

their country. Standing on the brink of the dark abyss which yawned before their eyes, they racked their brains to discover a way out of the danger.

Here I must add and explain a very important point. The Nation and the Army had no suspicion at all of the Padişah-Caliph's treachery. On the contrary, on account of religious and traditional ties handed down for centuries, they remained loyal to the throne and its occupant. Seeking for means of salvation under the influence of this tradition, the security of the Caliphate and the Sultanate concerned them far more than their own safety. That the country could possibly be saved without a Caliph and without a Padişah was an idea too impossible for them to comprehend. And woe to those who ventured to think otherwise! They would immediately have been looked down upon as men without faith and without patriotism and as such would have been scorned.

I must mention another point here. In seeking ways to save the situation it was considered to be specially important to avoid irritating the Great Powers — England, France and Italy. The idea that it was impossible to fight even one of these Powers had taken root in the mind of nearly everybody. Consequently, to think of doing so and thus bring on another war after the Ottoman Empire, all-powerful Germany and Austria-Hungary together had been defeated and crushed would have been looked upon as sheer madness.

Not only the mass of the people thought in this strain, but those also who must be regarded as their chosen leaders shared the same opinion. Therefore, in seeking a way out of the difficulty, two questions had to be eliminated from discussion. First of all, no hostility was to be shown towards the Entente Powers; secondly, the most important thing of all was to remain, heart and soul, loyal to the Padişah-Caliph.

Now, Gentlemen, I will ask you what decision could have been arrived at under such circumstances for salvation.

As I have already explained, there were three propositions that had been put forward:

1. To demand protection from England;
2. To accept the United States of America as a mandatory Power.

The originators of these two proposals had as their aim the preservation of the Ottoman Empire in its complete integrity and preferred to place it as a whole under the protection of a single Power, rather than allow it to be divided among several States.

3. The third proposal was to deliver the country by allowing each

district to act in its own way and according to its own capability. Thus, for instance, certain districts, in opposition to the theory of separation, endeavoured to remain an integral part of the Empire. Others holding a different opinion already appeared to regard the dismemberment of the Empire as an accomplished fact and sought only their own safety.

My above explanations are inclusive of the leading motives of these three kinds of propositions.

I did not think any of these three proposals could be accepted as sagacious, because the arguments and considerations on which they were based were groundless. In reality, the foundations of the Ottoman Empire were themselves shattered at that time. Its existence was threatened with extermination. All the Ottoman districts were practically dismembered. Only the father land, affording protection to a mere handful of Turks, still remained, and it was now suggested also to divide this. Such expressions as: the Ottoman Empire, Independence, Padişah-Caliph, Government — all of them were mere meaningless words.

Whose existence was it essential to save? And with whose help? And how?

Therefore, what could be a serious and correct resolution?

In these circumstances, one resolution alone was possible, namely, to create a New Turkish State, the sovereignty and independence of which would be unreservedly recognised.

This was the resolution we adopted before we left İstanbul and which we began to put into execution immediately after we set foot on Anadolu soil at Samsun.

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These were the most logical and most powerful arguments in support of this resolution:

The main point was that the Turkish nation should live in honour and dignity. Such a condition could only be attained by complete independence. No matter how wealthy and prosperous a nation is, if it is deprived of its independence it no longer deserves to be regarded otherwise than as a slave in the eyes of civilised world.

To accept the protectotare of a foreign Power is to admit lack of all human qualities, weakness and incapacity. Indeed, it is impossible to envisage people who have not been humiliated willingly accept a foreign master.