing counter-examples. Also, I will enter into a theoretical endeavor in order to make sense of the acts of silencing the Jewish sufferings. These silences can be regarded as both strategic and enforced. In such a landscape of conspiracy and an atmosphere of fear that it entails for the Jewish community, not being visible can be a way of dealing with the dangers of the hyper-visibility imposed upon the Jews by various conspirators. I will also discuss this tension between visibility and invisibility throughout this chapter. At the end of this chapter, I will also substantiate my research questions theoretically focusing on to what extent Turkey’s left contribute to the enforcement of such silences and invisibilities upon Turkey’s Jews and their sufferings.

The fourth chapter will be a critical overview of the leftist pluralist journal *Birikim*. In this chapter, I will try to show how anti-Semitism is discussed differently in different periods using the advantage of the long history of this journal. Based on this analysis, I will argue that Turkey’s pluralist left has not developed well-established and steady reactions against the threats of anti-Semitism and for constituting solidarity with the Jewish community in Turkey against these threats. In this sense, the question of anti-Semitism constitutes one of the thorniest and most contingent points in the pluralist claims of the leftist groups in Turkey. This chapter will also include a further discussion on the conspiracy landscape in Turkey and how pluralist leftists deal with the problems that it entails. As argued above, one of the primary objects of this landscape is *Dönmes*. In addition, considering the fact that the

foundation of this community—which is largely invisible and hyper-visible at the same time—is based on historical moments of conversion from Judaism to Islam, it is hard to separate anti-*Dönme* conspiracies from the anti-Semitic ones. Similarly, as they are regarded as ‘crypto-Jews’ serving for an overarching Jewish ideal while at the same time covering up their identities thanks to their religious conversion they are targeted more often and in more aggressive ways by various conspirators.¹⁴

Moreover, the ‘Salonican’ identity endowed to these people is combined with the view that regards Salonica as:

the city which paved the way for the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the place where first arose the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP, *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), among whose leading cadres were found both Jews and Dönmes; the city to which the ‘Great Ruler’ (Ottoman Sultan, Abdulhamid II) was exiled after being deposed by the Committee; and the city in which a new leader was born (Mustafa Kemal ‘Atatürk’), one who would in the future do away with the Caliphate and establish the [Turkish] Republic. (Bali, n.d., p. 412)

The bolstering of such an understanding of the ‘Salonican’ identity offered further opportunity to various conspirators to draw attention on the *Dönme* identity as a focus of power that is highly influential in world-making, the misery of empires—including and especially the Ottoman Empire—and the restructuring of the states. As Bali shows, such claims generally end up being related to the secret Zionist ideals (p. 423) and in this sense, it might be argued that in many accounts *Dönmes* are regarded as secret Jews who are even more dangerous than the Jews themselves. Although these views are not widespread in Turkey’s pluralist left, these circles are not entirely exempt from such conspiratorial views either. For instance, in 1991 Musa Anter¹⁵ wrote:

Like Erbakan, I am practically convinced that all evils come from Zionism and Israel. But I differ from him on this one point: when I say ‘Jew’ I do not mean the State of Israel. My message is meant for those unprincipled

¹⁴ See Yalçın (2004) as an example of *Dönme* conspiracies.

¹⁵ A prominent figure in Turkey’s left and the Kurdish national liberation movement.

converts from Judaism. They are in the dominant position in every field in Turkey” (as cited in Bali, n.d.)

Thus, an analysis on anti-Semitism in Turkey would be lacking without making the necessary links with the anti-*Dönme* content in the conspiracy theories since the two are significantly intertwined and as we can see in Anter’s case, such a tendency also impacted the realm of leftist politics in Turkey. However, due to the limitations of this thesis, I will not be able to account for the history of this intertwining. At the same time, I believe that tracing how anti-Semitic and anti-*Dönme* discourses are intermingled within the sphere of leftist intellectual production would further open up a fruitful possibility to study the limits of pluralism in Turkey.

The fifth chapter will be a reflection on the interviews that I held with Jewish participants of the leftist pluralist political sphere in Turkey. In this chapter, I will be able to show how this issue works beyond intellectual discussions and in the level of real politics where gain and cost calculations become more prevalent and not being trapped by populism becomes even harder. In addition considering the fact that all of my interviewees aligned themselves with the community of the ‘democratic left’¹⁶ in Turkey while mentioning their separation from the Jewish community and its ‘official ideology’, I will also try to make sense of what this phenomenon suggests us in terms of the politics of (in)visibility.

In the sixth chapter, I will be able to bring together the findings of the two different types of research that I held, namely the journal review and interviews with Jewish intellectuals/activists and discuss them briefly in relation to each other.

Finally, I would like to state that I am the sole responsible for all the translations throughout this thesis. The original texts of the translated quotations can be found in the Appendix section.

¹⁶ This corresponds to what I call ‘pluralist left’ throughout this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

This work is an analysis of political ideas and practices that relate to anti-Semitism within the wide sphere of Turkey's left. It is based on two inter-related types of research. While the first one consists of a review of leftist publications, the second one is based on interviews held with the Jewish intellectuals/activists who actively participate in the leftist pluralist political sphere of Turkey.

For the sake of simplicity, I had to confine the scope of my analysis in both parts. For this reason, for the media review section, I chose one leftist journal to scrutinize. The journal I chose is *Birikim*. There are some reasons which led me to focus on this option despite the variety of leftist publications in Turkey. First of all, my research is about the limits of pluralism and for this reason I had to concentrate on a publication whose publishers have certain claims for pluralism and show engagement with pluralist language. In other words, a journal that is published by a self-acclaimed leftist group which has no relation to the pluralist struggles in Turkey would not be in the scope of my analysis. This criterion has been an adequate reason to eliminate most of the publications by self-acclaimed leftist groups in Turkey. By contrast, in addition to being published by a self-acclaimed leftist group, *Birikim* has also served as a medium for the dissemination of pluralist arguments and discussions especially since the beginning of the 1990s. Another reason that made me focus on *Birikim* is the fact that it is the longest-lasting journal within the field of pluralist leftist politics in Turkey. Its first volume was published in March 1975, and except for a 9-year interruption between March 1980 and 1989, it is still in publication monthly and regularly. Such a long and continuing life span of its publication gave

me the opportunity to trace the way pluralist discourses entered into the leftist political sphere as well as the trajectories that they followed in different periods of time. At the same time, for the very same reason, I was able to realize how debates over anti-Semitism have transformed throughout this period. A final advantage of *Birikim* was due to the fact that in addition to a core group of authors, this journal is open to publications by other authors outside that group and inclusive towards the reflections of leftist intellectuals over the articles published previously. This feature helped me not only see what kind of arguments are produced within a core group of authors but also track how such arguments are put under scrutiny by a larger group of leftist pluralist intellectuals. Additionally, while *Birikim* has been my primary source for analysis, due to numerous debates that were initiated at *Birikim* but that later exceeded the scope of it, I had to follow the routes of such discussions in other journals or newspapers such as *Radikal İki*. However, these publications have not been a major source of analysis for me while I carefully examined their archives for finding traces of the anti-Semitism related debates that started at *Birikim*.

Limiting the scope of the second part which is based on the interviews with leftist Jewish intellectuals/activists was easier since there are very few Jewish intellectuals that actively take part in the sphere of leftist politics in Turkey. I conducted semi-structured interviews with four people all of whom are active members of at least one leftist pluralist organization. In line with the semi-structured interview method, I asked open-ended questions to my interviewees and sometimes only suggested some exemplary cases for discussion. My questions aimed to initiate a stream of consciousness about their experiences within the leftist political sphere of Turkey. Although sometimes the course of our interaction exceeded the content of the questions, each question that helped me conduct the interviews is indicated in the

relevant chapter of this thesis. All of the interviews are conducted between April and May 2015 thus both the questions and the answers should be regarded as formed within the social and political context of these dates. I conducted two of my interviews via Skype due to our physical distance. In the case of the other two, one took place at the interviewee's apartment, and the other was at an outside place.

Bringing together these two different analyses has been useful in terms of being able to track not only how certain ideas with regards to anti-Semitism are debated but also how they are implemented or fail to do so in the level of real politics. In other words, while the main question of this thesis is about how anti-Semitism figures in the leftist pluralist imaginaries in Turkey, the two different parts of this combined methodology respond to different aspects of this question. The fourth chapter which is based on the journal review allows me to analyze how anti-Semitic discourse and concession to it circulate and in what ways it is contested within the intellectual production of Turkey's pluralist left. The fifth chapter which is based on interviews allows me to understand how the Jewish activists position themselves concerning Jewish and pluralist/leftist communities in Turkey. Thus this chapter goes beyond the sphere of intellectual production in its consideration, and it pays attention to the realm of real politics where cost and benefit analyses—rather than political ideals—are often prioritized. While the realm of real politics and that of political ideals are intermingled and cannot be regarded in dualistic terms, they might as well have different dynamics. My combined methodology will let me pay attention to such differences. Moreover, such a perspective helped me stitch together the historical transformation and the current dynamics. In this sense, this thesis holds both a diachronic and a synchronic orientation. Finally, I would like to state that I am

responsible for all the translations including the interviews and references to newspaper/journal articles.

CHAPTER 3

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND ANTI-SEMITISM IN TURKEY SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE REPUBLIC

3.1 Demographics about the Jews of Turkey

Although usually the beginning of Jewish history in Thrace and Anatolia is traced back to the Sephardic Jewish exodus from Iberia in 1492, even centuries before this date there was a Greek-speaking Jewish group in this region, known as Byzantium Jews or namely Romaniot. Also, before the settling of the Jews fleeing Spain, a small Ashkenazi community had been under formation since the first half of the 14th century especially due to the various pogroms and oppressions in several Eastern and Central European kingdoms.¹⁷ It is also known that a French-born Ashkenazi rabbi, Isaac Sarfati who was raised in Germany and later settled in the Ottoman lands issued a letter to call the “Jews from the Rhineland, Moravia, and Hungary to join him in the Ottoman Empire” (Naar, 2016, p. 103). Moreover, mass and individual migrations of Ashkenazim from the Eastern and Central Europe to the Ottoman lands continued even after the Iberian Sephardic exodus. For instance, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there was an increasing Ashkenaz migration from the Russian Empire to the Ottoman soil. It is argued that nearly two thousand Jews from the Russian Empire arrived at the port of Salonica alone in 1892 and this route maintained its vital importance in the early 20th century especially due to the Kishinev and Odessa Pogroms in 1903 and 1905 respectively (p. 106).

There is also a Karay community, the members of which are called as the Turkic-speaking Jews; religiously this community adheres to textual

¹⁷ The first mass migrations of Ashkenazim to Asia Minor in the late medieval period and prior to the Iberian Sephardic exodus are known as the cases of those expelled from Hungary in 1376, from France in 1394, from Sicily in the early 1400s, and from Germany in 1470 (Naar, 2016, p. 103).

fundamentalism, believing in the Torah and rejecting the Talmud. Despite the prior existence of multiple Jewish groups, with the Spanish exodus Sephardic Jews became the dominant group. Although it is hard to make clear distinctions due to inter-group assimilations (especially the assimilation of Romaniot by Sephardim), it is argued that currently 96% of the Jews living in Turkey –which amounts approximately to 20,000 people- are Sephardic. There are 500 Ashkenazim and 80 Karaim. Among nearly 20,000 people, 18,000 lives in Istanbul; 1,500 in Izmir and the rest in Ankara, Bursa, Canakkale, Kirklareli, Adana, and Antakya (Güleryüz, 2016). These numbers are incredibly small compared to 93,000 Jews living in Anatolia in 1919 (Toktaş, 2005, p. 396) and the major role of numerous anti-Semitic attacks and policies in the making of this decline is incontrovertible.

3.2 Anti-Semitic incidents between the foundation of the Republic and 1934

Despite the already existing cases of blood libel during the Ottoman Empire (Güleryüz, 2016), Rifat Bali traces back the beginning of a more systematic anti-Semitism to the founding years of the Turkish Republic. He associates this rise not only with the crisis of transition from an empire to a nation state but also with the economic misery of the era (Bali, 2013, p. 64). The most popular examples from the early Republican period include the Elza Niyego incident in 1928, the Thrace Pogroms as well as the ‘settlement law’ in 1934, the Wealth Tax of 1942 and 6-7 September 1955 Incidents. The first one of these incidents refers to the murder of a young Jewish woman by the man who had allegedly fallen in love with her and proposed to her but had been rejected. The case happened in 1927, and the ‘lover’ who committed the murder happened to be the former adjutant of the former Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamit II. The murderer was freed shortly after having been

detained. This incident led to the greatest mobilization of the Jews in Turkey when we consider the entire Republican history as tens of thousands of people attended her funeral shouting ‘*We Want Justice*’ (Levi, 1996, p. 23-27). It is difficult to comment on the dynamics that produced such a reaction within the Jewish community, but it is important to consider that this response has been generated in a context which is dominated by the Turkification policies of the new Republic in both economic and cultural terms. Such policies became even denser between 1925 and the end of the Second World War (yet, when we consider the case of Greeks we can even exceed this time-span to 1964). For instance, in 1928, ‘Citizen, Speak Turkish’ Campaigns which were organized by Istanbul University’s Law Faculty students became quite popular rendering oppressions towards the Judeo-Spanish speaking Jewish community in Turkey even more threatening (Toktaş, 2005, p. 400). Between the 1930s and 1940s there was a sudden rise in the newspaper articles and cartoons which depicted Jews as money-grubbers; this increase especially became visible in the publications managed by Cevat Rifat Atilhan and Nihal Atsız, two extreme racists who were also going to incite people during the Thrace Pogroms (Toktaş, 2005, p. 401). Toktaş shows that the Thrace Pogroms which broke out in Çanakkale, Edirne, Kırklareli, and Tekirdağ included threats and violence against the Jews living in these cities and caused 15,000-20,000 Jews to flee to Istanbul (p. 402) while many others left the country (p. 55, Guttstadt, 2016). According to Guttstadt, these pogroms were to be considered together with ‘the settlement law’ “of June 1934 which empowered the government to dislocate the population of whole regions in order to achieve turkification” (Guttstadt, 2016, p. 56). Figure 1 shows a

photograph¹⁸ from an evacuated Jewish neighborhood in Thrace while the banner reads as ‘Whatever is national belongs to us’ (Bali, 2012, own translation).



Fig. 1 Thrace pogroms
(Bali, 2012)

3.3 The period after 1934

With the rise of the German National Socialists to power in 1933 anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic policies in Turkey were transformed into an even more heated and thorny state. With regards to this period, Kader Konuk mentions the existence of a “Germany on the Bosphorus” (Konuk, 2010, p. 102). As it becomes explicit throughout her book about the German philologist Eric Auerbach and the days he spent in Istanbul as a migrant Jewish professor from Germany, the notion of “Germany on the Bosphorus” refers not only to the presence of German Jewish

¹⁸ This figure constitutes the cover page of Rifat Bali’s book, *1934 Trakya Olayları* (2012).

scholars in Istanbul but also to a massive German state propaganda through German officers as well as the expatriate German non-Jewish community of Istanbul.

Although the immigrant German Jewish scholars lately became a part of the narrative of the Turkish official history as a proof of Turkish hospitality, Corry Guttstadt argues that the migration of these 130 scholars to Turkey stems from nothing but a “coincidental timing of Turkey’s (educational) reform plans and the Nazi’s dismissal of scholars” (Guttstadt, 2016, p. 55). Her claim is also substantiated by Konuk, who shows that many other academics of Jewish descent were rejected by Turkey while at the same time Turkish universities also hired Nazi scholars during the same period (Konuk, 2010, p. 122). For instance, after the hire, by the German Language Department at Istanbul University, of Hennig Brinkmann who uses “his philological work as a platform for Nazi ideology”, who “joined the SA (Sturmabteilung), the Nazi paramilitary organization, in 1933 and became a member of the party itself a few years later” (p. 122), Eric Auerbach states that Brinkmann is a Nazi propagandist only to be responded with the outrage of his colleagues and the accusation of ‘being a racist’ (p. 121). Moreover, and disconcertingly, this happened in 1943, which means that it was even after the acceptance of the Final Solution Plan by the Nazis. Among other Nazi scholars who have been hired for the ranks of Istanbul University is Gerhard Fricke. Interestingly enough, his hire was even after the fall of the Third Reich, while Germany was going through a de-Nazification process. He was among the scholars who lost their job due to their Nazi past, which, for Fricke’s personal history, includes being “the main speaker at the infamous book burning in Gottingen, where he gave the so-called bonfire speech” (p. 125) but he could chair the Department at Istanbul University between 1950 and 1958 (p. 126). Still, in the history section of Istanbul University German Languages and Literatures

Department's website we can find the photos of Eric Auerbach and Leo Spitzer side by side with the photo of Gerhard Fricke represented as the 'influential' professors of the Department without any problematization while being yet another example of a non-confrontational relation with the past.

The reflections of a similar approach can also be found in the Turkish State's policies towards European Jews and also its own Jewish citizens living in the parts of Europe which were under the Nazi influence. 'Decree No. 2/9498', issued quite early in the process, on 29 August 1938 has forbidden "the authorization of visas for Jews with German, Hungarian or Romanian citizenship" (Guttstadt, 2016, p. 60).

Moreover, the same year, Turkish consulates started demanding "proof of 'Aryan descent' before granting an entry visa to Turkey" while this policy also applied retroactively to "some of the exiles who had settled in Turkey prior to 1938" with an exemption for certain specialists (p. 61) as an obligation to prove their 'Aryan descent' unless they preferred to be deported. In 1942, Turkish prime minister Refik Saydam declared that "Turkey was not going to provide a home for Jews 'unwanted elsewhere'" (Konuk, 2010, p. 127). Similar policies also applied to the Jews living in Europe with Turkish citizenship. Izzet Bahar suggests that there were more than 13,000 Jews with Turkish citizenship in France alone when Paris was occupied by German forces in June 1940 (Bahar, 2016, p. 158). Also, Bahar lays bare the 1944-dated documents of communication between Turkish consulates in Paris and in Marseille with regards to the case of Jews who are Turkish nationals. In addition to difficulties in passport renewals, this document shows that the Turkish government required visas from its own citizens:

For one year now, there have been constant requests by the German authorities to neutral countries including Turkey to recall their Jews from occupied France. When we communicated this to our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we were instructed that "The influx of Jews as masses to the country

was not desirable, and visas should not be issued before asking the approval of Ankara.” Because of this instruction, while the Jewish citizens of all other neutral countries and of Germany allies have left France, our citizens could not be sent to Turkey. (as cited in Bahar, 2016, p. 158)

At the end, despite the myths of Turkish consulates rescuing Jews from Nazi persecutions, only 414 Turkish Jews were rescued although the Nazi authorities were also willing to let them free with the condition that they should be deported to Turkey immediately (p. 164). This small number does not refute the benevolent intentions of Turkish consuls, but it shows that their case was exceptional and never embraced by the state level policy.

These were also the years when the wealth tax policy of 1942, which mainly targeted the non-Muslim citizens of Turkey, was put into implementation with the aim of Turkifying the economy while those citizens who could not pay the unreasonable amounts of money were sent to the working camps (Akar, 2006, p. 111). At the same time, the Turkish state’s visa policy gave rise to further Jewish miseries like in the case of the Struma Disaster. In December 1941, Jews trying to flee Romania, departed from the Port of Constanta by a ship named Struma with the aim of arriving at Palestine. Struma was a very small ship and there was a crowd of 769 people on it. Soon after its departure from Constanta, it had to stop around Sarayburnu, Istanbul due to technical problems. In resonance with the aforementioned visa policies which rarefied the entry of Jews into Turkey, the immigrants were not let out of the marine zone. In the meantime, the Turkish media was swarmed with anti-Semitic articles and cartoons mocking the tragedy of the refugees who had been waiting in the offshores of Istanbul. After 72 days of waiting, the ship had been pushed through the Black Sea and left to its misery until it was sunk by a Soviet Submarine which mistook it for a German Cruise (Hür, 2015). This tragedy was by no means the first of its kind but rather an even more disastrous

repetition of the case of the Salvador Ship¹⁹, namely ‘the sailing coffin’ which also carried Jews fleeing from the same port, Constanta (Hür, 2015). Also, in January 1943, Istanbul’s new Chief Police Commissioner Haluk Nihat Pepeyi made a professional visit to Germany together with another police officer Selahaddin Korkud; this trip was registered in the official documents as a ‘professional investigation’ (Bali, 2006a, p. 42) and it included a visit to the Nazi Concentration Camp, Sachsenhausen (Bali, 2006b, p. 38).²⁰ Soon after this official trip, a building which was said to be built as a bakery in Balat—a predominantly Jewish neighborhood in Istanbul—and which was never used, became a major source of rumors; according to these rumors, Turkish authorities were building the likes of the crematory ovens in Nazi concentration camps. Later, the restoration of a public bath (*hamam*) in the Lonca neighborhood of Balat gave rise to a further spread of such rumors while these structures were publicly called as ‘Los Ornos de Balat’²¹ (Bali, 2006a, p. 46). These rumors soon overreached the Borders of Balat and even Istanbul as similar stories circulated about Karataş, a predominantly Jewish district of Izmir (p. 47). Still, there is no archival research which could confirm the accuracy of such rumors. However, what equally matters is the fact that these rumors, beyond their accuracy or fallacy, represent the atmosphere of fear and insecurity that surrounded the Jewish communities of Turkey during the Second World War. Finally, these incidents of anti-Semitism which appeared in an atmosphere mainly impacted by the World War II, were later followed by the infamous Pogroms the main cities during 5

¹⁹ The Salvador Ship left the port of Constanta in December 1940, exactly one year before the departure of the Struma from the same port. It had 342 Jewish migrants on board although the maximum capacity was 40 people. While they asked for refuge from the Turkish authorities, their demand was rejected, and the ship sank on the shores of Silivri, Istanbul on 13 December 1940 leaving 219 dead bodies behind (Hür, 2015).

²⁰ This ‘professional investigation’ is represented in the Turkish media as an official trip to take the remains of Mehmet Talat Pasa—a leader of the Young Turks—, who was shot to death by Soghomon Tehlirian in Berlin in 1921, to Turkey although Pepeyi later clarified that he did not take care of this issue. For further scrutiny over this case, see Bali (2006a).

²¹ The Judeo-Spanish phrase for ‘Balat ovens.’

and 6 September 1955; while this, at the beginning, started as an anti-Greek protest it immediately turned against all non-Muslims in the form of violence and plunder (Toktaş, 2005, p. 407).

After 1955, the existent anti-Semitism in Turkey was also bolstered by a form of Jewish hatred under the guise of opposition to the Israeli State and its war policies. For instance, just after the Six-Day War of 1967, the right-wing newspaper *Bugün* published an article series that continued for some months. The topics of the articles published ranged from the lists titled “Some of the Jews that Gnaw the Turkish Economy” to other pieces titled “It is a National Service to Stop Shopping from Jews” (Bali, 2009, p. 138-139). Later on, this form of Jewish hatred under the guise of opposition to the Israeli state’s policies turned to be an everyday issue, became widespread and banalized together with the rise of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. The major incidents of this period includes the Neve Şalom Synagogue Bombing on 6 September 1986 (Bali, 2009, p. 345), the murder of a Jewish goldsmith, Behor Roziya, in his workplace in Kemaralti, Izmir (Radikal, 16 April 2002), the assassination of a Jewish dentist, Yasef Yahya while Yahya’s murderers also grabbed his phone to find and call other Jewish named people for threats (Bali, 2009, p. 470). There was yet another attack, this time suicide bombings, in Neve Şalom Synagogue in Kuledibi, Istanbul and Beth Israel Synagogue in Osmanbey, Istanbul on 15 November 2003 (p. 470).

Currently, despite all this dark history as well as the presence, the case of German Jewish scholars who migrated to Turkey together with the case of some exceptional consuls who worked to rescue Turkish nationals become mere tools for the representation of Turkish hospitality towards ‘the pariah of Europe’ promoted as part of the official discourse used in a way “to belittle or deny the Armenian

Genocide” (Dost-Niyego, 2016, p. 217). Considering the cases mentioned above, it becomes apparent that such narratives correspond to a particular way of writing the history.

3.4 Theoretical framework

Walter Benjamin, famously, suggested that “There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism, barbarism taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one owner to another. A historical materialist therefore dissociates himself from it as far as possible. He regards it as his task to brush history against the grain” (Benjamin, 1968, p. 257). Following him and his rejection of the neutrality of history writing, Michel-Rolph Trouillot lays bare how the power is inscribed within the process of history writing. According to Trouillot, not only actions but also the narrative itself matters since narrative is beyond an impartial assembly of happenings but it points out a fixation of happenings into a certain net of relations from within a certain socio-historical context and position; this is where one can regard the inscription of power (Trouillot, 1995, p. 24). He suggests that “any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences, the result of a unique process” and just like Benjamin’s call for ‘brushing the history against the grain’ Trouillot calls for deconstructing those silences (Trouillot, 1995, p. 27). However, I would argue that power is inscribed not only in the process of history writing but also of image making. At this point, I would like to pay attention to the comparative literature specialist Thomas Keenan’s insights on the photographer Trevor Paglen’s works which focus on the idea of disappearance. Trevor Paglen who is both an artist and a scholar of geography merges photography

and geography in his scholarly artistic works. He is particularly interested in the landscapes of disappearance such as military zones and detention camps. The areas he photographs are those which are rendered invisible not only by the physical distance to residential areas but also by surveillance and by military apparatuses such as Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp. In order to take photos, Paglen needs to use highly advanced zooming technologies such as attaching telescopes to a digital SLR camera (Keenan, 2008, p. 38). While such technologically advanced methods allow him to take pictures of these areas, in turn, the photographs that he takes are crucially blurred. Speculating about Paglen's work, Thomas Keenan states that "in many of Paglen's images, blurring is not something that befalls an otherwise crisp image. It is not something secondary or accidental, not the sign of a failure to capture what is there to be seen clearly. The image begins and persists in a haze. If it is blurry, that is because it has to be" (Keenan, 2008, p. 38). Thus, in a way, Paglen takes the photographs of invisibility itself rather than what is rendered invisible, while at the same time revealing the infrastructural configurations which render invisibility possible. Similarly, Keenan further argues that "Faced with something obscure—something essentially dark—it is radically insufficient merely to shine the light of publicity. It misses the point: to turn on the lights tells us nothing about the dark itself" (Keenan, 2008, p. 38). This productive trajectory opened up by the photographs of Paglen and reflections of Keenan shows us that not only silences but also invisibilities cannot be regarded as mere occurrences, but they are actively produced. Then, I would suggest that the history writing processes are not independent of the determining influence of the acts and infrastructural configurations that produce such invisibilities and this would have certain implications about the main subject of this thesis. In line with these insights, the

abovementioned incidents are the happenings that prepared the long-specified silence and invisibility of the Jewish Community in Turkey exemplified with the idiom, ‘No mos karişeyamos en los meseles del hükümet.’²² As Trouillot suggests, just at the moment that they were happening, a certain history was under the process of formation in terms of both action and narration. At the same time, the silence and the invisibility of Jews in Turkey are also the outcomes of an active process. When we consider the case of the 500th Year Jewish Museum²³ prepared in certain aspects for glorifying various instances of ‘Turkish hospitality’ towards Jews throughout the Ottoman and the Republican periods²⁴, we see that both the silence and invisibility are actively produced by becoming vocal and visible in certain ways. Similarly, Marcy Brink-Danan regards the tension between visibility and invisibility that escalated during the 500th year celebrations as momentous as she argues that, “If, historically, Turkish Jews kept a low profile, now they (or, more correctly, their officials and other prominent figures) have changed tactics.” (Brink-Danan, 2012, p. xii). Yet, it is difficult to argue that the Jewish community suddenly became visible in the political realm after 1992. Rather, we may think about constant negotiations between strategic/enforced visibilities and strategic/enforced invisibilities. These notions of invisibility and silence will appear once again in the narratives of my interviewees. In the scope of this thesis, the main questions might be in what ways the pluralist/leftist circles in Turkey attend in the construction of such silences and

²² A popular idiom which merges the Judeo-Spanish words and syntax with some Turkish words and which means ‘We do not intervene in the government issues.’

²³ As the museum was opened in 1992, ‘the 500th year’ refers to the quincentennial anniversary of the Iberian expulsion and the arrival of the Sephardic Jews in the Ottoman soil. The message that this museum and the celebratory events that took place in the course of its opening refers to a centuries-long happy Jewish life in these lands which were once under the Ottoman rule. To this extent, what is referred to as ‘the 500th year discourse’ is also widely circulated by the modern Turkish state in order gain reputation in the international arena. For further discussion on this topic, see Brink-Danan (2012).

²⁴ An academic version of this hospitality discourse that will be challenged in the following pages can be found in Shaw (1991).

invisibilities, if these circles produce demands for certain ways of becoming visible from the members of the Jewish community, and also if the sphere of their activity might open up a space for deconstructing silences/invisibilities or hearing Benjamin's call for brushing the history against the grain.

In her Edward Said Lecture, Judith Butler, by citing Said who refers to Hannan Ashrawi's words, argued that "Palestinian people are those whose national experience belongs with that of Armenians, Jews, Irish, the Cypriots, the American Black and Indian Americans" and suggested that we universalize the crisis by detailing a suffering in its specificity and at the same time framing it in terms of its connections with other subjugated peoples (Butler, 2014). Such an approach would be even more revealing once we focus on Butler's understanding of what she calls 'grievability' as it was also one of the very central themes in the abovementioned speech. In Butler's theory, the notion of grievability constitutes a basis for her critique towards liberal human rights ideologies. It is formed through a merging of the ethical, political and ontological, and it separates life from living by attaining value to the former. In this sense, it demarcates life's emergence (Butler, 2009, p. 15). Grievability can be understood both as a potential—since each life is essentially precarious—and as a problem of framing which appear through the workings of power-knowledge and which make certain recognitions and apprehensions about the value and vulnerability of certain lives possible over the others. Then, while on the one hand Butler's is a call for radicalizing this potential by suggesting the "radical equality of the grievable" (Butler, 2014) as a principle to be embraced, at the same time she recognizes that these frames differentiate lives (Butler, 2009, p. 3) and that grievabilities are not allocated on an equal terrain. This understanding differs from the human rights discourse to the extent that it is not based on an abstract notion of

life but it offers a way for historicizing and contextualizing lives in their peculiarities. From this standpoint, it becomes possible for her to ask the questions “What is the value of Palestinian lives” and “For whom do Palestinian lives have value” in her keynote speech (Butler, 2014). The very act of raising these questions is a way to reveal the fact that it becomes possible to ask these questions at a certain time and within a certain context. In other words, by raising these questions she attempts to deconstruct that context or, in her and Trinh Minh-ha’s words, Butler aims to frame the frame itself, a wonderful example of which is Trevor Paglen’s photographic works that I discussed above (Butler, 2009, p. 8; Minh-ha, 1992). Thinking about her suggestion for recognizing the uniqueness of each suffering and relating such unique sufferings to each other, together with the instances of anti-Semitism discussed in this chapter I would argue that within the state level discourse, sufferings are already related to each other. Yet, they are related in a way Butler does not dream about. Considering the case of Turkish State promotion based on silencing the claims about the Armenian Genocide, by appealing to a narrative about hospitality towards Jews, which is already prepared by various acts of silencing, I suggest that in the State level discourse, these sufferings are associated in a peculiar way which is based on reading them against each other. In a broader terrain, this appears as follows: photos showing the devastation of Kurdish cities are easily negated with the claims that they are from Gaza, the discourse of Turkish hospitality towards the Jews, originating from the Ottoman Empire’s welcoming of the Sephardic Jews who were expelled by the Spanish King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in 1492 is put into international circulation each year towards the end of April (since April 24th is commemorated as the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide) as a way to argue that the Ottomans have been hospitable towards the

‘pariah of Europe’ and thus that it is impossible that they would commit a Genocide, an approach which not only obscures the Armenian suffering but also relegates the Jews of Turkey to an ‘eternal guest’ status. Still, the sufferings of Palestinians are used as easy legitimizations of never-ending anti-Semitic attacks in Turkey. Then the act of history making of the sovereign depends on not only certain silencings/rendering invisible but also on reading the sufferings of people against each other. For this reason, the notion of radical grievability should be based on Benjamin’s call; reading the archives of these already established associations against the grain. Such an approach should do away with reading the sufferings against each other and move towards an astute attentiveness for each of them and the links between them. However, such an attentiveness towards others’ suffering is not unproblematic, and it has its own stakes. What Haraway calls “a doctrine of embodied objectivity” (2002, p. 676) which means paying attention to the situatedness of vision and knowledge offers an important critique. She calls for construction of “care people might take to learn how to see faithfully from another’s point of view” (p. 679). However, in her account, such a mobility among visions is also problematized. In this sense, she does not favor relativism. On the contrary, recognizing that all visions are situated, she argues for a stance that “privileges contestation, deconstruction, passionate construction, webbed connections, and hope for transformation of systems of knowledge and ways of seeing” (p. 680). Her approach is radically different from liberal multiculturalist accounts in the sense that her call is attentive against a romantic identification with the ‘subjugated visions’ (p. 679). In the following chapters, I will question how Turkey’s left fails to achieve such an attentive mobility and partakes in the sovereign historicist practices of reading sufferings against each other when the issue is anti-Semitism.

CHAPTER 4

ANTI-SEMITISM DEBATES IN TURKEY'S PLURALIST MEDIA ORGANS: THE CASE OF *BİRİKİM*

In this chapter, I will try to understand how anti-Semitism is discussed in leftist/pluralist media in Turkey. For the sake of briefness, I had to confine my research to a limited number of publications. I had two criteria while limiting the scope of my analysis: first of all, the groups that I would be dealing with had to have claims for pluralism since otherwise it would not be relevant to the topic of this thesis. In other words, while a study on the circulation of anti-Semitic discourse among rather more nationalistic fractions of Turkey's left might be promising, at the same time such research would far exceed the limits of my analysis as I am mainly interested in the pluralist leftist groups. As a matter of fact, self-acclaimed leftist groups that have no claim for pluralism and their publications were to be excluded from my research. Second, I restricted the scope of my analysis to the publications in which anti-Semitism has been an issue of debate comparably more often while this restriction also mirrors the lack of discussion about anti-Semitism in many other publications produced within the realm of leftist politics in Turkey. In line with these criteria, I chose *Birikim* as the main publication for my critical scrutiny. Historical background of *Birikim* which is defined as a socialist culture journal by its editors is to be discussed further in the following pages of this chapter briefly. However, I eventually realized that I also had to add the newspaper *Radikal* to my list due to its significant intellectual association with *Birikim*. Although *Radikal* was not directly related to a leftist political organization or community and it was owned by Doğan

Media Agency (DHA),²⁵ this necessity stemmed from the fact that this newspaper, especially with its supplement *Radikal 2*, constituted an important realm of debate for leftist and liberal intellectuals in Turkey. Moreover, most of the authors writing for the journal *Birikim* were also active in *Radikal*. In accordance with these, in order to track a debate that started with an article in *Birikim*, for instance, it became necessary to analyze the responses to that piece that emerged in *Radikal*. For this reason, this newspaper will not be a central element in my analysis but a side way through which I can track the trajectory of the debates initiated in *Birikim*.

A primary outcome of the review of this leftist journal with a critical lens about anti-Semitism was the fact that anti-Semitism could barely occupy a realm in the discussions of leftist intellectuals in Turkey and when it does it is very seldom regarded independent from Zionism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For instance, neither the history of anti-Semitism nor the recent anti-Semitic incidents in Turkey are popular subjects amongst different leftist circles in Turkey with very few exceptions. Therefore, I will argue that the awareness towards anti-Semitism as well as involvement in the struggle against it constitutes one of the thorniest and the most contingent lines about the pluralist claims of leftist groups in Turkey.

4.1 Historical transformations of *Birikim* and the publicity of anti-Semitism debates

Established in 1975, *Birikim* was published monthly and sometimes bimonthly during the five pre-military coup years, until 1980. These years were marked with a convivial and multi-vocal sphere for leftist politics in Turkey. *Birikim*'s publishers described the *raison d'être* and goal of the journal as “not foundering in the fervency of actual times and looking at the actuality from within the long and complex fortune

²⁵ A media conglomerate and a part of the Doğan Holding, DHA includes various newspapers, radio, and TV channels while each one of these media organs might appeal to ideologically quite dissimilar audiences.

of the history of humanity.”²⁶ Moreover, as mentioned earlier, they have not regarded their task as producing a socialist journal but a “socialist culture journal.”²⁷ By this move, they broadened their scope to involve more than just the articles about real politics; in their own words, their work was about “everything that relates to the human”²⁸ including arts, literature, philosophy, etc. (“Hakkımızda,” n.d., own translation). In line with this approach, in the first five years, *Birikim* included overview articles about the latest political developments in Turkey and in the world with a particular interest in the countries in which real socialism²⁹ was being experienced, reflections upon local and global currents in arts and literature, philosophical translations from thinkers among whom were Walter Benjamin, Michel Foucault, Nicos Poulantzas, Tzevan Todorov, Louis Althusser and Eric Hobsbawm, reflections upon Marx’ writings and different currents in Marxist politics, reviews about local and global leftist struggles and recent literary works such as poems by Can Yücel and stories by Selim İleri. Expectedly and unlike the current situation, in the 1970s’ *Birikim*, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities in Turkey were not prominent issues of debate. For instance, no single article covered the convoluted history and the presence that Kurds and Armenians have been going through either under the Ottoman Empire or during the Republican Era. When Kurdish issue could occupy some lines in the introductory article under the title of This Month’s Events,³⁰ it was addressed as “the problems of Kurdish people,”³¹ and its solution was imagined to be possible “only within the borders of the country and

²⁶ “Güncelliğin hararetine kapılıp kalmamak, olup bitene insanlık tarihinin uzun ve karmaşık devranı içinden bakmak.”

²⁷ “sosyalist kültür dergisi.”

²⁸ “İnsana dair her şey.”

²⁹ ‘Real socialism’ or ‘actually existing socialism’ is a term that became popular during the Cold-War era. It is used to describe the countries in the Eastern-Bloc where the Soviet-style socialism was implemented as a state imposed policy and ideology. For further discussion on this topic, see Bahro (1978) and Verdery (1996).

³⁰ Ayın Olayları.

³¹ “Kürt halkının sorunlarının...”

with a socialist method”³² (“Aydın olayları,” 1975, p. 3, own translation). When it comes to Armenians, *Birikim* published an article titled *Talat Pasa* which was presented in the editor’s introductory article as “a concrete proof of the deep segregation between anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist attitudes”³³ (“Aydın olayları,” 1975, p. 3, own translation) and in which “the Armenian slaughter”, as the author of the article names it (Herbert, 1975. p. 55), appeared as a minor point compared to the debate about anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism.

Unlike Kurds and Armenians, Jews were the subject of an article in the first years of the journal; in 1978 they published the translation of an article by Elie Kedourie who was a prominent historian of the Middle East and who paid attention to the Sephardic Jewry in his studies. His article was titled “Young Turks, Free Masons, and Jews” and it focused on the letters written by Sir Gerard Lowther, the British Ambassador to Istanbul between 1908 and 1913, while these letters were loaded with conspiracy theories about a secret alliance between these three groups argued to be serving Zionism. According to the narrative of Kedourie, Lowther was portraying ‘the Jew’ as ‘entrapping the Turk,’ and his claims were too bold to point out to an inherent Jewish alliance with Young Turks as the responsible party for the deportation and exclusion of Armenians, Greeks, and Arabs. Kedourie called all these assertions “fusion fantasies,” yet he argued that they should be taken seriously due to their determining power in the sphere of diplomatic politics (Kedourie, 1978, p. 57). Thus, we can deduce that although Kedourie never used this word, the very first article that touches upon the Jewry in Turkey that was published in *Birikim* aimed at raising awareness towards anti-Semitism since it laid bare the anti-Semitic content of Lowther’s letters through a critical stance towards the conspiracy theories

³² “...ülke sınırları içerisinde ve sosyalist bir yolla...”

³³ “<<anti-kolonyalist>> ve <<anti-emperyalist>> tutumlar arasındaki derin ayrımın somut belgesi.”

to which Lowther appealed and which he aimed to spread. However, Kedourie's article did not have a powerful impact to initiate and perpetuate a critical debate about the prejudices and discontent towards the Jews. The only response to that article was a two-page piece written by Mete Tunçay in the same volume of the journal with the title "On Young Turks, Freemasons and Jews." Interestingly, the editors presented Tunçay's piece right before Kedourie's article while this arrangement suggests the reader to read the review of Kedourie's article before the original piece. Yet, considering the content of Tunçay's very short piece which stood as a warning to be cautious while reading Kedourie, such a sequencing of articles becomes strategically understandable. Tunçay began his review as follows:

Prof. Kedourie, one of whose books has been translated into Turkish with the title '*Nationalism in Europe*', is originally a Jew from Baghdad. I am sorry to feel that I must mention this. It is ugly to attempt to explain the ideas of an author with his racial origins. Kedourie generally raises rightful objections in his presentation at this volume. Yet, against the possibility that Kedourie, this time on the opposite way round from the letter's direction, might provide an impression as if there was no single relation between Jews and the Unionists [members of the Committee of Union and Progress], it is necessary to keep in mind that Kedourie might have favored the Jews too much, (Tunçay, 1978, p. 52, own translation)³⁴

In the rest of his piece, Tunçay mentioned that although Lowther was "an extremely conspiracy-minded diplomat,"³⁵ "the essence of his claims was not completely false"³⁶ (p.53, own translation). Despite the 'ugliness,' as Tunçay named it, of explaining someone's ideas with his racial roots, Tunçay manifested how he feels an obligation to link Kedourie's favor towards the Jews, as Tunçay perceived it, and the fact that Kedourie himself was a Baghdadi Jew. First of all, the idea of favoring the Jews is quite vague in the sense that it is not clear which Jews Tunçay thinks that Kedourie favors; does each member of this community need a favor in order to be

³⁴ See Appendix, 1.

³⁵ "AŞIRI <<komplocu>> bir diplomat..."

³⁶ "...ama anlattıklarının özü büsbütün yanlış değildir."

detached from an alignment with the Unionists? Or, are there certain individuals within the Jewish community that might have certain ties with the Unionists? Neither in the introductory paragraph nor the rest of his writing, Tunçay made clear what he meant by this alignment and to what end it served. For this reason, we cannot have a clue from Tunçay's piece about which aspects of Lowther's claims constituted the true essence of his argument and what aspects were detached from this true essence to build up conspiracy. As mentioned earlier, apart from Tunçay's introductory remark, Kedourie's piece does not seem to have created further published debate about neither the conspiracy theories nor the discontent towards the Jews and these two articles would remain the only ones that picked an ethnic or religious community as the main topic in the first years of the Journal until its closure in 1980 due to the military coup d'état in Turkey.

After a nine-year interruption, *Birikim* started to be published again in 1989. In the last volume before the closure, not foreseeing what was about to come, the editor of the journal explained their near-future plans about the formation of *Birikim*. For instance, he stated that they would not prepare anymore the comparably more up-to-date "International Events and Problems" and "Turkey" sections—the two subsections into which "This Month's Events" section has been bifurcated over time—; together with the financial difficulties and lack of paper, this decision was argued to stem from the lack of harmony between actuality that these sections contain and the 'theoretical' spirit of the journal. The editor explained these sections as a "redundance"³⁷ that is "antithetical to the structure"³⁸ of the journal ("Birikim'den," 1980, p. 3, own translation). This explanation shows that when it comes to compromise due to financial reasons and to choose between the two types

³⁷ "...iyiden iyiye bir fazlalık..."

³⁸ "kendi yapısına aykırı bir iş..."

of writings that occupy the pages of the journal, the pre-military coup editors of *Birikim* used to prioritize the cultural/theoretical writings over the texts about daily politics in Turkey. Yet, new *Birikim* -in the process started in 1989-, together with perpetuating the theoretical duty it once undertook, was more open to publications about actual politics as well as the history and the present condition of Turkey. This transformation might be partly due to the urge towards scrutinizing what Turkey had been going through during and right after the military coup d'état as the confrontation with this recent violent past and pondering upon the restructuring of Turkey have been prominent topics in the journal after this date. However, their interest in the daily politics in Turkey exceeded the limits of examining the military coup and its long-term impacts. For instance, the sustainability of Bilkent as the first private university project in Turkey (Onaran, 1990), elections in the Istanbul Bar Association (İnanıcı, 1990), the Congress of the True Path Party [*Doğru Yol Partisi*, DYP] (Laçiner, 1993) constituted the subjects that were discussed in the articles published throughout this new process.

Another important transformation about the topics that *Birikim* covers was related to the inclusion and predominance of articles about identity politics. This type of transformation was resonant with the post-coup rise of political organizations which define their *raison d'être* on the basis of ethnic and gender identities. Previously, during the period between the 1960s and 1980s, ethnicity and gender related issues were absorbed by an overarching 'socialist struggle' in the leftist political realm.³⁹ However, as Zürcher suggests "in the aftermath of the 1980 coup the left was crushed so thoroughly" (2001, p. 219) due to the immense amount of systematic violence which includes the enforced closure of various political

³⁹ This strand can be best observed in the case of Progressive Women's Association (*İlerici Kadınlar Derneği*) which was established in 1975 as a branch of the Communist Party. See Akal (2011).

organizations and their media organs, imprisonment of the members of these organizations, murders and enforced disappearances under custody. In an environment where the socialist organizations were suppressed, feminist and identity-based political organizations thrived with certain degrees of independence from the socialist question. For instance, the first legal march after the coup d'état was a “protest against the battering of women in the home”⁴⁰ initiated by thriving feminist organizations⁴¹ in May 1987 (Sirman, 1989, p. 1). Similarly, the foundations of the Kurdish political struggle were structured within the socialist movement of the pre-coup period as we can see in the case of Revolutionary Cultural Associations of the East (DDKO).⁴² Yet, the increasing systematic violence during the coup period which targeted Kurdish leftists on the basis of not only their ideological positions but also their ethnic identities⁴³ accelerated the constitution of a Kurdish political struggle the primary concern of which became the question of ethnic identity rather than the class struggle. Thus, while having their roots in the pre-coup era's socialist movements, both feminist and Kurdish struggles of the post-coup period posed serious critiques towards the idea that the socialist solution would also bring about the emancipation of women and ethnic minorities. For this reason, while in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup d'état the leftist political realm in Turkey ‘was crushed so thoroughly’ as Zürcher argued, we can also claim that it became more polyphonic at the same time. As the leftist political realm in Turkey transformed into a different context, *Birikim* got its share of this transformation.

⁴⁰ *Dayağa Karşı Kadın Dayanışması Kampanyası* in Yoğurtçu Parkı (Kadıköy District).

⁴¹ These organizations which were established in the post-coup period are widely referred as “the second wave of the feminist movement in Turkey” (Öztürkmen, 2013, p. 255). For lengthy analyses and discussions about Turkey's second wave feminist struggles, see Tekeli (1990) and Çakır (2005).

⁴² *Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları* (DDKO) was established in 1969 and mainly populated by the members and sympathizers of the Workers Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*). See Bozarslan (2007).

⁴³ A most obvious example of this type of political violence is the case of Diyarbakır Prison. For an ethnographic analysis on this matter, see—especially the chapter 5— Aras (2013).

In addition, I would argue that the transformation that *Birikim* has gone through in the post-coup process—regarding the centralization of identity-related questions—can be traced back not only to the changes in national political context but also to the new currents in the international leftist intellectual sphere. Most importantly, the 1980s were years of an explosion in the scholarship about nationalism. Especially the year 1983 witnessed the publishing of three major works in this field, namely Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, Eric Hobsbawm’s *The Invention of Tradition*, and Ernst Gellner’s *Nations and Nationalism*. All of these three works had paradigm changing impacts in the study of nationalities since they all challenged the primordialist assumptions⁴⁴ about nations which used to approach the concept of the nation as an ontologically given and ever-present entity rather than a historical construction. In contrast, the modernist accounts of Anderson, Gellner, and Hobsbawm attempted with different approaches to show how the idea of the nation came about in line with nationalism as an ideology. To put it differently, with their works nationalism has been historicized and contextualized as a product of a particular era. While Gellner’s Weberian accounts were never published in *Birikim*, especially Hobsbawm’s Marxist approach to historiography was quite influential for this socialist journal. Indeed, Hobsbawm was translated for *Birikim* even in the pre-coup period (1975). This interest in Hobsbawm’s writings—especially in those about nationalism as an invented tradition—would only accelerate in the early post-coup publications of *Birikim* (1990; 1993; 1994; 1996). In other words, the timely combination of the questions that are posed by the rising Kurdish liberation movement and a growing international theoretical inclination to consider nations as historical constructs resulted in a growing interest in interrogating the

⁴⁴ See Fichte (2008) and Herder (2002) as examples of the primordialist assumptions.

establishment of the Turkish nation and nationalisms as well as the inclusionary and exclusionary mechanisms around which they are organized. As a result, the new *Birikim* started to publish extensively on ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and nationalism.⁴⁵ Over time, attention towards the experiences of women also increased, and feminist texts began to be published and translated⁴⁶ for *Birikim* while this was not the case for the journal's pre-coup issues even when we consider the theoretical translation articles published. The question of nationalism was further examined theoretically with *Birikim*'s joint 45th-46th volume in January and February 1993 under the title of the "Nationalism Syndrome." From this point onward, nearly each volume would include articles about nationalism and the Kurdish issue. Until mid-1995, this situation continued as a growing interest in the Kurdish issue and publication of a few articles about the Armenian issue. Finally, *Birikim* dedicated its March-April 1995 volume to 'the ethnic identity and minorities.' The range of article topics in this volume included theoretical approaches to minorities and nationalism, confrontations with the exclusionary foundations of the notion of Turkish nation as well as ethnic and religious minorities such as Armenians (Ayvaz; Danziqyan; Dink), Assyrians (Bilge; Karataş), Circassians (Bjedug; Taymaz), Georgians (Çiloğlu), Greeks (Belge), Hamshenis (Ersoy), Jews (Başak; Ovidia; Grossman), Romas (Duygulu), Laz (Aksamaz) and Sabbathaians (Zorlu). Interestingly, despite the journal's interest in the Kurdish and Alavi issues as manifested in the previous volumes, there were no articles about Kurds and Alevis.

Of the three articles about Jewishness in Turkey published in this volume, Grosman's was a very short narrative about the 'peaceful' lives of Jews in the

⁴⁵ See Fritsche (1991), Yaşar (1991), and Suny (1991) among many others.

⁴⁶ See Devecioğlu (1991), Bora (1992), Fraser (1992), and Segal (1992) among many others.

Ottoman Empire/ modern Turkey throughout the centuries, while Margulies's (nicknamed as Başak) and Ovadia's pieces were politically more critical, problematizing the widespread silence and blindness among Turkey's leftists towards anti-Semitism. Grosman's article was in parallel with the 500th year discourse which resonates with the Turkish State's official discourse about hospitality towards Jews. This similarity stems from Grosman's references to Ottoman/Turkish leaders' praises towards some Jews as well as to the Talmudic verse that 'the law of the Government is the law' and an emphasis on the redundancy of still talking about the 1930s' Thrace Pogroms against Jews, representing the Pogroms as minor occurrences in a very long history (Grosman, 1995, p. 156-157). Stella Ovadia's article, titled "You don't have any rights either to remind me or forget that I am Jewish"⁴⁷ was both a critique towards Turkey's left and an open call for establishing solidarity with Jewish communities against anti-Semitism. Ovadia discussed how her fights against patriarchy and anti-Semitism empowered each other (Ovadia, 1995, p. 144). Throughout the article, she first problematized the collective silence within Turkey's left towards anti-Semitism by referring to the absence of any reaction or mobilization among leftist groups after the 1986 Neve Şalom Synagogue bombing. Then, she discussed a similar indifference towards the Turkish State's official declaration about minorities as 'native foreigners', and their identification as 'possible saboteurs' in the Official Gazette which was dated 28/12/1988 as well as the ignorance towards the attack on Istanbul's Ulus Jewish Cemetery in 1994 (p. 145). Also, Ovadia problematized what she called 'banal racism' that she experienced in everyday life through her contact with her friends from the leftist circles. Ovadia gave the example of a friend with whom she visited women's shelters in Sweden;

⁴⁷ "Yahudi olduğumu ne unutmaya ne de hatırlatmaya hakkın var."

when Ovadia mentioned that she wanted to visit Stockholm's Jewish Museum her friend reacted as follows: "I didn't know that you were religious"⁴⁸, "I am fed up with the notices about cruelties committed against Jews" and "I can never think of you as a Jew"⁴⁹ (p. 145). Similarly, she was teased by a friend who has just seen the movie *Schindler's List* with the statement, "I couldn't see your father's name on the list" (p. 145). In another instance, upon coming across a Star of David, she was asked: "You do not identify yourself with that sign, right?". Another memory of her is from a dinner reception of Human Rights Foundation which was organized to raise awareness about minorities and the person sitting next to Ovadia told her that she could sit with other Jews instead of him if she wanted to. The rest of the article can be regarded as a manifesto and, as mentioned above, a call for solidarity: "And if there would again be people who would want to remind me that I am Jewish through oppression in this country, don't leave the responsibility of struggle on my shoulders because as long as racism is as common and contagious, the fight against racism cannot be left on minorities' shoulders" (p. 146). Margulies on the other hand focused on a discourse which is widespread among leftist groups, and which "reduces capital into racial basis" (2004, p. 157). He argued that "If a movement that regards a Jewish holding owner as a proletariat antagonist and does not, at the same time, defend him/her against racial attacks then it does not know how to struggle against racism" (p. 157). Besides, Margulies held a very critical position towards the 500th year discourse—the influence of this discourse is also visible in Grosman's piece as mentioned before—in his call for the struggle against racism.

Together with these, Birikim was going to publish several articles about Jews and anti-Semitism in Turkey all of which were written by Rifat Bali between this

⁴⁸ "Dindar olduğumu bilmiyordum."

⁴⁹ "Seni bir Yahudi olarak düşünemiyorum."

volume and another momentous one in 2004. At the beginning, topics of Bali's articles ranged from the image of 'the Jew' in the Turkish nationalist literature (1996a, p. 78-83), and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories among Turkish Islamists (1996b, p. 60-62; 1996c, p. 74-87) to anti-Semitic discourse within Turkish elections (1996d, p. 171-173), and Turkish nationalism of Jews (1997, p. 47-53). As Bali started writing for *Birikim* anti-Semitism began to appear as one of the issues discussed in this journal's pages regularly, if not very often.

The most intense published discussion about anti-Semitism within the leftist circles of Turkey started with a special edition of *Birikim* in 2004. Soon, this discussion leaped into the pages of *Radikal 2* as well. Indeed, an article which appeared in this issue was already a reaction upon a prior but recent debate which broke out in the pages of *Radikal 2*. *Birikim's* special edition was titled "Two Sides of the Medallion: Anti-Semitism and Zionism"⁵⁰; both the title and the content of some articles became a focus of controversy. This political and intellectual conflict escalated further and ended up with the publishing of a book by Rifat Bali (2005). I believe that this edition and the discussion that it triggered stand as a prism that reflects the variety of positionings among leftists in Turkey with regard to anti-Semitism and to what extent anti-Semitism is taken seriously in the pluralist/leftist realm. It also shows the different ways of being blind towards this particular form of hatred which primarily include a disability to consider anti-Semitism without making connections to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, not situating it within the context of Turkey or perceiving it as a by-gone threat.

First of all, the publication of this edition with a claim to focus on anti-Semitism was a momentous event considering the lack of discussion about this

⁵⁰ Madalyonun İki Yüzü: Anti-Semitizm ve Siyonizm.

problem among the leftist circles. The edition was an ensemble of a variety of viewpoints. Twelve of the sixteen articles in this volume were related to the title of the edition. Yet, as expected from the title not all of them would have the same stress upon anti-Semitism. Five of the twelve articles that examine anti-Semitism and/or Zionism were translations. For the remaining seven articles, one article had nothing to do with a discussion of anti-Semitism, and its goal was examining the history of Palestinian politics (Keleşoğlu), one article was about the peace movements in Israel (Çubukçu), in three of them discussion about Zionism was overshadowing the possibility of a debate over anti-Semitism in Turkey (Kıvanç; Laçiner; Paker). The remaining two articles were focusing on anti-Semitism situating it within the context of Turkey (Günaysu; Margulies). Only by looking at this picture, it is possible to claim that such a collection would not satisfy the expectations from an issue that has anti-Semitism in its focus. Yet, the main controversy was going to occur around Ümit Kıvanç's article. Kıvanç's article aimed at establishing an argument about how the label of 'anti-Semite' is used in order to prevent criticisms towards Zionism and the politics of the Israeli State. Moreover, in order to make this argument, Kıvanç chose to open the article with his reflections towards a piece translated for *Radikal 2* and the criticism that this piece's author and translator received from Rifat Bali, a prominent researcher of anti-Semitism and Jewish life in Turkey. In other words, not only the aftermath but also the background of this most intense debate was in the newspaper *Radikal*, and this proves the necessity of a brief examination over this newspaper for the study at hand although *Radikal* was not necessarily a left-wing publication.

The article that was published in *Radikal 2* was originally from a Canadian journal called *Adbusters*. *Adbusters* is an online journal located in British Columbia,

and as it is possible to conclude from the name, the publishers of the journal are from a leftist group opposed to taking commercial ads. With the circulation of 120.000 copies, the interest towards this journal was transcending the boundaries of Canada and involving readers from the US as well (Bali, 2005). Even before the article that was going to be translated for *Radikal 2*, the same journal had published an article titled “Why Won’t Anyone Say They Are Jewish?” in which the author of the article, Kalle Lasn, came up with a “50 most influential neocons” list for the George W. Bush era politics in the US and put stars next to the names which allegedly belonged to the neocons of Jewish descent (as cited in Bali, 2005). The main objective of the very short piece was showing that half of the list of effective neocons are Jewish and relating this to the close ties between the American and Israeli states. Lasn argued that these people do not distinguish between American and Israeli interest as if sticking on one side over the other might be more acceptable from a leftist standpoint. Moreover, Lasn stated that “A lot of ink has been spilled chronicling the pro-Israel leanings of American neocons and the fact that a disproportionate percentage of them are Jewish” (as cited in Bali, 2005). Through this claim that Lasn used for consolidating his position and finding a basis for the necessity of preparing such a list, he was at the same time refuting his own claim put forward in the title that nobody would say that these people were Jewish. Yet, he was right about the fact that such claims have been expressed excessively in various anti-Semitic accounts together with the conspiracy theories about a Jewish hand over the world. All in all, Lasn terminated his piece with the following words which aim at creating a similar impact as those conspiracy theories: “What they [neocons] all share is the view that the US is a benevolent hyper power that must protect itself by reshaping the rest of the world into its morally superior image. And half of them are Jewish”

(2004). Here, with his proposition that neocons are all united in the goal of shaping the world according to the US interest, once again Lasn refuted his claims that neocons cannot discriminate between the US and Israeli interests. Apart from all the internal inconsistencies of this work, Lasn's piece was mainly problematic due to the alignment it attempted to establish between a religious/ethnic group and an ideological disposition. Such an alignment leads to the blurring of politically influential non-Jews in the US who might lobby for Israel or politically conservative Jews such as Henry Kissinger who are well-known for their influence in decisions that are contrary to the interest of the Israeli state. Yet Lasn's method of establishing an alignment between Jews and observing the Israeli interest is much more sophisticated compared to some of its counterparts. First of all, Lasn was aware of the fact that he might be accused of being an anti-Semite after publishing such a list and through the use of a certain rhetorical device he tried to do away with the possible accusations even before they appear, with the following words: "Drawing attention to the Jewishness of the neocons is a tricky game. Anyone who does so can count on automatically being smeared as an anti-Semite" (as cited in Bali, 2005). This rhetorical device is an attempt to refute possible accusing arguments in advance by merely revealing the anti-Semitic content in one's writings and by accounting for such an awareness on the author's side, claiming the legitimacy of his ideas. It stems from the belief and the hope that since the author of the article is conscious of anti-Semitism and able to guess how his article might be characterized as anti-Semitic, it, indeed, should not be characterized as being so. Yet, in reality, adding a section which reveals such an anticipation does not transform the content of the writing and thus it cannot add to or subtract from its anti-Semitic dispositions if they are already there. In short, such a rhetorical device does not affect the alignment that Lasn tried

to establish between Jews and a certain ideological position while it asks for the legitimacy of the sentence ‘And half of them are Jewish.’ Another rhetorical device used by Lasn appears as revealing his consciousness that not all the Jews think similarly. Then, this suggests that all the Jews may not have the same ideological disposition (being supportive towards the Israeli state’s political actions in this case), but Jewishness should be a reason for doubting about it. Within such a proposition it is not possible to do away with one’s racial roots and regard him/her in his/her singularity about his/her political dispositions. In other words, in order to protect himself from possible accusations of anti-Semitism Lasn proposed to at least doubt each Jew instead of making the easier equation between the Jew and the support for the Israeli state which would be more fragile vis-à-vis the accusations of anti-Semitism. Another problem with his way of argumentation lies in the fact that the notion of supporting the Israeli state is also quite vague since it consists of various conflicting dispositions as well while I believe that it is not the duty of this dissertation to open up a discussion about it. Moreover, we know that Lasn has already proposed a dichotomy between the American state interest and the Israeli state interest, accused some/all neocons by supporting the latter and problematically adumbrated the preferability of the former. Thus, his arguments resemble the conspiracy theories about a ‘Jewish interest that governs the world’ while recognizing that not all Jews might partake in such a project and rendering his argument criticism-proof to some extent.

As expressed earlier, this article did not have a central place in the discussion that took place mainly in *Radikal* and *Birikim* although it was mentioned a few times by different authors. Yet, I especially wanted to spare some space to discuss it for two reasons. First, through this discussion, we can see certain strategies as these

above-mentioned rhetorical devices that will also appear in some of the cases that I am going to examine in *Birikim* and *Radikal*. Second, I wanted to mention this in order to draw attention to the political dispositions of the author of the article that was translated and published by *Radikal*. The article published by *Radikal* was also about a similar issue, dealing with neocons and the Israeli interest. Thus, this discussion might be helpful in making sense of it.

The article translated for *Radikal2* was titled “Portraits of Bush and His Cavalry; The Architects of the War in Iraq.” This article was making connections between the evangelical religious education of George W. Bush and Condoleezza Rice by vaguely linking this background to a sympathy towards Israel. What was most interesting about the article and what attracted Bali’s attention was the fact that either in the translation or the editing process there had been some changes and additions to the original article. In *Radikal’s* version, the article had some sub-titles dividing the article into different sections while such titles did not exist in the original version published in *Adbusters*. Later, the *Radikal2’s* editing team explained that it was not the responsibility of the translator, but they did it themselves for the sake of clarity. The sections were arranged and entitled according to the names of politicians that are mentioned the most in those parts of the article. For instance, there were sections about President Bush, Condoleezza Rice, and Paul Wolfowitz. Yet, in these titles added by *Radikal 2’s* editing team each person’s name was accompanied with his/her racial or religious affiliations. One section was titled ‘Evangelical Bush,’ the other ‘Jewish Wolfowitz’ and finally ‘Black Christian Rice’ (as cited in Bali, 2005) while such adjectives were non-existent in Lasn’s piece. Thus, first of all, *Radikal2’s* job was a bad translation that aimed at twisting the original article according to the translator’s or editor’s intentions. It is not to claim

that such intentions are not existent in the original piece but apparently *Radikal2* team wanted to emphasize them and thus imposed this emphasis in their publication by carrying it to a more visible level compared to the original article. Such an intervention not only included an anti-Semitic manner but by linking Rice's political acts and dispositions with the fact that she was a black Christian it became an example of an overall racist position. *Radikal's* publication of this article and the manner of their editing received a few criticisms which started with Rifat Bali's article, also published in *Radikal2* (as cited in Bali, 2005). In this piece, Bali mentioned the background of Kalle Lasn to show his anti-Semitic tendencies through a very brief discussion of Lasn's previous piece, "Why Won't Anyone Say They Are Jewish." In addition, Bali, by comparing the original article as it was published in *Adbusters* to the translated version in *Radikal*, criticized the translator for not remaining faithful to the original article due to both shortenings and contributions as we see in the case of section titles. According to Bali, this intervention was a result of an intention to transform the article to a tone that was more harmonious with the tone of the dominant intellectual circles in Turkey. *Radikal 2* editors agreed to publish Bali's article, but the publishing came with a surprise for Bali as it ended with an *Editor's Note* section. The note was as follows:

We added the section titles, but all of them originate from the information proposed within the text itself. If you pay attention, we add section titles nearly to all articles (for instance, academicians generally do not use section titles). This aims both at arousing the reader's interest and diminishing the weight of 'terrifying' block writings. If ever your piece includes an implication that we are anti-Semitic, we will just say 'have mercy.' *Radikal 2* is a supplement that embraced the principle of being a platform for those who cannot make their voices heard. Our past is the best proof of this. As the last word, let us tell you that we are sorry if we upset you. By the way, let us add that we didn't use any section titles in your recent piece since it is a response to a previous article whereas two section titles would seem so nice. (as cited in Bali, 2005, own translation)⁵¹

⁵¹ See Appendix, 2.

By announcing *Radikal 2* as “a platform for those who cannot make their voices heard” the editor team was winking at pluralist ideals. Yet, at the same time, their past as they propose it became a shield that may protect them from potential critiques and accusations which might imply any failure in struggling for such ideals.

Soon, this debate between Bali and *Radikal 2* editors fired up with the translation of Kalle Lasn’s article spread into another platform, *Birikim*, as Ümit Kıvanç’s piece in “Two Sides of the Medallion; Anti-Semitism and Zionism” issue included several references to it. Kıvanç’s article, which started with a direct reference to the abovementioned debate and which had a quite aggressive tone towards Bali and his critique, was titled as “Political Correctness Against Reality.”⁵² Following our theoretical debate in the previous chapter, it can be argued that a critique towards political correctness, depending on the position that it takes, can be aligned with a pluralist critique towards the liberal understandings of multiculturalism that would resonate with Haraway’s call for constructing a stance which is essentially based on accountability, and responsibility to the extent that what is politically correct and what is not might also be shaped from within the dominant norms/ideologies and it cannot be regarded as being positioned beyond perspectives. Yet, Kıvanç’s article in which the term ‘political correctness’ is used in a way that corresponds to any current critiques towards anti-Semitism utilized the potential of a critique towards liberal multiculturalist assumptions in order to devalue the debates over anti-Semitism. From the very beginning, Kıvanç stated that he would like to “get rid of the charges that the crimes committed by the Nazis against the Jews loaded on the shoulders of each of us as the members of the human

⁵² Politik Doğruluk Hakikate Karşı.

family”⁵³ (Kıvanç, 2004, p. 31). With this point, Kıvanç located anti-Semitism within the borders of Europe and in the WWII era ignoring the trajectories that it has gone through within the borders of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic in different time periods both independent of and dependent on the Nazi project. This was also in line with the rest of the article which did not include any single reference to anti-Semitism in this region. He further explained that “the conditions necessitate and force”⁵⁴ (p. 31) us to get rid of this charge as the label ‘anti-Semite’ had a use value at the hands of the Israeli State in order to prevent debates over the Palestinian tragedy. Thus, with this move, in addition to not being able to locate anti-Semitism outside of the Nazi project, Kıvanç also joined the current within which it is not possible to raise the issue of anti-Semitism without necessarily relating it to the acts of the Israeli State. Moreover, in doing this, he did not abstain from bold generalizations such as “Now the victims of the Nazi cruelty follow the footsteps of their slaughterers”⁵⁵ (p. 31). In addition, he attempted to degrade the very valuable - from a pluralist standpoint- question “Isn’t it possible to fight against the Israeli State without being an anti-Semite”⁵⁶ by claiming that the underlying meaning of this ‘much-debated’ question is “Isn’t it possible to fight against the Israeli State without being labeled as an anti-Semite”⁵⁷ (p. 31). Once again, Kıvanç took a Western-centric view by claiming that this question is a much-debated one while it was not the case at all within the borders of Turkey as the lack of discussions about anti-Semitism has already proved us. In all these senses, Kıvanç’s article which argued for doing away with the debates of anti-Semitism as ‘the current conditions

⁵³ “İzninizle, Nazilerin Yahudilere karşı işlediği suçların insanlık ailesinin fertleri olarak hepimizin üzerine yüklediği yüklerden artık kurtulmak istediğimi belirtiyorum.”

⁵⁴ “Şartlar bunu gerektiriyor ve zorluyor.”

⁵⁵ “Şimdi Nazi zulmünün kurbanları, katillerinin izinden gidiyor.”

⁵⁶ “Yahudi düşmanı olmadan İsrail devleti ile mücadele edilemez mi?”

⁵⁷ “Yahudi düşmanı ilân edilmeden İsrail ile mücadele edilemez mi?”

necessitated and forced us to do so' was incompatible with a journal edition that claimed to discuss anti-Semitism since Kıvanç's main premise was the impropriety of such a debate under current conditions. At the same time, it can be easily foreseen that an argument towards the present impropriety or outmodedness of debates over hatred towards Armenians or Kurds is not as suggestible within the leftists circles as in the case of Jews, and I would argue that this stems from the above-mentioned tendency towards not locating the latter within the context of Turkey's present.

As argued above, Bali's reaction to Lasn had a central importance for Kıvanç as Bali became a major one of his interlocutors from the very beginning and throughout the article. Kıvanç's initial sentence read as follows: "An article that Rifat Bali wrote for *Radikal İki* has got past my endurance about an issue that I have been suffering from for a long time"⁵⁸ (p. 31). In the rest of the article, Kıvanç wrote about the rightfulness of what Lasn did by mentioning the 'Jewishness' of some individuals among the efficient neo-cons in the American politics and aligning this to the Israeli interest. In order to emphasize the rightfulness of Lasn, Kıvanç argued that what was problematic was not Lasn's attitude but being a "detector" of anti-Semitism referring to Rifat Bali (p. 32). At the same time, he accused Bali of not paying attention to an opinion about the impact of the Israel lobby on the US government by naming this impact as the 'main issue' (p. 32). This view ignores the possible anxiety that a pluralist leftist intellectual might feel towards the anti-Semitic tendencies observed in Lasn's article bolstered with the racial exclamations introduced in its translation by *Radikal* and the fact that such anxiety could be more important from a perspective, although not of his own. In addition, this view prioritizes certain political concerns over others while declaring concerns about anti-

⁵⁸ "Rifat Bali'nin *Radikal İki*'ye yazdığı bir yazı, uzun zamandır muzdarip olduğum bir konuda sabrımı taşırdı."

Semitism minor and redundant. Moreover, it winks at the tendency that asks for determining one's position towards the Israeli State once this person is a Jew and intends to talk about anti-Semitism. He emphasized this position with the following words:

Each Jew is, initially, obliged to describe his/her relationship with this state. This is inevitable under these conditions. Think of it this way: we are in 1942, we have just watched the news about what is going on in the Treblinka Concentration Camp, and we confront with someone who says 'Hello, I am German.' The critical part starts at this point. Being in a world where whenever we hear 'German' we immediately think of Nazis and also we put this issue forward in any situation that we dislike about Germans, the following question cannot be regarded as redundant however bothersome it might be: Is the 'Jew' identical with the Israeli state? Or at least, is s/he its natural partner in crime?" (p. 39, own translation)⁵⁹

Following the parallel that Kivanç drew one could conclude that it can be legitimate to put forward the Israeli State crimes 'in any situation that we dislike about' the Jews. First of all, the possibility of the existence of a situation which someone may dislike about a whole group of people sounds quite vague and such vagueness is not innocent of racist tendencies while terminologically it is called anti-Semitism when this group of people happens to be the Jews. Second, once we accept Kivanç's proposition that the Israeli State ethically puts such a charge upon each member of the world's various Jewish communities, would it be sufficient for a Jew to describe his/her relation to this state in order to transcend this burden and proceed to discuss other issues? Isn't it possible for someone to complain about current anti-Semitism without necessarily referring to the Israeli state? Aren't there any stakes at this, from a leftist point of view that opposes the Israeli State's policies, such as accepting the Israeli state's definitions of Jewishness and anti-Semitism and ignoring many other definitions transgressing the boundaries of the Israeli state's official ideology? Finally, how might this approach differ from the one of the right-wing anti-Semites

⁵⁹ See Appendix, 3.

who urge Turkey's Jews to condemn Israel during every bombardment of Gaza?

While the latter can be regarded as a condition to exist, should we consider the former as a common code for participation within the leftist circles? Then, doesn't this necessitate approaching each and every Jew with suspicion until there is an exclamation about such relationship, which was also the case for Lasn's article?

After such claims for the legitimacy of Lasn's article, Kıvanç raised the question "To what extent is the anti-Semitism efficient now?"⁶⁰ (p. 41, own translation). In this section, he "humbly" claimed that "the era of the specter of the anti-Semitism has passed for now"⁶¹ (p. 41, own translation). He further stated that "It is not a common threat at all to explicitly bear enmity towards the Jews solely because they were born Jewish"⁶² (p. 41, own translation). In order to bolster his argument, he asked about the number of Jews who are currently forced to leave their homes and migrate, have problems in their jobs, and live under terror's threat (p. 42). Kıvanç, at the same time, stated that the hatred within Europe is now directed mostly against Africans and Muslims and when neo-Nazis use the vocabulary of anti-Semitism it is not because of the centrality of the hatred towards Jews but out of nostalgia (p. 42). As an example, he mentioned the case of Jean-Marie Le Pen and his statement that "This is not the French National Team" regarding the African and Algerian players in the French Football Team (p. 42). First of all, it does not appear even vaguely how Kıvanç made a differentiation between hatred towards Jews and the Nazi nostalgia and why he located Europe to the center of his discussion. Second, his explanations were erroneous considering various anti-Semitic statements of Le Pen which include many incidents such as Holocaust denialism and calling a French

⁶⁰ "Anti-Semitizm şu anda ne kadar etkili?"

⁶¹ "Bütün bunlara ilaveten, naçizane, diyorum ki, bu anti-semitizm heyûlasının devri şimdilik geçti."

⁶² "Ama şimdilik, Yahudilere sırf doğuştan Yahudi oldukları için aşıktan düşmanlık yapılması, hiç de öyle genel bir tehdit değil."

Jewish politician a *crématoire* –cremation oven- in 1988 (“Jean-Marie Le Pen embarrasses daughter Marine with anti-Semitic jibe on front national website,” 2014). Moreover, and what is probably of most importance is the fact that Kıvanç’s piece which raised the question if there were still Jews who live under the threat of terror or forced to leave their homes was published in October 2004, shortly after the two synagogue bombings of November 2003 in Istanbul which left 57 people dead and 700 of them wounded and the murder of Yasef Yahya in August 2003. Yasef Yahya was a dentist of Jewish origin living in Istanbul while his murderers explained the reason for the murder as Yahya’s Jewish sounding name on his office’s signboard. They also stated that they investigated other Jewish names on the same street and later it was argued that the murderers also grabbed Yahya’s cell phone and used its phone book to reach other Jews and ask for money by threatening them (Demir, 2004). Later, both attacks and this individual murder were stated to be Al-Qaida-related considering that one of Yahya’s murderers also committed the bombing attack against the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in Turkey (“Göztündakilerden biri Yasef Yahya’nın katili,” 2004). Despite its similarities with Hrant Dink’s murder in 2007, Yahya’s case did not end up in a political mobilization even among the leftists and liberals, could not find a place in the anti-Semitism issue of a leftist journal which was published only some months later and remained ignored making it possible to argue for the outmodedness and current insignificance of anti-Semitism. Although the possible Al-Qaida link could have been used to claim that this hatred is not common but belongs to an extremist terrorist organization, another related incident would show that such hatred had its correspondence within the larger public as the leftist intellectual Defne Sandalcı prepared a declaration which condemned anti-Semitism. The day after the first attack she handed these

copies to the shopkeepers of Kuledibi and Tünel, the neighborhoods where the attacked synagogues were located, only to be rejected with the words “Take this back. Jews made the attack”⁶³ (Bali, 2004a, own translation). For all these reasons, while Kıvanç paid attention to a fundamental problem that was already rising by the time he wrote his article, namely Islamophobia and white supremacy in the Western European countries such as France, he was at the same time far from a Butlerian radically pluralist stance to the extent that he read the sufferings of different people against each other.

Last but not least, in this article, Kıvanç consulted to the same rhetorical device as Lasn did by mentioning that his ideas could be stigmatized as anti-Semitic and by showing such awareness claiming that they could not be anti-Semitic at all. This rhetoric indicates an awareness about the non-monolithic structure of Jewish communities by giving examples of the Jews who do not support the Israeli state policies or the Republican Party in America. However, since it cannot do away with the suspicion towards each individual Jew it eventually ends up with a claim that the author can foresee the possibility that himself/herself could be stigmatized as an anti-Semite. In this sense, this is a move towards imposing a potential to refute such accusations in advance into such an ability to anticipate. Similar to Lasn, Kıvanç also mentioned the existence of ‘good Jews’ with the following words: “Moreover, we also know about the existence of those people in that country (Israel) who take to the streets against genocidal and expansionist policies... we salute them; they are the honor of humanity”⁶⁴ (p. 40, own translation). Yet this salutation and the mention of the good ones become a tool to legitimize abovementioned suspicion when it is

⁶³ “Bunu geri al. Baskını Yahudiler yaptı.”

⁶⁴ Üstelik, biz o ülkede her şeyi göze alıp, işgalci-soykırımcı politikalara karşı sokaklara dökülen insanların varlığını da biliyoruz, bu yaptığınız ülke savunması değil alenen saldırı” deyip işgal bölgelerinde görev almayı reddeden askerlerin olduğunu da (selâm olsun onlara, onlar insanlığın yüzakıdır!).”

written to be followed by these sentences:

But look, while we express the reality that some Falcons who are influential over the USA governments provide Israel with a power to act despotically and however it wants, if we express that they are Jewish, suddenly we are blocked by assault boats: ‘Stop! Prohibited Area!’ . Isn’t their Jewishness at least a trace that they might be associated with Israel, have a heart! (p. 40, own translation)⁶⁵

Michael Niman’s critique directed towards Lasn’s piece would be helpful at this point since it has important implications for Kıvanç’s piece to the extent that Kıvanç shares Lasn’s ideas either by directly consulting to or by defending them. Niman puts it as follows:

Lasn’s claim that there are lots of Jews among neocons is right. What is wrong with that? There are lots of Jews among socialists. There are numerous Jews within the worker’s movement... After all, Lasn accepts in advance that there is not a monolithic Jewish perspective. Then, what is his argument? The neocons at stake are questioned for what they have done to this country, for they lobbied in favor of an illegal war in Iraq, for supporting the military offense politics morally broken down, for their fight which aims at destroying the bill of rights, and yes, for financially and politically supporting the disgusting and ruthless acts of the Sharon government... That’s why we need to oppose them- not because someone claims that they are Jewish. (as cited in Bali, 2005, p. 54-55, own translation)⁶⁶

As Niman makes explicit, the awareness that Jews have no monolithic perspective is incompatible with the urge for proving the Jewishness of certain people in certain political groups and such incompatibility leaves one without a clear argument but a bundle of arguments moving in different directions. This is the reason why I have been calling these a rhetorical device. In Kıvanç’s case this incompatibility becomes the most apparent when we regard the coexistence of bold generalizations such as “Now the victims of the Nazi cruelty follow the footsteps of their slaughterers” (p. 31, 2004), his emphasis on the importance of laying bare the Jewishness of certain neocons, and the mention of the ‘good Jews’. Niman’s question for Lasn, “Then, what is his argument” is quite valid for Ümit Kıvanç’s text as well.

⁶⁵ See Appendix, 4.

⁶⁶ See Appendix, 5.

Then, the other move that Kıvanç followed to complete this rhetorical move to a full circle came with putting forward the above-mentioned awareness about the possibility of being called an anti-Semite. This appeared in his text in two parts. The first revelation of such an awareness in Kıvanç's piece aimed at showing that Lasn was not an anti-Semite and the second one was for proving that Kıvanç was not racist. The lines that serve for proving that Lasn's argument was not anti-Semitic was bolder than Lasn's own piece in claiming that foreseeing such an accusation exactly corresponds to not being an anti-Semite and that being anti-Semitic and foreseeing such an accusation are mutually exclusive when we consider the fact that Lasn only expressed such a prediction but did not explicitly state an equation between the two unlike Kıvanç. First of all, Kıvanç mentioned how Lasn, just as himself, referred to 'good Jews' as well. Then Kıvanç's lines read as: "*Adbusters* author Kalle Lasn, certainly, for sharing the same state of mind as I have at the moment, was meanwhile expressing that he would probably be accused of anti-Semitism. That is to say, simply, what *Adbusters* author had nothing to do with anti-Semitism" (p. 33, own translation).⁶⁷ Kıvanç's conclusion was an easy one, and it suggested the reader to ignore the content and focus on such equation provided by this rhetorical device. Such more 'aware' types of concessions towards anti-Semitic discourses which bear concerns for establishing a boundary between their positions and the one of the open racists does not form the basis of their arguments on a simple equation between the Jew and the Evil but proceed by keeping a Jewish suspicion alive. The second part in Kıvanç's piece that serves for completing the task of this rhetorical device aims at vindicating Kıvanç's position by claiming that he took the risk of being called an

⁶⁷ "*Adbusters* yazarı Kalle Lasn, elbette, şu anda benim de içinde bulunduğum ruh halini paylaştığından, muhtemelen anti-semitlikle suçlanacağını da arada belirtiyordu. Yani, basitçe, *Adbusters* yazarının yaptığı için anti-semitlikle filan alâkası yoktu."

anti-Semite as he was going to criticize Israel in the following pages of that piece. Michael Niman argues that naming anyone that opposes Israeli policies as anti-Semite is a slander act that weakens the struggle against the reality of anti-Semitism (2004). Kıvanç's article made use of such devaluation of anti-Semitism debates to argue for their overall redundancy. His way of looking at anti-Semitism, in the scope of this particular article, aims at establishing a binary opposition between adhering to the right-wing Israeli State definition of the term and its overall abolishment at least for the time being. In the picture that he drew, debates over anti-Semitism currently have a sole purpose which is serving for the Israeli State interest so they should be abolished. To sum up, his piece clearly aimed at devaluing the possibility of discussing anti-Semitism within leftist circles by merely depicting it as redundant and even politically misleading and dangerous. Yet, Kıvanç claimed that he would be at the forefront of the fight against it if the anti-Semitism would rise once again someday. Apparently, there was a problem of recognizing its existence.

Other articles in this issue such as the ones written by Ömer Laçiner and Murat Paker implicated awareness towards the anti-Semitism in Turkey while not taking it as a central issue of debate since they were primarily focused on the Israel/Palestine trajectory in their discussions. On the other hand, Paker's article, which did not deny the present existence of anti-Semitism, also categorized the translation from Judith Butler and Ümit Kıvanç's piece under the same rubric due to the critical approach towards the Israeli state existent in both articles. Butler's article was mainly a reaction to Lawrence Summers' (Harvard's Chancellor by then) critique against the divestment campaigns towards Israel. She agreed with Lawrence to the extent that he mentioned a rise in anti-Semitism, but at the same time, she opposed the idea that imprisons the Jewish identity to the notion of victimhood. For Judith Butler,

victimhood is a notion in movement; it is not static, and it can be easily translocated (Butler, 2004, p. 54-55). In accordance with this, she argued that ‘Jew’ is a notion that is transformed historically and culturally; it appears as an identity which cannot take a unitary form and *telos* (p. 81). In this sense, she stated that the notion of ‘Jew’ did not fit into the definitions proposed by either the Israeli State or the anti-Semitic ideology (p. 81). At the same time, in addition to the case of Lawrence Summers, Judith Butler also considered the case of the Manchester-academic Mona Baker who used to publish the journals *Translator*, and *Translation Studies Abstracts* and who threatened two Israeli academics with unappointing them unless they resign from the editorial board of the two academic journals that she used to administer –and who did so later on- stating that her decision is not personal but political. Butler argued that this act was a clear reduction of Jewishness to a certain definition aligned with the Israeli State and thus, it is anti-Semitic. The reduction that appeared in Kıvanç’s text did not include a clear definition of Jewishness. However, it was based on centralizing the suspicion as well as prioritizing one definition of Jewishness over the others by keeping that suspicion alive. In addition, just like Michael Niman, Butler also took anti-Semitism very seriously while keeping her critical position towards the Israeli State and thus, her approach considerably diverged from the either/or point of view proposed by Kıvanç. Then, I would argue that Paker’s alignment of Kıvanç’s article with Butler’s indicates a lack of reflexes towards the ideas that correspond to concessions to anti-Semitic discourses, given the absence of any problematization about the former and the absence of attention towards the discrepant aspects of Kıvanç’s and Butler’s arguments.

However, such lack of reflexes was problematized in the two declarations and the piece written by Ayşe Günaysu which was published in the very same issue of

the journal. The first declaration was titled “Attacks Against Jews are Encouraged with the Pretext of Israel.”⁶⁸ The declaration was prepared by the Istanbul branch of Human Rights Association (IHD) and dated August 30, 2004. It was primarily prepared as a declaration to be read in front of the office of the right-wing Islamist, and anti-Semitic newspaper *Anadolu’da Vakit* due to a recent tribute to Adolf Hitler published on its pages but it could not be read because of the constant verbal attacks towards six protesters and the intervention of the police. The declaration also condemned the constant calls by the same newspaper for the Chief Rabbinate in Turkey to condemn Israel as well as accusations for not doing so, naming these acts as explicitly racist crimes (p. 55). These calls and accusation were made explicit in the articles directed at the Chief Rabbi Ishak Haleva which were titled “Condemn Israel If You Are a Man”⁶⁹ and “No Sound from the Rabbi”⁷⁰ (p. 55). The declaration ended with a call for “everyone who denies hate speech and recognizes being silent towards the threats against Jews as a shame, to protest the racist manner of the newspaper *Vakit* and to have a common stance not to provide a life space for racism and anti-Semitism, no matter what ideology we might have” (p. 55).

Ayşe Günaysu’s piece was published consequently after this first declaration as a first-hand witness’ account about the interrupted protest in front of the newspaper’s office since Günaysu was one of the six protesters who gathered there that day. At the beginning of the article, Günaysu mentioned the slogans and verbal attacks she encountered there: “Sharon’s Servants, Get Out!”⁷¹ “Down with Israel Collaborators!”⁷² “Do you receive orders from Israel?”⁷³ “What did you do for the

⁶⁸ “İsrail bahanesiyle Yahudilere Saldırıları Teşvik Ediliyor.”

⁶⁹ “Erkeksen İsrail’i kına.”

⁷⁰ “Haham’dan hâlâ çıt yok.”

⁷¹ “Şaron’un uşakları, defolun!”

⁷² “Kahrolsun İsrail işbirlikçileri!”

⁷³ “İsrail’den mi emir alıyorsunuz?”

soldiers that PKK murdered?”⁷⁴ “Where were you when the babies died in Palestine?”⁷⁵ (Günaysu, 2004, p. 56, own translation). However, Günaysu’s complaints were not directed only towards the anti-Semitism of this specific newspaper or the violent interruption of their declaration. In this piece, she also mentioned her concerns about not finding support from the leftist/liberal, pluralist circles. For instance, she narrated how these six Human Rights Association activists struggled that day sending an e-mail to 50 lawyers, 100 NGOs that work in the field of human rights, 200 journalists, 100 authors/artists and 50 web-site administrators about what they have gone through and they received no reactions except two news published by *Medyatava* and *bianet* (p. 56). Also, she mentioned that, in contrast to that silence, *Vakit* initiated a campaign against them which continued for days. This campaign included explicit photos of the protesters together with threats and defamations such as “Rabbi Requested, IHD Protested”⁷⁶ (p. 55, own translation). In this sense, Günaysu was also narrating the story of how this group of six people was left alone in their struggle against an anti-Semitic incident, in the absence of the expected support from groups with a claim for pluralism. She also mentioned the same newspaper’s praise towards another group “with leftist tendencies,” “No for Occupation in Iraq Coordination”⁷⁷ which chanted against Israel the very same day as the protest that Günaysu attended. *Vakit*’s praise for the leftist Coordination also included a comparison between the Coordination and the group of protesters—of which Günaysu was a part—; they congratulated the former as ‘good leftists’ and condemned the latter as ‘Israel’s servants.’ Günaysu complained about the silence towards such a separation among leftists as well (p. 56). Finally, she referred to the

⁷⁴ “PKK’nin öldürdüğü Mehmetçikler için ne yaptınız?”

⁷⁵ “Filistin’de bebekler öldürülürken neredeydiniz?”

⁷⁶ “Haham rica etti, IHD eylem yaptı.”

⁷⁷ “Irak’ta işgale Hayır Koordinasyonu.”

following lines published in *Vakit* on March 24, 2004: “All Jews are not murderers, reprobates and morally corrupt. However, the greatest murderers, most violent reprobates and most disgusting fanatics of the world emerge among the Jews,”⁷⁸ and she asked the readers to replace the word ‘Jews’ with ‘Kurds’, ‘Turks’, ‘Armenians’, ‘Greeks’ or ‘Assyrians’ (Günaysu, p. 56). By this way, she questioned if there would still be silence about this text after such replacement (p. 56), drawing attention to the ignorance towards anti-Semitic incidents amongst the groups which have obvious concerns for racism and which take pluralism as an ideal.

The second declaration in this issue that was published right after Günaysu’s article was named “Zero Tolerance for Anti-Semitism” and signed by 117 people including some prominent intellectuals and various members of the Jewish communities in Turkey. The text problematized the fact that while the dissidents of the official ideologies in Turkey question various incidents of discrimination and racism against non-Turk/Muslim/Sunni citizens of the Turkish Republic, anti-Semitism “remains to be an issue that is ignored, unnamed or the existence of which is explicitly denied, and vis-à-vis which everyone becomes silent”⁷⁹ (p. 58, own translation). Moreover, this text argued that “A big portion of the left, some defenders of human rights, and the opponents of racism are not able to pronounce anti-Semitism as a threat per say”,⁸⁰ and that when it becomes crucial to react they regard it merely as a regular form of discrimination, failing to notice its gravity (p. 58). In terms of the journal *Birikim* itself, all these show that despite the problematic approaches that it contained, this issue was a multi-vocal gathering of quite different

⁷⁸ “Yahudilerin hepsi katil, namussuz, ahlâksız değildir. Amma dünyanın en büyük katilleri, en şedit namussuzları, en iğrenç fanatikleri Yahudilerin içinden çıkmaktadır.”

⁷⁹ “Ama antisemitizm parmakla sayılabilecek istinalar dışında görmezden gelinerek, adı konulamayarak ya da varlığı açıkça inkar edilerek, karşısında hemen herkesin suskunlaştığı bir konu olmayı sürdürüyor.”

⁸⁰ “Solun büyük bir kesiminin, kimi insan hakları savunucularının ve ırkçılık karşıtlarının antisemitizmi gündemlerine oturmadıklarına, kendi başına bir tehdit olarak telaffuz edemediklerine...”

perspectives among which Roni Margulies' piece that problematized the growing anti-Semitism in Turkey with an emphasis on the recent synagogue attacks and Yasef Yahya's murder (Margulies, 2004, p. 45). Margulies focused on the question of how to avoid anti-Semitism while struggling against the Israeli State politics which has been degraded by Kıvanç. He proposed that there can be neither a rightful racism nor a selective anti-racism (p. 48). In this sense, I would argue that Margulies' arguments, rather than those of Ümit Kıvanç, are much more in concordance with those of Judith Butler contrary to Paker's categorization mentioned above. At the same time, Margulies discussed how, in Turkey, Jewish conspiracy theories are not regarded as racism at all. Moreover, in order to exemplify this problem, he brought up the "unthoughtful, impertinent and still not understanding"⁸¹ Editor's Note attached by *Radikal İki* to Bali's corrective for Lasn's translation (p. 45, own translation).

According to Bali's narrative, *Birikim*'s editor Abdullah Onay notified Bali in August 2004 about Kıvanç's upcoming piece and offered him to read it before it is published sending him the document via email in September 2004 (Bali, 2005, p. 14). Bali stated that he hadn't commented much about it after reading, asked for writing an answer which should be published without any intervention and received Onay's approval. At the same time, he mentioned that his few comments were about his disagreement with Kıvanç's belief that the critiques of Israel were automatically stigmatized as anti-Semite, taking into consideration the validity of criticism towards Israel in Turkey and this was also approved by Onay (p. 14). Bali also added the claim that the politically correct stance in Turkey corresponded to criticizing Israel rather than an 'obsession' with anti-Semitism (p. 14). At this point, Bali—just like

⁸¹ "...düşüncesiz, terbiyesiz, ve hâlâ anlamayan..."

Kıvanç did—also drew attention to the fact that the notion of ‘politically correctness’ makes way for abuse by the dominant norms but apparently, their interpretations of what counts as dominant norm were different from each other. The piece that Bali wrote for *Birikim*’s upcoming issue was mainly about translations in the Turkish media especially of the texts that contain references to Jews and Israel. Bali considered the abovementioned *Lasn-Radikal İki* incident as well as the publication of the translated versions of a *Los Angeles Times* article titled “Turkey’s Chill Further Isolates Israel” in three different media organs in Turkey that include Republic of Turkey Office of the Prime Minister, Directorate General of Press and Information, the socialist newspaper *Birgün* and the conservative newspaper *Zaman* (p. 91, Bali, 2005). Bali scrutinized the different translations of the text and concluded that these translation examples were at the same time translations of the original text into the dominant ideologies accepted by the media organ which publishes them and in the case of articles related to Jews and Israel these dominant norms bear considerable resemblance to each other along different ideological stances. In other words, this article was proposed as an account of the widespread unawareness towards anti-Semitism within various media organs in Turkey and provided a proof for Bali’s idea that ‘anti-Semitism detectors’ are among the least common things in this atmosphere while a critical stance towards Israel is amongst the most common ones. At the same time, this portrayal was entirely different than the picture that Kıvanç drew. Throughout this article, Bali referred to Kıvanç only two times, and both were with regards to the ‘anti-Semitism detector’ accusation. While both were critical, especially the second reference also included a teasing tone and with this note Bali also problematized Kıvanç’s promise that he would be the first one to defend Jews if anti-Semitism would rise once again, professing about a

Jewish friend of his own (Bali, 2005, p. 100). *Birikim*'s editorial board rejected publishing this article without certain editing. According to Bali's narrative, the reason that they put forward was that Bali's article was a media critic and did not directly address Kıvanç's argument/question "'Isn't it possible to struggle against the Israeli State without being an anti-Semite.'" This is the question discussed. However, this is what is meant: 'Isn't it possible to struggle against the Israeli State without being labeled as an anti-Semite'" (Kıvanç, 2004, p. 31). At this point, it is important to suggest that such an expectation does not seem unproblematic not only because an author's freedom to reflect upon whatever s/he regards as deserving a reflection but also due to the way Kıvanç reduced an important concern into a mere guise in these lines. At the same time, Bali's discussion was about showing how Kıvanç's argument was faulty, especially considering the context in Turkey. In other words, although Bali did not refer to these lines, his main argument was a refutation of what was implicated in them. Their second critique was that Bali unfairly attacks Kıvanç and in Kıvanç's personality, these attacks were also directed at *Birikim* itself since this is where Kıvanç's piece was published (Bali, 2005, p. 21). Finally, Bali decided to publish the book *Response to Ümit Kıvanç: Story of the Article Birikim Rejected to Publish*⁸² (2005) which includes a preface that informs the reader about the process started with the publication of Lasn's article in *Radikal İki* and ends with the rejection letter Bali received from *Birikim*'s editorial board, Lasn's two articles, three reflections to Lasn from different authors, *Radikal*'s translation of Lasn's article, his reaction piece also published in *Radikal İki*, his piece rejected by *Birikim*, and another article by Bali that the socialist newspaper *Birgün* refused to publish.⁸³

⁸² Ümit Kıvanç'a Cevap: *Birikim Dergisi'nin Yayınlamayı Reddedtiği Makalenin Öyküsü*.

⁸³ From this date on, Bali completely terminates his publications in *Birikim* and İletişim Publishing House—although he published several books from this publishing house before. Instead, in 2008 he initiates his own publishing house, Libra Yayınevi which mainly publishes academic works in the

In the meantime, Ayşe Günaysu and Roni Margulies got involved in this debate with their critics published in the newspaper *Özgür Gündem* and the journal *Virgül*, respectively. In her piece, Günaysu introduced Bali's abovementioned new book under the title "Birikim Journal, Turkish Left and the Story of a Book"⁸⁴ (n.d.). She mentioned the importance of Rifat Bali's book relating its significance to her belief that without a better left there could not be a better future. Moreover, she emphasized Kıvanç's piece as a proof of the banality of anti-Semitism and the blindness towards it in Turkey. She aligned the dynamics of anti-Semitism in Turkey to how sexism works due to the similarities they share regarding the existent invisibility despite the high levels of violence and even for the leftist eyes. In this sense, Günaysu's piece resonates Stella Ovadia's (1995) abovementioned piece published in *Birikim* where Ovadia concatenated her struggles in Turkey's left against patriarchy and anti-Semitism. The last part of Günaysu's piece read as follows:

Yes, here is Turkey. Synagogue bombings couldn't be enough for anti-Semitism to be a peril. Ümit Kıvanç does not regard anti-Semitism as a problem 'anymore' either in the world or Turkey... Because for it to be a peril, there need human ashes to scatter from the chimneys of concentration camps. The most painful part of this is that this is the case even for those socialists within the left whose reputation is not open to discussion. (Günaysu, n.d., own translation)⁸⁵

Margulies' piece in *Virgül* was titled "Racism detectors and those who got past their endurance"⁸⁶ (Margulies, 2005, own translation). Apparently, both parts of the title were chosen with reference to Kıvanç's article; while first part stems from Kıvanç's accusation towards Bali for being an 'anti-Semitism detector' the second part was about his self-description after reading Bali's reaction to Lasn's piece. Like

field of social sciences. Many of these works are concerned with the Jewish history in Turkey and the Ottoman Empire among other topics.

⁸⁴ "Birikim dergisi, Türk solu ve bir kitabın hikayesi."

⁸⁵ See Appendix, 6.

⁸⁶ "İrkçilik dedektörleri ve sabrı taşanlar."

Günaysu, Margulies also emphasized the banality of anti-Semitism in Turkey by looking at the section titles added by *Radikal İki* team to Lasn's article as well as the blindness towards the already existent anti-Semitic content in it even before this addition (Margulies, 2005, p. 63). Also, again in similarity with Günaysu's piece, this article was a scrutiny over a 'socialist political reaction,' and Margulies suggested that blindness towards racism cannot be included in such a reaction. Moreover, in accordance with Rifat Bali, Margulies questioned the reality of the concerns that Kıvanç argued to bear about being labeled as anti-Semite in any attempt to criticize Israel, considering Kıvanç's situation as living in a country where not only the latter condition but also the former one is a general norm. Margulies stated that:

If Kıvanç had been living in America and *Birikim* had been being published in America, then the 'Politically Correctness Against Reality' article might have made sense... However, that is America and here is Turkey. Until today I have never encountered anyone in Turkey who has been attacked or accused of being a racist upon criticizing Israel. I, for my part, on television, radio and various publications, wrote and said several times that the Israeli state is not a legitimate state, it is America's gendarmerie in the region, Zionism is racism, and Palestinians' struggle (including the suicide bombings) is a rightful and legitimate struggle. There were people neither to criticize me nor to accuse me with anti-Semitism and to silence. On the other hand, those approaches that head towards a dreadful racism under the pretext of criticizing Israel, regard Jewry, and Zionism as the same, cannot differentiate between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are many. Hence, in Turkey (contrary to the case in America) the fundamental problem is not being unable to criticize Israel as Kıvanç believes. The problem is the further expansion of the already widespread racism with the pretext of Israel. Thus, a socialist's responsibility is being on the watch towards anti-Semitism while criticizing Israel and supporting Palestinians. (p. 64, own translation)⁸⁷

Margulies also expressed his opinion about the rejection Bali received from *Birikim* by expressing that publishing Bali's piece or not doing so is up to *Birikim* editors' decision while publishing Kıvanç's piece was an error from the beginning. This debate was maintained with a response piece which was published with the signature

⁸⁷ See Appendix, 7.

‘Birikim’ (“Rifat N. Bali ile ilgili zorunlu bir hatırlatma,” 2005). In this short article, *Birikim* editors mentioned Bali’s new book and rejected Bali’s claim that *Birikim* denied his right to respond as well as holding a critical stance towards “some people” who “wrote articles that support” Bali’s claim (Birikim, 2005). First, they claimed that Kıvanç’s piece was not about Bali at all. Second, they complained about the length of Bali’s response. Third, they stated that Bali’s reason to write a response was the accusation he received from Kıvanç about being an ‘anti-Semitism detector’ and that his response did not speak to this accusation. When we consider the content of Bali’s article which was speaking to the picture drawn by Kıvanç about the state of anti-Semitism in Turkey as well as to Kıvanç’s claim about the redundancy of ‘anti-Semitism detectors,’ at least two of these claims could easily be refuted. The severe tone of the language directed at Bali can be exemplified in the following sentence: “Let us state in advance that our silence is due to the fact that we are completely right. Rifat N. Bali and those who support him should know that we preferred to remain silent since the response and demeanor that he deserved was quite weighty”⁸⁸ (2005, own translation). A further reason that they proposed for Bali’s piece not to be published was that Bali accused Kıvanç with anti-Semitism without substantiating this accusation. Then, they put Bali’s ethical stance at stake by stating that “This comment can be possible in his level of publishing ethics. It doesn’t have anything to do with us, *Birikim*’s publishing ethics and understanding. Our history is its most clear proof”⁸⁹ (2005, own translation). A similar tone was also directed towards Ayşe Günaysu with the lines “We do not need to take Ayşe Günaysu into consideration who published an article in *Özgür Gündem* without

⁸⁸ “Peşinen belirtelim ki bu suskunluk, bu konuda *tamamen* haklı olduğumuzdan dolayıdır. Rifat N. Bali ve onu destekleyenler bu durumda onun hak etmiş olduğu cevabın ve tavrının teşhisinin hayli ağır olacağından dolayı susmayı yeğlediğimizi bilmelidirler.”

⁸⁹ “Bu, onun kendi yayın ahlâkı düzeyinden mümkün bir yorum olabilir. Bizimle, *Birikim*’in yayın ahlâk ve anlayışıyla hiçbir ilgisi yoktur. Tarihiniz bunun apaçık kanıtıdır.”

understanding, being able to understand or caring about what is at stake”⁹⁰ (2005, own translation).

The content and the tone of *Birikim*'s response was interestingly similar to another response piece published by them only eleven months ago in March 2004 but which had the exact contrary approach towards a similar case (“Hedef gösterme,” 2004). A focus on this similarity would further clarify that the pluralist leftist circles are not completely indifferent to the threats of anti-Semitism; however, there are no steady reflexes developed in this realm against these threats either. Previously, in January 2004, upon synagogue and HSBC bombings in Istanbul, *Birikim* published another special edition. This one has three main topics among which is “Islamists and terror.” Rifat Bali had two articles in this edition. The first one of these two articles is about the synagogue bombings and in this one Bali holds a critical approach towards multiple targets among which are Turkish state officials, the Chief Rabbinate and Jewish Community spokespersons in Turkey (Bali, 2004a, p. 25-30). The second one was titled “Conspiracy Theories and Theoreticians” and in this piece, Bali discussed the worldwide rise of conspiracy theories especially after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center in New York City, the current state of conspiracy-minded thinking in Turkey, their usual anti-Semitic content and various reasons for their spread (Bali, 2004b, p. 31-37). Also, by using examples from their articles, Bali named “the most popular” ones among conspiracy theoreticians as:

the former National Intelligence Agency employee Mahir Kaynak, Labor Party President Dogu Perincek, Yalcin Kucuk, Oktay Sinanoglu, associate professor Emin Gurses, prime author of *Anadoluda Vakit* Abdurrahman Dilipak, author of the same newspaper Hasan Karakaya, prime author of *Yeni Safak* Fehmi Koru who signs his articles with the nickname Taha Kıvanç, the author of various conspiracy books and the newspaper *Zaman* Aydogan Vatandas, the author in the same group and editor of the website www.komplo.com, Atilla Akar who was the author of social democratic

⁹⁰ “Neyin söz konusu olduğunu anlamadan, anlayamadan veya aldırmadan bu konuda aleyhimize *Özgür Gündem*'de yazısı yayımlanan Ayşe Günaysu'yu muhatap almamız da gerekmez.”

topics in the past, Mutlu Çölgeçen, Aytunç Altındal, Hakan Yılmaz-Ali Çimen couple, Dr. Süleyman Adem, *M5 Haber* journal author Nedret Ersanel. (p. 32, own translation)⁹¹

For instance, Bali referred to Koru's lines in which Koru praised the books being published by Timas Publishing which "clarify the issues that are sneered at as 'Conspiracy'"⁹² by claiming that "After all, you feel that your mind is opened, incidents gain more of a meaning in your eyes"⁹³ (Koru, 2003, own translation). The notions used by Ali Çimen and Hakan Yılmaz such as 'covering the reality' or 'reality that is different from the reality' were among the other examples used by Bali (p. 33). After the publication of this piece in *Birikim* two of the authors mentioned in Bali's article, Fehmi Koru and Atilla Akar sent responses to *Birikim* and both of them were published in this journal's February 2004 edition. Koru's response was composed of two very short letters, one directed at *Birikim* and the other at Bali. Koru complained about Bali's way of approaching conspiracy and anti-Semitism concurrently expressing his dissatisfaction with being regarded as a conspirator just because praising a conspiracy theory book and claiming that he was also indirectly declared as anti-Semite due to Bali's approach which regards links between conspiracy theories and anti-Semitism (Koru, 2004, p. 44). However, in his abovementioned piece, Bali did not declare Koru as an anti-Semite and mentioning the widespread anti-Semitic content in conspiracy theories would not be the same as declaring anyone that gives credit to any type of conspiracy theory as anti-Semitic although there is a considerable danger. Koru also gave internet links for his own articles in which he problematizes anti-Semitism also expressing that he reads and suggests his friends to read Bali's books to show that he is not anti-Semitic and on the contrary, he approaches anti-Semitism as a serious problem. At this point we see

⁹¹ See Appendix, 8.

⁹² "'Komplo' diye dudak bükülen konulara açıklı getiren kitaplar..."

⁹³ "Sonuçta zihninizin açıldığını hissediyorsunuz, olaylar daha bir anlam kazanıyor gözünüzde."

that at the beginning of the 2000s which is remembered with the 9/11 attacks, Bush government and the eve of Iraq War, conspiracy theories were so common that even the authors who problematize anti-Semitism used to give credit to conspiracy theories which are in many cases used to feed anti-Semitism all around the world.

For sure, Kuru was not alone in having such a stance. There are lots of articles produced by authors located in the left side of the scale that pay serious attention to such conspiracies. In many cases, those conspiracies are not devoid of an anti-Jewish stance. For instance, in 2002 Can Dündar wrote an article in the newspaper *Milliyet* with the title “The Jewish Lobby in the USA.”⁹⁴ Dündar begins his article by stating that “About Palestine, initially Bush then all Washington speak with ‘Sharon’s language’ and give the green light to the Israeli aggression”⁹⁵ (Dündar, 2002, own translation). After categorizing the academic circles, capitalists, and media as monolithic supporters of Israel, he refers to the stale Jewish conspiracy as a discovery. He tells his readers how he realized this reality after listening to a TV program in which Beykent University’s International Relations Department Chair, Professor Ahmet Davutoglu revealed “very interesting numbers about this lobby”⁹⁶:

In the USA, still, 10 million Jews constitute the 3% of the American population which is 280 million. Nonetheless, they are represented with an 11% in the American business life. In the American universities, one out of every five professors is Jewish... Also in the American media, they have a power that corresponds to 25 percent. That is to say that they captured a representation rate that is eight times more than their population. From the USA Vice Secretary of Defense to the commissioner of NBA, from the most famous Hollywood directors to the chairman of the Central Bank, from the New York mayor to the 10% of Senate members and 6% of the Congress they have an incredible gravity in all areas. (Dündar, 2002, own translation)⁹⁷

After a narrative about how influential this lobby is Dündar was finalizing his words

⁹⁴ Amerika’daki Yahudi Lobisi.

⁹⁵ “Filistin konusunda başta ABD Başkanı Bush olmak üzere bütün Washington, “şaron ağzı ile” konuşuyor ve İsrail saldırılarına yeşil ışık yakıyor.”

⁹⁶ “...bu lobiye dair çok ilginç rakamlar...”

⁹⁷ See Appendix, 9.

as “Probably under many texts that are in circulation on TV, in the press, the internet and the words of statesmen there are their invisible signatures. Try to see!”⁹⁸

(Dündar, 2002, own translation). Here, Dündar uses a romantic language with the claim of unraveling a truth that is characteristic of all conspiracy theories. Yet, what kind of truth is that? Turning back to Niman’s critique, despite the real existence of various groups—dominated by Jewish members or not—in the USA that lobby in accordance with the Israeli state interests these lines once again leave us without a clear argument here. In this sense, this is an example of substituting political analysis with a mere suspicion or ending the political analysis at the level of suspicion and asserting various suspicions as the ultimate reality.

To turn back to the case in *Birikim*, the second response to Bali’s piece, written by Atilla Akar appears as a manifestation of such substitutions. His response, titled “If only these ‘conspiracy theoreticians’ do not exist”⁹⁹ was a harsh attack on Bali including implications such as Bali prepared the list of conspirators as a black list report for the Israeli institutions. A very interesting finding that appears through reading his lines points out to the emergence of conspiracy theories as a legitimate genre at the beginning of the 2000s as Akar referred to himself as a ‘conspiracy theoretician’ and accused Bali of ‘driving wedge between conspiracy theoreticians’ (Akar, 2004, p. 43). The author of this response, on the one hand, expressed that it is not even necessary for him, as someone coming from a leftist tradition, to tell how his life was dedicated to a fight against anti-Semitism, fascism, and racism (p. 42). On the other hand, he referred to Bali’s analysis of conspiracy theories and theoreticians as “a call for an ideological genocide” and claimed that Bali’s call

⁹⁸ “Muhtemelen televizyonda, basında, internette, devlet adamlarının dilinde dolaşan çoğu metnin altında da onların görünmeyen imzaları var. Görmeye çalışın!”

⁹⁹ Ah Şu “komplo teorisyenleri” Olmasa!

echoed in an interview of Israel's Vice Consul to Istanbul Moshe Kanfi in the form of a serious threat although the example he used was totally far from a threat: "We even know who spread these" said Moshe Kanfi about the Jewish conspiracies and continued, "Anti-Semitist, barbarous and uncivilized people"¹⁰⁰ (as cited in Akar, 2004, p. 41, own translation). Akar made use of obscure terms such as Bali's "own official ideology"¹⁰¹ declaring Bali as someone who approaches with sympathy to "what Sharonist-Zionist clique in Israel did to Palestinians"¹⁰² without showing any proof for that (p. 42, own translation). Akar also complained about naming each and every critique of Israel as anti-Semitism after mentioning that he was a fighter against anti-Semitism (p. 42). To sum up, with many more examples that are touched upon up until here, Akar turned his conspiracy theory tools against Bali to represent him as a servant of the Israeli state without any proof for this. Moreover, he attempted to make his conclusion by avoiding anti-Semitism accusations. These polemics ended up with a response written by *Birikim* editors which included very similar verbal templates used in their response to Bali some months later among which we can count referring to *Birikim*'s ethical stance as well as the history of the journal as the proof of it, implicating something about the ethical stance of their addressee by this way and expressing their boundaries about whom they would not take into consideration. This time they defended Bali against Akar's accusations. Unlike Kıvanç, Akar was an explicit and self-identified 'conspiracy theory specialist.' Yet, on the other hand, what Margulies said about *Radikal İki* editors was also valid for Kıvanç: "I do not think that *Radikal İki* editors are anti-Semite, but... it is certain that they believe in anti-Semitic conspiracy theories whether they are aware

¹⁰⁰ "Biz bunları kimin yaydığını bile biliyoruz. Antisemitist, insalık dışı ve medeniyet dışı insanlar."

¹⁰¹ "...kendi resmi ideolojisi çerçevesinde..."

¹⁰² "...İsrail'deki Şaroncu-Siyonist kliğin Filistinlilere yaptıklarında..."

of it or not”¹⁰³ (Margulies, 2005, p. 63, own translation). In other words, in the best scenario, the difference between Kıvanç’s and Akar’s position about conspiracy theories lies in Akar’s belief in their legitimacy and Kıvanç’s persuasion by their conclusions without problematizing their legitimacy. On the other hand, Kıvanç was much more measured compared to Akar when we consider Akar’s declaration of Bali as a sympathizer of Sharon’s Palestine policies. Yet, instead of this bold and unsubstantiated claim, Kıvanç’s argument was, as discussed in detail above, for keeping a suspicion alive which can be exemplified in the following lines:

In the translation article in which section titles were added, the main issue was, briefly, about the impact of the Israel lobby over the USA government. In fact, since Bali did not speak much about the essence of the issue and instead acted as an anti-Semitism detector, we couldn’t understand what he thinks about this phenomenon out of this article. Still, there were some clues in relation to this essence, and these were of a type that would –let’s be kind-astound -let’s not generalize- me. (Kıvanç, 2004, p. 32, own translation)¹⁰⁴

The same measured manner –again in comparison to Akar- was also valid for Kıvanç’s way of arguing that any critique of Israel was prevented through an easy equation with anti-Semitism since unlike Akar, Kıvanç was not explicitly talking about blacklists and Mossad reports prepared by Bali. Yet, he joined Akar in devaluing such reactions towards anti-Semitic conspiracy theories right after claiming himself not an anti-Semite. In this sense, Kıvanç went even one step further as he declared anti-Semitism as a problem in the past which no longer exists in the present. To conclude, despite their different tones, at the level of argumentation Kıvanç’s and Akar’s pieces bear important similarities. However, *Birikim*’s responses to Akar in March 2004 and to Bali, together with ‘those who support him’ in April 2005 eventually bear important similarities as well when we consider the tone and the rhetoric. A comparison of these two cases would reveal that *Birikim*

¹⁰³ “*Radikal İki* editörlerinin antisemit olduğunu düşünmüyorum, ‘insaf’ demelerine gerek yok, ama... antisemit komplo teorilerine inandıklarından kuşkum yok.”

¹⁰⁴ See Appendix, 10.

takes two different positions which were inconsistent with each other. Even if we do not consider *Birikim*'s response to Bali, the following question would be relevant: how did the *Birikim* team which reacted in this way against Akar's arguments publish Ümit Kıvanç's article in the first hand and then promote it like in the case of Murat Parker? This situation points out the validity of Bali's conclusion that such processes and reactions are also impacted by the community relations (Bali, 2005, p. 22). Yet, more importantly, it once again sheds light upon the lack of stable reflexivity and vigilance towards anti-Semitic incidents and conspiracy theories within the pluralist circles at least when we consider the timeline corresponding to the beginning of the 2000s.

4.2 The late 2000s: Signals of transformation

During and after these days, *Birikim* continued publishing articles which took anti-Semitism as its subject although they were very few. For instance, just one month before *Birikim*'s response to Bali, in March 2005 they published an article written by Mehmet Mihri Özdoğan who was not a regular author of the journal. It was titled "Why it is important to ponder upon anti-Semitism in Turkey."¹⁰⁵ Interestingly, this article was proposed to the reader under the section title "Two sides of the medallion: Anti-Semitism and Zionism" although it was not published in that edition. However, it might make sense when we consider the fact that this article was a reflection upon the question about the proper socialist response to these issues. As it is understandable from its title, this article was an important call for locating anti-Semitism within the context of Turkey. Although it did not explicitly name any authors in the above-mentioned polemics, it was critical towards Kıvanç's stance as

¹⁰⁵ Türkiye'de Anti-Semitizm Üzerine Düşünmek Neden Gerekli?

understandable from the authors reference to the word ‘detector’ and his alignment between ‘the ghost that we disregard’ and ‘the ghosts that we invite from the backdoor’ (Özdoğan, 2005, p. 59). It also had several important implications such as not reducing anti-Semitism debates to a discussion about Israel. Other pieces published in *Birikim* which are either about Jews/Jewishness or anti-Semitism related subjects were as follows: in January 2005 they published a translation article by Alison Dagnes which analyzed the ‘Jewish Vote’ in 2004 American presidency elections; in February 2005 Bertel Ollman’s article which problematized the ‘self-hating Jew’ label is translated for *Birikim*, in the May-June 2005 volume they published Hamit Bozarlan’s piece about the Armenian Genocide in which the author used a comparative approach by considering the Shoah. In October 2005 Ayşe Hür wrote an article for *Birikim*, which scrutinized the state of anti-Semitism in Turkey and the world from a comparative perspective; in this one, Hür addressed various anti-Semitic incidents locating this problem in the context of Turkey; in October 2009 Günaysu once again wrote an article for *Birikim* to introduce Bali’s new book “*The Model Citizens of the State: Jews of Turkey during the Multi-Party Period.*” She especially drew attention to how the Turkish State tries to mobilize the Jewish community in Turkey as well as a discourse of hospitality, tolerance, and compassion towards this community for obscuring the claims about the Armenian Genocide. In June 2010, Kazim Özdoğan published his comparative analysis between Anti-Semitic and Islamophobic discourses; although it was mainly about the case in Europe, this was an important article in terms of not reading these two specific forms of hatred against each other but putting them in relation. More recently, in 2012, *Birikim* published three articles by different authors all of which problematized the collaboration between Nazi and Turkish states as well as the

Turkish State's responsibility in the Holocaust (Çetinoğlu, 2012; Dost-Niyego, 2012; Yetkin, 2012) while two of them questioned the possibility of developing Holocaust education agendas in Turkey (Dost-Niyego, 2012; Yetkin, 2012). These articles also emerged right after the translation and publication of Corry Guttsadt's book, *Turkey, the Jews and the Holocaust* (2012) by the İletisim Publishing House where *Birikim* is also published and whose main authors and editors are also the main contributors to the journal. In that book, Guttsadt successfully refuted the claims about Turkish hospitality and tolerance through her lengthy analysis which showed that, contrary to the common assumption, the Jews of Turkey were not exempt from the Nazi atrocities and Turkey's over emphasized 'saving approach' was exceptional when compared to numerous alliances between Turkish and German governments before and during the WWII as well as Turkey's denaturalizing policy applied to its Jewish citizens living in Europe during this period (Guttsadt, 2012). Also, some months after the publication of Guttsadt's book Metis Publishing House published the Turkish translation of *East West Mimesis: Auerbach in Turkey* (Konuk, 2013). The book focused on the exile days of German Jewish philologist Erich Auerbach as well as other German Jewish or socialist professors in Turkey during the Nazi regime. Locating their existence in Turkey in relation to the on-going education reform of the young Turkish Republic and putting it into a comparison with the Turkish Republic's negative attitude towards the refuge demands of non-academic Jews from Europe (p. 65), Konuk offered yet another way to think critically about the official hospitality/compassion narrative of the Turkish Republic. These books may not be regarded as produced within Turkey's pluralist intellectual sphere but their translation points towards an intellectual and political demand for such knowledge that appeared in within the context of Turkey. However, despite the hope-inspiring

translations of Guttstadt's and Konuk's books, the following question still remains valid: does a critical approach towards the founding acts and principles of the Turkish Republic, this time from the aspect of the experiences of Turkey's Jewish communities, automatically bring about a solidarity with the Jewish people of Turkey against the ongoing anti-Semitic attacks? As long as such an approach is not combined with a vigilant reflexivity towards current anti-Semitic speeches and attacks, the history of anti-Semitism in Turkey would remain to serve merely as a tool at the hands of opposition groups for critiquing the Republic's founding principles. I would argue that such a critique is not critical enough and also is based on separating the victimhood and the victim. We still see many examples of this case in the widespread silence within these circles towards the ongoing attacks against synagogues gaining momentum especially during the periods in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict escalates, everlasting demands from the Jewish community of Turkey to condemn and explicitly define their position towards the Israeli state, daily threats, defacement of Jewish cemeteries and properties ("Hatay Musevi mezarlığına çirkin saldırı", 2016), hate crimes towards Jewish citizens including murders such as the cases of Yasef Yahya in 2003 and Behor Roziya in 2002 which still remains unspoken about and the murderer of which is still not found (Yıldırım, 2002). In this sense, Günaysu's demand from her readers to replace the word 'Jews' with 'Kurds,' 'Turks,' 'Armenians,' 'Greeks' or 'Assyrians' and her following question if there would still be silence after such replacement is still meaningful.

Looking at this picture, we can conclude that the contemporary anti-Semitism in Turkey remains a disregarded problem and the scarcity of articles written about this problem is a proof of this fact. However, we can also conclude that when we consider the case in the last years, there seems to appear a strand among the leftist

circles in Turkey through which a relatively independent analysis of anti-Semitism in Turkey from the Israel/Palestine debates starts becoming increasingly possible compared to the period between 2000 and 2005 during which conspiracy theories were regarded as much more legitimate for wide range of communities. This transformation can also be followed in Kıvanç's piece published in *Taraf* newspaper six years after the previous polemics. This piece by Kıvanç was titled "Being like Israel, what does it mean"¹⁰⁶ and was composed of his reflections towards the reactions against the Israeli Defense Forces' very recent Gaza Flotilla raid. In this piece, Kıvanç took the anti-Semitic content in the majority of these reactions seriously and claimed that the current curses against Israel involved 'illegitimate elements' (Kıvanç, 2010). Citing from the speeches of a protester, "Jews have been doing these¹⁰⁷ for many centuries"¹⁰⁸ and one of the survivors of the flotilla raid, "As long as a state called Israel exists, these problems cannot be solved"¹⁰⁹, Kıvanç asked the following question "Are we protesting the Israeli state's arrogant and relentless attack or are we demanding the destruction of the state that a people which has been committing crimes 'for many centuries' has possessed by force? What if the fact that this people is not anybody but 'the Jews' has been determining our whole attitude?"¹¹⁰ (Kıvanç, 2010, own translation). He explicitly named these as 'enmity towards Jews' and stated his difficulty in believing the sincerity of the speaker whenever the issue is Israel and the speaker mentions that what is at stake is the humanitarian aspect of the issue. Kıvanç explained the main cause of such difficulty by referring to the fact that he "lives in a country where the atrocities towards non-

¹⁰⁶ "İsrail gibi olmak, ne demek?"

¹⁰⁷ By 'doing these,' the protester particularly refers to the illegitimate use of violence exemplified in the Flotilla Attack.

¹⁰⁸ "Yahudiler bunu yüzyıllardır yapıyor."

¹⁰⁹ "...İsrail diye bir devlet varolduğu sürece bu sorunlar çözülmez."

¹¹⁰ "Biz İsrail devletinin küstahça ve acımasızca saldırısını mı protesto ediyoruz yoksa 'yüzyıllardır' birtakım suçları işleyen bir kavmin zorla sahip olduğu devletin ortadan kalkmasını mı talep ediyoruz? Bu kavmin herhangi birileri değil de 'Yahudiler' oluşu sakın bütün tavrımızı belirliyor olmasın?"

Muslims are constantly being lied about, people might be massacred in the name of certain sects and nationalism and racism patrols around”¹¹¹ (Kıvanç, 2010, own translation). Finally, he concluded that “the scene of always-already rightfulness and taking sides with the oppressed that is staged in Turkey is not legitimate. Such rank can be gained henceforth. However, this cannot happen by abusing the victimhood of Palestinians to fuel anti-Semitism”¹¹² (Kıvanç, 2010). Apparently, all these sound quite different from arguing for the redundancy of pondering upon anti-Semitism by claiming that it is no longer in existence or representing anti-Semitism debates solely as serving for the state of Israel and devaluing them. Moreover, after another five years, Kıvanç wrote another article which problematized the way Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was criticized by a Republican Party MP, Mahmut Tanal who, through his Twitter account, stated that “I am not a servant of America. I do not have a Jewish medal. I am the representative of our people. I am anti-imperialist. I am the nightmare of those who graft and steal”¹¹³ (as cited in Kıvanç, 2015, own translation). What is at stake was Erdogan’s reception of American Jewish Congress’ Profile of Courage award and Kıvanç criticized Tanal by arguing that “In Turkey, in order to condemn a person, you can say ‘S/he received a medal from the Jew.’ There would be only a few to object you”¹¹⁴ (2015, own translation). Apparently, contrary to his stance eleven years ago, this time Kıvanç was complaining about the lack of ‘anti-Semitism detectors.’ His claim that “Yes, there has been no racism in Turkey

¹¹¹ “Çünkü ben, gayrimüslimlere yapılmış zulümler hakkında sürekli yalan söylenen, mezhep adına insanların katledilebildiği, milliyetçilik ve ırkçılığın kol gezdiği bir ülkede yaşıyorum.”

¹¹² “Bu yüzden, bugün Türkiye’de sergilenen ezeli-ebedi haklılık ve mazlumun yanında olma manzarası meşru değildir. Bu paye ancak şimdiden sonra kazanılabilecektir. O da Filistinlilerin mağduriyetini Yahudi düşmanlığına yem yaparak olmaz.”

¹¹³ “Amerika uşağı değilim. Yahudi mandalyam yok. Halkımızın vekiliyim. Antiemperyalistim. Yolsuzluk ve hırsızlık yapanların korkulu rüyasıyım.”

¹¹⁴ “Türkiye’de, herhangi bir kimseyi kınamak için ‘Yahudi’den madalya aldı’ diyebilirsiniz. Size laf edecek pek az kimse çıkar.”

because it was not possible to identify it”¹¹⁵ (2015, own translation) was also valid for his arguments eleven years ago which laid bare the difficulty and exceptionality of identifying the existing anti-Semitism even among the leftist circles. If there was a transformation in this sense, there might be various reasons including the decrease in the legitimacy of conspiracy theories—at least, self-identifications as ‘conspiracy theoretician’ have lately lost the normalcy that they used to have in the first years of the 2000s. Another reason might be the intensified schedules of the pluralist political groups in their struggle against racism, especially after Hrant Dink’s assassination. Moreover, it seems that there has been a break within the 2000s’ blind alliance¹¹⁶ between leftist and Islamist groups—which are known to be anti-Semitic—under the tag of an ‘anti-war stance.’ While this break might be due to the consolidation of the latter’s powerful position throughout the 13 years of the conservative Justice and Development Party government, today’s political atmosphere does not seem as likely to give way to the emergence of a roof organization, like the Peace Initiators¹¹⁷ of the early 2000s, for leftists and Islamists in whose protests the following slogan appeared: ‘Benevolence against Malevolence, Good against Bad, Palestinian against Israeli, Arabs against Jews’ (as cited in Hür, 2004, own translation).¹¹⁸ These possibilities can be the subjects for further research. However, it is still unrealistic to claim a total effacement of conspiracy theory trends among leftist groups, and this will be further scrutinized in the following chapter which consists of the interviews I held with the Jewish participants of Turkey’s leftist politics.

¹¹⁵ “Evet, sahiden Türkiye’de ırkçılık yoktu! Çünkü tesbit edilemiyordu.”

¹¹⁶ See Bali (2005) and Günaysu (2004) for critical approaches to this alliance.

¹¹⁷ Barış Girişimcileri.

¹¹⁸ “Kötülüğe karşı iyilik, kötüye karşı iyiler, İsraili’ye karşı Filistinli, Yahudilere karşı Araplar.”

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVES OF JEWISH INTELLECTUALS / ACTIVISTS

Despite the decrease in the legitimacy of conspiracy theories which used to have a much more authoritative position during the first years of the 2000s, they still continue to pop up in the most unexpected moments. The period between 2013 and 2015 witnessed the peak of pluralistic discourses among various leftist/liberal groups bolstered by the *Türkiyelilesme* (transforming into a movement that represents the whole of Turkey not only geographically but also in terms of ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual orientation) discourse of the Kurdish political movement and various leftist groups in collaboration with it. This situation ended up with a growing interest towards this alliance, and the Jewish community of Turkey was not entirely exempt from this trend. For instance, the Jewish community in Turkey has been historically coded and self-coded as a politically silent minority. This type of encoding is reflected in the humorous half Judeo-Spanish and half Turkish phrase ‘No mos karişeyamos en los meseles del hükümet’ (We do not intervene in the governmental issues). However, some formerly politically less vocal members of the community lately started raising their voices in support of this alliance and the ideals promoted by it, the reflection of which can be observed in the Jewish community’s newspaper, *Şalom*.¹¹⁹ Still, arguing for a widespread politicization within the Jewish community would be fallacious. Yet, this newly emerging field of potentialities can be regarded as a result of what we may call the de-marginalization of the pluralist discourse within Turkey’s political atmosphere. In this environment, the letter written to the ‘peoples of Turkey’ by the imprisoned Kurdish political leader

¹¹⁹ See Gabay (2015) and Molinas (2015).

Abdullah Öcalan and read in Turkish and Kurdish by the two Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) MPs during the 2013 Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakir was welcomed by various groups which were engaged in the pluralistic discourse. On the other hand, only one month before this letter was read aloud, the transcription of Öcalan's meeting with 3 BDP deputies had leaked into the mainstream media organizations. These transcriptions included yet another repetition of the lobby conspiracies not only about the Jews but also about Greeks and Armenians pointing out the lobby activities of these groups as the reason for the unrest in Turkey especially with regards to the Kurdish issue:

In Turkey, there are parallel state endeavors from three sides. The relations are being sabotaged. These are not trivial lobbies. In the United States; Jewish, Armenian and Greek lobbies are interfering tactically and strategically. They all stem from Anatolia... The Armenian lobby is effective; they want to come to the fore with 2015... After the Islamization of Anatolia, there has been a one thousand years old Christian rage. The Greek, the Armenian, the Jew claim rights in Anatolia. They do not want to lose what they gained so far under the guise of secularism and nationalism... The Israeli lobby, Armenians and Greeks that come into the play and say 'The more Kurds are excluded, the more we become successful.' This is the parallel state. This is a one thousand years old tradition. ("Öcalan-BDP görüşmesinin zabitleri ortaya çıktı," 2013, own translation)¹²⁰

Indeed, this was not the first time Öcalan consulted to such lobby conspiracies as it appeared in different books and reports written by him. For instance, PKK's (Partîya Karkerên Kurdistan, meaning Kurdistan Workers Party) 10th Congress Report in 2008 included parts written by Öcalan and sent out from the prison in the letter format, and these were very dense in terms of conspiracy theories especially about the Jews. In this report, he was speculating about the Jewish roots of current government members ("Onuncu kongre belgeleri, program ve tüzüğü," 2009, p. 4), stating that "Jews govern the world through making people collide with each other. At first, they imposed their ideologies to Germans. This is to say that, they created

¹²⁰ See Appendix, 11.

Hitler. They had created the blood tie and the kindred tie. Hitler is their product” (p. 8). Moreover, claiming that Jews are ten times more effective in the Anatolian governments than in the Israeli government he was blaming Jews for the ethnic cleansing towards Christian group in Anatolia (p.11), a similar stance taken by Sir Gerard Lowther of Britain many years ago and criticized by Elie Kedourie, a debate mentioned at the very beginning of this thesis. Throughout Öcalan’s pages long explanations about the Jews, ‘Jewish projects’ are represented as the sole factor for the spread of nationalisms, cruelties, and oppressions in this region including the Wealth Tax policy of 1942 which victimized many Jews very harshly. Regarding the time span, he argues that Jewish capitalist activities in Anatolia have always already been existent in Anatolia since 1393 (p. 15). Finally, he concludes that Mustafa Kemal Ataturk was resistant towards such malicious Jewish activities by claiming that he was one of the two leaders who dared to execute Jews as if this is to be praised if it ever happened (p. 15). Apparently, this dense amount of anti-Semitism is something that we have not seen in the previous chapter in my analysis over the articles published in *Birikim*. In this sense, it sharply diverges from a concession or ignorance towards anti-Semitism and directly accommodates such language. From this aspect, these sound more like right wing ideologies. Yet, interestingly, these very explicitly anti-Semitic scenarios and the assertion of their truth are interpolated with the claims of the author that he is not an anti-Semite (p. 18). Then, once again we witness that this claim turns into a rhetorical tool to legitimize one’s argument used in a way that might be disconnected from its content.

These explanations probably have not widely circulated within Turkey’s leftist pluralist groups, and the inclusive tone in Öcalan’s Newroz letter might have mitigated the impact of the lobby conspiracies within the transcriptions that leaked

into the media. Yet, only nine months after Diyarbakir Newroz where the inclusive discourse became widely celebrated, another leader of the Kurdish political movement, Bese Hozat gave the following speech:

There are parallel states that are formed independently of the official state. For instance, Fethullah Gülen community is a parallel state. Israel lobby, nationalist Armenian and Greek lobbies too are parallel states. There is an interest relation through which parallel states become partners with each other... Its main goal is to prevent the democratization of Turkey. (“KCK eşbaşkanı Hozat’ın ‘Ermeni ve Rum lobileri paralel devlet’ açıklamasına tepki,” 2014, own translation)¹²¹

This time, the revitalization of Öcalan’s claims in Hozat’s speech received significant criticisms especially from the authors of the Armenian newspaper *Agos*. For the first time for a long a time, it is strongly implicated within pluralist leftist circles that the Kurdish emancipation would not automatically bring about the emancipation of other minorities (Danzikyan, Kılıçdağı & Koptaş, 2014)¹²². The main axis of these debates was about what we can name as the two sides of the medallion: the proliferation of ideals supported by the Kurdish movement such as pluralism through the normalization/de-marginalization of the movement itself and the engagement of some elements within the Kurdish political movement with the populist politics in the process of normalization.

While the sudden pop-ups of the conspiracy theories in such unexpected moments consisted one side of the problem, from another aspect, when we consider specifically the case of Jews in the process of de-marginalization of the pluralist discourses, it is worthy of attention that the Jews can only seldom enter into the speeches of intellectuals and politicians when they refer to the multi-ethnic past and present of Anatolia. This is not a new phenomenon, and it is exemplified in great detail by Rifat Bali in the appendix section of his book *The Model Citizens of the*

¹²¹ See Appendix, 12.

¹²² Also see Akçam (2014).

State: Jews of Turkey during the Multi-Party Period (2009). Quantitatively, the number of instances in which Jews were not included in pluralist speeches may not tell us much since Bali does not offer information about how many times they are mentioned in similar speeches. However, qualitatively, it might reveal something. For instance, referring to the claim of the pluralist music band Kardeş Türküler that they sing the songs of ‘the oppressed peoples of Anatolia’ and the fact that they sing in many different languages including Zazaki, Kurdish, Hamshini, Armenian, Greek, Assyrian, Macedonian, Arabic and Georgian but not Judeo-Spanish, Bali raises the question if leftists and liberals in Turkey identify the image of the Jew not with the oppressed but with the oppressor (p. 576). Is there a collective memory within Turkey’s left that codes Jews as oppressors or at least does not code them as oppressed? How do these dynamics influence the notion of solidarity within the pluralist leftist circles in Turkey? Is this the reason for the lack of reflexivity towards current anti-Semitic attacks and the separation between victimhood and the victim?

A similar reaction also showed up in Jewish community’s newspaper *Şalom*.

Figure 2 shows the work of İzel Rozental (2015), the cartoonist of *Şalom*.



Fig. 2 *Şalom* caricature
 (“İyi mi?,” 2015)

Figure 2 describes two Jewish men with kippas standing in front of a New Year celebration banner prepared in the name of Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) which is what BDP has transformed into in the western regions of Turkey following the *Türkiyelilesme* discourse. It includes an HDP logo and a message that reads as '2015 will be the year of Peace, Freedom, Equality, and Justice'¹²³ which are combined with a text, 'We are Workers, Women, Laborers, Young, Laz, Kurdish, Turkish, Abkhaz, Georgian, Greek, Albanian, Bosnian, Armenian, Circassian, Roma, Pomak, Alevi, Arab, Revolutionary, Socialist, Patriot, Anti-Capitalist'. In Rozental's cartoon, the two Jewish men standing in front of this banner speak to one another through speech bubbles. The first one reacts: 'Look, they didn't include us!'¹²⁴ and the other one answers: 'I couldn't decide if this is good or bad.'¹²⁵ So the cartoon not only problematizes a non-inclusive approach towards Jews within the rising pluralist alliance under the roof of HDP but at the same time it depicts a confusion among the Jews of Turkey about whether becoming visible in this pluralist discourse is desirable or not.

Considering all these—pop-ups of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories even in unexpected conditions and periods, the lack of references to Turkey's Jewish community within pluralist discourses and signs of a confusion among the Jewish community to be included in such discourse—I decided to interview Jewish intellectuals and activists who actively take part in Turkey's leftists political realm in order to learn about their observations and experiences about the concessions towards anti-Semitic language within Turkey's left and the specific contexts out of which such concessions come about. All the issues that I have discussed so far in this

¹²³ "2015 Barışın, Özgürlüğün, Eşitliğin, Adaletin yılı olacak!"

¹²⁴ "Bak bizi yazmamışlar!"

¹²⁵ "İyi mi kötü mü bilemedim?"

chapter have turned into a question in my interviews. I interviewed four people by using a semi-structured interview method. The people that I interviewed include a middle aged person of letters (Interviewee I) who has been very active in Turkey's leftist political scene since the 1970s. The other three interviewees are from the younger generation. One of them (Interviewee II) has been active in this scene since the 1990s. He has recently left for abroad but is still engaged with the political groups in Turkey. Interviewee III and Interviewee IV ran for the local council memberships in the 2014 local elections as candidates from HDP. Three of my interviewees are members of the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (Devrimci Sosyalist İşçi Partisi —DSIP) through which they lately became engaged with HDP while interviewee IV has not been a member of any political parties until her engagement with HDP in January 2013 despite her previous political activities.

Although our semi-structured interviews were open to interventions by my interviewees and me, I had the following trajectory and questions in my mind during the interview processes:

- 1) Previously, which political organizations did you take part in and which one are you affiliated with currently?
- 2) Showing the cartoon published in *Şalom* and a discussion about what it evokes in their mind. I also had two sub-questions for this part: i) Are Jews largely invisible within HDP and other pluralist leftist organizations in Turkey and ii) why is this cartoon published now; does it tell us anything about a demand from within the Jewish community to become engaged with today's spreading pluralist discourse?
- 3) Have you observed any transformations within the Jewish community in terms of political activities especially lately? If the question could not initiate a productive

discussion, I use some examples which include the activities of the Jewish Youth group Alef such as inviting Hayko Bağdat who is an author and activist engaged with the pluralist leftist circles and writing especially about the minorities in Turkey or the fact that some Jews recently started writing for *Agos* instead of *Şalom* considering the more apparent ties of *Agos* with the pluralist leftist political sphere in Turkey or a TV commercial disseminated by the tire firm Petlas and the changing reactions it received in 17 years from the Jewish community. The Petlas commercial was about a legend which depicts a soldier who fought during the WWI in Canakkale Front. According to the legend, the army needed tires, but economically it was not affordable. Mehmet Muzaffer used his talent in arts to create a fake banknote, and by this way, he achieved to buy the tires. In the TV commercial, the merchant who sold the tire is depicted as a caricatured Jew with his accent and physical features. He is also depicted as a money grubber as he responds to a soldier that is ready to do anything to save his country by saying ‘Para peşin, kırmızı meşin’ which in English might correspond to ‘no ticky no washy.’ Moreover, throughout the commercial, he is mentioned as a ‘cunning fox.’ While this commercial was on the TV in 1998, in 2015 it started to appear once again due to the centenary of the WWI. Ivo Molinas, the main editor of the newspaper *Şalom*, narrates that they called Petlas to prevent the appearance of this commercial and were saddened by the fact that they were not even aware of the anti-Semitic content. Interestingly, Molinas has been asked why they didn’t notify the firm of their discontent about this commercial, 17 years ago (Molinas, March 2015).

- 4) If there is a transformation, might this have anything to do with the fact that the Armenian community became politically more active especially in the period

after Hrant Dink's assassination or the achievements of the Kurdish political movement?

- 5) Does the belief that Jews are not politically active form one of the reasons for the lack of references to Jews in Turkey's leftist pluralist imaginaries?
- 6) While there are other ethnic communities in Turkey which are not much active in political terms and less numerous, why is it the Jews who are not included in these pluralist speeches? Is there a popular demand within these circles directed specifically towards the Jews for their politicization? If yes, might this have anything to do with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the suspicion towards individual Jews with regards to that (which is discussed in depth in the previous chapter)?
- 7) Referring to Rifat Bali's argument about the separation between the oppressor and the oppressed and his argument that Jews are not regarded as an oppressed people of Anatolia within the leftist imaginaries I ask my interviewees about their observations with regards to such encodings.
- 8) Have you ever witnessed an explicit concession towards anti-Semitic discourse within any organization that you took part in?
- 9) Are there any tendencies within these organizations that approach Turkey's Jews as the representatives or natural allies of the Israeli state?
- 10) What do you think about the speeches of Abdullah Ocalan and Bese Hozat as well as the reactions towards them that appeared in the political organizations that you take part in?

The interview method is much criticized by various anthropologists, and for instance, it is true that it might be inadequate in capturing the answer for the question if there is a tendency within Turkey's left that identifies Jews with the image of an oppressor

rather than the oppressed. The answers would always be tricky, calculated and relationally produced with the inclusion of both the interviewer and the interviewee. Moreover, considering the fact that there is not a monolithic structure such as Turkey's left but it is always fragmented, making room for various potentialities as well as certain blockages, each observation would tell a 'partial truth' as James Clifford would call it (1986). Yet, partial truths do matter. Through the assemblages of such and other partial truths interactions become possible in certain moments and contexts. Together with many other reasons, the partiality of the truths that I could be able to produce together with my interviewees throughout this study comes most importantly from the prevailing political atmosphere during the particular period during which I conducted my interviews. All four of these meetings were held between March-April 2015. All were right before the June 7 (2015) general elections. All of my interviewees were in an ongoing struggle for HDP to pass the election threshold and it was relatively a peaceful moment throughout the country in which pluralist discourse became perhaps more widespread than ever. All these affect the way I form my questions, how I interact with my interviewees and how they respond to my questions. In addition, although a relational evaluation of them will reveal much about how anti-Semitism figures in the oppositional imaginaries in Turkey, the findings of this chapter would crucially be different than the ones in the previous chapter for what is at stake here is not an intellectual reflection towards anti-Semitism that we can find in a journal like *Birikim* but how anti-Semitic discourse is put into circulation or avoided in ways which are tied more closely to political interests, power relations and pragmatic cost-benefit calculations as we will see in the following pages. Another factor that affects the results of my analysis is the fact that all of my interviewees self-identifies as having rather weak ties with the

Jewish community. So, if we can talk about a community affiliation with regards to my interviewees this community, predominantly, should be 'the democratic left' as the interviewee II refers to in various instances of our conversation. In the way that he uses it, 'democratic left' is a concept that corresponds to an assemblage of leftist circles without the inclusion of the 'nationalist left' such as the Republican Party (CHP) or the Workers' Party (IP) which is currently transformed into the Patriotic Party.

5.1 Making of the 'Jewish activist identity' in Turkey

Despite my interviewees' self-identification mainly with the 'democratic left,' we should keep in mind that the community ties are unstable, contingent and loaded with multi-directional possibilities. Foucault's understanding of subject becomes most clear in his definition of genealogical analysis. Through genealogy, the history of presence, Foucault strives for getting "rid of the subject itself, that's to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework"; this is "a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects, etc., without having to make reference to a subject" (1984, p.59). Then, Foucault suggests a specific historical contextualization which does not take the subject as granted but regards it as a historical constitution. This product is not determined once and for all but is constantly being reproduced through the exercise of power. So, Foucault's account of power does not suggest a binary opposition between subjects dividing them into the dichotomous categories (1990, p.94) but it accounts for continuous transformations of multiple subjects upon the power axis. Moreover, he argues that "more often one is dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing

cleavages in a society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remolding them, marking off irreducible regions in them, in their bodies and minds” (1990, p. 96). Thus when we speak of communities –either Jewish or leftist- we refer to notions that are transitory, contingent and under constant transformation vis-à-vis and in relation to each other.

All of my interviewees mentioned that they do not identify themselves so much with Jewishness while three of them referred a notion which they called ‘the official ideology of the community’ (Interviewee I, II and III). While the widespread use of the notion of ‘official ideology’ refers to what is asserted through the state discourse as well as an ideology of exclusion, in the way that three of my interviewees use this term the state is replaced with the (Jewish) community as an institution and the exclusive feature is kept similar. The official ideology that they mention is regarded as an ideology of silence -that is exemplified in the 500th year discourse mentioned previously- and matched with an official definition of Jewishness. Since they do not regard their practices in compliance with that, they have ambiguity in positioning themselves vis-à-vis Jewishness. For instance, Interviewee I states that:

Let’s talk about why they are silent, why they try to be invisible. This (tendency) is very much apparent in the Jewish community, but in fact, it is not much different in Armenian and Greek communities either. Armenian community started raising their voices especially after Hrant’s assassination, but before that, they were also like this, like let’s not make voice, let nobody see us. The reason for this is as follows: in Turkey, all these three communities have terrific and terrifying events in their social memory. 1934 Thrace Incidents, 6-7 September Incidents, the Wealth Tax, deportation of Greeks from Istanbul in 1964 and finally, Hrant’s assassination... These are sharp incidents known almost by everybody but there are much more incidents which are not as sharp, yet they occupied an important place in community’s memory. For this reason, now there are 1500 Greeks, 15,000-20,000 Jews and 50,000-60,000 Armenians in Turkey. It may not occupy a place in daily awareness level, but these are present in the memory of those who remain. In return, there developed an approach such as let’s not be seen, and they might forget that we are here and they don’t touch us.

On my part, I find this faulty because the rights that are not claimed would not be given. Yet, I can understand its reason. On the other hand, of course, it is faulty to regard the communities as the guilty of this situation. The guilty is the state that forces these communities to be invisible. We need to blame the perpetrator, not the victim. (Interviewee I, own translation)¹²⁶

Then when we proceed on speaking about a possible transformation within the community through the instances stated above in my third question, he gave me another example similar to the ones I mentioned. This was about a piece that he has written for the newspaper *Taraf* concerning an anti-Semitic publication in the journal of Uludag University's Religion Department. He told me that after the publication of his piece Jewish community leaders became aware of the case and demanded the removal of that piece from University's website by sending a letter. In addition, he argued that:

They prefer to work like this. Sending messages, not making much noise... Contrarily, I preferred to make noise immediately; I even wrote in *Taraf* that if that had happened in a western country, not only this author but also the guy heading the faculty and the president of the university would have been imprisoned. Contrarily, the community prefers to solve this silently like in the case of the TV commercial too. They prefer to solve it by calling Petlas. That is not the right way of doing this. The right way is that you will start an uproar, you will say that this is racism, you will cause Petlas' sales to reduce, you will make a campaign so that this would reach the level of awareness because the guy who prepared that commercial is, of course, anti-Semitic, of course, racist but he is not aware of this. I am sure that if we tell this to him if we say 'are you maniac, this is a terrific racism' he would take offense, he would say 'why, what is wrong with that.' The widespread racism in Turkey is like this. In order to overcome this, sending letters behind the scenes, talking to a few people would not work, you must bring it to the level of consciousness. This is the difference between my view and the official view of the community. (Interviewee I, own translation)¹²⁷

Considering these two statements by the Interviewee I, it becomes apparent that the way he positions himself vis-a-vis 'the community' and its 'official ideology' is based on the binary oppositions between being silent vs. being vocal, visibility vs. invisibility, political passiveness vs. political activeness. Similar references appear in

¹²⁶ See Appendix, 13.

¹²⁷ See Appendix, 14.

the way my other interviewees described themselves. For instance, after expressing that he is not in the community and linking the inclusive approach of the pluralist left in Turkey towards Armenians partially to their political mobilization especially after Hrant Dink's assassination, the interviewee II states that

Jews too need a fight like this; nothing is for free. Nobody deserves to fight for this but this is the reality of it. So they should come out and speak. Instead of talking to the HR manager of Petlas and listening to the empty talks such as 'it was not like this 17 years ago', I would go burn that place. Beyond this, what they should do is, you can come out and initiate a campaign. There is change.org, you can do this as you sit down but they still try to solve the problems without being seen because there is not an organized society. There is a tiny organized field, but they want nothing to happen. They move together, and this is the decision they make. What goes around comes around. If you stand behind the scenes, if you try to solve problems individually, you would go on standing behind the scenes. You may solve it or not but politically it does not seem right to me. Come out and speak, say that they tell this and this for us, ask; 'isn't it shame.' They won't listen once or twice but in the fifth, they will listen... Eventually, I am a part of it too, but ultimately I made my self-critique and found a way to act differently... (Interviewee II, own translation)¹²⁸

He also makes explicit that his self-positioning is also produced and reproduced by the acts of community members/leaders:

By the way, I also would like to state that in 2005 I went to Şalom and talked to them. I said if I am Jewish and if this is not your own father's newspaper then I would like to write too. They couldn't know what to say. After a while, they said okay. I wrote two articles; they didn't publish the third one. They didn't answer my phones... They didn't answer my e-mails. I went there, and they told me 'we made an editorial decision, your articles are very aggressive.' That was exactly my point, to say that you publish an ideological newspaper with the money of the community. (Interviewee II, own translation)¹²⁹

Through these words, there appears another strand, one that corresponds to reclaiming Jewishness by attempting to disrupt what is regarded as its 'official definition.' So, while on the one hand, their political activity takes these people away from imagining and identifying themselves as Jewish, on the other, this political field is loaded with potentials for them to lay claim to Jewishness. For instance,

¹²⁸ See Appendix, 15.

¹²⁹ See Appendix, 16.

interviewee III narrates me how he transformed into a Jew through his political activity in DurDe (Say Stop- to racism and nationalism) Platform.¹³⁰

In the course of its (DurDe's) formation, since they are all friends from DSIP (Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party), we were all together and to me they were like 'come and become an activist' but with my Jewish identity, I mean I was even less of a Jew back then, but within the movement they pushed me forward with my Jewish identity. (Interviewee III, own translation)¹³¹

Moreover, when I asked him about a possibility of a transformation within the Jewish community he responded to my question by referring to a recent event organization through which he 'came closer' with 'the community':

Recently I went there; there was a meeting in which I came closer to the community after 19 years. I entered into the community... In my grandmother's memorial service, a friend of my mother's asked me to make an arrangement for a community event, to call for someone famous. There was this event that I fell into and that I arranged by saying to myself that we are criticizing the community this much then I should make at least some contributions too so that I can pay my debt (to the community). For this reason, I went to that meeting, and because I had to become a Jew within the movement I was like 'what do Jews do nowadays.' (Interviewee III, own translation)¹³²

Also, he told me that he learned about earlier examples of anti-Semitism such as Elza Niyego incident 'compulsorily' in the process of becoming a Jew through his involvement within the leftist groups. I would argue that these narratives have at least two indications. First of all, in line with Butler's argument that 'Jew' is an identity which cannot take a unitary form or telos (2004, p. 81), these narratives lay bare that Jewishness is a category that exceeds any determinations as well as self-determinations. It is made and re-made through various combinations, interactions and especially in the case of my interviewees, through reclamations. It cannot be located in any institution or personality and is always already under transformation.

¹³⁰ Founded in 2007, DurDe is defined as a pluralist democratic platform of activists. Their motto is 'A world where there is no racism and nationalism is possible.' It is at the same time one of the few leftist organizations that routinely organizes conferences and protests concerning anti-Semitism in Turkey.

¹³¹ See Appendix, 17.

¹³² See Appendix, 18.

Moreover, this potential to be transformed and to interact can make up new possibilities for transforming other realms such as the leftist political sphere. Secondly, contrary to the way Rifat Bali's refers to the notion, 'socialists' as a monolithic institution, Turkey's left too should be regarded as a fragmented sphere which makes room not only for the use of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories or at least a widespread ignorance towards anti-Semitism but also for certain groups such as DurDe and personalities that struggle against them.

5.2 'A Jewish perspective,' to whom does it belong?

While speaking about DurDe and its struggle against anti-Semitism, Interviewee II stated that;

Since the beginning, they have been trying to bring Jewishness into the forefront. Now DurDe is the only organization that goes out and organizes meetings in Holocaust Remembrance Days and against anti-Semitism... Şalom mentions DurDe. Then probably it has certain credit for Şalom too... After all, Levent (Şensever) (the spokesperson for DurDe) has grown up in Germany. I think he is probably a person who has been affected by the 2nd World War, Holocaust, Jewishness discourse there in his childhood and who cultivated a Jewish perspective. So he might have a Jewish perspective. (Interviewee III, own translation)¹³³

These lines trouble a rigid understanding of identities even more by calling to mind the question, 'who might develop a Jewish perspective.' Is this perspective confined by the boundaries of an ethnicity/religion or is it transferrable regardless of such boundaries? I would argue that diaspora theory might provide us with productive tools for answering such questions. Historically, the term 'diaspora' referred to a centuries-long Jewish experience. As Rogers Brubaker shows; "the paradigmatic case was, of course, the Jewish diaspora; some dictionary definitions of the diaspora, until recently, did not simply illustrate but defined the word with reference to that

¹³³ See Appendix, 19.

case” (Brubaker, 2005, p. 2). In other words, the concept was used in a monocentric fashion, excluding many other experiences from its definition. In time, the intellectual production of many other works among which are the cases of Chinese (Nonini & Ong, 1997) and African (Hall, 1990; Gilroy, 1987) diasporas started disrupting such monocentric understandings as well as transforming the boundaries of the notion of diaspora by inscribing variety of experiences in it. These works can be regarded as attempts to decentralize the Jewish experience and re-conceptualize the notion either as multi-centered or as a non-centered assemblage of experience through identities and differences as they have not been imagined before. The theme of identity and difference is quite apparent in Stuart Hall’s work. In his piece about cultural identity and diaspora, he argues that “Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. This view problematizes the very authority and authenticity to which the term, 'cultural identity,' lays claim” (1990, p. 222). In other words, for Hall, in the case of diaspora, not only the conceptual homeland but how, in what processes and through which interactions that homeland is conceptualized and imagined matters. For him, what matters is not a ‘rediscovery of identity’ but its very production in a process where the past is intermingled with the present and future (p. 223). This production always happens as ‘positioned’ in particular contexts (p. 222). So, it is not about essences but positionings (p. 226). For this reason, the making of a diasporic identity is an unstable and ongoing process, and it includes multiple interactions while such a play between culture and identity exceeds binary structures not allowing for any rigid fixations (p. 228). In line with Hall, Paul Gilroy disrupts the well-accepted

assumption that the diasporic identities are defined with reference to a conceptual homeland by showing that the conceptual homeland too is produced and reproduced within certain contexts. In other words, there are no fixed reference points in the making of diasporic identities, and each reference point continues to be transformed and transform others. Moreover, he shows that the cultural-geographical locations that diasporic identities are positioned are not exempt from the impact of such transformations; they both serve for making their context and get affected by them. For instance, when one uses the term 'British culture' it may refer not only to the plurality of identities but also a dynamic process in which they get generated, dissolve and transform through various interactions as he argues that "the effects of these ties and the penetration of black forms into the dominant culture mean that it is impossible to theorize black culture in Britain without developing a new perspective on British culture as a whole" (Gilroy, 1987, p. 156). These productive interactions towards the way diasporas are debated and theorized led to more 'queer' understandings of the notion which relies on a radical inclusivity towards varied experiences as in the work of Jafari Allen. He argues that "(Black) diaspora is at once about particular locations (actual and imagined); roots/uprooting (principally understood as *from* Africa, but just as much *to* and *within* Africa, in other cases); and routes that bodies, ideas and texts travel. By diaspora, we refer to these conditions of movement and emplacement, and to processes of (dis)identification, but also relationality" (Allen, 2012, p. 216). His emphasis on roots and routes offers us new ways of thinking about the essence and the process. In addition, with his work, the notion of disidentification enters into the conceptual realm through which we may reflect on the constant 'play between culture and identity' as Stuart Hall put it. In line with a (dis)identification and routes approach, Andreas Huyssen questions the notion

of diasporic memory and the possibility that memory can be transferred through the diasporic encounters by considering a novel by Zafer Senocak about the Turkish diaspora in Germany. He argues that migrating to a country might also bring about a mnemonic migration into a country's national memory as in the case of the Turks; when they migrate to Germany, it might similarly be a migration into the German national memory produced with regards to the Holocaust (Huysen, 2003, p. 147). I believe that these are not automatic processes and they appear through multiple interactions with as well as resistances towards the national memory. On the other hand, Huysen's argument is quite relevant to the context that I consider in the scope of this thesis due to the question that it raises about whether the memory of the Holocaust that works as one factor in the making of German-Turkish diasporic identities could also work in a way to transform the leftist political memory in Turkey through further encounters? Donna Haraway argues that "the knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and *therefore* able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another" (Haraway, 2002, p. 681). Similarly, I suggest that 'a Jewish perspective' exceeds the limits of ethnic and religious boundaries and it may emerge in different ways, in different instances. Moreover, I would argue that the absence of Holocaust education and critical reflections about Turkish Republic's give and take with the Nazi government in Turkey contributes to what Bali defines as identification of Jews, not with the oppressed, but with the oppressor and this has certain outcomes for Turkey's left as well. Yet, in this sense, the intellectual activity of German/Turkish intellectuals like in the case of Levent Şensever, Kader Konuk, and Mehmet Mihri Özdoğan have significant potential for

exposing the memory of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism into possibilities for engaging with the fragmented political memory of Turkey's left.

5.3 Further reflections on Turkey's leftist political sphere

Interviewee II too mentioned an interest within Turkey's left towards debates over certain anti-Semitic incidents even before the establishment of DurDe:

I can say that this is a much-liked subject from the perspective of the Marxist left. Since 1990s Trace Pogroms etc. are among the interesting and amusing topics. Back then, we didn't know about the Armenian Genocide. Something had happened to Armenians, but nobody knew. Yet, Jewish Pogroms used to be known and talked about. For instance, it was something that was used as a good example of the essence of fascism in the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Yet, are those the Jews who are at stake here? Of course, not, Jews constitute only an example here. (Interviewee II, own translation)¹³⁴

This explanation of my interviewee is in line with one of my findings in the previous chapter about a tendency towards regarding anti-Semitism as an issue of the past and using such incidents as an exemplary tool for critiquing Republic's founding principles which is based on a separation between the victim and victimhood and in turn which does not automatically bring about an awareness towards current anti-Semitic incidents.

Apart from all these, the narratives of all interviewees are nearly in consensus with each other in pointing out that they observe anti-Semitic tendencies and a widespread insensibility towards this issue within Turkey's left. Moreover, they all narrated that the concessions towards the anti-Semitic discourse are put into circulation strategically within Turkey's left as a result of gain and cost calculations and with populist aims. Yet at the same time, most of them regard their presence as loaded with potentials for interactions that can transform this realm. For instance, while talking about İzel Rozental's cartoon, Interviewee I stated that;

¹³⁴ See Appendix, 20.

There are Armenians, Assyrians and others among HDP candidates (for parliamentary elections). HDP makes this on purpose announcing it with pipes and drums. Why aren't there any Jews? I think this is bilateral. First, it is already difficult to find one; the number of Jews who would do this is less than the number of fingers of one hand. However, this issue has another side related to HDP. Nominating a Jewish candidate is a dangerous thing. It is dangerous in terms of pulling votes because in Turkey Jewishness is 99% an unfavorable thing. It is something that evokes negative things. For this reason, HDP wouldn't have deliberated on it. This is the concession that they make to racism, this concession issue is very significant. Most positively, I can express it like this. I mean, over and above I tell this as a person who campaigns for HDP to pass the threshold in the elections, but it is like this. (Interviewee I, own translation)¹³⁵

Such tactical concession towards racism and anti-Semitism within Turkish left is exemplified in Interviewee II's narrative as well while he was reflecting on the latest conspiracy theories that are mentioned above:

The dirty end of the stick is that anyone who steps into the popular politics gives a harsh kick to the Jews. This is, for sure, an unpleasant situation but it causes a gain. I think this will go on; if politics is based on winning and losing and if whoever hears this also nods with approval, somebody will say this. Of course, it is distressing that this is expressed from within the democratic politics... I think this is an issue that should be discussed within the Party so that at least they would know what they are doing and might not repeat once again. (Interviewee II, own translation)¹³⁶

Thus, both Interviewee I and Interviewee II explained such concession with the political strategies. While Interviewee IV also mentioned such strategic moves she also argued that the reason why not including Jews in pluralist discourses in popular politics depends on the alignment between Jews and Israel:

Especially in Turkey, for pluralist movements to embrace Jews, those movements need to have a very nuanced position about Israel, they need to be able to separate anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism very well... At the moment you enter here (as a Jew), there will be lots of anti-Semitic stuff against you and the movement, like these are Mossad... because you are Jewish and Jewish means Israel in this country. (Interviewee IV, own translation)¹³⁷

¹³⁵ See Appendix, 21.

¹³⁶ See Appendix, 22.

¹³⁷ See Appendix, 23.

I believe that these are the instances through which ‘the ghost that we disregard’ for strategic political reasons turns into ‘the ghosts that we invite from the backdoor’ as Mehmet Mihri Özdoğan termed it (Özdoğan, 2005, p. 59). Interviewee I was more explicit about this;

The left in Turkey is racist. It is necessary to state this explicitly. This also includes every level of the Kurdish movement, from Öcalan to a newspaper columnist in Hakkari... Speculations about the Armenian lobby and the Jewish lobby are widespread. These speculations entirely derive from the racist discourse of the West. This movement is not even aware of this fact, but it uses the same statements. It wouldn't be right to whitewash. (Interviewee I, own translation)¹³⁸

Moreover, when I asked him about Bali's suggestion that Jews are not regarded among the oppressed peoples of Anatolia he responded that:

Precisely, it is very much obvious that they are not regarded as oppressed... It stems from regarding each and every Jew as a part of the Israeli state. It stems from an entirely racist point of view. That's what is common in Turkey's left. While not being able to separate Jewishness and Zionism is widespread nearly as 100% in Turkey, within left let's not say 100% but 80 %... Jews in Israel did this, you do not have anything to do with that, but you are of the same race then you too are responsible. Ok, but this is racism. Turkey's left is not exempt from this at all, neither the Kurdish movement... And what is more, if it (conspiracy theory statements) was only for once a response like I blurted it out or I spoke without thinking could be understandable but if the same words are mentioned consecutively and continuously by people from any level of the movement and if they try to defend this it is evident that they think this way. (Interviewee I, own translation)¹³⁹

A direct alignment between Jews and Israel within Turkey's left is also mentioned by the Interviewee II:

Leftists too expect the same manner from you about Palestine. If s/he is cleverer s/he doesn't ask that directly; otherwise, directly, as the first question, it would be like ‘Your name? Dani? What is that? Oh, Jew! What do you think about Israel?’... If you are Jewish, you have to give an explicit declaration under oath about the Israeli politics; you have to condemn (Israel) and love Palestine. I am a Palestine activist, but it is not because I am Jewish. When the question is posed in this way, I prefer not to act as one because I take umbrage. (Interviewee II, own translation)¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ See Appendix, 24.

¹³⁹ See Appendix, 25.

¹⁴⁰ See Appendix, 26.

So, together with our analysis in the previous chapter, in these narratives, it appears that there are mainly two ways through which anti-Semitism figures in the leftist oppositional imaginaries in Turkey. One can be described as making concessions and being indifferent towards this particular form of hatred and the dangers that come along with it. The second one is a direct acquisition of anti-Semitic language either by appealing to conspiracy theories or not being able to differentiate Jewishness and Israeli state crimes. While the first one is more common, there is also an interrelation between the two since the former prepares a proper ground for the latter to flourish. In other words, the concessions towards anti-Semitism which are oftentimes used as a political strategy even within the pluralist left in Turkey also promotes the direct acquisition of anti-Semitic language by degrading its illegitimacy.

As a final observation, I should state that three of my interviewees made it explicit that their presence in this field is transformative and this aspect becomes even more apparent during a time of a crisis since they can exploit it and turn it into a productive moment. While we were talking about the latest pop-up of the conspiracy theories, interviewee IV expressed that:

One reason for us to be there, indeed, is forming a blockage against certain concessions that you research about because these concessions are sometimes made by force but when you find an institution that is self-critical, you can be the force that pushes that case in the other direction... For instance, it was a productive moment for us in the Party. We discussed why lobbying should be a bad thing; we also do lobbying, trying to promote our Party we organize something in some locations. It was about reclaiming the word, lobbying. There was also criticism towards the anti-Semitic sound of this word, lobbying... It's like killing three birds with one stone; it was a good discussion... The question is this: does HDP have a responsibility to separate Israel and Jewishness in Turkey? In the long run, probably it has but how will it do that? It will do that through several failures. It will not give statements after statements about that, but I think it will probably fail, then as a result of these failures a field will emerge there to discuss. Stepping into this headfirst is meaningless. (Interviewee IV, own translation)¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ See Appendix, 27.

Similarly, interviewee II explained to me that he used to utilize his Jewishness as a conscious attempt to transform the discriminatory approach:

If I am there when it happens, I lay my card on the table telling that I'm a Jew because we're living in a society in which racism is really dense. People are naturally racist; you lose the other side. I say it directly, and they get baffled when it comes into existence as flesh and bones. There is something called Jewish but when you show up and start talking it suddenly turns into a human being. I prefer to use this. When you say 'you are racist,' maybe that's the right thing to do but since I do politics for me, consequences matter... I gave lots of workshops in Kurdistan on democracy and discrimination. It was among the cards that I was using. I was throwing out some words like Jewish or Israelite, and I was waiting for them to speak and pour out, and then I was asking them what if there is a Jew among us... In order to conduct these discussions, you need to be in the field. (Interviewee II, own translation)¹⁴²

Finally, interviewee III told me how the field provided by the pluralist left is open for many possibilities through a variety of interactions:

Social movements too are in the process of transformation. They are asking: 'what is Ladino,' 'what is Hebrew.' They say Jews' language is Hebrew. Then, another Jew or I say, 'no, Jewish language here is not Hebrew, it is Ladino.' There is an interaction. Think of it, how many Turks know how many Kurdish words. They live here next to us. Istanbul is the city that has the most crowded Kurdish population. We don't even know how to say 'thank you,' 'hello,' 'how are you.' HDP is an institution which is beneficial for that, knitting up of identities, familiarity. (Interviewee III, own translation)¹⁴³

In all these narratives, 'being there' appears as an essential theme. However, I would argue that such an understanding of 'being there' which appears as an opening towards multiple possibilities, circulates in these narratives, not in an unproblematic fashion. It is usually a 'being there' used together with 'despite all' recognizing the former's transformative power over the latter. There is a positioning vis-à-vis both Turkey's pluralist left as well as the Jewish community on a terrain which is made up of mobile, contingent and transgressive relations.

In early 2016, only some months after I conducted my interviews, an internet based journal named *Avlaremoz* began to be issued with the participation of my

¹⁴² See Appendix, 28.

¹⁴³ See Appendix, 29.

interviewees. *Avlaremoz* means ‘we will speak’ / ‘let us speak’ in Judeo-Spanish while the use of first person plural refers to a community. Thus, this act could be regarded as a reclamation of Jewishness, once again reminding us that the category of Jewishness exceeds any determinations and impositions. At the same time, the publishers describe the choice of ‘*avlaremoz*’ as the platform’s title with reference to another Judeo-Spanish word, *Kayades*, which circulates widely within Turkey’s Jewish community and holds exactly the opposite meaning¹⁴⁴ while this is representative of both the atmosphere of fear that surrounds Turkey’s Jewish community and the silence and invisibility that it entails. Although this platform was first initiated with the endeavors of a few Jewish and non-Jewish activists, its crew expanded fast to include a broad range of authors many of whom have not previously participated in the leftist political realm in Turkey. They routinely analyze newspaper articles, graffiti on the streets, social media posts and TV series tracing the everyday forms of anti-Semitism that penetrated into these realms, under the category ‘*Afedersin Antisemit.*’¹⁴⁵ Their publications also include articles about the history of anti-Semitism both in Turkey and worldwide, various Jewish cultures in general, and interviews with Jewish youth about their everyday experiences with anti-Semitism as the members of the Jewish community in Turkey.

By keeping anti-Semitism on the watch and through immediate reactions towards discourses that make concessions towards the anti-Semitic arguments—including those that come up from within the leftist sphere—*Avlaremoz* attends in the act of ‘narrating,’ which Trouillot suggests, is an intervention towards the history writing. For instance, when Ayşe Düzkan, a renown activist especially in the sphere

¹⁴⁴ A one-word Judeo-Spanish advice that means silence, keeping quite, not interfering, not being visible, and living low profile. See Çiprut (2016).

¹⁴⁵ Meaning, ‘I apologize, anti-Semite’ referring to the extensive use of the infamous racist statements such as ‘I apologize, Armenian,’ ‘I apologize, Jewish,’ ‘I apologize, Kurdish’ etc. as if these words that refer to different ethnicities are unmentionable swearwords.

of feminist politics in Turkey, published an article (2016) which is critical towards the anti-Semitic content in Yıldız Tilbe's tweets that are mentioned at the very beginning of this thesis but which also failed to recognize anti-Semitism from the perspective of Turkey's Jewish community and their vulnerabilities (2016)—instead she problematized anti-Semitism only because it pushes more Jews into Israel and the Israeli state legitimizes its claims for the occupation in Palestine by this way—a reaction article was published in *Avlaremoz* immediately. Such immediate responses to the concessions towards the anti-Semitic discourse are quite rare, if not unprecedented in Turkey's leftist pluralist sphere as it is shown throughout this thesis. In this sense, the work of this platform holds an important transformative potential. The anonymous response article criticized the approach that eventually links any questions of anti-Semitism to the issue of Zionism, and that underestimates anti-Semitism as a problem in itself (“Hayri Çavuş’un not defteri: sol yanım, acemi yanım,” 2016). The final lines of this article are quoted from Orhan Veli’s poem, *My left hand*: ‘I got drunk, and again I thought of you; my left hand, my clumsy hand, my pitiful hand!’¹⁴⁶ as the author draws attention to the clumsiness (*acemilik*) and inexperience in Turkey’s left in responding to the threats of anti-Semitism. All in all, *Avlaremoz* is not only a platform through which the leftist Jews of Turkey reclaim their Jewishness in the face of what they call ‘the official ideology of the community’ by attempting to break the silence and reconcile the Turkish Jewish identity with political activism. At the same time, by offering a realm for practicing with the ways of reacting to the structural and everyday occurrences of anti-Semitism, *Avlaremoz* appears as an opportunity to overcome this clumsiness (*acemilik*), inexperience and ambiguity in Turkey’s left about how to respond to the

¹⁴⁶ ‘Sarhoş oldum da seni hatırladım yine; sol elim, acemi elim, zavallı elim!’

threats of anti-Semitic discourses that is problematized mainly in the previous chapter of this thesis and the responses of my interviewees.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

My aim in this research was to explore how anti-Semitism figures in the oppositional imaginaries in Turkey. I decided to focus on this case mainly due to my earlier observations about the lack of struggle against contemporary anti-Semitism in Turkey even within the groups which engage with pluralist discourses and practices. Such preliminary observations of mine depend not only on the pluralist/leftist intellectual publications but also my everyday interaction with the individual members of these groups. In accordance with these two areas where my preliminary observations are located, I decided to determine two main focus for my analysis; the first one is the longest standing pluralist leftist publication, *Birikim*, which makes room for various viewpoints. This approach allowed me to capture different positions among Turkey's pluralist left taken towards the problem of anti-Semitism. Moreover, due to the large time-span that the journal covers, it helped me figure out how the prevailing trends in discussing anti-Semitism have changed over time. My second focus was the everyday experiences of the Jewish intellectuals and activists within Turkey's pluralist leftist groups. I tried to reveal such experiences by conducting interviews. Most importantly, these interviews disclose the contingency of the Jewish identity as well as the transformative power of my interviewee's inclusion within the Turkey's pluralist left no matter how few they may be.

These interviews also set forth a possible transformation within Turkey's Jewish communities, in particular for the younger generation, regarding the methods they use for their political engagement. While in the earlier generations the hypervisibility imposed on the Jewish community through the routinized anti-

Semitic conspiracy theories is dealt with the help of strategic configurations of visibilities and invisibilities, the younger generations are more prone to problematize the use of invisibility as a political strategy. Instead, they tend to become more visible in order to challenge the type of conspiratorial hypervisibility imposed on the Jewish community. Especially *Avlaremoz* is a compelling example of this tendency. For instance, unlike my interviewees, the expanding list of authors who write for this platform in order to challenge anti-Semitism in distinct ways include various young people who do not situate themselves at the outskirts of the Jewish community. Moreover, these people are more increasingly involved in the events and publications of the pluralist left in Turkey. For instance, Marxism Days Conferences organized by DSIP each year during the spring-time include at least one session on the issue of anti-Semitism in Turkey. While previously the speakers were mainly the Jewish activists who align themselves with the community of the ‘democratic left’ rather than the Jewish community, in the recent years these sessions tend to include young authors of *Şalom* who have well-established ties with the Jewish community. Moreover, these young people increasingly tend to write for other publications such as Armenian community’s newspaper *Agos* which became an important intellectual and political realm for the pluralist left especially in the period after Hrant Dink’s assassination due to the accelerated politicization that this majorly transformative event led to. In this sense, while they have quite distinct histories as well, the (in)visibility of the Jewish community in Turkey should not be though independently from the (in)visibility of the Armenian community. On the one hand, the increasing visibility of such insider contestations against the widespread anti-Semitic claims would also transform the realm of pluralist leftist politics in Turkey. On the other, while before Hrant Dink’s assassination Armenian community was also associated

with similar notions of silence and invisibility,¹⁴⁷ the pluralist left of Turkey in this period was not entirely disassociated from the discussions about anti-Armenian reflections of racism and nationalism in Turkey¹⁴⁸, unlike their position towards anti-Semitism. This once again shows that the direct appeals and concessions towards anti-Semitic forms of hatred are one of the most contingent and nuanced issues in the pluralist claims of the leftist groups in Turkey. It appears that there are different yet interrelated demands for visibility from the Jews that come not only from the Turkish state and nationalist sections of the society but also from the leftist fragments. On the one hand, hospitality narratives that situate Turkey's Jews in a position of 'eternal guests' are circulated—and the Jews of Turkey are rendered visible by this way—for the sake of the international representation of Turkey in diplomatically critical moments. On the other, there are demands for an increased political Jewish visibility concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict shared by both leftists and the right-wing groups. Such demands either directly blame the Jews of Turkey for Israeli state's actions or put them under suspicion.

In terms of the tension between visibility and invisibility and how it impacts the interaction between Jewish and pluralist leftist communities, one of my interviewees argued that if a leftist political organization attempts to associate their names with the Jewish community by hanging a banner in a synagogue's street during the Jewish high holidays such as Passover¹⁴⁹ this may even scare the Jewish community which has developed long-standing practices of invisibility and silence. While the synagogues in Turkey are designed in a way that they cannot be spotted by outsiders unlike churches, mosques, and cemevis, drawing attention to Jewish

¹⁴⁷ See Tataryan (2012).

¹⁴⁸ See Akçam (2004).

¹⁴⁹ High holidays of some other ethnic and religious minorities such as Greeks and Armenians are celebrated this way by HDP for instance.

communal spaces and bypassing safety measures might not be a proper way of establishing solidarity networks between the pluralist left and the Jewish community. All in all, these spaces are constantly being molested despite all these security measures and the invisibility established around them. For instance, where people gathered in order to protest the Israeli bombardment in July 2014 was the sidewalk right across the Ortaköy Etz Ahayim Synagogue while the protesters shouted ‘Baby murderer Israel’ and threw eggs on synagogue’s wall. Only 4 months after this incident and around the anniversary of Neve Şalom Synagogue bombings, Neve Şalom was once again the target of racism as a man who wore a Turkish flag and carried a stick hang a banner on the front door of the synagogue which reads ‘Place to be destroyed’ (Günel, 2014). In such an atmosphere of blatant anti-Semitism, not increasing the visibility of Jewish communal spaces might be a part of the solidarity with the Jewish community. However, very small numbers of participation in the protests that DurDe organized in the aftermath of these attacks (not around the synagogues but in Galatasaray Square) as well as the lack of support for a few human-rights activists when they were attacked due to their activities in the fight against anti-Semitism that is discussed in the fourth chapter shows that in the pluralist leftist movements in Turkey, it is difficult to find well-established reflexes against anti-Semitism even when they are explicitly demanded. In this sense, historically, protesting anti-Semitism has not been an attractive issue for Turkey’s pluralist left.

Throughout my research, I found out that there are two main trends of discussing anti-Semitism within the pluralist left in Turkey. The first one corresponds to the fashion in which anti-Semitism is never discussed through locating it within current Turkish context, and it is always aligned with the Israeli

politics as we already saw in the case of ‘Two Sides of the Medallion: Anti-Semitism and Zionism’ discussed extensively in the 4th chapter of this thesis. First of all, this approach is based on introducing the critical arguments produced as a result of North American political dynamics into the social and political context in Turkey instead of providing more locally-informed critiques. Even the difference between anti-Semitism score indexes of the US and Turkey is a proof of discrepancy between these two frameworks.¹⁵⁰ Throughout this thesis, such an imposed globalization of the North American critique of Zionism which is incongruent with the context in Turkey is problematized. Moreover, this strand runs the risk of reading the sufferings of Palestinian and of Jews against each other rather than linking them to each other from within a radically pluralist approach. The second prevalent trend in discussing anti-Semitism corresponds to a manner in which the debates over anti-Semitism can be located in the context of Turkey while the time-span at stake never exceeds the 1920-1955 interval. From this approach, anti-Semitic incidents become a mere tool for criticizing the founding principles of Republic while lacking the possibility for a critical attentiveness towards current cases of anti-Semitism. I argued that both of these approaches are based on a separation of victim and victimhood, focusing on the latter.

Another finding of my study is that especially between 2000 and 2005 anti-Semitic conspiracy theories were more prevalent in Turkey compared to other periods. In this period, they were legitimized through arguments for substituting critical analysis for suspicion, and they even made their way into the leftist circles. In the later years, there has been a decrease in their prevalence and legitimacy in simultaneity with the demarginalization of pluralist discourses. As a result,

¹⁵⁰ According to the previously mentioned ADL report, 9% of adults harbor anti-Semitic attitudes in the US while Turkey scores 71%.

discussions over anti-Semitism tended towards a politically more attentive direction. However, anti-Semitism never became a popular issue of debate when we consider the silence within leftist pluralist circles towards everyday attacks against Jewish institutions as well as insults towards Jews. In addition, despite the considerable decrease, anti-Semitic conspiracy theories continue to pop-up from time to time in unexpected moments even within the 'democratic left.' I discussed that there might be two reasons for this; the first one appeared in my interviews, and it is about the popular politics and the fact that concessions towards anti-Semitism may be happening as a result of certain cost and gain calculations in the field of real politics. The second reason is more closely related to the leftist intellectual sphere, and it refers to the absence of an image of the Jew as oppressed among leftist pluralist imaginaries. Finally, I argued that works of particular German-Turkish intellectuals as well as the recent activities of leftist Jewish intellectuals in Turkey, as we see in the case of *Avlaremoz*, can bear potentials for transforming such imaginaries. I believe that this potential stems from not only reconciling Jewish and pluralist/leftist communities which were previously described in dualistic and exclusive term but also from the potency of these groups for producing more contextual critiques of anti-Semitism in Turkey.

APPENDIX

ORIGINAL TURKISH QUOTATIONS

1. Bir kitabı, “Avrupa’da Milliyetçilik adıyla Türkçeye çevrilmiş bulunan (çev: Haluk Timurtaş – Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Sosyal İlimler Komisyonu Yay. 6, 1971) Prof. Kedourie aslen Bağdatlı bir Yahudidir. Kendimi bunu söylemek zorunda hissettiğim için üzgünüm. Bir yazarın görüşlerini onun ırksal kökeniyle açıklamaya kalkmak çirkin bir şey olmakla birlikte, burdaki sunuşunda genellikle haklı itirazlarda bulunan Kedourie’nin, bu kere de mektubun tam tersi yönde, sanki Ittihatçılarla Yahudilerin hiçbir ilişkisi yokmuş gibi bir izlenim uyandırması ihtimaline karşı Yahudileri fazla kayırmış olabileceğini göz önünde tutmak gerekiyor. (Tunçay, 1978, p. 52)
2. Ara başlıkları biz ilave ettik ama tümü de yazıda kullanılan bilgilerden çıkarıldı. Dikkat ederseniz gazetecilik tekniği açısından aşağı yukarı her yazıya (örneğin akademisyenler genellikle ara başlık kullanmıyor) ara başlık atıyoruz. Bu hem okuru yakalamayı hem de “dehşetengiz” blok yazıların biçim olarak hafiflemesini sağlıyor. Yok eğer yazınızda antisemit olduğumuz iması varsa size yalnızca ‘insaf’ diyeceğiz. *Radikal İki* seslerini duyuramayanlara da platform olma ilkesini benimsemiş bir ek. Geçmişimiz bunun en iyi kanıtı. Son söz olarak yine de sizi üzdüysek biz de üzüldük dememize izin verin. Bu arada sizinki bir cevap yazısı olduğu için ara başlık kullanmadığımızı ekleyelim. Halbuki iki ara başlık çok da iyi duracaktı. (as cited in Bali, 2005)
3. Her Yahudi ilk iş bu devletle ilişkisini tarif etmek zorunda kalıyor. Bu koşullarda bu kaçınılmazdır. Düşünün ki 1942 yılındayız, az önce diyelim Treblinka toplama kapında olan bitene dair bir haber izlemişiz ve karşımıza, “Merhaba, ben Almanım,” diyen biri çıkıyor. Asıl kritik nokta burada başlıyor. Zira ‘Alman’ denince akıllara derhal ‘Nazi’nin geldiği, Almanlarla ilgili hoşumuza gitmeyen en küçük olayda bunu ortaya sürdüğümüz bir dünyada elbette şu soru, her ne kadar rahatsız edici olsa da, hiç fuzuli sayılmaz: ‘Yahudi’, İsrail devleti ile özdeş midir? Ya da en azından onun doğal suç ortağı mıdır? (Kıvanç, 2004, p. 39)
4. Ama bakın, ABD yönetimleri üzerinde etki ve nüfuz sahibi birtakım şahinlerin, İsrail’in gönlünce asıp kesmesini sağladığı, hatta bu insanların Yahudi olduğunu belirttiğimizde, birden hücumbotlar önümüzü kesiyor: “Hop! Yasak sulara girdiniz!” Ya, Yahudi olmaları, İsrail devleti ile ilişkili olabileceklerine dair bir karine de mi değildir; insaf artık! (Kıvanç, 2004, p. 40)
5. Daha mütemmim bir liste olması halinde bile Lasn’ın yeni muhafazakârlar arasında çok sayıda Yahudi’nin bulunduğu iddiası doğrudur. Peki bunda ne [kötülük] var? Sosyalistler arasında da birçok Yahudi var. İşçi hareketi içinde de çok sayıda Yahudi var... Neticede Lasn peşinen monolitik bir Yahudi perspektifi olmadığını kabul ediyor. O zaman iddiası ne? Söz konusu yeni

muhafazakârlar bu ÷lkeye yaptıkları için sorgulanmaktalar, Irak'ta yasa dışı bir savaş lehine lobi yaptıkları için, manevi olarak iflas etmiş askerî saldırganlık siyasetini destekledikleri için, İnsan Hakları Beyannamesi'ni yerle bir etme amacıyla sürdürdükleri kavga için, ve evet, Sharon hükümetinin tiksindirici cani eylemlerini finansal ve siyasi açıdan destekledikleri için. Lasn'ın sözünü ettiği Yahudi ve Yahudi olmayan insanlar, liberallerin ve gelenekçi muhafazakârların karşı çıktıkları bir siyasi hareketin mensuplarıdır. Hükümetimizi rehin almışlar ve ÷lkemizi iflasa doğru sürükleyen bir yolda ilerlemekteler. Bu nedenle onlara karşı olmalıyız – bazıları Yahudi olduklarını iddia ettikleri için değil. (as cited in Bali, 2005)

6. Evet, burası Türkiye. Antisemitizmin tehlike olması için sinagogların bombalanması yetmedi. Ümit Kıvanç “artık” antisemitizm gibi bir sorun görmüyor ne dünyada ne Türkiye’de... Çünkü tehlike olması için toplama kamplarının bacalarından insan küllerinin savrulması gerekiyor. İşin en ama en can acıtıcı yanı, sol içinde saygınlığı tartışmasız olan sosyalistler için de bunun böyle olması. (Günaysu, n.d.)
7. Kıvanç Amerika’da yaşıyor ve *Birikim* dergisi Amerika’da yayınlanıyor olsaydı, ‘Politik Doğruluk Hakikate Karşı’ yazısı bir anlam ifade ederdi... Ama orası Amerika, burası Türkiye. Bu güne kadar İsrail devletini eleştirdiği için ırkçı olmakla suçlanan, saldırıya uğrayan hiç kimseye rastlamadım Türkiye’de. Ben, kendi hesabıma, televizyonda, radyoda, çeşitli yayınlarda İsrail devletinin meşru bir devlet olmadığını, Amerika’nın bölgedeki jandarması olduğunu, Siyonizmin ırkçılık olduğunu defalarca yazdım, söyledim. Beni ne eleştiren oldu, ne de susturmaya çalışan. Öte yandan, İsrail’i eleştirmek vesilesiyle tüyler ürpertici bir ırkçılığa savrulan, Yahudilik ile Siyonizmi aynı sayan, anti-Siyonizm ile antisemitizmi ayırt edemeyen yaklaşımların bini bir para. Demek ki, Türkiye’de (Amerika’nın aksine) temel sorun Kıvanç’ın sandığı gibi İsrail’i eleştirememek değil. Sorun, zaten yaygın olan ırkçılığın, İsrail bahanesiyle daha da yaygınlaşıyor olması. Dolayısıyla, bir sosyalistin üzerine düşen, bir yandan İsrail’i eleştirir ve Filistinlileri desteklerken, bir yandan da antisemitizme karşı tetikte olmaktır. (Margulies, 2004, p. 63)
8. Eski MIT görevlisi Prof. Dr. Mahir Kaynak, İşçi Partisi Genel Başkanı Doğu Perinçek, Yalçın Küçük, Oktay Sinanoğlu, Doç. Dr. Emin Gürses, *Anadolu’da Vakit* gazetesi başyazarı Abdurrahman Dilipak, aynı gazete yazarlarından Hasan Karakaya, Taha Kıvanç müstear adıyla imzaladığı yazılarıyla *Yeni Şafak* gazetesi başyazarı Fehmi Kuru, birçok ‘komplo’ kitabının müellefi *Zaman* gazetesi yazarı Aydoğan Vatandaş, aynı grubun yazarı ve www.komplo.com web sitesi editörü Mustafa Aydın, geçmişte sosyal demokrat konuların yazarı olan Atilla Akar, Mutlu Çölgeçen, Aytunç Altındal, Hakan Yılmaz-Ali Çimen ikilisi, Dr. Süleyman Adem, *M5 Haber* dergisi yazarlarından Nedret Ersanel. (Bali, 2004b, p. 32)
9. Halen ABD’deki 10 milyon Musevi, 280 milyonluk Amerikan nüfusunun yaklaşık yüzde 3’ünü oluşturuyor. Buna karşın Amerikan siyaset ve ticaret hayatında yüzde 11 oranında temsil ediliyorlar. ABD üniversitelerindeki her 5 akademisyenden biri Yahudi kökenli... Amerikan medyasında ise yüzde 25

oranında bir güce sahipler. Yani nüfuslarının 8 katı fazla bir temsil oranı yakalamış durumdadır. ABD Savunma Bakan yardımcısından NBA başkanına, en ünlü Hollywood yönetmenlerinden Merkez Bankası başkanına, New York belediye başkanından Senato üyelerinin yüzde 10'una, Kongre'nin yüzde 6'sına kadar her alanda inanılmaz bir ağırlıkları var. (Dündar, 2002)

10. Gerçi Rıfat Bali meselenin esasına dair pek laf etmediği, sadece anti-semitizm dedektörlüğüyle meşgul olduğu için bu olgu hakkında kendisinin ne düşündüğünü ayrıntılarıyla anlayamadık bu yazıdan. Yine de 'esasa ilişkin' bazı ipuçları vardı ve bunlar, -haydi genellemeyeyim; beni, -haydi nazik olayım- hayrete düşürecek cinstendi. (Kıvanç, 2004, p. 32)
11. Türkiye'de 3 koldan paralel devlet çalışması var. Bu ilişkileri sabote edilmeye başladı. Sıradan lobiler değil. ABD'de Yahudi, Ermeni ve Rum lobileri stratejik ve taktik müdahale ediyorlar. Her 3'ü de Anadolu çıkışlıdır... Ermeni lobisi etkili. 2015'le gündem olmak istiyorlar... Anadolu İslamlaştıktan sonra, bin yıllık bir Hıristiyanlık öfkesi var. Rum, Ermeni, Yahudi, Anadolu'da hak iddia eder. Laiklik, milliyetçilik kisvesinde elde ettiklerini kaybetmek istemiyorlar... Devreye giren İsrail lobisi, Ermeni ve Rumlar, 'Kürtler ne kadar dışlanırsa o kadar başarılı oluruz' diyorlar. Bu paralel devlettir. Bin yıllık bir gelenektir. ("Öcalan-BDP görüşmesinin zabıtları ortaya çıktı," 2013)
12. Türkiye'de resmi devletin dışında bir de oluşan paralel devletler vardır. Mesela F. Gülen cemaati paralel bir devlettir. İsrail lobisi, yine milliyetçi Ermeni ve Rum lobileri paralel birer devlettir. Paralel devletlerin birbiriyle ortaklaştığı ciddi bir çıkar ilişkisi vardır... Asıl amacı, Türkiye'nin demokratikleşmesini engellemektir. ("KCK eşbaşkanı Hozat'ın 'Ermeni ve Rum lobileri paralel devlet' açıklamasına tepki," 2014)
13. Niye sessiz olduklarını, görünmez olmaya çalıştıklarını konuşalım. Bu Yahudi cemaatinde çok belirgindir ama diğer cemaatler, Ermeni ve Rum cemaatleri de çok farklı değil aslında. Ermeni cemaati Hrant'ın katlinden sonra daha biraz ses çıkarır filan oldu, ama daha önce onlar da öyledi, aman ses çıkarmayalım, kimse bizi görmesin... Bunun da nedeni şudur: Türkiye'de bu üç cemaat de toplumsal belleğinde çok korkunç ve korkutucu olaylar barındırır. 34 Trakya olaylarından başlayıp iste Varlık Vergisi, 6-7 Eylül Olayları, 64te Rumların İstanbul'dan gönderilmesi ve nihayet Hrant'ın öldürülmesi... Bunlar sivri ve hemen hemen herkesin bildiği olaylardır ama bunun gibi, bu kadar sivri olamayan ama cemaatin belleğinde yer edinmiş çok olay vardır. O yüzden bugün Türkiye'de 1500 Rum kaldı, 15-20 bin Yahudi kaldı, 50-60 bin Ermeni kaldı. Kalanların belleğinde tüm bunlar günbegün, bilinç düzeyinde olmasa da mevcuttur. Buna karşı da görünmeyelim bizim burda olduğumuz belki unutulur ve bize dokunmazlar anlayışı gelişti. Ben bunu kendi hesabıma yanlış buluyorum, aranmayan hak verilmez çünkü. Ama anlayabiliyorum nedenini. Ayrıca bu durumun suçlusu olarak cemaatleri görmek de yanlış tabii ki. Bunun suçlusu bu cemaatlerin görünmez olmak zorunda kalmasına yol açan devlet. Kurbanı değil, kurban edeni suçlamak gerekiyor. (Interviewee I)

14. Böyle çalışmayı tercih ediyorlar. Yazışmalar, fazla gürültü çıkarma... Ben ise hemen gürültü çıkarıp, *Taraf* gazetesinde üstelik, şey yazdım, 'Batıda bir ülkede olsa, sadece bu yazının yazarı değil fakültenin başındaki herif de üniversitenin rektörü de hapse girerdi' diye yazdım. Cemaat ise daha sessizce, işte üniversitenin rektörüyle görüşerek halletmeyi tercih ediyor. İşte reklam örneğinde de Petlas'ı arayıp halletmeyi tercih ediyorlar. Doğrusu bu değil, doğrusu gürültü koparacaksın, 'bu ırkçılıktır' diyeceksin, Petlas'ın satışlarının düşmesini sağlayacaksın, kampanya yapacaksın ki bilinç düzeyine çıksın bu, çünkü o reklamı yapan herif tabii ki antisemit, tabii ki ırkçı, ama bunun farkında değil. Eminim herife söylesek, 'ya manyak mısın, bu korkunç bir ırkçılık' desek gocunur herif. 'Niye yaa, ne var ki bunda?' der. Türkiye'deki yaygın ırkçılık böyledir. Bunu alt edebilmek perde arkasından mektuplar ve bir iki kişiyle konuşmak düzeyinde olmaz. Bilinç düzeyine çıkaracaksın. Benim görüşümle cemaatin resmi görüşü arasındaki fark bu. (Interviewee I)
15. Yahudilerin de böyle bir savaşa ihtiyacı var. Hiçbir şey bedava değil. Kimse haketmez savaşmayı bunun için, ama gerçeği böyle bu işin. Bu yüzden çıksınlar konuşsunlar efendim. Petlas'ın HR müdürüyle konuşup '17 yıl önce bu böyle değildi' diye lafları dinleyeceğime ben gider orayı yakarım. Ama bundan öte yapmaları gereken, çıkarsın bununla ilgili bir kampanya başlatırsın. Change.org var, oturduğu yerden yapsın. Görünmeye çalışmaları lazım. Onlar hala görünmeden iş halletmeye çalışıyor çünkü ortada örgütlü bir toplum yok. Üstelik küçük bir örgütlü alan var ama onlar da bir şey olmasın istiyorlar. Birlikte hareket ediyorlar, verdikleri kararlar da bu. Ne ekersen onu biçiyorsun. Ektiğin şey arkada kalmak olursa, münferit sorun çözmeye yönelik olursa sürekli münferit sorun çözmeye devam edersin. Çözersin çözemezsin, siyaseten doğru gelmiyor bana. Çık de ki, 'bize böyle böyle diyorlar, ayıp değil mi?' de. Bir kere iki kere dinlenmez, beşincide dinlenir... En nihayetinde içinde veya dışında ben de cemaatin bir parçasıyım, ama ben nihayetinde özeleştirelimi verdim zaten, başka türlü davranmanın yolunu buldum... (Interviewee II)
16. Şunu da söylemek isterim yeri gelmişken, çünkü yeri tastamam; 2005'te Şalom'la gittim konuştum, 'ben de Yahudiyim, o zaman ben de yazmak istiyorum babanızın gazetesi değilse, o zaman ben de yazayım' dedim. Ne diyeceklerini bilemediler. Bir süre sonra 'yaz' dediler. İki yazı yazdım, üçüncüyü yayınlamadılar. Telefonlara da çıkmadılar... Maillere de bakmadılar. Gittim, dediler 'biz editoryal bir karar verdik, yazıların çok agresif' filan... Derdim zaten buydu, 'cemaatin parasıyla siz ideolojik bir gazete çıkarıyorsunuz' demekti. (Interviewee II)
17. DurDe'nin ilk oluşumu sırasında, hep DSIP'ten arkadaşlar olduğu için, kurulum aşamasında da beraberdik. Bana böyle 'hadi sen de aktivist ol' falan diyorlardı, yani Yahudi kimliğimle. O zaman da daha da az Yahudiydim ama işte beni hareket içerisinde Yahudi kimliğimle ileri attılar. (Interviewee III)
18. Geçen gittim, benim de 19 yıl sonra cemaatle yakınlaştığım bir toplantı oldu. Cemaatin içine girdim filan... Babannemin mevlutunda, annemin çok eski bir arkadaşı bir etkinlik için ünlü birilerini ayarlarsın bana filan dedi. Derken ben

de işin içine düştüm, 'neyse hadi cemaati o kadar eleştiriyoruz, biraz katkımız da olsun bari, belki biraz borcumu ödeyeyim' diye ayarladığım bi şey vardı. Onun için gittim o toplantıya. Ben de Yahudi olmak zorunda kaldığım için hareket içerisinde, bakalım Yahudiler n'apıyomuş falan filan... (Interviewee III)

19. En başından beri Yahudiliği öne çıkarmaya çalışıyorlardı şimdi de Holokost'u anma günlerinde antisemitizme karşı sokağa çıkıp eylem yapan tek örgüt DurDe örgütü... Şalom gazetesinde DurDe'den bahsediliyor; bir kredisi var Şalomda ki böyle... Sonuçta Levent Almanya'da büyümüş bir insan. Oradaki zaten 2. Dünya Savaşı, Holokost, Yahudilik söyleminden muhtemelen çocukluğunda etkilenmiş, bir Yahudi perspektifi oluşmuş bir insandır diye düşünüyorum. Onun için bir Yahudi perspektifi vardır. (Interviewee III)
20. Bunun çok sevilen bir konu olduğunu söyleyebilirim Marksist sol açısından. Tee 90'lardan beri Trakya Pogromları filan bunlar sevilen, eğlenen... Hatta Ermeni soykırımını hiç bilmezdik o zamanlar, Ermenilere bir şey olmuş ama kimse bilmezdi, ama Yahudi Pogromları bilinirdi ve konuşulurdu. Türkiye'nin kurulumundaki faşistliğin özünün iyi bir örneği olarak mesela kullanılan bir şey ama burda konu Yahudiler mi? Tabii ki hayır, Yahudiler burda bir örnek. (Interviewee II)
21. HDP adayları arasında iste Ermeni var, Süryani var, başka da vardır. Bu HDP'nin bilinçli olarak yaptığı ve davul zurna çalarak duyurarak yaptığı bir şey. Niye Yahudi yok? Simdi bu bence iki yönlü. Birincisi, zaten Yahudi bulmak zor; bunu yapacak olan Yahudi sayısı gerçekten bir elin parmaklarından daha da az. Ama HDP ile ilgili bir yanı da var bunun. Yahudi aday göstermek tehlikeli bir şey. Oy toplamak açısından tehlikeli bir şey çünkü Yahudilik Türkiye'de 99% oranında olumsuz bir şey. Çok negatif şeyler çağrıştıran bir şey. Onun için çok da üzerinde durmamıştır HDP. Bu da onların ırkçılığa taviz vermesi, bu taviz meselesi çok çok önemli. En olumlu şekliyle ancak böyle söyleyebiliyorum. Yani HDP'nin seçimlerde barajı aşabilmesi için kampanya yapan birisi olarak söylüyorum bunu üstelik, ama bu böyle. (Interviewee I)
22. İşin kötü yanı, popüler siyasete giren herkes Yahudilere bir tekme atıyor. Bu tatsız bir durum tabii ki, ama kazandırıyor. Bunun devam edeceğini düşünüyorum. Politika kazanmak ve kaybetmek üzerine kuruluysa ve bunu duyan kafasını sallıyorsa birileri bunu söyleyecek. Tabii ki demokratik sol içinden bunun söyleniyor olması sıkıntı... Bence parti içinde tartışılması gereken bir konuydu bu... En azından ne yaptıklarını bilsinler ve bir daha yapmasınlar. (Interviewee II)
23. Özellikle Türkiye'de, çoğulcu hareketin Yahudileri kucaklayabilmesi ve ön plana çıkarabilmesi için İsrail hakkında çok nüanslı bir çizgisi olması lazım. Antisemitizmle antisyonizmi çok iyi ayırabilmesi lazım... Buraya girdiğin an ve saniye sana ve harekete karşı bir sürü antisemitik şey gelir, yani işte bunlar da Mossad bilmem nesi... çünkü sen Yahudisindir ve Yahudi Israilli demektir bu memlekette. (Interviewee IV)

24. İrkçi bir Türkiye solu var, çok açık yani bu. Bunu açıkça söylemek gerek. Kürt hareketinin her düzeyinden Öcalan'dan Hakkari'deki gazeteciye kadar, sık sık Ermeni lobisi, Yahudi lobisi lafları geçer. Bunlar tamamen Batı'nın ırkçı söyleminin parçalarıdır. Bu hareket bunun farkında bile değildir. Aynı lafları kullanır. Bunun üstünü örtbas etmek doğru olmaz bence. (Interviewee I)
25. Tabii öyle, mazlum olarak görülmedikleri çok açık... Her Yahudiyi İsrail'in bir parçası olarak görmekten kaynaklanıyor. Tümüyle ırkçı bir bakış açısından kaynaklanıyor. Türkiye solunda yaygın olan budur. Yahudilikle Siyonizmi ayırt edememek, Türkiye'de nasıl 100%'e yakınsa, Türkiye solunda da 100% demeyelim de, %80 diyelim... İsrail'deki Yahudiler bilmem ne yaptı, senin hiç alakan yok ama aynı ırktansın, eee o zaman sen de sorumlusun! Ee bu ırkçılık! Ama Türk solu bundan hiçbir şekilde muaf değildir. Kürt hareketi hiç muaf değildir. Hayır, ayrıca bu bir kere olsa pardon ağzımdan kaçtı, tam da düşünmeden konuştum gibi bir cevap anlaşılabilir ama arka arkaya düzenli aralıklarla, hareketin çeşitli düzeylerinden en başındaki kişiye kadar sürekli aynı laf çıkıyorsa ve bunu savunmaya çalışıyorlarsa, belli ki böyle düşünüyorlar canım! Kazayla ağzından kaçmış değil... (Interviewee I)
26. Solcular da aynı tutumu senden beklerler Filistin konusunda. Daha kafası çalışanı bunu düzden, ilk soru olarak sormaz. Daha kafası çalışmayanı düzden, hani ilk soru olarak, 'Dani mi? O ne? Yahudi! İsrail'le ilgili ne düşünüyorsun?' gibi... Öncelikle, Yahudiysen İsrail politikalarıyla ilgili düz bir yeminli deklarasyon yapman gerekiyor, ve kınaman, ve Filistin'i sevmen gerekiyor. Ben Filistin aktivistiyim ama Yahudi olduğum için değil bu. Bu şekilde sorulduğunda da böyleymiş gibi davranmamayı tercih ediyorum çünkü ağırımaya gidiyor. (Interviewee II)
27. Birincisi, orda bulunmamızın bir sebebi senin aslında araştırdığın bir takım tavizlerin önüne blokaj oluşturmak, çünkü bu tavizler hakaten el zorlanarak veriliyor bazen, fakat özeleştiriyen bir oluşum bulduğun zaman sen de eli diğer tarafa doğru bükün kuvvet oluyorsun... O mesela 'productive' bir andı bizim için, partide lobicilik niye kötü bir şey olsun diye konuşuldu. Biz de lobicilik yapıyoruz, partimizi tanıtmaya çalışıyoruz. Bir takım yerlerde, bir şeyler organize ediyoruz. Lobicilik kelimesini 'reclaim' etmek üzerine bir şeyler dönmüştü. Bir de şey eleştirisi yapıldı, bu lobicilik lafının antisemitik tınısının... Bir taşla 3 kuş vurmak gibi; o iyi bir konuşma olmuştu mesela... Soru şu: 'HDP'nin Türkiye'de Yahudilikle İsrail'i ayırtmak gibi bir görevi var mı?' Uzun vadede herhalde var, uzun vadede bunu nasıl yapacak? Kendisi bir takım tongalara düşerek yapacak. Yani böyle çıkıp bu konuda 'statement' üzerine 'statement' vermeyecek. Bir tane terso yapacak, o tersoların sonucunda bir alan açılıp konuşulacak herhalde diye düşünüyorum. Buna head first girmenin bir manası yok. (Interviewee IV)
28. Kendi bulunduğum ortamda bu olduğu zaman ben Yahudiyim diye baştan kartımı koydum çünkü ciddi anlamda ırkçılığın yoğun olduğu bir toplumda yaşıyoruz insanlar da doğal olarak ırkçılar; kaşı tarafı kaybediyorsun. Ben

direk söylüyorum ve ete kemiğe büründüğünde şaşırıyor insanlar, Yahudi diye bir şey var ama karşına çıkıp konuşmaya başladığında birden insana dönüşüyor ben onu kullanmayı tercih ediyorum. Irkçısın diye girdiğinde aslında doğrusu o ama siyasetten geldiğim için benim için önemli olan sonuç... Ayrımcılık üzerine de çok eğitim yaptım ben Kürdistan'da, demokrasi ve ayrımcılık vs gibi. Kullandığım kartlardan biriydi, ortaya Yahudili İsrailli bir şey atıp insanların konuşmasını, bol bol içini dökmesini bekleyip ardından ya aramızda bir Yahudi varsa diye... Bu tartışmaları yürütebilmek için alanda yer almak gerekiyor. (Interviewee II)

29. Sosyal hareketler de değişiyor, dönüşüyor. Soruyorlar işte 'Ladino ne?', 'İbranice ne?', 'Yahudilerin dili İbranice' diyorlar. Burda ben veya başka Yahudiler diyoruz ki 'burdakilerin dili İbranice değil, Ladino' filan... Bir etkileşime giriliyor. Düşün yani, kaç tane Türk kaç tane Kürtçe kelime biliyor? Burda dibimizde yaşıyorlar, İstanbul Kürtlerin en fazla olduğu şehir. Bir 'teşekkür ederim,' 'merhaba,' nasılsın' demeyi bilmiyoruz. HDP de buna yarayan bir oluşum olabilir, kimliklerin kaynaşması, tanışıklık. (Interviewee III)

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