

A Lifetime Dedicated to the Republic: Hasene Ilgaz with Works, Activities, and Thoughts

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Abstract

Undoubtedly, the circumstances and the period we are born into shape our biography. Therefore, biographical works do not only tell us the story of a life. They also tell the story of an era. There are such lives lived at turning points in history that tell us a lot about the period beyond being a biography. This study focuses on the Turkish female identity idealized by the founding elite of the Republic in the early Republican period through the life of Hasene Ilgaz, who lived in such a period and whose works and activities shed on light the period she lived in.

These women's identities, shaped by the founding principles and ideals of Republican Turkey, also make it possible to look at recent Turkish history studies from a new perspective. This is because Turkish women are part of the Turkish Modernization experience, which began with the Tanzimat, gained momentum with the Second Constitutional Period, and took on a contemporary character with the Republic. As the lives of these special women of the early Republican period come to light, they will make valuable contributions to our recent history. This thesis aims to make such a contribution to the literature in the case of Hasene Ilgaz.

Keywords: Biography; early Republican period; Republican woman; women parliamentarians; women's rights

INTRODUCTION

A life story is shaped by the conditions of the period in which it is lived. Therefore, it bears witness to its period. Especially lives lived at turning points in history reflect the period's socio-cultural, socio-economic, and political changes and transformations. This study aims to trace such an adventure through Hasene Ilgaz's legacy.

As a witness to a historical turning point in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic after the Balkan Wars, World War I, and the War of Independence, Ilgaz's life story bears traces of the legacy passed from the late Ottoman Empire to the Republic and the unique qualities of the Republic. On the other hand, it is possible to read through Ilgaz's life story how the struggle for the social, political, and legal rights of Turkish women, which started in the field of education during the Tanzimat period and gained momentum with social aid societies and press activities during the Second Constitutional period, gained a new identity with the Republic. As will be detailed below, Ilgaz was born in the early years of the 20th century and spent her childhood during the Second Constitutional period. As a student of Darülmüallimat (Women's Teachers' Training College) during the Armistice period, Ilgaz personally experienced deep sorrow upon the occupation of Istanbul on March 16, 1920. She spent the first 40 years of her life in Kocamustafapaşa, a classical Ottoman neighborhood characterized by religious and traditional motifs until she was elected as an MP in 1943 and settled in Ankara. Ilgaz was the daughter of a highly aware father who took a close interest in the education of his children. These conditions were undoubtedly decisive in Ilgaz's manifestation as an idealistic, patriotic Turkish woman of Republican Turkey.

In her nearly a century of life, Ilgaz was a teacher, writer, orator, member of parliament and a founder, member, and administrator of nearly 40 NGOs. With her books, newspaper articles, and notes, Ilgaz's life story bears witness to an era. This study will focus on women's identity and the mission attributed to Turkish women in Republican Turkey through Ilgaz's works, especially her private archive donated to the Women's Library and Information Center Foundation. In other words, through the life and activities of Hasene Ilgaz, this study aims to shed light on the female identity shaped by the founding principles and ideals of Republican Turkey and its contribution to the understanding and interpretation of early Republican history. In this context, the conditions in which Ilgaz and her generation grew up, the possibilities and impossibilities of being a woman in the Republic of Turkey, what kind of Turkish woman and Turkey Hasene Ilgaz imagined as an early Republican woman, what kind of legacy Ilgaz left

for future generations with her works and activities as a Turkish woman committed to Atatürk's principles and reforms, and the contributions of Turkish women to our social, economic and political history will be examined.

RESULTS

In the context of Turkish women's rights, Hasene Ilgaz's life story was shaped within the framework of the accumulation of the past in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic. Turkish women first gained the right to education as part of the modernization trend during the Tanzimat period. In the unique conditions of the Constitutional period, Turkish women became more visible through associations and press activities. Turkish women also entered the labor market during this period due to the war conditions. Although it has its distinctive qualities, Republican Turkey built a new Turkish women's identity on this historical background.

Historical Background

The socio-cultural existence of Turkish women in the Ottoman Empire was almost destined to be in a fateful alliance with Ottoman modernization. Continuing the ancient Ottoman tradition of using education as a tool to ensure social discipline, Tanzimat officials emphasized the importance of education for change and transformation (Somel, 2019; Nurdoğan- Demirkıran, 2018; Sancar, 2012). In this period, the phenomenon of backwardness against the West was identified with the lack of education of women, who constituted half of the society (Şensoy, 2008). For this reason, the educational policies of the Tanzimat period aimed to make women, who were the idle consumers of society, productive (Işın, 1988).

It was these new regulations and practices in the field of education that opened the door to the first professional career of Turkish women, who had the opportunity to receive modern education in modern educational institutions with the Tanzimat. These schools not only paved the way for the first professional career of Turkish women in the field of education but also led to the emergence of an enlightened group of Turkish women (Koçer, 1972). In particular, Darülmualimat, which was established in 1870, paved the way for the emergence of "women teachers", the first profession in the Ottoman Empire in which Muslim women could show activity in the public sphere (Somel, 2000).

These first teachers not only played an important role in the schooling of girls but also had a share in the development of women's rights (Akyüz, 2001). Again in this context, as Işın states,

in addition to the classical housewife mission, which finds its counterpart in the motto of “good wife, good mother” during the Tanzimat period, two different prototypes of women (laborer and intellectual), the first representations of which we come across during the reign of Abdul Hamid II, were also manifested as the work of *Tanzimat Maarifçiliği* (Tanzimat educationism) (Işın, 1988). *Terakki* (1869), the first publication to bring women’s rights to the agenda, also began its publication life in this period (Işın, 1988; Taşkiran, 1973; İnan, 1984).

The regulations and practices in the field of women’s educational rights during the Tanzimat period bore fruit in the Constitutional period, and Turkish women, who reached a certain level of culture, took an active role in national affairs and participated in social life through the associations they established (Kurnaz, 2011, 62). Undoubtedly, the impact of the Balkan Wars and World War I on Turkish women becoming more visible in the public sphere during this period cannot be denied (Kurnaz, 1996; Akyüz, 2000; Şanal, 2004; Koçer, 1972; Gündüz, 2018; Tümer Erdem, 2018). Ilgaz also points to the place of these wars in the Turkish women’s movement and mentions that women, who had been isolated from society in the early Ottoman period, became visible in society due to the new conditions brought about by the conditions of war (Ilgaz, 1991). Turkish women, who had the opportunity to become midwives and teachers before the Constitutional period, stepped into the civil service with the influence of the wars in question, especially the Balkan War (Ergin, 1977; Kurnaz, 1996). Turkish women supported the national struggle both through their efforts to awaken national consciousness through the press and societies behind the front lines and by fighting the enemy alongside Turkish soldiers on the front lines (Kurnaz, 2011). After the occupation of Izmir, Turkish women took part in rallies and protested against the occupation forces and worked with great zeal for the future and independence of the homeland (Kurnaz, 2011; İnan, 1977; Müderrisoğlu - Esiner, 2019, Taşkiran, 1973).

By the time of the Republic of Turkey, psychological and historical conditions had been created for women’s education and their participation in public life on equal terms with men (Akyüz, 2000). What distinguishes the Republican period from the late Ottoman Empire is the revolutionary reforms carried out by the founders of the Republic by making good use of the conditions prepared by the previous legacy (Alim Baran, 2019; Meşeci, 2018). In the context of women’s rights in Republican Turkey, which was built on the accumulation of the late Ottoman Empire, Mustafa Kemal’s legal and socially egalitarian perspective and the bold steps he took to ensure this opened a new page for women’s rights and struggle (İnan, 1977). The Turkish women’s movement and women’s quest for rights gained their true meaning in the

Republican era. Ilgaz argues that the Republican era gave Turkish Women all the rights of citizenship (Ilgaz, 1991; Banoğlu, 1989). Speaking about women's rights in his speeches in various corners of the country, Mustafa Kemal drew attention to the concept of "citizen woman" and signaled that he would build a new Turkey where all citizens, men, and women, would be equal (Taşkiran, 1973). With a similar approach, Ilgaz argues that Mustafa Kemal emphasized the importance of women in every trip he made and believed that men and women should work together in the affairs of the country. According to Ilgaz, "Atatürk prepared Turkish public opinion for the women's rights revolution with these speeches" (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_001_145)¹. In 1935, 18 women deputies entered the parliament with the encouragement of Atatürk himself in the 5th term elections of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (Alim-Baran, 2019; Tekeli, 1982; Gökçimen, 2008). According to Çaha, from this date onwards, a social destiny was drawn for Turkish women and they were turned into loyal servants of the Republican regime. As in the Ottoman Empire, the women of the Republic assumed the mission of educating and leading society through this social role assigned to women (Çaha, 1996).

Another characteristic of this period in terms of Turkish women's history is the continuation of the community activities of the Second Constitutional years. The elite women of Atatürk's Turkey took an active role in the Red Crescent (*Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*), the Charity Association (*Yardım Sevenler Derneği*), and the People's Houses (*Halkevleri*) and participated in social activities, as well as fighting for the national economy as members of the National Economy and Savings Society (*Milli İktisat ve Tasarruf Cemiyeti*), which was established to encourage the public to use domestic goods. In this context, the distinctive feature of Republican Turkey is that it assigned social roles to Turkish women as professional women in addition to their social mission. According to Durakbaşa, three images of women came to the fore in this period: the 'educated professional woman' with a national mission, the 'active woman in social organizations', and the 'feminine woman' in modern evening dresses at balls. Educated professional women embraced the Republican ideology wholeheartedly with the mission of warriors of the new regime and succeeded in their professions with a strong sense of professional duty (Durakbaşa, 1988).

¹ KEKBMV HIÖA: Hasene Ilgaz's Archival Records at the Women's Library and Information Centre Foundation.

DISCUSSION

In this study, the theoretical debates on the rights and opportunities gained by Turkish women in the aforementioned process will be discussed in the case of Hasene İlgaz, and the female identity constructed by Republican Turkey will be evaluated within the framework of İlgaz's activities and works.

A Lifetime Dedicated to the Republic: Hasene İlgaz

In Hasene İlgaz's life story, it is possible to trace all these historical backgrounds mentioned briefly above. Born in 1902, İlgaz's childhood was spent during the Second Constitutional period. İlgaz, a student of Darülmüallimat during the Armistice period, is an idealist Turkish woman in Republican Turkey. İlgaz was born in Kocamustafapaşa, a classical Ottoman neighborhood with religious and traditional motifs (Ergun, 1997; Gökçimen, 2009; Çufalı, 2012; Göktürk Çetinkaya, 2019; Yıldırım & Zeynel, 2010). According to İlgaz's note in her archive donated to the Women's Works Library, her father Mehmet Fevzi Bey was from Safranbolu. Fevzi Bey, who belonged to a family known as Nakibzade from the Halveti order, worked in the *Sadaret Mektubi Kalemî* during the reign of Abdul Hamid II, under the tutelage of Okçuoğlu Salim Bey (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_046_2780; İlgaz, 1990; Davaz, 2014; Gülen, 2016). In 1906, Fevzi Bey was awarded the Order of Mecidi of the third rank by Abdul Hamid II for his successful performance of his duties (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_046_2782.). A street near his house was named after Fevzi Bey (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_046_2780; Ergun, 1997). Fevzi Bey, who joined the ranks of the Committee of Union and Progress during the Second Constitutional Monarchy, had a pioneering role in İlgaz's upbringing. The pioneering role of Fevzi Bey, who took a close interest in his daughter's education, in determining İlgaz's vision is reflected in İlgaz's sentence "My father had brilliant ideas, you will do them, my daughter" (İlgaz, 1991a). In accordance with the tradition of the period, İlgaz was sent to the Neighborhood School when she was 4 years and 4 months old (İlgaz, 1970; Kara & Birinci, 2021). After graduating from the Inas Numune School, she continued her education at the Girls' Teacher Training School (İlgaz, 1991a, p. 6). With the encouragement of her father, she started her education at Çapa Girls' Teacher Training School in 1915 and continued until 1921 (İlgaz, 1991a). With the opening of the Darülmüallimat schools, teaching became an ideal career for women of the period (İşin, 1988; Somel, 2000; Akyüz, 2001), and it was the ideal profession of İlgaz and her father (İlgaz, 1991a).

Durakbaşı argues that the ‘teacher ladies’ of Atatürk’s Turkey assumed the mission of the ‘muallime ladies’ of the late Ottoman Empire and assumed social roles as individuals responsible for the upbringing of the nation as well as the upbringing of future generations (Durakbaşı, 1988). Ilgaz’s teaching career supports this view. Her entire life was spent in an effort to explain, teach, and make almost every segment of the society understand, teach, and adopt Atatürk’s principles and reforms, which she saw as a genuine prescription that would bring the Turkish nation to the level of contemporary civilizations (Ilgaz, 1991a). According to Ilgaz, who devoted her life to raising the youth of the Republic, transferring Atatürk’s revolutions and the ideals of Republican Turkey to new generations, teaching is “the art of rising above all interests” to “see the suns of the future”. “It is the duty of teachers to give direction to a young generation, to try to help children take their place in society, to instill in them the roots of culture, to deepen them”. At the same time, according to Ilgaz, teaching is “the only profession that carries social responsibility on its shoulders” (Ilgaz, 1991b; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_042_2431). In this respect, for Ilgaz, teaching is a great social service that cannot be measured by any other profession.

When we look at Ilgaz’s professional career and social activities, in Durakbaşı’s words, it is possible to trace the roles of “educated professional women with a national mission and “active women in social organizations” assigned to the elite women of Atatürk’s Turkey. These educated professional women who embraced the Republican ideology wholeheartedly, including Ilgaz, were also successful in their professions with the mission of warriors of the new Turkey and with a strong sense of professional duty (Durakbaşı, 1988). In this context, the 20-year teaching career of Ilgaz, who was among the first teachers appointed in 1923 to fill the teacher shortage after the proclamation of the Republic, was based on teaching and helping (Ilgaz, 1991a; KEK HIÖA 10002_040_2289). During her teaching career, Ilgaz not only tried to teach her students the good, the beautiful, and the true, and to make them adopt the ideals of Republican Turkey, but she also took a close interest in the needs of her students. She pioneered the establishment of the “Association for the Help of Poor Children (Yoksul Çocuklara Yardım Derneği)” to provide for the needs of poor children in schools. These efforts of Ilgaz, who also endeavored to provide clothing and school equipment, are important in that they reflect her sense of duty and sensitivity to the needs of a society that had just emerged from war (Ilgaz, 1981). In addition, Ilgaz, who believed in the importance of school-parent unions to improve the quality and success of children’s education and to ensure their attendance at school, also took part in the formation of the Parents and Teacher Association (PTA), which came to the

agenda in the 1930s (Ilgaz, 1981, pp. 155-156). Ilgaz was also among the teachers who endeavored to ensure that all segments of society, young and old, men and women, learned to read and write in the Public Classrooms opened after the Alphabet Reform in 1928 (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_044_2593). The importance Ilgaz attaches to public education finds its meaning in the positive relationship she establishes between democracy and public education. According to Ilgaz, countries that successfully maintain their democracies are those that succeed in public education (Ilgaz, 1981).

All these activities briefly summarized above reflect Ilgaz's views and beliefs about her teaching mission. According to the documents from her archive, Ilgaz had a successful teaching career. In a letter sent in 1937, the Istanbul Culture Directorate congratulated her on her success in the 1935-1936 school year (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_035_2080). Her achievements in her teaching career, which officially continued for 20 years until she became a member of parliament for Hatay in 1943 and went to Ankara, were appreciated and thanked in the following years, and she was presented as a role model to society. She was awarded an outstanding service award by the International Federation of Lions Clubs in the category of "teachers who first taught Latin letters" (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_046_2786, p. 2). The Turkish Women's Union presented Ilgaz with a certificate of gratitude on behalf of the students she trained and the women she brought into society (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_047_2882). Although her professional career as a teacher lasted only 20 years, Ilgaz did not stop teaching and educating society until the end of her life. At every opportunity she found, she was involved in every activity she deemed important for the education of society and especially the youth. It was her teaching career that gave color to both her professional career and her social activities.

Ilgaz's Cultural and Social Activities from Orator Ilgaz to Activist Ilgaz

1923 is a turning point in Ilgaz's life in every sense. In her 98-year-long life (1902-2000), Ilgaz took part in nearly 40 associations, societies, and foundations as a founder, board member, and administrator, and started her social, cultural, and political activities as of this date. In these years, she continued the revolutionary courses at Istanbul University (Ilgaz, 1990), which started co-education in 1921 (Gündüz, 2018). Ilgaz argues that this course, which she attended during her teaching at Çapa, improved her oratory skills (Ergun, 1997; Gülen, 2016). In 1934, on the day when women were granted the right to vote and be elected, Ilgaz expressed the happiness of Turkish women at the Turkish Women's Union (Ilgaz, 1991; Ergun, 1997; Banoğlu, 1989; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_002_145). In 1935, Ilgaz was among those who spoke

at the rally organized in Istanbul after the assassination attempt against Atatürk (Ilgaz, 1981; Ilgaz, 1991a; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_005_477; *Kurun*, October 24, 1935). Ilgaz is sometimes seen at a Republic Day celebration (Ilgaz, 1981; Ilgaz, 1991b; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_002_142), sometimes in a program commemorating Turkish Aviation Martyrs (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_027_1585; KEKBMV HIÖA 041_2355), and sometimes on the occasion of an opening (Ilgaz, 1981; Ergun, 1997). Until the end of her life, Ilgaz gave speeches at many historical, social, and cultural events and shared the values she believed in with society and future generations.

Ilgaz also took part in the activities of the People's Houses (Halkevleri), which were designed as cultural centers of the Republic. The People's Houses, in which the Republican generation took an active role with their unique characteristics, were established by Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP) (the Republican People's Party) in 1932, open to the use of all citizens, with the aim of educating the public to create a collective consciousness and thus build the national self (Ergün, 1997; Gümüšoğlu, 2002). Women and men worked hand in hand in these institutions, which aimed to serve the socialization of the revolutionary principles of Atatürk's Turkey (Çaha, 1996). Within the framework of this principle, which İnan defines as "Equal rights, equal responsibility" (İnan, 1984), Turkish women fulfilled their duties with a sense of duty and responsibility. As a woman of the Republic, Ilgaz also undertook this duty with great enthusiasm and devotion and took an active role in the activities of the People's House. According to Ilgaz, the People's Houses, which served as the CHP's cultural centers, were a "gathering and unifying" home for citizens (Ilgaz, 1981).

Ilgaz, who participated in the social and history branch of Eminönü People's House since its foundation (1932), was the president of the Şehremini People's House, which she and Bican Bağcıoğlu pioneered on February 22, 1935 (Ilgaz, 1981; Ilgaz, 1991b). The activities organized with the mission of educating the public and "raising a youth with character" in the People's Houses, which Ilgaz described as places where they "both educate and fulfill the task of educating", bear the traces of what kind of society and youth were imagined (Ilgaz, 1981; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_028_1658; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_004_408). Activities on historical days and events such as Lausanne Day, the proclamation of the Republic, and Victory Day, commemoration programs for historical figures, seminars for youth education, the Second History Exhibition, and the exhibition promoting Turkish aviation reflect the national spirit that the People's Houses wanted to foster. In addition, according to Ilgaz, the People's Houses became a refuge and a school for the youth with their theater performances, music education,

and library. Her generation, whose destiny was united with the revolutions, shared the values they believed in with the public wherever they went, and the public was influenced by these speeches and willingly gave up their outdated customs and habits (Ilgaz, 1981; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_017_973; Gümüšoğlu, 2001).

The People's Houses were also, in Ilgaz's words, "the people's door of need". Hundreds of young people and their families without running water, bread, notebooks, and books applied to the social branches of the People's Houses to meet their needs (Ilgaz, 1981). Ilgaz, who emphasized the social welfare mission of the People's Houses, as the president of Şehremini People's House, especially made efforts to meet the needs for food and shelter (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_043_2545). As a teacher who embraced the ideals of the Republic, Ilgaz was deeply saddened by the Democratic Party government's closure of the People's Houses. According to Ilgaz, with the chain on the doors of the People's Houses, the source of nourishment for the youth and the public was cut off, and the youth and the public were deprived of the doors of necessities (Ilgaz, 1981; Gümüšoğlu, 2001).

Another noteworthy work of Ilgaz within the scope of her cultural activities is Turkish Language studies, which she defines as "a widely participated cultural activity" of Republican Turkey (Ilgaz, 1981). Ilgaz, who considered the Alphabet Revolution as one of Atatürk's greatest revolutions, participated in Turkish Language congresses from the first language congress (Ilgaz, 1981; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_025_1421). For Ilgaz, the importance of this initiative lies in the return of Turkish to its essence. According to Ilgaz, in this way, "like Turkey, Turkish would be saved" (Ilgaz, 1991b; Gümüšoğlu, 2001). Ilgaz took part in the word compilation activities of the Turkish Language Association, which she regarded as Atatürk's legacy, and compiled thousands of plugs (Ilgaz, 1981; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_031_1782; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_027_1594). We learn about her presidential skills at the Turkish Language Congresses from the laudatory lines of Milliyet writer Haldun Taner (Ilgaz, 1991b; Gümüšoğlu, 2001; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_041_2475; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_044_2636). It should be noted here that for Ilgaz, Atatürk's second great revolution was women's rights. In Ilgaz's words, the adoption of Latin letters and women's rights constitute the foundation of the Republic. The alphabet revolution was important because it made it possible for society to learn easily and be well-educated, thus enabling development and progress, women's rights were important because they showed the duties and responsibilities of women and the unshakable role of women in society (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_025_1421).

In addition to the cultural activities we have briefly summarized above, Ilgaz's duties within various NGOs are also noteworthy in terms of reflecting the dimensions of the social mission that Republican Turkey assigned to Turkish women. According to Ilgaz, there are four social issues that concern the societies of the period: Children, the elderly, the disabled, and the youth (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_002_179). In her writings in various periodicals, Ilgaz addressed issues related to these four elements of society, which she considered important. While trying to meet the needs of these segments of society through her NGO activities, Ilgaz seems to have aimed to raise public awareness of these issues through her writings.

In this context, the associations and foundations that Ilgaz pioneered to provide solutions to the problems and needs of youth, children, the elderly, and the disabled are noteworthy in terms of reflecting her sensitivity, especially, sensitivity towards these four elements of society. Ilgaz also undertook the management of some of these associations and foundations. Under the umbrella of the Child Protection Agency (Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu) (Fatih District president (1936); member of the General Central Board (1943); General Central II President (1948)), Association of Aid to Darülaceze (Darülaceze'ye Yardım Derneği) (founder, 1941), İstanbul Social Services Coordination Board (president, 1961), Association for Establishing and Sustaining the Nursing Homes (Huzurevleri Kurma ve Yaşatma Derneği) (founder and president; 1964), Turkish Hearing and Speech Rehabilitation Foundation (Türkiye İşitme ve Konuşma Rehabilitasyon Vakfı) (founder, 1973), Ilgaz worked with great devotion to meet the needs of these groups. She is also an honorary member of the Association of Blinds (Körler Derneği). On the other hand, Ilgaz reached out to people in need through the activities of the Istanbul Charity Association (İstanbul Yardım Sevenler Derneği), which she founded, and extended her helping hand to people who were damaged in natural disasters. Veterans, martyrs, and martyrdoms are another field of activity that Ilgaz embraced with national feelings. In 1937, under the guidance of Istanbul Governor Muhittin Üstündağ, the Martyrs' Cemeteries Reconstruction Society of Türkiye (Türkiye Şehitlikleri İmar Cemiyeti), which she was interested in, became a foundation with Ilgaz's initiatives, and Ilgaz became the first president of the foundation (1971). Under the umbrella of this foundation, Ilgaz made great efforts for the reconstruction and restoration of the martyrs' cemeteries throughout Turkey, especially the Edirnekapı and Sakızağacı Martyrs' Cemeteries. With the same national feelings, Ilgaz also took part in the activities of the Turkish Aeronautical Association (Türk Hava Kurumu) (Fatih District president) and the Turkish Navy Society (Türk Donanma Cemiyeti) (1966), and she aimed to contribute to Turkey's development through tourism with the Turkish Tourism Writers

and Journalists Association (Türkiye Turizm Yazarları ve Gazetecileri Derneği) (founder and president, 1966). Ilgaz was also an active member of the Turkish Women's Union (Türk Kadınlar Birliği), where, in Ilgaz's words, Ilgaz and her generation "ran to serve the most and joined its ranks", and an honorary member of the Turkish Cypriot Cultural Association (Kıbrıs Türk Kültür Derneği) (Ilgaz, 1981; Ilgaz, 1970; Ilgaz, 1991; Davaz, 2014; Gökçimen, 2009; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_002_192). Looking at the fields of activity of these associations and foundations, the versatility of Ilgaz's social welfare work is striking.

Politics and Turkish Women: Hasene Ilgaz as a Political Figure

Ilgaz's political experience began with her participation in social and cultural activities within the CHP during her years as a teacher. Ilgaz, who worked in the hearth, parish, provincial, and district organizations of the CHP, which she saw as a "political, cultural and social school" (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_018_1027), believed in the importance of experience and knowledge in politics. According to Ilgaz, "Politics requires struggle and continuity". Women should make themselves recognized in politics with their "knowledge and intelligence" (Banoğlu, 1991; Çufacı, 2012). Ilgaz, who entered politics to "make her social projects permanent" (Davaz, 2014; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_041_2404; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_030_1767), worked in the CHP's central and broadcasting offices (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_001_084). After women were granted the right to vote and be elected, Ilgaz addressed the public in general elections within the framework of election propaganda and also took part in election activities as a second voter (Ilgaz, 1981; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_043_2522; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_044_2656; KEKBMV HIÖA 025_1369). In 1938, she became a member of the CHP Istanbul Provincial Administrative Board (Erdem, 2020; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_013_898; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_043_2495). Ilgaz participated in CHP congresses as a delegate and orator (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_028_1602; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_028_1605; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_036_2111). She also took part in the Party's women's branches and the Party Assembly (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_002_190; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_018_1019-1027; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_043_2508; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_028_1660).

The interviews she conducted with members of the Karakol Society, the secret heroes of the national struggle, during her presidency of the social branch of the CHP, is an important document as a historical source (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_001_033; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_001_034; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_037_2169). As a member of the CHP Istanbul Provincial Administrative Board from 1938 to 1943, she also led many social and cultural

activities (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_028_1656). During this period, Ilgaz was instrumental in the opening of a dormitory for female students coming to Istanbul for education (Ilgaz, 1981; Ergun, 1997; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_004_390; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_027_1594) and the expansion of the inadequate dormitory for male students (Ilgaz, 1981; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_040_2293), and the preparation of facilities to meet the accommodation needs of those who came to Istanbul to find work or for treatment (Ilgaz, 1981; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_043_2495). Her role in the establishment of the Istanbul branch of the Charity Association (Yardım Sevenler Derneği) in 1941 is also worth mentioning (Ilgaz, 1981; Ilgaz, 1991b; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_033_1906; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_032_1866). During this period, Ilgaz also took part in the activities of the Association of Aid to Darülaceze (Darülaceze'ye Yardım Derneği) (Ilgaz, 1981; Oruz, 1974; Özbek, 2017), served as the president of the Fatih district women's branch of the Turkish Aeronautical Association (Türk Hava Kurumu) (Ilgaz, 1991a; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_002_157; 002_121). She also participated in the commemoration of the Turkish Aviation Martyrs and in rallies organized as part of the campaign to donate aircraft to the Turkish Aeronautical Association (Ilgaz, 1981; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_027_1585; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_041_2355). All these initiatives are noteworthy in terms of reflecting the sensitivity of the women of the early Republican generation to national issues.

Ilgaz's professional career after teaching continued as a member of parliament. Ilgaz, who became a member of parliament while she was the head teacher of Fatih Kocamustafapaşa School, served in the Parliament for 2 terms between 1943-1950 (1943-1946 Hatay MP, 1946-1950 Çorum MP) (Ilgaz, 1991b; Çufacı, 2012; Gümüšoğlu, 2001; Davaz, 2014; Yıldırım & Zeynel, 2010; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_042_2441). In the 1950 general elections, although she ran as a candidate from Çorum, she could not enter the Parliament as the Democratic Party (DP) won the elections (Ilgaz, 1981; *Son Posta*, April 23, 1950; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_025_1405). Her political career continued as a member of CHP women's branches and Party Assembly (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_002_190; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_018_1019-1027; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_043_2508; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_028_1660). Ilgaz, who also served as a delegate in party congresses (Tuğluoğlu, 2017; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_028_1602; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_028_1605; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_036_2111), distinguished herself from many of her contemporaries as a political figure by being one of the most frequently spoken names in the Parliament (Alacı, 2019). According to the information provided by Gökçimen, she took the floor 6 times as Hatay MP and 33 times as Çorum MP (Gökçimen, 2009). Göktürk

Çetinkaya states that she expressed her opinions, suggestions, and proposals on the floor of the Parliament 8 times in the first term and 36 times in the second term (Göktürk Çetinkaya, 2019). In addition, Ilgaz was a prominent figure with her duties in the parliamentary commissions and her law proposals during her parliamentary term. She served in the Transportation and Parliamentary Library commissions as Hatay MP and in the National Education Commission as Çorum MP (Gökçimen, 2009; Göktürk Çetinkaya, 2019; Ilgaz, 1981). She also served in the temporary commissions formed within the scope of law proposals and drafts and in the research commissions of various ministries (Ilgaz, 1981; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_043_2513). She was the only woman member of the Labor Commission that was constituted after the establishment of the Ministry of Labor in 1945 (Ilgaz, 1981, pp. 199-204; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_027_1594). At the same time, Ilgaz stands out with her law proposals and suggestions. Some of these proposals were co-signed and some were Ilgaz's proposals. In this context, Ilgaz also acted as a law spokesperson and rapporteur (Ilgaz, 1991b; Ilgaz, 1981; Göktürk Çetinkaya, 2019). According to Ilgaz's notes, Ilgaz's law proposals to the Parliament include "uninterrupted payment of bonuses to those who leave their professions before the completion of their service period", "seed loans to farmers", "nurses and patient caregivers", and "forgiveness of debts owed to the government by villagers who build schools". Ilgaz was the spokesperson for the bill on "the inclusion of primary school teachers in the general budget" (Ilgaz, 1991b; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_043_2531; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_044_2640; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_027_1594). Besides, Ilgaz advocated for "no income tax on pensioners (Ilgaz, OGY, 1991; Göktürk Çetinkaya, 2019), protection of orphaned, abandoned and abnormal children (Ilgaz, 1981; Göktürk Çetinkaya, 2019; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_020_1060), and to give worn-out clothes in the army to the poor instead of burning them (Ilgaz, 1981; Göktürk Çetinkaya, 2019).

As a deputy for Hatay and Çorum, Ilgaz identified the social, cultural, and economic problems of the cities she represented and endeavored to solve these problems by contacting the relevant ministries. Traveling from village to village in Hatay and Çorum, Ilgaz listened to the demands and complaints of the people and took the initiative to build schools in villages without schools. With her mission as a teacher, which also colored her identity as an MP, Ilgaz took part in efforts to provide Turkish education to the people in Hatay. She explained to women from Hatay and Çorum what they should pay attention to in social activity organizations. Ilgaz helped farmers deal with harmful pests and was involved in many issues concerning the cities in question, such as the opening of the museum in Hatay, the establishment of a Tuberculosis

hospital in Çorum, the publication of *Çorum* Newspaper in a qualified manner, and the repair of broken roads and bridges in the cities. Ilgaz also extended her helping hand to cities other than the ones she represented (Ilgaz, 1981; Gümüšoğlu, 2001; Ergun, 1997; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_027_1594)

To summarize, the parliamentary deputy position, which she described with the words “There is no sweeter profession in the world”, offered Ilgaz the opportunity to “freely defend any issue she wanted from the rostrum”, to intervene in wrongdoing, to propose laws, and to voice “the troubles of the people as one of the people, as a representative of the people” (Gümüšoğlu, 2001). Ilgaz’s most original and noteworthy work during this period was her visit to Cyprus. After a 70-year hiatus, Ilgaz was among the first Turkish group to go to Cyprus with a group of teachers in 1948 and played a pioneering role in the re-sprouting of communication with the people of the Island. Upon her return to Cyprus, Ilgaz was among the members of the delegation that presented a report on the social, cultural, political, and economic problems of Cyprus to President İsmet İnönü. Ilgaz’s interest and assistance to Cyprus continued until the end of her life, and her efforts were appreciated by the Turkish Cypriots, and a street in Nicosia (Lefkoşe) was named after Hasene Ilgaz and her name was kept alive (Ilgaz, 1981; Ilgaz, 1991b; Balyemez, 2020). Finally, it would be appropriate to draw attention to Ilgaz’s critical approach as one of the characteristics that marked her parliamentary career. Ilgaz made it her motto to say “good is good, bad is bad” whether she/he was from within or outside the Party. She believed in the necessity of constructive and guiding criticism. She was against partisanship, which she believed harmed the interests of the country and society (Ilgaz, 1981).

Ilgaz as a Turkish Woman Writer and Journalist and Her Views

Ilgaz’s writing began, in her own words, “during her school years”. Ilgaz mentions that her teachers read her writings (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_045_2660). Ilgaz, who wrote articles in prominent newspapers of the period such as *Yeni İstanbul*, *Ulus*, *Vakit*, *Cumhuriyet* and *Kadın Gazetesi*, shared her observations and opinions on social and cultural issues covering almost every segment of society in local newspapers such as *Akgün*, *Safranbolu*, *Yeni Hatay*, *Halkın Sesi* and *Çorum Gazetesi*. *Yeni Defne*, *Ana*, *Tarih ve Edebiyat*, *Eflatun*, *Yeni Adam*, *Türk Çocukları*, and *Yeşilada*, a local magazine in Cyprus, are among the magazines where we can read Ilgaz’s writings (Ilgaz, 1970; Ilgaz, 1981). Ilgaz, who held a press honor card and was a member of the Board of Directors of the Turkish Press Union (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_041_2354), also supported the publication of local newspapers such as *Çorum* and

İskilip Newspaper (Ilgaz, 1981; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_027_1577). In addition, *the Turkish Children's Magazine* and the *Parent-Teacher Association Bulletin* were among the periodicals Ilgaz contributed to (Ilgaz, 1981; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_041_2346).

Ilgaz wrote articles in various newspapers and magazines of the period, especially the magazines and newspapers mentioned above, dealing with social, cultural, and political issues covering all segments of society such as children, youth, the elderly, women, and workers. Cities and villages, historical events, and personalities were conveyed to the reader through Ilgaz's pen. Ilgaz's writings and works based on her research, observations, experiences, and opinions shed light on the period she lived in from the perspective of a Republican woman who was an educator, philanthropist, orator, parliamentarian, and writer. During her time as a member of parliament, she shared her observations on prisons and the living conditions of prisoners with the readers in a series of articles. The education of children and young people was also one of the issues that Ilgaz emphasized sensitively. Thus, in her own words, Ilgaz "shared the values she believed in with the masses through her writings that taught and guided on many subjects with the feeling of being a mother and a woman and the habit of being a teacher for the upbringing of the society" (Ilgaz, 1981).

Ilgaz has published 7 books: *Cyprus Notes (Kıbrıs Notes)* (1949), *Unforgettable Years (Unutulmayan Yıllar)* (1970), *Istanbul Social Services Coordination Board Activities (İstanbul Sosyal Hizmetler Koordinasyon Kurulu Çalışmaları)* (1970), *100th Anniversary Gift to Atatürk (Atatürk'e 100. Yıl Armağanı)* (1981), *The Ertugrul Frigate (100th Anniversary Gift) (Ertuğrul Fırkateyni (Yüzüncü Yıl Armağanı))* (1990), *The Story of a Girls' Boarding School from 1915 to 1921 (1915'ten 1921'e Yatılı Bir Kız Okulunun Öyküsü)* (1991), *What I Read, What I Saw, What I Wrote (Okuduklarım, Gördüklerim, Yazdıklarım)* (1991). According to a document in her archive, among her published works are works on *Children's Affairs after the Republic (Cumhuriyet'ten Sonra Çocuk İşleri)* (1933), *People's House Activities (Halkevi Çalışmaları)* (1935), and *What I Saw in 33 Prisons (33 Cezaevinde Gördüklerim)* (1955), but these publications could not be accessed, including her private archive (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_036_2084). Ilgaz also prepared for publication the bulletin of *the Martyrs' Cemeteries Reconstruction Foundation of Türkiye (Türkiye Şehitlikleri İmar Vakfı)* (1986), of which she was the chairperson, and the conference notes of the CHP Istanbul Provincial Women's Branch, of which she was the chairperson in the early 1960s, which consisted of events organized after the 1960 coup d'état (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_029_1679). The booklet *Atatürk: From Birth to Death (Atatürk: Doğumundan Ölümüne Kadar)* (1962) chronologically covers the life of her

ancestor, to whom she was devoted with great gratitude and respect, and in this respect aims to facilitate those who will study Atatürk's life (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_028_1629)

This accumulation left behind by Ilgaz is undoubtedly a rich source for understanding and interpreting early Republican history in general and Turkish women's history in particular. It is possible to trace Ilgaz's thoughts and approaches to Atatürk's principles and reforms, women's rights, and the political, social, and economic developments of her time through her works, writings, and notes mentioned briefly above. As an efficient and productive woman of the Republic, Ilgaz expressed the values she believed in not only as an educator but also in her speeches at various events. All this accumulation offers us the opportunity to journey into the world of thought of a Turkish woman who wholeheartedly believed in the ideals of Republican Turkey. The testimony of these distinguished and selected women of the early Republican generation tells us the story of an era from Ilgaz's perspective. In this context, if we look at Ilgaz's approach to the Turkish women's movement and the quest for women's rights, which is one of the issues on which she expressed her opinions and thoughts the most, according to Ilgaz, it started to sprout in the last period of the Ottoman Empire and gained its true meaning with the Republican era. The Republican era gave Turkish women all the rights of citizenship. With the adoption of the Civil Code in 1926, equality between men and women was achieved, and four years later, in 1930, women were granted the right to participate in municipal elections, and in 1934, the right to become members of parliament, thus giving Turkish womanhood a respected place in the world (Banoğlu, 1989; Ilgaz, 1991b, KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_029_1725).

Ilgaz represented the Turkish Women's Union at the 12th International Women's Union Congress held at the Istanbul Şale Mansion in 1935 and took part in the "Commission on Equality of Women and Men Before the Law" and "Commission on Equality of Women and Men in Business Life" (Davaz, 2014; KEKBMV NTÖA 10046_002_111; KEKBMV NTÖA 10046_001_011)². Ilgaz, on the other hand, stated in her notes that he attended this congress representing the government and provided all kinds of assistance for the Congress until the end of the Congress. According to the information given by Ilgaz, the thesis of the Congress was "Unity of rights for women / Peace for humanity" (Ilgaz, 1991b; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_046_2788). In the following years, we observe Ilgaz taking part in women's congresses and activities organized within this framework. For example, upon the request of Müjgan

² KEKBMV NTÖA: Necile Tefvik's Archival Records at the Women's Library and Information Centre Foundation.

Cunbur, Director General of the National Library, Ilgaz's works were sent to the exhibition organized in Bangkok in 1975 as part of the "International Women's Year" (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_035_2077; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_035_2071). What is noteworthy about Ilgaz's approach to the activities realized in this context is that she attributed a special importance to the Congress in 1935. Ilgaz believed that the decisions taken after the Congress in 1935 contributed positively to women's social, economic, legal, and political problems, but she laments that these decisions were not properly implemented. Another noteworthy approach of Ilgaz in this context is that societies can be developed by men and women working hand in hand and that problems cannot be solved by women's initiative alone. Based on this idea, Ilgaz criticized the declaration of 1975 as the "Year of Women" and emphasized that the social problems in society could not be solved by discussing only the problems of women (Ilgaz, 1981).

According to Ilgaz, it is the woman who builds, sustains, and maintains society. Within the framework of this mission she attributed to being a woman, Ilgaz's evaluation of the May 27 coup d'état, which she characterized as a revolution, as a lesson to be learned for Turkish womanhood is also noteworthy. Ilgaz assigned Turkish women the duty to take care of their men and argued that this event shows that Turkish women should take a closer interest in their men (KEKBMV HIÖA 1000_040_2295). Another mission she attributed to Turkish women was the defense of the Turkish Revolutions. According to Ilgaz, these revolutions were made for the advancement of the Turkish nation and its honorable and independent life. At the same time, as a reform movement aimed at Turkish nationalism, these revolutions were steps taken in accordance with modern civilization and democracy (Ilgaz, 1991b; KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_018_1001).

Ilgaz's belief in and commitment to Atatürk's principles and reforms is expressed in her approach to the coups. For Ilgaz, the 1960 and 1980 coups represented a return to the ideals and principles of the Republic of Turkey idealized by the Great Leader, who aimed to "establish the new Turkey based on the spirit of democracy, the sovereignty of the national will and modern civilization". In Ilgaz's words, with May 27, which was a victory of patriots, "the Republic was riveted, the Constitution was saved, and freedom was quaffed" (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_039_2211). Ilgaz's approach to the 1980 coup also overlaps with her approach to the 1960 coup. According to Ilgaz, "Due to the internal turmoil before 1980, Atatürk's spiritual presence was disturbed, the pleas rising from every house reached God, these heartfelt cries found their place, and on the morning of September 12, 1980, Atatürk's comrades-in-arms took

over the government administration to protect and safeguard the Republic and removed the discouraged and indecisive government from power. The new owners of the government are protecting all the works of Atatürk and trying to save the country from all kinds of upsetting thoughts. Thus, the gaps opened in the Turkish revolutions will be strengthened again with the unity and solidarity of the nation” (KEKBMV HIÖA 10002_002_143).

CONCLUSION

As mentioned above, Ilgaz’s life story includes the entire adventure of the historical process in which she lived. At the same time, in the context of women’s history, it reflects the similarities and differences in the demands for social, cultural, and political rights that were transferred from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic and the rights that Turkish women gained with the Republic. In addition, the diversity of the duties she undertook also provides clues to the responsibilities Ilgaz believed she carried on her shoulders as a versatile Republican woman. Beyond being a teacher, Ilgaz took part in many of the cultural, social, and political positions that the early Republican elites assigned to Turkish women for the construction of a modern and prosperous Turkey. All these activities of Ilgaz bear traces of the idealized individual and society in the early Republican period. Ilgaz’s motivation for her involvement in all aspects of life was her deep love for Atatürk and her belief that his principles and reforms would enable the construction of a new and strong Turkey. In this respect, Ilgaz is one of the Republican women who wholeheartedly embraced the mission assigned to Turkish women in Atatürk’s Turkey.

Ilgaz’s belief in and commitment to the principles and revolutions of Republican Turkey colored both her professional career and her social and cultural activities. The basic element that determines the framework of Ilgaz’s activities is the ideal of a developed, free society. Teachers are the ones who will realize this ideal and raise society and future generations. Therefore, Ilgaz’s teaching career was shaped within the framework of the mission attributed to teachers by Atatürk, whom she saw as the hero of the National Struggle and the founding leader of Republican Turkey. In this context, Ilgaz undertook the task of educating not only future generations but also society. For Ilgaz, who believed in the power of Atatürk’s principles and revolutions in the development of Turkish society, education was necessary for the construction of a democratic society. For this reason, Ilgaz attached importance to the mission of the People’s Houses and Public Classrooms in the construction of a conscious and educated society.

Ilgaz, who worked as a teacher between 1923 and 1943, also participated in social, cultural, and political activities within the CHP during the same years. The knowledge she acquired under the umbrella of the CHP played an important role in the formation of her political vision as well as her social and cultural vision. Ilgaz's political career was shaped under the unique conditions of the early Republican period. The political role assigned to Turkish women during the years of One Party rule seems to have influenced the way Ilgaz and her generation practiced politics. Although she was more active in the parliament than many of her contemporaries, Ilgaz's responsibilities as an MP focused on social and cultural issues. For Ilgaz, politics was a means of serving society, just like teaching. In this respect, Ilgaz was involved in activities aimed at solving the social and economic problems of Turkish society, especially in the cities she represented. At the same time, since Ilgaz's experience in the Parliament coincided with the transition to a multi-party political system in Turkey, it also contains its unique characteristics. Ilgaz experienced both the last one-party election of the Republic (1943) and the first multi-party one-stage election (1946). During these years of World War II, Ilgaz was also closely involved in the economic problems of Turkish society. As the only female member of the Labor Commission, she addressed the problems of workers, especially mine workers. Ilgaz focused on prisons and prisoners, slums, and children in need of care.

Another characteristic of Ilgaz that reflects the characteristics of her period is undoubtedly her activities under the umbrella of social welfare organizations. Social welfare organizations, which emerged as a result of prolonged wars and changing social, economic, and political conditions and which were the manifestation of social solidarity, were taken over by Republican Turkey and served as places where Ilgaz and her generation worked with great devotion. In social institutions such as Darülaceze, the Child Protection Agency, and the Red Crescent, which were under the control of the CHP during the One Party rule, philanthropic Turkish women took it upon themselves to heal the wounds of society. Turkish women worked for the development of young Turkey and a more prosperous Turkey under the umbrella of social associations and foundations such as the Charity Association and the Association of Aid to Darülaceze, which were established with the initiatives of prominent families or professional women of the period. In the context of Turkish women's rights, they seem to have addressed their problems under the umbrella of the Turkish Women's Union. They also established women's branches under the umbrella of the Turkish Aeronautical Association, the Turkish Navy Society, and the Turkish Economy and Savings Association, in which the women of the period took part in national feelings. Ilgaz's work in the Federation of Social Services, the

Turkish Tourism Writers and Journalists Association, and the Martyrs' Cemeteries Reconstruction Foundation of Türkiye is also worth noting.

Finally, when we look at Ilgaz as a writer and orator, we see traces of the responsibility she believed she carried on her shoulders as an educated, professional Turkish woman who embraced the ideals of the Republic. As a prolific writer, Ilgaz focused on social and youth issues. Education, health, social, political, and cultural issues are explained to the reader from Ilgaz's perspective. Ilgaz shared her values, knowledge, and experiences with the public through her newspaper articles, her works, and her speeches at various events. In this respect, Ilgaz is one of the women of the Republic who was active in almost every field. According to Ilgaz, these activities are parts of a whole for a brighter tomorrow. The motive underlying Ilgaz's multifaceted personality is the ideal of a prosperous Turkey.

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