

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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WHAT WAS ATATURK? FALIH RIFKI ATAY

Summary

In this work, Falih Rifki Atay tells some important moments before and after Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in a non-chronological way by referring to the writings of chroniclers such as Ahmet Cevdet Pasha. In this way, he invites the reader to grasp the meaning of the reforms that Ataturk pioneered. The main issue he focuses on is that democracy is dysfunctional if society is not modernized through education.

People

Ali Fuat Cebesoy	Soldier and politician
Bedii Faik Akin	Author
Bulent Ecevit	Politician
Douglas MacArthur	American soldier
Enver Pasha	Soldier and politician
Fethi Okyar	Soldier, diplomat, politician
Franz Joseph Hermann Michael Maria von Papen	German diplomat, statesman
Hamdullah Suphi	Writer, teacher, and politician
Ismet Inonu	Soldier and statesman
Kazim Karabekir	Soldier and politician
Kazim Orbay	Soldier and politician
Mahmut Esat Bozkurt	Statesman
Recep Peker	Soldier and politician
Refet Bele	Soldier and politician
Sukru Saracoglu	Economist and politician
Yunus Nadi	Journalist and politician

Events

Dictator or Libertarian?

One evening in Sarayburnu, Mustafa Kemal asks those around him who has a small notebook. Then, the waiter hands him a notebook. After Mustafa Kemal writes something, he gives the notebook to Falih Rifki and asks him to review it. Falih Rifki is surprised to see a text in the Latin alphabet. He reads what is written, and everyone applauds. Two days later, Mustafa Kemal goes on a journey to Anatolia to give writing lessons to the people. That is a top-down approach. However, the constitution of the same period reads that power is held by the people, and the parliament represents the people. That is democratic.

There is a debate in the parliament about granting the president the right of veto and dissolution. Mustafa Kemal wants to keep these two rights to himself, just in case. He invites Sukru Saracoglu and Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, who oppose this, to his house and argue until the morning. In the end, he gives up on these rights, albeit reluctantly. That doesn't prevent him from making Saracoglu and Bozkurt ministers.

Mustafa Kemal, who threatens those who oppose the reforms while the revolutionary laws are being discussed, and Mustafa Kemal who gives up on these rights are the same person. He is open to discussion. He is a democrat in character. Falih Rifki can argue with him without hiding his opinions.

Mustafa Kemal doesn't like the word dictator as he thinks his duty is to prepare the preconditions of freedom. There are many reactionary names in the council during the years of the national struggle. This assembly opens nearly four hundred madrasahs, abolishes art classes, and bans alcoholic beverages. Mustafa Kemal's friends tell him to dissolve this assembly, but he prefers not to share his thoughts with everyone because the conditions are not favorable. While the national anthem, the product of the period, describes the West as "the monster with one tooth left," he thinks the best way

to get rid of the West is joining the West. He never thinks of living without parliament. As in the famous French saying, he concludes that the worst assembly is better than no assembly.

The laws of the revolution are approved by the deputies, who don't embrace these laws, upon the pressure of Mustafa Kemal. His aim is to do what the *Tanzimat* reforms could not do. Accordingly, in order for the regime to be permanent, religion should remain a matter of belief between God and the person, people should receive a secular education, and conscience should be freed from the monopoly of sharia. The rule of the people can only be possible after these are secured. For this reason, democracy is not the reality of Mustafa Kemal's times but his long-term goal.

Progressive Republican Party

The Progressive Party is established as an opposition. The promise of respect for religious feelings at the beginning of its program is a source of debate. Falih Rifki questions what this expression means as everyone fasts in Ramadan, religious books are published, and religious schools training clergy are open. This political formation, which attracts the reactionaries in the country, is closed down after the assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal in Izmir.

Two Dispositions in Republican People's Party

In time, two tendencies emerge in the party. A group represented by Fethi Okyar is consisted of 19th-century liberals in the field of economics and is against statism. Mustafa Kemal thinks that the transition to democracy is easier with two parties defending different economic and social plans. Falih Rifki attends a meeting to discuss this and states that the idea doesn't work. Accordingly, one member of the newly established Free Republican Party promises to open dervish lodges, and another member tells people that Mustafa Kemal doesn't perform prayers. This attempt fails because of the increase in reactionary activities.

Independent Deputies

There are two independent deputies in the parliament; Manisa deputy Halil Bey and Izmit deputy Sirri Bey. As the elections approach, Mustafa Kemal expresses that he wants both of them in the parliament. There are three people who identify the candidates; president, prime minister, and party secretary general. When Mustafa Kemal goes to the train station to come to Istanbul, he is accompanied by Prime Minister Ismet Inonu and party secretary general Recep Peker. Recep Peker opposes Sirri Bey's re-entering the parliament. Mustafa Kemal asks if they can do the same, saying that he can defend his work against the critics and tells them not to be afraid of the two opponents. In the end, he states that if they don't want Sirri, they may not allow his candidacy because it's two against one. When he comes to Istanbul, he is happy to hear that Refet Bele is the independent candidate. He wants to see what those who don't like Sirri will do against someone more dissident than him. After Refet Bele is elected, he visits Mustafa Kemal to tell him that he knows who helped him and thanks him. However, contrary to expectations, he doesn't speak much in parliament.

A Culture of Debate

Mustafa Kemal doesn't get involved in any parliamentary debate, except those concerning the laws of the revolution. No criticism is left unheeded at party meetings on Tuesdays. Ministers wear out in the face of these criticisms. In addition, only in the one-party period ministers are tried by the Supreme Court for corruption.

Falih Rifki, quoting H.G. Wells, states that the primary duty of the modern state is to educate the society without consulting the society, that schools must be established before the ballot boxes, that the ballot paper in the hands of the uneducated is not only useless but also dangerous, that ignorance doesn't have a nation.

Before and After April 23, 1920

Mustafa Kemal tells the people around him how he opened the assembly. In those days, he is told that the English are about to soften, but his presence dissuades them. Some of his friends confirm this. He asks where he should go, his friends suggest him going to the east, perhaps to Russia. Instead of going, he opens the assembly.

And when an armistice is offered, he thinks that no agreement without a decisive victory is appropriate. He talks to all the commanders one by one to show them the dangers of signing an agreement without a victory. It is often said that Turkish soldiers cannot attack; they can only defend. But he clears Izmir of Greek soldiers.

Falih Rifki laments that forty-six years later, there are Soviet supporters on one side of the country and reactionaries who want the Hagia Sophia to be a mosque on the other.

Before and After

In 1913, Mustafa Kemal is a military attaché in Sofia. The ambassador is Fethi Bey. One day, a member of the Union and Progress, who returns from Sofia, says that Bulgarians wear clothes which are produced in their own factories. In Istanbul, foreign tailors sew clothes from English fabric, and Austrian ready-made garments are sold.

As Falih Rifki works in *Tanin* newspaper, the editor-in-chief Muhiddin Birgen goes to Livadeia to greet the Tsar of Russia with Talât Pasha. On his return, he tells that at dinner, the tsar told Talât Pasha that everything on the table was Russian. In response, Talât Pasha said that this was not the case in his own country because of the capitulations.

A friend of Falih Rifki's friend Bedii Faik goes to New York and sends him a letter. In the letter, he writes that he went to a store called Browning King, where he saw ready-made garments more expensive than others and when asked why he learned that they were made of Turkish merino.

Falih Rifki states that all the food on the table and all the clothes worn are Turkish now. He also adds that even the construction materials and furnishings of the Macka Hotel, which is being built, are Turkish. He states that Mustafa Kemal forced Turkishness into the economy, when Turks were only stationers and gendarmes.

Society in a Society

Since the *Tanzimat* days, Turkey is like a society within a society; the minority that is open to Western culture, and the majority adopting Eastern culture. One considers painting and sculpture sin, while the other teaches painting and sculpture. One embraces civil law, while the other permits a man to marry more than one woman and instructs women to cover their heads. Although both are Muslim, the difference is that one supports seventh-century pedagogy, while the other supports modern education. That is what Mustafa Kemal desires to change.

Falih Rifki shares the words of a Western thinker who states that democracy means surrendering a country to the common people, thus, the first job is to educate the people in terms of ideas and tastes. Falih Rifki indicates that this is the aim of Mustafa Kemal.

Being a Republic

Mustafa Kemal is the speaker of the parliament. After the victory, he either hands over the presidency to the sultan or changes the regime. One day, Hamdullah Suphi comes to the presidential room in the parliament and says that it is written in the European newspaper that they are preparing to change the regime and that they should reject the news immediately.

Another day in the same presidential room, Yunus Nâdi says that they should proclaim a republic when they are at their strongest, Mustafa Kemal slams his hand on the table and says that they are at their strongest.

In those days, prime minister and ministers are elected by the parliament. An interim council elects Yusuf Kemal. Thinking that he cannot work without Mustafa Kemal, Yusuf Kemal asks Mustafa Kemal if he is willing to help him, Mustafa Kemal answers that he doesn't want to be involved in anything. Yusuf Kemal then rejects the assignment. Thereupon, a meeting is held in Cankaya with Ismet Inonu, Fethi Okyar, Kemalettin Sami, and Halit Pasha. Mustafa Kemal is also invited to the meeting. In that meeting, Mustafa Kemal says that they will declare the republic the next day. The next day, in the afternoon meeting, Mustafa Kemal can't talk much because he has a toothache and asks for an hour's leave. Then he returns and defends the republican regime. Young people also give speeches in

support of him. The hodja who said, "We got rid of the Greeks, let's see how we get rid of Mustafa Kemal" on the day Izmir was taken back, is also there. He and others like him are disturbed by these conversations.

After the republic is proclaimed, Kazim Orbay fires a cannon in Ankara to herald the news. Kazim Karabekir, unaware of the circumstances, wants to know why he does this without his knowledge. After Kazim Orbay tells him that he does this to announce the proclamation of the republic, he asks him if he would prevent him. Kazim Karabekir replies in delirium that they have not decided on proclaiming the republic.

Against the Unionists

Falih Rifki refers to the memoirs of Ali Fuat Cebesoy and states that Mustafa Kemal designed the National Oath long ago. When Mustafa Kemal is transferred from Damascus to Thessaloniki in 1907 as a senior captain, the officers, who are members of the secret society, Motherland and Liberty, he founded in Syria, join the Committee of Union and Progress in Thessaloniki. The Unionists dream of making Abdulhamid proclaim the constitutional monarchy, but Mustafa Kemal asks them what their goals are after they achieve this. Everyone answers that the next step is easier. After the declaration of constitutionalism in 1908, they hire a hitman named Yakup Cemil to have Mustafa Kemal killed, but Yakup Cemil refuses this and advises Mustafa Kemal to be cautious. Later, a person named Abdulkadir and Enver Pasha's uncle Halil undertake this task. However, they cannot succeed.

Before the Second World War

In 1933, Mustafa Kemal predicts that the world war is approaching and the countries will be plunged into chaos in the 1940s. He meets with General Douglas MacArthur. This interview is later published in a journal in the USA in 1951. According to General MacArthur's account, Mustafa Kemal tells him that the Treaty of Versailles did not abolish the conditions that led to the First World War, that it widened the gap between all old rivals, that the victorious states imposed peace terms without taking into account the ethnic, geopolitical, and economic conditions of the defeated states, that the fate of Europe depends on Germany's attitude, and that the USA should continue its peace-making role in Europe. As a matter of fact, von Papen tells Falih Rifki that when he went to the League of Nations meeting as the German chancellor, he told British and French politicians that if they did not focus on the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles, they would not be able to find him again. Indeed, Hitler comes to power.

Not to Forget Others

A year before Mustafa Kemal's death, he tells the foreign minister of Romania that the task of a political leader is to guide the nation to embrace life with joy and enthusiasm. He reads various philosophers and sees that some equate life to nothing and leave no room for happiness, while others argue that life means nothing, therefore it is necessary to live happily. It is the latter that suits him. But on one condition: A person must work for the honor and happiness of future generations too. Not only for the future of their own nation but for the future of all nations.

To illustrate this, Falih Rifki cites a memory of Mustafa Kemal. While performing his military service during the war, Mustafa Kemal closely follows what is happening on the Erzurum front. His aide asks why he is interested in matters that don't interest him. He answers that if he doesn't know the situation of other troops, he cannot know how to lead his own troops.

On Communism

Falih Rifki is angry that Mao's book has been translated into Turkish. He criticizes the communists' argument that they democratize the parliament and claims that democracy and the parliament disappear if the extreme left comes to power. He states that communism was openly defended in the first assembly. He makes reference to the memories of Adana deputy Damar Arikoglu.

Arikoglu states that the communists in the parliament see the liberation of the country in communism and demand a transition to communism as soon as possible. As the number of people using red color in their accessories increases, one of their friends joins them. Arikoglu asks his friend how come he supports Russia. His friend replies that their country has no friends other than Russia, reminding him of the Treaty of Versailles.

Medivani, the first Soviet ambassador, comes to Ankara with two hundred people. The government allocates many houses to this delegation. Over time, the number of people using red accessories increases. Sheikh Servet, Bursa deputy, Sukru Bey, Afyon deputy, and Nâzım Bey, Tokat deputy, are communist leaders in the parliament. One day, an invitation letter bearing the signature of Nâzım Bey invites everyone to a newly opened club. Everyone who takes the podium at the invitation praises communism. They even claim that it is a system suitable for Islam and that the first caliph Abu Bakr was also a communist.

Reactionarism in the Parliament

Since diseases such as syphilis and malaria are widespread, the health commission recommends that those who want to get married should be examined by a physician first. Thereupon, the hodjas, who don't even imagine a female physician, object to this, saying that it is not appropriate for a woman to be examined by a man physician. Nigde deputy Hilmi Bey argues that it is a sin to enact such a law, referring to one of his friends. His friend calls a doctor to have his wife examined; the doctor enters a room with his wife and locks the door, then his friend spies on them through the hole in the door and is disturbed by what he sees. A mufti, who is also a deputy, tells that the wife of one of his acquaintances gets sick, his acquaintance doesn't want to have his wife examined by a man. So, he finds a midwife. She listens to the man's wife and then describes the condition to the physician. The physician writes a prescription accordingly. Hearing this, Bursa deputy Dr. Emin curses the physician for prescribing without seeing the patient. When the mufti replies, "God damn you," Dr. Emin slaps him. Afterwards, other hodjas in the assembly, including those who doesn't accept to make laws thinking the Qur'an is enough for organizing life, try to lynch Dr. Emin.

From the Past

Falih Rifki makes reference to some events written by chronicles like Ahmet Cevdet Pasha and Ahmed Lutfi Efendi.

During the reign of Selim III, the empire is at war with Austria and Russia. He calls the grand vizier, the janissary agha, and some officers into his chamber. They all say that it is impossible for them to win the war unless they learn the battle tactics used by the enemy. Some suggest alliance with Prussia, but the hodjas object, saying that Muslims cannot ally with infidels.

In the same period, the French Revolution takes place. Selim III asks for support from the ulama because there is nothing in the treasury. The shaykh al-Islam says that the prayer of the ulama is not the same as the prayer of the ordinary people, so they have no money. Upon that, Selim III bans things made of gold and silver and turns them into money in the mint. This time, the ulama criticize the state.

Selim III establishes the *Nizamıcedid* (new order) army. However, Dervis Efendi, who occupies important positions as a member of the ulama, is sent to Selim III as an intermediary by the rebellious janissaries. Selim III finally abolishes the new army.

Falih Rifki says that just as the janissaries against Selim III, the enemies of the revolution accuse Mustafa Kemal of infidelity. He adds that the *Nurcus*, who are followers of a Sunni movement founded in the early 20th century and based on the writings of Said Nursi (1877–1960), in the parliament, define their schooling system as a war against communism, accusing all Western civilizationists including Selim III of communism. For Falih Rifki, this is because the past never passes.

His Answers to One of His Readers

Based on a letter from a reader, Falih Rifki writes that Hagia Sophia was turned into a museum at the request of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk so that the old-style religious separatism would not continue. He also states that some desire to continue Arabic script and turn the Presidency of Religious Affairs into a ministry, and some want to add to the constitution a phrase stating that the religion of the state is Islam. Therefore, if democracy means reactionarism in Turkey, he is the first volunteer to overthrow it.

A Memory of Nuri Sait Pasha

While Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Said Pasha is in the same army as Mustafa Kemal in the Ottoman Empire, they have dinner together. A physician at the table says that he is on leave to go to Istanbul. Mustafa Kemal questions how he goes to Istanbul to have fun while the army is suffering from typhus. The doctor throws a bottle at Mustafa Kemal's head because he is drunk. Years pass, Nuri Said Pasha comes to visit Mustafa Kemal in Turkey. During the conversation, he asks him what has happened to that physician. Mustafa Kemal says that he is the head of an army medic. Nuri Said Pasha thinks how big-hearted Mustafa Kemal is.

Masonry

A piece of news in the newspapers claims that a minister is a freemason. The minister sues the journalist for writing this. Falih Rifki says that if this discussion is translated into foreign languages, Turkey will seem like a third-world country. He adds that, like laicism, freemasonry is also used by the ignorant masses in Turkey to mean irreligion. However, he cannot meet one of his religious friends in some days because he attends a masonic meeting every two weeks.

The Things That a Newspaper from the Past Reminds Him Of

Falih Rifki finds an *Ikdam* newspaper published during the reign of Abdulhamid on December 24, 1906. He looks at the economic news and examines the prices of products such as cabbage, leek, celery, and bread. He states that although everything was cheap, the people were starving in those days. Officials were paid bimonthly or quarterly. Salaries were increased after the constitutional monarchy was declared. However, the people were still supporters of Abdulhamid. Falih Rifki is sure that if a plebiscite had been held in 1908, Abdulhamid would have been elected. The constitutional monarchy was declared thanks to a handful of civilians and soldiers against the oppression of the palace, corruption, injustice, and mismanagement in 1908, and the army saved the constitutional monarchy in the 1909 uprising. For this reason, Falih Rifki argues that democracy in Turkey can survive not with sympathy for the Ottoman sultans but with Kemalism.

A Fatwa from the Al-Azhar University

A fatwa from the Al-Azhar University states that socialism and communism are not against Islam. Falih Rifki says that if a leftist dictatorship regime were established in Turkey, it would defend the same thing, and that during the years of the national struggle, those who declared the fighters as infidels were the sheikh al-Islam and the hodjas in Istanbul, but the hodjas from Ankara defended the opposite.

He emphasizes that Hodja Suavi, who taught in Istanbul mosques in 1879, told people that the Qur'an could be recited in any language but they even recited the adhan and gave the sermons in Arabic, that dervishism left Islamic countries behind in art, trade, economy, and architecture, that Christianity brought dervish lodges to the Islamic world, that the origin of dervishism was priesthood. In addition, the same hodja also said that the idols were banned in Mecca to prevent people from worshiping them, but it was no longer necessary, that the Umayyad caliph Abdulmalik decorated the walls of the mosque in Jerusalem with the pictures of the Islamic prophet, and that there was a cavalry statue in the Tomb of Sheikh Mansour in Baghdad and the caliph had this done, and that Timur built a museum in Samarkand full of paintings and sculptures.

Citing examples from the Islamic historian Syed Ameer Ali, Falih Rifki says that music was not banned when bigotry was not strong, that even the caliph Omar stopped to listen to women with beautiful voices, and that women could freely walk among men during the reign of the four caliphs. Likewise, according to the accounts of a well-known traveller, on his way back from Mecca, he wants to rest near Medina and enters a rich man's house. After entering the courtyard, he asks if he can get off his camel. The landlady says he can, and they chat freely.

The Portrait of Mahmut II

Falih Rifki continues to quote from history books. According to the accounts, Mahmut II desires to hang his portraits on the walls of the government offices to lift the ban on painting. The first portrait is hung on the walls of Selimiye Barracks with a magnificent ceremony. Prayers are recited, twenty-one cannons are fired, and the soldiers are marched in front of the portrait, the inside and outside of

the barracks are decorated with candles. Since the people are disturbed by this, the portraits are removed after the death of Mahmut II.

Some Notes from History

Based on the history books in his hand, Falih Rifki states that in the past, viziers and pashas were obliged to grow beards, that Christians were expected to add a sign to their clothes in order to expose their religion, that only the sultan could ride when the phaeton first came out, and that other statesmen were allowed to ride afterwards. He states that Mahmut II re-established medical schools according to European models, brought foreign teachers and had them teach in French. He also adds that according to a fatwa in the Ottoman Empire, bribery is the thing that harms and oppresses others. It is not something that is given to solve problems and gain benefits.

Pinching

Falih Rifki reads in an article of Churchill that cartoonists draw Benjamin Disraeli's forelock, William Ewart Gladstone's collar, Father Churchill's mustache, and Stanley Baldwin's pipe enlarged. When Churchill goes on an election tour, he uses a small hat that his maid put his bag. Upon that, his caricature with a small hat gets popular. In his article, Churchill states that famous people who are not caricatured are saddened, and that he owes his French love to French cartoonists.

As the head of the press delegation, Falih Rifki gives a dinner in San Francisco. The hostess of the hotel invites the daughters of some important American families to dinner. One of these young women sits next to a former minister. Although this minister is someone who was educated in Europe, he pinches her after a few glasses of wine. She doesn't understand why he does this, but he continues to pinch her. When the meal is over, the young woman complains about him, saying that the Turks like to torture. Falih Rifki states that it is not possible to explain to that woman that pinching is an expression of appreciation, just like a cartoon.

1819

Abdulhamid II is the sultan, and Sait Pasha is the grand vizier. A reformation program is presented to the palace. The delusional sultan invites Sait Pasha, who is on the twenty-second day of his grand viziership, to the palace and comes at him with a dagger. The next day, the first ambassador of Romania gives a medal to the sultan. Grand vizier goes to the ceremony. On the way back, the chamberlain makes him wait and delivers a note from the sultan. It reads that the sultan gets upset seeing him sad and likes him very much. Falih Rifki states that the sultan makes two mistakes in the four-line note and that these mistakes cannot be made even by secondary school students.

The Sultan's Paranoia

One night, Abdulhamid II invites Sait Pasha to the palace and hands him an investigation file that shows that he is the leader of a secret organization that wants to overthrow the sultan. The grand vizier says this is not true. However, the sultan doesn't believe him and asks for his seal back. The grand vizier has an agha guarding him. This agha has the seal and is waiting at the door. When the grand vizier says he wants to go to his chamber to fetch the seal, the sultan takes out a gun and puts it to the head of the grand vizier. The grand vizier still asks for permission to go to his chamber. The sultan has the bag brought and gets the seal, and then locks the grand vizier in a room. Sait Pasha's wife informs the British ambassador as the grand vizier has suggested her before. When the ambassador gets involved, the grand vizier is sent home after eighteen hours of captivity. On the night of the day he came to his house, he is called to the palace and made a grand vizier again.

One day, the Bulgarian prince declares that the eastern part of Bulgaria is separated from the Ottoman administration. Thereupon, the ministers unanimously decide to send an army. Meanwhile, Sait Pasha, who is on his way to the Sublime Porte, is summoned to the palace and kept waiting until the sun goes down. Gazi Osman Pasha invites him to his room to have dinner. Just as he is about to start eating, Sait Pasha is summoned by the sultan. But he is kept waiting again. After two hours, the sultan asks him for his seal and then imprisons him. Sait Pasha stays awake for three hours in the place where he is locked. After falling asleep, he is awakened and blamed for sending the army to Rumelia to dethrone the sultan. He tries to explain that he wants to prevent a principality in Plovdiv until the morning. The next day is Friday. When the sultan returns from the Friday prayer procession, he is released, and then he learns from the newspapers that Kamil Pasha is to replace him.

Even when Sait Pasha is not the grand vizier, he is often invited to the palace. When he learns that Abdulhamid uses one of his concubines as an informant, he reacts against this situation. After the filing a complaint, the sultan calls him to the palace and says that there are rumors about him and that he has taken some precautions. While returning home, Sait Pasha is taken back to the palace. This time, the sultan accuses him of gathering those who want to dethrone him in the mawlid that the sheikh al-Islam organizes that day. Sait Pasha is imprisoned again. After being imprisoned for a while, he says that there are people supporting him, and they do what is necessary. Then the sultan calls him over to inform him that it is understood that he has nothing to do with that meeting.

As soon as the sultan learns that in addition to the warships anchored in the Bosphorus, a few more are about to be brought to protect the minorities in Istanbul, he summons Sait Pasha to the palace and orders him to see the British ambassador immediately. Although Sait Pasha tells him that it is not appropriate to visit someone at night, the sultan doesn't listen to him. Sait Pasha goes to the ambassador's place, but he doesn't accept him. When he returns to the palace, he is asked to go to the Russian embassy. He does what he is asked to do again, but Russian ambassador is in sleep. He desperately returns home but receives a letter ordering him to go to the German embassy too.

As a result, Sait Pasha cannot prevent the arrival of the new warships, and the sultan decides to imprison him, thinking that he does this on purpose. Finally, Sait Pasha takes refuge in the British embassy because he doesn't want to be imprisoned once again. This time, the sultan sends Esat Efendi, who represents him in holy places, to the embassy to talk to him. When Sait Pasha doesn't accept Esat Efendi, Esat Efendi says that he is there with the Qur'an. Then, Sait Pasha compulsorily accepts him. Esat Efendi states that the sultan has taken an oath and promised for not inflicting any harm on him, if he returns home. When this promise is presented in the presence of witnesses and approved by the ambassadors, Sait Pasha returns home.

Falih Rifki notes that Abdulhamid, who is almost deified by the traditionalists, is such a man.

About the Ottoman Christians

Falih Rifki cites Cevdet Pasha's chronicle, complaining that nationalism in Turkey considers people from different sects infidels. Ahmet Cevdet Pasha writes that the Armenians, who carry out the financial affairs, and the Greeks, who carry out the foreign affairs, live as guests among the Muslims. He finds that what the state does to improve this condition is not enough.

As the quality of education in madrasahs decreases and bigotry increases, people insult Christians. When the state is unable to feed the army, porters and artisans in Istanbul are sent on expeditions. Soldiers in the deteriorating army plunder the Christian villages on their way to fight Russia. In this case, the Greeks begin to support Russia.

When this war is concluded with a treaty, Ghazi Hasan Pasha starts to take the Greeks living in the Mediterranean islands as navy forces. The limitation for the size of the boats used by the Greeks is removed, and they start to sail larger boats. In many places, Greek schools are opened, which have a curriculum that cannot be controlled by officials because they don't know European languages.

At one point, the Sublime Porte is informed by the British embassy that the people of the Morea are about to revolt. A translator, Nikola, is sent to the Morea. However, Nikola encourages the rebels and tells the government that there is nothing to be afraid of. Finally, the grand vizier calls Patriarch Grigorios and asks if he knows anything. The patriarch states that he knows nothing. The grand vizier doesn't believe him and has the patriarch hanged at the door of the patriarchate. After his corpse is hanged for three days, upon the order of the grand vizier, he is thrown into the sea with a stone tied to his stomach by the Jews.

This event angers the Orthodox Christians and further fuels the revolt of the Greeks. Thereupon, the officials gather in the mansion of the Shaykh al-Islam to discuss what to do. In the end, edicts, which permit enslaving and killing the rebellious Christians, are sent everywhere. Meanwhile, the people living in the Christian neighborhoods in Istanbul are attacked and the Egrikapi Church is looted. While the prohibition of the slave trade is discussed in the Congress of Vienna, enslaving the Greeks positions the Europeans against the Ottomans.

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As Falih Rifki thinks of the anti-Greek mob attacks directed primarily at Istanbul's Greek minority on 6–7 September 1955, the Wealth Tax, radical religious and national newspapers, he concludes that things are not much different from the 18th and 19th centuries.

How to be a True Muslim

Falih Rifki states that Ahmet Cevdet Pasha shows what true Islam means in a letter to a German scholar who converted to Islam and in a conversation with the French ambassador. In the letter, he tells the ambassador that a person who wants to become a Muslim can become a Muslim by himself, without the need for any clergyman and that Islam cannot be forced upon anyone. He also says that committing sin doesn't make anyone unbeliever; it only makes people wrongdoer. The most important thing in Islam is having a good character, which resides between two the evils; exaggeration and understatement.

In the conversation with the French ambassador, the ambassador tells him that Bonaport said that if he were religious, he would become a Muslim because there is none between God and the person in Islam; however, Bonaparte is wrong because there is the ulama. In response, Cevdet Pasha says there is no need for a clergyman to become Muslim and worship. Only Allah forgives sins. But in Christianity, the child is baptized to become a Christian, the priest mediates between the person and Jesus Christ, and even a funeral cannot be held without a priest.

By quoting these, Falih Rifki states that some deputies in the parliament should read them instead of *Risale-i Nur* [a tafsir (exegesis) on the Qur'an written by Said Nursi], which is a book of profanity.

Caliphate and Morality

When the head of Religious Affairs was the mufti of Istanbul, he said that people's morality deteriorated because of the abolition of the caliphate. Upon hearing this, Falih Rifki gives an example from the 17th century to show that he is wrong.

Vizier Yusuf Pasha besieges Chania for weeks. The sieged people say that they leave the castle if they can depart with their families and valuables. Yusuf Pasha accepts this and takes a few concubines and two columns to the sultan. The sultan's attendants, who don't believe in Yusuf Pasha, blame him for keeping the booty for himself and pit the sultan against him. Under their impact, the sultan imprisons Yusuf Pasha. But the mother sultan defends Yusuf Pasha, saying that he is an honorable man. However, the rumors in the palace don't end. Then, the sultan asks Yusuf Pasha to take Crete completely. Yusuf Pasha warns him because the season is not suitable for a naval expedition. Then, the sultan blames him for returning without taking any booty after spending so much money. Yusuf Pasha reminds him that he did not put anyone in a difficult situation by using his sword and that he added a castle to the empire. Finally, the sultan has Yusuf Pasha strangled.

Falih Rifki cites another example. Salkim Mehmet Agha, one of the important names of Aleppo, dies, leaving an inheritance that is worth twenty-five thousand liras. The governor possesses this inheritance. He pretends to sell the inherited properties at the auction deceiving the heirs. He makes the heirs sue the merchants with whom the deceased did business and then forces the merchants to pay money to him. While doing all this, he dresses like a sheik, reads historical stories in friendly assemblies, and weeps sadly, questioning his condition on the day of judgement.

If Communism Were in Turkey

Falih Rifki tells a story from China. A barber named Li-Teh-hsun begins to study Mao's book, which analyzes social classes in China, thinking that to become a true communist, he must abandon the old-fashioned shaving and choose a style that fits with Mao's thinking. He eventually develops a shaving style that is completed in seventeen minutes. While he was doing this, other Chinese raid the museums, claiming that they are promoting pre-communist China.

After conveying this, Falih Rifki states that bigotry is the same on both the right and the left, and every ideology is inclined to turn into barbarism when three-quarters of a society is ignorant. Complaining about those who show Russia and Yugoslavia as an example, he states that Russia was among the Western states with its culture, industry, and universities before it became communist, that it was not a backward Eastern country, and that Yugoslavia was neither one of the countries lost in 1912 nor Serbia in 1878. He points out that if Turkey is governed by dictatorial socialism, it will turn not into Russia or Yugoslavia but into China or Algeria, which turns its vineyards into grain fields. Arguing that people's constructive and creative energy cannot be efficient without material and moral compensation, he states that while China finds equality in being a pedestrian, Russia increases automobile production to increase the employees' ambition.

Corrupted Ulama

Falih Rifki, quoting from Monsieur D'Aramon's travel book, states that in the 16th century, natural sciences were taught in madrasas, none was privileged, and *kadis* were a symbol of honesty. He states that Koci Bey, who reported the reasons for the collapse of the empire and handed it over to Murat IV, showed the corruption of the ulama as the biggest of these reasons. He says that he personally saw the coffeehouses where professional perjurers wait for a job.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Commentary

When Mustafa Kemal returns to his mansion during a reactionary event, a sycophantic person who later joined the ranks of the Democrat Party tells him that every villager has Mustafa Kemal in their heart. Mustafa Kemal replies that he knows this, but he is also aware of that the same villager can delete his name to write another one.

Istanbul

Falih Rifki states that Kagithane has turned into one of the ugliest places on earth and then cites what Evliya Celebi (an Ottoman traveler) writes about the old days of the district. Evliya Celebi hears gunshots every night and wonders from where they come. His friend tells him they come from Kagithane, a beautiful promenade. Evliya Celebi takes some food and drinks with him and goes to Kagithane with his friends. They sit under a tree on one side of the stream there. For two months, he watches closely how the notables of the city have fun in the tents. In every tent, songs are sung until the morning. During the day, jugglers hold demonstrations.

According to Falih Rifki, civilization is not possible unless Istanbul is cleared of factories, shipyards, thieves, and bad tastes, and groves should be planted around Kagithane and Silahtaraga.

News from the 19th Century

Falih Rifki shares some news from the first years of the 19th century. Accordingly, when the army cannot cope with the Greek soldiers, it asks the Egyptian governor Mehmet Ali Pasha for help. Mehmet Ali Pasha asks for Crete in return for help. But then he returns it, saying that Crete costs too much.

When Ibrahim Pasha, son of Mehmet Ali Pasha, marches to Anatolia, Mahmut II seeks refuge with the tsar of Russia. The sheik al-Islam issues a fatwa stating that the soldiers of Ibrahim Pasha must be killed even if they are Muslim. Russian soldiers gather in the Bosphorus. They even set up a stone with a Russian note as a souvenir. When the Western states, who are afraid of the Ottomans coming under the control of Russia, send other soldiers, Ibrahim Pasha returns, and sheik al-Islam takes the fatwa back by order of Mahmut II.

The governor of Sarajevo wants to prevent the people from leaving Sarajevo by claiming that the shopkeepers are involved in things that don't interest them. However, his real purpose is to prevent his persecution of the people from being heard. The grand vizier answers that it is not possible to prevent the people from trading.

For the first census to be accepted by the people, the task is assigned to the sharia officers. No officer is sent to Edirne at the request of Huseyin Pasha. Adana and many other provinces are not counted in order not to frighten Ali Bey, the trustee of Adana. And only men are counted.

The first newspaper, *Takvimivakayi*, is established. Until that time, nothing is considered a book except what is allowed by the fatwa of the sheik al-Islam.

Every day, an edict is issued to prevent the communities from being persecuted by people holding power. The government cannot see other way but to send a decree of justice against oppression. However, since the travel expenses of the officials carrying these edicts are also burdened with the public, issuing edicts against persecution is another source of persecution.

India as an Example

Falih Rifki states that Nehru and his daughter Indira Gandhi are progressive, doing their best to transform India into a modern country. Indira Gandhi, finding the courage to fight everything that binds society to the traditions of the past, doesn't prohibit the slaughter of cows. She argues that anything that is not medically prohibited can be eaten.

In a piece of news published in a foreign newspaper, the writer says that the people protesting the slaughter of cows in India are fighting not against hunger but for hunger. Quoting the news, Falih Rifki notes that sociological realities cannot be changed by changing the law. Abolishing the caste system in New Delhi is not as easy as enacting a social security law in London. Such problems can only be solved by education.

Unfortunately, an educational system doesn't work properly in Turkey. The ideals described by the hodjas are not in harmony with the values of the constitution. Therefore, Falih Rifki argues that the religious educators should be taught in harmony with the constitution and that their duties should be limited to giving guidance on worship and preaching based on moral verses.

Against Bulent Ecevit

Falih Rifki tells what Bulent Ecevit says about him and then answers him. In a speech in Manisa, Ecevit says that the People's Republican Party followed an erroneous forest policy in the past, and Falih Rifki gives more value to the trees than the people, so he is not useful to the party, and that he is glad that the party uprooted him.

Falih Rifki gets angry at these words and states that he doesn't like to talk about himself, but expects someone who criticizes him to read the books and articles he has written first, that he is concerned about protecting the lands of Turkey from desertification in his every article, that he defends the forests, but never forgets the people. He specifies that Ecevit is not satisfied with Ataturk's era. He is a socialist and appreciates Russia. People like Ecevit caused him to withdraw from the party. Ataturk aimed to improve the peasants materially and morally, and for this reason, he abolished the tithe tax and dried up the main source of the budget. He could live only ten years after establishing a new order. So, if his goals regarding the villagers are yet to be realized, the responsible person here is Ismet İnönü, who was the prime minister until 1950.

He mentions an American writer who came to Turkey. Seeing that the Turkish villages were backward and wondering how they were before the republic, the writer captured a report written by an American team that had come for the Alishar excavation and went to the village mentioned in the report and then wrote that the village was still backward, but much further than the date the report was written. Moreover, he draws attention to the fact that when the Democrat Party was in power, forests were destroyed, and people were left to starve.

Aggrieved by the portrayal of Ataturk as a colonialist who values the forests but doesn't take the people into consideration, he reminds people of that he comes from a generation who saw the French and British armies and navies entering Istanbul, and was driven to despair because even the intellectuals were willing to turn the country into mandated territories. That's why Mustafa Kemal Ataturk is a hero for him and those like him. Those on the extreme right or left are only ideological perverts.

He examines those who sided with Ataturk in the first days of the parliament but later turned to the extreme right or left and recognizes Ataturk's fear that the party won't remain the same after his death. As one side allows the *Nurcus* to poison the people, the other side looks at Ataturk and his followers and accuses them of being bourgeois. Falih Rifki, on the other hand, references the notes from the diary of Mahmut Soydan, who was Mustafa Kemal's escort officer in those days, to show that the

victory was not easy. For these notes tell a victory which is won despite all financial and moral difficulties.

Georges Benjamin Clemenceau's Words

Declaring that the Treaty of Sèvres prepared the funeral ceremony for the Ottoman Empire, Falih Rifki quotes the words of Georges Benjamin Clemenceau, who chaired the conference. Clemenceau says that there have been many Turkish successes and disasters in history. Successes are consisted of bringing foreign societies under Turkish domination, as disasters are consisted of breaking these societies from Turkish domination. Expressing that it is not seen that the level of civilization and material welfare of a country don't decrease under Turkish rule, he argues that the Turks have not been able to show the capacity to nurture in peace what they have gained in war.

Hopeless Intellectuals

Falih Rifki mentions some intellectuals. Velid Ebuzyia is the owner of the newspaper, *Tasvirifkar*, which supports the national struggle. He is exiled to Malta for opposing the European occupying powers. Yunus Nadi goes to Ankara after Mustafa Kemal and publishes the newspaper *Yenigun*. He is also the founder of *Cumhuriyet* newspaper. Halide Edip is a nationalist Turkish woman writer. Necmettin Sadak is the professor of sociologist and Turkologist Ziya Gokalp. Ahmet Emin is a journalist and writer.

A document dated December 5, 1918, with the signatures of these people, is extracted from the U.S. archives. It is a petition to Woodrow Wilson. They request the USA to intervene in the internal affairs and seize the country's government for fifteen or twenty-five years under certain conditions.

Falih Rifki mentions this document to show that the only hope of even the intellectuals of that period is to be under the control of other states. He adds that even Ismet Pasha and Refet Pasha did not see a way out other than the American mandate, and that the left follows the path of these intellectuals.

The Conquest and Salvation of Istanbul

Falih Rifki says that Istanbul has two days to celebrate. Mehmet II is the city's conqueror, while Ataturk is its savior. Mehmet Vahiduddin surrenders Istanbul to the enemies by the Treaty of Sèvres. In other words, the name of both the taker and the giver is Mehmet. Falih Rifki resents the hostility towards Mustafa Kemal Ataturk on the day of the conquest of Istanbul and reminds people of the fact that Mustafa Kemal Ataturk is the one who saved Istanbul from being an internationally administered city.

Capitalism: The Regime of the Future

Falih Rifki quotes some research conducted by journalist Raymond Cartier, about the regime of the future. According to the research, the population of the United States, which was 75 million at the beginning of the century, is close to 200 million. Everyone lives in a better condition. Marxism was shaken by Henry Ford in January 1914. Ford drives the bosses crazy by raising wages at a time when the working hours are reduced to eight, but a few years later, he becomes one of the richest men in the world. In the USA, service, that is, labor, is expensive, and products are cheap. People buy shares from big companies. The regime of the future is capitalism. Thus capital circulates among the people. Based on these, Falih Rifki states that whatever is good for humanity has been found by the West. So, we should not leave the West's path.

Israel as an Example

Falih Rifki states that the Israeli people come from the Middle East and Africa, most of them are illiterate, but the minority in the administration has created a change in a generation with a qualified schooling. He says that there are many physicians, engineers, lawyers, architects, and officers in Turkey, but it is not easy to come across an intellectual.

He states that despite the conflict of parties in Israel, the army doesn't seize the administration and is under the command of civilians. He argues that two lessons should be learned from Israel. The first is to educate the society with a secular education system. The second is to examine Israel closely For Israel is able transform an old desert of the Ottoman Empire into a civilized country.

Superstitions

Mustafa III sends an emissary to King Fredrik of Prussia to ask him to recommend an augur to find a good day for battle and to facilitate the selection of a good commander. The king takes this request seriously and advises Mustafa III to read history and learn from old experiences, build a good army, keep the army as fit as in wartime, and not leave the treasury empty.

Selim III asks the sheik al-Islam to sleep for istikhara [a dream incubation technique to receive guidance for life affairs] to choose a grand vizier. The next day, the sheik al-Islam says he didn't have a dream. Later, Selim III has a dream about Hasan Pasha, so he gives his seal to him. But Hasan Pasha dies. This time, he has the names of all Rumelian viziers written on papers and draws lots. Falih Rifki underlines that Selim III, who attempted to modernize the army and opened medical schools, is the same person as this superstitious sultan.

The Law Is Not Enough

Former Afghan King Amanullah Khan visits Turkey and returns to his country with enthusiasm for reform. He immediately wants to remove the veil. Ataturk, who hears of this, thinks that he is naive. Indeed, the king is dethroned.

Falih Rifki tells a memory about Resit Pasha, stating that the laws are not sufficient in Muslim countries where people are not educated. After reading the Reform Edict, Resit Pasha tells the British ambassador who visits him that they have now equalized non-Muslims and Muslims. Thereupon, the ambassador rejoices that from now on, a Muslim woman can marry a Christian man, just as a Muslim man can marry a Christian woman. Pasha jumps up and says that this is not possible.

Falih Rifki states that thanks to civil law, the wife of Italy's ambassador to Vietnam is a Turkish woman, and Turkish men cannot marry more than one woman. But he adds that everyone in the assembly wants to please a bigot and when these laws are violated, cannot speak up not to lose the votes of peasants. Indeed, he reminds us that the assembly violated the non-Muslims's right to property while voting on the Wealth Tax in 1942 and that Christians are not allowed to have a share in the cooperative in which Ismet Inonu has a share.

Themes

Past Falih Rifki would like to draw attention to the importance of reforms by referring to the chronicles. Selim III, who is known for introducing reforms to modernize the army, hopes for help from istikhara. Mahmut II, who is known for his modernization efforts, takes refuge in powerful states when the army fails and asks for a fatwa from the sheikh in order to kill other Muslims in a war. Abdulhamid II, who is glorified by reactionaries, imprisons the grand vizier with no reason due to his paranoia. Falih Rifki learns these from the chroniclers, but sees occupied Istanbul himself. He spends his youth at a time when the country's most enlightened names are so desperate to write a petition to be under the control of a great state. He recounts all these to make people comprehend the value of the newly established republic.

The Importance of the Process Mustafa Kemal Ataturk carries out many reforms in a top-down manner. But until he gets to that point, he makes concessions to many reactionaries around him. He doesn't oppose the hodjas in the parliament who forbid the consumption of alcoholic beverages before the proclamation of the republic. He declares the republic when he feels he is at his strongest. He believes that some pre-conditions are necessary for the ideal of democracy. As long as his own authority is not challenged, he supports different parties and independent deputies in the parliament. Except the reforms, he allows MPs to discuss every subject. His ideal is popular sovereignty, but this is a goal he dreams of achieving in the long run. Falih Rifki draws attention to the process that Ataturk started and demands that Ataturk not be held responsible for that the goal has not yet been realized.

Education The biggest problem that Falih Rifki expresses is the lack of educational unity in the country. While painting, sculpture, and music lessons are promoted in public schools, they are condemned in religious institutions. Therefore, it is impossible to be a democratic society. The most inspiring example in this regard is Israel. He marvels at how much the state of Israel has transformed society in one generation. He is very impressed that the rabbis don't take any steps that might violate the civil code. He complains that even progressive politicians in Turkey act in fear of losing reactionary

voters. For this reason, he states that the democratization of uneducated people is not possible, and elections in such a society only serve reactionism.

Anti-Leftism Falih Rifki criticizes Bulent Ecevit and politicians who have moved to the left from Ataturk's line. He states that Russia was a country with an industrial and cultural accumulation before communism, but despite this, it decreased its productivity because of communism, and that if Turkey becomes socialist, it will become an oppressive Muslim country. He seeks the regime of the future in the USA and adopts capitalism as the ideal order. Thus, in this work, which he wrote during the Cold War, he also reveals his ideological stance.

Environmental Awareness Falih Rifki expresses his ideological conflict with Bulent Ecevit through their different attitudes towards forest policies. While Falih Rifki opposes the destruction of forests, Bulent Ecevit prioritizes people trying to establish settlements within the forests. Although Falih Rifki doesn't elaborate on this subject, he suggests that he has an environmental awareness that prioritizes nature.

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