

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
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# THE DIPLOMAT IN SPITE OF HIMSELF

YAKUP KADRI KARAOSMANOGLU

## People

Arthur Neville Chamberlain	Prime Minister of Great Britain
Arthur Seyss-Inquart	Austrian Nazi leader
Celal Uner	First Aide-de-Camp to the President
Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord	French statesman, diplomat
Dino Grandi	Italian statesman
Édouard Daladier	French statesman
Eduard von Steiger	Swiss statesman
Edvard Benesh	The second president of Czechoslovakia
Ernst Eisenlohr	German diplomat
Falih Rifki Atay	Turkish journalist, writer, parliamentarian
Franklin D. Roosevelt	American statesman
Franz von Papen	German diplomat
Haj Ali Razmara	Prime Minister of Iran
Hussein Ala	Prime Minister of Iran
Ismet Inonu	General and statesman
John Carter Vincent	American diplomat
Kamil Krofta	Czechoslovak historian and statesman
Karel Chapek	Czechoslovak author
King Zog	President of Albania
Klemens von Metternich	Austrian statesman, diplomat
Milan Hodza	Slovak journalist and politician
Milan Stojadinovic	Prime minister of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia
Mohammad Mossadegh	Prime Minister of Iran
Mohammad Reza Pahlavi	Shah of Iran, son of Reza Pahlavi
Refik Saydam	Turkish physician and politician
Reza Pahlavi	Shah of Iran
Rusen Esref Unaydin	Turkish journalist, writer, diplomat
Sukru Kaya	Turkish statesman
Tevfik Rustu Aras	Turkish physician, journalist, politician
Tomas Garrigue Masaryk	The first president of Czechoslovakia
Vasif Cinar	Turkish journalist, politician, diplomat
Winston Churchill	Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
Yakov Surits	USSR ambassador

## Synopsis

Yakup Kadri is appointed to Tirana as a diplomat in 1934 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk upon the distress caused by the articles published in his *Kadro* [Cadre] magazine. However, after King Zog's sister's betrothment with Abdulhamid's son, the minister of foreign affairs orders Yakup Kadri to leave Tirana for fear that the Ottoman Dynasty get stronger in Albania. Yakup Kadri's next stop is Prague. Here, he witnesses how the Nazi regime forms Czechoslovakia between 1935 and 1939, leading to the Second World War. He is appointed to The Hague in 1939. However, he can't stay there long because of the Nazi occupation and gets to Istanbul from Berlin in 1940. Between 1942 and 1949, he continues his duty in Switzerland that follows a policy of neutrality. In 1949, he is assigned as an ambassador to Tehran. Due to his deteriorating health, he is appointed to Bern as an envoy. That is the last stop of his journey in the world of diplomacy.

## Events

### *Kadro [Cadre]*

After returning from an international congress, Yakup Kadri visits Minister of Interior Sukru Kaya upon what Vasif Cinar told him a few days ago. Vasif Cinar told him that *Kadro* was the subject matter at Mustafa Kemal's table the previous night, and that people thought that its articles target the new regime. Mustafa Kemal asked Minister of Interior Sukru Kaya to intervene, but Sukru Kaya implied that Prime Minister Ismet Inonu was responsible for this. Then, Mustafa Kemal muttered about Ismet Inonu thinking the same as the writers of *Kadro*.

Yakup Kadri went through a similar situation two years ago. One morning, Falih Rifki Atay advised him to visit Mustafa Kemal during the day as an article published in *Kadro* was severely criticized at a meeting held the previous evening, and he might receive disciplinary action. Yakup Kadri followed his advice, but Chief Aide Celal Bey said that Mustafa Kemal was up late, so he was still asleep. Then, he went back to the house of his friend Rusen Esref, where his wife waited for him. Because he returned early, everyone thought that Mustafa Kemal had refused to see him. But after he explained the situation, they were relieved. After a while, they heard the noise of cars and motorcycles rolling along, and suddenly, Mustafa Kemal stood before them with a cheerful expression. When Yakup Kadri said he would shut down *Kadro*, which caused so much controversy, Mustafa Kemal objected to him, demanding that writers explain suspicious articles to him in person.

Thus, Yakup Kadri listened to Vasif Cinar with a smile on his face, but he visits Sukru Kaya with deep concern.

### *An Unexpected Assignment*

Sukru Kaya greets him in a hectic mood and suggests going to Ataturk Forest Farm and Zoo to have a beer and chat. Yakup Kadri does not feel up to drinking beer because he has just returned from a cure in Vichy due to having gallbladder surgery, but Sukru Kaya turns a deaf ear to his complaints. He talks nonstop along the way. When they finally arrive at the pub on the farm, he says he wants to talk to him about something, but first, he wants to know about his health. Yakup Kadri informs him about the latest state of his health, but at that moment, they hear cars and motorcycles arrive.

A little later, Mustafa Kemal asks Yakup Kadri what he is doing there. Yakup Kadri, thinking that Mustafa Kemal is not aware of his return from Europe, says he has just returned. Mustafa Kemal tells him that he does not mean that. He says he heard that he is appointed to the Tirana embassy. Yakup Kadri tries to make a joke of it, but Mustafa Kemal implicitly condemns Minister of Interior Sukru Kaya for not giving this news to Yakup Kadri in time. When Ismet Inonu arrives, Mustafa Kemal tells him that Yakup Kadri still does not know about his new position. When Yakup Kadri sees that Minister of Interior Sukru Kaya, Prime Minister Ismet Inonu, and Chief Aide Celal Bey are in distress, he gets angry. He cannot comprehend the real purpose of the setup. Since he knows that Mustafa Kemal is a shy person, he thinks that Mustafa Kemal is overwhelmed by the complaints he received because of his publication and is afraid to tell him openly that he should walk away. However, this time, he questions why he doesn't inform him of this decision through an intermediary. He is very uncomfortable with the idea of closing the magazine of his own free will and being punished by being sent to another place. Understanding the situation, Mustafa Kemal has his adopted daughter Ulku brought to soften the atmosphere, but despite Ulku, everyone is distracted and sad.

After a while, they all go to Cankaya together. In front of the mansion, Prime Minister Ismet Inonu gets out of his car by the garden gate, and then Minister of Interior Sukru Kaya and Yakup Kadri go up to him. Ismet Inonu tells Yakup Kadri that he sees him sad, but he shouldn't disobey Mustafa Kemal's order no matter what. Meanwhile, Minister Sukru Kaya says he did not hear of this appointment before. Yakup Kadri does not believe this and plans to resolve this issue when he catches Mustafa Kemal alone. However, when they enter the mansion, they see it is crowded inside. As Yakup Kadri intends to sit at the end of the dinner table, Mustafa Kemal tells him to sit between the Trabzon and the Kirsehir deputies.

When Yakup Kadri sits down, he sees Falih Rifki across from him, he wants to show him that he is in trouble, but Falih Rifki continues to smile at him. As Yakup Kadri finds out that Falih Rifki is unaware of the appointment, he is worried that this decision is a secret and then concludes that it is not official yet.

After Mustafa Kemal whispers something to Minister of Foreign Affairs Tefvik Rustu Aras, Tefvik Rustu Bey calls Yakup Kadri out and officially informs him that he is appointed an ambassador to Tirana.

When they return to the table, Mustafa Kemal asks the minister whether they have an agreement with Yakup Kadri, and the minister answers in the affirmative. Yakup Kadri can't fight back his feelings and intervenes, stating they don't yet. However, since he knows that Mustafa Kemal is not open to any criticism about party and state issues, he thinks that the issue is closed there. But as Mustafa Kemal friendly says that he sees hesitation in him, he expresses that his health has just started to improve, and he is worried that he will not be able to find the necessary health service in Tirana. Upon this, Mustafa Kemal replies that he can go to Italy in any health-related situation. As a second reason, Yakup Kadri states that he believes that he will not be able to do this job because he is not a professional. This time, Mustafa Kemal explains that none of them is a professional. After the war, many people told him that he was done and should step aside now, but he did not. He laughingly points to Foreign Minister Tefvik Rustu Aras and says he is a gynecologist.

This speech causes laughter, but Yakup Kadri senses that Mustafa Kemal feels regret, thinking about Tirana's life and climate conditions and his sensitive body. The next evening, Mustafa Kemal asks the foreign minister whether Yakup Kadri can be appointed to Vienna, but the foreign minister already reserved Vienna for a relative. Thus, Yakup Kadri begins to think that Mustafa Kemal made such a decision not to punish him but to end the controversy caused by *Kadro* without hurting his self-esteem. Even though it is a small magazine, *Kadro* discusses the People's Party's economic decisions, and the party members press on Yakup Kadri at every opportunity on the grounds that he does not have the right to publish on behalf of the party. For this reason, they even publish another magazine called *Ulku* meaning cause.

#### *About Ataturk*

Yakup Kadri states that Mustafa Kemal Ataturk is not someone taking decisions out of anger. He is always calm, patient, and cautious. He comforted the people around him even when the bandits and traitors surrounded Ankara during the days of the National Struggle. He never loses his composure. In the first parliament, some deputies ask for a law obliging that only people born within the borders of Turkey or who have lived in a region of Turkey for at least five years can be a candidate in the election in order to exclude Mustafa Kemal from politics. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who was born in Thessaloniki, and served as a soldier in different regions for years, gently defends himself in the parliament.

When the voices of the opponents of the reforms in the second assembly overwhelm the others, a meeting is held in the Cankaya Mansion one evening, and the names are reported to Ataturk to be purged from the party. After making a list of these names, Ataturk reads them one by one, laughs, and says that they are almost in the minority. Then he calls out his aide and whispers something to him. An hour later, two opponents show up. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk tells them that he wants to talk to them about the unrest in the parliament, but the opponents claim there is no unrest in the parliament. This speech is followed by many letters toward midnight, and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk informs those present at the meeting that the issue is resolved by itself, as the opponents decided to form another party.

#### *About Being a Diplomat*

Yakup Kadri is not used to taking or giving orders, as he has never been in government service except for a few years as a high school teacher. When the accountant notifies that if he doesn't start his job on the thirtieth, his salary will be cut off, he feels like someone who has no say over his future. From now on, he will not be able to criticize any application that does not make sense to him or dispute with the official when he pays sixty-five for a taxi fare recorded as seventy-five or object to being constantly accountable for everything.

As the civil servants return to their homes in the evening, he has to live in an official building, use things that do not belong to them, wait for the state to get the broken stuff repaired for months or years because he is a diplomat. After his work at the embassy is over, he can't want to sink into a chair and relax for a bit because he either has a visitor or has to attend an invitation, which is where diplomats show their skills. They have to praise every taste, even if it doesn't suit them. Yakup Kadri cites a meal at the Chinese Embassy as an example. A black soup is placed in front of him. As he takes his full spoon to his mouth, he asks what the soup is made of and almost drops the spoon when he learns that it is made of insects but continues to eat it.

He relates his encounter with many retired diplomats in the hot springs in Vichy, Carlsbad, and Evian to this lifestyle. However, he states that it is not only what they eat and drink that is responsible, but that they always have to live with an attitude that pleases everyone. A diplomat has to eat, praise the taste of the food and chat with everyone at the table. Moreover, he must know how to give vague answers to the questions as it is considered rude to act like someone who has a definite judgment on any matter. Besides, diplomats with their own opinions are not welcomed by the states they represent. In such cases, they are decommissioned or assigned to very distant places if not dismissed.

Yakup Kadri says that diplomats are people, who eat without getting hungry and talk without thinking, and do not know what it means to live according to one's personal beliefs and principles. They understand what a political event means after an official mouth explains it to them. He states that professional diplomats interpret all political events by the cliché analysis of diplomats before them, so they expect current political events to progress as the previous events did.

Although one of his friends, who is not a professional diplomat, advises him not to keep long reports so that people do not consider him arrogant, he can't help writing long ones because he does not like clichés. For this reason, he adds that diplomats who are not trained in the profession are always treated as half-brothers, and their reports are met with suspicion.

He states that over the years, he had to fade his unique style, change his way of thinking, and even learn to say "two times two can make four" instead of "two times two makes four." However, since he is not a professional diplomat, what he says is always interpreted as a fantasy or feeling. For example, when he returns from the Netherlands as a result of the Nazi attack, he comments that England will win the war. But only Prime Minister Ismet Inonu and Health Minister Refik Saydam take him seriously. A diplomat thinking the same as the others, opposes him saying his comment does not verify what the intelligence service told them.

### *The World of Diplomats*

Yakup Kadri believes that diplomats have extraordinary foresight until he begins to practice the profession. Metternich, who stopped the seemingly inevitable revolutions, and Talleyrand, who managed to survive politically, created such an impression on him. From the first moment he enters the embassy, he belittles himself, thinking about them, but the diplomatic world turns out to be a big disappointment for him. Although people think that the source of political events is diplomatic circles, diplomats learn everything from newspapers, radios, and occasionally from official sources.

Accordingly, Yakup Kadri receives an encrypted telegram during the Second World War. He excitedly enters his room and locks the door. While trying to understand the message with great curiosity, he extends his finger to turn off the radio. At that moment, he notices that the BBC presenter is giving the news written on the message in more detail. He judges that there is no such thing as a diplomatic secret and starts to laugh.

However, even if all newspapers report an event, a diplomat continues to act as if nothing has happened unless he obtains verification from official sources. For this reason, Yakup Kadri thinks that diplomacy is an anachronistic institution stuck in the habits of the previous century. According to him, the diplomat is unaware of the power of the masses; he does not care about public opinion; he only follows the official account.

While leaving a gathering, the French Ambassador defines the duty of diplomats as resolving conflicts between states by bargaining and reconciliation and not acting as agents of propaganda and polemic. Yakup Kadri stating that no person could ask him how Russia that depends solely on polemic and propaganda, defeated them in diplomacy, points out that a diplomat has no role in any negotiation. As another example, he points to Daladier, the prime minister of France at the beginning of the Second World War. Daladier submits to Hitler's dictatorship to prevent war and expects people to attack him, but people welcome him with joy because they do not want war. Yakup Kadri ascribes Daladier's ignorance of the public's mood to the fact that he does not refer to any source other than official files to follow what is happening.

Throughout his life as a diplomat, he does not encounter a view different from this. During his years in Prague, he doesn't meet a single diplomat who has read any of the works of Dr. Krofta, one of Czechoslovakia's greatest historians, or who has an idea of the literary importance of Karel Chapek.

Yakup Kadri states that because of these reasons, the profession is a great disappointment for him, and he spent twenty years of his life among anachronistic people. Moreover, the attitude of the Westerners, who describe the new government in Ankara as "a parliament in the middle of the desert," creates another reason for his professional reluctance. Although he attributes it to the hostility of the Europeans toward the Turks at first, he determines in time that the diplomats act with inherited feelings and convictions. Accordingly, for them, Turkey is doomed to fail no matter what it does, while any Christian European country is never erased under any circumstance from the world map. That's why Yakup Kadri says no diplomat could predict that Germany would attack Czechoslovakia and that Czechoslovakia would surrender without fighting. After everything happened, they just asked, "How could it be possible?"

### *First Days in Tirana*

Due to its natural conditions and continuous uprisings, Albania seems to be an uninhabitable place for many people. Moreover, its connotation for Yakup Kadri is a dagger in the back or a bullet stab in the neck. As a matter of fact, in the Balkan Wars, Commander Ali Rıza Pasha was killed unexpectedly at night in the mansion of an Albanian chief. Yakup Kadri expects to have his first meeting with King Zog in this mansion, which has been converted into a palace because King Zog is the person who killed and replaced the man who committed this murder.

When Yakup Kadri arrives in Tirana, he does not know only two of those who welcome him; a Turkish trader and the chief of protocol. When they arrive at the embassy building, the house that the previous ambassador Rusen Esref had furnished looks like a castle to Yakup Kadri. He and his spouse feel like newlyweds because everyone's attention is on them.

However, Yakup Kadri cannot take office as King Zog's mother passed away, and he does not accept anyone during the mourning period. The mourning period, which is forty days, is reduced to twenty days for Yakup Kadri's sake. During these twenty days, he cannot find anything else to do but go for a walk with his wife. In the villages they pass through, they chat with people speaking Turkish. One day, while walking around Elbasan, a villager sees the small Turkish flag waving by the side of the car, comes up to them shouting "Ottoman," then kisses the flag and asks the driver if he is the new pasha who is in Tirana.

Yakup Kadri states that he is happy to have the opportunity to get to know the public, unofficial Albania, before taking office because the people who defended Abdulhamid's tyrannical government in Istanbul carried the same governmental system here with them and now represents official Albania. But he adds that these people always treat him kindly.

### *King Zog*

King Zog accepts Yakup Kadri with a simple ceremony. But it is complicated enough for Yakup Kadri to feel like an actor in an operetta. King Zog greets him with a clear Turkish. Yakup Kadri later learns that the king is one of his readers. However, he finds him very flawed like all other Eastern rulers as he came to power through a bloody path, and he relies on a system similar to that of Abdulhamid.

### *The Impact of the Italians*

While Yakup Kadri and his wife are talking about the stolen oranges from the orange grove in their garden, their servant Suleiman hears them. Forgetting to use the negative particle, he says, "I swear, I did steal it." Yakup Kadri states that this ethical insight no longer exists as one ascends to the upper level.

One day, a deputy, one of the former defenders of Abdulhamid, comes to visit him and openly tells him that no one among them is not for sale and that they are now serving the Italians. He even says that an Italian young man, who gave a speech at the opening of Mussolini Avenue in Tirana, is the head of the fascists there. And he distributes grants and creates new sources of trade for the people around him.

Yakup Kadri reports that many people who were educated in Ottoman schools and worked as civil servants in Ottoman institutions take Italian surnames in Albania. One of them with the surname Alijoti claims that he is related to the Italian Alioto. But he is actually a former Ottoman governor named Ali Feyzi.

### *Albanian Statesmen*

Many of these people claim that all the important statesmen in the Ottoman Empire are originally Albanian. At a dinner in honor of Yakup Kadri and his wife, a minister tells Yakup Kadri's wife that they probably find Albania very backward, but the reason for this is the Ottomans, who did not invest enough in these lands. Then, Yakup Kadri's wife responds that if the most important statesmen of the Ottoman Empire are originally Albanian, as they say, then the fault lies with these statesmen who did not invest in their own country.

### *Visits and Banquets*

Yakup Kadri visits the ambassadors of other countries with his wife as per the protocol. However, since these visits are supposed to be performed in Tirana with long jackets, striped trousers, and a top hat, he starts to feel ashamed whenever he finds himself before one of the embassies. But this feeling quickly fades away as the hosts officially welcome them. He interprets this dress requirement as the desire of Albania, which is a small country, to demonstrate its level of civility to the ambassadors of other big countries.

After the visits, banquets await him. In time, he learns which ambassador is to be invited for lunch and which for dinner as some find it simple to be hosted at lunch, while others do not like dinner because they want to go to bed early. According to the protocol, it is clear who is supposed to sit where, but there are still those not satisfied with their place. As it is the first stop of Yakup Kadri's professional journey, he encounters such troubles mostly in Tirana.

### *Mussolini*

Mussolini's "conquest" of Ethiopia destroys the last vestiges of Italian hostility in Albania, and according to Yakup Kadri, also reveals the impotence of Western diplomacy. The sanctions that countries take against Italy become dysfunctional. Great Britain, taking the lead in applying these sanctions, signs the Gentlemen's Agreement with Mussolini. Yakup Kadri says that with this agreement, Great Britain loses its prestige all over the world, and Albanians start to make fun of the British, who accuse them of being Italian servants.

### *Being a Diplomat or a Governor?*

While the Western states are busy with the mess caused by Mussolini in Ethiopia, King Zog embarks on a "cleansing" at home against the dissidents. He kills some and puts others in prison. Among those arrested are Kemal of Berat, whom Yakup Kadri knows from Istanbul, and Nurettin Vlora, the son of a former grand vizier Ferit Pasha.

When Nurettin Vlora is arrested, his brother Riyaz objects to the procedure, and then two brothers are put in cells side by side. At midnight, Nurettin breaks the jug on his bedside and cuts his wrists with pieces of glass. Riyaz hears the noises and thinks that his brother is killed and then has the guards come there by shouting. In doing so, he saves his brother's life. When this dramatic event is heard of, King Zog is forced to commute the death sentence to 101 years in prison.

The embassy is frequented by the relatives of these prisoners, most of whom are connected to Turkey. Yakup Kadri feels like a governor rather than a diplomat, as he receives petitions about the unjustly seized fields or the appointment of a cleaner to an office since his first day on duty. In this way, he builds up the courage to intervene and invites Abdurrahman Krosi, once a tulip to King Zog, to the embassy as he knows his influence on the king. This illiterate man speaks a little Turkish as he spent time in Istanbul during King Zog's student years. Yakup Kadri tells him that it is more appropriate to deport all prisoners who may be used against the king by Western countries in the future. Twenty days after this meeting, a general amnesty is declared.

### *Leaving Tirana*

When King Zog wants to marry one of his sisters off to one of Abdulhamid's sons, Foreign Minister Rustu Aras, thinking that the Ottoman Dynasty's re-strength in the Balkans may harm the Balkan Pact, sends a notification to the embassies of the Balkan countries in Ankara. Thereupon, the ambassadors of Yugoslavia, Romania, and Greece in Tirana are ordered not to be present at the wedding for some diplomatic reason. Yakup Kadri says that the ambassadors who want to participate in such an event to

show themselves with their wives are disappointed. For, whether they go against the order and go to the wedding or turn down the king's invitation, they will create a diplomatic crisis. Yakup Kadri, on the other hand, leaves Tirana without any concern as he is kindly informed by the king that he is not invited to the wedding. King Zog then demands that all envoys who do not attend the wedding be withdrawn.

### *The Atmosphere in Prague*

When Yakup Kadri arrives in Prague in 1935, he feels that the Little Entente, the pact between Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia, is going to break down. The Yugoslav ambassador in Prague tells Yakup Kadri that their ally Czechoslovakia has never been interested in their economic problems, but thanks to Hitler, the export rates have increased, and people are worried about Hitler for nothing.

Benesh, the new head of state, also gives speeches at every opportunity that the bond with their allies is getting stronger day by day. When Yakup Kadri visits him to deliver a thank you letter from the foreign minister for a gift of Benesh, Benesh tells him that in case of attack, France and Russia protect them. Moreover, Yugoslavia and Romania are bound to them by the Little Entente and to Turkey by the Balkan Pact.

Yakup Kadri cannot understand why Benesh is telling him these things on a Saturday visit. Listening to him, he realizes that the man before him has little to do with the dignified and cautious legal scholar he envisioned when he took office. However, after a while, when Hitler launches a psychological war against Czechoslovakia, doubts about a future war begin to prey on everyone's minds; people utter that Hitler may attack Austria and then the Sudetenland.

But diplomats do not believe that such an attack is possible because the Sudeten Germans have many privileges. For example, in Prague are Czech and German operas, Czech and German hospitals, and Czech and German universities, whose employees are determined by the Czech and German governments. The Germans continue their lives without learning Czech, and the Germans in the Sudeten region freely make Nazi propaganda among themselves. Therefore, the only thing that the Sudeten Germans can ask for is their police, namely, independence.

### *Benesh*

While Benesh is just a foreign minister, his photographs are hung on almost every street, and the name Benesh is added to the street names as an appendix. State officials do not act without him, and social and intellectual life appeals to his ideas. Thus, according to diplomats, the absence of Masaryk causes the crisis with the Sudeten Germans to flare up even more. Because, unlike Benesh, he is a clear-sighted man and does not follow a narrow-minded nationalism.

One of the aristocrats from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, whom Yakup Kadri speaks, tells him that he is very sorry since his privileges no longer exist, but when he visited Masaryk and complained that it was difficult to learn Czech, Masaryk replied that everyone in the country understands German, so there is no need to learn Czech.

While Masaryk manages to stay out of parties, Benesh's voice has a quarrelsome tone even when talking about friendly things. He lives and acts as a sectarian. Therefore, he favors the people around him in every aspect of life, and the fact that Jews are among those favored offends some devout Christians. When an old priest in Slovakia starts to organize a movement against Benesh, Benesh brings Slovak origin Milan Hodza to head the government. As one of the founders of Europe after the First World War, he is more interested in foreign policy.

According to Yakup Kadri, Benesh is a person of the nineteenth century. Despite his dynamic personality, he believes that everything is to be settled via negotiation, that the agreements signed are valid forever, and can set everything right. That's why they call him "pactoman," denoting his fondness for pacts.

### *Benesh and Hitlerians*

Although Hitler is crazy, he understands the situation in Czechoslovakia better than most, thanks to his Fifth Column activities. Hitler supporters in Prague argue that because Czechs are Slavs, they are in

danger of falling into the Pan-Slavism movement and spreading Russian communism to Europe, so the division of Czechoslovakia is in favor of Western Europe. The commander of the Czech army is one of the hundreds of soldiers who voluntarily surrendered to the Russians in the First World War. They are also sure that the Russian ambassadors are those whose opinions the Czechs care most. For them, Czechoslovakia is no different than a dagger stuck in the heart of Central Europe, the handle of which is in Moscow's hand.

Against all this, Benesh often visits his allies or shows off his power by hosting them in his country. This time, however, Hitler attacks him at every opportunity. To get out of this situation, Benesh negotiates with the German minority acting as representatives of a foreign government. But the Germans go so far as to argue that Prague belongs to them too.

#### *At Masaryk's Funeral*

After the death of Masaryk, the founder of Czechoslovakia, in 1937, a gloomy air covers Prague. While the masses of people cry on the streets during the ceremony, the people in the funeral procession are in a different mood. While Yakup Kadri is walking between Surits, the Soviet Union's Ambassador to Paris, and Stojadinovic, the Prime Minister of Yugoslavia, Surits constantly pokes and asks him to introduce him to Stojadinovic. Yakup Kadri finally can't stand it and whispers into Stojadinovic's ear that he wants to introduce Surits to him. In return, Surits introduces Yakup Kadri to French Prime Minister Léon Blum and later has a conversation with him about Turkey during the three-hour march of the funeral procession.

#### *Benesh's Invitation*

After the annexation of Austria by Germany in 1938, Benesh gives a banquet. Here, Yakup Kadri notices an expression on the faces of the ambassadors of Poland and Hungary, waiting for what happened to Austria to happen to the Czechs as well. They think that the Czechs have stolen the rich coal mines of Poland and the fertile lands of Hungary.

#### *The Jews*

Yakup Kadri says that it is enough to look at the Jews stamped with the "J," who know better than anyone what Hitler could do to understand the extent of the disaster approaching Czechoslovakia. They all say only one thing: "Hitler will come here too." The Czech government tries to deport Jews to other countries to prevent this fear from spreading to others. However, many countries close their doors to Jews because they are afraid of Hitler, and it is almost impossible to go to countries with open doors.

#### *Visit of an English Lord*

A glimmer of hope lights up in Prague when word spreads that British Prime Minister Chamberlain sent one of his friends, a lord, to Czechoslovakia to mediate between the Germans and Czechs. However, the lord in question never appears. People find various reasons for his mysterious stance. Then, it is understood that the lord is there to observe the Sudetenland crisis closely.

Yakup Kadri underlines the absurdity of a visit made for this purpose, stating that the British intelligence has enough information on this issue. The lord spends three weeks in a German's castle, fishing from the river passing in front of the castle, and returns to his country silently. When British journalists ask why he went to Czechoslovakia on his return, he answers that there is nothing left to do.

#### *Declaration of Mobilization and Chamberlain*

One evening in September 1938, while Yakup Kadri is sitting on the terrace of the Ambassadeur Hotel, mobilization is declared through the loudspeaker. Yakup Kadri and the Brazilian ambassador sitting next to him come eye to eye and then look at people's faces to understand the impact of the news. A woman's sobs break the silence after a while. Half an hour later, while Yakup Kadri and the Brazilian ambassador are searching for their car in the dark, they see the Polish Embassy's chief clerk. The chief clerk cynically says that what is going on is a comedy and that those who want to play war games should be left alone.



The British and French ambassadors in Prague advise Benesh at night to leave the Sudeten region to Germany and flee the country. The next day the news spread that Chamberlain received assurance from Hitler for the safety of Czechoslovakia beyond the Sudetenland. No newspaper other than *Times* embraces this mission undertaken by Chamberlain. Yakup Kadri, emphasizing that *Times* is the representative of high business circles, comments that Chamberlain received the authority to undertake such a mission from a group of people who put their interests above all else. And he also adds that he learned from former British Minister Duff Cooper's *Old Men Forget* when he was penning his memoir in 1954 that Chamberlain had attended this meeting without informing his cabinet.

It is also written in Cooper's memoir that Chamberlain acted against the British foreign minister to sign the Gentlemen's Agreement with Italy, ignoring the sanctions against Mussolini, which England had supported. Accordingly, one of the agents of Italian Ambassador Grandi and Chamberlain's one clerk meet in a taxi every night to exchange information. Also, Roosevelt sent a letter to Chamberlain proposing to hold a conference in Washington to prevent further barbarism in Ethiopia. However, as Chamberlain is about to sign an Anglo-Italian friendship treaty, he responds that he takes care of the dictators in Europe himself, so there is no need for Roosevelt to get involved.

#### *After Benesh*

After Benesh leaves the country, the public protests whenever they can. The French Embassy also gets its share of these protests, as people think that France has left them alone. A car leaving the embassy is attacked in a matter of minutes. One evening, when something like this is about to happen to Yakup Kadri's car, he tells people that he is from Turkey, and then the attackers suddenly calm down.

However, it is generally believed that Hitler is satisfied with obtaining the Sudetenland, and General Syrový, who is considered a national public hero, becomes prime minister. Foreign Minister Tevfik Rustu Aras, who is in the League of Nations at that time, calls Yakup Kadri and asks if this situation will harm the peace. After this call, Yakup Kadri concludes that the League of Nations is a dysfunctional organization, incapable of predicting the events and determining a strategy accordingly.

While the third president Hacha is living a quiet life like historical objects in the palace left by Benesh, diplomats see the representatives of the state much less. The biggest concern of those who have the means is to settle their children in France, England, Switzerland and transfer their savings to London and New York banks. Yakup Kadri expresses that in Prague, he saw how moral values collapsed when people despaired about their future.

#### *An Opera and its Beyond*

Now Hitler is the representative of all "oppressed" people like the Sudeten Germans. One evening, diplomats are invited to an opera by the state. But no one greets them except the widow of the general manager of Skoda factories. In the opera, all actors dressed as predators surround an old man. When the panther asks the old man how he likes to be eaten, the man faints. Then the hyena gives an injection to wake him up because they are all determined to eat their prey alive.

Yakup Kadri comments that the old man in this play is President Hacha, as the predators are Hitler and his companions. Indeed, the following morning, the Czechs surrender their country to Hitler without fighting. He cannot believe how quickly people get used to the new order. The country's left-hand traffic inherited from the Austrian Empire starts to flow from the right in two or three hours. When he asks his wife, who took a drive in the morning, about the condition of the bazaar, she explains that in the square, a group of people, most of them women, sing their national anthem for the last time.

A few days later, the embassy's ambassador whispers to him that the praised German army is not stronger than the Czech army at all, their equipment is half-broken, and that the Czech soldiers are regretful that they surrendered the country without a fight.

#### *The Hague*

After Yakup Kadri is appointed as ambassador to The Hague at the beginning of the Second World War, he sets off with his wife by train. Passing through Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, they see no trace of the war. But the streets of Paris are quiet. He thinks that the Parisians are enraged because they

entered the war to protect Poland, which supported Hitler. After a few days in Paris, they move on to The Hague.

Yakup Kadri sees neither rushing nor hasty people in The Hague. Thus he concludes that colonialism has resolved the livelihood issues, and the kingdom is organized as a simple and democratic country. People regulate their lives accordingly. However, he states that Nazism does not cause any reaction in the hearts of these democrat and liberal people. He even angers the foreign minister by telling him that neutrality is a state of mind, not a policy for them.

However, in aristocratic circles, some young people argue that Hitler protects Europe against two great dangers: the Jews and communists, while others despise the intimidating British navy and speak against England, according to Yakup Kadri, out of jealousy. Yakup Kadri attributes this to their contempt for arrogant Great Britain because the Netherlands is the first industrial center of Europe as Dutch ships opened trade routes in the seas, pioneered colonialism, and taught banking to other countries. As the so-called neutral Netherlands repeatedly sends ultimatums to London only when the British torpedoes search its merchant ships, Yakup Kadri believes that utilitarianism is the core of European morality, and it culminates in the Dutch identity.

#### *About the Netherlands*

There are three images related to the Netherlands that Yakup Kadri has had in his mind since his childhood; Queen Wilhelmina's youth photos, the diamond ring that his mother used to call the Dutch stone, and Dutch cheese resembling a red painted ball. In the Netherlands, he sees that the queen is old now and that the cheese is yellow but formed into a ball and covered in red wax when imported. Only diamonds are the same, bright like stars.

However, these are not the only things in his mind about the Netherlands. He knows that most of the German and French philosophers' books that he read were published in Amsterdam, Haarlem, and Leiden. Spinoza lived in The Hague, Erasmus in Amsterdam. Descartes and Voltaire escaped from the pressure of the church and sought refuge in the Netherlands. Thus, he believes that the country is the center of freedom of conscience and thought. But when he arrives, he is disappointed to see Catholics, Protestants, Lutherans, and Anglicans bickering in parliament.

Another thing that surprises him is that everyone rides a bike. He can't believe it when he sees a man in a frock coat and a priest riding a bicycle while reading a book. He sees tandem bicycles for the first time in the Netherlands.

#### *The Dutch Nobility*

Yakup Kadri finds the isolated life of the noble families intriguing. Most of these families do not attend any invitations, as they eat dinner at the latest at half-past six and go to sleep at nine o'clock. For this reason, the protocol directorate delivers a book containing the names of those families who are open to invitations in the evening to the diplomats. Yakup Kadri states that these people are either cosmopolitan or nouveau-riche.

However, aristocrats living in quarantine rules break these rules for people who have the titles of nobility like themselves. An Ottoman ambassador who had served in The Hague forty years ago joined the Dutch aristocrats because his father was a pasha and his wife was a sultan. Similarly, a chief clerk working at the embassy, who came from a noble Ottoman family, was welcomed by the aristocrats, too. Yakup Kadri hears of them after becoming a member of noble families' club, where whenever Turks come up, people praise these two Ottoman men.

#### *The Netherlands during the War*

The Dutch continue their tea and dinner parties, thinking that the war will not affect them, and Yakup Kadri and his wife keep up with this, throw parties. However, at these parties, Yakup Kadri's mind is busy with the upper floor of the house, as the roof leaks and the wallpapers come off. He cannot ask for a repair allowance from the state. He also feels uneasy, thinking that the Germans may unexpectedly attack here, just as they did in Prague.

Gottfried Aschmann is appointed as an ambassador as German Ambassador Julius von Zech-Burkersroda, is thought to be mild-mannered. Aschmann settles in the Czech Embassy building.

Yakup Kadri knows him from the days he was an undersecretary at the German Embassy in Ankara. When he visits him in the Czech Embassy, he sees that the building is more crowded with German officials than the original German Embassy. But more importantly, Aschmann is more secretive than before. It is no longer possible to chat with him.

These days, Hitler is silent, unlike what he normally does. However, the radio constantly calls for surrender in English and French. The Dutch are also told that they are actually of the same race as the Germans. A map of the Netherlands and all the countries of Northern Europe represented as provinces of Germany circulates among people, but the Dutch make fun of it.

As children play hide-and-seek in shelters, seagulls land on cannonballs on bridges, and young people sunbathe among shelters on the beaches, the protection measures taken by the Dutch state begin to seem unnecessary day by day. Yakup Kadri gradually gets rid of his worries and explores the places near the German border with the Norwegian ambassador. One day, they visit the wife of Baron Harrinxmann, who used to work in Ankara and was an ambassador in Brussels at that time, in his mansion. This mansion reminds Yakup Kadri of the Netherlands of the sixteenth century, which he saw in paintings. When he meets a Jewish antique dealer in another village, whose three-story house is full of historical items, he is impressed by the fact that he still lives there, and concludes that the Netherlands is safe. The last thing to renew this sense of security is the transformation of the big zoo across from the embassy into an amusement park.

#### *A Delegation from Turkey*

A two-person delegation comes from Turkey to sign a trade agreement with the Netherlands. One is Yakup Kadri's old friend Ismet Akkoyunlu, and the other is Cemil Conk from the Ministry of Commerce. When Commercial Attaché Melih Gunel joins them, things look up, and Yakup Kadri's worries about the future war gradually disappear.

#### *The Attack Begins*

One night, Yakup Kadri's wife wakes him up, telling him the German attacks have started. Yakup Kadri cannot believe it, considering that seven or eight hours ago, the wives of the Greek and Italian ambassadors and his wife played bridge with the queen's royal lady-in-waiting. Twenty minutes after returning home, the flower sent by the lady-in-waiting is still in the vase across from the bed. He doesn't want to believe that the lady-in-waiting hid it, although she knew there would be such an attack. When his wife calls out to him, he stands by a window and sees the planes descending a little in the sky and rising again after throwing some papers. And when he turns his eyes down, he sees people watch the planes calmly in their nightgowns. Upon this calmness, he thinks that this could not be an attack. At the moment, one of the planes burns down, and he looks at the street again and sees none. However, at half-past seven, everyone goes on with their lives as if nothing had happened. Yakup Kadri and his wife cannot believe this nonchalance.

As a precaution, they hang a Turkish flag on their door. Since there is no shelter in the embassy, they spend time standing on the stony ground at the end of the stairs leading down to the kitchen and office. They put up the Turkish delegation staying in hotels and hostels. After a while, Yakup Kadri's wife invites the Greek ambassador and his wife, too. The Greek ambassador's wife is pleased by this invitation as she is scared by a bomb that fell near the embassy.

#### *With the Greek Ambassador*

Yakup Kadri and the Greek ambassador go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together to find out what is going on. There, they learn that Germany has requested an urgent meeting with the Netherlands at six in the morning to declare that they want to occupy their airspace but do not intend to harm their sovereignty. While leaving there, the Greek ambassador teases themselves for not having a photograph demonstrating how Greek and Turkish ambassadors resist the German bombings.

#### *Those Who Stay and Those Who Leave*

Since Yakup Kadri can't go anywhere without the government's permission, he arranges a car for the Turkish delegation, consisting of Cemil Conk and Ismet Akkoyunlu. However, they can't continue beyond Belgium and have to turn back.

On the second day of the airstrike, diplomats hold a meeting at the Swiss Embassy, but Yakup Kadri is demoralized as the French, Belgian and British ambassadors are not present. The Romanian ambassador tells him that they had fled and asks, "What are we gonna do?" Except for them, all ambassadors represent neutral states, and two of them cannot get any information from Bucharest and Ankara.

When Yakup Kadri returns home, he makes up his mind to reach Ankara through the London Ambassador Tefik Rustu Aras. He calls and tells him that he wants to be informed if he can leave the Netherlands or not when the queen leaves the country. The next day, he learns that Queen Wilhelmina has been transferred to London at midnight. Afterward, most of the significant state representatives of the Netherlands go to England.

### *Two Dangerous Events*

Cemil Conk takes a stroll during the day because he is bored at home. One day, when he speaks German in a store, the store's owner thinks that he is German and tries to lynch him by screaming that he has caught a German agent. Cemil Conk saves himself by showing people his Turkish passport.

When Yakup Kadri can't get any news from London, he decides to go to the British Embassy to reach Tefik Rustu again through them. Since Cemil Conk does not want to leave him alone, they go together. Cemil Conk waits for him in the car in front of the embassy as Yakup Kadri goes inside. He reminds the ambassador that Turkey is an ally of England and tells that London is the only place he can go. Then, he asks him whether they can join him if he has to return to England. And he asks for help to contact London at that moment. He also requests information about the latest situation of the war.

The British ambassador says that everything depends on the military and takes him to the military attaché's room. The military attaché is talking feverishly to someone on the phone. He asks them to wait with his hand. When the phone call is over, the ambassador explains the situation to him. The military attaché takes Yakup Kadri to an empty room and explains the latest situation of the war on the map of Europe hanging on the wall. A moment later, when the phone rings, he returns to the phone again. Yakup Kadri is left alone in the room. Half an hour later, a naval officer enters with a whiskey bottle and two glasses. After filling glasses and telling how much he loves Istanbul and the Bosphorus, he confidently says that the Germans will win on land but lose at sea.

When Yakup Kadri looks at his watch, he remembers that Cemil Conk is in the car and immediately gets out. But he finds neither the car nor Cemil Conk. After investigating, the naval officer learns that the car and Cemil Conk are in the underground garage of the embassy. Yakup Kadri asks Cemil Conk what happened and then finds out that a few minutes after he entered the embassy, a conflict erupted, and the car was taken to the garage by the embassy's doorman.

### *Luftwaffe*

Yakup Kadri tells that the young people in Germany's air force are German orphans who survived the First World War with the support of the Dutch, speak Dutch as their mother tongue, know all parts of the Netherlands very well, but that Hitler erased all traces of these good deeds and confiscated their souls. One of them, dressed as a Dutch officer during the changing of the guard, fraudulently seizes an air headquarters in the vicinity of Rotterdam without encountering any defense.

After this incident, a bomb hits the maternity home just ahead of the Turkish Embassy, killing women and babies. When the bomb explodes, Yakup Kadri is in front of the embassy gate with the wife of Turkish commercial adviser Melih Gunel. They immediately enter due to the heatwave. A moment later, another louder explosion is heard shaking the embassy building. As the windows of the Argentine and Brazilian embassy buildings explode with this sound, the ambassadors take refuge in the Nunciature with their families.

Immediately after this, the British Ambassador calls Yakup Kadri and informs him that he will leave for London in fifteen minutes and that he can join him if he wishes. Yakup Kadri says goodbye to him on the phone, saying that he cannot get ready in fifteen minutes.

### *Mrs. Polihroniadis*

When Greek ambassador Spiridon Polihroniadis and his wife go to their own house from time to time, Madam Polihroniadis calls Yakup Kadri's wife and fills her in about what is going on. Yakup Kadri never forgets one of the events she shares. One day, when they go to their house, Mrs. Polihroniadis fills the tub to take a bath. Just as she is about to get into the tub, a bomb explodes, and she goes downstairs naked in fear. Meanwhile, Greek sailors injured in the Rotterdam attack are waiting at the entrance and are shocked to see her naked. While all this is happening downstairs, Ambassador Polihroniadis is bathing himself in the bathtub left by his wife.

### *U.S. Embassy*

Hundreds of French, British, Belgian, Norwegian, and Canadian citizens seek help from the U.S. Embassy, as it protects the citizens of the five warring countries in addition to the Americans. Ambassador Gordon cannot persuade help-seekers that even if he delivers visas to them, they can't go anywhere and that there is no guarantee that they can save their lives even if they secure their goods. He also strongly criticizes the actions of the Dutch government, which fled without informing anyone.

### *News of Surrender*

On the sixth day of the German invasion, the Netherlands surrenders at the request of Queen Wilhelmina. As soon as the news arrives, they start to burn all documents of the Turkish embassy in the fireplace, as they are not sure what to do with the Nazis, who do not follow any rules. However, as one of the previous ambassadors had the chimney sealed off, a fire breaks out. After they barely put out the fire, they burn all the papers in the heating boiler.

### *Wehrmacht*

The ground forces do not misbehave with people until they leave the administration to the SS. When people whistle at them or sing their national anthem as they pass German-occupied institutions, the soldiers ignore them.

Hotel des Indes, where the employees of the German Embassy are detained, is converted into a headquarters after the surrender. One day, Yakup Kadri witnesses a young Dutchman cursing at the German soldiers standing at the hotel door, but the soldiers don't care.

But the SS is different. Arthur Seyss-Inquart arrives at the Netherlands with a staff capable of taking care of all state affairs and gives a long speech at a meeting where diplomats are also invited. At the meeting, the listeners try to convey their discomfort with coughs, but he doesn't care and continues to speak.

### *The Way of the Diplomats*

Diplomats meet at the Romanian embassy to decide what they can do without resorting to the Germans and harming their diplomatic honor. The meeting heats up when a South American envoy proposes writing a memorandum. Two days later, another meeting is held at another embassy, and it is more aggressive than the other. Finally, at the third meeting, it is decided that each diplomat should write a letter to their embassy in Berlin. Since they are to send the letters by German post, they cannot be sure whether they will be delivered or not. As a matter of fact, Yakup Kadri can't receive a reply to his letter from the Berlin Embassy.

### *Aschmann*

One day, Aschmann visits Yakup Kadri, and Yakup Kadri thinks that he has some news from Berlin. However, Aschmann wants to say goodbye. He asks Yakup Kadri if there is anything he can do for him in Berlin, but Yakup Kadri doesn't ask for any help because of his anger toward the Nazis.

### *After the Surrender*

The surrender of the Netherlands does not bring peace to the country. This time, British air forces strike at strategic points. When Churchill replaces Chamberlain, the British military power increases even more. Yakup Kadri follows everything from the BBC announcers, whom he likens to sports reporters broadcasting a football match live.

## *Berlin*

Although Yakup Kadri and his wife go to Berlin from the Netherlands with their attendants, they enter the country with the anxiety of a refugee. Berlin Ambassador Husrev Gereede arranges a stylish hotel to get them out of this mood and takes them to an entertainment venue in the evening. But neither Yakup Kadri nor his wife can cheer up. They spend the night in distress. In fact, according to Yakup Kadri, nobody takes pleasure from anything just like them.

During his ten days in Berlin, he observes that the Germans are not interested in any event held to celebrate the victories at the front. All buildings are decorated with flags, church bells ring every hour, youth processions roam the streets singing marches, but Yakup Kadri sees that all these cause people to sulk.

One day, when he asks his friend Ernst Eisenlohr, the former ambassador of Germany to Prague, the reason for this, Eisenlohr smiles and says that the Germans have always been like this, that they don't like frenzy. But Yakup Kadri continues to put it to him and deduces from Eisenlohr's words that the Germans are disappointed because England, which they expected to demand peace after the fall of France, continues to fight. At the end of their conversation, Eisenlohr states that they plan to win the war by psychologically wearing out the self-indulgent British. Then Yakup Kadri warns him that they underestimate the strength of the British and questions how long Germany can withstand the food shortage during this time. When Eisenlohr and his wife visit Yakup Kadri in Switzerland in 1952, he finds Eisenlohr skinnier and regrets being justified by history.

## *Return to Turkey*

On the way back to Turkey on the train, he watches the captives in Germany, passing through Czechoslovakia, watches half-naked people crushing stones, carrying loads, and digging soil.

Everyone in Istanbul finds him and his wife too optimistic, as all of them are sure of the disastrous results of being allied with England and France. Therefore, when Yakup Kadri says that England will win and America will enter the war, only President Ismet Inonu and Prime Minister Refik Saydam take him seriously. However, in time, foreign policy shifts toward neutrality, and as some names in the press put forward the idea that Britain can stand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is disturbed by this statement.

## *Franz von Papen*

Franz von Papen carries messages of friendship from Hitler to President Ismet Inonu and gives all kinds of assurances in order to lure Turkey to the side of Germany. Moreover, the German Embassy turns into one of the most pleasant places among the diplomatic circles in Ankara as he arranges his way of life according to the Turks during his time in Turkey. People can dance, drink and chat, and play bridge or poker at the embassy until the morning.

Franz von Papen sometimes brings together Turkish and German soldiers who fought side by side in the First World War, makes them tell their war memories, and creates an emotional atmosphere. As the popularity of these invitations given by Von Papen increases, people feel sorry for those who have to go to the British Embassy, where strict protocol rules are followed. However, Franz von Papen and the British ambassador get along very well.

Although Franz von Papen is a little shy with Yakup Kadri, his wife gets along well with him. One evening, they come across Yakup Kadri at a party. Their son has just returned from the war wounded, and Von Papen's wife tells Yakup Kadri that Moscow is about to fall. However, when she realizes that Yakup Kadri does not support her, he asks whether an internal uprising against the communist regime is possible. Thereupon, Yakup Kadri comments that the communist regime had eliminated the bourgeoisie and the landed peasants. There are only people between the ages of twenty and forty who don't know any regime other than communism. Thus, there is no possibility of an uprising, and the only way to beat the Soviets from within is to pretend to save the nations from Moscow tyranny, like Crimea and Ukraine. But Germany persecutes these people, let alone rescuing them. After this conversation, Mrs. Von Papen walks up to her husband.

A little later, Franz von Papen himself comes up to Yakup Kadri and opens a conversation about his novel *Wild* because Yakup Kadri's the novel's translator translates his other book *Sodom and*

*Gomorrhah* without his permission, but Yakup Kadri does not want it to be published because it tells about Istanbul under the occupation of France and England, Turkey's new allies.

In the following days, the Nazi chiefs in Germany start to lash out at Turkey. But Franz von Papen prepares a non-aggression agreement between Germany and Turkey and softens this atmosphere. When relations between the Soviets and Germany break down, the Russians attempt to assassinate von Papen in Turkey. After this event, von Papen becomes even more popular and is treated as a folk hero.

### *Geneva*

After reading Tunalı Hilmi's book, *Cenevre'de Tahsil*, [Education in Geneva] at sixteen, Yakup Kadri's biggest dream is to live in Geneva. This desire increases even more with Rousseau's books. Years later, when he realizes this wish, he is a tired man struggling with lung disease. But after he recovers, he feels like sixteen again and finds Geneva as fascinating as in his dreams. Twenty-odd years later, when he is appointed as envoy extraordinary to Bern, he first visits Geneva.

### *Bern*

Yakup Kadri sees Bern as a place people visit only to get their work done, but at the same time as the center of all the features making a Swiss Swiss. Europe's wealthiest families live together with tradesmen and peasants in this city where there is not a single castle or monument left from the imperial period.

Yakup Kadri states that he could comprehend the spirit of this country when he became an embassy to it. When he was young, he only saw the cosmopolitan side of it. While he attributed the shy mood of those he met in his youth to xenophobia, he now attributes it to their shyness. He thinks that this country, where four million people from three different mother tongues, races, and sects can live together without conflict, is almost a school of democracy. And life in Bern is its best manifestation.

### *At Eduard von Steiger's House*

Ministers and deputies go to work by public transport in the early hours of the morning, just like civil servants. Yakup Kadri travels by tram in the evenings with two ministers, who live close to his house. One of these two ministers is Eduard von Steiger, one of the oldest families in Bern.

Eduard von Steiger invites Yakup Kadri and the French ambassador to dinner. When they are about to drink coffee after the meal, the doorbell rings, and it is the postman. Von Steiger shakes the postman's hand and invites him to drink liquor with them. Yakup Kadri and the French ambassador look at each other. They are relieved when the postman declines the offer with thanks.

### *Some Observations*

Yakup Kadri states that politicians do not leave their seats voluntarily without causing a crisis anywhere in the world. In countries such as England, France, and Germany, government means power but in the Swiss political culture service. Moreover, democracy is not an empty word used by demagogues in their political propaganda.

He says that working is a quality like eating and drinking for every Swiss and that anyone who is nineteen or twenty years old, no matter how wealthy their family is, finds a job and works. He even adds that the daughter of a mayor is babysitting the child of a commercial adviser at the Embassy of Turkey, and the prime minister's daughter works as a housemaid in England to learn English.

However, he states that the person who scares the democratic Swiss society, which tends to turn everyone into an average person, is the person who has a spark of genius in their eyes. Such people have no choice but to emigrate, like J. Rousseau. If there is a well-accepted author, it is because the author has managed to descend to the level of ordinary people. For this reason, artists in Switzerland can only see the value they deserve in countries speaking their mother-tongue, such as Germany and France.

### *Switzerland in WWI and WWII*

When Yakup Kadri first comes to Switzerland, he witnesses no famine due to the First World War while staying in the sanatorium due to his illness. But this time, during the Second World War, everything is under the control of the state. The farmer's animals and animal production are confiscated, and the Swiss comply with these regulations without objection for six years.

One of the differences between Switzerland in the First World War and the Second World War is that the German-speaking Swiss is hostile to Germany, while the French-speaking Swiss does not support France.

The German support in the sanatorium where he stays during the First World War is so intense that German singers give concerts here for the benefit of German orphans and widows. Money is collected among the patients to be sent to the Germans. But those who don't like Germans are free to say anything about Germans. For example, a young Belgian Yakup Kadri meets at the sanatorium, forgetting that Yakup Kadri comes from a country that is an ally of Germany, always tells him how much he hates the Germans. Since a German soldier kidnapped his sister, he feverishly says that he will find that soldier and kill him as soon as he recovers. But speaking against France in French Switzerland is not possible as it is associated with German espionage. Also, Turks are always insulted here. In newspapers, the expressions *sous-Boche*, meaning inferior to German and monkey, are used for Turks. They are accused of being the murderer of Armenians murderer at every opportunity.

Nowadays, Yakup Kadri feels deceived by the books, believing that the Europeans who defend human rights in the books appropriate everything in the name of goodness and beauty. As a result, he takes refuge in fierce nationalism.

But what happens to Central Europe and the Netherlands during the Second World War convinces him that Europe is just as worth defending as his hometown. For, Switzerland is the country that has survived as the last bastion of civilization, as German-speaking and French-speaking Swiss people leave all kinds of distinctions aside and strive only for the independence of their country.

Yakup Kadri thinks that one of the reasons for this is that German-speaking Swiss people try to protect themselves against Hitler's racist and expansionist Germany. For the same reason, they are more anti-German than French-speaking Swiss people.

### *Turkey and Switzerland*

Thanks to its neutrality policy, Turkey has a high reputation in the eyes of the Swiss. However, its credit in business and trade is lower. Because the wheat exported a year before the war eroded the grinders in Switzerland and other objects are found inside the sacks of hazelnuts. On top of these events, the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs employees suddenly begin to behave coldly toward the employees of the Turkish Embassy due to the Swiss companies in Turkey, which are pressured by the Wealth Tax enacted in Turkey. When Yakup Kadri goes to the embassy one day, he is told that the Swiss banks had to give large amounts of loans to Swiss companies in trouble because of this tax. After a short time, the travel of Turks to Switzerland is prohibited. But this decision is soon canceled.

### *The British Pilot*

British planes bombing Germany and Italy sometimes accidentally bomb Switzerland as well. Yakup Kadri and his wife follow the news from the newspapers with interest. One day, they are surprised when they meet one of the pilots. Because the pilot they meet is a dull and shy Englishman whose demeanor is similar to high school children's, although he is a colonel. When he says that he takes his turntable with Beethoven and Wagner records on every flight because he is fond of classical music, they ask him whether he feels any remorse after bombing the country of these two genius German musicians. The pilot replies that his job is just to push some buttons, so there is no need to feel any pangs of conscience.

### *The Captives*

The fugitive captive soldiers of the allied states take a vacation while they stay in Switzerland because the Swiss government places these soldiers in hotels by the lake in summer and at mountain resorts in winter. Yakup Kadri says that because the pocket money paid to the British soldiers is less than that of the Americans and Canadians, there is envy between them.



Fugitive Russian soldiers are included among these captive soldiers. The Swiss are surprised that there is a Turkish minority in Russia when the Turkish-origin soldiers want to be sent to Turkey or Egypt instead of Moscow because they are Muslims. Yakup Kadri helps these soldiers settle in Turkey by signing an agreement between the United Nations International Refugee Organization and Turkey. Although the agreement stipulates that these people are to be provided with a place to stay and a job when they come to Turkey, all of them have great difficulty finding a place to stay and a job.

After a while, civilians begin to mix with the fugitive captive soldiers from Italy. Although the Swiss government tolerates the elderly and children to some extent, it does not allow political asylum seekers and those identified as fascists to enter the country. Yet soon, Italians begin to appear in everyday life.

#### *After the War*

Yakup Kadri states that after the war, Europe is stuck between Russian communism and American capitalism. General de Gaulle, who can't digest the help of American soldiers, makes a deal with Russia, and Churchill glorifies the Red Army at every opportunity.

While chatting with the host envoy, the Dutch envoy extraordinary, and the Swiss foreign minister at a reception at the Greek Embassy, the Dutch envoy extraordinary suddenly goes on the defensive when the Swiss minister hints that Europe, freed from the Nazi plague, is in danger of communism. After sharing this memory, Yakup Kadri, reminding us that the Netherlands was a country that had cut off all diplomatic relations with Russia for 28 years until then, points out that Britain and France were much more optimistic about Russia.

Meanwhile, Switzerland begins to establish diplomatic relations with Russia again. However, Kremlin spokespersons claim that there are some fascists in the Swiss government. This allegation is taken seriously, and the foreign minister is accused of being a fascist. Calculating a potential commercial gain, they sacrifice the foreign minister. Then, a large embassy delegation from Russia arrives, but the expected commercial exchange between the two countries does not take place.

After a while, communist Chinese diplomats, who are even more closed to the outside world, join the shy Russian diplomats. Moreover, unlike the Russian delegation, only military men are assigned to the Chinese Embassy.

#### *Russian Charisma*

Although Russian diplomats are shy in social gatherings, their voices are heard the most at the United Nations meetings in Bern. Whatever the case, the Russians are those who attack, and the Anglo-Saxons are those who remain on the defensive. Yakup Kadri states that the Western powers did not have a charismatic force like the Red Army to lean on at that time and that for many politicians and diplomats, it was the Marshall Plan that divided Europe or the world into two.

However, he still underlines that Moscow was the dominant figure. The reason for this is some of the inappropriate behaviors of the American soldiers after the war, the jealousy of miserable Europe for America's enrichment, and the mistakes of American politicians in foreign policy.

#### *John Carter Vincent*

Yakup Kadri marks one of the biggest mistakes in American foreign policy not to prevent the shift of the Chinese administration from nationalists to communists. When John Carter Vincent, one of the diplomats who played a role in the surrender of the nationalist Chiang Kai-shek army to the communist Mao Zedong, is appointed as a diplomat to Bern, Yakup Kadri asks him the reason for that. Vincent replies that the dollars they gave to the nationalists were spent on marijuana by the soldiers, and the weapons they distributed were secretly sold to the communists, and they did the right thing. Then, as Yakup Kadri emphasizes that they should have taken more precautions, Vincent states that America does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries as a matter of principle.

#### *Tehran*

When Yakup Kadri and his wife leave Istanbul on a cloudy day toward the end of September 1949 and arrives in Tehran, they meet a scorching heat. But there is a bigger problem plaguing them; the

embassy building is no different from ruin with its leaking ceilings, flaking plaster, windows that cannot be opened and closed, and dirty and neglected furniture. They can't even find a bed and a clean sofa. The place is full of dog poop, and cockroaches pop up from every corner. When Yakup Kadri's wife seems to faint when she sees the insects, the servants find it ridiculous to be afraid of insects while the mice are invading the place. They say that the cook has to rub the dishes with soil because there is no detergent. Since the garden walls of the embassy are in ruins, the grassland is also plundered by grazing animals.

Yakup Kadri finds this situation deplorable because the embassy building is adjacent to the USSR Embassy and a summer mansion where Iran hosts foreign guests. The building turns into a construction site for months. He and his wife have to sleep in a different room each night and eat cheese and bread or find a good restaurant every day. Since it is impossible to iron at home, he has his clothes ironed by tailors. But each time, his suits come back dirty. After cleaning the dirt with a brush for minutes, he attends the invitations in exhaustion.

#### *With the Shah*

When he meets Mohammad Reza Pahlavi while taking office, the shah does something he hadn't done to other diplomats until then, inviting him to his writing room. He expresses his wish to make the friendship between Iran and Turkey as good as it was in the era of his father Reza Pahlavi and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

While leaving this one-hour private meeting, Yakup Kadri tells Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Asghar Hekmat that he feels like he is in his hometown and that he is sure that they will work together like two brothers.

#### *The Condition of Iran*

During the days Yakup Kadri settles in Iran, he sees that the secularist principles of Reza Pahlavi are gradually disappearing. Religious scholars are more visible. Women cannot wander the back streets without wearing a chador. The forbidden rites are held with much more enthusiasm. Sayyid Abu I-Qasim Kashani, who was in exile because he had instigated a young man to shoot Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, gains political power.

But this failed assassination is not an event to be forgotten. The young assassin, approaching the shah as a photojournalist during a ceremony, fires his gun, but the shah manages to survive thanks to his agility. However, a few months after Yakup Kadri's arrival, Prime Minister Abdolhossein Hazhir is shot by the Warriors for Islam at a religious ceremony and loses his life.

Yakup Kadri attributes the grudge against Riza Pahlavi, who destroyed the material and spiritual privileges of religious teachers, built wide streets and squares, universities and railways in the country, and closely observed people working in construction sites, to his disturbing people. He says that Reza Pahlavi woke those who dreamed of heaven and disturbed them.

#### *Mohammad Mosaddegh*

Yakup Kadri states that what makes a person blessed for Iranians is being a victim. He comments that Dr. Mosaddegh, with his expressions and tone of voice in street meetings and parliamentary sessions, succeeded in placing himself in an oppressed position in the eyes of people. Thus, he could do whatever he wanted as the head of the government for two years.

However, despite all his ridiculous and crazy-seeming attitudes, he prevents his country from being semi-colonial. He nationalizes Iran's oil wells with his struggle against the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. However, he cannot receive any technical support and cannot export oil because of the oil companies. Yakup Kadri states that oil companies have supra-state jurisdiction. Accordingly, these firms exploit the underdeveloped countries and desire to keep these countries under exploitative conditions forever. Therefore, the nationalization of Iranian oil resources bothers Dutch and American oil companies, as they fear the same thing will happen to them one day.

The dispute over oil is attempted to be settled with an agreement between the minister of finance and the representative of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. But whenever the subject comes to this agreement in parliament, Dr. Mosaddegh reacts by crying and whining, and the deputies suddenly

change sides. Another reason for this change of side is the protests on the streets against the agreement.

### *The Gentry*

It is said that two thousand families in Iran dominate the political and economic fate of the country. These families are landowners and live by feudal understanding. Their power is not measured by the extent of the land they hold, but by the number of people living on that land. Reza Pahlavi, who tried to destroy many old institutions, did not touch this feudal system.

Statesmen and well-educated people grow up in these families. After studying in Europe and America, they return to their country without losing their Iranian identity and continue their lives as an agha if necessary.

Yakup Kadri emphasizes that Iranians with a civilization of thousands of years are national but not nationalist. In a conversation with an Iranian intellectual, she tells him that the Arab armies forced them to convert to Islam, but they persist in their Zoroastrian customs.

### *Muslim Diplomats*

Yakup Kadri is invited to a luncheon for Muslim diplomats at the Afghan Embassy. The diplomats decide to meet once or twice a month and eat together, but this decision never comes true. They do not meet again.

Later, when Pakistani Ambassador Gazanfer Khan insists that unity should be built among Muslims, Yakup Kadri asks him who would benefit from a solidarity pact, as Pakistan's enemy is India while Arabs' Israel, and Turkey follows a very different path.

### *Haj Ali Razmara*

During the Korean War, articles and cartoons insulting Turks are published in the Iranian press. Yakup Kadri can't stand it any longer and conveys to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that he wants to inform the Iranian Prime Minister that he is not able to continue his duty any longer. The Ministry opposes this. However, he sets up an appointment with Razmara and shows him the cartoons in the newspapers, and then declares that it is difficult for him to continue his duty under these conditions. Razmara says he will handle this situation and takes the newspapers he left to the parliament. He shows them to the deputies and has some newspapers confiscated and shut down.

One day, he tells Yakup Kadri that America does not help any country in internal turmoil. England, on the contrary, likes to bargain with reckless people underhand to divide a country, and the Russians prefer to destroy every country from within. Yakup Kadri records that even though people do not trust him, Razmara does his best to bring peace to his country and states that he is the only one who feels sorry for Razmara's death the most among the diplomats.

### *Hossein Ala*

When Yakup Kadri meets Hossein Ala, who impacts him very much by his voice and English at United Nations meetings, which Yakup Kadri listens to on the radio, he compares him to Ottoman statesmen who did not lose their own values on the path to Westernization.

### *Being an Envoy Extraordinary*

After Yakup Kadri leaves Tehran, he works in Bern for three years. However, after being in Tehran as an ambassador, he is demoted to envoy extraordinary. Since this situation does not escape the attention of the diplomatic circles in Ankara, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is forced to make a statement that Yakup Kadri did this of his own will.

The long and the short of it is that Yakup Kadri demands to be appointed to another place because his health deteriorated in Tehran. Because historically, no country other than France can send an ambassador to Bern, he does not make a request specifically for Bern. He also knows that there is no possibility of returning to a place before another diplomat completes his mission there. Nevertheless, the Swiss government grants him a concession by accepting the Foreign Ministry's application for

Yakup Kadri. However, it states that he is not able to operate as an ambassador. Yakup Kadri does not accept his demotion, but when he hears of the pleasing statements of the Swiss foreign minister about his return to Bern, he does not act stubborn. He goes back to Bern as an envoy extraordinary.

However, he runs into problems related to his rank. First of all, his situation leads to a crisis in invitations. Confusion ensues as to whether he should be treated as an ambassador or an envoy extraordinary. And diplomatic circles look for other reasons for being demoted. Finally, the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs decides to evaluate the applications of states demanding to appoint ambassadors to Bern or promote their envoys. The envoys of Italy, America, Canada, England, Belgium, and India benefit from this decision right away, but he has to wait for months because he can't get a response to his letters from Ankara.

During this waiting, people around him interpret this situation as a kind of punishment, which gets on his nerves. However, he notes that what really upsets him is that while many countries have ambassadors, no one from the Republic of Turkey has the status of a first-class representative in Bern. He states that he did his best to keep his satisfaction behind his national pride throughout his professional life and comments that the memories of retired diplomats praising themselves are boring. However, he writes his memoirs under the title of the Diplomat in Spite of Himself because he likens himself to Molière's *the Doctor in Spite of Himself* and prefers to tell things self-mockingly.

## Themes

**Adaptation** Yakup Kadri is appointed as a diplomat against his will, but he does his best for twenty years. In his first place of duty, Tirana, he discovers that people convey their demands to him as if they were still attached to the Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, he acts as a governor and takes the initiative. In this way, he saves the lives of the people whom King Zog wrongly punished. While serving in The Hague under attack, he doesn't move anywhere without an order from the Turkish government. Despite the explosions, he continues to stay there with his wife. When he is appointed to Tehran, he transforms the embassy building from a ruin into a respected institution with months of work. Moreover, he succeeds in not making other people feel the troubles and fatigue caused by this work in his daily life in any diplomatic environment. Later, when he is demoted and appointed as an envoy to Bern, he handles all the troubles caused by this. In sum, although he is not a trained diplomat, in his twenty-year career, he adapts with a national consciousness to many things that he cannot adapt to as a writer to fulfill the requirements of every duty.

**Disillusionment** Although examples such as Metternich and Talleyrand shape Yakup Kadri's opinions about diplomats, he disillusions after he becomes one. For example, as he is in Prague, he sees that people believe that everything can be settled with interstate agreements and discuss what Hitler dares to do at the same time. The League of Nations is incapable of making predictions in its meetings before and during the Second World War. As Yakup Kadri encounters such examples throughout his career, he is convinced that the world of diplomacy is an archaic structure that cannot keep up with the developing and changing world. But in the world of diplomats who are even afraid to express their own opinions, he also meets extraordinary examples such as Ambassador Franz von Papen and does not hesitate to share his ideas with his wife, if not with him.

**Multi-Layeredness** Yakup Kadri observes the countries he lives in as a writer rather than a diplomat, so his comments do not miss the multi-layeredness of daily life. For example, he states that Switzerland, which he sees as a school of democracy, is inclined to make all its citizens live up to a certain kind of averageness, so it cannot shield its geniuses and cannot tolerate sharp personalities, even if they are artists. In Iran, a completely different culture, he observes that the most acceptable way for a person to stand out is the performance of victimhood. He finds Dr. Mosaddegh's success in nationalizing Iranian oil wells in his bodily performance, which seems crazy to many from the outside but invites many people in Iran to empathize with an oppressed person. Yakup Kadri's these observations belong to a writer's eyes rather than a diplomat's.

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