

Siyasal Anılar (Political Memories) (1976)

Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın

People

Abdullah Zühtü: Abdullah Zühtü is a journalist friend of Hüseyin Cahit. On the day the Second Constitutional Period is announced, Hüseyin Cahit does not know how to react but wants to do something unusual. Abdullah Zühtü is the person with whom Hüseyin Cahit can act like naughty children to welcome the constitution.

Mehmet Cavit: Mehmet Cavit, an MP, is Hüseyin Cahit's friend from high school years. He is the only person Hüseyin Cahit mentions throughout his memoir. Cavit appears as the person who informs Hüseyin Cahit about current political events. Yet, they share a common fate after the 31 March Incident. They flee to Thessaloniki, where Cavit persuades Hüseyin Cahit to join the masons.

Babanzade Ismail Hakkı: Babanzade Ismail Hakkı, an MP, is the person who witnesses how the protestors mistook an MP for Hüseyin Cahit and killed him. When he visits Hüseyin Cahit and Cavit in Thessaloniki, they publish an issue of *Tanin*, and Babanzade Hakkı describes what he witnessed from the window of the parliament building on March 31. Hüseyin Cahit figures out the seriousness of the protests thanks to Babanzade Ismail's distressing description.

Talât Pasha: Minister of internal affairs. Hüseyin Cahit meets him to write about him in *Tanin*, and they become friends. Although Hüseyin Cahit disagrees with Talât Pasha on some issues, he always appreciates his friendliness and sense of humor.

Enver Pasha: Minister of defense after the raid on the Sublime Porte. Hüseyin Cahit compares him with Talât Pasha and states that Enver Pasha is a more conservative man than Talât Pasha. However, he appreciates his strict anti-nepotism rules.

Events

The book consists of Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın's memories and reflections about the Second Constitutional Period (1908-1918) which were previously published in different magazines and newspapers.

Celebrating the Second Constitutional Period

On July 24, 1908, a state declaration on the first pages of the newspapers announces the restoration of the 1876 constitution, starting the second constitutional period of the Ottoman Empire. Hüseyin Cahit reads the announcement in disbelief that the reign of Abdulhamid II is over. It was a miracle he and his friends had been waiting for, but it happened unceremoniously. He is thrilled at the prospect of living in freedom, for which many people had been jailed, exiled, and murdered by the tyrannical regime. He goes out excitedly to see the difference in daily life, but everyone he sees on the street is almost the same as the previous day. There is nothing extraordinary.

Some time ago, Hüseyin Cahit's friends had visited him at his home and talked about an armed secret society working for constitutionalism in Thessaloniki. The society wanted to organize in Istanbul too, and his friends were willing to support them. Hüseyin Cahit felt uncomfortable with the idea of using a gun and said that it was impossible to organize in Istanbul, a city of whistleblowers.

Now, Istanbul is even afraid to see the words "constitution" and "constitutionalism" in a newspaper. He goes to the neighborhood of newspapers in Istanbul and stops by the bookstore of Karabet. Karabet is astonished like him. While he talks to Karabet, he sees Abdullah Zühtü walk down the street and joins him. They check if people are aware of what is happening and see that everybody continues their daily routine as if nothing happened. When they remember that it is Friday, they figure out something to break this routine. As the sultan returns from the Friday prayer, a salutation ceremony is held. Hüseyin

Cahit and Abdullah Zühtü decide to mingle with the crowd and start shouting slogans, but they know that people would not say anything in favor of constitutionalism. Thus, they cry, "Long live the sultan!" provoking everyone else, and eventually, the crowd shouts in unison. Hüseyin Cahit says that it was the only way to welcome the constitutional period in Istanbul at that time. After doing something extraordinary to celebrate the news, they visit Ahmet Cevdet, the owner of *İkdam*, to discuss how the newspapers will be released. It confuses them that the constitution is restored, but Abdulhamid II is still in power, and he is the one who restores it. However, they determine to cherish it despite everything. Hüseyin Cahit and Abdullah Zühtü write articles welcoming the restoration of the constitution. Yet Karabet and Ahmet Cevdet find Hüseyin Cahit's expressions offensive and combine two writings into one by censoring the offensive parts. The next day, their article is published in *İkdam* anonymously.

Ahmet Cevdet and Karabet hoist the flag at their workplaces, and Ahmet Cevdet sends one of his employees to invite nearby tea shops to do the same thing. However, nobody wants to talk to him, some accuse him of being a spy. Hüseyin Cahit and his friends see that the ethos of the oppressive regime is still in its place. Yet they do not give up. They meet the writers of *Sabah* and determine not to submit the drafts of their articles to the censor board prior to publication. They even plan to attack the officer of the board if he comes to examine their writings. However, nobody comes, and the newspapers are published without censor.

Hüseyin Cahit describes Istanbul then as a reckless child running in the streets without a guardian because the government officials have disappeared. New newspapers spring up like mushrooms in Istanbul, and new faces advocate constitutionalism. *Servetifünun* is the most famous gathering place because of its central location in Babıali Street, and many unrelated people meet there to discuss the future of the empire. However, the Committee of Union and Progress in Thessaloniki is uninformed about the situation in Istanbul. The committee only knows that Istanbul was in silence, while Thessaloniki celebrated the constitution on 24 July. Thus, a representative of the committee, Rahmi, comes to Istanbul to understand the situation. When Rahmi sees cunning people lecture about things they do not believe, he declares that none is entitled to speak on behalf of the committee. Hüseyin Cahit says that there was a branch of the committee in Istanbul under the leadership of Baha, who was a lawyer and a friend of Hüseyin Cahit's professor, Manyaslı Refik Bey from college. But Baha was not in touch with the headquarters in Thessaloniki not to attract attention. Thus, the committee sent another representative to check the situation in Istanbul.

One day, Hüseyin Cahit comes across Hüseyin Kazım, his old friend, in *Servetifünun*, and Kazım asks him as to whether he wants to start their newspaper with Tefik Fikret. On 1 August, the first issue of their newspaper *Tanin* is published. Hüseyin Kazım is associated with the committee in Istanbul, but Hüseyin Cahit prefers to be independent. Until the committee starts its newspaper, *Şurayı Ümmet* [council of the umma], *Tanin* publishes its public statements. However, people recognize *Tanin* as the committee's newspaper. Hüseyin Cahit is uncomfortable with that because people begin to support the committee for personal interests. His friend Abdullah Zühtü, for example, joins the association to increase the reputation of his newspaper.

It is confusing to Hüseyin Cahit that the statesmen working for the oppressive regime are still in power. People can make the government whatever they want by holding large rallies. The grand vizier declares general amnesty by the pressure of the masses, for example. Undoubtedly, the weak point of the revolution is that revolutionaries are absent. Abdulhamid II retains the authority to appoint the grand mufti, minister of the navy, and minister of defense, the three most important ministries. Hüseyin Cahit resents that the sultan is to establish a new cabinet on behalf of the committee because the committee consists of young men with little experience in life and politics. He mentions a conversation he had with his friend from high school, Ahmet Şuayıp, before the revolution to show that the committee's young supporters also hesitate to take charge. Ahmet Şuayıp and everyone like him expects some powerful men who had been tormented by the regime to take charge after the revolution. However, nobody comes forward.

Disenchantment The one that does not hesitate to lead amidst ambiguity is the press. Hüseyin Cahit considers the resignation of the grand vizier one of the most important services of the free press. Subsequently, a new cabinet is formed by Kamil Pasha. Yet, the revolutionaries are still absent. Both the government and a committee are playing a vaguely defined role. Nobody can figure out the principle of division of labor. Even the police are prevented from doing their job by the confusion. After

a while, the committee's Istanbul branch invites Hüseyin Cahit to the clinic of Dr. Esat Pasha. At the clinic, he meets Hasan Rıza Pasha, who speaks on behalf of the committee. The committee wants him to be less critical not to stir up people. Although Hasan Rıza Pasha conveyed their demand politely, Hüseyin Cahit fiercely opposes him, saying that he is not a pupil. Thus, his first encounter with the committee becomes an unpleasant experience.

Supporters of the old regime do not hesitate to use freedom of the press, which is guaranteed by the constitution. Indeed, the new government does not dare to bring about a real change. Only one minister out of the former authorities is arrested, and some officials are in jail. Their vulnerable situation makes Hüseyin Cahit's grudge fade out when he visits them. Yet he is uncomfortable with that no organization shows presence but the press in Istanbul.

When Recep Pasha who is known for his love of freedom, is appointed as minister of war, Hüseyin Cahit's hopes revived. However, Recep Pasha suddenly dies because of an indefinite illness. In the meantime, in honor of the sultan's birthday, Grand Vizier Kamil Pasha prepares a feast for foreign ambassadors in Istanbul. When the Bulgarian representative attempts to join it, he is refused, because it is only for foreign ambassadors. Then he goes back to Sofia reproachfully. Hüseyin Cahit and Abdullah Zühtü visit Kamil Pasha to warn him about a possible conflict with the Bulgarians. That is Hüseyin Cahit's first attempt to interview a politician, like journalists in Europe. However, he is disappointed with the vizier's messy and ugly appearance. The vizier does not take their warning seriously. Hüseyin Cahit leaves his office with contempt, while Abdullah Zühtü believes that the vizier knows what he is doing. However, Bulgaria proclaimed its declaration of independence. And Hüseyin Cahit goes to Bulgaria to monitor what is going on in Sofia. When he gets off the train, he witnesses the enthusiasm and joy that Istanbul lacked on 24 July 1908. In the meantime, Austria-Hungary announces the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hüseyin Cahit returns to Istanbul in despair. Now, he is disenchanted with the statesmen whom he has respected for many years.

Protests In October, a hodja known as Kör Ali provokes hatred in people against the new regime, and an armed crowd marches from Fatih Mosque to the Palace. A group of them conveyed their anti-constitutional demands to the Palace, but Kör Ali and his friend İsmail Hakkı are arrested. It is terrifying to Hüseyin Cahit that no law enforcement officials can stop the crowd from Fatih to the Palace. Referring to an official statement made on the same day about an ongoing investigation of citizens working against the new regime, he says that Abdulhamid II was behind the event. The sultan, who was secretly trying to undermine the new regime made such statements just in case.

Stepping into Politics Since Hüseyin Cahit's only hope is the new assembly, he announces his candidacy. He prepares a program and presents it to the public in a theatre hall. He says that he was so naïve to believe that he would change something by setting out a program. Yet, he specifies that the most significant part of the program was about education. He considered Turkish language education a national interest. Nevertheless, he condemns himself because his expressions regarding the necessity of education in the program were very hesitant.

He criticizes that the constitution suppressed Turkishness by highlighting an Ottoman identity to cover all ethnic groups in the empire. For Hüseyin Cahit, Ottomanism was a construction while Turkishness was natural. He considers each ethnic element a threat to the Ottoman Empire, except the Turks, but claims that they were not the dominant ethnic group. He also regards other ethnic groups' support of Prince Sabahaddin and his idea of decentralized government as a source of anxiety.

Prejudice He mentions a second incident indicating the absence of law enforcement. When a Muslim woman elopes with a Greek man, the woman's father informs the police. However, as the police bring them to the police station, a group of men beat the Greek man to death. Hüseyin Cahit denounces the use of violence and asks why people who were afraid of the old regime do not fear the law now. Yet nobody replies because there is no real government.

Being a Member of the Committee After a while, the committee offers him the opportunity to be a member of parliament. Although Hüseyin Cahit prefers to be independent, he accepts it. He joins the committee by taking an oath that he will adhere to the aims of the committee. Yet, he is uncomfortable with the idea that there is the Committee of Union and Progress on the one hand and the newly established Party of Union and Progress on the other hand. The committee was a secret organization. Now, the party members are supposed to be directed by the committee like a puppet, which means a secret organization will rule the country.

Opening of the Parliament The election reveals that the committee is not the dominant figure in the provinces, and the Liberal Party is a power that should not be underestimated in Istanbul. After the election, Abdulhamid II opens the parliament by delivering a speech and then gives a dinner party in honor of the new assembly. During the party, Hüseyin Cahit monitors the sultan closely and concludes that he is a cunning person. The whole night, the sultan spends time with Ahmet Rıza, who had to live in Europe as a dissident but now is the chairperson. Although Ahmet Rıza refused many offers made by the sultan to persuade him to serve the Palace, now the sultan seems to conquer him by just pouring water into his glass. Hüseyin Cahit believes that Ahmet Rıza is enchanted with the sultan's humble personality, and it annoys him that Ahmet Rıza talks to the sultan about his experiences in Europe as if he was on vacation. He says that at the end of the night, Abdulhamid II overcomes his fears of the Second Constitutional Period.

The religious backlash On February 28, 1909, two men begin to collect signatures in support of sharia rule in Grand Bazaar. They do not openly oppose the constitution but demand sharia rule. Upon that incident, Hüseyin Cahit writes an article entitled "We Want Sharia" and complains about the religious backlash. Then Grand Vizier Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha meets him to tell that his article disturbs the sultan. Hüseyin Cahit says that the article had nothing to do with the sultan. But it confuses him because he cannot decide whether Abdulhamid II was preparing something against the constitution.

An Assassination On April 7, Hasan Fehmi Bey, a newspaperman of the conservative newspaper *Serbesti* [Freedom] is shot to death on the street. The event affects Hüseyin Cahit deeply by leading him to question the dark side of politics. When he attempts to join the funeral, his friends stopped him because of a possible attack. Indeed, the anti-constitutionalists do not hesitate to use the incident to their advantage. Even soldiers start to protest the government, and some conservative groups demand that the government appoint some people who are close to them to important positions.

The 31 March Incident On April 13, (on March 31 according to the Rumi calendar) Hüseyin Cahit leaves the house as always, but when he cannot find a tram he is puzzled. He thinks of taking a taxi but cannot find it either. He feels something different in the city's atmosphere but cannot name it. While walking down the street he sees his friends Süleyman Fehmi and Hakkı Behiç. They inform Hüseyin Cahit about the protests of the religious students and soldiers against the restoration of the constitution. Then he returns home with his friends and spends some time with them discussing the situation. Later, Hüseyin Cahit and Cavit go to the Matrans, a Syrian family whose house is the gathering center for politicians, artists, and activists in Istanbul then. But as they stay there, their curiosity increases and they go out to drop by *La Turquie*, a newspaper. Only after their friend Séon tells them that the crowd in Hagia Sophia Square makes demands for sharia rule, and *Tanin* was plundered in the morning, can Hüseyin Cahit grasp the seriousness of the incident. He goes back to the house of the Matran Family hoping to see his other friends. After a short time, politicians start to come and go. One of them is Mehmet Aslan, deputy for Latakia. Yet he leaves to scout around for more information. Upon his leaving, Hüseyin Cahit goes to *Cercle d'Orient*, a social club in Beyoğlu, but he sees none there. Then he decides to go to another popular place, Tokatlıyan Hotel, where he comes across M. Quinet from *Matin*, a newspaper. When M. Quinet tells him that the crowd wants to behead him, he determines to wait in the house of the Matrans. Now, the house is crowded with the members of parliament, but Mehmet Aslan has not come back yet. They wait for him for hours yet he does not show up. Alfréde Sursak, a Syrian guest cannot stand to wait anymore and goes out. After a short time, he comes back with a pale face and says that the crowd seeks Hüseyin Cahit to kill. Then, Hüseyin Cahit gets a note from Séon writing that Mehmet Aslan was killed by the crowd that mistook him for Hüseyin Cahit.

Now, Hüseyin Cahit begins to worry about his wife and children and sends a note to his wife through the housemaid of the Matran Family. After his wife goes to her sibling's house with children, he is relieved but cannot determine what to do. When Cavit suggests going to the Austrian Embassy, Nadra Matran helps them reach out to newspaperman Weitz. Yet, Weitz conveys an implicit refusal. Upon this, Hüseyin Cahit suggests that they take shelter in the Russian Embassy without prior notice. Cavit does not prefer it and takes refuge in the house of one of his friends, who is a Mason broker. Hüseyin Cahit goes to the embassy, and his idea works. Russian Ambassador Zinoviev accepts to host him after being convinced that his life is under threat.

While staying in the embassy, he follows the news closely. A group of soldiers demands the withdrawal of the chairperson, grand vizier, minister of defense, and minister of the navy. The

newspaper quotes a soldier who states that the unionists deceived him and other soldiers like him by promising a sharia rule after overthrowing the sultan. Now they ask for justice in the name of Hasan Fehmi and blame the unionists for hiding the murderer. When Hüseyin Cahit reads it, he thinks that the press manipulates people against the government, and the chaos grows in Istanbul. Indeed, the interpreter M. Mandelstam, who takes care of him, verifies his concerns and recommends that he stay on the Russian ship Kolkhida. Hüseyin Cahit despairingly decides to leave the country and live in Europe. At night, he, accompanied by guards, leaves the embassy in disguise and gets on the ship. Later, Cavit joins him too, and they are transferred to a merchant ship, Queen Olga, to sail to Odessa.

Masonry In Odessa, Hüseyin Cahit and Cavit visit Governor Renenkampf, who is a commander famous for his loyalty to the tsarist regime. The governor helps with their official affairs even though it is Sunday, and they can set out for Thessaloniki. In Thessaloniki, a group related to the committee welcomes them. Yet Hüseyin Cahit feels uncomfortable because people around him expect them to give a speech. As a person who is not fond of long lectures, he says a few words and invites Cavit, who is more talkative, to speak. The next day, their curious visitors inform them about the Action Army heading to Istanbul from Thessaloniki to suppress the uprising. Hüseyin Cahit and Cavit begin to wait for more information. While spending their time in Thessaloniki, Cavit suggests Hüseyin Cahit that he should join the Masons. At first, Hüseyin Cahit refuses it, but Cavit persuades him by mentioning Masonry's humanistic values. Next evening, he becomes a Mason in the Masonic lodge. Hüseyin Cahit does not describe what he witnessed in the Masonic lodge because he promised to keep it a secret.

He values that Masonry strives for establishing a universal fraternity; however, he says that it is ridiculous to impress people through some old-fashioned secret ceremonies. He also complains of hypocrisy. Many calculating people join the Masons because the committee is associated with the Masons. That alienates him from the Mason lodges in Istanbul.

Tanin in Thessaloniki Babanzade İsmail Hakkı visits Hüseyin Cahit and Cavit in Thessaloniki. When people see Hüseyin Cahit and Babanzade Hakkı together, they encourage them to publish an issue of *Tanin* in Thessaloniki. On April 26, they publish an issue of *Tanin* in which Babanzade Hakkı describes what he witnessed from the window of the parliament building on March 31. In his article, entitled "A Day in Hell," he writes that some protestors entered the parliament. While the members of parliament discussed the situation, armed protestors put pressure on them. Furthermore, he saw how the crowd beat a member of parliament to death in Hagia Sophia Square. His account demonstrates the extent of violence that Istanbul witnessed on that day.

After the 31 March Incident Party of Union and Progress gets stronger after it suppressed the reactionary uprising. When Sultan Reşat replaces Abdulhamid II, the uprising politically ends as well. Sultan Reşat is an ineffective personality, like new Grand Vizier Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha, who was condemned for his inability to suppress the uprising.

When Hüseyin Cahit returns to Istanbul, he finds a collapsed printing house and a closed newspaper. His first job is to rebuild *Tanin* with limited means. However, the new administration's scapegoat is the press. Newspapers' critical voices are condemned to silence. Hüseyin Cahit says that people who fought for freedom could not digest freedom. He criticizes the leading characters of the Party because they acted in fear of appearing anti-religious. Whenever they were afraid of losing their ground, they stick to conservative rules related to women or children. Thus, he says, none supported freedom of conscience.

In Yıldız Palace Now, Abdulhamid II's Yıldız Palace is under the control of the Action Army. Hüseyin Cahit visits the palace with curiosity. He looks into the rooms. In the bedroom, he sees big pillows laid at the foot of the bed to prevent Abdulhamid II from a deep sleep. The room is full of informant letters. Hüseyin Cahit reads one of the letters and realizes that the letter was written by a young dissident, who used to organize meetings at his house to curse the regime. Yet what surprises him is the bad taste of the palace. He says that the palace was like the work of a sick architect.

When he has a chance to talk to the chief clerk, he learns that Abdulhamid II never worried on March 31, when the protestors fired their guns. The chief clerk says that he drafted a letter addressing the protestors, but the sultan tore it. He also says that if the sultan did not know what was going on

outside, he would be extremely alarmed. Hüseyin Cahit states that he cannot be sure if the sultan was not involved in the uprising.

Execution Orders One day on his way to the parliament building, he sees a crowd in Hagia Sophia Square. At first, he thinks of another uprising, but people are silent. They walk as if they were ghosts. A few minutes later, he sees that the square is full of people executed by hanging. At the moment, he says, he feels disgusted with politics.

Talât Pasha In July, Talât Pasha becomes minister of internal affairs. Since he was previously a telegraph clerk, many people underestimate him. Hüseyin Cahit meets Talât Pasha to write about him in *Tanin*. During the interview, the Greek archbishop comes to see the new minister too. Then Talât Pasha asks Hüseyin Cahit to wait in another room. Hüseyin Cahit starts to wait in the room, but after a while, he gets bored. Intending to leave, he walks toward the door but realizes that the door is locked. Then, he begins to listen to the conversation. The archbishop says things that put the minister in a difficult situation. Yet Hüseyin Cahit says that Talât Pasha makes skillful maneuvers. After the archbishop leaves, he congratulates the minister for his new position because he thinks that the old telegraph clerk is smart enough to lead the interior ministry.

Paying Respect to the New Sultan As part of celebrating a religious feast, the members of parliament visit Sultan Reşat to pay respect. While some members greet the sultan and kiss the textile fringes hanging from the throne as before, some only greet the sultan. Hüseyin Cahit is from the latter group. The next day, he writes an article to defend that paying respect is respectful only in a decent way. However, his view causes protests among people.

In The Ottoman Public Debt Administration Hüseyin Cahit becomes the Ottoman creditors' deputy in the Ottoman Public Debt Administration at the request of Cavit. Cavit prefers a person of Turkish origin instead of Greek or Armenian to negotiate with the government on behalf of the Ottoman creditors. When the World War erupts, French and English deputies leave the country, and Hüseyin Cahit becomes the chief executive working with German and Austrian deputies. In the meantime, he joins a group of members of parliament, officials, soldiers, merchants and intellectuals to visit Germany in pursuit of strengthening Turkish-German friendship. However, he does not enjoy it because it takes so much time to translate conversations that they sometimes have to leave dinner table almost at midnight.

The Freedom and Accord Party

Hüseyin Cahit calls the new party a sinister organization consisting of people who are different from each other in every sense. He says that they acted together to destroy what the unionists had built, and unfortunately they succeeded.

The Raid on the Sublime Porte Hüseyin Cahit regards the raid as the victory of patriots. However, in his article in *Tanin*, he criticizes some unionists who seek an act of personal revenge and maintains that the country is in need of peace and reconciliation. Indeed, the unionists found the National Defense Society and invite their opponents to join it. In this manner, they believe that they end hostilities, and to prove their goodwill they declare an amnesty.

However, Hüseyin Cahit considers it naivety and says that the opponents were always ready to betray their country. He tells that one day, they heard some news regarding a secret scheme concocted by Prince Sabahaddin's private clerk Satvet Lütfü to bring down the government. But the plot failed, and some people got arrested. While telling the story, he states that the incident still influences him. Yet he also criticizes himself because he celebrates the *coup d'état* of the unionists and asks to what extent a person can be objective in his judgments.

An Assassination The unionists come to power with a coup to succeed in the Balkan Wars. Thus when Adrianople falls, the opponents take advantage of it and concoct a plot to recapture the power. They failed, but in this turmoil, Grand Vizier Mahmut Şevket Pasha, who was the leader of the Action Army, is murdered in the street. Hüseyin Cahit appreciates the unionists for their adherence to the law. Although they had the power to judge and punish those they wanted, they sought evidence not to punish anyone innocent. However, he is estranged from politics because the revolutionary atmosphere does not exist anymore. He writes a letter to Talât Pasha informing him about his exit from the committee.

Enver Pasha When Enver Pasha becomes minister of defense, he calls Hüseyin Cahit to learn the source of some news on the army in *Tanin*. Yet Hüseyin Cahit refuses to share their source of information. Upon Hüseyin Cahit's answer, Enver Pasha closes *Tanin* for two days. Hüseyin Cahit appreciates Enver Pasha because Pasha will not do nepotism. He also adds that when Attorney-General Ibrahim Bey asks Enver Pasha for a small favor for his relative through a letter, Enver Pasha frames the letter and hangs it on the wall of the ministry to condemn it.

However, Hüseyin Cahit disapproves of Enver Pasha's conservative lifestyle. The Pasha believes that religion is indispensable for military success and demands religious observance from each soldier. For example, he expels a soldier from the army because he lets his wife spend time with some German soldiers. Hüseyin Cahit argues that an army based on religious differences contradicts with civic society. He compares Enver Pasha with Talât Pasha and says that although Talât Pasha was a believer, he was not bigoted.

Leaving Tanin Until the coup, the committee does not intervene in what Hüseyin Cahit writes in *Tanin*. However, after the coup and assassination of Mahmut Şevket Pasha, different committee members visit Hüseyin Cahit to ask him not to produce critical content about the government. At first Hüseyin Cahit does not take them seriously. Yet as the visits become more frequent, he realizes that his desire to write might be an obstacle for his friends. Then, he decides to leave *Tanin* unwillingly.

An Offer The day before he leaves *Tanin*, a committee member visits Hüseyin Cahit and offers him the position of general secretary for the committee. He kindly declines the offer. Later on, when Cavit talks about a conversation he had with Talât Pasha about the offer Hüseyin Cahit understands that the offer was made to him because the committee wanted to propitiate him. Indeed, a man called Mithat Şükrü was the one Talât Pasha wanted for the position.

World War I One morning, Cavit comes to Hüseyin Cahit's house to inform him about the agreement with Germany. Hüseyin Cahit is surprised by the news and criticizes England and France because of their uncompromising policy. He says that it was neither the result of successful German diplomacy nor incompetent Turkish diplomats. It was the outcome of the uncompromising attitude of French and English powers.

While describing the days before the war, he says that few people thought of war as a disaster. Everyone, including him, expected a victory. Even people who blamed Enver Pasha and Talât Pasha for joining the war were supporters of it too. He maintains that the Second Constitutional Period ended in 1914. During the war, the members of parliament could not fulfill their primary duty.

At the Front Hüseyin Cahit learns that Enver Pasha prepares to go to the Gallipoli campaign and then decides to join him. When he arrives at the front, he sees soldiers with beer bottles filled with water in their hands because they could not find water bottles. In headquarters, a soldier warns them about a nail-throwing aircraft, and then they wait in a pit. After the danger is gone, they have lunch and go to see the trenches. In Ariburnu, he meets Mustafa Kemal. While they have some buttermilk, a music team that they could not see sings Carmen.

A Trip to Germany After a group of German deputies' visit to Istanbul, some members of parliament visit Germany. Hüseyin Cahit states that Germans were not hopeful about the course of the war. But they were proud of the achievements of Turkey. While they visit central places like Munich, cities were decorated with Turkish flags.

When they prepare to meet the emperor, they discuss whether they are supposed to wear the medals that the emperor had granted them before. Although Hüseyin Cahit refuses it feigning that they are not allowed to wear any medal without the sultan's permission, Seyit Bey, Izmir MP, does not support him. In the end, they wear medals.

At the dinner, everyone exchanges their ration cards for bread, but Prime Minister Bethmann-Holweg cannot get a slice of bread because he does not have ration cards. Then, a person gives up his bread to the prime minister. Hüseyin Cahit and other members of parliament observe what happens and find it admirable.

The Armenian Problem One day, while Hüseyin Cahit works in the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, a clerk who has just come from his duty in Anatolia talks to him about Armenians in Anatolia. He is surprised by what he hears and remembers what Enver Pasha said to him about the Armenian problem. Enver Pasha mentioned a plan to force Armenians to migrate to places where they would not conflict with Turkish citizens. However, what the clerk says is different from what Enver Pasha said, and Hüseyin Cahit's neither Armenian nor Greek friends have said anything to him about what has been going on in Anatolia.

One morning, MP Zohrab's wife visits him at home to ask for help. Her husband Zohrab and his friend Vartkes, an MP, were taken to Diyarbakır to stand trial. She asks Hüseyin Cahit if he can talk to Talât Pasha about his husband's situation. Hüseyin Cahit goes to Talât Pasha's house with the woman. Talât Pasha listens to the woman and suggests to her that she should not worry about her husband. Yet neither Zohrab nor Vartkes come back from Diyarbakır. Later, the man who killed Zohrab and Vartkes is executed by Cemal Pasha.

An Amendment and a Discussion In the assembly, when freedom of conscience is suggested to be added to the party program, Hüseyin Cahit gets angry and blames his colleagues for being hypocritical. He asks them whether they know what freedom of conscience is and accuses them of not having the courage to implement it. He questions them about what they would do if he wore a hat, the symbol of infidelity among the Ottomans. Upon his question, an MP condemns him with his facial expressions, while Ziya Gökalp states that collective conscience is against it. Then, Hüseyin Cahit asks them what they would do if he permitted his daughter to marry a non-Muslim man. Ziya Gökalp gives the same answer. This time Hüseyin Cahit specifies that even if he behaves against collective conscience, the law has to protect him, and if they support freedom of conscience, they have to inform the society about the law, about that nobody has a say on anyone's personal decisions. After he finishes his speech, his colleagues make fun of him, and the discussion ends.

Hüseyin Cahit argues that political program was always a problem of the constitutional period.

Against Profiteering Since the Ottoman Empire relies on imports to meet its basic needs, the war badly affects its commercial traffic. Sellers can only import German and Austrian goods. Although German and Austrian sellers sell their goods at the same price, prices constantly increase in the empire because of greedy traders. Thus, a commission of three people is established to keep imported goods under control. Hüseyin Cahit becomes the second chief of the commission and works without payment. To work efficiently he does not allow bureaucracy and takes action on a verbal complaint. For example, if a man thinks that he is cheated, he comes to the commission with the product in question and gives the seller's address. Then the officer brings the seller to the commission for investigation. He says that even a relative of an MP had to stay in prison for one night because of their anti-nepotism rules. As an example, he describes an event between him and Talât Pasha. One day, Talât Pasha asks him to give two boxes of matches to a former ambassador. Yet Hüseyin Cahit refuses to grant a privilege to anyone saying that they have never done it before. Talât Pasha asks in surprise if he is serious, Hüseyin Cahit assures him again, and then Talât Pasha suggests that they should keep going like that. Hüseyin Cahit attributes the success of the commission to their attitude towards nepotism.

He also refers to a long-lasting discussion about the lack of a shroud cloth during the war. He says that those, who blame Republican People's Party because people could not find a winding sheet during the war, should understand two things; first, at that time, Republican People's Party did not exist. Second, if a country does not have a textile industry it will be deprived of textile products during a long war.

A New Cabinet When Grand Vizier Sait Halim Pasha retires, Talât Pasha is assigned to create a new cabinet. Hüseyin Cahit's friends insist that he become a minister in the new cabinet, and Talât Pasha asks him for which ministry he prefers to work. Hüseyin Cahit wants to be minister of external affairs. Yet pro-German Enver Pasha objects to him because of his pro-British and pro-French attitude. Then Hüseyin Cahit prefers to be minister of internal affairs. This time, Talât Pasha asks what he would do as a minister of internal affairs, and Hüseyin Cahit says that he would carry out an unbiased investigation on the Armenian problem. Yet Talât Pasha does not like his answer. In the end, Hüseyin Cahit decides not to take part in the new cabinet.

Themes

Disenchantment: Hüseyin Cahit, throughout his memoir, repeats that politics was not his thing. He gives an account of how he was disgusted with politics on different occasions. Executed people, hypocrite politicians, and intrigues of politics alienated him from political life.

In that regard, his political memoir is a long story of disenchantment with what he has dreamed of for a long time. He starts his narration by describing the day the Second Constitutional Period was announced. It surprises him that the day he has been waiting for years is such a dull day. His description gives an idea of the future of the constitutional period. Most people are not aware of what is going on, and those who are aware do not know how to react.

In the coming days, he witnesses the enthusiasm he has been waiting for. Yet, he is gradually disenchanted with the revolutionaries because they hesitate to govern the empire. They do not ask crucial men of the old regime to account for anything. Instead, they conceal in shadow and permit Sultan Abdulhamid II, who suppressed them for years to protect his reign. They get stronger after the 31 March Incident and the raid on the Sublime Port, yet, their revolutionary persona is deformed by their strong attachment to the committee. For the committee remains as a secret power governing the political party. Thus, their sole purpose becomes to suppress the opposition like the regime of Abdulhamid II. However, Hüseyin Cahit prefers believing in the revolutionaries' goodwill, despite everything.

Critical Thinking: Hüseyin Cahit portrays a critical political personality thanks to his journalist identity. He does not refrain from expressing his disapproval of the representatives of the ideology that he supports. His memories reveal that his journalist part weighs more than his politician part. For example, when he finds himself surrounded by strangers in Thessaloniki, he realizes that people expect him to lecture as an MP, who had to leave his country because of a reactionary protest. He says a few things and then invites Cavit to talk more. He considers expecting people to lecture about significant events sickness and convinces himself that he cannot be a politician who is never tired of talking about something.

However, when different committee members visit Hüseyin Cahit to ask him not to produce critical content about the government, he leaves *Tanin*, stressing his reliance on opinion journalism and saying that news reporting would not satisfy him. After *Tanin*, he describes himself as an aimless and empty person.

He denounces members of parliament who pay respect to the sultan like obedient servants. He notices that the party could not detach from the committee, driving people who care about independence away from the party. He criticizes himself because he celebrates the raid on the Sublime Porte while denouncing Prince Sabahaddin's attempt to overthrow the government. Therefore, his memories exemplify the viewpoint of an observer and a critic rather than a politician.