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## The Ottoman Government crisis of 10–13 February 1909 and the press reaction

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Unlike the First Constitutional era (1876–1878), the new period, which began with the promulgation of the Second Constitution, became a quite dynamic and dramatic course of action in Turkish political history. Compared to the First Constitutional era, the characteristics of the freedom environment were absolutely different and perhaps a little overdrawn. This was not unexpected as the ‘freedom’ was acquired after the years of ‘tyranny’ and a period of fierce strife.<sup>1</sup> After a couple of turbulent months in Ottoman Rumelia, which included dramatic acts such as assassinations and non-violent uprisings against the Sultan’s administration,<sup>2</sup> the promulgation of the Second Constitution was announced on 23 July 1908 by the Sultan’s decision to hold the elections for gathering together a new parliament, which had been dormant for the last 31 years.<sup>3</sup> It was a rather swift and non-violent revolution. It was also the beginning of a new era that paved the way for the modern Republic of Türkiye.

In this study, the fall of the second government, which had been created right after the promulgation, is studied. To scrutinize the process, archive papers, press publications of the period, memoirs, and other research are used. In order to understand the approaches of the political parties, the articles written by some columnists, who were also politicians, are investigated in detail. Hence, a comparative reading of the events that happened became possible.

During a preliminary literature search on the topic, no study in English focusing on this particular event was found. The event could be tracked within the memoirs of witnesses of the period. However, the memoirs, some of which have been used in this work, mostly reflect one-sided perspectives. Moreover, memoirs as a genre are generally written long after incidents happen. The author of the memoirs might not recall the details of the event correctly or might sketch a picture that suits his or her own perspective. In Turkish academic literature, no study has been found with a particular focus on the press reaction to the crisis and an evaluation of the discourses of the political figures who were also writing in the newspapers of the period. To illustrate, an important document on the event – ‘Kamil Pasha’s Explanation’ which is a first-hand narrative of the events – has not been evaluated in the related works. Moreover, there is not one study inspecting this particular event from the viewpoint of interpretations of the constitution either. There is a lack of academic works using first-hand and actual accounts of the period (such as the press) with a selection of Ottoman archive documents and memoirs (especially ones written in the Ottoman alphabet and not transcribed to Latin letters), which could further be supported by other resources. The fall of the Kamil Pasha government is very important to understand the evolution of constitutional democracy in Turkey and, hence, needs to be inspected in terms of democracy and the constitutional law. This work was written with the intention of filling this gap in the literature.

## The foundation of the new government and its main characteristics

The first government of the Second Constitutional era, the Said Pasha government, resigned on 3 August 1908.<sup>4</sup> Kamil Pasha was then assigned by the Sultan to form a new government that would lead the country to the elections. Kamil Pasha formed the government on 7 August.<sup>5</sup> As the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) was the main catalyst behind the revolution, their involvement in the government was a matter of public curiosity. The leading members of the CUP were generally young and politically inexperienced, so it did not seem as if they would retain seats in the newly forming government. Even though appointing cabinet members was a constitutional right granted to the Ottoman monarch, the Sultan had left the authority to choose cabinet members to Kamil Pasha except for the Sheikh-ul-Islam.<sup>6</sup> The government formed by Kamil Pasha included some experienced bureaucrats and well-known politicians such as Cemal Efendi as the Sheikh-ul-Islam, Reşit Pasha as the Minister of Interior Affairs, Tevfik Pasha (the former Ottoman ambassador to London) as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Recep Pasha as the Minister of War.<sup>7</sup>

It seems that some of the members of the CUP gave considerable importance to Recep Pasha's appointment as the Minister of War. The members of the CUP, including a leading figure such as Hüseyin Cahit Bey, were ready to greet Recep Pasha on his arrival in Istanbul.<sup>8</sup> Unexpectedly, on 16 August, two days after he arrived in Istanbul, Recep Pasha passed away suddenly as a result of arteriosclerosis.<sup>9</sup> The nomination of the Minister of War was about to become one of the main disputes during the crisis between Kamil Pasha and the CUP. After Recep Pasha's sudden death, Osman Nizami Pasha was assigned to be the acting Minister of War.<sup>10</sup> After approximately ten days, the post was given to Ali Rıza Pasha, who had been assigned as the commander of the Ottoman Second Army during Recep Pasha's ministry.<sup>11</sup> Ali Rıza Pasha was going to be one of the key figures of the 10–13 February government crisis as he was going to be replaced by the decision of Kamil Pasha.

The program of the new government seemed to be describing the characteristics of a transitional government. In the manifesto, it was declared that the primary agenda of the government was to administer the country in compliance with the 'spirit of the constitution' until the opening of the parliament. The government stressed that all orders, suggestions, and instructions which did not comply with the constitution were null and void. The rest of the manifesto was mostly about the economic situation and some general ideas about how to improve it. The last section was about foreign policy.<sup>12</sup> The program seemed to have been prepared in a very short time as it did not outline any definite policies but gave some general ideas for all fields it emphasized. There was no ideological and certain political approach that could be defined as a political view. It was obvious that the government perceived itself as a transitional structure, thus, there was not a certain and clear approach on some problems of the country, such as the problems with Bulgaria and the de facto Austrian occupation of Bosnia. It seemed that policies related to the serious problems of the empire had to wait until the opening of the parliament.

## The return of the exiles

Straight after the promulgation, the political figures who had been banished by the Sultan or had fled abroad started to return to Turkey. A significant political figure amongst the returnees was Prince Sabahaddin, who was going to be a leading figure in the anti-CUP movement. Prince Sabahaddin arrived in Istanbul at the beginning of September and was greeted by his supporters who were aboard ships hired by the Armenian and Greek communities of Istanbul.<sup>13</sup> Another returnee was Nazim Pasha. Nazim Pasha was an exile as a result of accusations about his involvement in an alleged coup attempt in which Fuad Pasha 'the Mad' was accused of being the leader. His military ranks were removed because of the same accusations and he was

demoted to the military rank of private. He had been held in Erzincan, the center of the Ottoman Fourth Army, between 1902 and 1908. He was aboard a ship fleeing to Europe after a successful prison break. Once he heard about the promulgation of the constitution and the general amnesty for political prisoners, he decided to leave the ship when the vessel was passing through the Bosphorus. Nazim Pasha set foot in Istanbul on 3 August.<sup>14</sup> His arrival was well received not only by his future allies but also by his future rivals – the members of the CUP. *Tanin*, a pro-CUP press organ, announced Nazim Pasha's arrival by stating his family ties with the famous former Grand Vizier Âli Pasha<sup>15</sup> and the oppression he suffered. It also underlined that he had been greeted by a crowd of pro-freedom people.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, *İkdam*, which had closer ties with Ottoman liberals and pro-western politicians, announced Nazim Pasha's arrival more attentively. *İkdam* presented Nazim Pasha as one of the most remarkable officers of the commanding staff (of the Ottoman Army).<sup>17</sup> After adding some general information about the people who attended to the greeting, *İkdam* called for a quick reinstatement of his military rank.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the fact that the CUP was very warm to Nazim Pasha – who was a victim of tyranny – he did not have the same feelings towards the CUP. An incident right after Nazim Pasha's arrival might have revealed Nazim Pasha's attitude towards the CUP. Nazim Pasha did not participate in the ceremony in which his removed ranks were reinstated to him. Nazim Pasha was unable to catch the ceremony on time; the ceremony was conducted by Mahmut Muhtar Pasha, the Commander of the Ottoman First Army, without Nazim Pasha's presence.<sup>19</sup> According to Suleyman Nazif Bey, Nazim Pasha's absence from the ceremony was a sign of his hostility towards the CUP.<sup>20</sup>

During the short ministry of Recep Pasha, Nazim Pasha was assigned as the commander of the Ottoman Fifth Army, which was based in Damascus.<sup>21</sup> However, Nazim Pasha rejected the post by claiming that he would not be able to adapt to the climate of the region.<sup>22</sup> In the meantime, Ali Rıza Pasha, commander of the Ottoman Second Army had been commissioned as the new minister. Thus, Nazim Pasha was assigned as the commander of the Ottoman Second Army on 2 September.<sup>23</sup> The assignment of Nazim Pasha to the Second Army was Ali Rıza Pasha's idea.<sup>24</sup> It must be noted that the Second Army, which was based in Edirne (Adrianople), was a strategic army responsible for guarding the main line of the Ottoman-Bulgarian border and also crossing the border of Bulgaria when needed and it was better disciplined compared to the other Ottoman armies.<sup>25</sup>

## The separation

According to Samipaşazade Hasan Bey, during the early days of the revolution, the CUP had 'embraced' Kamil Pasha and brought him to the Grand Vizerate. Kamil Pasha acted closely with the CUP for taking revenge on Sultan Abdülhamid II as well.<sup>26</sup> Not long after the revolution, the ranks within the pro-freedom figures began to loosen. During the early days of the revolution, Prince Sabahaddin drew an image as if he had been working together with the CUP. Nonetheless, he was a fierce supporter of the idea of decentralization, which was never accepted among the leading members of the CUP; thus, a compromise between the prince and the CUP became impossible. The disagreement between the two sides drove Sabahaddin away from the ranks of the CUP.<sup>27</sup>

Sabahaddin Bey was on the verge of becoming a political magnet attracting all the people with different ideas, who were against the CUP for various reasons. The group gathering around Sabahaddin and his ideas, such as Fazlı Bey (also a relative of Sabahaddin), Rıza Nur Bey, and Zöhrap Bey decided to create an alternative political camp and founded a new political party, 'Ahrar Fırkası'.<sup>28</sup> According to Tarık Zafer Tunaya, as early as August 1908, some meetings aiming to form a political party standing against the CUP had already been started by Sabahaddin's supporters. Ahrar had been founded in September 1908.<sup>29</sup> Some of the anti-CUP figures such

as İsmail Kemal Bey, who later worked for the separation of Albania from the Ottoman Empire, and Ali Kemal Bey, the lead columnist of *İkdam* newspaper, joined the ranks of Ahrar.<sup>30</sup>

While the paths were being split, the elections were completed in December 1908 and the result was a decisive victory for the CUP. The CUP won 280 of 281 parliament seats.<sup>31</sup> Since preliminary results of the elections showed the coming victory for the CUP, Kamil Pasha implemented some changes within the cabinet in the favor of the CUP.<sup>32</sup> On 27 November, Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha, who was a statesman known to be respected and even admired by CUP members, was appointed to one of the most important posts within the cabinet, the Ministry of Interior. Another politician well-received by the CUP, Manyasizade Refik Bey, was appointed as the Minister of Justice. On the same day, Hasan Fehmi Pasha was appointed as the head of the Council of State (*Şura'y-ı Devlet*) and Hakki Bey as the Minister of Education.<sup>33</sup>

The parliament had been opened on 17 December. Sultan Abdulhamit II participated in the opening meeting.<sup>34</sup> On behalf of the Sultan, the first clerk of the Sultan's Office, Ali Cevat Bey addressed the deputies. After the address, the Sultan expressed his gratitude and good wishes.<sup>35</sup> The parliament reached the quorum for electing the permanent speaker at the fourth gathering, on 22 December. The elections resulted in a decisive victory for Ahmet Rıza Bey, the Deputy of Istanbul, who had 205 votes from the deputies.<sup>36</sup> Since Ahmet Rıza Bey was one of the members of the CUP's central committee<sup>37</sup>, the result was another victory for the CUP.

There were different voices and ideas in the ranks of the CUP. Not long after the opening of the parliament, in the seventh gathering on 30 December, the CUP deputy Hüseyin Cahit Bey's interpellation about the government's foreign policy<sup>38</sup> caused heat in the Ottoman political scene. However, contrary to Hüseyin Cahit Bey's attempt to obtain a vote of no-confidence against the cabinet, the CUP stepped back and decided not to overthrow the government.<sup>39</sup> In the motion of no confidence, which took place on 13 January 1909, the parliament declared confidence in the government.<sup>40</sup> Due to the divergence between the members of the CUP, Kamil Pasha might have thought that there was no unity between CUP members so he could empower his position on this fact.<sup>41</sup>

During the period, there were some other disputes between the CUP and Kamil Pasha outside of the parliament. One of the crises happened as a result of the visit of the president of the London Balkan Committee, Noel Buxton, and his relatives to Istanbul. CUP members were evaluating this visit as an opportunity to change Buxton's pro-Bulgarian opinions in favor of the Ottoman side. To accomplish this goal, some of the CUP members prepared a tour-like program for Buxton. One of the essential steps of the program was a dinner at Kamil Pasha's house. As this dinner was planned without asking the opinion of Kamil Pasha, the Grand Vizier perceived this act as a *fait accompli*. As he was not asked before the planning, Kamil Pasha refused to open his house for such a reception. Rahmi Bey and İsmail Hakki Bey, who were to inform Kamil Pasha about the planned dinner in his house, reacted negatively and appealed directly to the Sultan. Hence, the Sultan ordered Kamil Pasha to come to the palace. During the meeting a fierce debate took place. Kamil Pasha accused the CUP members of monopolizing the constitution and blamed them of ineptness. İsmail Hakki Bey answered this accusation by accusing Kamil Pasha of widening the gap between the Sultan and the nation. To counter this accusation, Kamil Pasha threatened them with his resignation and to disclose the reasons behind his resignation. Eventually, the dinner plan in Kamil Pasha's house was canceled.<sup>42</sup> There had been other disputes between the sides such as Kamil Pasha's participation in a dinner organized by Ahrar in the honor of the foundation anniversary of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>43</sup>

During the period of the parliament, there was not a significant dispute between the Sultan and the CUP. During the secret congress of the CUP, which was held in Salonika in 1908, the party had already decided to keep Sultan Abdulhamit II on the throne as long as he complied with the constitution.<sup>44</sup> The banquet held by the palace on the last day of 1908 even strengthened relations between the Sultan and the CUP.<sup>45</sup> During the banquet, Sultan Abdulhamit II repeatedly displayed his admiration for Ahmet Rıza Bey, the speaker of the parliament.<sup>46</sup>

The banquet had been well-received by the CUP. Hüseyin Cahit Bey, who was also the lead columnist of *Tanin*, expressed his ideas clearly in this way. According to him, the speech made by Ali Cevat Bey on behalf of the Sultan was 'superior' to the speech he had made during the opening of the parliament. Hüseyin Cahit concluded his article by praising the Sultan and fiercely criticizing Kamil Pasha.<sup>47</sup>

## The government crisis

Kamil Pasha's attempt to relocate 'The Hunter Battalions' sparked the prelude to the government crisis. The Hunter Battalions were troops relocated to Istanbul from Roumelia to protecting constitution. The CUP gave special importance to the Hunter Battalions as they did not trust the troops located in Istanbul. During the period after the promulgation, the Hunter Battalions proved their worth by suppressing an uprising launched by the 'Istanbul troops'.<sup>48</sup>

The disputes between the CUP and Kamil Pasha were not likely to cease. An incident that happened in Janina became a matter of dispute between Kamil Pasha and the CUP. Two battalions located in Janina launched an uprising by requesting discharge from their seven-year-long military service. This uprising was suppressed by other troops deployed to Janina. During this event, rumors were spread, such as that the Greek government was arming the Greek population of Janina for an insurgency against Ottoman rule. Due to these rumors, the Albanian residents of the region appealed to the central government to deploy soldiers to the region.<sup>49</sup> Therewith, Kamil Pasha decided to send some troops to Janina because of the activities of the 'Etnik-i Eteria' Committee and the Greek brigands. According to him, if the required troops had been sent to Janina from the battalions within the ranks of the Ottoman Third Army, the balance of the power within Roumelia would have been destabilized. So he requested that the Hunter Battalions be relocated to Janina.<sup>50</sup>

Ali Rıza Pasha, the Minister of War, clearly revealed his contrarian position within the cabinet and conducted maneuvers in disobedience of Kamil Pasha's order to relocate the battalions. Ali Rıza Pasha referred the order to the General Staff of the Ottoman Army. The General Staff rejected the request by claiming that the distribution of the military troops was a matter that had to be decided and handled by the General Staff, including any possible troop relocation related to the situation in Janina.<sup>51</sup>

For Hüseyin Cahit Bey, the matter of relocation was another opportunity to strike a blow against Kamil Pasha and prove the rightfulness of his opposition to the government. According to Hüseyin Cahit Bey, Kamil Pasha's attempt to oust the Hunter Battalions, which had been considered the protector of the constitution by the CUP, was thought of as preparation for a coup. Hüseyin Cahit Bey hinted that the attempt was directly against the parliament by stating that the parliament felt worried.<sup>52</sup> Other than Janina, similar telegrams that provoked the political scene for deploying soldiers in the region came from Berat and Ergiri (Gjirokastrë).<sup>53</sup> Considering that the fiercest enemies of the CUP, Ismail Kemal Bey and Müfit Bey, were the deputies of the region, the suspicions of the CUP members seemed reasonable.

Another major friction between Kamil Pasha and Ali Rıza Pasha was the question of Bulgaria. The rising tension in the Balkan peninsula had been a major problem during the Kamil Pasha government. During Kamil Pasha's grand viziership, Bulgaria proclaimed its independence on 5 October 1908.<sup>54</sup> In the autumn of 1908, Kamil Pasha asked Ali Rıza Pasha about the combat effectiveness of the Ottoman Army against Bulgaria in case of the need for a military answer. Ali Rıza Pasha stated that the combat efficiency of the army was so poor by saying 'There were even no shoes to cover our soldiers' feet'.<sup>55</sup>

According to Süleyman Nazif Bey, just before the cabinet revision of 10 February 1909, Kamil Pasha asked Ali Rıza Pasha whether the army would be dependable or not in case of necessity (a possible engagement between the two armed forces) during the negotiations with Bulgaria.

Ali Rıza Pasha answered this question by stating that the army, which had lost its effectiveness during the period of tyranny, was in need of hard work at least for a couple of years to be ready for combat. Nazım Pasha, the Commander of the Ottoman Second Army, also received the same question from the Grand Vizier. Nazım Pasha encouraged the Grand Vizier to wage war against Bulgaria by taking all the responsibility on himself and assuring that the army was not only capable of defensive operations but also offensive ones.<sup>56</sup> Considering the deficiencies the army suffered during the period of tyranny, Ali Rıza Pasha's approach was quite plausible. However, Kamil Pasha's insistence on keeping a readily available and battle-prepared army might have been an attempt to solve the problems with Bulgaria, for which he had been criticized in parliament.

Due to the disagreements, relations between the two statesmen had broken down. On 10 February, Kamil Pasha visited Yıldız Palace and took Nazım Pasha with him. He submitted his request for the appointment of Nazım Pasha to the post of Minister of War by referring to his military competence and the progress that the Second Army recorded within a short time under Nazım's command. He also requested the assignment of Hüsnü Pasha as an acting minister in the Ministry of the Navy.<sup>57</sup> Kamil Pasha attempted a *fait accompli* against the parliament and the Sultan by taking Nazım Pasha to the palace with him without consulting anyone. Sultan Abdülhamit, who received Kamil Pasha's request, called Ali Cevat Bey to deliver his opinion to Kamil Pasha. The Sultan stated that since the Minister of Navy, Arif Pasha, had resigned from his post, an appointment of a new minister would be natural and he would surely not reject this request. The Sultan also stated that relieving Ali Rıza Pasha of duty, who was considered very successful by him from the very first day in his post, would be unfair and unjust. Therefore, Nazım Pasha's appointment was rejected.<sup>58</sup>

The rejection of the request drove Kamil Pasha to find another solution in which Ali Rıza Pasha was not being relieved of duty, instead assigning him to an equal or even better post. Hence, Kamil Pasha insisted on his request by remarking on the necessity of the situation and Nazım Pasha's trustworthiness and competency, to Ali Cevat Bey.<sup>59</sup> Then, he attempted to make another submission. In his second submission, he asked for an imperial decree to assign Ali Rıza Pasha to the vacant post of the Commissary of Egypt and the appointment of Nazım Pasha as the Minister of War by raising his rank to 'Birinci Ferik'.<sup>60</sup> The submission had also included the Grand Vizier's request to appoint Hüsnü Pasha as the deputy Minister of the Navy.<sup>61</sup> The imperial decree approving the ministerial appointments including Nazım Pasha's promotion were published later that evening.<sup>62</sup> According to Ali Cevat Bey's record, Kamil Pasha attained the imperial decree after threatening the Sultan with his resignation.<sup>63</sup> According to Ali Cevat Bey's account, the Sultan was against the appointment of Nazım Pasha as he found him suspicious. The Sultan also added that he knew of Kamil Pasha's ambition to be a 'dictator'.<sup>64</sup> After the publication of the imperial decree, Kamil Pasha and Nazım Pasha left the palace.<sup>65</sup>

Other than the appointments in the Ministries of the War and Navy, on 9 February Kamil Pasha assigned Ziya Pasha to the Ministry of Education to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Abdurrahman Efendi.<sup>66</sup> This appointment was also to be criticized by the pro-CUP media organs.

### Press reactions to the new appointments

On the day after the incident, *Tanin* criticized the appointments, especially the change in the Ministry of War. *Tanin* questioned which failures of Ali Rıza Pasha would have been the reason for discharging him. According to *Tanin*, Kamil Pasha not only attempted to expel Ali Rıza Pasha but also took vengeance on Ahmet Muhtar Pasha – the discharged commissar of Egypt. *Tanin* also criticized the choice of the Minister of Education; the new minister, Ziya Pasha had no background in the field of education.<sup>67</sup>

On 12 February, Hüseyin Cahit Bey discussed the incident. Hüseyin Cahit Bey questioned the reasons behind the removal of the ministers and the consistency of the events with the principles of the constitution. He began by discussing the change of the Minister of Education. He asserted that it was natural to assign someone else to the post as the ex-Deputy Minister of Education had resigned. According to him, rumors described Ziya Pasha as a member of the opposition party, Ahrar Fırkası. But the changes of the Ministers of War and Navy were more critical. He stated that the main reason behind the removal of Ali Rıza Pasha was his objection to Kamil Pasha's order to relocate the Hunter Battalions. Hüseyin Cahit Bey also claimed that the other members of the cabinet were not informed about the cabinet revision.<sup>68</sup>

Hüseyin Cahit Bey continued to express his fierce criticism, possibly with the pleasure of turning out to be right about Kamil Pasha. In the 13 February issue of *Tanin*, Hüseyin Cahit Bey wrote another article. In his article, Hüseyin Cahit used the term 'the coup of tyranny' about the incident. He claimed that the government had the intention of closing parliament because of the possibility of some ongoing parliamentary investigation that might decide against the government. He also asserted that closing the parliament was impossible as the CUP held the power. So the government tried ousting Hunter Battalions from Istanbul and started a press campaign against the CUP. Hüseyin Cahit Bey stated that the Ministers of the Navy and Education were known members of the opposition party, Ahrar Fırkası. By infusing Ahrar members into the cabinet, Kamil Pasha tried to show that he was stepping closer to decentralization by gaining the support of the Ottoman-Greek press and supporters of the Ahrar Party. If Kamil Pasha were to be successful in convincing public opinion about the fact that he could change a minister whenever he felt it necessary then he would also remove Nazım Pasha from the post in order to replace him with a puppet Minister of War. Hüseyin Cahit Bey ended his article by asserting that Kamil Pasha found himself strong enough to act like this because of the approval of the parliament that he had received in the last interpellation incident.<sup>69</sup> These last words, of course, were a reproach to the CUP MPs and the higher committee of the party who had rejected supporting the interpellation he gave in the parliament.

In the same issue of *Tanin* another writer, Babanzade İsmail Hakkı, also wrote on the matter. According to İsmail Hakkı Bey, the government secured a vote of confidence from the parliament as a whole. So the Grand Vizier had no right to discharge any minister of the voted government. He could ask the ministers to resign. Even if any ministers resigned of their own free will, the government with new ministers must be voted for to maintain confidence in the parliament.<sup>70</sup>

The first reaction of *Şura'y-ı Ümmet*, the official press organ of the CUP, was a rather bitter approach. In its 11 February issue, the newspaper asked in the headline, 'Is It Change of the Ministers or a Coup of Tyranny?'. According to *Şura'y-ı Ümmet* the changes in the cabinet should have been voted for in parliament. *Şura'y-ı Ümmet* questioned how Kamil Pasha could change ministers who had the confidence of the parliament. According to the newspaper, the incident did not comply with the spirit of the constitution.<sup>71</sup>

As expected, the press organs closer to the opposition took a different approach. Ali Kemal Bey's *İkdam* gave the news on its third page in its 11 February issue. According to *İkdam*, a cabinet revision was an expected matter. *İkdam* needed to underline that despite the expectation of a cabinet revision, they (*İkdam*) did not know which minister had to be changed. *İkdam* gave wrong information, stating that all three former cabinet members resigned of their own free will. *İkdam* also praised the new ministers. The article did not include any criticism about the events or the new ministers.<sup>72</sup> Nonetheless, *İkdam's* first reaction to the cabinet revision was very warm.

As another newspaper close to the opposition, *Serbesti's* approach was rather interesting. On 11 February *Serbesti* announced the cabinet revision positively by remarking that as long as Nazım Pasha stayed on duty, some implementations which were against freedom, such as the Minister of Interior Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha's press regulations, could not be executed. *Serbesti*

directly argued about a possible divergence between two members of the same government. Hence, *Serbести* reflected the incident as a countermove against a minister who was already in the cabinet.<sup>73</sup>

### The fall of the Kamil Pasha government

The day after the Ministers of War and Navy had been changed, on 11 February, some CUP MPs submitted five separate questions about the government. In the first question, Kamil Pasha was invited to explain the recent changes in the cabinet as the cabinet revision widely reshaped the government that had acquired a vote of confidence from the parliament. Other questions were similar to the first one. Some MPs objected that they were not informed about the revision and only learnt about the incident from the press. In the last question, Kamil Pasha was criticized for not taking the necessary actions effectively to make the drafted laws.<sup>74</sup> The strategy of asking five separate questions must have been intended to corner Kamil Pasha by overwhelming him and making him unable to prepare proper answers for each question within an acceptable time. Eventually, the course of events proved that this strategy achieved what had been intended.

As a result of the five questions submitted, the parliament voted to call Grand Vizier Kamil Pasha to answer the questions asked in the parliament.<sup>75</sup> Before answering the questions, Kamil Pasha attempted to conduct maneuvers to strengthen his position. As he had seen that the lobbies were against him, he paid a visit to the palace. According to *Tanin*, he tried to threaten the Sultan by claiming that if he were overthrown there would be a coup enthroning Şehzade Yusuf İzzettin Efendi.<sup>76</sup> Such rumors also found places in the newspapers published on 12 February.<sup>77</sup> Due to the rumors, Kamil Pasha had to publish an official statement about the invalidity of the rumors. In the same statement, Kamil Pasha denied accusations about the matter of relocation and offending the constitution.<sup>78</sup> However, after the cabinet meeting on 11 February, the press asked Kamil Pasha whether he would answer the questions asked by the parliament. His answer was short and certain: 'Yes, the answer is ready.'<sup>79</sup>

The CUP denied the claims in agency telegrams that came from Europe, which had blamed them for a coup attempt to enthrone Yusuf İzzettin Efendi. The CUP emphasized that even before the promulgation of the constitution, they had an article in their internal code for the revolution about keeping the traditional method of enthronement. They also noted that during the party congress held in Salonika 5 months earlier, they had added another article to their code about protecting the Sultan's life and rights so long as he stayed loyal to the constitution.<sup>80</sup>

The 12 February issue of *Sabah* published an interview with Kamil Pasha. In the interview, Kamil Pasha defended the cabinet revision. The Grand Vizier claimed that Ali Rıza Pasha had been informed about his assignment and was content with it. According to Kamil Pasha, the way he did the cabinet revision was appropriate to the constitution. Kamil Pasha was also asked about the rumors claiming that some of cabinet members had resigned due to not approving the cabinet revision. He denied the claims. He also claimed that unlike what the rumors said, the cabinet revision was not related to Ahrar or the CUP.<sup>81</sup>

In the meantime, Ali Rıza Pasha gave an interview to the CUP's official newspaper, *Şura'y-ı Ümmet*. In the interview, Ali Rıza Pasha stated that he had not asked Kamil Pasha to assign himself to the post of Commissary of Egypt.<sup>82</sup> The CUP and its allies were trying to corner Kamil Pasha from each direction. Kamil Pasha's claim about Ali Rıza Pasha in the columns of *Sabah* was denied on the same day by *Şura'y-ı Ümmet*.

With news about resigning ministers in the newspapers on 13 February, the extent of the crisis became clear. According to the news, Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Manyaszade Refik Bey, the Minister of Justice, and Hasan Fehmi Pasha, head of the Council of

State, resigned on 12 February.<sup>83</sup> So as claimed by Süleyman Kani İrtem, during the cabinet meeting on 12 February some of the ministers had asked Kamil Pasha about the cabinet reshuffle. Kamil Pasha answered this question by claiming that the secret reason behind the cabinet revision was to prevent the CUP's coup attempt to enthrone Yusuf İzzettin Efendi. Then the ministers asked him how long he had known about this attempt. The answer was '15 days'. Then, the ministers asked what the evidence of this attempted coup was. Kamil Pasha presented some news and agency telegrams from Europe. The three ministers were not convinced and they resigned.<sup>84</sup>

On 13 February, contrary to his earlier declarations, Kamil Pasha did not stand before the parliament. He only sent a written answer to the call of the parliament. In this answer, the Grand Vizier requested a postponement of 5 days due to the greater interests of the state. He also stated that the appointment of the New Minister of the Navy was made after the resignation of Arif Pasha. On the other hand, the rumors about the attempt to oust the Hunter Battalions from Istanbul were a fabrication for opposing the appointment of the new Minister of War. Kamil Pasha ended his answer by asserting that the personality and patriotism of Nazım Pasha were the most important proof of protecting the constitution.

Some of the deputies stated that a written answer to the call of the parliament was unacceptable. After that, the statement of Ali Rıza Pasha about his unwillingness to be appointed as the Commissary of Egypt was read. The cheer and excitement of the deputies were increased with this statement. After Ali Rıza Pasha's statement, the statement of Arif Hikmet Pasha in which he claimed that he had not resigned but had been discharged by Kamil Pasha, was also read.<sup>85</sup> The general expectation of the parliament was to see Kamil Pasha standing before the parliament on that very day. Therefore, a few deputies, including İsmail Kemal Bey, fiercely defended Kamil Pasha. Due to the interventions made by İsmail Kemal Bey, Ahmet Rıza Bey had to warn him by saying, 'Sir, you're not Kamil Pasha's attorney.'

Meanwhile, a telegram that came from some of the shipmasters of the navy was read in the parliament. In the telegram, the shipmasters protested the change of the ministers and declared that the way the ministers had been changed did not comply with the constitution. After that, the parliament voted to call Kamil Pasha to the second gathering of the day.

Kamil Pasha sent another written answer to the parliament. This time he declared that he had not had enough time to prepare a convincing answer and therefore he would be able to stand before parliament on 17 February. This answer was found unsatisfactory by most of the deputies. While the parliament was preparing a motion of no confidence, the third note of Kamil Pasha arrived at the parliament. In his third note, he threatened parliament that if the insistent calls remained he would resign and put all the responsibility on the parliament for 'the gravity' of the events in foreign politics. Then, he would publish the answer he had been preparing as a press release. This note affected the deputies in a way far from what Kamil Pasha had hoped and they started the vote of no confidence.

Two hundred and seven deputies participated in the voting. Parliament declared no confidence in the government by 196 votes to 8 votes. The eight votes mostly belonged to Albanian and non-Turk deputies. Müfit Bey, the Deputy of Janina wrote 'I assume (Kamil Pasha) resigned' on the voting paper. Two votes, including Müfit Bey's, were invalid and were not counted.<sup>86</sup> The result indicated that the opposition had almost no base in the parliament. This hopeless situation in parliament might have been the reason for the opposition's involvement in the 31 March Incident, which was to happen within a time of less than two months.

### Press reaction to the fall of the government

The fall of the government was the main topic of the Ottoman press the following day. Hüseyin Cahit Bey, whose ideas about overthrowing the government became accepted by the force of

events, said, 'The Ottoman Meclis-i Mebusan (parliament) faced the fiercest enemy of the country yesterday.' According to him, the parliament's vote of no confidence was a matter of siding with tyranny and collapse or freedom and salvation. Thus, the parliament voted for the right side of the paradox. He also stated that the parliament gave only two days to Kamil Pasha to prepare his answer and that was a strategic approach to prevent Kamil Pasha and his supporters from conducting political maneuvers to evade the motion. Hüseyin Cahit Bey expressed that the third answer of Kamil Pasha, which had just arrived right before the voting, made him think that there must have been a person amongst the deputies who was in touch with Kamil Pasha.<sup>87</sup>

Ali Kemal Bey also gave his opinions about the fall of the government. According to him, the way Kamil Pasha changed the cabinet was correct in spirit but wrong in form. However, the parliament might have been acting in moderation. He approved that Kamil Pasha made a mistake by not informing the cabinet members and parliament about the cabinet revision. According to Ali Kemal Bey, parliament could have handled the situation in another and less exciting way. By accusing Kamil Pasha of treachery against freedom, parliament humiliated itself. Ali Kemal Bey claimed that, in foreign politics, Kamil Pasha had served the country well. He also added that the matter was the higher interests of the country and personalities were not important.<sup>88</sup>

On the other hand, İkdam criticized the parliament because Kamil Pasha had been given only two days to prepare for standing before the parliament. According to İkdam, in the developed countries, solving such a crisis would take a week. İkdam meant two days for the answer was a very short time considering similar examples around the world. İkdam also added that according to the 38th article of the constitution the Grand Vizier could postpone the appearance.<sup>89</sup>

The official press organ of the CUP – *Şura'y-ı Ümmet* asked 'to whom are the ministers responsible?' According to the newspaper, the parliament had handled an important matter related to 'the spirit and life of the constitution and the country'. The newspaper tried to scrutinize the possible political camps within the current period and predictable future by drawing attention to the political camp that had supported the government during the no confidence motion.<sup>90</sup> In another article, *Şura'y-ı Ümmet* claimed that public opinion perceived the fall of the government positively. The newspaper also added that the no confidence motion would be a good example for future governments, thus such actions like the last cabinet reshuffle could be prevented.<sup>91</sup>

*Serbesti*, another newspaper that was close to the opposition, conducted an interview with Kamil Pasha. During this interview, Kamil Pasha openly accused Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha of circulating rumors about the dethronement of the Sultan by the CUP.<sup>92</sup> Kamil Pasha also stated that the CUP was the one that had offended against the constitution since it had overthrown his government without giving him a chance to stand before the parliament. He also claimed that he would not make a press release about the reasons behind the cabinet revision, with which he had threatened the parliament during the day when he was supposed to give an answer, due to the possible frustration it could create in public opinion.<sup>93</sup> In the same issue of *Serbesti*, the fall of the government was also examined with an approach defending Kamil Pasha and opposing the CUP.<sup>94</sup>

Another newspaper, *Saadet*, evaluated the reasons and results of the recent events. In the article, Kamil Pasha was criticized for ignoring the internal politics by mostly focusing on foreign relations. The main point of the criticism was the government's lack of law drafts, which had been expected to form the new order based on the constitution. According to *Saadet*, by witnessing the way Kamil Pasha had changed the cabinet, it could be claimed that the age of tyranny was still alive under the name of the constitution. On the other hand, *Saadet* suggested that the ex-cabinet had to be questioned for their actions during the time they had ruled the country.<sup>95</sup>

*Sabah* criticized the way Kamil Pasha acted in the case of cabinet revision. He did not act cautiously nor inform anyone about his intentions. *Sabah* claimed that Kamil Pasha intended

to use the rumors about the dethronement of Sultan Abdülhamid II to attack the CUP. Kamil Pasha's choice to assign well-known supporters of Ahrar to the Ministries of Education and Navy was his second mistake. Moreover, his attempt to relocate the Hunter Battalions aroused the suspicion that he was plotting against the CUP. Sabah asserted that preventing possible clashes between different parties was expected from Kamil Pasha. However, he became a part of the clashes.<sup>96</sup>

Another pro-CUP press organ, *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, examined the events with an angle against Kamil Pasha as expected. According to *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, Kamil Pasha's cabinet revision offended against the constitution. With the addition of the rumors about the dethronement, the current situation became a crisis and caused a wide-scale disturbance in public opinion. As it was told by the newspaper, the Ottoman navy had not recognized Hüsnü Pasha as the Minister of Navy. Instead, they had declared full commitment to the parliament. The Second and Third Ottoman Armies were also uncomfortable with the events. Other than these statements, the editor-in-chief of *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, Hüseyin Kazım (Kadri) Bey narrated his impressions from the parliament meeting that he had watched. He also underlined that Kamil Pasha's statement about the rumors of dethronement within the letter he had sent to the parliament was contradictory to his statement leaking from the cabinet meeting in which some ministers resigned.<sup>97</sup>

A humor magazine, *Karagöz*, also published a caricature about the matter of relocation of the Hunter Battalions. In the drawing, Kamil Pasha was trying to convince a soldier of the battalion to go to Janina for two months. The fictional character, which symbolized the magazine itself, *Karagöz*, was answering Kamil Pasha instead of the soldier: 'No Pasha, he cannot move anywhere from here. (Instead) you could take a rest.'<sup>98</sup>

### Kamil Pasha's explanation

On 4 April 1909, a lengthy statement from Kamil Pasha, in which he described his account of the events that had led the government to fall, was published in the Ottoman press. According to Kamil Pasha, the CUP sent representatives to the army centers, Edirne and Salonica, in order to provoke some army officers by claiming that the last cabinet reshuffle was an attempt to return to tyranny. As a result of this attempt, some of the officers of both armies sent telegrams in which they declared they were ready for the parliament's order to take action against the government. Likewise, some navy officers made a similar declaration. According to Kamil Pasha's claim, the country was in anarchy.

Kamil Pasha stated that there was no clear rule in the constitution about calling the Grand Vizier and Sheikh-ul-Islam to answer in parliament.<sup>99</sup> However, he underlined that he had already stood before parliament on some occasions other than this crisis, in order to draw an example for the future. Kamil Pasha also stated that insisting on obliging the Grand Vizier to be ready on a certain day and time was against the constitutional article about the appearance in the parliament. Furthermore, Kamil Pasha stated that he wanted to stand before the parliament on the day he was called, but the Russian Ambassador to Istanbul, who was ordered from Saint Petersburg to make contact, visited him to discuss international matters about Bulgaria. Hence, he could not attend parliament. Because of some other governmental affairs that had been planned to be handled before the call, he asked to postpone the appearance to Wednesday. He also added that he needed time to gather some documents together, which would be crucial for the answers he was to give to parliament.<sup>100</sup>

According to Kamil Pasha, it was only the parliament which felt disturbed by the events, not public opinion. He claimed that there was a plot against him and if he had gone to the parliament, there could have been some incidents that would offend the honor of the parliament. Therefore, he had sent a note that included the threat to resign by crediting all the responsibility to the parliament, but his note was not answered. Instead, the parliament members were 'forced'

to declare no confidence in him. He also stated that Ahmet Rıza Bey and a couple of parliament members had visited the palace and requested the Sultan to relieve Kamil Pasha of his position before he resigned.

Kamil Pasha agreed that the main objection about himself was the discontent caused by the cabinet revision. According to him, assigning Ali Rıza Pasha to the post of the Commissariat of Egypt was a 'political necessity'. However, he did not mention the exact reason that he called it a 'necessity' or whether it was about internal or foreign politics. He also said that there had been another cabinet revision without any objection.<sup>101</sup> According to Kamil Pasha, it was Nazım Pasha's appointment that disturbed the CUP most. On his account, a member of the CUP, Nazım Bey,<sup>102</sup> visited him in the evening of the day when Nazım Pasha was appointed. Nazım Bey pointed out how bizarre the appointment was found by the CUP. Nazım Bey also asked how Kamil Pasha could conduct such a revision without informing the CUP. Kamil Pasha answered him by saying 'it is nothing extraordinary that requires to be found bizarre'.

Kamil Pasha also complained about the CUP's unnecessary involvement in government affairs. According to Kamil Pasha, CUP was doing this with a claim of the right to check the government until the constitutional order became stabilized. Then, he asserted that Ali Rıza Pasha was unable to restrict the army officers from involving in politics. Due to the inadequateness of Ali Rıza Pasha on the matter, he (Kamil Pasha) chose to assign Nazım Pasha to the Ministry, whose capability to bring order to the troops had been proven by his earlier works in the Ottoman Second Army.

The ex-Grand Vizier mentioned the rumors that he and Nazım Pasha had collaborated to bring back tyranny. In this context, he gave his account about the relocation of the Hunter Battalions. He narrated this incident without relating the dispute during Ali Rıza Pasha's ministry. In his explanation, he only mentioned the events that happened right after Nazım Pasha's appointment. He claimed that he ordered the Ministry of War to fortify Janina with troops because of the rumors about a possible Greek invasion, and the overreaction of the people of the region. Hence, he suggested sending some troops from Istanbul in case there was a lack of available troops within the Third Army. Therefore, Nazım Pasha did not send the Hunter Battalions to the Janina but instead he chose to take other precautions. As Kamil Pasha did not mention the story during Ali Rıza Pasha's ministry and the dispute between them, it seemed as if he was sketching the story to justify his actions. He ended this chapter by stating that he and Nazım Pasha were victims of the tyranny and allegations about their involvement in such crimes were ill-willed rumors.<sup>103</sup>

## Conclusion

The second government that was formed after the promulgation of the constitution was at the same time the only government overthrown by the Ottoman parliament. The period that Kamil Pasha was ruling was also significant due to its nature, which reflected how the political parties perceived the constitution. In this context, it was remarkable that the understanding of constitutional law was mainly based on individual aspects and comments. The relativity about the matter of understanding constitutional law and interpretations based on political aspects became an important area of dispute between the CUP and the opposition. Of course, these understandings were not only affected by purely individual thoughts but also political interests. It could be seen that both sides were stretching their interpretation of the law to the point that their interests required. Nonetheless, there was a sense of truth and goodwill on both sides. Not only were the political sides striving to show their goodwill but also the monarch was trying to reflect his good intentions towards the constitution by leaving some decisions to the politicians, decisions which had been originally granted to the Sultan by the constitution. The Sultan's declaration to give the right to choose the ministers to Kamil Pasha was an example of this.

On the other hand, the emergence of disputes soon after the gathering of the parliament displayed the divergencies between the CUP and Kamil Pasha. The CUP, as the main force

behind the promulgation process and which also lacked the politicians to occupy seats in the government, was trying to infuse its political views into government policies. On the contrary, Kamil Pasha had no intention of giving way to the political aspects of the CUP as he probably considered them inept and not well thought through regarding governmental matters. Being against the CUP's policy of interfering in governmental affairs by using cabinet members close to themselves, Kamil Pasha moved toward the opposition.

This alignment in Ottoman political circles caused a series of crises which eventually ended in the fall of the government. The disputes forced the political parties to interpret the constitution in accordance with their own viewpoints. These varied interpretations could be tracked from the press of the period.

The process and the events within the period were significant in terms of comprehending the confusion of Ottoman political circles about the concept of constitutional administration. There were attempts to fill some gaps in the constitution with the personal opinions of politicians. Different parties interpreted these unclear articles for their own benefit. Those personal interpretations caused a series of disagreements and disputes, which were believed to be unable to be solved by law. These chains of events, which were the results of the 10–13 February Government Crisis, paved the way for a massive upheaval, the 31 March Incident.

## Disclosure statement

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## Notes

1. The word 'freedom' has been chosen for the Turkish Word, '*hürriyet*', and the word 'tyranny' has been chosen for the Turkish Word, '*istibdat*'.
2. For further information about public unrest and meetings before the proclamation, see İsmail Küçükkılıç, *İkinci Meşrutiyetin İlanında Halk Unsuru* [The People as an Element in the Proclamation of Second Constitution] (Ankara: Cedit Neşriyat, 2011).
3. The Council of Ministers minute and the imperial decree dated 23 July 1908 (10 Temmuz 1324 in the Ottoman Rumi Calendar), *Düster – Tertib-i Sani*, vol.1 [The Code: The Second Composition] (Istanbul: Matbaa'yı Osmaniye, 1329), p.2. For further information about the process, see İsmail Küçükkılıç, *İkinci Meşrutiyetin....*
4. İhsan Güneş, *Meşrutiyetten Cumhuriyete Türkiye'de Hükümetler* [The Governments in Turkey from the Constitution to the Republic] (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları 2008), p.29.
5. The Hat't-ı Hümayun (the handwritten document composed by the Sultan) addressing Kamil Pasha dated 9 Rajab 1326 (the day in Islamic Calendar begins on 6 August 1908 around 19:55 and ends on 7 August 1908 around the same time), Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi [Presidency of The Republic of Turkey Directorare of State Archives], Istanbul (Hereafter BOA), İ. DÜİT. 190/62.
6. 'Vezir-i Maal-i Semirim' [My Renowned Vizier], *Tanin*, 8 August 1908, no. 7, p.1. Leaving this decision to the Grand Vizier was a favor to him because the constitution gave this authority to the Sultan. *Kanun-i Esasi* [The Basic Law] (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Ahmet Kemal, 1293 – 1876), p.13.
7. İhsan Güneş, *Meşrutiyetten Cumhuriyete Türkiye'de Hükümetler* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2008), p.61.
8. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, *Siyasal Anılar* [Memoirs in Politics] (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2008), pp.57–58. 'Recep Paşa'nın Vürudu' [The Arrival of Recep Pasha], *Tanin* no.15 (15 August 1908), p.2.
9. Abdulsasır Yiner, 'Müşir Recep Paşa'nın Askeri ve Siyasî Hayatı (1842–1908)' [The Military and Political Life of Marshal Recep Pasha] (PhD Thesis, Istanbul University, 2006), pp.266–71.
10. The news without a headline on *Tanin's* fourth page, *Tanin* no.17 (17 August 1908), p.4.

11. 'Harbiye Nezareti' [The Ministry of War], *Tanin* no.28 (28 August 1908), p.3., 'Harbiye Nazır-ı Cedidi', *İkdam* no.5122 (28 August 1908), p.1.
12. İhsan Güneş, *Meşrutiyetten Cumhuriyete Türkiye'de Hükümetler* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2008), pp.63–66.
13. 'Sabahattin Bey'in Muvasalatı' [The Arrival of Sabahaddin Bey], *Tanin* no. 34 (3 September 1908), p.3.
14. The news without a headline in *Tanin's* fourth page, *Tanin* no: 5 (5 August 1908), p.4; 'Nazım Paşa', *İkdam* no.5098 (4 August 1908), p.3.
15. Nazım Pasha was married to Mehmed Emin Âli Pasha's daughter Zahide Selma Hanım. Zahide Selma Hanım passed away in 1895. İbnül Emin Mahmut Kemal İnal, *Son Hattatlar* [The Last Calligraphers] (Ankara: Maarif Yayınevi, 1955), p.616.
16. The news without a headline on *Tanin's* fourth page, *Tanin* no.5 (5 August 1908), p.4. As Nazım was commander of the Ottoman Army during the Balkan defeat, his military skills became a matter of doubt. Süleyman Nazif Bey was a remarkable example who expressed how and why his thoughts about Nazım Pasha's military skills had negatively changed. For further information, see Süleyman Nazif Bey, *Yıkılan Müessesese* [The Collapsing Establishment] (Istanbul: İlhami – Fevzi Matbaası, 1927). For further information about Nazım Pasha, see Ender Korkmaz, *Harbiye Nazır Nazım Paşa: 31 Mart Vakası – Balkan Harbi – Bab-ı Ali Baskını* [Nazım Pasha the Minister of War: the 31 March Incident – The Balkan War – The Raid on Sublime Porte] (Istanbul: Selenge Yayınları, 2021).
17. The word 'modestness' is chosen for the Turkish word '*istikametli*'.
18. 'Nazım Paşa', *İkdam* no.5098 (4 August 1908), p.3.
19. 'Nazım Paşa'nın İade-i Rütbesi Merasimi' [The Reinstatement Ceremony of Nazım Pasha], *Millet* no:31 (4 September 1908), p.3.
20. Süleyman Nazif Bey, *Yıkılan Müessesese* [The Collapsing Establishment] (Istanbul: İlhami – Fevzi Matbaası, 1927), p.12.
21. 'Reactionaries Replaced', *The Evening News* vol. XXXIII. no.9673, (15 August 1908).
22. Letter from the Ministry of War to the Porte on 30 August 1908, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi [Presidency of The Republic of Turkey Directorate of State Archives], *BOA, İ.AS. 73/55*, Lef 1.
23. The missive given by Kamil Pasha to the Royal Chamber on 31 August 1908 and the Responsive Imperial Decree that was published on 2 September 1908, *BOA, İ.AS. 73/55*, Lef 2.
24. The missive sent by the Ministry of War to the Grandvizierate on 30 August 1908, *BOA, İ.AS. 73/55*, Lef 1.
25. Bekir Sıdkı, *Garp Ordusu Harekâtı – Cavit Paşa Kolu – Vardar Ordusu* [The Campaign of the Army of the West – The Cahit Pasha Corps – The Army of Vardar] (Istanbul: Kitaphane-i Askeriye, 1331), p.4.
26. Samipaşazade Hasan Bey, *Kamil Paşa'ya Bir Nazar* [A glance to Kamil Pasha] (Istanbul: Matbaa'y-ı Hayriye ve Şürekası, 1327), p.4. It must be noted that Hasan Bey was a fierce enemy of Kamil Pasha because of his personal affairs with him.
27. Mahir Said Pekmen, *31 Mart Hatıraları – İsyân Günlerinde Bir Muhalif* [The Memoirs of 31 March – A Contrarian in the Days of Uprising] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2014), pp.42, 63–64.
28. Süleyman Kani İrtem, *31 Mart İsyanı ve Hareket Ordusu – Abdülhamid'in Selanik'e Sürgünü* [The 31 March Incident and the Army of Hareket: The Selanik Exile of Abdülhamid] (Istanbul: Temel Yayınları, 2003), pp.35–36.
29. Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler – Vol 1: İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi 1908–1918* [The Political Parties in Turkey – Vol 1: The Second Constitutional Era] (Istanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları 1989), p.143. According to Tunaya the Ahrar Party was founded on 14 September 1908. In a footnote in his work Tunaya stated that he had an interview with Nureddin Ferruh Bey, a founding member of the Ahrar Party. According to Nureddin Ferruh Bey's memoirs, the Ahrar was founded on 14 September 1908. Due to the 13-day difference between the Ottoman Rumi and Gregorian calendars this date may also be 27 September 1908. Nureddin Ferruh Alkan, *Ahrar Fırkası ve II. Meşrutiyet Anıları* [The Ahrar Party and Memoirs of The Second Constitutional Era] (Konya: Salkımsöğüt Yayınları, 2017) p.44.
30. Süleyman Kani İrtem, *31 Mart İsyanı ve Hareket Ordusu – Abdülhamid'in Selanik'e Sürgünü* (Istanbul: Temel Yayınları, 2003), pp.35, 36.
31. Cezmi Eraslan and Kenan Olgun, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Meşrutiyet ve Parlamento* [The Constitution and The Parliament in Ottoman State] (Istanbul: 3F Yayınları, 2006), p.79.
32. Sina Akşin, *31 Mart Olayı* [The 31 March Incident] (Istanbul: İmge Kitabevi, 2015), p.33.
33. İhsan Güneş, *Meşrutiyetten Cumhuriyete Türkiye'de Hükümetler* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2008), pp.61. Sina Akşin thinks that this cabinet revision was 'in the favor of the CUP'. Sina Akşin, *31 Mart Olayı* (Istanbul: İmge Kitabevi, 2015), p.33. On the other hand; Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha had rejected the offer that came from Kamil Pasha for assigning him to the post. He answered Kamil Pasha by stating that the Monastır Central Committee of the CUP was attacking him as he didn't accept complying with some of their requests. Thus, if he accepted the post, the same committee would try to intervene in the affairs of the ministry. He asked Kamil Pasha to postpone his appointment until the parliament gathered and the ex-

- traordinary circumstances waned. The telegram sent by Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha – the Rumeli Inspector to Grandvizierate on 28 October 1908, BOA. Y.EE.KP. 33/3261, Lef 1.
34. According to Ali Cevat Bey's account, who was the first clerk of the Sultan's office (Mabeyn-i Hümayun), Kamil Pasha threatened the Sultan with his resignation if he did not participate in the opening meeting. Faik Reşit Unat, *İkinci Meşrutiyetin İlanı ve Otuzbir Mart Vakası* [The Proclamation of the Second Constitution and the 31 March Incident] (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2014), p.34.
  35. *Ibid.*, p.35.
  36. *Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi* [The Ottoman Parliamentary Records], Vol. 1, Gathering: 4, 10 Kanunievvel 1324 (23 December 1909), p.42.
  37. Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler – Vol III: İttihat ve Terakki Bir Çağın, Bir Kuşağın, Bir Partinin Tarihi* [The Political Parties in Turkey: Vol III: The Union and Progress A History of an Age, a Generation, A Party] (Istanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları 1989), p.240.
  38. *Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi* [The Ottoman Parliamentary Records], Vol. 1, Gathering: 4, 17 Kanunievvel 1324 (30 December 1909), p.80.
  39. Süleyman Kani İrtem, *31 Mart İsyanı ve Hareket Ordusu – Abdülhamid'in Selanik'e Sürgünü* (Istanbul: Temel Yayınları, 2003), p.67. This decision was the result of a meeting between Kamil Pasha and the CUP leaders – Enver Bey, Talat Bey, and Nazım Bey (the Doctor),
  40. *Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi* [Ottoman Parliamentary Records], Vol 1, Gathering: 11, 31 Kanunievvel 1324 (13 January 1909), pp.175–178.
  41. Fatih Mehmet Sancaktar, *II. Meşrutiyetten Cumhuriyet'e Milli Hakimiyet Düşüncesinin Gelişimi Hüseyin Cahit Örneği* [The Evolution of the National Sovereignty Idea from the Second Constitution to the Republic: Hüseyin Cahit as an Example] (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2009), p.64.
  42. Süleyman Kani İrtem, *31 Mart İsyanı ve Hareket Ordusu – Abdülhamid'in Selanik'e Sürgünü* (Istanbul: Temel Yayınları, 2003), pp.59–62. According to an article published in *Sabah*, Kamil Pasha rejected their request by asserting that the representatives of the CUP addressing him bore no official title. 'Hakikatler' [Truths], *Sabah*, 16 February 1909, no.6966. According to Kamil Pasha's own account, the dinner was canceled, but he accepted Buxton and his companions for tea. Kamil Pasha, 'Kamil Paşa'nın İzahnamesi' [The Explanation of Kamil Pasha], *Serbesti* no.138 (4 April 1909), pp.1–3.
  43. Süleyman Kani İrtem, *31 Mart İsyanı ve Hareket Ordusu – Abdülhamid'in Selanik'e Sürgünü* (Istanbul: Temel Yayınları, 2003), pp.73–76.
  44. Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler – Vol III: İttihat ve Terakki Bir Çağın, Bir Kuşağın, Bir Partinin Tarihi* [The Political Parties in Turkey: Vol III: The Union and Progress A History of an Age, a Generation, A Party] (Istanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları 1989), p.228.
  45. Faik Reşit Unat, *İkinci Meşrutiyetin İlanı ve Otuzbir Mart Vakası* [The Proclamation of the Second Constitution and the 31 March Incident] (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2014), p.39.
  46. 'Ziyafet-i Hazret-i Padişahi' [The Feast Given by His Excellency Sultan], *Tanin* no.152 (1 January 1909), pp.1, 4.
  47. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, 'Nutm-i Hümayun ve Hakimiyet-i Milliye' [The Imperial Address], *Tanin* no:152 (1 January 1909), p.1.
  48. Süleyman Kani İrtem, *31 Mart İsyanı ve Hareket Ordusu – Abdülhamid'in Selanik'e Sürgünü* (Istanbul: Temel Yayınları, 2003), pp.51–53.
  49. *Ibid.*, p.75.
  50. The missive written by Grand Vizier Kamil Pasha to the Ministry of War on 27 January 1909, 'Avcı Taburları İçin Emir Verildi mi?' [Was an Order Given for the Hunter Battalions?], *İkdam* no.5288 (14 February 1909), p.1.
  51. Hüseyin Cahit, 'Tebdil-i Vükela' [The Change of the Cabinet], *Tanin* no:192 (12 February 1909), p.1.
  52. *Ibid.*
  53. The letter written by Grand Vizier Kamil Pasha to the Ministry of War on 10 February 1909, 'Avcı Taburları İçin Emir Verildi mi?' [Was an Order Given for the Hunter Battalions?], *İkdam* no.5288 (14 February 1909), p.1.
  54. Nazif Kuyucuklu, 'Bulgaristan' [Bulgaria], *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, Vol: VI* (Ankara: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1992), p.339.
  55. Ali Fuad Türkgeldi, *Görüp İşittiklerim* [The Things I've Seen and Heard] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1949), p.23. A similar narration about the incident could be read in the 16 February issue of *Sabah*. According to *Sabah*, the members of the CUP suspected that Kamil Pasha was trying to oust the Hunter Battalions from Istanbul by propounding battle preparations against Bulgaria. 'Hakikatler' [Truths], *Sabah*, 16 February 1909, nr.6966, p.1.
  56. Süleyman Nazif Bey, *Yıkılan Müesseseler* [The Collapsing Establishment] (Istanbul: İlhami – Fevzi Matbaası, 1927), p.23. Süleyman Nazif Bey adds that when Nazım Pasha's confidential answer reached Abdullah Pasha, another general of Circassian origin, Abdullah Pasha criticized Nazım Pasha by referring to his (Abdullah Pasha's) recent experience in the general staff working in the Sultan's office, which he had left a couple

of months earlier. According to him, without working seriously for a couple of years, the army would face nothing but certain defeat in a war against Bulgaria.

57. The Report of Ali Cevat Bey – The First Clerk of the Royal Office, *BOA, Y.EE. 94.*
58. Ibid.
59. Faik Reşit Unat, *İkinci Meşrutiyetin İlanı ve Otuzbir Mart Vakası* [The Proclamation of the Second Constitution and the 31 March Incident] (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2014), p.44.
60. A rank one rank under the highest military rank of Marshal (Müşir) in the Ottoman Army.
61. The missive written by Grand Vizier Kamil Pasha in Sultan's Office on 10 February 1909, *BOA, İ.AS. 80/52.*
62. The imperial decree published on 10 February 1909, *BOA, İ.AS. 80/52.*
63. The Report of Ali Cevat Bey – The First Clerk of the Royal Office, *BOA, Y.EE. 94.*
64. Faik Reşit Unat, *İkinci Meşrutiyetin İlanı ve Otuzbir Mart Vakası* [The Proclamation of the Second Constitution and the 31 March Incident] (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2014), p.44. In addition to Ali Cevat Bey's accounts, Celal Bayar narrated that, during the mentioned event, Nazım Pasha presented a letter to the Sultan. According to Bayar's narration, Nazım Pasha assured in this letter that he had no grudge against the Sultan and remarked that he kept the Second Army out of politics. Also, he promised to bring order to the Ottoman First Army which, he believed, was involved in politics. Celal Bayar, *Ben de Yazdım* [I wrote too], Vol:III (Istanbul: Sabah Yayınları, 1997), pp.131–32.
65. The Report of Ali Cevat Bey – The First Clerk of the Royal Office, *BOA, Y.EE. 94.*
66. İhsan Güneş, *Meşrutiyetten Cumhuriyete Türkiye'de Hükümetler* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2008), p.61. Hüseyin Cahit, 'Tebdil-i Vükela' [The Change of the Cabinet], *Tanin* no.192 (12 Şubat 1909), p.1.
67. 'Vükelaca Tebeddülât' [The Change in the Ministers], *Tanin*, *Tanin* no.191 (11 Şubat 1909), p.3.
68. Hüseyin Cahit, 'Tebdil-i Vükela' [The Change of the Cabinet], *Tanin* no.192 (12 Şubat 1909), p.1.
69. 'Sadrazam ve Meşrutiyet' [The Grandvizier and the Constitution], *Tanin* no.193 (13 February 1909), p.1.
70. İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, 'Kabinenin Şekli-Hazırı ve Bazı Nazariyat-ı Siyasiye' [The Current Shape of the Cabinet and Some Political Opinions], *Tanin* no.193 (13 February 1909), p.1.
71. 'Tebdil-i Vükela mı, Darbe-i İstibdat mı?' [Is It a Cabinet Revision or a Coup of Tyranny], *Şura'y-ı Ümmet* no.129 (11 February 1909), p.1.
72. 'Kabine Tadilatı' [The Cabinet Revision], *İkdam*, no.5285 (11 February 1909), p.3.
73. 'Bugünkü Tevcihat' [The Assignment of Today], *Serbesti* no.86 (11 February 1909), p.1.
74. *Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi* [Ottoman Parliamentary Records], Vol. 1, Gathering: 26, 29 Kanunisanı 1324 (11 February 1909), p.571.
75. Ibid, p.572.
76. 'Âdem-i İtimat Kararından Sonra' [After the Decision of No-Confidence], *Tanin*, 15 February 1909, no.195. A report written by Gerard Lowther, the British Ambassador to Turkey, to Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, also reported that such rumors were circulating, but he (Lowther) did not know whether the rumors were true or not. The letter sent by Lowther to Grey on 9 February 1909, *Public Record Office, Foreign Office (FO) 800/79 p.287.*
77. 'Resmi Yalanlar' [The Official Lies], *Tanin* no.194 (14 February 1909), p.4.
78. 'İlan-ı Resmî' [The Official Announcement], *Tanin* no.194 (14 February 1909), p.4.
79. 'Sadrazam Paşa'nın İfadatı' [The Statements of the Grandvizier Pasha], *İkdam* no. 5286 (12 February 1909), p.3.
80. 'Geç Vakit Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti Tarafından Tebliğ Olunmuştur' [Announced by the CUP Lately in the Day], *Tanin* no.193 (13 February 1909), p.3.
81. 'Sadrazam Paşa ile Mülakat' [An Interview with Grandvizier Pasha], *Sabah* no.6962 (12 February 1909), p.3.
82. 'Meşrutiyet İdareye Mühim Bir Darbe' [A Blow Against the Constitutional Administration], *Şura'y-ı Ümmet* no.230 (12 Şubat 1909), p.1.
83. 'Dahiliye Nazırı İstifa Etmiş' [The Minister of Interior has Resigned], 'Hasan Fehmi Paşa Nasıl İstifa Etmiş' [How has Hasan Fehmi Pasha Resigned], *Tanin*, no.193 (13 February 1909), p.3. 'Vükelanın İstifası', *Sabah* no:6963 (13 Şubat 1909), p.1.
84. Süleyman Kani İrtem, *31 Mart İsyanı ve Hareket Ordusu – Abdülhamid'in Selanik'e Sürgünü* (Istanbul: Temel Yayınları, 2003), p.95.
85. It must be noted that Ali Fuat Türkgeldi, the avant-courier of the Grand Vizerate states that he personally saw the resignation of Arif Hikmet Pasha and he could not understand why Arif Hikmet Pasha denied this fact. Ali Fuat Türkgeldi, *Görüp İşittiklerim* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1949), p.23.
86. *Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi* [The Ottoman Parliamentary Records], Vol. 1, Gathering: 27, 31 Kanunisanı 1324 (13 February 1909), pp.590–612. The nine votes (including eight votes of confidence and Müfit Bey's vote) in favor of the government belonged to Aziz Pasha and İsmail Kemal Bey, the Deputies of Berat (Albania), Müfit Bey the Deputy of Argiri (Albania), Abdülhamid Zehravi, the Deputy of Hama (Syria), Rifat, the Deputy of Aleppo, Seyit Muhammed and Abdurrahman Efendi, the Deputies of Hudaydah (Yemen), Muhiddin Efendi and Yorgaki Efendi, the Deputies of Nigde.
87. Hüseyin Cahit Bey, 'Heyet-i Vükelanın Sükûtu' [The Fall of the Cabinet], *Tanin* no.194 (14 February 1914), p.1.

88. Ali Kemal Bey, 'Seyahatten Siyasete' [From the Journey to the Politics], *İkdam* no.5290 (16 February 1909), p.1.
89. 'Buhran-ı Vükela' [The Cabinet Crisis], *İkdam* no.5288 (14 Şubat 1909), p.1.
90. 'Nüzzar Kime Karşı Mesuldur?' [To Whom are the Ministers Responsible?], *Şura'y-ı Ümmet* no:133 (15 Şubat 1909), p.1.
91. 'Kabine Sükutunun Tesiri' [The Impact of the Fall of the Cabinet], *Şura-y-ı Ümmet* no.134 (16 February 1909), p.1.
92. It must be noted that, according to Tanin, it was Kamil Pasha who used these rumors to justify his cabinet revision in the eyes of the Sultan. 'Âdem-i İtimat Kararından Sonra' [After the Decision of No Confidence], *Tanin* no.195 (15 February 1909), p.2. Tanin's claim seems more logical as the CUP was accused of being the perpetrator of the attempt. Circulating such a rumor could provide no to little advantage to the CUP. It seemed as if Kamil Pasha tried to use the well-known anxiety of the dethronement of Sultan Abdulhamid the Second to affect his decision on the matter.
93. 'Sadr-ı Sabık Kamil Paşa ile Mülakat' [An Interview with the Former Grandvizier Kamil Pasha], *Serbesti* no.90 (15 February 1909), p.1.
94. 'Tedbil-i Vükela İzhâr-ı Hakayık' [The Change of the Cabinet The Explanation of the Truths], *Serbesti* no.90 (15 February 1909), p.1.
95. 'Vükela'y-ı Sabıkaya İhtar' [A Warning to the Former Ministers], *Saadet* no.197 (15 February 1909), p.1.
96. 'Hakikatler' [The Truths], *Sabah* no.6966 (16 February 1909), p.1.
97. Hüseyin Kazım Kadri, 'Buhran-ı Hazıra, Tebdil-i Vükela' [The Current Crisis: The Change of Cabinet], *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* no.10003 (14 February 1909), p.1.
98. The caricature drawn on the front of the issue, *Karagöz* no.59 (15 February 1909).
99. The 38th article of Kanun-i Esasi of 1876 was about calling the government members to answer in parliament. There was no clear description that obliged the Grand Vizier to stand before the parliament. In addition, any ministers called by the parliament would be able to postpone answering by taking responsibility. *Kanun-i Esasi* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Ahmet Kemal, 1876), p.13. On the other hand, the article describes the practice of calling the 'ministers'. The title of Grand Vizier was not included in the law. Nonetheless, since the reign of Sultan Mahmut II, the title of 'Başvekil' ('prime minister'), instead of Grand Vizier, had been used as the head of government until 1882. Thus, the Grand Vizier should be perceived as a minister managing the cabinet. For detailed information about the use of 'Başvekil' see Ercüment Kuran, 'Başvekil' [The Prime Minister], *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, Vol: V* (Ankara: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1992, pp.136–37).
100. Nonetheless, the ex-Grand Vizier confessed that the Russian Ambassador's visit was not the sole reason for postponing the appearance.
101. Kamil Pasha was referring to the cabinet revision that was made in favor of the CUP on 27 November as the elections came to be revealed as a victory for the CUP. Sina Akşin, *31 Mart Olayı* [The 31 March Incident] (Istanbul: İmge Kitabevi, 2015), p.33. İhsan Güneş, *Meşrutiyetten Cumhuriyete Türkiye'de Hükümetler* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2008), p.61.
102. The CUP member who was claimed to be visiting Kamil Pasha's house was Dr Nazım who was one of the founders of the CUP.
103. Kamil Pasha, 'Kamil Paşa'nın İzahnamesi' [The Explanation of Kamil Pasha], *Serbesti* no.138 (4 Nisan 1909), pp.1–3. The same text was also published as a standalone booklet. Kamil Pasha, *Sadr-ı Sabık Kamil Paşa Hazretlerinin İzahnamesi* [The Explanation of the Former Grandvizier Kamil Pasha] (Istanbul: No information of the publisher is given, 1327 (the Rumî calendar year between 14 March 1911 and 13 March 1912 in the Gregorian calendar).