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**From Erzurum to Sivas:  
Congresses Period in the  
Independence War**

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## **From Erzurum to Sivas: Congresses Period in the Independence War**

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### **Abstract**

The process going from Erzurum to Sivas is a period when power struggle between Istanbul Government, which had tied its hopes to the favor of occupying forces and preferred dynasty family's interests over nation's interests, and nationalist-revolutionist Ankara Government, became heated. This period is worth noticing since Turkish national resistance movement had settled down. Opinions' fight concerning Mustafa Kemal name, shaping of general hierarchy within nationalist leadership, national powers' struggle to survive in hard times at the start of struggle expose the vital importance of Erzurum-Sivas congresses period in terms of near history. In that respect, it will not be wrong to characterize Erzurum-Sivas congresses period as, 'A historical cross section, in which a nation has escaped from confusion and feeling of being crushed and started to recreate its identity as a whole.' This period is also a "*waterline mark*" that crystallizes the transition from Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic.

**Keywords:** Erzurum Congress, Sivas Congress, national-democratic leadership, Otoman Empire, nation-state, mandate question, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

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The first moment that Turkish nation proved it was a ‘modern nation in the Western sense’ to both occupying forces and powerful Western civilizations is the period of congresses gathered in Anatolia. Congresses period, when resistance movements in bits were gathered under the same flag and fundamental principles of the national resistance movement were determined, is a historical haunting place that documents manifesting Kemalist Revolution’s determinism were declared. This period is also a *waterline mark* that crystallizes the transition from Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic. This study shall try to explain the turning points, when Turkish national independence struggle’s ‘burning fire’ has got out of local solution searches and encircled all Anatolia, on the axis of Erzurum and Sivas congresses.

*On the way to Erzurum*

Mustafa Kemal had left Amasya and set out to Erzurum together with Rauf Bey and those being with him on May 26, 1919. There was news of possible difficulties they could face at Sivas, where he intended to stop by while going to Erzurum Congress. A military unit was ordered to follow him and not to cut contact. A conspiracy was prepared to arrest him at Sivas, with the order of Istanbul Government. Thus the congress would be prevented and national movement would be strangled before it was born. Istanbul had assigned an ex-general staff officer named Ali Galip Bey to Elazig governorship and sent him to Sivas. New governor had put notices up the walls and proclaimed Mustafa Kemal to be a ‘Traitorous, rebellious, dangerous man’.

The hard trip that lasted to July 3 finally came to an end and Mustafa Kemal arrived at Erzurum. Official dismissal decision was conveyed to him within the process he was at Erzurum. Setting forth final opinion and dismissal adventure, which had started on July 8 finished in the evening of July 8/9. Sultan was informing that he should come back to Istanbul after taking two months' of staying at Anatolia and that he took guaranty from English that Pasha would not be mistreated. Mustafa Kemal conveyed first to Ministry of War at 22.50, then to Sultan himself at 23.00 that he had resigned from his military profession along with his duty. Mustafa Kemal had left military profession, which he valued as much as his life, and left what the future held for him in nation’s generosity and compassion. (ATATURK-I, 1999: 65)

Kazim Karabekir had managed to save and keep a strong military force in the East alive. 40 thousand soldiers were left for Ottoman State at the end of the war, and one third of these were left under Karabekir’s command. Ottomans’ worries concerning Armenian assaults, which were going to come forward after war, had a big role in this. Karabekir was respected and loved as a father in the East. Erzurum and the population of its surroundings was one tenth of what it was before the war. Kazim Pasha was trying to unearth nation's will and provide the army with some maneuver area. As an officer loyal to his traditions, he had said he would obey the orders of his superiors when he was asked what he would do in case of a possible order to abandon Erzurum. But for him, the fact which is even above the government was nation’s will and the main goal of congress should recognize this will, and at least show everyone that Eastern provinces, which were in good condition in terms of military, were not convicted to despair. For this reason, Kazim Pasha had joined Mustafa Kemal and his friends’ discussions for gathering Sivas Congress and insistently suggested to be gathered in Erzurum first.

*Resignation from military profession*

Kazim Karabekir welcomed Mustafa Kemal with a ceremony indicating the devotion of this Eastern province to him. It was certain that Mustafa Kemal, who was preparing to quit military profession and face towards people, needed such a public demonstration. When he was informing Erzurum public of his resignation, he was going to indicate that he would take

part in holy national duty as a citizen from that time on. But there were some questions in Mustafa Kemal's head. For him, public would want to see soldiers, whom they always trusted and entrusted their lives, in imposing uniforms. He was anxiously trying to determine what was going to happen if no one respected him when he took off his uniform.

However, problems were not limited to this. Delegates joining meeting were thinking of limiting their mission with the condition of Eastern provinces. They were going to come, discuss and agree upon a regional problem, and especially focus on Armenian threat. Delegates were going to be either notables or various tribe leaders and Lazistan representatives. Only value Mustafa Kemal seemingly shared with them was that pasha was against the idea of establishing an Armenian state. Development of electing Mustafa Kemal, who came from West and wanted congress to undertake the mission of leading national congress, as Chairman at Erzurum was odd at the beginning. Besides, some delegates still supporting Progress and Union were considering Mustafa Kemal as an enemy. These problems were overcome by the influence of Kazim Karabekir. Karabekir had majority of delegates to appropriate the idea that the right way was to gather around Mustafa Kemal and two seats emptied by two delegates' resignation were left for Mustafa Kemal and Rauf Orbay.

### *An interesting timing*

Dates that Erzurum Congress gathered and was unable to gather are highly interesting. First, Erzurum Congress was decided to be held in July 10. Constitutional Monarchy was declared in July 10, 1324. In other words this was *Liberty day*. (AKSIN, 1998: 472 – 473) Delegates were unable to join the congress at determined date due to the bad transport conditions and obstruction of some governors supporting Istanbul. (DURSUNOGLU, 1946: 112) So arrangement committee announced that they had postponed the congress for 2 weeks. Delegates who arrived at Erzurum stayed guest near their acquaintances or those from the public that opened their home. 2 weeks was too much for postponement, but July 23, which was announced as the day congress would gather, was a conscious preference. Because, with the changes made in 1917, Julian calendar was brought to Gregorian calendar level. As of the time difference Liberty Day was celebrated on July 23. Arrangement committee, by cherishing an extremely ideological and conscious tactic, was absolutely wishing to open the congress on Liberty Day.

Eastern Provinces Defense of National Law Association and Trabzon Protection of National Law Association were arranging the congress. East Anatolia Defense of Law Association name was determined during the congress. Decisions that came out of the congress, which continued for 14 days, were as follows:

- ‘- Parts of motherland within national borders must be taken as a whole, they cannot be separated.
- Be that as it may, nation shall resist and defend in case foreigners enter our lands and interfere with our operation and Ottoman Government is dissolved.
- If Istanbul Government is not strong enough to preserve independence and ensure security, a temporary government shall be established in order to achieve these goals. Members of this government shall be assigned by national congress. If congress has not been held, this assignment shall be done by Representation Committee.
- To render National Forces and national will active is the basic principle.
- No privileges that can enable political superiority and harm our social balance can be provided for Christian minorities.
- Guidance and protection of foreign countries cannot be accepted.
- We shall operate to gather National Assembly as soon as possible and ensure government operations are conducted within Assembly control.’ (ATATURK-I: 89)

*Transition to nation-state process and the situation of Istanbul*

Representation Committee was also prohibiting migration unless necessary and, reminding that majority of those who lived at the borders when war ended were Muslims, exclaiming that borders in question would not be separated from country's land in the congress. *Any act* against borders were to be considered as Greek and Armenian trick. But both the stress put on borders when war ended and the fact that people would defend their rights against any kind of violation towards borders were indicating that the congress had exceeded regional matters and gained a national characteristic; because, it was manifesting that it was not only Armenians, whose *any kind of* attacks would be resisted. In other words, national forces would resist all violations regardless of the attacker, whether it is Armenian, Greek, Italian, French or English. Mustafa Kemal, influencing the congress, had drawn Turkey's new borders by jumping to foreground, which was in accordance with his leadership qualities. These borders were covering the line drawn by Turkish bayonet on October 30, 1918 truce. Thus nationalists were giving up the claim that they had right on Arabian lands, and they were heading towards a realistic goal, which was based on Turks. This goal was, whether its name was given that day or not, a *nation-state* in Western terms. Erzurum Congress was adding public support to Amasya Circular goals determined by a narrow cadre of Turkish high-military and strengthening this circular's legitimacy.

Istanbul Government, which had tied all its hopes to *Paris Conference*, was literally *kicked out* of the conference. In fact, there were lots of reasons for Istanbul Government to hope from negotiations. Most of all, a right that was not given to Germany and Austria was granted to Ottomans. Austria and Germany were to listen the meeting as audience and accept their fates. But victors had granted Ottoman State an opportunity and right to talk for telling its complaints. Damat Ferit had gone to victors with a thick file prepared during his meetings with Vahdettin. (DURAL, 2004: 271-273)

These requests were considered as *insolence* by victorious states' representatives and foreign media. Obviously Padishah had wished to request very much and leave the table with all concessions he could get, but his weapon had turned out badly. Victorious states were angry at Ottoman pasha for sitting at the table not like a defeated state but as a victorious state. Ottomans were making fun of Europe, which had bestowed enough favor by granting the right to speak. Memorandums were ignored and Damat Ferit was informed that things were only going to mix up more if he stayed at the conference any longer. Ferit Pasha was literally *kicked out of the door* at Paris Conference in July, 28. (AKSIN: 399-402)

*Decisions become general.: From Erzurum to Sivas*

Mustafa Kemal had to deal with congress problems and the business of establishing National Forces as well as his political studies. He was increasing the denseness of administrative cadre lines by bringing commanders devoted to him both with themselves and with civilian administrators. Moreover, he was pacifying some conservative officers within the army, who were blindly devoted to Istanbul, by the help of his friends at the Ministry of War and General Staff Chief Cevat Pasha. Though Istanbul was trying to replace these systematically cleaned officers with the new ones, the resistance of Anatolia was leaving these attempts mostly fruitless. Most important of all, he had seized telegraph centers after he returned from Amasya and took all civilian governing mechanism of Middle Anatolia under his control. Central assignments were still holding the possibility of putting nationalists out of action through their pressure. Focusing of Anatolia to a single center and making Istanbul's plans fruitless was possible through wholly controlling communication network. Mustafa Kemal had seen the function of telegraph offices during the declaration of 2<sup>nd</sup> Constitutional Monarchy with his own eyes.

National Sivas Congress was gathered at Sivas High School at 14.00 on September 4. Sessions would continue for one week. Decision made in Amasya was at last actualized and



participation was tried to be kept high by conducting correspondence with provinces from that day on. But the result was not very positive. 31 delegates had participated in the congress, and participation was lower even than Erzurum. Even Sivas was being represented with one delegate. But participation to the congress had been expected to reach 120. Total number of participants, including those representing eastern provinces, reached only to 38. Rasim Bey joined the congress on behalf of Sivas by himself. Since there were no delegates coming from occupied regions, Eastern Black Sea and Southern provinces, only one fourth of Turkish lands were represented in Sivas. Mustafa Kemal was spreading the regional decisions made in Erzurum to all country by generalizing them in Sivas, and consequently solving legitimacy problem completely, in his mind.

### *Mandate question*

In fact Sivas Congress was opened with a total despondency and disappointment and nationalist forces were not able to catch the opportunity to speak until the last day of sessions. This has various reasons. The most serious problem that little number of Kemalists had to face is the mandate question. A lot of intellectuals, Halide Edip being foremost, were pressurizing the congress from outside for the acceptance of USA mandate and even Mustafa Kemal's closest friends were positive to this idea. Moreover, even Ismet Pasha had sent a letter, which defended USA mandate, to be submitted to Kazim Karabekir. Izzet Pasha had also delivered a proposal of similar opinions to Sivas. (KARABEKİR, 1960: 170–177) Mandate supporters had brought an American journalist named Browne to watch the congress. But presence of Browne, who was cheek by jowl with US Navy Forces and suspected of being a *secret service member* had narrowed Kemalists' movement field. Just as Mustafa Kemal sensed they would be defeated and mandate supporters were near victory, Istanbul centered English supported Ali Galip incident exploded and the air of congress turned opposite way around.

Another difficulty Mustafa Kemal faced was the fact that even his closest friends would feel discomfort of his being elected as Congress Chairman. Rauf Bey was suspecting that Mustafa Kemal Pasha would distinguish himself rapidly and become a *Tyrant*. Kara Vasif, Bekir Sami, İsmail Hilmi and Rauf Beys, who were gathered at Bekir Sami Bey's house, were on a consensus to prevent Mustafa Kemal from being elected as chairman. Moreover, Rauf Bey told this matter to the face of Mustafa Kemal and he was rebuffed by Pasha. In spite of everything, Mustafa Kemal managed to be elected as chairman for a majority of votes, against three opposition votes. (AYDEMİR-II: 121) On the other hand all through the congress the mandate supporters were motivated by following basic start points:

Instead of independence limited to 2-3 provinces, mandate would have to be preferred on the condition of recognizing the rights of constitutional monarchy and representation at foreign countries covering all Ottoman property. Wilson and congress would have to be appealed in order to let USA hear not several persons' but all nations' voice: 1- Establishment of a just government. 2- Spreading of General Education. 3- Ensuring religion and sect freedom. 4- Ending secret agreements. 5- USA's acceptance of mandate covering general Ottoman property. (KANSU-I, 1968: 185-186)

Halide Edip was claiming that American Mandate seemed to be the *least dangerous way of solution* when looked from Istanbul. By means of American Mandate Turkey would be protected from the wishes of foreign minorities, Turkish peasant would be educated and modernized, and the country would be protected from European Imperialism. USA had managed all these at Philippines and it was the only power that could move Turkey to modern civilization level without suppressing. Louis E. Browne was sent for Sivas Congress, again by the advice of Halide Edip. Mustafa Kemal welcomed Mr. Browne well. When he was asked whether Sivas Congress would make a decision that calls America to accept mandate, Mustafa Kemal made a diplomatic maneuver and requested guarantee from collocutor that

USA would accept all conditions discussed. Browne reminded that he was there as a journalist and authority to grant guarantee was not his.

In fact the first 3 days of the congress passed by discussing whether committee gathered in Sivas would be related to politics or not, preparing oath texts, announcing no relation could be found between Unionism and congress, and preparing the writing that was going to be sent to Sultan. Refet and Rauf Beys were claiming mandate question, possibly surprising Mustafa Kemal. Refet Bey was seeing USA mandate as the *better of the worse* and claiming that Turkish nation had not other option. According to Refet Bey, who claimed mandate would not harm independence, a nation that entered 20<sup>th</sup> century with 500 million debts and 10-15 annual income would not be able to live without outside help. A war with Greece could not be endured. USA mandate would help finding support-guarantor and prevent more separation of the borders. (ATATÜRK-I: 145-147)<sup>1</sup> (İGDEMİR, 1969: 71)

#### *Fine diplomacy at the congress*

After a while mandate discussions would flow to two different directions. Some mandate supporters were defending that a direct application concerning mandate would have to be submitted to USA and American authorities would have to be activated. According to the proposal leaded by Refet Bele and supported by Kara Vasif and Ahmet Nuri, a delegation would have to be sent to USA with an American ship in secrecy and communication would have to be conducted. (İGDEMİR: 60–62) At last, a conciliatory solution proposed by Rauf Bey was decided. In fact this way was among the solutions closest to independency concerning mandate. American Congress would be requested to send a commission in order to inspect country and prepare a report about its real situation. This demand was transmitted to American State with a telegraph that included information requested concerning congress and signed by Mustafa Kemal, Rauf Orbay and other several people. Though Mustafa Kemal tried to weaken letter's content in the Speech by claiming that he did not know whether the letter was sent or not, it is interesting that this letter was found among disclosed secret USA files. Experts are characterizing letter's sending issue as tactical in two aspects. One of these tactics is to intimidate the palace, which relied on English policy and prove Anatolian movement could have find *friends*. According to second and stronger view, Mustafa Kemal felt he had to act in such a way in order not to offend his friends, whom he started with, and to finish mandate discussions *in a proper fashion*.

As a matter of fact, this letter was enough for calming down mandate supporters. Also it was seen, as Halide Edip stressed, that USA was not willing to undertake the responsibility of a country so far from its lands. USA was wishing to divide the country into three parts and removing Turks from Europe, instead of regarding Ottomans as a whole. In other words, USA was not going to agree to enter into an adventure, unlike mandate supporters claimed. It was stressed in secret American files that Turks were not capable of governing themselves or anybody else, but it would be a valuable attempt to improve this nation. American intelligence experts were indicating that leaving Turks at Istanbul would eventually necessitate Turkey to enter a war against Russia and Greece. (DURU, 2001: 37–38)

#### *Ali Galip conspiracy and Sivas Decisions*

While mandate discussions were going on in Sivas, news was echoing around that Ali Galip, who was directed by Istanbul Government and palace and supported by the English, would raid Sivas and dissolve the congress. Ali Galip, who was first Elazig Governor and then assigned to Sivas Governorship and Commandership, was going to get help from the English, make Kurds rebel with the funds allocated for him and end Sivas Congress with a

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<sup>1</sup> It is told in the Speech that similar ideas concerning money problem were also repeated by Kara Vasif Bey.

sudden raid. One of the most important duties of Ali Galip was to remove or arrest and bring distinguished names of nationalist leadership, especially Mustafa Kemal, to Istanbul for trial. (AKSIN: 542) Bedirhan brothers, who were leaders of Kurdist- separatist movement in Europe, and an English officer was ready at Elazig.

As the news was spread in Sivas, tension reached at its peak. First, Mustafa Kemal was far from collecting 20 soldiers and defending the congress. Military offices he appealed wanted him to keep them out of this matter. After a while, Mustafa Kemal activated some region commanders and started to follow Ali Galip's trail. When he robbed government safe, Ali Galip was frightened and ran away. Mustafa Kemal became angry at military posts that slipped Ali Galip through their fingers when they just cornered him and submitted the conspiracy attempt to Sivas Congress. English officer, who was ready at Elazig in order to help Ali Galip, found the solution in running away to Aleppo. Air in Sivas suddenly became reversed and members, who were still trusting Istanbul, changed their minds. Delegates, turning towards Kemalists with a big enthusiasm, embraced nationalist leadership's demands unlike expected at congress that started very weak and hit hard by numerous problems.<sup>2</sup> Regional decisions in Erzurum were generalized to nation and Kemalist movement became public's only hope by turning into a legitimate force based on people. Mustafa Kemal lists acquisitions acquired from Sivas decisions as the following in the Speech:

1- Name of the association was 'Şarki Anadolu Müdafaai Hukuk Association', now became 'Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaai Hukuk Association'.

2- The sentence, 'Representation Committee represents all Eastern Anatolia' was replaced with 'Representation Committee represents all country'. Six persons were added to members.

3- The sentence, 'Cooperative defense and resistance principle is accepted since any occupation and interference with our work shall be deemed as establishing Greek and Armenian organizations,' was replaced with, 'Cooperative fighting and struggling principle is accepted for stopping any occupation and interference with our work and especially actions that aim at establishing Greek and Armenian organizations.'

Difference in these two sentences is definitely huge in terms of meaning. In the first one, it is not said that we shall act hostile and resist Allies. This aspect is clearly indicated in the second one.

4- Problem forming the fourth clause of regulations caused discussions. Clause was the following:

'If it is seen that Ottoman Government releases and is forced to be not interested in these places (meaning Eastern Provinces) due to foreign states' pressure, to determine and fix how it shall be acted administratively, politically, militarily' in other words to establish a temporary government.

Covering and general phrases like, 'releasing or not being interested in any part of our country' were put instead of 'these places' to the clause in Sivas Congress Regulations.' (ATATÜRK-I: 121)

Decisions were clear; congress would deal with both politics and governing. Ottoman's submissive politics was literally opening nationalist leadership's front and seeds of a resistance totally opposite of Istanbul were being sprinkled in Anatolia. Representative Committee Chief Mustafa Kemal was brought to nation-wide chairmanship of independence favoring national-democratic movement.

First, Ministry of Internal Affairs was called near machine and requested to deliver congress decisions to Sultan at Istanbul. When Minister refused to do so, tense discussions took place between Istanbul and Sivas. Minister was claiming that Unionists were traitors and accusing his Sivas collocutor for selling themselves to English. Mustafa Kemal, just like at a battle field, was replying his collocutor instantaneously as if rushing enemy trenches. It would

<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> volume of the Speech and 1<sup>st</sup> volume of Aksin's "İstanbul Governments and National Struggle" can be referred for detailed information on Ali Galip incident and change of attitude at Sivas.

be wrong to directly attack Sultan and making palace a direct target in this period, public could be confused. Mustafa Kemal, fully aware of Sultan's real intention, was improving new moves and accusing Damat Ferit and government instead of opening a new front against Vahdettin. The only guilty was Damat Ferit and his cabinet, who had blocked *worthy Turkish sultan* and nationalist leadership and misinformed Padishah. If Sultan had reached the truth, he would not keep this miserable government in its place for one more minute! Telegraph was requesting Padishah to establish a new government consisting of honorable persons. Cabinet would have to be investigated as soon as possible and those who committed the crimes in questions would have to be punished properly.

Kemalists were watching what was going on beside telegraphs without blinking their eyes. Military authorities, who controlled telegraphs, were acting just as the same. Istanbul telegraph house repeated that they would not open Palace connection at 5.00 on September 12. Mustafa Kemal issued a circular and announced that the existing government was not legitimate and all official ties, post, telegraph communication with Istanbul government was cut until a legitimate government came to power.

### *Vahdettin's historical Error*

Istanbul Government was, in appearance, hiding Sivas decisions from sultan, but in fact Vahdettin was aware of all developments. Mustafa Kemal knew how sly and a keen enemy of national movement Vahdettin was, but he was unwilling to take the throne against him and not to conflict with the traditional loyalty of public to throne. Addresses directed towards palace from Anatolia were always full of respect and loyalty. Mustafa Kemal knew that it was among general leadership secrets to say the necessary when suitable time came. He would have to hide his true feelings for throne for now and direct criticism arrows towards Damat Ferit. It was crucial to overthrow Ferit Pasha, who always acted together with local-foreign compradors against Anatolia movement, and end 3<sup>rd</sup> Ferit Government. Overthrowing Ferit Pasha also meant causing palace to step back. Mustafa Kemal was also aware of the fact that a possible cabinet change would enable the possibility of becoming Minister for some nationalists in Istanbul.

Vahdettin made his *historical error* while he was evaluating Sivas Congress decisions. Just like any other king, he was unable to digest modern concepts like nation, nation-state. He had been a sultan that took as much land as possible from the ultimate treaty in his head. (TUNAYA, 1970: 178) Vahdettin valued land. Evaluating Sivas Congress decisions in his palace, Vahdettin knew he would have to make a statement sooner or later. Either he would adopt Sivas Congress decisions and prevent nationalist leadership to touch him forever, or he would stand by his son-in-law and put front a very important antinomy. It would not be easy to overthrow or fight with a sultan who *supported* congress decisions, even supposedly. Vahdettin, making a strategic error, gave a chance to Mustafa Kemal and applied the second formula. He supported his son-in-law Ferit. (ATATÜRK-III, 1999: 1401-1403)

In fact, announcement made from the palace eventually destroyed Vahdettin. Accusing nationalist leadership, who aimed at overthrowing existing government with all their powers and submitted national reaction to sultan, of creating duality in the country was showing that there were no common ground between sultan and nationalists. Mustafa Kemal was going to use the Sivas interpretation of Padishah along with his devotion to the English and his attitude against National Forces and shape his propaganda around these three factors when dissolving sultanate. The attitude of Vahdettin favoring Ferit Pasha, which sickened national forces and Anatolia reacted greatly, is so important that some commentators claim it would be very difficult to declare Republic if Vahdettin had, even supposedly, made announcement favoring Sivas. Those who defend this view add that government after Independence War would not be Republic but Constitutional Monarchy. (AKŞİN: 595) Nevertheless, claims of passing to absolute monarchy after independence if Vahdettin embraced Sivas decisions are debatable. (GOKBILGIN, 1965: 41-42)

*Conclusion*

The process going from Erzurum to Sivas is a period when power struggle between Istanbul Government, which had tied its hopes to the favor of occupying forces and preferred the interests of dynasty family over those of nation, and nationalist-revolutionist Ankara Government, became heated. Relations stretched by mutual diplomacy games and Istanbul centered provocation-setting ups were proving that Turkish nation was not going to exist with a reactionary government type that hides behind Ottoman Empire's name in 20<sup>th</sup> century.

This period is worth noticing since Turkish national resistance movement had settled down. Opinions fighting concerning Mustafa Kemal's name, shaping of general hierarchy within nationalist leadership, national powers' struggle to "survive" in hard times at the start of struggle expose the vital importance of Erzurum-Sivas congresses period in terms of near history. Determination of transition from Islamic community tradition to national culture as the fundamental goal without naming it is the permanent inheritance of congresses. Especially the date determined for Erzurum Congress is a concrete proof that shows which values within Western civilization Kemalist leadership took as a model for themselves. In that respect, it will not be wrong to characterize Erzurum-Sivas congresses period as, 'A historical cross section, in which a nation has escaped from confusion and feeling of being crushed and started to recreate its identity as a whole.'

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