

SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS TURKEY
1920-1923

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ABSTRACT

SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS TURKEY (1920-1923)

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This research is a case study, which aims at examining Soviet policy towards Turkey by contextualizing it within the complexity of post-war world affairs, complicated situation of the new Soviet government in the international field and its quest for “peaceful coexistence” through a diplomatic offensive in the East and in the West. The foundational principles of the Soviet foreign affairs were directly reflected in the policies towards Turkey, though plenty of tactical changes took place throughout the process. The years under question denote the beginning of the first interactions between the Turkish national movement and Soviet government; establishment of Soviet diplomatic mission in Ankara, familiarization of the Bolsheviks with the current situation and national movement in the country, and readjustment of Soviet policies towards the end of the Liberation War and beginning of the Republican era. Turkey had a changing role for the Soviet foreign policy in the time period discussed in the dissertation. Namely, while in the first years, Turkish national movement was considered as the leading current in the East that might set an example to other Eastern nations, later, more or less with Lausanne, this consideration was replaced by locating Turkey within the capitalist countries to be allied with,

against ongoing pressures from the imperialist countries. In the dissertation, the standard view about the decision-making in the Soviet Russia as a monolithic and monodical process is questioned by explaining the many-sided and tense nature of policy making of the Soviet foreign affairs towards Turkey in the years under question.

Keywords: years of Turkish Liberation war, Soviet state, foreign policy, diplomacy, peaceful coexistence

ÖZ

SOVYET RUSYA’NIN TÜRKİYE POLİTİKASI (1920-1923)

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Bu araştırma Sovyet Rusya’nın Türkiye politikasını Birinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası dünyanın karmaşık siyasi koşulları, yeni Sovyet hükümetinin uluslararası arenadaki zorlu konumu ve Doğuda ve Batıda bir diplomatik atakla yürüttüğü “barış içinde bir arada yaşam” politikası bağlamında inceleyen bir vaka çalışmasıdır. Sovyet dışişlerinin kuruluş ilkeleri, süreç boyunca çeşitli taktiksel değişimler yaşansa da, kendini Türkiye politikasında göstermektedir. İncelenen yıllar Türk ulusal hareketiyle Sovyet hükümeti arasındaki ilk ilişkilerin doğduğu, Ankara’da Sovyet diplomatik misyonunun kurulduğu, Bolşeviklerin Türkiye’deki duruma ve Türk ulusal hareketine aşina hale geldiği ve Sovyet politikalarının Cumhuriyet’in ilanına doğru gözden geçirildiği yıllardır. Türkiye bu tezde tartışılan dönem boyunca Sovyet dış politikasında değişen bir role sahip olmuştur. İlk yıllarda Türk ulusal hareketi doğudaki diğer uluslara örnek olabilecek bir akım olarak görülürken, daha sonra, aşağı yukarı Lozan’la birlikte, bu değerlendirme yerini Türkiye’yi emperyalist ülkelerin baskılarına karşı ittifak yapılacak kapitalist ülkeler arasına yerleştirme perspektifine bırakmıştır. Tezde, Sovyet Rusya’da karar mekanizmasını monolitik ve tek sesli bir süreç olarak gören yaygın görüş sorgulanmakta, Türkiye örneği üzerinden Sovyet dış politika yapım süreçlerinin çok taraflı ve gergin doğası gözler önüne serilmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Kurtuluş Savaşı yılları, Sovyet devleti, dış politika, diplomasi, barış içinde bir arada yaşam.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Conceptual framework and problematic

This study aims at contributing to the literature on Soviet-Turkish relations by focusing at Soviet policy towards Turkey. The reason of such a focus is the observation that the works on Soviet-Turkish relations generally overlook the theoretical framework and the context, which together determined the Soviet policies toward Turkey. The Soviet side of the story, especially in the works in Turkish language, is superficially examined depending mostly on century-old assumptions and biases. If the problem is partially due to the general issues regarding the official history-writing in Turkey, not less guilty of this superficiality is the lack of a profound examination of Russian sources, which have been open to researchers for a couple of decades. On the other hand, the literature in Russian strikingly suffers from the lack of contemporary studies. The works on the issue from the Soviet times, by typically reproducing the same narrative in an official framework, though still useful, are not able to satisfy our need to find the answers to our questions. Outside the countries in question, a huge literature has developed on Soviet foreign policy. However, it is very exceptional to find works that specifically focus on Soviet policy towards Turkey.¹

Therefore, this study is an attempt to integrate Turkish-Soviet relations in the first years of the “New Turkey” with the scientific matter called “Soviet foreign policy in the first years of the Soviet Russia”. I hope that it will amount at the end, to a case study on Soviet foreign policy. The choice about the period to be examined is not arbitrary. For the Soviet government, the year 1920 marked the pursuit of a new foreign policy in order to perpetuate the “breathing

¹ A recent comprehensive study which reflected command on Russian sources and depends itself to a large literature is Samuel J Hirst, “Eurasia’s Discontent: Soviet and Turkish Anti-Westernism in the Interwar Period” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2012).

space” emerged with the victory of the Red Army over the White armies in the Civil War. At the same time, it was the beginning year of regular relations between the Soviet government and Turkish nationalist leaders. The victory of the Liberation War and the process of Lausanne heralded a change in the mode of the relations. With a reassessment on the policy toward Turkey, Soviet foreign affairs adjusted itself in accordance with the Republican era of Turkey with the decisiveness to keep Turkey close to the Soviets. It was directly related to the struggle of Soviets to make the legitimization and recognition of Soviet power, which could be achieved to a certain extent until that time, stable. Therefore, the study will cover a period from the beginning of relations and familiarization (in the years 1920 and 1921) to a redefinition of relations for a new beginning (in the years 1922 and 1923).

Soviet Russia² was genuinely a new state in the sense that it was founded on principles totally unfamiliar to the world up until that day. The fact, which came to life a few years after the revolution, the necessity to survive without the support of successive revolutions and new Soviet governments in other countries, obligated the establishment of a truly institutionalized foreign affairs apparatus. This apparatus³ will be called hereafter Narkomindel³, with a large network of diplomacy, would also utilize methods of traditional diplomacy with the aim of developing normal relations with other states and provide the Soviet government a secure and sustainable zone of existence. Soviet foreign policy making was in no sense a practice limited to Narkomindel’s decisions and action. Also necessary to question the common belief that Politburo⁴ with its omnipotent leaders single-handedly assumed the task of decision-making. When referring to “Soviet foreign affairs”, a number of structures that took part

² Starting from the Revolution, Soviet Union was entitled under different names, most commonly known as Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic until the end of 1922. In the period this study covers, there was no denomination like Soviet Union. Therefore, here and hereafter, “Soviet Russia” is used.

³ One of the abbreviations of People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs.

⁴ Leading organ of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) composed of members who shaped the general outline of Soviet policies.

in the decision-making process on foreign affairs are implied: the Politburo, the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the chief cadres of the Red Army (PVS)⁵ and intelligence service (Razvedupr)⁶, Komintern⁷, diplomats, military officers, the state and Komintern agents in the field. Soviet foreign policies were decided through a complicated process of decision-making. Especially during the first years when the level of institutionalization within the state was relatively low and division of work between the institutions was not settled; the actors that took part in decision-making could enjoy a large sphere of initiative. Under Chicherin's administration, the Narkomindel became an effective apparatus of conducting diplomacy with foreign countries; and in spite of the Politbureau's position as the final decision maker, reached a power to shape Soviet foreign affairs. For that reason, I will analyze Soviet foreign policy in general and Soviet policy toward Turkey in particular with an approach that puts Narkomindel at the core of the narrative in this study.

The Bolsheviks with the theoretical bulwark of the analysis on imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism perceived the world a huge arena of class struggle. The unequal integration of national elements to the world capitalist system, that were most clearly reflected in the unequal relations between nation states, prevents this class struggle to be a monolithic one. However, irrespective of the differences between the countries and in spite of the inability to break from the capitalist system at once and as a whole, there is an interconnection between the revolutionary processes of each country due to the interdependence of capitalist countries.⁸ This interconnection is highly influential on the future of capitalism and socialism. That is why the projection

⁵ Revolyutsionnyy Voennyi Sovet Respubliki: Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic

⁶ Razvedyvatel'noe Upravlenie Shtaba RKKA: Intelligence Directorate of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. Later it would be Glavnoe Razvedyvatel'noe Upravlenie (GRU): Main Intelligence Directorate.

⁷ Russian abbreviation for Communist or Third International. This structure will be discussed in the second chapter.

⁸ Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence; the History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-67* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 28.

of Soviet policy toward a foreign country is realized through its contextualization within the capitalist world order, which was the case for Turkey. Turkey, as a semi-colonial eastern country according to Soviet categorization was located in the anti-imperialist front. During the Liberation War, Turkish national movement was considered as the leading force of the struggle of the oppressed people of the East against imperialism. During the transition to republican era this framework changed to a certain extent. Stemming from the objective contradiction between the imperialist states and national bourgeoisies of newly emergent nation-states, Turkey continued to be a striking element of the anti-imperialist front, whose sustainability was guaranteed by the Soviet Russia itself. In both cases, during and after the Liberation War, Soviet Russia in the direction of Narkomindel's proposals constituted a crucial place in Soviet foreign policy.

Throughout the 1920s, Bolshevik leaders and Soviet foreign policy makers experienced a process of familiarization with Turkish social and political structure. However, from the very beginning, knowing the character and orientation of the leadership of the national movement, having a considerable knowledge on the history of Turkey and with the given immaturity of capitalism, working class and communist movement in the country, the Soviets never approximated to the idea of a socialist revolution in Turkey. The exportation of socialism in the absence of the necessary conditions in terms of internal dynamics of a country was not the policy of the Soviets in the 1920s. "The export of revolution" was not only contrary to the theoretical basis of the Soviet foreign policy, but also Soviet Russia did not have the power and means to take such risks.⁹

It is a reasonable expectation widely to touch upon the communist movement of Turkey in particular, within a study on Soviet-Turkish relations in the first half of 1920s. However, in this study these elements will be referred more briefly than possibly expected since I strongly believe that Soviet Russia,

⁹ It was evident in the long-lasting hesitation of Bolshevik leaders in taking the decision for sovietization of the Transcaucasia. Documental evidence on the issue will be presented in the third chapter.

in early phases of her interaction with Turkey, made a clear preference on the major political actor to “invest in”, in favor of the Kemalist movement and to the detriment of the communist movement of Turkey. Therefore, the debate was not when and how Turkey, like other eastern countries, would realize its transition to socialism, but on how far the bourgeois revolutionaries could go and radicalize their revolution, and what kind of benefits could be derived from this radicalization. In the case of Turkey, the Soviet leaders considered that the radicalization of the Turkish revolution was highly dependent upon the relations of this country with the West and upon how long the friendship with Turkey could be preserved. Throughout the 1920s, Turkey, though advancing through a capitalist path, could not settle its contradictions and conflicts with the Western countries. This situation made Turkey an invaluable partner against the formation of a united anti-Soviet front.

The rise of Soviet Russia as a threatening force toward capitalist global hegemony changed the conditions of global rivalry between states; simply because beyond the limits of the competition between the capitalist states, Soviet Russia was the representative of a new socio-economic system whose claim was to abolish private property, exploitation of labor and imperialist domination over oppressed peoples. Turkish nationalists realized the antagonism between the “New Russia”¹⁰ and the Western world at a very early phase of the emergence of the national movement in defense of the country. They constructed their strategy on the ground of this antagonism; they considered this strategy as the key to accomplish political independence. Independence was possible due to the fact that imperialist powers, before all Great Britain, although extremely reluctant to accept the emergence of an independent Turkey, did not have the power and unity among themselves in the post-war conjuncture to impose an imminent solution for Turkey that excluded the option of independence.

¹⁰ As they called it.

The “Kemalist Turkey”¹¹ would negotiate with each side by making use of the threat to get closer to the other side.¹² As a matter of fact, these cadres themselves felt the hot breath of communism on their necks. They had a delicate task to utilize communist Russia in foreign affairs without leaving a door for the legitimization of communism inside the country. This task could not be exempt from tensions. First of all, obviously there were defenders and opponents of this strategy within the ruling cadre. During the days when suspicions about the Soviet practices managed to create a hostile atmosphere toward the Soviets, the Soviet opponents amplified their voice. As the new regime began to institutionalize in the middle of the Anatolian steppes before independence was formally achieved, the capitalistic relations were already flourishing at a certain pace. This meant reintegration of Turkey to the capitalist world economy on new terms. This inevitably brought about a distancing from the Soviet Russia and rise of anti-communism as a decisive factor in Turkish domestic and foreign policy.

Contrary to the studies in Turkish and Russian that glorify the Turkish-Soviet friendship, none of the two sides attribute sincerity to each other’s words.¹³ Mutual suspicion was the essential character of the relations between the two countries. In many works, ideological proximity between the Bolsheviks and the Kemalists are exaggerated.¹⁴ On the other hand, equally

¹¹ Russians very often used to refer to Turkey as such.

¹² For an early example of this see Mustafa Kemal’s letter to Kazım Karabekir on June 23th 1919. Kazım Karabekir and Faruk Özerengin, *İstiklal Harbimiz I* (İstanbul: Emre Yayınları, 2000), 192.

¹³ For an exemplary work of glorification see: Dimitir Vandov, *Atatürk Dönemi Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2014). In this work, mutual utterances and declarations are presented as if they reflected the real content of the relations.

¹⁴ For example, in Mehmet Perinçek’s works, overemphasis on the common anti-imperialist position of two sides conceals striking difference in terms of class base of the two powers; and also the hostility that at times remarkably felt itself. Mehmet Perinçek, *Atatürk’ün Sovyetler’le Görüşmeleri: Sovyet Arşiv Belgeleriyle* (İstanbul: Kaynak, 2005); Mehmet Perinçek, *Türk-Rus Diplomasından Gizli Sayfalar: Siyaset-Askeriye-Ekonomi-Kültür-Bilim-Spor* (İstanbul: Kaynak, 2011). An early work that was written with an objective to show the ideological proximity: Rasih Nuri İleri, *Atatürk ve Komünizm* (İstanbul: Anadolu Yayınları, 1970).

misleading is the reduction of this friendship just to a fruit of realpolitik calculations on the basis of common geographical proximity to Europe and of a common enemy. According to this reasoning, the Turkish-Soviet friendship is assumed to be nothing but a “marriage of convenience”. Politics is not something exclusively done by political elites, nor do their political and ideological preferences determine the fate of the societies. A common mistake is the attempt to explain Turkish convergence with the Soviets with the pragmatism of Mustafa Kemal and his hard-core group. This approach is as problematic and superficial as to undermine the essence of the Soviet strategy towards Turkey by relating it solely to security concerns. The “realist” analyzers overlook the socio-political dimension of the relations between Turkey and Soviet Russia. In a sense, apart from the “realpolitik calculations”, one should take into account the influence of the political atmosphere and strong ideological codes like anti-imperialism and populism, which undoubtedly inspired by the ideals of the October Revolution. Demand for freedom and equality had never been so popular in the region before.¹⁵ Besides, the fact that left politics never reached a substantial organizational level in Asia or bolshevism never became a serious project in the Asia Minor doesn’t mean that the constituent will of the New Turkey was deprived of leftist elements and the new Turkish leadership was exempt from the internal pressure of these elements.¹⁶ In such an atmosphere the convergence between two countries had an essence that surmounted a simple pragmatism.

¹⁵ Halliday examines the effect of a revolution in a society on another society in general terms: “Whatever their hegemonic content and consequences, revolutions, by their ideas and example, generated changes in other societies very different from their pre-revolutionary antecedents.” Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 134.

¹⁶ From Mustafa Kemal’s letter to Ali Fuat (Cebesoy) on September 14th, 1920 on the Halk Zümresi (People’s Group) in the *meclis* (Grand National Assembly): “The recently emerged People’s Group in the *meclis* is composed of our friends. They are those who are convinced the necessity of an internal reform, though partially, in the country. They cannot conceive the dangers of this attempt. We tried to dissuade them from establishing a separate group, but we failed. But now, we accepted a program entitled program of populism. The People’s group seems to have dissolved spontaneously.” Ömür Sezgin, *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Siyasal Rejim Sorunu* (Ankara: Birey ve Toplum Yayıncılık, 1984), 47, footnote no: 19.

In summary, this study examines the place of Turkey in Soviet foreign policy in the years the formula of “peaceful coexistence” was in force. I will claim that as it was the case in general, ministry of Soviet Foreign Affairs and its leading figure minister G. V. Chicherin played an unprecedented role in formulation of Soviet strategy and policies towards Turkey. This formulation was made in a process of familiarization with this country and on the base of a hot debate among the different components of the Soviet government. Though expectations about the radicalization of the revolution in Turkey changed at the end of the period in question, place of Turkey in Soviet strategy to break the imperialist blockade through an anti-imperialist front remained intact. I will also question if the Soviet policies towards Turkey were coherent part of Soviet outlook to international politics, which was formulated and reformulated on the basis of Marxist-Leninist framework. I will try to ground through analysis of archival documents the claim that realpolitik calculations and methods of traditional diplomacy were, as in the case of politics towards Turkey, necessary to fulfill the obligation to preserve the Soviet socialist power in a capitalist world.

1.2 Literature on the Soviet foreign policy in the first years after the revolution

The literature on Soviet foreign policy predominantly developed during the Cold War years. The ironic analogy of Adam B. Ulam¹⁷ reveals the reason: “Contemplating the vast volume of Kremlinology produced in this country since World War II, a layman might well paraphrase Karl Marx’s famous

¹⁷ One of the most eminent *Kremlinologists*. Ulam was born on April 8, 1922, in Lwów (Lviv), then Poland now Ukraine. After graduating from high school, he emigrated to the United States on or around August 20, 1939, to go to college. He studied at Brown University, taught briefly at University of Wisconsin–Madison, and obtained a Ph.D. from Harvard University, where he studied from 1944 to 1947. He became a member of Harvard's faculty in 1947, was awarded tenure in 1954, and enjoyed the title of Gurney Professor of History and Political Science until he became professor emeritus in 1992. He directed the Russian Research Center (1973–1974) and was a research associate for the Center for International Studies, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1953–1955). He was the author of twenty books and many articles, primarily on the Soviet Union and the Cold War (the major exception being *Fall of the American University*, a critique of U.S. higher education, written in 1972).

thesis on Feuerbach and complain that various experts have only interpreted the Soviet Union in different ways, while the urgent need is to find out how its policies can be changed.”¹⁸

It’s hard to find a field of history-writing, whose scholars are urged so much by practical reasons like in the case of Soviet foreign policy. During the Cold War, the historians and analysts of Soviet foreign policy and foreign policy makers in the West were overwhelmingly elites of the same establishment. In so much so that, one can hardly discern the point where the history-writing ends and “history-making” starts. George F. Kennan was one of the most illustrative personalities in this sense. He was an American die-hard diplomat and historian of the early Cold War era, who served in USSR as a diplomat for many years and tried to change the strategy of his government toward the Soviets. Two documents written by him were especially referred as path-breaking. One was “the Long Telegram X” from Moscow, to Washington, written in 1946; and the other was his article “Sources of Soviet Conduct” written in 1947. The depiction of the Soviet Union as an expansionist power and Soviet leaders as power thirsty people has been said to be influential in the new American policy, which prioritized containment of Soviet Union. These documents were in a sense, flare of the Cold War.

In search for the reason behind the beginning of the Cold War, the common ground among the historians and scholars from other related branches of social sciences was blaming on the USSR for its expansionist policies. Without exception, the USSR was depicted as an expansionist and repressive power that threatened the future of the “free world”. In addition to this pessimist approach, the acts of Soviet policy-makers were always met with suspicion. Their sincerity was questioned. Although a distanced relation, a certain level of suspicion is necessary for the historian in his/her relation with the sources, in the case of Soviet studies of the Cold War era it was overdone to the extent that one can easily get the impression that the whole Soviet canon

¹⁸ Adam B. Ulam, “Anatomy of Policymaking” in *Classical Issues in Soviet Foreign Policy: From Lenin to Brezhnev*, ed. Frederic J. Fleron Jr., Erik P. Hoffman, Robbin F. Laird (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1991), 251.

is based on a simple deception: “Lacking better evidence we are compelled to study the available documents, to examine floods of propaganda, speeches, and the overt conduct of the leaders. From such studies we at least learn what the Communists want us to think, what they are persuading other nations to think, what they say they hope to accomplish, and so on. Over a span of more than forty years we have acquired considerable facility at ferreting out the bits of truth embedded in Soviet words and deeds and piecing them together in a fairly accurate pattern.”¹⁹

In spite of these common points, there were debates and divisions among the scholars of traditional approaches. Main divergence emerged when defenders of realist paradigm objected “idealist approaches” that attributed so much meaning to the ideological aspect of the “Soviet threat”. For the idealists, unless one has studied the evolution of ideology and its influence upon the Soviet attitude and behavior, it is not possible to understand Soviet foreign policy:

The Soviet Union’s leaders pride themselves on the wide range of and flexibility of their tactics, on their ability to zigzag, to take one step forward and two steps back, to ally with capitalist nations while working for their destruction, to retreat and patiently wait out defeats, to organize peace fronts and popular fronts, and to preach coexistence or rebellion as the situation demands. However it should be remembered always regardless of the current tactic, the Soviet leaders remain dedicated to the strategic goal. No matter what they may say today or tomorrow to win a current struggle, they believe in the ultimate victory of world communism over capitalism.²⁰

The realists, on the other hand, assumed that the USSR was more of a traditional form of great power “struggling to win security and power by

¹⁹ Arthur E. Adams, *Readings in Soviet Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Boston: Heath, 1961), xv.

²⁰ Adams, *Readings in Soviet Foreign Policy*, xii.

conventional diplomatic maneuvering”.²¹ The debates on whether it was simply an authoritarian regime or a totalitarian one that can be identified with Nazi Germany; whether the Soviet Union was a new type of political power or was just a continuation of the Tsarist regime with a new facade; whether national interests or ideological commitments were dominant in the conduct of Soviet foreign policy can all be evaluated within the lines of this divergence.

In the first years after the October Revolution, the newly emerged socialist power in Russia was an enigma. In the Western newspapers of the time, it is possible to follow the perplexity toward this new power. It was something unprecedented. It was unacceptable and ephemeral because it was a coup of a handful of barbaric people. It did not take long that Western powers unhesitatingly gave their support to the White armies in order to “normalize” the situation in Russia. In time, after the triumph of the Red Army in the Civil War, as the Soviets developed links with Western states and corporations and gained recognition in the Western public opinion, the Soviet image as an abnormality started to change. Still, in the retrospective analyses, the Soviet power continued to be considered exceptional and Bolshevik leaders could never get rid of being subject to psychological assessments. Soviet foreign policy was a case of psychological disorder. At the bottom of the Kremlin's neurotic view of world affairs lied the traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity.²² This feeling of insecurity, lacking evidence of a real threat from the outside world, reached almost a paranoid level, and incite the Bolsheviks to disseminate the fear of capitalist aggression toward the country.²³

One might argue that some of the psychological habits the Bolsheviks brought with them to the task of ruling their country

²¹ Tolgahan Akdan, “A Systemic Analysis of the Cold War and Turkey’s Postwar Drive to the West” (Phd., Middle East Technical University, 2014), 22.

²² David Allan Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 97-102.

²³ George F. Kennan, “Sources of Soviet Conduct” in *Soviet Foreign Policy: Classic and Contemporary Issues* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1991), 314.

were, by the same token, to handicap them: extreme suspiciousness of every movement and every government not fully sharing their ideology, an underestimation of the staying power of democracy in the Western countries, and a view of international politics as consisting mainly of the clash of economic and military interests.²⁴

George Alexander furthered the psychological analysis by inventing the term “operational code”. Focusing on the attitudes and behavior of the Bolshevik leaders, he claims certain characteristic patterns of thought and action exhibited by Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders were inherited as an operational code by their successors.²⁵ The precepts inherited by these successors “are based on the assumption that the party is working in a hostile environment, surrounded by internal class enemies or encircled by capitalist states, and that difficulty, danger, and conflict are the norms of political life -as opposed to the Western view that harmony is the natural political state.”²⁶ The goal of reconstructing a “corrupt and evil society” the code legitimized any means that provides the attainment of the goal in the shortest time possible.²⁷

According to this canon, The Soviet leaders “who were poisoned by their voracious desire for power”²⁸ and were in constant effort to secure their power that they seized in 1917²⁹, under the influence of extreme suspicion toward the external world, constructed a repressive regime. If this repressiveness stems from traditional authoritarian rule of state or a totalitarian rule as a modern phenomenon exclusively belonging to the twentieth century was an issue open to debate.

²⁴ Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*”, 22.

²⁵ Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noguee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia Changing Systems, Enduring Interests* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 30.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Kennan George F., “Sources of Soviet Conduct,” in *Soviet Foreign Policy: Classic and Contemporary Issues* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1991), 315.

²⁹ Ibid.

Totalitarian model was developed first by Hannah Arendt, Merle Fainsod, Carl Friedrich with his student Zbigniew Brzezinski and Leonard Schapiro.³⁰ Totalitarianism was characterized by “one party rule, a guiding ideology, the use of terror as a means of control, government monopoly over the economy, communications, the police, and the armed forces, a desire to control every aspect of human life.”³¹ Communism was a variant of totalitarianism and fascism was in the same category. Therefore Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany could be analyzed under the same category. According to the theory, totalitarian systems are made possible by twentieth century technology that for the first time gives the dictators total control over the entire society.³²

This idealist approach considering the West cradle of democracy and peace, ideologies of “outsiders” as threat to this cradle ignore the struggle for power in the international system, among the Western countries.³³ Objections of the realist scholars arose at this very point. They replaced the totalitarian approach where the East and West were sharply demarcated along clear lines through their ideals for the future of the human-being with a view of international politics whose essence was constant struggle for political and economic power. Accordingly, the Soviet Union was just an authoritarian power whose tactics and strategies to become a superpower in the international politics resembled those of the authoritarian powers preceding the Soviet Union. It was not an exception, on the contrary it should be assessed through

³⁰ Robert V. Daniels, “Comment: Revisionism Avant La Lettre,” *Slavic Review* 67, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 706.

³¹ Peter Zwick, *Soviet Foreign Relations: Process and Policy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990), 57.

³² Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956) and Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2nd ed. (New York: World, 1958).

³³ Edward Hallett Carr in his book *Twenty Years' Crisis* convincingly shows that struggle for economic and military power between the great Powers characterized the international institutions such as League of Nations, whose goal pretended to be international peace. Edward Hallett Carr, *Yirmi Yil Krizi, 1919-1939* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2010).

same conceptualization that was utilized for the foreign policies of the rest of the countries in the world.

Whether the Soviet rulers continued the political traditions of the Russian tsars largely occupied the debates within the orthodox scholarship on Soviet foreign policy. It was also an important aspect of the debate on the essence of the Soviet power. As in the case of arguments on transition from the Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic, certain elements attributed to the Tsarist Russia, like absence of pluralist democracy, high degree of centralism, elitism, militarism, the influence of religion and ideology, traditional Slavic Russian values and behavior³⁴; weakness of civil institutions independent of state control, the pervasive regulation of society by government bureaucracies, and a weak judiciary³⁵; considered perennial and inherited by the Soviet power. Bolshevism was twentieth century Russian autocratic imperialism or the Soviet state was renascent Russian state.³⁶

According to the *realist* scholars who advocated continuity thesis, the Soviet Union was inherently expansionist in foreign policy because Soviet power found itself in the middle of same external pressures and security problems that stemmed from geographical vulnerability and resulted in equalization security with land, as did Russia³⁷; and because the Russian sense of security required centralization, the Soviet Union was centralized and militarized. Similarly, because it has had no democratic political tradition, the USSR is as authoritarian as was Russia. In addition to the profundity of the roots of Russian political culture, the actual circumstances also obliged the Soviets go on the same authoritarian and expansionist path as did Tsarist Russia.³⁸

³⁴ Zwick, *Soviet Foreign Relations*, 49.

³⁵ Nicolai N. Petro and Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Russian Foreign Policy: From Empire to Nation-State* (New York: Longman, 1997), 5.

³⁶ Zwick, *Soviet Foreign Relations*, 49.

³⁷ Russian famous urge to the warm seas, which was largely mentioned in the narratives on Tsarist aggression toward Ottoman State was also related with the same feeling of insecurity.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 56.

According to this way of thinking that discounts the role of Marxist-Leninist ideology of the state and new type of social organization introduced by the Soviets, Soviet Russia continued to pursue same strategical goals with a new language of propaganda:

In brief, it was not entirely historical fancy and propagandist needs of the moment that made Stalin in the 1930s abjure the dogmatic Marxian classification of imperial Russia and claim continuity with certain elements in the policies of Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great. It was also a belated acknowledgement that November 1917 had not wiped the slate clean, that underneath the new language, for all the new cult and the new ruling class, there were some fundamental links with the imperial past.³⁹

However, lessons taken from the past do not necessarily indicate continuity of the same traditions and policies under new labels. It is highly possible that knowledge of Soviet foreign policy makers on international politics did not depend only on theory or their own experience, but also the experiences of their predecessor state, namely Tsarist Russia. For example they knew security of Black Sea coasts and the straits would be a tough question because of the given susceptibility of the major capitalist powers toward the issue that the Soviets knew from the past.

What was the impact done by the previous regime in the country is a delicate question that cannot be answered with totalistic, ahistorical explanations. When the Soviet Russia entered the world politics under the compulsory circumstances of living side by side with capitalist countries, Soviet foreign policy makers had to implement several traditional foreign policy and diplomacy tools that were not peculiar to tsarist Russia but largely utilized by all world powers. Nationalist sentiments at times were incited with reference to the tsarist past especially at the time of WWII. Geography, multi-ethnic scheme of the population and some other factors inherited from the past were also at work. Still, the explanation of Soviet system as a mere

³⁹ Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, 5.

continuation of the past means discounting the changing conditions of the world, the social base of the new regime and the new challenge to the Western world, completely different in character from the rivalry with Tsarist Russia.

National interest/ideological commitment dilemma was an integral part of the debates on tsarist past and totalitarian or authoritarian character of Soviet Union. Those who claimed that national interests were the real source of motivation before the Soviet foreign policy ritualized to refer Winston Churchill's words on October 1, 1939, after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact: "I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside of an enigma; but perhaps there is a key: The key is Russian national interest."⁴⁰

According to Petro Rubinstein, "those wishing to convey the image of an ideologically driven relentlessly expansionist, difficult-to-comprehend Soviet leadership frequently omit the last twelve words from that quotation."⁴¹ He contends, as the tsars acted on the basis of regional and international configurations of power in spite of the propagated ideological premises such as messianic Slavophil view of Russia's uniqueness, sense of mission and commitment to the Orthodox faith, the Bolsheviks acted on the basis of national interests whenever the security of Russia was at stake leaving aside ideological concerns.⁴²

Accordingly, Adam Ulam believes the Soviet regime was capable of distinguishing propaganda from foreign policy perceiving that its ideology and national interest are not always synonymous. He contends, the Soviet skill on this matter was learnt from the Tsarist period.⁴³ The parallelism is established by Ulam between the Soviet approach to the "oppressed people of the East" and Russian "pan-Slavism" towards the Slavic inhabitants of Ottoman and

⁴⁰ David Carlton, *Churchill and the Soviet Union* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1.

⁴¹ Petro and Rubinstein, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 5.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴³ Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, 9.

Austro-Hungarian Empires.⁴⁴ Both were tools to disguise Russian interest that laid beneath the surface no matter it is tsarist or soviet administration. However he does not reject that Bolsheviks were sincere Marxists when they seized power in Russia in 1917. What happened is that, since Marx and Engels envisaged a different world panorama and did not leave a guideline for foreign policy of a socialist country in a hostile world full of capitalist countries, Bolsheviks had to find their own way in foreign policy depending upon their own experience and tsarist foreign policy traditions. In time, this resulted in transformation of ideology to a simple tool of propaganda.⁴⁵

There is a large circle of scholars who consider ideological aspect of Soviet internal and foreign policy as justification of policies and a tool for preservation of power. Barrington Moore⁴⁶, Samuel L. Sharp⁴⁷, Richard Lowenthal⁴⁸ and Robert W. Daniels⁴⁹ are among them.

Barrington Moore in his works on Soviet politics⁵⁰, published in 1950 took a very radical stance vis-a-vis the most of the remaining historians of the most vivid days of the Cold War. The orthodox line of the time asserted that Soviet attempts during the 1920s toward normalization of relations with the West and their practices of traditional diplomacy served for the image that they used to hide their subversive activities. Moore, on the contrary, claimed that by 1921, the Soviet government ceased to follow a revolutionary path, abandoned

⁴⁴ Ibid., 10

⁴⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁶ Barrington Moore, "The Relations of Ideology and Foreign Policy," in *Soviet Conduct in World Affairs*, ed. Alexander Dallin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960); Barrington Moore, *Soviet Politics - The Dilemma of Power: The Role of Ideas in Social Change*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950).

⁴⁷ Samuel L. Sharp, "National Interest: Key to Soviet Politics," in *The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy* (London: Butterworths, 1971).

⁴⁸ Richard Lowenthal, "Logic of One Party Rule," in *The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy* (London: Butterworths, 1971).

⁴⁹ Robert W. Daniels, "Doctrine and Foreign Policy," in *The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy* (London: Butterworth, 1971).

⁵⁰ Moore, *Soviet Politics*.

all the support to the revolutionary movements around the world and totally started to engage in traditional power politics. For him, Marxist ideology had a place in decision-making only by in some cases retarding the shift, while in others speeding up the change.⁵¹ He contends, Russian expansion can be explained very largely without reference to Marxist ideological factors. If there is any central goal being the policy of Soviet leaders, it is the preservation and extension of their own power, by any means whatever, rather than spread of a specific social system or the realization of a doctrinal blueprint.⁵²

The critiques of Moore concentrated on Moore's negligence about the existence of diverging ideas among the Bolshevik leaders before and after 1921 and frequent maneuvers of policy in accordance with the external developments, which are all correct. However, more crucial than that is Moore's overlooking to the fact that the Bolshevik perception of world order and affairs was categorically different from that of Western counterparts. According to that perception, the societies in the world were vertically divided to classes, the struggles among which had different appearances in social, ideological, political, economic and international spheres. For them, the tension and strife between the Soviets and the capitalist world was one of those appearances. They did not consider the struggle between them and the rest of the world, simply the struggle of national interests. That is why the strife was irreconcilable. What they understand from the "peaceful coexistence" was the totality of diplomatic operations that would postpone the expected crash between two world orders, two ideologies and two antagonistic classes. There is no sign that shows us that they changed this way of thinking after 1921.

Besides the functional approach that reduced ideology to a policy tool, it is also common to define the role of ideology in Soviet foreign policy as a distorting source of the worldview of the Soviets:

⁵¹ Moore, "The Relations of Ideology and Foreign Policy", 83.

⁵² Ibid., 85.

Interpreting all international developments in Marxist-Leninist terms, the ideology predetermines their responses, preventing them from seeing or comprehending things *as they are*⁵³...although the Soviet leaders incessantly repeat and may sincerely believe that they stand for peace, their use of the word is peculiar to their ideological stance; the peace they envision can only be achieved by the victory of the proletariat under Soviet leadership.⁵⁴

Most serious Sovietologists of the Cold-War generation examined deeply Marxist-Leninist literature. Furthermore most of them acknowledged the sincerity of the Bolsheviks in their commitment to “Marxist ideals”. Still, they barely managed to analyze the relation between Marxism and Soviet foreign policy. Ideology is understood either a set of stable rules or set of values or principles. It is not perceived as a methodology that marks the analyses of the Bolsheviks on state of affairs and frames the foreign policy of the country. Secondly, there is no direct relation between the ideology of the socialist state and the transformation of the socio-economic structure of the country. To illustrate, there is not even a slight correlation between the prohibition of the private property of the means of production and the elimination of capitalist power in the country and the way the Soviet foreign policy was conducted. The ideology is some idealistic principles of a handful of people, which were to abandon when the conditions are changed.

When ideology is perceived as such, socialist or Marxist-Leninist ideology and national interests can be depicted as two irreconcilable phenomena, contradicting by nature.

Whatever the position of Cold War scholars on Soviet foreign policy there is a common character that embraces them all: the top leaders of the Soviet regime were self-proclaimed power-seeking individuals that heavily indebted their political behavior and culture to the their tsarist predecessors. Whether the motivation was national interest or Marxist-Leninist ideology, or

⁵³ The emphasis is mine.

⁵⁴ Zwick, *Soviet Foreign Relations*, 67.

both, more important point of these motivations were usefulness rather than their essence. The ideology, irrespective of their sincerity in their commitment, is something to be chosen:

The founders of the Soviet state chose this ideology as the best vehicle for achieving power and for the realization of a global proletarian revolution... It is clear that at the critical moments throughout Soviet history (Brest-Litovsk, Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) the security and survival of the Soviet state took precedence over the spread of communism and revolution. Soviet leaders frequently manipulated their ideology to justify the course of action they wished to pursue.⁵⁵

This is a standard expression of the supposition of a dilemma between the ideology, as an inflexible set of ideas that requires constant effort to spread communism, irrespective of the conditions and abilities of a socialist state to do it, to preserve the purity by doing only those written in the “book”⁵⁶ and national interest, if any, independent from the security and well-being of the Soviet people and challenging the security and well-being of other peoples of the world⁵⁷. By ascribing ahistoric and abstract meanings to the concepts such as ideology and “national interest”, they created an artificial duality.

Furthermore, As Zwick argues, ideology is mistakenly juxtaposed with rationality and reason. He explains, some argued involvement of ideology in foreign policy is something that drives policy-makers to irrational direction. When pragmatic considerations instead of ideology is accepted to determine Soviet foreign policy, then Soviet Union becomes a state that can be treated

⁵⁵ Petro and Rubinstein, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 13.

⁵⁶ It is convenient to remember Lenin’s conception of theory: “is not dogma, but assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement... It is precisely because Marxism is not a lifeless dogma, not a completed, readymade, immutable doctrine, but a living guide to action, that it was bound to reflect the astonishingly abrupt change in the conditions of social life.” Zwick, *Soviet Foreign Relations*, 103.

⁵⁷ National interest is contentless. National interest formation is part of the policy making process, not prior to it. If Soviet leaders are Marxist-Leninist, then their determination of what is in the Soviet national interest will be conditioned, at least in part, by the fact. Jan F. Triska and David D. Finlay, *Soviet Foreign Policy* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), 114.

like the rest of the states whose goals and actions reflect their rational calculations. This is the position of most realists. Rationality in foreign policy pertains to means, not ends. Ideologies are goal oriented belief systems... Only after a goal is adopted, can the means for achieving that goal be rational or irrational.⁵⁸

To sum up within the orthodoxy, there were two main poles. One pole considered the Soviet state a new and alien element, emerged as a result of an inexplicable deviation of the normal course of the history and calls it “totalitarianism”. The other pole, harshly criticizing the former, ignores the unique character of the Soviet state that distinguishes it from the group of capitalist states and equalizes it with a common “power-hunger state”. According to their definition, it is a state in itself, whose outward nationalist and expansionist tendencies are independent from its relation with the bourgeois domination and its class character. Both views fail to figure out the birth of the Soviet state from within the contradictions of capitalism as a part of the international system, yet contained the dynamite to shake the foundations of that very system due to its claim to root up existing property relations.

Revisionist tendencies in Soviet historiography appeared at a time when Cold War tensions gave the first signs to be replaced by a thaw to the end of the 1960s. A series of factors was influential. A new generation of Sovietologists in this new period was replacing the old generation whose perspective and sources were wider than the latter. Yet, among all, the most striking element of the change was the rising opposition against US foreign policy all around the world, but especially in the US. Accordingly, the point of departure of the revisionist Sovietologists was before all, the critique of American policy. The critique of Open Door policy⁵⁹ especially in the conjunction of the Vietnam War resulted in the consideration that the US policy toward Soviet Union was pro-active rather than defensive contrary to

⁵⁸ Zwick, *Soviet Foreign Relations*, 102.

⁵⁹ American policy, depending on the traditional belief that democracy and prosperity at home depends upon overseas economic expansion and access to foreign markets which inevitably has brought political interference of the US in other countries domestic affairs.

what was claimed by traditional historiography of Soviet foreign policy and/or Sovietology. According to revisionist critique, Sovietology was a way of doing scholarship that had been corrupted by its over-dependence on government support⁶⁰, of ignoring the simple reality that the US had been manipulating the views on Soviet foreign policy for its own interests. Accordingly, the impact of revisionism remained limited to the academic circles. “While the revisionist challenge to the totalitarian model won over the profession by the mid 1980s, it had virtually no impact on public understanding of Soviet history, which has remained true to the totalitarian framework.”⁶¹

One of the most prominent figures of revisionist paradigm in Soviet historiography was Moshe Lewin. Under the heavy influence of the *Annales*, from the beginning he considered himself a “historian of society”. His studies on Soviet Union were far from being simply analyses of the regime. He dealt instead, “contingencies and choices, as well as the deep social structures, determining what the Soviet Union would become.” In the late 1970s, the seminars on imperial Russia, the 1917 revolution and after organized by him and his colleague Alfred Rieber were influential in bringing about a young generation of scholars who were critical to orthodoxy in this field.⁶²

Revisionism is established upon the negation of some Cold War theses on the Soviet Union in general, Soviet foreign policy in particular. Lewin wisely explains his position on the USSR and its historiography that actually illuminates the position of other revisionists: “Anti-anti-Communism”.⁶³ Revisionist works inform on what the Soviet Union was not instead of what it was. It is barely possible to say that they attempted to build a comprehensive alternative to orthodoxy that guides our knowledge on the Soviet Union.

⁶⁰ Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Revisionism in Soviet History,” *History and Theory* 46, no. 4 (December 2007): 80. Representatives of the orthodoxy in return, accused the revisionists of being in political collaboration with the Soviet Union.

⁶¹ Fitzpatrick, “Revisionism in Soviet History”, 79.

⁶² Ronald Grigor Suny, “Moshe Lewin, 1921-2010,” *Slavic Review* 70, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 240.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 241.

At the present time, discrete studies of education, social mobility, the Great Purges, and the making of the Soviet working class have not yet formed a new synthesis to replace the largely abandoned totalitarian paradigm of the Cold War years. Moreover, with few exceptions the new social historians have failed to integrate in their analyses within broader political contours and processes.⁶⁴

It questioned only partially traditional approaches and ignored the discussion inside the traditional paradigm. The revisionist scholars mainly targeted “totalitarian-model scholarship” which envisaged Soviet society as a “passive society that was purely an object of regime control and manipulation.” The revisionists objected the view that the main mechanism of control was terror, and propaganda was a secondary device in the Soviet Union. The regime had a monolithic structure and its bearers followed inflexible line of ideology articulated in the classics of Marxism-Leninism.⁶⁵

Soviet foreign policy was among the least interested subjects for the revisionists. While revisionist scholars who criticized one-dimensional heavily politicized approaches of orthodoxy, dealt in depth with social structure and its transformation in the Soviet Union, Soviet foreign relations were studied by only a few scholars. Jon Jacobson was among them. In his work “When the Soviet Union entered World Politics” that focuses on the Soviet foreign policy in 1920s, presents well-organized framework of revisionist critique to the traditional historiography. For Jacobson, “totalitarian” and “communist ideology” models contends:

- The USSR’s foreign relations were driven primarily by revolutionary ideology during the 1920s.
- The destruction of capitalism through direct insurrectionary offensive was the central intention of the first Soviet leadership cohort and the ultimate aim of their regime

⁶⁴ Ronald Gregor Suny, “Marx, Russia, and Soviet History,” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 33 (Spring 1988): 78.

⁶⁵ Fitzpatrick, “Revisionism in Soviet History”, 80.

- Normalized diplomatic and commercial relations are only facade on the aim of world revolution (facilitated by the Red Army if necessary).
- Soviet foreign relations were completely coherent and under the highly centralized control of the Politburo.
- The diplomats played no influential role in the actual formulation of policy.
- The Bolsheviks, their mentality and their diplomacy were exceptional in the history of world politics. They cannot be analyzed in the same categories and terminology, as were the foreign relations of the liberal democracies.⁶⁶

The assumption that in the 1920s, the Soviet Union was, as a matter of fact, primarily in quest of European revolution was replaced by the assumption that Soviet Union's main concern was mainly survival and security. The change in the most basic assumption on Soviet foreign policy in the 1920s could take place thanks to the new possibilities of access to Russian archival sources and the emergence of a new generation of scholars who were free from a fanatical anti-communism.

In the 1920s and after, the most conservative sections of Western politics commonly asserted that Soviet diplomacy and foreign trade was a tool to hide subversive activities for revolutionary insurrection in Europe. It was a means of propaganda to deal a blow in the increasing popularity of the Soviets in the Western public opinion. Later this very propaganda turned out to be a "scientific" assumption of the conservative Sovietologists and historians of the Cold War. The revisionists properly replaced this idea with the real concern of the Soviets as to create a sphere of existence in the middle of the capitalist world under the conditions of recession in European revolutionary dynamics. On the other hand, by claiming that Soviet foreign policy after the Civil War was not driven ideologically but by the realist policies of Lenin accounts for repetition of the same ideology/national interest dilemma of the realist paradigm.

⁶⁶Jon Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

The transformation in the considerations on the Soviet power structure was another revolutionary attempt. Instead of assuming a completely centralized monolithic administrative structure directed by a few people, the revisionists drew attention to the debates and struggles inside the party echelons and they showed the existence of public opinion inside the party and the society that accounts an important factor in decision-making. This transformation had important reflections on the analyses of foreign policy-making processes.

The revisionists, before all proposed to place the Soviet Union not as an exceptional power that completely differs in political traditions and policies from rest of the “civilized world” that was equated with Nazi Germany, but as a regular actor in international politics. This approach was important for both it places the Soviet Union in the context of international politics and contributes to our knowledge of international politics by doing so. However, by insisting that the terms applicable to Western capitalism can also be used in the analyses of Soviet foreign policy resulted in repetition of realist theses that ignores striking socio-economic difference that distinguished Soviet Union from the countries of the capitalist world.

As revisionist perspective contributed to surmount unrealistic conceptions of Cold War orthodoxy on Soviet foreign policy, a number of radical perspectives that were suggested throughout the same period help us to think on the weaknesses of revisionism and guide us in historical contextualization in the studies on Soviet foreign policy. As Tolgahan Akdan pointed out, the problem of orthodox, revisionist or post-revisionist interpretations of the Cold war is that neither of them “posits any causal links between the socio-economic system of superpowers and their respective foreign policies. This absent link between the nature of the socioeconomic structure of bloc leaders and their foreign policies as well as the nature of the conflict between them in the mainstream debates has been addressed by a

number of radical theories of the Cold War.”⁶⁷ Below, I will briefly examine most striking aspects of these perspectives.

The prestigious historian of Soviet history Edward Hallett Carr is still inspiring for younger generations of historians in terms of his methodology and command on vast amount of sources. Milan Babik in his article questions whether it is possible to term Carr’s methodology as simply “realist.”⁶⁸ He was a realist in the sense that for him international politics was always power politics. He dedicated an entire chapter to the concept of power in *The Twenty Years Crisis*.⁶⁹ Along the same line, he opposed liberal thinkers envisagement of “a hidden fundamental harmony among nations to be achieved through national self-determination, democratization, laissez-faire trade, international law, and collective security.”⁷⁰ International relations are based upon conflict instead of accord.

However, Carr’s vision was beyond the state-centered and methodological individualist approach of the realist paradigm. Before all, he had a historical perspective instead of ahistorical problem solving method of realist thinkers.⁷¹ His critical analysis of liberal internationalism goes far beyond that of realist thinkers. He often utilizes Marxist terminology such as “class conflict” and “class interests” and relies heavily on the analysis of the liberal-capitalist state, whose values and institutional machinery Carr regards as instruments of bourgeois hegemony.⁷² His view on the Soviet foreign policy was in parallelism with another outstanding Marxist scholar Isaac Deutscher,

⁶⁷ Akdan, “A Systemic Analysis of the Cold War”, 32.

⁶⁸ Milan Babik, “Realism as Critical Theory: The International Thought of E. H. Carr,” *International Studies Review* 15, no. 4 (December 2013).

⁶⁹ Carr, *Yirmi Yil Krizi*, 147-185.

⁷⁰ Babik, “Realism as Critical Theory”, 501.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 496.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 503.

with whom he had a fruitful friendship.⁷³ Fourteen years after Carr, Deutscher in 1960 wrote in his book, *The Great Contest: Russia and the West* that the struggle in the world politics since the October Revolution was characterized by the great contest between two antagonistic social systems. The contest was unprecedented in the sense that before the October Revolution rivalry between the great powers had never posed a systemic challenge to each other. The real reason behind the emergence of the Cold War was not the pursuit of the Soviets for world domination, but was that systemic challenge that eliminated the possibility of an eventual reconciliation. However, now the economic successes of USSR amounted to a big blow to capitalist system and resulted in questioning of its effectiveness.⁷⁴ Halliday, a more recent scholar, who, different from the other two, witnessed the collapse of the USSR, drew attention Kennan's prophetic prediction in his *Long Telegram*. In general, he argues, "the confrontation between revolutionary states and their opponents lasted far longer, even as it changed, than either the realists, or the critics of revolutionary 'betrayal', allow."⁷⁵ Halliday, as an isolated scholar by the orthodoxy of the international relations discipline due to his proposal to replace the discipline's abstract political terms like states or balance of power in explanation of the determinants of international dynamics, with the heterogeneity of the socio-economic characters of the states, modes of production or capitalism.⁷⁶ Yet he insisted that as far as the differences in

⁷³ It is possible to see that the critique was an important aspect of this friendship. In the review Deutscher wrote for the fourth volume of "History of Soviet Russia", he did not abstain from criticizing state-centre approach of Carr and indicating his limitations due to his professional background: "We know of no other man of Mr. Carr's background who has proved capable of even a small part of that enormous mental effort which Mr. Carr has made to grasp the inner logic of Leninism. Even so, the peculiar limitations of the diplomatic mind can sometimes be sensed between the lines of his History. Isaac Deutscher, "Mr. E. H. Carr as Historian of Soviet Russia," *Soviet Studies Soviet Studies* 6, no. 4 (1955): 342.

⁷⁴ Isaac Deutscher, *The Great Contest; Russia and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 65-66.

⁷⁵ Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*, 135.

⁷⁶ Michael Cox, "Fred Halliday, Marxism and the Cold War", *International Affairs International Affairs* 87, no. 5 (2011): 1107-1122.

socio-economic formations of the states existed, an irreconcilable contradiction among those states bound to continue.⁷⁷ Though Soviet Russia as a “revolutionary state” was often accused of leaving communist goals for the sake of *realpolitik*, the cleavage between the internal constitution of the Soviet state and society and that of rest of the world was a factor of constant confrontation.⁷⁸

In this study, Soviet policies towards Turkey will be examined as foreign policy practices of a revolutionary state, which used to take each an every step in the international politics with the consciousness of the extent of the systemic challenge its existence posed to the capitalist world order. Keeping alive the first socialist state in the face of irreconcilable contradiction and conflict with the great capitalist powers constituted the essence of the alliance with the Turkish national movement. This perspective, as it is maintained in this study, is more realistic than defining the friendly manners of the Bolsheviks towards Turkey in the period under question as a mere disguise of the perennial Russian ambitions towards Turkey.

1.3 Literature on Turkish-Soviet relations

The subject that has been chosen in this study is part of a field of historical research in which, for a long time, political concerns have prevailed scientific considerations. To an extent, it is normal and expected since the existence of Soviet Russia with its political, ideological and geo-strategic meanings, essentially influenced, or even determined Turkish politics and Turkey’s relations with the outside world in the Republican era. What is surprising is that, so many years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there is not much development in the field of study on Turkish-Soviet relations.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Ibid., 11.

⁷⁸ Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*, 134.

⁷⁹ Within the contemporary literature, two of a few inspiring studies should be uttered here, since they served as reference books for this study: Emel Akal, *Moskova-Ankara-Londra Üçgeninde: İştirakiyuncular, Komünistler ve Paşa Hazretleri* (Ankara: İletişim, 2013); Bülent Gökay and Sermet Yalçın, *Bolşevizm ile Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye: (1918-1923)*

Most of the works on Soviet-Turkish relations bears the weakness of reproducing Cold War theses on Soviet foreign policy, which lean more to political instrumentalisation of historical facts than to scientific analysis. In spite of the end of the Cold War, generational continuity of the traditional views has been the rule, which is evident in the PhD dissertations of the last decades submitted to history or international relations departments in Turkey⁸⁰. There are exceptions, though. After many years of indifference to the topic, several members of the younger generation in Turkey and abroad have been set out to contribute to the field in terms of both methodological and contextual aspects. The fact that more researchers seek to obtain language skills in order to have access to Russian sources⁸¹ shows that we will meet in the near future more studies that extend across mere repetition of well-known roles of the Cold War era. Yet, for the time being, these studies are far from amounting a new current in the literature on Turkish-Soviet relations. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the development and general features of this literature.

In spite of the differences in the emphases and explanations on the history of Turkish-Soviet relations, the fundamental approach remained intact throughout these periods. The common political ground of the works on foreign relations history is the priority of “the national interests” and “national

(İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2006). Still, as the former focuses primarily on the communist movement in Turkey and its relations with Soviet and Turkish governments, and the latter focuses on the position of the Turkish government in the middle of the tense relations between Russia and Great Britain, this study distinguishes with its special focus on Soviet foreign policy and extensive usage of Russian archival sources.

⁸⁰ Several examples of this kind are as follows: Mustafa Öztürk, “Atatürk Döneminde Türkiye'nin Kafyasya Politikası” (Hacettepe University, 2005); Selami Şekerkıran, “Türk-Sovyet Sınırı (1919-1946)” (Ankara University Institute of Turkish Revolution History, 2008); Çağatay Benhür, “Stalin Dönemi Türk-Rus İlişkileri (1924-1953)” (Selçuk University, 2008); Durmuş Karaman, “Milli Mücadele Dönemi'nde Sovyet Cumhuriyetleri İle Yapılan Antlaşmaların Meclisteki Akisleri (1920-1922)” (Erciyes University, 1997).

⁸¹ Russian archives started to be open, though partially, before the collapse of the USSR; to the extent that already in the 1970s social history of 1930s, depended upon Russian archival sources, could be written in the West. Besides the Russian sources, German documents of Nazi period that became accessible after the WWII were also invaluable material for the researchers. Therefore, it is hard to justify the lack of utilization of Russian primary sources in the majority of the works written before the collapse of the USSR with the inaccessibility of the Russian archives. Yet, it is a fact that the possibilities substantially increased especially after 2001.

security” of the country. National interest is represented by the state and above the social classes. The works on Soviet-Turkish relations reflected the methodology in foreign policy writing that puts the interests and security of the Turkish state to the center, and abstained from any theoretical framework, pretending to be exempt from an ideological stance. Eventually the definition of national interest might change however the methodology in historiography remains the same. Secondly, foreign policy decisions of the states are results of the character, ideological views and intentions of the political actors.⁸² The complicated nature of the socio-political and economic reasons of the rise of those political actors is out of the picture. Radical political changes are related to the substitution of certain political actors by others. This was an enduring perspective that never abandoned the strict adherence to the oldest versions of realism. It prolonged through the post-Cold War era and remained neglectful to the methodological debates that went on in the West during the Cold War years.⁸³

To illustrate during the Cold War, when the Turkish state assumed the Soviet Union the biggest threat to national security, the predominant nationalist views depicted the Soviet Union of the 1920s as a tactical friend but a potential enemy. The tactical alliance between two countries was result of a series of obligations and was ephemeral since the Soviet Union was swift to return tsarist political methods that were even more dangerous with the contribution of communist ideology. After the Cold War a left-wing variant of nationalism identifying the western axis and NATO as the real threat toward Turkey rewrites the history of Soviet-Turkish relations in order to show the alliance was strategic and depended upon a common ideological ground. That is to say, the Soviet Union in the 1920s was a real friend of Eastern peoples and

⁸² Faruk Yalvaç, “Approaches to Turkish Foreign Policy: A Critical Realist Analysis”, *Turkish Studies* 15, no. 1 (2014): 119.

⁸³ İlhan Uzgel, “Türk Dış Politikası Yazımında Siyaset, Ayrışma ve Dönüşüm”, *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 4, no. 13 (Spring 2007): 115, 116. The critique to this methodology, coming with the rise of the left opposition in the 1960s, which replaced the state-centered approach with class-based analysis claiming that Turkish foreign policy reflected the interests of the dominant class, had a limited influence in the field. *Ibid.*, 118.

Turkey.⁸⁴ In both cases, whether the position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union is negative or positive, the relation is defined through its suitability to Turkish national interests. Major socio-economic differences are out of the picture. In the case of nationalist views, influential since the first history-writing of Turkish-Soviet relations, Mustafa Kemal and other prominent cadres of liberation war and formation process of the republic are honest nationalists who are respectful to the rights of other nations while the Bolshevik leaders are power-seeking pragmatic communists. They can easily change view and “sell out” their allies. For the left-nationalist variant, on the other hand, though leaders of the respective countries had different worldviews they were united on the ground of anti-imperialism, which is almost the more leading force behind the good relations. Therefore ontologically speaking, the individual(s) in claim of representing their states are the focus of the historiography of Soviet-Turkish relations of this kind.

Surprisingly, in spite of the predominantly severe anti-communist discourse in politics and culture throughout the Cold War years⁸⁵, foreign policy analysis did not rest on the threat of the Soviet totalitarianism posed to the free world. Soviet Russia was continuation of the Tsarist Russia with a new ideological outlook. Therefore, different from many of their Western colleagues, Turkish scholars identified the Tsarist aspirations behind the Soviet behavior, irrespective of the new Soviet discourse. This approach stemmed from the fact that due to the geographical proximity and the centuries of interaction with Russia, anti-communism in Turkey was highly intermingled with Russophobia.⁸⁶ That is why struggle against anti-communism overwhelmingly amounted to the struggle against the traditional Russian

⁸⁴ For very demonstrative examples for the two cases respectively: Mehmet Saray, *Atatürk'ün Sovyet Politikası* (İstanbul: Veli Yayınları, 1984) and Perinçek, *Türk-Rus Diplomasinden Gizli Sayfalar*.

⁸⁵ For a recent and comprehensive research on the issue see: Cangül Örnek, *Türkiye'nin Soğuk Savaş Düşünce Hayatı: Antikomünizm ve Amerikan Etkisi* (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2014).

⁸⁶ Among the documents published by Ali Fuat Cebesoy a letter he received from Atatürk was especially striking for our subject. In the letter Atatürk equalized bolshevization of the country to absolute Russian domination.

enemy. In this sense, realist views of the interwar years were preserved, however this time, the Russian national interests were described as completely opposing to Turkish national interests and causing the Soviet leaders act with a secret agenda in which old Tsarist expansionism was hidden.

The quest of a hidden agenda in the Soviet attitudes and acts was an old tradition started by the republican cadres and continued by the mainstream historians in Turkey. Just as the official explanation of primary political actors and diplomats of the West on Soviet foreign policy formed the basis for the orthodox historiography of the field, the Republican political cadres determined the main line of Turkish historiography on Soviet-Turkish relations. Among others memoirs of Ali Fuat Cebesoy⁸⁷, the first Turkish ambassador in Moscow, Kazım Karabekir⁸⁸, one of the top commanders of the Liberation War were especially influential and served as the primary sources in the absence of available archival sources. Second and third generation diplomats such as Kamuran Gürüz⁸⁹ and Suat Bilge⁹⁰ followed them. The biographies of the scholars who studied the issue show that they had links with the Turkish foreign affairs, most of the time as an advisor.⁹¹ Therefore, as it was the case in the West, most apparently in the US and the Soviet Union, foreign policy-making and foreign policy-writing intertwined. And the retrospective explanation of the Soviet policies towards Turkey in the 1920s,

⁸⁷ Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları* (İstanbul: Vatan Neşriyat, 1955).

⁸⁸ Karabekir and Özerengin, *İstiklal Harbimiz*.

⁸⁹ Kâmuran Gürün, *Türk-Sovyet ilişkileri, 1920-1953* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991).

⁹⁰ Ali Suat Bilge, *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri, 1920-1964* (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1992).

⁹¹ Mehmet Saray was a good example of that. He worked as chief advisor of the ministry of foreign affairs on Turkic republics. He has a book on Turkish-Soviet relations: Saray, *Atatürk'ün Sovyet Politikası*. İlhan Uzgel in his article drew attention to the interconnection between the foreign affairs and the international relations discipline first founded in Faculty of Political Sciences, Mülkiye. According to Uzgel, during the Cold War, the foreign policy writing was not only *state-centered*, but also *for the sake of the state*. Uzgel, "Türk Dış Politikası Yazımında Siyaset, Ayrışma ve Dönüşüm", 116.

was made in a world conjunction where the “capitalist west” and the “socialist east” were in a severe ideological struggle and in a country where the ruling class categorically united its faith with the former. Expectedly, those explanations amounted to an “interpretive labor”, if we borrow the term from Coş and Bilgin⁹². The interpretive labor served to highlight several arguments about the Soviet government and Kemalist leadership. Neither of the arguments was totally new. As it was mentioned above, the several prominent actors of the Turkish Liberation War and first republican years formulated them. However, the point was that, in the face of the sharp change in Turkish attitude towards the Soviets, first hand sources were utilized selectively. Positive or moderate views vis-à-vis the Soviets, which emerged among certain Republican cadres during the interwar period were totally ignored. That is why, the views of Ali Fuat Cebesoy, a republican cadre known with his conservatism and anti-Soviet stance, gained so much popularity among the Turkish historians. Yusuf Kemal Tengirşenk, on the other hand, who was one of the first foreign affairs ministers of the New Turkey, the chief of the delegation that signed the Moscow Agreement in 1921 and who assumed many important duties in the first Turkish governments, could not reach the same popularity with his book “Vatan Hizmetinde”,⁹³ which overwhelmingly refers to Turkish-Soviet relations and which was composed of his day-to-day notes in the years of the Liberation War. Likewise, it is difficult to find a reference to the work of Hikmet Bayur⁹⁴, which was written in 1934 on Atatürk’s demand. Both works reflects the general atmosphere of their era vis-à-vis the Soviet Russia, which can be defined in general as “positive”.

⁹² Kıvanç Coş and Pınar Bilgin, “Stalin’s Demands: Constructions of the ‘Soviet Other’ in Turkey’s Foreign Policy, 1919-1945” *FPA Foreign Policy Analysis* 6, no. 1 (2010): 48.

⁹³ Yusuf Kemal Tengirşenk, *Vatan hizmetinde* (İstanbul: Bahar Matbaası, 1967).

⁹⁴ Prominent Kemalist statesmen, who serves as general secretary of the presidency, minister of national education, ambassador in various countries.

Hikmet Bayur's work constitutes a good example of a historiography that reflected the official approach towards the Soviets in the interwar period.⁹⁵ Written in 1934, it included Bayur's examinations of the official documents and his testimony during his duty as the chief of Political Affairs Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 1920 and 1925. He was also a member of the Turkish delegation in the Lausanne Conference. As mentioned above, it is hard to distinguish his work from those written on Turkish foreign policy during the Cold War years in terms of its basic feature, which was the state-centered approach. Yet, the explanations of the events were mostly leaned on cause-effect relation through searching objective reasons of the Soviet actions instead of searching for hidden primordial intentions behind them. An example of this, that showed this difference was his explanations on the Soviet attitude about the Turkish-Armenian issues in the summer 1920. While Turkish delegation was in Moscow in order to conclude a friendship agreement with the Soviets, a delegation that represented the Armenian Dashnak government was also invited to Moscow. In August before a Turkish-Soviet agreement was signed, the Soviet government agreed with the Armenians. Later, after an agreement project was prepared by the Turkish delegation together with the commission appointed by the Soviet government for this purpose, Chicherin proposed Bekir Sami Bey, the head of the delegation, verbally, cession of Van, Bitlis and Muş provinces to the Armenian Republic. Bayur explained this incident in his book by Soviet concern to satisfy the expectations of European public opinion, which sympathized strongly the Armenian cause; and to keep the Dashnaks from the Entente plans to annihilate the Bolshevik power. In the orthodox historiography of the Cold War years on the other hand, this incident was mostly associated with the maintenance of Tsarist expansionist policy towards Turkey by using the Armenians.⁹⁶ In Bayur's work, Soviet Russia's

⁹⁵ Bayur wrote in the introduction of the book that the work was reviewed by Atatürk and Fevzi Çakmak; and the ideas in the book were compatible with that of the government's approaches towards the issue.

⁹⁶ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hâtıraları*, 74.

policy toward Turkey was reflected as loyal to the Turkish-Soviet friendship for 13 years as the Soviet government eliminated its confusion about the support to Turkish national movement.⁹⁷ However, later this argument transformed into the argument that Soviet Russia acted friendly towards Turkey whenever it felt isolated and vulnerable in international relations, while it took hostile steps against Turkey whenever it felt strong enough to harm Turkey without any cost.⁹⁸

The highlighted arguments in the orthodox analyses of Turkish-Soviet relations are as follows. First of all, Tsarist-Soviet continuity is emphasized in most definite terms. With the idea that Ali Fuat was the most influential primary source for the Cold War thesis on Turkish-Soviet relations, it is convenient to refer his description of this continuity. For Ali Fuat, Bolshevik Russia was the inheritor of the Tsarist Russia's policy. The signs of continuity were the desire for the seizure of the Straits, Baku oil, insistence on the hegemony over Turkistan, hindering the policies of Islam and Turan and whenever it captured the opportunity annihilation Turkey at all.⁹⁹

Another postulate of the orthodox historiography was that the Soviets principal objective in Turkey was to bolshevize the country.¹⁰⁰ As it was understood that the Turkish nationalists were sufficiently strong and there was no real possibility for a government change in favor of the communists, the Soviets oriented itself towards the friendship with the Turkish nationalist leadership. This line of thinking led the historians to reduce the Turkish communists to simple instruments of Soviet Russia without any initiative. All of their steps were determined from Moscow. And the Soviets planned to construct a soviet regime in Turkey by taking the opportunity of the foreign

⁹⁷ Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, *Türkiye Devleti'nin Dış Siyaseti* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995), 65.

⁹⁸ Ahmet Şükrü Esmer, "Türk-Rus Münasebetleri," *Ulus Gazetesi*, sec. Dış Politika, October 27, 1957.

⁹⁹ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hâtıraları*, 114, 115.

¹⁰⁰ For an explicit example of this see: Saray, *Atatürk'ün Sovyet Politikası*, 58.

occupation and political vacuum in the country.¹⁰¹ Actually, this postulate was compatible with the common outward explanation of the Republican cadres, since it served to the stigmatization of the Turkish communists as agents of foreigners, alien to their society.

Cold war historiography had also an idea on the Soviet administrative apparatus, which was close to the idea developed in the West. That is to say, the Soviet state and society was under the absolute control of several party leaders, who together took place in the Politburo. They decided on everything. The organs other than the Politburo were just executors of the decisions taken by top leaders. For our case, Chicherin and Narkomindel's role was not more than that in the foreign affairs.¹⁰²

The literature on Turkish-Soviet relations in Russian overwhelmingly refers to the works written in Soviet times. As it is the case in Turkey, maybe worse, with the collapse of the Soviet Union academic interest towards the history of Turkish-Soviet relations radically diminished. Still there are few recent studies worth mentioning. However, firstly, it is necessary to outline the Soviet historiography on the subject. It is difficult to distinguish this subject from the field of Turkish studies in the Soviet Union. The scholars of this country had an immense interest towards Turkish history, politics, economy and society. This interest had its roots in the development of Turcology in Russia during the nineteenth century. However, the works on Turkey written in the 1920s and 1930s are mostly belong to the writers out of the field. They were mostly communist theoreticians who supported the national liberation movements in the East.¹⁰³ Turkish-Soviet relations were part of the analysis on

¹⁰¹ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hâtıraları*, 17. "I immediately have to propound that, it was understood that the Russian Soviet government and the Third International secretly decided the inclusion of Turkey in the federation of the Soviet republics through its sovietization like Ukraine. Thanks God our nation did not allow the execution of these secret ambitions." Ibid., 97.

¹⁰² Ibid., 216, 217.

¹⁰³ A. A Kolesnikov, *Atatürk Dönemi Türk-Rus İlişkileri: Türk-Sovyet İlişkilerinin Kuruluşunun 90. Yılı* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2010), 5.

Turkey, since in the Soviet Union these relations were considered to have played a crucial role in the foundation process of the New Turkey. As it was the case in Turkey, the scholars of the field were most of the time composed of the people who had also a part in actual state foreign policy making processes.

The protagonist of Turkish studies in the Soviet times was Mikhail Pavlovich, who was the one of the founders and professors of the new academy of the Red Army general staff. He became the rector of the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies and Leningrad Institute of Languages. He was also the founder and editor of the influential journal *Novyy Vostok*¹⁰⁴ His books, articles and his speeches on Turkey in the years 1921-1925 pioneered further studies in the field.¹⁰⁵ In this period many other scholars engaged in Turkish studies. Among those most outstanding ones were, V. A. Gurko-Kryazhin, P. Kitaygorodskiy, Bartanov, B. M. Dancig, A. D. Novichev, A. F. Miller, K. Yust, G. Astahov, P. Pavlenko. The importance of their works, whose scopes varied from Turkish history and independence period, political system and political parties, Turkish economy and trade, Turkish society; working class and socialist movement etc., was related either to the profundity of their knowledge in the field, or to their direct observations and experiences in Turkey thanks to either their official duties or visits in Turkey. As Kolesnikov maintains, while the works during the 1920s mostly amounted to essays whose topics were determined in accordance with the objectives of the Kemalist administration as a support, the Turcologists in the 1930s had the chance to make more field studies and presented comprehensive monographies in certain topics.¹⁰⁶ However, the first studies that focused directly on Turkish-Soviet relations to a great extent appeared in the 1960s. After the coup d'état of 1960

¹⁰⁴New East

¹⁰⁵Two of his books are especially worth mentioning: *Turtsiya na Bor'be za Nezavisimost'* (Turkey in the war for independence), Moscow, 1925; *Revolutsionnaya Turtsiya* (Revolutionary Turkey), 1925.

¹⁰⁶Kolesnikov, *Atatürk Dönemi Türk-Rus-İlişkileri*, 13. For an unabridged bibliography of the Turkish studies in the Soviet Union until 1959 see: A. K Sverchevskaya et al., *Bibliografiya Turtsii literatura na russkom yazyke: 1917-1975 gg* (Moskva: Nauka, 1982).

in Turkey, with a thaw in the political relations that had been strained for many years since the WWII, the interest to the history of Turkish-Soviet relations dramatically increased in the Soviet Union. This new interest can be interpreted as a desire to remind the old good days and to return normal relations between the two countries. Soviet ambassador C. Aralov's memories, which still constitutes one of the main sources on the subject published in the 1960. His book was followed by the works of S. Ī. Kuznetsova, A. N. Kheifets, Yu. A. Bagirov, A. M. Shamshutdinov, among others. This interest continued at a certain pace in the 1970s and 1980s. The revitalization of Turkish-Russian relations after the collapse of the Soviet Union did not give the result of a new wave of interest on the subject, though. Still, the most important work, among a few others, continues to be N. G. Kireev's book on Turkish history in the 20th century.¹⁰⁷

Therefore, if we distinguish two main periods of intensive studies on Turkish affairs, one roughly from the beginning of relations through the WWII years and the other from 1960 until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the first period was characterized by studies on various features of Turkey and Turkish society, in the service of Soviet policies of influence towards Turkey, while the second period was marked by a focus on history of Soviet-Turkish relations with an attempt to support the revitalization of them. Though it is possible to talk about a continuity between two periods in terms of basic premises on Soviet foreign policy in general, Soviet foreign policy towards Turkey in particular, as well as the assumptions on Turkish socio-political structure, there are still some striking differences. First of all, while in the first years Soviet scholars were more interested in the analyses of Turkish society, social classes and socialist/working class movements, composition of the dominant class in the country, and its activity in politics¹⁰⁸, in time class analysis to an extent lost

¹⁰⁷ N. G. Kireev, *Istoriya Turtsii v 20. Vek* (Moskva: Kraft, IV. RAN, 2007).

¹⁰⁸ See: Georgiy Aleksandrovich Astahov, *Ot Sultanata k Demokraticheskoy Turtsii* (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1926); V. A. Gurko-Kriyazhin, *Yeni Türkiye'nin Doğuşu: 1923-1924 Yazıları* (İstanbul: Kaynak yayınları, 2008); O. Bartanev, *Turtsiya* (Moskva: TsK MOPR SSSR, 1927); P. Kitaygorodskii, *Turtsiya* (Moskva: CK. MOPR SSSR, 1929).

ground and Kemalists and especially Atatürk himself became the elements that brought to the fore in the narrations on Turkey. Atatürk was praised as a revolutionary who realized radical transformations in the country and the founder of the Turkish-Soviet friendship. According to the narration, his death marked immense changes in the Turkish politics and therefore relations with the Soviet Union. There was also a striking change in the approach towards the Turkish politics at the beginning of the 1920s. Gurko-Kryazhin, for instance, classified the groups in the Grand National Assembly as the primary nationalist group led by Mustafa Kemal that was composed of the moderates who were keen to reconcile with the West in the first suitable moment; and another mixed group composed of radicals, ex-Unionists, nationalists, Turkists, Islamists. They were propagated a restless struggle against the West with the support of the eastern states, Soviet Russia, Iran, Afghanistan etc.¹⁰⁹ The classification in the 1960s, however, was different. All the ‘sins’ of the first years of 1920s were attributed to the right-wing, “feodal, clerical, pro-imperialist and monarchist” leaders and group of the Grand National Assembly.¹¹⁰ They were blamed for the anti-Soviet moves, reconciliation attempts with the West, and opposition to the construction of a national economy. Even the policies that were shaped in accordance with the main line of the government could be reflected as the results of the intrigues of the right-wing opposition. For example, in a collected work contributed by the senior scholars of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, the concession given by the Turkish delegation about the Istanbul Straits in Lausanne was mostly related to the political pressure put by the right-wing opposition led by Rauf Bey.¹¹¹ The feodal-clerical opposition propagated a change in the foreign policy from Russian orientation to Entente orientation during the whole course

¹⁰⁹ Gurko-Kryazhin, *Yeni Türkiye'nin doğuşu*, 136.

¹¹⁰ For example see: Aleksandr Naumovich Khejsets and Akademiya Nauk SSSR, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya i Narody Vostoka 1921-1927* (Moskva: Nauka, 1968), 170.

¹¹¹ Manvel Arsenovich Gasratyan and Petr Pavlovich Moiseev Manvel Arsenovich, *SSSR i Turtsiya 1917-1979* (Moskva: Nauka, 1981), 52.

of Lausanne.¹¹² Though the existence of such a group is a historical fact and the political and ideological of this group was truly identified by the Soviet historians, to cast all the blame on this group about the Western orientation and crisis with the Soviet Russia seemed to be an exaggeration. It is more like a political preference in order to emphasize the support of the Soviet Union to the constitutive political element of Turkey which regained credit with the coup d'état of 1960. A comparison between the ambassadorial reports written by Semen Ivanovich Aralov who served in Ankara in the years 1922-23, and his memorial book, *Vospominaniya Sovetskogo Diplomata 1922-1923*, also reveals the difference in the two distinct periods in terms of their political emphases.¹¹³ Soviet foreign affairs roughly until the end of 1921 had an indecisive attitude about supporting the Kemalist movement. Even in the summer 1923, the Narkomindel and Politburo discussed about giving full support to Mustafa Kemal to the detriment of the oppositional group composed of the ex-Unionists, though this time this debate was far from bearing the previous confusions. The history-writing from the 1960s onwards however, pretends as if such a confusion never took place and the Soviet government from the very beginning gave a decisive support to Mustafa Kemal and his entourages.

In the 1950s, when the ideological tension between two antagonistic poles of the Cold War was in its heyday, and Turkey under the rule of Democrat Party heavily leaned on the US, a polemic took place between a Soviet and Turkish historian, famous turcologist. A. F. Miller and Turkish political historian and journalist Ahmet Şükrü Esmer. This polemic, started with Esmer's article on the history of Turkish-Soviet relations in the *Ulus*¹¹⁴ newspaper on October 21th, 1957 and continued with Miller's reply January

¹¹² Ibid., 53.

¹¹³ Semen Ivanovich Aralov, *Vospominaniya sovetskogo diplomata* (Moskva: Izd. Instituta Mezhdunarodnyh otnosheniy, 1960).

¹¹⁴ It means Nation.

1958 edition of the Narkomindel's periodical *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'*¹¹⁵, and displayed the rigorously diverging approaches of Turkish and Soviet sides on the issue. Miller did not leave unanswered¹¹⁶ by two more Esmer's articles published on March 27th and April 9th of 1958 in *Ulus*. The polemic presents a good opportunity to highlight the basic tenets of the divergence between the two sides in terms of historiography of the relations.

Esmer's basic arguments in his first article were related to Tsarist-Soviet continuity. With a vehemently anti-communist discourse, he indicated that the ultimate goal of Russia had always been "to devour" Turkey. It approached Turkey whenever it felt vulnerable, as it was the case on the eve of the Moscow Agreement in March 16th, 1921. Soviet Russia was isolated and disappointed with the failure of expected revolutions in the West. That is why it oriented towards friendship with Turkey.¹¹⁷ Miller in his reply in *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'* in January 1958, drew attention to the anti-Soviet propaganda going on Turkish press in those days, which intended to convince the public opinion to the Soviet threat as if the Soviet Union was the responsible of all the problems the country suffered.¹¹⁸ Against Esmer's continuity thesis, Miller stressed the radical break with the October Revolution from Tsarist past in terms of foreign policy. He exemplified this by uttering the abandonment of old Russian claims on Turkey by the Soviets, Soviet military and financial aid during the Liberation War, Soviet effort to break the isolation over Turkey in the international arena etc. He stated that it was not the Soviets but Turkey was on the edge of total annihilation on the eve of the Moscow Agreement. Soviets finishing the Civil War, concluding a commercial treaty with Britain, completing the sovietization of Transcaucasia was in much more favorable

¹¹⁵ It means *International Life*. Miller's article was formulated as a letter to the editor of the *Ulus* newspaper and it was soon also published in *Ulus*.

¹¹⁶ His article was published in June 1958 in the *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'*.

¹¹⁷ Esmer, "Türk-Rus Münasebetleri."

¹¹⁸ A. F. Miller, "Protiv fal'sifikatsii istorii sovetsko-turetskikh otnosheniy," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'*, no. 1 (1958): 103.

situation than Turkey.¹¹⁹ The striking difference in the ideas of the two historians was that, while Esmer believed in the ephemerality of the Soviet-Turkish friendship which emerged as the tactical initiative of Mustafa Kemal due to the conjunctural necessities¹²⁰, Miller, on the other hand, like other Soviet historians in the 1960s, attributed sincerity to Mustafa Kemal's approaches towards Soviet Russia, which was explained by ideological proximity instead of political reasoning. Esmer attacked the Soviet claim that the Turkish-Soviet friendship was broken mainly because of the elimination of Atatürk's policy towards the Soviet Union. He adds: "If Atatürk lived today, he would also be an opponent of Russia."¹²¹ Another striking difference was that, while Esmer claimed that from the very beginning the ultimate goal was bolshevization of Turkey, Miller pretends as if Soviet Russia could never have such goals due to its commitment to peace policy. He pretends as if the support given to the national bourgeois in the region was a principle rather than a policy.

While Esmer reminded the fact that an agreement couldn't be signed in summer 1920 due to Soviet territorial demands on behalf of Armenia and lagged until March 1921, Miller brought into question the Turkish foreign minister's Bekir Sami's counter-revolutionary efforts, his misleading of information from Moscow as the obstacle in front of Turkish-Soviet convergence. He added, contrary to Esmer's claim that the victory of Turkey over Armenia in autumn 1921 obliged the Soviets to come to terms, the Turkish-Armenian war was a reason of tension between two countries.¹²²

Finally, Miller pointed to the change in Esmer's ideas on the essence of Turkish-Soviet relations, reminding his article published in French edition of

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 104-105.

¹²⁰ Ahmet Şükrü Esmer, "Türk-Rus Münasebetleri," *Ulus Gazetesi*, sec. Dış Politika, March 27, 1958.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² A. F. Miller, "Eshhe raz ob istoricheskikh ekskursah Esmera," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'*, no. 6 (1958): 109.

Millet newspaper “La Turquie” in 1933. There, Esmer asserted that every Turk was grateful to the Soviet support in the Liberation War and after; and that nobody could achieve breaking up of Soviet-Turkish friendship. Esmer’s reply is not convincing. He claimed that the difference was due to the fact that Russia was friend of Turkey in those days which was not in the day the polemic in question took place.¹²³ Because, the debate is not on the changing conditions of Turkish-Soviet friendship, but with the Cold War, the reinterpretation of the events that took place at the beginning of the 1920s.

In the light of this debate, it is possible to reach the conclusion that the frameworks of both sides utilized to explain Turkish-Soviet relations are far from being satisfying. This fact does not ignore the reality that the anti-communist hysteria and hatred towards the Soviet Union in the 1950s in Turkey was a distinct phenomenon and deserves to be analyzed distinctively. Yet, the political conditions of the Cold War seemed to determine the historiography of both sides. In the simplest form, it was reflected in formulations on the one side as “Atatürk would also be an opponent of Russia” and on the other side as “Atatürk’s successors betrayed Atatürk’s policy of friendship with the Soviet Russia.” These formulations depict the shortcoming of a methodological approach, which is methodological individualism in the explanation of the historical facts. The developments in the Turkish-Soviet relations are reflected as results of the decisions of the rulers, instead of looking beyond the decisions, to the structural differences that provided conditions for those decisions and drove the wedge between two countries.¹²⁴

¹²³ Esmer, “Türk-Rus Münasebetleri,” 1958.

¹²⁴ Turkish-Soviet relations became to deteriorate from the second half of 1930s onwards. Both the date and the reason of this deteriorating were subject of long debates among historians. Turkish historiography heavily leans on the idea that Turkish-Soviet relations deteriorated due to Soviet demands at the end of the WWII. For a comprehensive study that focuses on this question see: Akdan, “A Systemic Analysis of the Cold War.”

1.4 Sources

In the framework of this study, it is not possible to equally embrace all the events in the international and regional politics that took place in the years in question. Instead, I deal with the developments that were directly related with and influenced by the course of Soviet foreign policy. For the details I made reference to some comprehensive studies covering this period.

While the second chapter mostly depends on related studies and published primary sources; the following four chapters heavily rest upon the Russian archival documents. The collection of the Russian archival documents was realized during the work in three archives of the Russian Federation during spring 2014 and winter 2015, five months in total. Those archives are the Russian State Archive of Socio-political History¹²⁵ and Foreign Affairs Archive of Russian Federation¹²⁶. Russian State Archive of Socio-political history was one of the largest archive of the country with 699 fonds and more than 2 million files in its body. It covers documents from 1617 to 2014 on the social and political history of the western countries and Russia, as well as on the history of the international working class, socialist and communist movements. I mainly worked in the reader's hall I, where documents on history of western countries and Russia were located. Those documents were classified in the fonds under the titles like political parties, social movements, organizations, institutions, as well as in the fonds dedicated to historical personalities. Foreign affairs archive of the Russian Federation on the other hand was the only archive, which remained intact after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was founded by Chicherin. As a former archiver of the foreign affairs ministry of the Russian Empire, he claimed that Narkomindel needed documents as much as the Red Army needed bullets. That is why foreign affairs archive emerged as his personal archive at the beginning of the 1920s. It contains documents mainly on Soviet period, including all the secret and open

¹²⁵ Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvennyy Arhiv Social'no-politicheskoy Istorii (RGASPI)

¹²⁶ Arhiv Vneshney Politiki Rossiyskoy Federatsii (AVPRF)

correspondances inside Narkomindel, between Narkomindel and other state structures, between Narkomindel and diplomatic units of other countries, international treaties and conventions and diplomatic reports on the situation of various countries. The fonds are classified both on country and regional base and on the personal correspondances of Soviet statesmen. In both of the archives, in RGASPI and AVPRF, the progress in the work was relatively slow due to the complicated procedures regarding the access of the archives and strict rules and restrictions in terms of extracting copies of the documents from the archive. Considerable part of the documents used in this study was copied by handwriting since it was not possible to take a hard-copy from each of them.

The documents overwhelmingly recovers correspondence between the Politburo, Narkomindel, Transcaucasian Military-Revolutionary Council, Caucasian Bureau of Central Committee of RKP(b) and the diplomats in Turkey and Caucasia. In spite of the restrictions and inadequacy of the Turkish archival sources on the topic, the memoirs and published documents, before all the Turkish parliamentary minutes were helpful to a great extent.

Bülent Gökay mentions the difficulty examining Russian documents because of the fact that formal Soviet policy statements were constructed with a significant amount of propaganda when writers reported current events, simply because these writers shared the same ideological matrix. And he adds: “the language used in the secret documents of Soviets differs little from the published proceedings of official state bodies.”¹²⁷ My experience and impression is on the contrary. First of all, this argument might be asserted for the published/secret documents of any state in the world, since no state’s foreign affairs is exempt from a certain ideology and objective to disseminate that ideology according to its class character. The excessive emphasis on the propagative character of Soviet foreign policy documents inevitably creates the false idea that other countries’ documents on the same issue reflect the objective situation and “real” considerations of those countries. Secondly, there

¹²⁷ Bülent Gökay, *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey, 1920-1991 Soviet Foreign Policy, Turkey and Communism* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 3.

is no reason to doubt about the sincerity of the secret documents when all the tensions evident in the harsh, sometimes even insulting language used in the correspondences, self-exposure on the weaknesses and failures of the Soviet power and Soviet foreign policy are considered. These documents help us map the structure of Soviet foreign affairs of the time and the actors in charge, whose stories are not very well known. What is written in documents from the archives and in memoirs is certainly not taken as granted in this study, and used after a process of verification and negation with the other sources.

1.5 Outline of the dissertation

The main body of the dissertation is composed of five chapters. Except Chapter II, the chapters will follow a chronological order. It seems obligatory to analyze the Soviet perception and intervention to the international conjuncture and developments at the beginning of 1920s in order to contextualize Soviet policy towards Turkey. Therefore, in Chapter II, an overall assessment of the political developments in the post-war period and Soviet western and eastern policies will be made. The analysis of the pivots of Soviet foreign policy will provide a basis to reveal the place Turkey constituted in the Soviet foreign policy.

In Chapters III and IV, the period of familiarization is analyzed concomitantly with the process of the establishment of Soviet policy toward Turkey within a context of Soviet diplomatic offensive for facilitating the conditions of “peaceful coexistence.” The course of events flowing in a dazzling speed in the years 1920 and 1921 will be analyzed from a Soviet viewpoint in order to follow the development of Soviet policy toward Turkey. The analysis of this period will also give an idea about the insistence of the Soviets in preserving friendly relations with Turkey in spite of all the fluctuations and setbacks in the relations.

Chapters V and VI will be devoted to a period of redefinition of relations between Soviet Russia and Turkey. The year 1922 started with a hopeful atmosphere left by the visit of the Bolshevik leader Mikhail Frunze. Soon, however, the unstable nature of relations once again revealed itself. Tensions

among the parties escalated in the process through the victory over the Greek Army and peace talks with the Entente, which at the end turned out as a total isolation for the Soviets. The Soviets had to redefine its policy toward Turkey without a major change in the importance attributed to this country in the general context of foreign policy.

Finally, it seems crucial to examine if Soviet policy toward Turkey in the first four years of 1920s was a success or a failure, as Soviet-Turkish convergence was replaced by divergence and hostility starting from the mid-1930s, in spite of the efforts to make the friendship sustainable. For the first four years of the relations, the alliance between the countries in question was beneficial for both sides. It contributed undoubtedly to the achievement of political independence of Turkey; it also liberated the young Turkish republic from being totally isolated from world politics. For the Soviets on the other hand, this friendship presented stability and security along the southern borders throughout the 1920s. It also contributed to the legitimization of Soviet policies toward the Muslim world. Apart from these, during the years of the Liberation War and the foundation process of the republic, Turkey was in need of external material support. Soviet efforts in this sense were doomed to fail due to its own shortages. In spite of this, successful diplomatic practices that made the Turkish government feel the political significance of friendship with the Soviets brought the achievement of relatively stable relations throughout the 1920s. These considerations will be handled at length in the last chapter of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY IN THE 1920s

2.1 Why do we need to contextualize Soviet policy toward Turkey?

For the purposes of this dissertation, contextualizing the Soviet policy toward Turkey within international politics in the years between the world wars is obligatory since both countries were extremely susceptible to the international developments in the foundation processes of their new regimes. Their susceptibility stemmed from two reasons: They both needed to secure a “breathing space”, in other words, a completely peaceful, warless period to bind up the wounds of long war years and to revive their bankrupt economies. Secondly, for the reconstruction of the economy and even to provide the basic needs of the population, they not only needed peaceful relations with the Western states, which not long ago threatened their very existence, but also to establish commercial relations with and receive financial credits from them. Therefore every single decision on the bilateral relations was a result of a series of considerations in a broader context and most of the time directly reflected the latest developments in the Western countries; and the interaction of the countries in question with them.

The world between the two wars experienced, in a sense, a state of interregnum. The First World War, which had erupted at a point when the imperialist rivalry became unsustainable under “peace” conditions, turned the balances within the international system upside-down.¹²⁸ Post-war settlement brought essential changes in the European map; the anti-colonial insurrections became the reality of the new era, and the world became familiar with the first socialist country. One should add to the ambiguities brought by all these developments of the post-war era, the ambiguities regarding the world

¹²⁸ Keith Neilson, *Britain, Soviet Russia and the Collapse of the Versailles Order, 1919-1939* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

hegemony or the leadership of the imperialist system, and the new positions of the major capitalist states, both the losers and the victors of the war, in this system. All these ambiguities were contributing the gross contradictions and conflicts, no less intense than the pre-war period. The difference from the wartime was that struggle for power, resources and world leadership moved to the fields of economy and diplomacy.¹²⁹

The facts such as a socialist power like the Soviet Union could survive despite the efforts of a group of capitalist states and representatives of huge corporate interests, which directly perceived the Soviets as a threat; and a new republic like Turkey could impose itself as a sovereign state while the Ottoman Empire, as one of the major issues of secret diplomacy among the imperialist powers during the War, had been subject to complete subjugation, were result of the distinctive character of the post-war international situation. In the post-war era, during the 1920s, the international politics took place in a world without a decisive leadership of a capitalist country. The arena of international politics was deprived of well-established working rules and control mechanisms over minor states.¹³⁰ The convergence of the two countries could not be prevented despite all efforts, due to the uncertainty and turmoil within the international system.

Kemalist Turkey and Soviet Russia being aware of the international situation that paved the way for their new regimes, always felt themselves obliged to be vigilant as much as possible before the international developments that could be in favor or to the detriment of their very existence.

Soviet Russia roughly from 1920 onwards endeavored to construct a foreign policy depending on a very fragile and temporary balance of powers between the first socialist state of the world and the states that represented imperialist-capitalist power in the international politics. While Soviet Russia was seeking official recognition through commercial and diplomatic means, all

¹²⁹ Bilsay Kuruç, *Mustafa Kemal Döneminde Ekonomi, Büyük Devletler ve Türkiye*, (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011), 32.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

the Bolsheviks without exception knew that the things could suddenly turn against them. This perception led them to fortify their existence on the world arena through a number of distinct foreign policy tools. Turkey was at the intersection of two of them: “Soviet Eastern policy” and Soviet policy towards the capitalist states that had irreconcilable contradictions –though temporary– with the major imperialist countries.

Friendship with the new Turkish Republic was a fundamental foreign policy tool for the Soviets in its relations with the West, especially with Great Britain. Actually, one of the hypotheses of this dissertation is about the special position of Turkey in Soviet foreign policy. I will claim that throughout the 1920s friendship with Turkey was one of the two pivots of Soviet foreign policy. The other pivot was rapprochement with Germany. Turkey and Germany, good relations with whom would secure southern and western borders of the Soviets, were heirs of two defeated and disparaged sides of the First World War. Turkey could regain the control of certain territory as a result of the victory over Greek troops that were sent to the Asia Minor with encouragement and promotion of the allied powers led by Britain. Despite this victory and official recognition of the new Turkish state in the Lausanne Conference (1922-1923), it took much longer for Turkey to achieve real recognition and to get rid of the either neglectful or minacious attitude of the Western powers. Germany, on the other hand, besides the territorial losses and gigantic war reparations that would prevent its revival in a foreseeable future, felt humiliated as a great power, and became the major representative of revisionism in the European politics.

Soviet Union derived from two “war victims” with undecided positions in the international politics, two crucial friends, convenient for the foreign policy conducted throughout 1920s. Although a comparison between the political significance of the two states, Turkey and Germany in the international system is out of question, they had more or less the same weight in the view of Soviet foreign policy makers in terms of their post-war situations, their geopolitical locations, and for the difficulty in their reintegration as agreeable partners of the capitalist-imperialist system. With all

these assets, Turkey and Germany were promising security for the western and southern borders of the Soviet Union and giving an important “trump” in the European game to the Soviet diplomacy. Turkey in that sense was part of the European power politics.

On the other hand, in many Soviet documents, Turkey is referred with two other Eastern countries, Iran and Afghanistan where national movements, challenging the British hegemony, determined the political scenes. Besides being directly part of European power politics, Turkey with its recently emerged national populist government contributed to the Eastern policy of the Soviet Union, which also aimed at putting pressure on the imperialist hegemony. The analysis of this twofold position of Turkey in the Soviet foreign policy, as an actor in European power politics and as a member of the countries that represented the “eastern awakening” requires a comprehensive understanding of post-war international setting.

Another reason of writing such an introductory chapter is the necessity to give an idea about the development of diplomatic structure in use and the actual implementation of policy objectives in the Soviet foreign affairs in order to fully recognize the significance and influence of correspondences and reports of Soviet foreign policy makers on Turkey, which will be extensively referred in this dissertation. The first Soviet diplomats in the countries that were important to the Soviet foreign policy were generally outstanding Bolsheviks with a sophisticated knowledge of world affairs and foreign language skills. While working in the Soviet diplomatic missions abroad, they had a large sphere of initiative; since only the principal objectives were dictated from Moscow and the actualization of those objectives was at their disposal. Their detailed country reports were essential documents in the making of Soviet foreign policy, which was exactly the case in the bilateral relations with Turkey.¹³¹

¹³¹ In the case of Turkey, it took sometime to send masterful diplomats to Turkey who could meet the requirements of Soviet policy. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

In the first years of the Soviet Union, “the foundation of socialism” proceeded in the middle of harsh debates, struggle within the leadership cadre of the party and drastic changes in the internal policy and administration of the economy. All the significant transformations inside the country inevitably created their footprints on the foreign policy. Nevertheless, as the principle necessity of the young socialist republic in its relations with the world remained unchanged throughout these years, namely peaceful coexistence with capitalism, the radical changes inside the country were not directly reflected in foreign policy. The changes in foreign policy preferences generally stemmed from the reasons beyond the control of the Soviet government. To illustrate, while at the beginning the good relations with Germany was one of the basic pivots of Soviet foreign policy, Germany lost its significance in time due to the inclusion of Germany back into league of powerful capitalist countries. Still the Soviet Union did not totally discard Germany until the Nazis triumphed in this country in 1933. Similarly, as it is observed in the Soviet foreign policy documents, irrespective of the changes in the political power within the Soviet state, Soviet foreign affairs maintained a coherent policy toward Turkey, with minor changes in tone and accent.

2.2 Foundation and Sources of Soviet Foreign Policy

2.2.1 First steps to a foreign policy through “Carthaginian Peace”¹³²

The meaning of the rise of the Soviet power in Russia could not be perceived truly in the West amid the turmoil of the World War. The proclamations and decisions of the young Soviet government caused perplexity. The Soviet government distinguished from all other governments in history in terms of the way it manifested itself. The world was facing a new type of government that purported to be the representative of the world

¹³² It refers to the brutal peace imposed by the Rome on the Carthage in 146 BC. In its modern usage, it generally refers to the Versailles Treaty (Betty Miller Unterberger, “The Treaty of Versailles: Carthaginian Peace or Pragmatic Compromise?” *Reviamerhist Reviews in American History* 14, no. 3 (1986): 398–404). Brest-Litovsk by the conditions imposed on the Soviet Russia by Germany has a similar reminiscence.

proletariat instead of Russia's national interests. It seemed to struggle not against rival national states, but the imperialistic world hegemony of the international capitalist monopolies and their political representatives. The confiscation of private enterprises in the country was complemented by the cancellation of the loans contracted by Tsarist and provisional governments with the international financial capital. Its recognition of the right of self-determination of the nations that were once subjects of the Tsarist regime was complemented by its support to the peoples in the colonies for their independence against imperialism.¹³³

The first thing done by the Soviet government the day after the revolution also bore certain novelties. It was the declaration of the Peace Decree.¹³⁴ The Decree was the logical consequence of the Bolsheviks' most striking promise given before the revolution to the working people of the country, exhausted by the protracted war. Promise of an immediate peace had been the factor that yielded popularity to the Bolsheviks vis-a-vis the provisional government, from February to November of 1917. The Peace Decree addressed all belligerent peoples of Europe and their governments for an unconditional, just and democratic peace, "without annexations and without indemnities".¹³⁵ The Soviets also announced in this decree that they abolished secret diplomacy and would immediately begin to publish in full all the secret treaties concluded or confirmed from February to November 1917.¹³⁶

¹³³ These points were highlighted in the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People which was introduced by Lenin at a meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee in January 1918. It was approved by All-Russia Congress of Soviets in the same month and was later included, though partially in the constitution of RSFSR in July 1918. Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *On the Foreign Policy of the Soviet State* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), 431.

¹³⁴ It was declared at Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets that took place on November 8, 1917. For the whole text: *Dokumenty Vneshney Politiki SSSR (DVP)*, Moskva: Ministerstvo Inostrannykh Del, 1957, I, 11-14.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹³⁶ "Narkomindel published secret treaties of Russia and some other countries in December 1917 and early in 1918, following a decision of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets. On the initiative of N. G. Markin... over a hundred treaties and other secret documents of the tsarist and provisional governments of Russia were removed from the archives, deciphered and

When the revolutionary forces triumphed in Russia in November 1917, none of the leading members of the Bolshevik party might have imagined a long-term existence of the socialist Russia without receiving a substantial support from the successive revolutions that were expected to take place in the central capitalist countries, primarily in Germany. Thus, the revolutionary fire was considered as the only way for the survival of the revolution in Russia. When the Bolsheviks referred in the Peace Decree, to the progressive movements of the three leading European countries' working classes, of Germany, Britain and France, they had in mind the possibility that those working classes might rebel against their governments that were reluctant for a peace as such, and might trigger European-wide revolution.

The Peace Decree did not give the expected result. None of the governments in war drew into an armistice and the war continued a year more. Nor did the working people of the belligerent states revolt or revolutionary attempts result in victory. The failure of the German Revolution in 1918 was a major blow to the aspirations of European-wide revolution and so to the nascent Soviet revolution. As the workers of Berlin and Hamburg had failed to overthrow the Kaiser and so the German army continued its advance on 'red' Petrograd, the question of security became a matter of life or death for the Soviet government.¹³⁷ Lenin did not give credit to the Entente offers for reinforcement of Russian army against the Germans. Based on the assumption that the imperialist centers would not miss any opportunity to suffocate a revolution that challenged their class interests, he considered, the Entente was planning to destroy two enemies at the same time, the Bolsheviks and the Kaiser's Germany respectively.¹³⁸

published. They first appeared in newspapers and were later issued in nine volumes. Among them were a number of Austro-Hungarian, German, Italian, French, British and other documents. The publication of the secret treaties was important in revealing the imperialist nature of the First World War." Lenin, *On the Foreign Policy of the Soviet Republic*, 429.

¹³⁷ Teddy J. Uldricks, "Russia and Europe: Diplomacy, Revolution, and Economic Development in the 1920s", *The International History Review* 1, no. 1 (January 1979): 57.

¹³⁸ Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 27 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Pub. House, 1960), 28.

At the Second All-Russia Congress of the Soviets, in the concluding speech following the discussions on the Peace Decree, Lenin highlighted that the proposal of a democratic peace, “without annexations and without indemnities” was not an ultimatum. It was due to the fact that Bolsheviks did not want to close the doors on any possibility of peace and they were open to negotiations. Otherwise, Lenin insisted, Russia would give a pretext to the imperialist states for the continuation of the war, using the “Bolsheviks’ irreconcilability”.¹³⁹ This would lead to an undesirable situation since neither for the Russian people, nor for the Bolsheviks that sought to consolidate their power. The war was sustainable. With the dire need to put an end to war, Russia signed Brest-Litovsk Treaty (March 1918) accepting excessive territorial and financial demands of Germany.¹⁴⁰

In the winter of 1918, simultaneously with the peace talks in Brest, a furious debate took place among the Bolsheviks. In this debate, the ultimate victory of Lenin’s position over the majority of the party gave in a sense the hints of the Soviet foreign policy of the upcoming years. There were mainly three positions: Immediate peace, represented by Lenin and a few other Bolsheviks, continuation of war with Germany which would turn into a revolutionary war, which was the thesis of the majority of the party for a while; and “neither war nor peace” option, advocated by Leon Trotsky, which meant to gain time for the insurrection of the soldiers in the German army.¹⁴¹ The last two positions were based on the assumption of imminent German revolution. A peace with Germany, accepting heavy conditions imposed by the Germans, would amount to a blow to German revolutionary movement and a sell-out of

¹³⁹ Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 26, 256.

¹⁴⁰ Germany rejected Soviet proposal and imposed harsh terms that amounted the plundering of the country. Poland, Lithuania, part of Latvia, Estonia and part of Byelorussia went to Germans. (Kommunisticheskai Partii Sovetskogo Soiuz, Vysshiaia Partiyanaia Shkola. Kafedra mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy i vneshney politiki SSSR, and F. G Zuev, *Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya i Vneshnyaya Politika SSSR, 1917-1960; Uchebnoe Posobie*. (Moskva: VPSH, 1961), 17)

¹⁴¹ Cemal Hekimoğlu, *Sovyet Dış Politikasında İlk Yıllar* (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: Gelenek Yayınevi, 1989), 53.

the people in the territories that were left to Germany. Lenin involved in a strident polemic with these arguments. In his polemic with “Left Communists” a small group within the party, he defined the duty of a socialist country - especially a backward one- until the time that revolutionary movements triumph in other countries, as avoiding military battle with imperialism that would inevitably result in defeat of the revolution. Meantime the conflicts among the imperialists would weaken them even more and bring the revolution in other countries even nearer.¹⁴² In the same article, Lenin portrayed the Soviet position “defencist”, a definition that would soon turn into the main line of Soviet foreign policy:

We have been “defencists” since October 25, 1917. I have said this more than once very definitely, and you dare not deny this. It is precisely in the interest of ‘strengthening the connection’ with international socialism that we are in duty bound to defend our socialist fatherland.

The victory of Lenin in convincing the party after heated debates on the “immediate conclusion of a separate and annexationist peace” with Germany,¹⁴³ meant opening a corridor to European politics, which was considered essential for Lenin under the conditions that the European revolution was in the process of maturation with the impossibility to mark a certain date and Soviet Russia had to live side by side for an uncertain time

¹⁴² Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 27, 325-333 (“Left-Wing Childishness and the Petty-bourgeois Mentality”).

¹⁴³ On January 8, 1918 made a speech in his defense of immediate conclusion of a separate and annexationist peace at a meeting of members of Central Committee of the party and bolshevik members of Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets. After the discussions that lasted for days Lenin achieved to pass a decision from the Central Committee for immediate peace. Trotsky as the head of the delegation ignored the decision. On February 18, 1918 German troops broke the armistice terms and launched an offensive along the whole Russo-German front. The Central Committee adopted a decision to sign the proposal of Germans but Germans this time imposed harsher terms, claimed all Baltic area; and Kars, Ardahan and Batum to be given to the Turks, evacuation of Finland and Ukraine, conclusion of peace with bourgeois nationalist Ukrainian Central Rada. And required heavy indemnities. The peace treaty was signed in March 3, 1918. After the dethronement of the monarch in November 1918, All-Russia Central Executive Committee denounced the unjust, annexationist treaty of Brest-Litovsk. (Lenin, *On the Foreign Policy of the Soviet Republic*, 431)

with the capitalist world. The accommodation with Germany, in this sense, even if it were through a “Carthaginian Peace”, would mean the first hole opened in the imperialist siege for a breathing space.

Brest Litovsk only marked the end of an open external war, which was replaced by the Civil War that took place between the Red Army of the Bolsheviks and White Army of the counter-revolutionary forces. The World War ended with the victory of the Entente forces, which turned all the balance upside down.

In the darkest days of the Civil War, when there was no doubt that the Whites were receiving military and financial support from the major capitalist powers, France, Britain, Germany, USA and Japan, the Bolsheviks left the door open to negotiation with the same powers.¹⁴⁴ The Bolsheviks were observing that the support given to the White Army by these powers was limited both because they did not have the military capacity they had before the World War as many times reported by the high ranking officials of Entente armies; and because the rivalries among them prevented a common offensive with the fear that one would benefit from the victory over the Bolsheviks more than the other. The most striking example of that was the limited support given to Kolchak in the east by the Japanese with the fear that the US as her rival would benefit from that.¹⁴⁵ This observation and detailed accounts of the rivalry among the countries provided the knowledge for a strategy towards the imperialist countries that would give a “breathing space” to the new Soviet power.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ The end of war with the victory of the Entente forces caused serious concerns of the Bolsheviks about the possibility of concentration of Entente countries for a direct assault towards the Soviets. For that reason, they launched a peace campaign from the end of 1918 onwards. From August 1918 to January 1919 Soviets proposed to start official talks for a peace treaty to Entente for more than seven times. Gökay and Yalçın, *Bolşevizm ile Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, 72.

¹⁴⁵ DVP, III, 407.

¹⁴⁶ Edward Hallett Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), 59.

2.2.2 Lenin's contribution in the formulation of Soviet foreign policy

The leader of the October Revolution, V. I. I. Lenin, beyond any dispute, was the mastermind in the formulation of the main lines of the Soviet foreign policy. His prognosis in the years preceding the revolution, on the future of the world capitalist system and his theses on imperialism as “the final stage of capitalism” constituted the theoretical basis of the Soviet foreign policy.¹⁴⁷

In Lenin's thought, capitalism in his final stage is dominated by monopolies, emerged as a result of continued concentration of capital in certain hands. Those monopolies extended far beyond the limits predicted by Marx and Engels in the Communist Party Manifesto. The expansion of markets resulted in constant pressure “for the export of capital and the development of colonial empires with protected markets.”¹⁴⁸ Since the world had already been divided by colonial powers, repartition of the colonies, resources and markets gained top priority.

The rising rivalry between the major powers turns the balances upside down and the wars become inevitable. Treaties and alliances among these powers can be little more than temporary truces between wars.¹⁴⁹ Lenin in his speech in the First All-Russia Congress of the Navy on November 22th, 1917, when the Bolsheviki were debating for a strategy for peace settlement, characterized the war a life and death struggle for the capitalists over the share-out of the booty. Therefore, it would be “highly naive to think that peace can be easily attained, and that the bourgeoisie will hand it to us on a platter as soon as we mention it.”¹⁵⁰

Lenin's ideas on world affairs and the inevitability of war thesis were reassessed after the revolution because they gained practical significance with the rising of the Bolsheviki to political power. The developments indicated that

¹⁴⁷ Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *Imperializm Kak Vysshaya Stadiya Kapitalizma: Populyarnyy Ocherk* (1952).

¹⁴⁸ Uldricks, “Russia and Europe”, 57.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 26, 345.

the World War did not suffice to put an end to the contradictions within the capitalist system, on the contrary intensified them. Yet the signs of a transformation of the systemic crisis into a revolutionary crisis were blurred with the successive failures of revolutionary attempts in Europe. Moreover, the imperialist powers might in the near future temporarily surmount the contradictions among themselves by forming a united anti-communist front against the common enemy, the Soviet Russia. The Bolsheviks being witnessed the imperialist backing to their political rivals during the civil war, adopted the exploitation of contradictions among the western powers as an everlasting principle. The goal of this principle was to prevent at all costs, unification of the imperialist powers against the Soviets.

Lenin's observation on the increasing hatred towards imperialist centers impelled the idea that Soviet Russia as the heart of anti-imperialist struggle might ally with all the elements suffering from or dissatisfied by imperialist policies. These elements can be grouped in three major forces:

The organizations of western proletariat whose influence in politics significantly grew amid the economic hardship and political ambiguities of post-war era. The reaction of German and British workers unions against their governments for its ultimatum to the Soviets, when Soviet government decided to repel the Polish troops back to Warsaw in the autumn 1920, was a striking sign.¹⁵¹ It meant for the Bolsheviks that Western proletariat could be a vital supporter in the struggle of the Soviet power to survive. Secondly, the "oppressed people of the East", a definition that commonly used by the Bolsheviks to denote the colonial subjects of major capitalist powers in Asia were considered to be in a new mobilization that began in the years of the World War. The liberation movements had been gathering strength. The Bolsheviks who kept these movements under close watch tried to get in touch with them.¹⁵² Finally, the hierarchy within the capitalist system brought about

¹⁵¹ *Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya i Vneshnyaya Politika SSSR, 1917-1960*, 31.

¹⁵² November 22th, 1919 during the second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East, Lenin put forward the idea that, "The socialist revolution will not be only or chiefly a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against its

negation of sovereignty rights of weak states by the major capitalist powers. Additionally, the bourgeoisie of the defeated states in the World War, before all Germany, was strangled by the same powers through Versailles Peace Treaty. The ruling classes of these “mistreated” countries became the natural allies of Soviet Russia since imperialist powers did not leave any other option to them. The Bolsheviks had to adopt a strategy based on the plurality of capitalist political centers instead of confronting them all together and approaching the outcasts of the imperialist restoration.

These three different zones of alliance amounted to the foreign policy strategy that would help Soviet Russia to get rid of the isolation from the rest of the world and to facilitate the final breakdown of the imperialist system since the contradictions within the system would both crystallize and intensify. It was a long-term strategy. Because in spite of the utmost importance attributed to the developments in the East, the Bolsheviks did not set aside their Euro-centrist approach. According to Lenin, the triumph of revolutions in the backward countries might be easier, albeit it was a very heavy task for the revolutionaries to ensure its survival. In the West on the other hand, due to the mechanisms created by the ruling class that masked the contradictions between the antagonistic classes, the seizure of political power by the revolutionary forces were much more difficult. From 1918 onwards, Lenin repeated several times this difficulty and asserted that the European revolution was yet in the process of maturation.¹⁵³ This appraisal became more apparent in 1920-1921 when the Civil War in Russia resulted in failure of the counter-revolutionary forces that were considered the Russian branch of world capitalist class while in no other country the capitalist regime could be toppled.

According to Lenin’s theoretical stance on “uneven and combined development of capitalism”, a stance formulated before the revolution, the

bourgeoisie — no, it will be a struggle of all colonies and countries oppressed by imperialism, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism.” Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 30, 159.

¹⁵³ For example see: Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 27, 68-75; 200-201.

world revolution would be achieved as a result of disengagements of countries from the capitalist system one after another. However the speed, frequency and the time in between two distinct revolutionary processes were unpredictable:

We Marxists have always been proud that we determined the expediency of any form of struggle by precise calculation of the mass forces and class relationships. We have said that an insurrection is not always expedient; unless the prerequisites exist among the masses it is a gamble; we have often condemned the most heroic forms of resistance by individuals as inexpedient and harmful from the point of view of the revolution.¹⁵⁴

Lenin himself as early as 1918 started asserting that the defense of the first socialist republic cannot be postponed for the sake of possible revolutions in other parts of the world. Thus, the principal task of the Soviet foreign policy from the very beginning was the protection of the socialist regime. This task required that Soviet foreign policy makers should arrange their activities for providing a time of peace that would enable the construction and consolidation of the regime inside the country. They had to buy time in two tactical levels. On the one hand they would play to the contradictions among the imperialist powers, as in the case of rapprochement with Germany, exploiting the humiliation of this country after the World War, on the other hand they would attempt to obtain full recognition and normal diplomatic and economic relations with all the major western powers.

For Lenin, there was a dialectical relation between detente policy and support to the revolutionaries around the world. The overlap of three processes, exploitation of the contradictions between the Western capitalist powers and establishing normal bilateral relations with each of them by the Soviet diplomacy; casting a blow to the world imperialism through supporting the struggles of the oppressed peoples of the East and through close contact with the Western proletariat and alliances with the bourgeoisie of weak capitalist

¹⁵⁴ Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 27, 19-29.

countries; and industrialization of the Russian economy that would constitute an alternative path of modernization and an example for the newly liberated countries of the East, would altogether deepen the crisis of the world capitalist system, consolidate the existence of the the Soviet power and pave the way for a new wave of revolutions.¹⁵⁵

By the summer of 1920, Lenin's concept of peaceful coexistence was evolving from that of a short peace break in the imperialist war to something more long running. He qualified the new balance between capitalism and socialism as unexpected. He concludes the proletarian rule and Soviet republic could not be destroyed; however, world revolution has been deferred:

It has thus turned out that our policy and our predictions have proved fundamentally correct in all respects and that the oppressed people in any capitalist country have indeed show themselves our allies, for it was they who stopped the war. Without having gained an international victory, which we considered the only sure victory, we are in a position of having won conditions enabling us to exist side by side with capitalist powers, which are now compelled to enter into trade relations with us. In the course of this struggle we have won the right to an independent existence.¹⁵⁶

Therefore, for Lenin, what was achieved was more than a breathing space, it was much more significant. It meant, though a foreign intervention was still a possibility, the Soviets "entered a new period, in which we have won the right to our fundamental international existence in the network of capitalist states."¹⁵⁷

In the last days of 1920 that marked the last phases of the Civil War, the top issue among the party circles was about finding an exit from war communism and construction of a socialist economy that was considered as the only way to overcome the extreme hardship and unrest among the people of the

¹⁵⁵ Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics*, 44.

¹⁵⁶ Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 31, 408-415.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

Soviet republic. The main question was through which sources the socialist economy would develop. In the year 1920, Russia was a country of destroyed industry and infrastructure (which was already limited before the First World War), with an empty treasury and deprived of a qualified workforce.

The law of concessions dated November 23th, 1920 aimed at attracting western capital to the country. The Soviet government was hoping to stimulate commercial relations and reach financial credit from the West by giving them concessions in timber, agricultural and mining sectors.¹⁵⁸ Economic relations would not only provide the necessary source for the reconstruction of the country but also would mean unofficial recognition of the Soviet existence.

The law met with apprehension by the party members and non-Party circles for it was considered to put at risk the socialist regime by opening the country to the economic invasion of Western capital. Lenin, in his report on the concessions in the Eightieth Soviet Congress in December 1920¹⁵⁹ greeted this “highly vigilant attention” that was being paid to relations between the Soviets and the capitalists. Yet, he concluded the revolutionary instinct was not enough to make the final judgement about the concessions.

Lenin’s lengthy report was an important document that laid out the cornerstones of Soviet foreign policy; at the same time it showed how the concerns about security and the pursuit for economic construction were intermingled.¹⁶⁰ The Bolsheviks, as it was stressed in the report, thought that Soviet Russia owed its survival in the civil war to the “profound discord among the imperialist powers, and only because that discord has not been a fortuitous and internal dissension between parties, but a most deep-seated and ineradicable conflict of economic interests among the imperialist countries

¹⁵⁸ Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 429.

¹⁵⁹ Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 31, 463-486.

¹⁶⁰ It is also interesting to see how normalization of the Soviet image in the minds of Westerners became important. “[At the end of the conversation of Vanderlip, an American capitalist and Lenin] Vanderlip ended by his saying as he was leaving, ‘Yes, it is true Mr. Lenin has no horns and I must tell that to my friends in America.’” Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 31, 469.

which, based on private property in land and capital, cannot but pursue a predatory policy which has stultified their efforts to unite their forces against the Soviets.” The contradictions between European countries and USA that demanded repayment of war debts, between Germany and the Entente countries because of Versailles, between USA and Japan because of their respective interests in China and Korea would not only be taken for granted by the Soviets but further incited through offering them concessions.¹⁶¹

This strategy would give them the possibility to develop economic ties to obtain a certain minimum of the means of production, locomotives and machinery necessary for that preparation. Therefore, although by giving concessions they would take a certain risk and accept the continuation of war in a different character, these concessions were the only way to rehabilitate the economy in the short run and to maintain its autonomy in the long run. Establishing economic ties with the West would not only mean giving concessions but also guarantees of noninterference in the internal affairs of the countries in question. Lenin was not hesitant about giving this guarantee.

Lenin added one important dimension to the policy of manipulating the contradictions among the capitalist countries, as a *sine quo non* of the main strategy of Soviet foreign policy: “Grouping around the Soviet Republic those capitalist countries which are being strangled by imperialism.”¹⁶² Germany was in the first place of those capitalist countries, conjuncturally encircled by the other imperialist powers. Turkey would be another important actor in the same category. The Bolsheviki considered that these countries were obliged to collaborate economically and politically with the Soviets as the only possible and strong ally since the imperialists did not leave them a living space.

This attempt of allying with the surrendered capitalist countries did not necessarily mean losing any opportunity to enhance economic links with the most trading country of the world, Britain. On the contrary, the Soviet leaders were aware of the strife within the British ruling class on the relations of

¹⁶¹ Jacobson, *the Soviet Union Entered World Politics*, 24.

¹⁶² Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 31, 463-486.

Britain with Soviet Russia. By offering benefits that could not be refused, they tried to lure British capitalists to the vast Russian market, resources and lands that were very charming in the actual situation of the world economy.¹⁶³ With the same policy they aimed at strengthening the hands of the liberals who were moderate towards the Soviets to the detriment of the conservatives that sought a rapid and forceful elimination of Soviet power.

At the time of the Soviet Congress, negotiations with Britain were going on; it was still uncertain that if the Soviet diplomats would be able to convince their British counterparts for a commercial treaty. Yet, they had already decided to proceed on the risky path of “peaceful coexistence” with the capitalist world. Throughout the 1920s, Lenin’s principle to win time for the construction of socialism by creating the conditions of peaceful coexistence with the capitalist world whose basic tool was a categorical policy of peace continued to determine the decisions of Soviet foreign affairs.

2.2.3 The “New” Diplomacy

The resignation of Leon Trotsky from his post as the first foreign affairs commissar of the Soviet state during the conclusion of Brest-Litovsk Treaty had more symbolic meaning than its actual effect. This outstanding revolutionary and Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army was the leading bearer of the conviction that Soviet Russia did not have the chance to survive without spreading the revolution towards Europe. That is why, as the first foreign affairs minister, the following words of his are better known than his deeds in the ministry: “I will close the shop after I publish a number of declarations addressing the peoples’ of the world.” Soon, Georgi Chicherin, who was son of a diplomat in Tsarist times, replaced him. Chicherin was a

¹⁶³ Lenin went so far as to express Soviet Russia’s role in the ‘restoration’ of capitalist world economy: ‘If you read and re-read attentively the decree of November 23 on concessions [he told a group of party workers], you will see that we underline the importance of world economy: we do this deliberately. This is an incontestably correct standpoint. For the restoration of world economy the utilization of Russian raw material is essential. ... And now Russia comes forward in front of the whole world and declares: We take on ourselves the restoration of world economy — that is our plan.’ Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*. Vol. 3, 284, 285.

former archiver in the Tsarist foreign affairs and he had vast knowledge on world history and full command on many European languages. He had a strong grasp of European politics and traditional diplomacy. Before the revolution, he had left his career for revolutionary struggle and had spent long years in Europe engaging in revolutionary activism and search for financial means for the Russian revolutionaries.¹⁶⁴ For Lenin he was matchless for the tasks of Soviet foreign affairs.

Lenin's close work with Chicherin and Narkomindel, until the time that he was completely incapacitated, played a major role in attainment of such a power in decision-making. It is also crucial to add that, from the first days of the revolution the Soviet government established a massive network of information, partly composed by intelligence practices, partly official missions in the foreign countries and partly Komintern officials and foreign communist groups affiliated to the Komintern. At times, as in the example of Turkey, it is possible to see that commercial representatives and press bureau abroad also served as good sources of information. One should add that all these sources were interconnected, notwithstanding the contradictions sometimes emerged in terms of information and views they sent to Moscow.

Not so long after closing the international war front, the new Soviet government faced with the onslaught of counter-revolutionary forces. According to the Bolsheviks, the support given by the allied powers to the Whites in the Civil War had been a sign of the hatred of the capitalist world toward them and fortified their persuasion about the inevitable war between the two antagonistic systems, capitalism and socialism. Furthermore, as the revolutionary expectations disappeared, the fact that Soviet Russia had to cope with the state of isolation in a hostile world became clearer each day. Facing with these facts emerged in the years following the revolution, the motivation

¹⁶⁴ For a good account of Chicherin's early life: Timothy Edward O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution: G.V. Chicherin and Soviet Foreign Affairs, 1918-1930* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988), 3-43.

of the Bolsheviks to defend the revolution and the new socialist regime in Russia gradually grew to the extent that they had to reorganize the state apparatus, institutionalize the state mechanisms and establish a powerful body of foreign affairs. This body was expected to obtain recognition from the great powers, to enhance good relations with the states that were critical for Soviet security and to promote trade links with foreign states, single capitalists and large conglomerates. Being involved in European power politics without losing the revolutionary essence embedded in the Leninist principles mentioned above required a highly sophisticated cadre of foreign policy makers and diplomats, who would have the ability to realize the inevitable practices of conventional foreign policy tools for revolutionary purposes.

At the beginning it was not an easy task to form such a cadre. The Bolsheviks had to derive cadres from tsarist bureaucracy most of whom were reluctant to work for them.¹⁶⁵ As the ultimate importance given to the diplomatic relations with Europe was considered, the Bolsheviks appointed a number of outstanding party cadres to the diplomatic posts abroad. They had a wide range of initiative for the sake of a common strategy. At the beginning in the absence of the official recognition of several Western states, they were free to wander around the line between the legal and “illegal” activities of a diplomatic mission.¹⁶⁶ The relations established by the Soviet diplomats mostly as a result of their own initiative with the politicians, bureaucrats, business people abroad contributed in laying out a foreign policy strategy. As time passed and Soviet foreign affairs and missions full-fledgedly established in the country and abroad, the traditional tools of foreign policy making and diplomacy inevitably started to be utilized.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Valeri A. Shishkin, *Stanovlenie Vneshney Politiki Poslerevoluyutsionnoy Rossii (1917-1930 godi) i Kapitalisticheskiy Mir* (Cankt-Peterburg: RAN, 2002), 8-10.

¹⁶⁶ Richard Kent Debo, “Litvinov and Kamenev-Ambassadors Extraordinary: The Problem of Soviet Representation Abroad,” *Slavic Review* 34, no. 3 (1975): 463–82.

¹⁶⁷ A very symbolic reflection of the change in the Soviet foreign affairs is told in the interview with Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, a prominent military and civil bureaucrat during the first years of the Turkish Republic: When the first bolshevik “représentant diplomatique”, Budu Mdivani arrived at Ankara in 1920, Bayur recalls his astonishment because of the dressing of the

Even under the circumstances that led Soviet diplomats to use traditional diplomatic means, Soviet diplomacy was different in nature, in style and tactics. It introduced novelties to international politics that were most of the time shaking the norms to the surprise of traditional foreign policy makers of the West. It all started with the Soviet call for immediate peace without annexations and indemnities that was unacceptable in the minds of loot seeking warrior sides. War indemnities were indispensable in the sense that post-war national economies would overwhelmingly depend on that for rehabilitation. The revelation of the secret treaties during the war was an unprecedented attempt in the history of international relations. Disarmament was first mentioned by the Soviets in 1922, a concept which would mark international politics between the two world wars. Disarmament was a useful tool that no other force could dare to claim as extreme as the Soviets did. By constantly presenting the Soviet government as the champion of peace, Soviet foreign affairs managed to put a strong pressure on the interventionist policies of the West; proclaimed readiness for negotiation on any subject weakened the arguments who favored military intervention to the Soviet Russia.¹⁶⁸ Another striking difference from the traditional conduction of diplomacy was the appraisal of the masses not as passive audiences of high politics behind the door, but active participants. Though the Western analyzers of Soviet foreign policy generally interpret it as the utilization of propaganda for policy objectives¹⁶⁹, there is another meaning of constant address of the Soviet government to the people on the political issues: to mobilize people around the

bolshevik diplomat during the ceremony of presenting credentials to Mustafa Kemal. Mdivani wore a pair of knee boots, that he compares with driller's boots. Just after 3-4 years, he witnessed in the feast given by the Afghan ambassador in London, that bolshevik diplomats who were in the country for trade negotiations wore frocks while British Worker's Party ministers dressed casually. Bayur draws attention to the change in the clothing habits of Soviet diplomats in a very short time. İnan Arı, *Tarihe Tanıklık Edenler* (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011), 373.

¹⁶⁸ O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, 68.

¹⁶⁹ Grzybowski, Kazimierz. "Propaganda and the Soviet Concept of World Public Order." *Law and Contemporary Problems* 31, no. 3 (Winter 1966): 479-505, 482.

World for a common front against the “intrigues of the imperialists.” Disarmament was a powerful slogan that legitimized the Soviet image in a positive sense in world public opinion¹⁷⁰ A series of non-aggression treaties with several capitalist countries were also unique in their content. The Moscow Treaty with Turkey (16 March 1921) or the Rapallo Treaty with Germany (16 April 1922) had no demand for land or for reimbursement of the debts.

The approaches taking the Soviet regime as a "totalitarian" model presupposed that foreign policy was exclusively determined in the Politburo of the Communist Party. According to the same reasoning, the decision making process had been gradually limited to a smaller cadre up to the point that Stalin finally monopolized all power. However, historical facts, at least related to foreign affairs of the Soviet state, derived from the archival sources tell us something else. Contrary to the unrealistic, ideologically biased views on the Soviet administrative apparatus, decision making on foreign affairs depended on far more complex mechanisms and procedures than is envisaged by the supporters of “totalitarian” models. This complexity is evident in the content of a vast number of correspondences between Narkomindel, Politburo, other ministries and organizations such as the ministry of foreign trade, Komintern or All-Union of Society of Cultural Relations with Abroad (VOKS). The decision making process was by no means exempt from tensions and from pressure from the public opinion in general and party circles in particular. The relationship between Soviet Russia and capitalist Europe was a subject of intense debate and questions of foreign policy were no exception.¹⁷¹ The documents pertaining to the years in question in this study also reveal the weight of the Narkomindel Council in decision-making on foreign affairs of the country.

¹⁷⁰ For Soviet disarmament policy see: Walter C. Clemens, *Lenin on Disarmament* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1963).

¹⁷¹ Uldricks, “Russia and Europe”, 55.

There were always competing ideas among the key figures of Soviet politics on almost every issue. Since the relations with the capitalist world was considered as the most important issue in terms of the survival and development of the socialist regime in the country, the most heated debates used to occur in the field of foreign affairs. It was generally the external developments that determined which ideas would triumph over the others. One very significant example of this was the diverging approaches of Chicherin and Litvinov, the two key figures of Soviet foreign policy in the early 1920s who worked side by side for a couple of years.

Chicherin preferred one to one contacts, and solidarity between the states. This was the way more compatible with the general strategy to utilize the contradictions among the capitalist states and save the Soviets from the obligations of the international organizations.¹⁷² Litvinov on the contrary, advocated the presence of the Soviets in the international collective security initiatives and membership of League of Nations; and claimed the importance of normalization of the relations with Britain, USA and France. At the outset, Chicherin's approach was more feasible within the scope of Leninist principles.

According to Chicherin, while Britain was considered as the most dangerous enemy of Soviet power that had the potency to lead a coalition for an onslaught towards the country, Germany was the closest ally, as an excluded figure among major powers, in dire need of external support. Chicherin was strongly against any union among European countries, which he thought would ultimately fall into the hands of Britain, as a weapon toward the Soviets. The League of Nations was the most apparent example of such groupings. 'The so-called League of Nations,' Chicherin proclaimed, 'is in

¹⁷² "The constant preoccupation of the Soviet Government with the need to prevent 'a united capitalist anti-Soviet front' was reflected in Komintern propaganda against the Versailles treaty, which was designed to keep alive in Germany feelings of resentment against the western Powers. In an interview published in the Observer in August, Chicherin, Soviet Foreign Commissar, referring to French hostility to Russia and Germany, asked: 'What is more natural than that the two should be driven into one another's arms?'" (*The Communist International 1919-1943: Documents* Vol. I (1919-1922), ed. Jane Tabrisky Degras (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 357, 358.)

reality a very convenient front for attacks against the Workers-Peasants state on those occasions when the capitalistic governments do not wish or, better said, are not able (not wishing to compromise themselves within their own countries) to attack.¹⁷³ In fact, the role that was assumed by the League of Nations after its establishment in the Paris Peace Conference (January 1919) in the seizure of Germany's overseas colonies, establishment of mandates and preparation for Sevres Treaty (August 1920)¹⁷⁴ did not leave any room for any confusion about the nature of this organization.

The distinctive policy line of Chicherin was based on the assessment of multilateral relations with the capitalist world. This was peaceful co-existence, also coded as *modus vivendi*. Parallel to the attempts of economic engagement with the West, Chicherin declared that, 'There may be differences of opinion as to the duration of the capitalist system, but at present the capitalist system exists, so that a *modus vivendi* must be found in order that our socialist states and the capitalist states may coexist peacefully and in normal relations with one another.' This code was pronounced as early as 1919 by Karl Radek¹⁷⁵, the Bolshevik agent and diplomat in Germany, whose identification about the red line between the two systems did not fully represent the official Soviet foreign policy at that time when the Bolsheviks were still in pursuit of a European revolution.¹⁷⁶ As the policy steered towards the sustainability of mutual

¹⁷³ For Chicherin's ideas on League of Nations as a tool of intervention of the imperialist powers see: G. V. Chicherin and L. I. Trofimova, *Stat'i i Rechi Po Voprosam Mezhdunarodnoj Politiki* (Moskva, 1961), 81, 375, 475, 496.

¹⁷⁴ Kuruç, *Mustafa Kemal Döneminde Ekonomi*, 36.

¹⁷⁵ Karl Berngardovich Radek was an Austrian communist who was active in the European social democratic movement and joined to the Bolsheviks during the time of February Revolution in Russia. He was a member of Central Committee of Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) when he was decided to participate in the foundation congress of the Communist Party of Germany. He was arrested in Berlin on February 12th, 1919 during the final blows were dealt on the German revolutionaries. He stayed in Prison until January 1920. In the following years, he was charged as the member of executive committee of Komintern.

¹⁷⁶ "In Germany Radek, at a time when the Bolshevik leaders in Russia still believed that revolution in Europe was a matter of months, learned to take the far soberer view of its prospects which was dictated by German conditions. In his own words he came to recognize 'that the first wave of the revolution had receded' and 'that the task was to organize the masses for the next revolutionary wave'; and this involved not shock tactics, but patient propaganda

relations the code gained recognition by Chicherin and was historically justified by Radek as, '[t]here was a time when a feudal state existed alongside capitalist states. ... We think that now capitalist countries can exist alongside a proletarian state.'¹⁷⁷

The *modus vivendi* approach was challenged, however, by the obligations of the Bolsheviks concerning the international communist movement. This had to be carried out with a two-speed policy. A *de facto* division of labor between the Narkomindel and Komintern prevented the collision of policies, but in each sphere this naturally corresponded to different policy vectors.

2.2.4 Communist International (Komintern)¹⁷⁸ and the Soviet Foreign Policy

In the literature on Soviet Foreign Policy the divergent routes taken by the Komintern and Narkomindel have been generally interpreted as the clash of two conflicting policies of Soviet Russia attributed to these organs: The

through trade unions, factory committees and parliamentary elections...These ideas would have been highly unorthodox in the Moscow of 1919; when Radek returned, his premise that the European revolution would be 'a lengthy process' caused 'much head-shaking' on the part of Bukharin, and probably of others.... If, however, Radek was an innovator in terms of party tactics, he was even more of an innovator in the field of Soviet diplomacy." Radek was among the first defenders of a foreign policy based on "peaceful coexistence". Carr in this quote especially mentions Radek's role in the conclusion of Rapollo Treaty in 1922 with Germany; and much earlier his conversations with the Turkish Unionist triumvirate in Berlin. (Carr Edward Hallett, "Radek's 'Political Salon' in Berlin 1919." *Soviet Studies* 3, no. 4 (April 1952): 411–30; the Introduction of Carr for Karl Radek's work, "November: A Page of Recollections" (October 1926).

¹⁷⁷ Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 160, 161.

¹⁷⁸ Komintern is the Soviet abbreviation for Communist International or Third International. It was established in 1919, one year after the finalization of First World War, stemming from the necessity to alter the Second International, whose erroneous attitude on the eve of the World War on the war/peace issues created fatal results for the European social democratic and working class movement. This new International was expected to coordinate the activities of the communist parties emerging all around the world with the political programs compatible with that of bolsheviks. This was a condition that was ensured with the declaration of 21 principles later in 1920, opening the path for bolshevization of the communist parties. Member parties sent their delegates to Komintern Congress every year until.. Executive Committee of the organization, elected by the Congress, was the highest decision-making organ between two congresses. (Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe, eds., *International Communism and the Communist International, 1919-43* (Manchester; N.Y.: Manchester University Press, 1998) 31-67.)

“World revolution” and “peaceful co-existence”, respectively. This interpretation is far from explaining the essence of the tensions between Komintern and Narkomindel, for both of them are accepted as apparatuses of the Soviet state and therefore “world revolution” and “peaceful coexistence” are two foreign policy tools that were put into practice whenever necessary. In reality, Komintern and Narkomindel were formations totally different in nature.

Ulam holds that ‘[m]ost of the studies of Soviet foreign policy of the early and mid-1920s emphasize that Soviet foreign policy was organized along two parallel lines: the policy of the Komintern designed to foment revolutions and that of the Narkomindel attuned to the state interest of the USSR.’ According to Ulam, the state interest was defended at all costs and this implied a legacy of tsarist foreign policy with respect to other imperial powers, notably Britain.¹⁷⁹ This approach equalized Soviet state interest with nationalism and defines it as opposed to the international mission of the Komintern.

Carr, on the other hand, refers to Lenin to clarify this controversy: There are two fundamental lines of foreign policy that do not constitute a dilemma for Soviet policy. One places ‘socialist revolution’ as the primary aim and the other ‘national independence’ and ‘power status’, which is a bourgeois line. The Soviets clearly follow the first line that both regards the chance of a revolution in the west and at the same time try to create a breathing space for Soviet power. Carr infers that ‘the two facets of Soviet foreign policy — the encouragement of world revolution and the pursuit of national security — were merely different instruments of a single consistent and integrated purpose.’¹⁸⁰

The assumption that Soviet foreign policy was positioned on the horns of a dilemma -as to whether to pursue a world revolution, its own national interest or preserve socialism in one country- was an illusion. The real discussion was on how the world revolution would historically develop and by which means

¹⁷⁹ Adam B. Ulam, “Russian Nationalism” in *The Domestic Context of Soviet Foreign Policy*, ed. Seweryn Bialer (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1981), 6.

¹⁸⁰ Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 53, 58.

each country would contribute to the development process. To harmonize this heterogeneity, an institutional mechanism was needed that would integrate a variation of policies at different levels. While Narkomindel sought to preserve and consolidate the Soviet power in the world balance of powers as the epitome of socialist revolution, Komintern took on a flexible role in embracing and unifying communist parties and their own policies concerning different revolutionary opportunities in various regions. It was not easy for the latter to accord itself with the first within an environment of uncertainty. This also revealed certain incompatibilities concerning the initiatives of some Bolshevik cadres according to their specific missions in this mechanism.

The Komintern's leading role in the pursuit of world revolution was not to force any communist party towards an immature revolutionary course. This was coherent with Soviet foreign policy.¹⁸¹ Revolution in Europe, although the abortive revolutionary attempt of the German Communist Party in 1921 seems to be encouraged by some Bolshevik cadres in Komintern such as Bela Kun, was outside the scope of the Narkomindel and was officially condemned by the Soviets. Regarding the right-wing criticisms towards Bolsheviks of trying to provoke a revolution, Trotsky maintained that 'Russia could be interested only in "the internal logical development" of revolution, not in artificially hastening or retarding it.'¹⁸² Likewise, the discussions in the Fourth Congress of Komintern in 1922 concerning the alliances with the national emancipation movements of the East required the Soviet position to stay at a distance. The arguments ranged from narrowing the scope of alliance by confronting the national bourgeoisie to further expanding it to include the indigenous feudal

¹⁸¹ Lenin, replied the declaration of Moscow local party burea entitled "In the interests of the world revolution we must accept the loss of Soviet power" with an article under the title: "Strange and Monstrous". The following part from that article reveals his view on the relation of socialist state and prospective revolutions: "Actually however, the interests of the world revolution demand that Soviet power, having overthrown the bourgeoisie in our country, should help that revolution, but it should choose a form of help which is commensurate with its own strength. By 'accepting the possibility of losing Soviet power' we certainly would not be helping the German revolution to reach maturity, but would be hindering it." (Lenin, *On the Foreign Policy of the Soviet State*, 43.)

¹⁸² Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 395-397.

classes.¹⁸³ Soviet foreign policy would not be deviated by any of Komintern's complicated relations and regional experiences with the communist movements of the world.

At the beginning, the different revolutionary conditions for each country could not be reconciled and arranged at a universal level and this was not what was expected from Komintern. Neither did Komintern operate as a follower of Narkomindel, but it managed to serve both as a mechanism to standardize the communist movement according to the acquis of socialist revolution and as a platform to discuss the future of the world revolution according to the variety of objective conditions. The paradox of Soviet power concerning Komintern was not a crude dichotomy of national-international interests but evolved as an effort to centralize the international revolutionary policy of communist parties and at the same time steer it from the Soviet center. This paradox was relieved in due course as the major communist parties of the world gained a consistent programmatic line through Komintern directives while they built up native but also Soviet friendly popular fronts in their countries.

The Komintern's role in the Soviet revolutionary strategy evolved as the European revolution failed and different policies of alliance came to the fore. The founding Congress of the Communist International in 1919 was based on the idea of subordinating each country's communist movement to the international revolution and integrating the parties that aimed at establishing their own Soviets together with young Soviet Russia. The point of departure was the treachery of the Second International social democrats. 'The main emphasis of the congress was not on the struggle against capitalism, but on the struggle against the right wing in the labour movement.'¹⁸⁴ On the other hand, the executive committee of Komintern would act as the international central committee of the communist movement but would also work close in touch

¹⁸³Ibid., 480-482.

¹⁸⁴ *The Communist International 1919-1943 Documents* Vol. 1, 4-7.

with Narkomindel.¹⁸⁵ Actually, the appeal to the “working masses of all countries” to put pressure on their governments about their Soviet policies in the very first congress of the organization gave the first signs of collaboration between Komintern and Narkomindel. That call was pursuant of Narkomindel policy objectives for stopping the Western support to the White armies; ensuring the recognition of the Soviet government by the Western states as a fully legitimate political power; and commencing the commercial and economic exchange with Russia.¹⁸⁶

In the wake of the German counter-revolution, Komintern declared the rise of the ‘world reactionism’ and the Second Congress was convened with the idea of constructing an organ not of communist propaganda but of war. Meanwhile, this new conjuncture turned the eyes to the East. In 1919 Chicherin had felt free in calling the people of Iran and Turkey to resist the imperialists and their collaborators in their countries.¹⁸⁷ Now, diplomacy necessitated walking on a thin line of both supporting anti-imperialist and nationalist movements through Narkomindel and assisting the communist elements within them through Komintern.

As the hope for the new Soviet power was exhausted, the Fourth Congress withdrew Komintern from an offensive instrument to a defensive one. Komintern accorded its policy to the Soviet centered axis and adopted inclusionary and constructive relations within the capitalist world.¹⁸⁸ The united front policy of Komintern equalled the concession policy of the NEP

¹⁸⁵ When Chicherin had addressed a warning to the German Government through Komintern's radio, this was explained as, "in the absence of any official diplomatic contacts... [s]tatements such as the present appeal were widely used by the Soviet Government to announce and promote its policy. The Communist International provided a useful channel." Ibid., 28.

¹⁸⁶ Gökay and Yalçın, *Bolşevizm ile Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, 73.

¹⁸⁷ DVP, II, 238-242; Xenia Joukoff Eudin and Robert Carver North, *Soviet Russia and the East, 1920-1927: A Documentary Survey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), 106.

¹⁸⁸ “Zinoviev referred to the united front as a strategic manoeuvre, necessary because the social-democratic leaders had more popular support than the Komintern had believed. 'What is this strategic manoeuvre? It consists in our appealing constantly to people who, we know in advance, will not go along with us.'" *The Communist International 1919-1943, Documents* Vol. 2 (1919-1928), 1.

period. The relations between Komintern and Narkomindel had had a concurrent nature, with an informal coordination of simultaneous and multidimensional attempts of the two policy centers. As the uniqueness of the Russian Soviet became evident, Komintern had to enter the orbit of Soviet foreign policy, formally represented by Narkomindel.¹⁸⁹ After the Third Congress, Komintern had oriented itself to keep the Russian centered status quo of Soviet power.¹⁹⁰

Apart from a few exceptional moments, the acts that caused anger of ruling classes of various capitalist countries were not preparations of revolutionary insurrections. The only socialist country in the world felt obliged to give her material support to the working masses struggling for their rights. It was the case when the Soviets supported general strike in Britain in 1926.¹⁹¹ Or, as it will be discussed later, the support of the Soviets to “the oppressed people on the colonies” were mostly strategical measures, taken either for security reasons or put pressure on British imperialism. One example was the military support given to the Kemalists during the Liberation War in Turkey. Komintern’s revolutionary discourse and declarations against the governments of the capitalists countries were often provoked those government and resulted in damage on the diplomatic relations of the Soviet Union.¹⁹²

Chicherin petitioned the Politburo to disjoin the two levels of Soviet foreign affairs and to separate the activities, the personnel, the instruments and

¹⁸⁹Already in the third congress of Komintern in 1921, it was accepted that “European-wide revolution was a matter of years rather than months.” The conjuncture that revolutionary forces started offensive for undermining capitalist regimes all around Europe had changed. By 1921 and 1922, it was rather counter-revolutionary forces that repelled the offensive and like in Italy with the triumph of Mussolini they attained significant achievements. (Hekimoğlu, *Sovyet Dış Politikasında İlk Yıllar*, 31.)

¹⁹⁰ “With the third congress’, Trotsky wrote later, ‘it is realized that the post-war revolutionary ferment is over... The turn is taken to winning the masses, using the united front, that is, organizing the masses on a programme of transitional demands’. The broad revolutionary perspectives opened by the war and its consequences had not led to the victory of the proletariat, he said, because of the absence of revolutionary parties able and willing to seize power.” *The Communist International 1919-1943, Documents* Vol. I (1919-1928), 224, 225.

¹⁹¹ Uldricks, “Russia and Europe”, 65.

¹⁹² Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics*, 34.

the policies of the Comintern from those of the Soviet government.¹⁹³ Lenin supported Chicherin by giving directives such as disassociation of Narkomindel and Komintern with all the bodies and policies, prohibition of revolutionary propaganda by the Soviet diplomats abroad and prevention of politburo members making any statements on foreign policy beyond Chicherin's knowledge. As a general tendency of Narkomindel the diplomats were ordered to be very meticulous in distinguishing their activities from that of Komintern.¹⁹⁴ However, Politburo members in the Executive Committee of the Komintern, the Komintern emissaries in the Soviet diplomatic missions abroad and the diplomats with Komintern connections usually undermined these efforts.¹⁹⁵

It was especially the case when the relations with Germany, Britain and Turkey were concerned because activities against government of Weimar Republic and Kemalist government in Turkey were damaging the relations with two strategically critical countries. Britain on the other hand, as the most dangerous country to existence of the Soviet Union in the eyes of Narkomindel under Chicherin's leadership, used to react brutally whenever she had information on the Soviet intervention in the territories under her control. The

¹⁹³ Ibid., 50.

¹⁹⁴ It was not the case in the first years of the revolution as it is very well illustrated in the following anecdote: Louis Fischer, an American journalist, who spent a couple of years in the Soviet Union and wrote on Soviet foreign policy tells in his book *Men and Politics* a memory with the first Soviet ambassador Joffe to Germany after Brest-Litovsk. Joffe, he says, showed him the reports from 1919 about how the Soviet embassy in Berlin served as a staff headquarters for a German revolution. Joffe used to buy secret information from German officials and pass it on to radical leaders for use in public speeches and articles against the government. He bought arms for revolutionaries and paid out 100,000 marks for them. However, Joffe had added: "We were too weak to provoke a revolution." Fischer, *Men and Politics* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941), 26.

¹⁹⁵ "While the Narkomindel and Soviet diplomats had made definite shifts in policy and activities to ensure that their diplomacy was no longer the diplomacy of revolution, the regime had not entirely given up on propaganda being organized through Soviet embassies. The Comintern, although an agency distinct from the Narkomindel and composed of Communist parties from a wide range of countries, used Soviet diplomatic missions as a means to insert individuals into various places leading the problems and resentment of propagandists by Soviet diplomats as a result of the challenges it posed to maintaining normal diplomatic relations." Alastair Kocho-Williams, *Engaging the World: Soviet Diplomacy and Foreign Propaganda in the 1920s*, Bristol: University of the West of England, 2007.

tensions emerged between Narkomindel and Komintern can be followed especially in Chicherin's reactions whenever a Komintern leader made public statement to the detriment of foreign addresses of Narkomindel.¹⁹⁶

2.3 Soviet Russia in International Politics (1920-1924)

According to the Bolshevik view, by 1921, the revolutionary forces and major capitalist powers had reached a stalemate. The Russian Civil War, which also bore the characteristics of an external war, showed that for the time being the Soviet power could not be suffocated. On the other hand, counter-revolutionary forces could to a large extent stop the progress of revolutions in Europe. In spite of this fact, the Bolshevik foreign policy makers felt that they now had a suitable time for development, which amounted more than a breathing space. For, the Bolsheviks saw the two faces of the same reality during the Civil War: how strong the hatred of the West toward socialist power and how fragile they were against the same power. The meaning of "peaceful coexistence" was changing, necessitating more durable state of relations between Soviet Russian and the capitalist world. What was to be done was to turn the attempts to establish relations with the outside world to a full-fledged foreign policy.

From November 1920, right after the Polish War to July 1921 the Bolsheviks reassessed the world political situation. They considered that the Versailles system made the things even more complicated in the sense that it rendered establishment of a stable post-war world order impossible. The imposition of Versailles on Germany was strongly demanded especially by France with the need of a quick recovery of its economy through reparations taken away from Germany and with the desire to prevent Germany to become an economic contender and military threat once again. However, in real terms, an economic recovery, the revival of international trade and payment of reparations were impossible without accepting the capacity of Germany's

¹⁹⁶ For example when Bukharin compared Mustafa Kemal with Chiang Kaishek., Ibid.

industry and human resources and their realization.¹⁹⁷ The attempts to overcome this dilemma by Britain, which was in search for updating its world leadership, were doomed to failure, at least for the moment, as it was witnessed in Genoa conference in April-May 1922.¹⁹⁸

Along the lines of these weaknesses inside the imperialist camp, the Soviet government envisaged itself a new zone of existence, which was the reciprocity of the New Economic Policy in the foreign affairs. As Carr very brilliantly put it:

The change of front carried out by Moscow in March 1921 affected the climate in which Soviet foreign policy henceforth operated rather than the substance of that policy. It did not mean, in domestic affairs, the abandonment of the goal of socialism and communism or, in foreign affairs, of the goal of world revolution. But it meant recognition of the necessity of a certain postponement in reaching these goals, and in the meanwhile of building up the economic and diplomatic strength of Soviet Russia by all practicable means, even if these means were in appearance a retreat from the direct path to socialism and world revolution. The new foreign policy had been adopted, in the words used by Lenin of NEP, "seriously and for a long time". It was the relative durability thus imparted to expedients hitherto invoked only as short-time practical manoeuvres, which, more than anything else, changed the character of Soviet foreign policy after 1921.¹⁹⁹

Therefore, with these considerations Chicherin's foreign policy invested on the rapprochement with Germany. The hatred of the remaining powers, especially of Britain, would be neutralized by diplomatic means and trade links, which in return would help the recovery of Russian economy.

¹⁹⁷ Edward Hallett Carr, *International Relations between the Two World Wars, 1919-1939*. (London: Macmillan, 1947), 25-27.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁹⁹ Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 304.

2.3.1 NEP as a “proletarian Thermidor” and Soviet foreign policy

The New Economic Policy (NEP) introduced by Lenin in the spring 1921, was firstly an internal necessity to put an end to famine in large rural areas and to give an impulse to the almost totally ruined economy after the civil war. NEP, defined as state capitalism by Lenin, depended on revitalization of private ownership of means in small-scale production leaving intact the state-ownership and control over the banks, foreign trade and large industry. Instead of forced confiscation of grain, it set free the exchange of agricultural products whose prices would be determined in the market. In return, the farmers would pay regular tax to the state and the state would purchase the products in market prices. It was a strategic retreat for the Bolsheviks, as called by Chicherin a “proletarian Thermidor”.

This policy inevitably had certain repercussions in the international relations of the Soviet government. It coincided with the agenda of normalization and recognition through the endeavour to develop diplomatic and economic relations by giving concessions and enhancing trade links. The message of NEP was attractive for capitalist states and monopolies for it gave the guarantee to safe investment and good profits in Russia. It was also encouraging in the sense that it inspired the idea to some liberal, capitalist circles in the West that Soviet Russia could be transformed in time through “peaceful means”, by getting hold of her underdeveloped economy that was unable to make use of the rich resources of the country.²⁰⁰

The agenda, namely normalization of the relations, obtaining recognition and commercial and financial contracts as much as possible, establishing special relations with several countries, considered key elements for the national security of Soviet Russia, could be effectively carried out roughly until 1924. An assessment on the compatibility between the policy objectives and results brings us to the conclusion that in this brief period Soviet foreign

²⁰⁰ When the economic concessions were put into the agenda, the US replied to the Soviet central executive committee that without a firm economic framework including ‘the sanctity of contract and the rights of free labour’, it would not be possible to promote economic relations; an uncompromising message implying the restoration of capitalism. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 341.

affairs performed a sound and effective prelude in the world politics. At the end of this term, the Soviet Union²⁰¹ gained the recognition of all the major capitalist powers, except the United States, established economic and commercial ties with them, although those links did not reach to the expected level.

However the implementation of the strategy was far from being “easy”. The existence of and relations with the Soviet government was a matter of harsh debate among the ruling classes of the West. This made the attempts of Soviet diplomats vulnerable to policy shifts and attacks toward the Soviet existence. This was especially the case as the relations with Britain were concerned.

2.3.2 Neither friend nor enemy: Relations with Britain

A commercial treaty was signed between Britain and Soviet Russia in 16 March 1921. It was the victory of moderate liberals over hard-line conservatives within the British ruling class. It corresponded to a strategy, preferred by Britain for that moment, which was based on eliminating the Soviet regime by reintegrating Russian economy back into world capitalism. Another objective was to prevent further development of German-Soviet relations.²⁰² For the Soviets, the reestablishment of economic relations with Britain would serve as an icebreaker towards its political non-recognition by the rest of the world.²⁰³

The conclusion of the commercial treaty was the last stage of a long processes lasted about a year when Soviet government formed a commercial

²⁰¹ The denomination after 1922.

²⁰² Jon Jacobson, “Is There a New International History of the 1920s?” *The American Historical Review* 88, no. 3 (1983): 644.

²⁰³ “The de facto recognition of the Soviet Government by Great Britain had validated Soviet nationalization laws in the eyes of the British courts, so that the Soviet authorities no longer had to fear action by alleged previous owners of cargoes exported by them to Great Britain or of gold used in payment for imports; and the British example was accepted as decisive by most other trading countries.” Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 351.

delegation headed by Leonid Borisovich Krasin.²⁰⁴ It was at a time when British government had the intention for the normalization of relations with the Soviets through reaching a wide-ranging political agreement, especially due to the increasing concerns about the Soviet influence in the East.²⁰⁵ In spite of the intentions, both sides focused on the commercial matters at the beginning. However, clash of the Red Army with the Polish troops and its repulse of the latter from Kiev resulted in a British call for peace to the warring factions, under its auspices.²⁰⁶ The Soviets sent a new delegation this time headed by Kamenev.²⁰⁷ In August 1920, the Soviet commercial delegation met with Lloyd George once again. However revelation of Krasin's and Kamenev's material aid to the left-wing circles in Britain resulted in interruption of the talks. Kamenev left the country. Krasin could not achieve to sign the commercial treaty in March 16th, 1921.²⁰⁸

By the time of the signing of the commercial treaty between Britain and Soviet Russia, the second Komintern conference was being held with the agenda of revolutions in the East. Not surprisingly this did not escape the notice of British foreign affairs. During the negotiations for a commercial treaty they laid down as the primary condition non-interference of the Soviets to eastern revolutionary and liberation movements. This was very critical for Britain, for she could not risk its hegemony over the colonies. On the eve of the

²⁰⁴ The choice of Krasin was not random. An outstanding engineer as one of the chiefs of the Soviet industry he had a good reputation and business relations in the West. He was the commissar of trade, industry and foreign trade from 1918 to 1923. (Shishkin, *Stanovlenie Vneshney Politiki Poslerevoljucionnoy Rossii*, 90.)

²⁰⁵ Gökay and Yalçın, *Bolşevizm ile Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, 125.

²⁰⁶ In Britain, though not resulted with the victory of the Soviet Russia, Red Army march to Warsaw muted the voice of the advocates of using military means to exterminate Bolshevik Power. For France it was not the case, though. French government with the demand of recovery of Tsarist debts and the losses caused by the nationalizations of French investments in Russia would keep an aggressive policy towards the Soviets without any break. O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, 68.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 127. Lev Borisovich Kamenev was one of the major figures of the Bolshevik revolution, member of RKP(b) Politburo.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 129.

treaty, Britain was already discussing the scale of exterritoriality that would be demanded from the Soviets²⁰⁹.

The first signs of deterioration concerning the agreement also emerged in the field of Eastern politics. Starting from 1921 the British foreign affairs minister Lord Curzon sent a number of diplomatic notes about the Soviet propaganda against Britain in Asia and in Europe. Lord Curzon was a conservative politician who had a strong distaste toward the Soviets. He must have felt much more at ease in his actions with the fall of the liberal, "Soviet friend" Lloyd George government since pro-detente elements in the government were eliminated by this way. For sometime he had been on the alert for the activities of the Soviet ambassador in Iran who was trying to create a pro-Soviet circle within the Iranian ruling class and to diminish American influence in the country, or the Soviet support to the revolutionaries in northwest of India.²¹⁰ Now he could take an action to stop the Soviets in the East.

The complaints were handled by the Soviets with the conventional Komintern-Narkomindel binary mechanism.²¹¹ The Soviet Union gave a calming reply to Curzon's note, stressing that this kind of pint size events should not sacrifice the benefits achieved through the development of

²⁰⁹ 'On November 18, 1920, Lloyd George told the House of Commons that the Cabinet had worked out a draft which was about to be sent to the Soviet delegation; it was handed to Krasin ten days later. From this moment discussions moved with reasonable rapidity, turning far more on the subsidiary condition of the agreement that the Soviet Government should refrain from propaganda against the British Empire, especially among the peoples of Asia, than on actual questions of trade. At one moment the British Government desired to include Asia Minor and the Caucasus among the regions in which the Soviet Government could undertake to refrain from anti-British propaganda, but eventually agreed to abandon any specific enumeration of "the peoples of Asia", except for "India and the independent state of Afghanistan"'. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 286, 287.

²¹⁰ Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics*, 111.

²¹¹ The Bolsheviks pushed their diplomatic maneuvering to its limits: The secret agent notes referred to the reports 'made to the "central committee " of Komintern by Stalin, "the president of the eastern division of the Third International", by Eliava, and by Nuerteva, described as "director of propaganda under the Third International". The Soviet reply of September 27 stated that none of these persons had ever exercised any functions under Komintern to which the British counter-reply of November 12 bewilderingly retorted that "it was never said of any of these persons that they belonged to the Third International, though that is not a point of substance". Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 345, footnote 1.

commercial relations between the two countries. Curzon fell short of his goal for that time.²¹² However, Soviet-British relations continued to fluctuate. The process of the Lausanne Conference became a new topic of tension. The isolation of the Soviets from the conference by limiting the presence of the Soviet delegation when the issues on Turkish straits were being discussed met with the protests of Soviet foreign affairs. However the result did not change. Nor was the attitudes of the two foreign affairs ministers Curzon on the one hand and Chicherin on the other slightly close to something to be called “friendly” in Lausanne.²¹³ The murder of a senior member of the Soviet Delegation, Vaclav Vaclavovich Vorovskij, Soviet ambassador in Italy, on May 10th in Lausanne during the conference was never considered something contingent by the Bolsheviks. This single event was like the herald of the strife between the two countries in the upcoming years. The murder was two days after a harsh note of Curzon was received by the Soviet foreign affairs. Besides a number of complains such as arrest of British citizens in the Soviet territory, trials on the religious functionaries, Curzon was urging the Soviets for stopping communist propaganda in the East. Otherwise, he threatened to disannul the commercial treaty.²¹⁴

Although in 1924, Britain officially recognized the Soviet state with an agreement, which marked a huge success for the Soviet foreign affairs, the fate of Soviet-British relations could not be changed. The rise of the Labour Party to the power under the leadership of Ramsay Macdonald was welcomed by the

²¹² Jacobson, *Ibid.*, 112. Soviet Russia preferred to show a low profile in the Near Eastern issues too. Though everybody knew its support to the Turkish nationalists, it was never declared officially and never reached the level of military alliance. This issue will be discussed at length in the next chapter. Just three days after this note, Soviet diplomat Vorovski was killed in Switzerland, a murder which was never considered something contingent by the Bolsheviks. This single event was like the herald of the strife between the two countries in the upcoming years. Soviet government was always menaced in different ways by British and even Germans whenever it was allegedly or not involved in revolutionary propaganda in the territories under the control of these countries.

²¹³ John Grew, *Atatürk ve İnönü: İlk ABD Büyükelçisinin Türkiye Hatıraları*, trans. Muzaffer Aşkın (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet, 2000), 17.

²¹⁴ DVP, VI, 297-302.

Bolsheviks, yet Macdonald's government did not last for long. Zinoviev's controversial letter²¹⁵ just before the British elections had an impact on the election results to the detriment of the Labour Party government and in favor of the conservatives.

The new government had the central purpose to reorganize Europe and reintegrate Germany into the big power league by resolving the tensions between Germany and France. Another powerful line within the government was aiming at forming a front against the Soviet Union, a line that was represented by Winston Churchill, Chancellor of the Exchequer of the cabinet. He was known with his enmity towards socialism and his hard-line against working class movements.²¹⁶

The new government contributed much in changing the atmosphere in Europe in terms of Soviet interests. The Dawes Plan and the following Locarno Pact after the failed occupation of Ruhr by France were attempts to lay the foundation of a new international order, under the political leadership of Britain and the economic support of the United States. This process that started to put Germany back in its place among big powers was perceived as the emergence of a united capitalist front by the Soviets. The last efforts of resuming negotiations for furthering commercial relations with Britain in 1926 failed with the pretext of Soviet support in the massive miners' strike in Britain. Information by British intelligence regarding subversive activities of

²¹⁵ The so-called Zinoviev letter was allegedly written by the leader of the Communist International, a prominent bolshevik and member of Politburo of the Communist Party at that time, Grigory Zinoviev. It was claimed that Zinoviev in his letter wrote that the development of relations between the Soviet Union and Britain would help revolutionizing the proletariat in Britain and in her colonies. Carr, *International Relations between the Two World Wars*, 76-77.

²¹⁶ Later, these hardliners were accused of their uncompromising manner vis-à-vis the Soviet Russia, which allegedly led to the rise of fascism and a new world war. (Neilson, *Britain, Soviet Russia and the Collapse of the Versailles Order*, 7) What was not well understood is the fact that it was not simply a policy option and it was not simply explicable by the ideological prejudices. On the contrary, it was about a clear consciousness of the British ruling class of the threat brought by the Soviet Russia to the very existence of the capitalist relations and world economy. A consciousness that prevented risk for temporary economic gains coming from the Soviets; as did by the Labour Party and the business elites surrounding it.

Komintern in Britain and her colonies provided an excuse to severe diplomatic relations from 1924 up to 1926.²¹⁷

2.3.3 Friendship with the victim of the post-war settlement: Relations with Germany

The Paris Peace Conference in 1919 was the outset of Germany's depressive years in peace time. Deciding on the details of a quite humiliating peace treaty, the Versailles Treaty, that would bring harsh reparations, territorial concessions and complete disarmament to Germany in a conference in which Germany was not present, was heralding the exclusion of Germany in the upcoming years. Germany's attempts to position itself as a power against the Bolsheviks did not draw any interest from especially the French side. The intention of France was to establish a strategy for containment of both the Weimar Republic and Soviet Russia. France would utilize Poland, a spoiled child of post-war settlement and the Baltic countries.²¹⁸ This framework left Germany without any option other than welcoming the offer of the Soviets for rapprochement. Otherwise it would mean a complete isolation.

Substantial progress in Soviet-German relations came in an unexpected moment. It was during the Genoa Conference in spring 1922 that Soviet and German diplomats separate from the rest of the participant countries in the conference agreed upon a treaty, which would take its name from the city where the negotiations were being held, Rapallo. The news about the Soviet-German agreement stunned the major powers and especially met with anger by Lloyd George, who was the mastermind behind the conference.²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics*, 167.

²¹⁸ Hekimoğlu, *Sovyet Dış Politikasında İlk Yıllar*, 48.

²¹⁹ The treaty's importance was symbolic, compared to its intent. 'The two outcasts of European society, overcoming the barrier of ideological differences, joined hands, and, in so doing, recovered their status and their self-esteem as independent members of the society. Confidence in the ability of the Soviet Government to play a successful role in the game of diplomacy as a European Power began with the treaty of Rapallo.' Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 380, 381. Later in Reichstag it was ascertained that "the Rapallo treaty contains no secret political or military agreement". Ibid., 435.

Although it was a Soviet proposal to organize such a conference, with the promise that she would pay part of the Tsarist debts, Lloyd George turned the conference into a project where international economic problems were discussed. His intention was to reach a conclusion on a new economic order in which a new balance of powers was achieved under the leadership of Britain and with the financial means of the United States. French desires over Germany would be kept in line, Germany would be granted loans so that she could recover her bankrupt economy and could start to pay reparations.²²⁰ The entrance of American credit into the European market and the recovery of German economy would help flourishing of world trade and British economy, too.²²¹

The conference terminated without any concrete results, revealing that participants had divergent ideas on international order and Britain was not in the position to convince the rest to her line. The Soviet diplomats on the other hand used the conference more like an international platform where they introduced the principles of the Soviet power to world, than a place to come to terms with the major powers. It was especially so because those powers were insistent about the full reimbursement of pre-Soviet debts, something unacceptable for the Soviets.

Soviet diplomats gave pacifist messages, stressing the necessity of disarmament. This was an indirect appeal to start talks with Germany parallel to the conference.²²² They also expected that throughout Europe these messages would bring about sympathy within the liberal circles and disassociate them from the aggressive wing of the ruling classes in terms of attitude towards the Soviet Russia. The rest of the task that was fulfilled by

²²⁰ Kuruç, *Mustafa Kemal Döneminde Ekonomi*, 37.

²²¹ Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics*, 84.

²²² The advocacy of a general reduction of armaments, the insistence on equality between victors and vanquished, and the bare hint of "necessary amendments" to the Versailles treaty, were designed to fall on the grateful ears of the German delegation and to remind it where the true friends of Germany were to be found.' Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 373.

Soviet diplomats in the conference was to establish as many contacts as possible with the delegates of individual countries, especially for developing trade links.²²³

For the Soviet delegation, the conference apart from turning into a platform of promoting the Soviet government gave a very valuable fruit. Rapallo was the climax point of the success of Soviet strategy of making use of the contradictions among capitalist countries. It marked for Germany the first independent foreign policy decision without the control of the allied powers. For the Soviets on the other hand, it was a success in the sense that it repealed the provisions of the Brest-Litovsk. Rapallo, as a subtle modifier of Genoa, also had a similar effect of the British bilateral treaty in terms of utilization the disagreement in the German ruling class.²²⁴

Incompatibility between the Soviet foreign policy strategy of the first years and Komintern centered revolutionary activities was felt most strikingly in the case of Germany. Until the defeat of workers' uprising in October 1923 in Germany, the oscillation between two different policies, attempts to deepen relations with German government and to give ideological, financial and military support to the German communists and revolutionary working class movement continued. Only after the abortive insurrection of 1923, "It made evident even to the most optimistic of the Bolsheviks, that the prospects for successful proletarian insurrections in Europe were highly unfavorable."²²⁵

The honeymoon of Soviet-German relations lasted for about two years, 1922-23. Then with the crisis occurred when French occupation of German territory, a new strategy for the reinclusion of Germany in the great powers system began to get matured, the process of divergence between the Soviets

²²³ Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics*, 84.

²²⁴ "The project mooted by the western allies at the end of 1921 for an international consortium to develop and exploit Russian resources divided German economic interests into two factions — the interests centring mainly but not exclusively round light industry, which had close commercial and financial links with the west, and the heavy industrial interests which were primarily dependent on eastern connexions and markets." Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 368.

²²⁵ Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics*, 133.

and Germany as well. Yet, throughout the 1920s relatively stable and normal relations could be maintained, partly thanks to the striking contribution of diplomacy. The Soviet government sent one of most masterful party leaders, Krestinskij to Berlin as the Soviet diplomatic representative in October 1921.²²⁶ After Rapollo, he became Soviet ambassador in Berlin and stayed in that post until 1930. Nikolaj Nikolaevich Krestinskij was former member of Politburo and organizational bureau of the party. He was at the same time finance commissar of the Soviet government.²²⁷ On the other hand, German ambassador Brockdorff-Rantzau to Moscow from September 1922 to 1928 became very good friend of Chicherin, with their cordial manner and common fields of interests.²²⁸

2.3.4 The beginning of the end: Locarno and after

In January 1923, Belgian and French troops invaded the Ruhr region, rich with its coal mines. The aim of the invasion was to take by force what was not given by the indebted Germany. The invasion was followed by ultra-inflation, complete depreciation of the Mark and bankruptcy of German economy. While the German capitalist class was abstaining from sharing the burden with the rest of the society, the political power vacuum was rising accompanying the economic crisis. Under these circumstances huge workers demonstrations and strikes took place in summer 1923, revitalizing the hope among several bolshevik leaders for German revolution.

In the autumn of 1923, the German crisis reached an alarming level both for the German ruling class and for international capitalism. France, not having achieved an expected result from the invasion of Ruhr had to set back and support the new right wing government in Germany against a renewed revolutionary attempt of the German working class. The American fund was

²²⁶ O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, 78.

²²⁷ "Spravochnik Po Istorii Kommunisticheskoy Partii I Sovetskogo Soyuza 1898 - 1991," n.d., <http://www.knowbysight.info/index.asp>.

²²⁸ O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, 94.

the only exit that was foreseen inside and outside Germany. The Dawes Plan meant a harsh intervention to the German economy, in a sense it was a kind of American *Düyun-u Umumiye* in Berlin.²²⁹

The Dawes Plan was followed by Locarno negotiations (5-16 October). This process was in a sense the political complement of the Dawes. With Locarno, “capitalist powers of Europe and America stabilized their relations with each other with a series of agreements on military security, intergovernmental indebtedness, international trade, and transnational inter-industrial relations that did not include the USSR.”²³⁰ Germany again became the political addressee in the international arena, and her demands for territorial revision were partially accepted. After Versailles, it was for the first time European powers together with Germany could agree upon a series of decisions that would mark an important turning point in terms of the emergence of a new balance of powers.

The repercussions of Locarno in the Soviet Union were undoubtedly negative. The Bolsheviks were uneasy against the reconciliation of the capitalist powers, which seemed to undermine their strategy. Furthermore, they felt less secure than before due to the possibility of the emergence of hostile coalitions at Soviet borders.²³¹

The victors of the First World War changed the strategy after the futile Ruhr invasion and headed to financial exploitation. While Locarno allegedly resolved the problems of post-war settlement, what it actually did was to start the formation of a front of western capitalist countries against USSR to surmount their own contradictions. As to the Soviets, the time was ripe for the

²²⁹ The Public Debt Administration. (Kuruç, *Mustafa Kemal Dönemi Türkiye Ekonomisi*, 40.)

²³⁰ Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics*, 8.

²³¹ “In the late autumn of 1923, at the suggestion of the American President, a committee was set up to examine the reparations question; it was presided over by General Dawes, and met first on 7 December 1923. Its report, which recommended a sliding scale of reparation payments based on the earnings of the German economy, was accepted by the SPD and the German unions. The Komintern launched a large-scale campaign against the Dawes report, treating it as a further move towards rapprochement between Germany and the West, and consequently as inimical to Russia.” *The Communist International, 1919-1943* Vol. 2 (1923-28), 113, 114.

preparation for political and military confrontation with imperialism and the communist parties had to gather strength, revive their links with the trade unions and endeavour to show the achievement of the Russian working class.

In spite of the analysis of capitalist stabilization in the West, there was no revision anticipated in foreign policy. The basis of the foreign policy would continue to be “peace” and the prevention of an imperialist war. This indicated the continuation of peaceful coexistence policy as far as possible. The Soviet Union was still not willing to enter the League of Nations since it continued to be “an organisation for covering up the preparations for war”. The efforts to develop trade links and to deepen the relations with the defeated and humiliated countries of the War would be preserved.

This attitude also indicated that in spite of the steps taken back to reintegrate Germany to the league of big capitalist powers, the Soviets would preserve the policy of rapprochement with this country. Finally, the Soviets also would keep supporting the liberation movements of colonial and dependent countries, although the country did not have the strength to help substantially to deepen the growing crisis in the East, contrary to the accusations made by Britain.

2.4 The essence of Soviet eastern policy: Revolution or security?

For many historians, a shift in Soviet foreign policy towards the East from the West in terms of expectations for revolutions took place in 1920. It was due to the failures of the several revolutionary attempts in Germany, the collapse of Hungarian Soviet Republic led by Bela Kun, and finally the illfated Red Army march toward Warsaw. Accordingly, the Soviet leaders decided to deal a drastic blow to imperialist countries by tremendously increasing their support to national movements in the colonies and accelerating the revolutionary current in the East. This latter argument is not wrong. Yet, the formulation of the eastern policy never corresponded to a shift in orientation of Soviet foreign affairs. While European revolution seemed to “retard”, the developments in the East inevitably triggered a series of debates concentrated on a revolutionary strategy among the communist circles. Yet, Soviet foreign

policy continued to develop towards western orientation and the eastern policy was shaped as the complement of the policy towards West, which is the “peaceful coexistence”.

After the revolution, the Bolshevik call for immediate and non-annexationist peace, revealing of all the secret agreements signed by the Tsar and the provisional government with the other imperialist states. Then came the declaration for the right of self-determination. All these developments were met in the eastern world with excitement and as a herald of change. The young Soviet government openly declared its position against imperialist states not with the discourse of a big power giving its message to its rivals in power politics, but as the representative of the oppressed and exploited people. From the beginning this strong voice that called the oppressed people of the East to struggle for independence and equality was felt by British imperialism as a systemic challenge. Britain, considered by Soviet foreign affairs as the most dangerous enemy of the Soviets, was the null subject that served as the major determinant of Eastern policy of the Bolsheviks. Therefore, the Eastern policy of the Bolsheviks was developed in a complicated process and it was not isolated from the European politics.

Lenin’s analysis on imperialism had indicated the vitality of the colonies for the western powers. He observed the successive constitutional revolutions in Iran, Turkey, China following the 1905 Revolution in Russia. In 1908 an article by Lenin entitled *Explosive Material in World Politics* found a new significance in the revolutionary movements in Persia, Turkey, India and China: "The conscious European worker now has Asiatic comrades, and the number of these comrades will grow from hour to hour". A few years later, when the Chinese revolution had been victorious, Lenin diagnosed more precisely the significance of the re-birth of Asia.²³² However these “comrades”

²³² Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923 Vol 3*, 229.

were the young bourgeoisie of the East confronting the Western colonial powers yet.²³³

Accordingly, along with the disillusionment of the Bolsheviks concerning the European revolution following the Russian revolution, the Fourth Congress of Komintern in 1922 explained the accelerating resistance in the colonies and semi-colonial countries by the crisis of the world capitalist system and its conflict with the nascent indigenous bourgeois class.²³⁴ Lenin also attentively followed the agitation in the colonies against imperialism during war years. The people of the East tremendously suffered from the horrors of the war. The years following the war did not bring peace to these places, on the contrary invasion and massacres continued to be daily issues. The emergence of Soviet socialism from within the ruins of the war was a fresh hope and it was encouraging for upheavals against the oppressors.

Therefore for the Bolsheviks the struggle against imperialism in the East was promising. Yet it took some time for the new Soviet government to concentrate on Eastern affairs. It was partly because in the year 1918, expectation of a revolution from Europe, primarily in Germany was at its peak point and the developments in the East was only in the secondary position.²³⁵

²³³ “The western bourgeoisie is rotten, and is already confronted by its grave digger— the proletariat. But in Asia there is still a bourgeoisie capable of standing for a sincere, energetic, consistent democracy, a worthy comrade of the great teachers and great revolutionaries of the end of the eighteenth century in France.” Beryl Williams, *Lenin* (London: Routledge, 2014), 177.

²³⁴ “The imperialist war of 1914-18 and the prolonged crisis of capitalism which followed it, particularly in Europe, have weakened the guardianship of the Great Powers over the colonies. On the other hand, these same circumstances have narrowed the economic bases and spheres of influence of world capitalism and have intensified imperialist rivalries over the colonies. In that way, the equilibrium of the entire imperialist world system has been disturbed (the struggle for oil, Anglo-French conflict in Asia Minor, the Japanese-American rivalry over the domination of the Pacific etc.) It is precisely this weakening of imperialist pressure in the colonies, together with the increasing rivalry between various imperialist groups, that has facilitated the development of native capitalism in the colonial and semicolonial countries.” *Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Sovetskogo Soyuza, (RUSSIA) Institut Marksa-Engel’sa-Lenina, and Béla Kun, Kommunisticheskiy Internacional v Dokumentah, 1919-1932 pod redakciey Bela Kuna, (Moskva: 1933), 318.*

²³⁵ Yet, already in 1918 there was someone who strives to draw attention to the East. People’s Commissar of Nationalities Joseph Stalin wrote an article entitled “Don’t forget the East”, in *Works* Vol. 4 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952), 171.

Following the failure of the first attempt to seize power in Germany, in 1919 the battlefield of the counter-revolution for the Bolsheviks seemed to shift from Europe to the East. It created both a threat to deal with and an opportunity for cornering the centers of the world capitalist system, primarily Britain, since dealing a blow to capitalism in the heart of these centers proved to become harder than before.²³⁶

According to the calculations of the Bolsheviks, the disengagement of the colonies and semi-colonies from the hands of the imperialists would mean a big blow on them. At least the risk in the colonies felt by British government would limit its elbowroom. Strategically, it was thought that collaboration with the nationalist bourgeoisie of the colonial or semi-colonial countries that most of the time conducted the leadership of the liberation movements would result in close relationship with the Soviets keeping their distance from imperialist countries and maintaining them as strongholds of the revolutionary front. The Bolsheviks expected that the Soviet model would be a source of inspiration for those countries that gained their independence from the imperialist West. Soviet foreign affairs minister Chicherin kept his commitment very strongly to this policy.

In the first congress of Komintern, in March 1919, the Eastern question was still not the topic to focus on. There were only a few Asiatic delegates who were the members of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities.²³⁷ In one

²³⁶ “The year 1919, though it did little to enhance Soviet military power, saw a great forward move in Soviet eastern policy. Two new factors had made their appearance. In the first place the international balance of power had been completely changed by the downfall of the central powers. The RSFSR had no longer anything to fear from Germany or Turkey; on the other hand the victorious allies, and especially Great Britain, showed a disposition to divert a part of the vast resources released by the armistice to the waging of a campaign against Bolshevism. This meant a shift in the major field of activities from Europe to Asia. Apart from supplies furnished to ‘white’ Russian armies, British contingents in the Caucasus and in central Asia made in the first months of 1919 several moves openly directed against Soviet forces. Through this British action, the Middle East became in 1919 the theatre of an all but declared war between Great Britain and the RSFSR; the Middle East was, moreover, as events were soon to show, the most vulnerable point of British power. In these circumstances the RSFSR soon found itself committed, in default of other means of defense, to a general diplomatic offensive against Great Britain in Asia.” Edward Hallett Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 235.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 235.

section of the Commissariat's manifesto, after referring to a "series of open risings and revolutionary unrest in all colonies", it was observed, "the purpose of Wilson's programme, on the most favourable interpretation, is merely to change the label of colonial slavery". The manifesto declared, "the liberation of the colonies is thinkable only in connexion with the liberation of the working class in the metropolitan countries."²³⁸

Obviously, the Soviet formulation of the right for self-determination was something more than a simple principle. It had a context. It could be as a policy conducted after the Red Army dealt the first blows to Denikin and Kolchak troops. The Soviet government had the possibility to take the initiative to embrace the former subject peoples of the Tsardom. Then, it was thought that same principle of self-determination could be applied on the other Asiatic people outside the former Russian territories, which would promote anti-British sentiments in the continent. Thanks to the self-determination policy, the Soviet power could explicitly distinguish itself from the Tsarist past vis-a-vis not only the former subjects of the Tsar but also the neighboring countries that had suffered from Russian imperialism, like Iran. Secondly and most importantly, it was designed to fortify the front against Western "perpetrators", before all British imperialism.²³⁹ It seems clear that the representatives of the Asian liberation movements approached by the Soviets were also aware of the meaning attributed to this alliance.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ One of the most direct expression of this was made by Bukharin at the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party realized right after the Komintern conference: If we propound the solution of the right of self-determination for the colonies, the Hottentots, the Negroes, the Indians, etc., we lose nothing by it. On the contrary, we gain; for the national gain as a whole will damage foreign imperialism... The most outright nationalist movement, for example, that of the Hindus, is only water for our mill, since it contributes to the destruction of British imperialism.' Ibid., 236.

²⁴⁰ An Afghan representative who presided over the Afghan delegation in Moscow for the launching of diplomatic relations between the two countries compactly defined this strategic partnership in his statement to Izvestia in May 1919: "I am neither a communist nor a socialist, but my political programme entails the expulsion of the British from Asia. I am an implacable foe of the capitalization of Asia by Europe, the principal representatives of which are the British. In this I approximate to the communists, and in this respect we are natural allies." Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 236.

With the rise of struggles against imperialism in the colonial and semicolonial countries and as the communist parties and leftist ideology started to flourish in these places several Bolsheviks as well as the representatives of several member parties of the Komintern got the idea that the revolutionary process that had passed through a set back in Europe could be fortified in the East and revolutions could be achieved in the underdeveloped countries of Asia.²⁴¹

The strategy to be followed was the issue of long discussions in the Komintern. Komintern documents show that in the year 1920 the hot topic in the conference was struggle in the colonies. Finally, the resolutions on the eastern question and revolutions in the east resulted in a clear-cut strategy towards the East neither from Komintern nor from Soviet foreign affairs side. If we put the debate on revolutionary strategy in the East between Roy and Lenin that took place in the 1920 Congress, into a context, we reach the conclusion that revolutions in Asia was never thought by Lenin to be something that could replace European revolutionary processes.²⁴² In spite of

²⁴¹ Hekimoğlu, *Sovyet Dış Politikasında İlk Yıllar*, 59.

²⁴² “The commission had found itself confronted with two sets of theses on the national and colonial question presented respectively by Lenin and by Roy. The general theme of the liberation of the oppressed peoples through a world-wide proletarian revolution was common to both. But two minor differences and one major difference appeared between them. First, Roy described the economic order prevailing in colonial and semi-colonial territories as "pre-capitalist". The majority of the commission preferred to describe it as "dominated by capitalistic imperialism" ; and this amendment to Roy's theses was readily adopted. ^ Secondly, Roy developed the familiar thesis that the bourgeoisie in capitalist countries was able to stave off the proletarian revolution only by subsidizing the workers out of the proceeds of colonial exploitation, and carried the argument to the point of asserting that revolution in Europe was impossible until the Asiatic countries had thrown off the yoke of European imperialism. This seemed to the majority of the commission to put an unfair emphasis on the revolution in Asia, but called only for some tactful readjustments of phrase to bring Roy's theses into substantial agreement with those of Lenin. '...What therefore was needed was "a close alliance of all national and colonial movements of liberation with Soviet Russia". It was an open question whether the movements with which this alliance would be struck would be proletarian-communist or bourgeois-democratic. This must be decided by the degree of development of the country concerned. In backward countries communists must be prepared to assist "a bourgeois-democratic movement of liberation", and especially to support the peasantry against the large landowner and "against all manifestations and relics of feudalism". But, where this was necessary, there must be no ideological confusion: The Communist International must march in temporary alliance with the bourgeois democracy of the colonies and backward countries, but must not fuse with it and must preserve absolutely the independence of the communist movement even in its most rudimentary form.” Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*. Vol. 3, 254.

the crucial place of the East in Soviet policies, the Bolshevik leadership still saw the centre of the world revolution in Europe. That is why they never approached sympathetically to the idea of an “eastern international” or “Muslim international”, as was envisaged by Galiev.²⁴³ They were reluctant to risk a cleavage inside the liberation movements. This cleavage might lead to strengthening the reactionary forces of these countries that were supported by imperialism. Moreover, they did not consider that the communists and socialists of these countries had the power to transform their countries even with the Soviet support.

The appeal to the Asian masses for the Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East sponsored by the Komintern was inclusivity as much as possible:²⁴⁴

Though delegates from other parts of Asia were also invited, the focus of the Baku Congress was the Near East, both the territories within the former Tsarist Russia and neighboring countries. The main objective was stated as creating an organizational base of envisaged alliance between the Western proletariat, Soviet Russia and nationalist movements of the East.²⁴⁵

For that objective, the participants of the Congress that was held in September 1 to September 8 of 1920 were from a large spectrum of political persuasions. From Turkey, other than the

²⁴³ Mir Said Sultan Galiev participated in the Orgbureau of the Baku Congress, together with Ansatas Mikoyan and Neriman Nerimanov who were experienced in the Eastern question, to assist Ordjhonikidze and Zinoviev as the primary organizers of the Congress. Roy, in his memoirs, tells about his objection to the idea of convening a Muslim congress while narrating Radek’s ardour about it just to make Curzon lose his sleep even if it gives no result. Indeed, Bülent maintains that the Soviets’ particular expectation about the Baku Congress was to use it against the British as a trump. (Gökay and Yalçın, *Bolşevizm ile Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, 134)

²⁴⁴ “In July 1920, the Executive Committee of the Communist International issued an appeal in the name of the European and American workers to the ‘enslaved peoples of Persia, Armenia and Turkey,’ inviting them to a congress in Baku to be held in September of the same year for the purpose of discussing ‘together with you the question of how the forces of the European proletariat can be united with your forces for the struggle against the common enemy.’” Eudin and North, *Soviet Russia and the East*, 79.

²⁴⁵ 1273 of 1891 participants were said to be communists. The Turks were represented by 235 delegates, followed by 192 Persians, 157 Armenians and 100 Georgians. The main aim of the Congress was to announce the creation of an anti-imperialist platform among the Asian peoples. The need to support national emancipation struggles was reiterated many times. Gökay and Yalçın, *Bolşevizm ile Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*.

representative from Ankara government, Enver Pasha who was known as the major person responsible for the disastrous situation of Turkey contributed to the Congress not in person but by delivering a speech which was read through protests.²⁴⁶

A year later, in 1921 during the Fourth Congress of Komintern, the atmosphere had somehow changed. The “colonial and national question” of the previous congress was turned into the “eastern question” and was far from being the center of interest. On the face of the new situation in Europe, as the Komintern leaders openly asserted, since revolutionary breakthroughs were retarded, Komintern should contemplate a new strategy and a policy of alliance with the other leftist and working class forces of Europe. Moreover, the newly concluded trade agreement with Britain; friendship agreements with Persia and Turkey required implicit or explicit decrease in the dosage of revolutionary propaganda towards the East.²⁴⁷ Roy, who had challenged Lenin in the Third Congress concerning the Eurocentric revolutionary approach, now protested this attitude of neglecting the East as “pure opportunism”.²⁴⁸

Soviet Russia officially abandoned “destabilizing” actions in neighbor countries and anti-British propaganda. One of manifestations of this policy shift was the cancellation of the project “Social Science University for Eastern Workers”. Additionally, the council of propaganda and action established in

²⁴⁶ While Enver declared in his speech his regret of having been “compelled to fight on the side of German imperialism”, a resolution was presented on behalf of the presidium stressing, in return, that “those leaders of the movement who in the past led the Turkish peasants and workers to the slaughter in the interests of an imperialist group” (which might be taken as a censure of Enver), and summoned such leaders to redeem their past errors by action in the service of the working population (which left the door open to his further employment in the future).” John Riddell and J. Aves, “To See the Dawn: Baku, 1920 - First Congress of the Peoples of the East,” *The Slavonic and East European Review*. 74, no. 2 (1996), 335.

²⁴⁷ Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*. Vol. 3, 386.

²⁴⁸ According to Carr, “Revolution among the peoples of Asia, it seemed clear, had never been regarded by Komintern as an end in itself. The third congress damped down its ardour and placed it in leading-strings.” Ibid, 389. From a more schematic view point Kemper asserts that, by 1921, the nonaggression agreements with Turkey and Iran and the trade agreement with Britain mean a shift from “ideology to diplomacy”. Michael Kemper, “Red Orientalism: Mikhail Pavlovich and Marxist Oriental Studies in Early Soviet Russia,” *Die Welt Des Islams* 50, no. 3/4 (January 1, 2010): 455.

the Baku Congress of Eastern Peoples was abolished; its publication was halted. This congress was never repeated.²⁴⁹

The conduct of Moscow was to support neutralist-nationalist and modernizing regimes without anticipating -and consequently encouraging-successive revolutions following the insurrections against the West. The important aspect of the new period was the overlap between Soviet foreign relations and policies to spread the revolution. Treaties were signed with the adolescent regimes of Persia, Afghanistan, and Turkey both guaranteeing self-determination addressed by Narkomindel and renouncing revolutionary activity related to Komintern.²⁵⁰

Instead of drawing clear lines of demarcation between the so called “ideology” (or revolutionary policy as it was meant by Kemper) and diplomacy before and after 1921, it is more reasonable to concentrate on the hesitations of Soviet policy makers and unstable eastern policies of the Soviets from the very beginning. The hesitations of Soviet foreign policy makers in practice were not baseless. The policy of transient collaborations with the national bourgeoisies in the East, wherever they came to the fore as the leading forces of liberation movements, was not free from contradictions. It was a collaboration that was assumed to be temporary, since once the bourgeois democratic transformation of the country was to be realized the communists of the country would confront the bourgeoisie that once had been an associate, for transcending the bourgeois democratic level. This temporary character of the collaboration was also well-known by the national bourgeoisies under question. The Kemalist leadership was the best example of this awareness, which crushed the weak communist

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ “The twelve-month, period from the declaration of the Gilan Soviet Republic in May 1920 to the withdrawal of Roy from Tashkent and the disbandment of the Komintern's Central Asian Bureau in May 1921 was the moment of international socialist revolution in Central and southwest Asia. There-after the expectation that the October Revolution might be continued in these areas was decreasingly present as a factor either in Soviet foreign relations or in Komintern affairs, and insurrection ceased to be the primary means of “anti-imperialist struggle” in the Middle East... In Asia as in Europe the price of normal and stable political and economic relations, was the promise to halt revolutionary activities.” Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics*, 116.

forces in the country from the very beginning. The anti-communist sentiments were determining force not only in Turkey but also in other countries of the Southern zone of the Soviets.

Therefore, relations with these countries where nationalism was increasingly distinguished as a powerful ideology that influenced large masses against imperialist policies of Britain could not be unfaltering and stable. Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey were three places that were referred as semi-colonies and constituted a crucial place in the Soviet's anti-British policy.

Carr's exemplification of Soviet policy oscillations through the case of Iran is striking. It denotes two important facts. First, Soviet Russia at the time was still a weak and vulnerable power, which limited its foreign policy moves; second, Soviet Russia had to take each and every step in the East, calculating the reflections to its relations with the Western capitalist world. The Red Army provoked by the Whites towards cross-border operations lead to encounters with regional revolutionary elements complicating the line of *modus vivendi*.²⁵¹

It is not difficult to see the parallelism with the situation in Turkey. When the Soviets decided to establish a close relation with the nationalist movement in Turkey, it encountered multiple political actors'. Engagement with each of

²⁵¹In May 1920, when Soviet troops repelled British remaining forces in northern Persia at a confrontation when the Soviets wanted to seize the ships of White Army in the Caspian it meant a blow on the British prestige and turned the recently signed Anglo-Persian treaty obsolete before it was ratified. Meanwhile, just before the Red Army's military action in the Caspian, an accord was concluded between Kuchik Khan -virtually independent ruler of Gilan with nationalist and revolutionary persuasion- and Soviet representatives that resulted in declaration of Gilan Soviet Republic. In spite of the protests of Persian government to the Soviet action in Gilan it eventually negotiations for a nonaggression treaty with the Soviets. This could have evolved into a Soviet move towards Tehran but "its current preoccupations in Europe the problem of "divided counsels hindered it. "Was it to uphold the authority of Kuchik Khan, who was no communist, but might be used against the British or against a hostile Persian Government? Was it to encourage the small Persian Communist Party which held its first congress at Enzeli in July 1920, and proclaimed a struggle against British imperialism, against the Shah's government, and against all who support them? Or was it to who the Persian Government, which was equally resentful of support given to separatist and to communist movements, in the hope of making Soviet influence paramount in Teheran. All these courses had their supporters, but they were incompatible with one another, and the choice had to be made. *In Persia, as throughout the Middle East, the summer and autumn of 1920 were a period of hesitation in Soviet policy.*" My emphases. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*. Vol. 3, 244.

them would mean a different direction in the policy towards Turkey. It is possible to argue that neither the conditions of Turkey, nor the balances of power between the Soviets and the West was suitable to put the most desirable program into effect. This complicated situation caused a hesitant policy of the Soviets until almost around the process toward the Lausanne Conference.

The Soviet's envision of a temporary alliance with the Eastern bourgeois forces depended on the still vivid expectation of imminent revolutions in the West. However, after 1921, when the fact that revolution in Europe had been deferred became no longer an idea of a few Bolsheviks but turned into a more general feeling in the Bolshevik ranks, the answer given to the question what would be the new horizon of the relations with Eastern bourgeois forces remained ambiguous for some time. Still, it seems clear that a policy that supported strong national states, in Asia in general, in the Near East in particular, prevailed after 1921 for Soviet foreign affairs. It was partly because the limitations of revolutionary national struggle led by the national bourgeoisie became crystallized. It entailed a different perspective towards the relations with those countries. It was also a complement of the New Foreign Policy of the Soviets in Europe.²⁵²

On the other hand, it had a strong strategic aspect, providing a base for alliance with the newly emerged independent states in Asia, since Britain insisted on not recognizing this new reality in the continent. A definite support given to “national bourgeoisies” were to be theorized by Chicherin himself. This support was explained through a theory of “gradualism.”²⁵³

²⁵²“The forces which led in internal affairs to the New Economic Policy and in European affairs to the Anglo-Soviet trade agreement culminated almost simultaneously in a series of agreements with eastern countries — with Persia on February 26, 1921, with Afghanistan on February 28, and with Turkey on March 16. It was a further stage in the process by which relations between Moscow and the outside world were placed predominantly on a governmental basis.” Ibid, 290.

²⁵³ Politikus (a nickname of Chicherin), “My i Vostok”, *Kommunisticheskaya Revoliutsiya* No. 13-14 (52-53) (15 July-1 August 1923), 23-28. This gradualism had important repercussions in the considerations of Soviet foreign affairs towards Turkey. These repercussions will be discussed in the next chapter.

Yet the new orientation of the Soviets that finally became decisive after a long time of oscillation between 1919-1921 did not terminate the debate in Komintern. The Komintern's nature and dynamics were different. It did not overlap a hundred percent with the Soviet foreign affairs. The Soviets needed time in order to harmonize the two structures. Therefore, the contradiction, so evident at the Second Congress, between Roy's emphasis on class conflict and Lenin's concept of tactical co-operation with nationalist bourgeois elements had not yet been resolved.²⁵⁴

The same distinction came up once again in the Fourth Congress in 1922. Roy, putting the Turkish case in center and predicting prospective developments in China pointed out the importance of supporting the leadership of a political party representing the workers and peasants on the national struggle since the contemporary events showed that national bourgeoisies had been leaving it for the sake of reconciling with the imperialist powers. While other delegates who also cited the ongoing Turkish experiment challenged this argument, the strategic discussion on alliances seemed to be ignored by both the Soviet and the Turkish delegates to which the discussion was addressed but who anticipated the practical sides of collaboration.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴ Eudin and North, *Soviet Russia and the East*, 151.

²⁵⁵ "Roy speaking from the standpoint of Hindu India and reverting to his argument at the second congress, thought that the policy of collaboration with bourgeois nationalism had gone too far. The leadership of the 'anti-imperialist front' could not be left in the hands of the 'timid and wavering bourgeoisie'... On the opposite side of the argument, Malaka, the Indonesian delegate, thought that collaboration had not been carried far enough. ... harm had been done by the denunciation of pan-Islamism at the second congress of Comintern". Both sides gave Turkey as a positive example of their argument: The Indonesian delegate covered his case by saying "In Muslim countries the national movement at first finds its ideology in the religious-political watchwords of panIslamism... as the growth of national liberation movements extends, the religious-political watchwords of panIslamism are replaced more and more by concrete political demands. The struggle recently carried on in Turkey for the separation of the secular power from the Khalifate confirms this." From a different point of view, the Indian delegate asserted that "In colonial countries with an enslaved native peasant population the national struggle for liberation will either be conducted by the whole population together, as for example in Turkey, and in this case the struggle of the enslaved peasantry against the landowners begins inevitably after victory in the struggle for liberation; or else the feudal landowners are in alliance with the imperialist robbers..." Carr points out that Zinoviev and Radek did not join the discussion and the impatient of these refinements, brought back the issue nearer home by calling for "an anti-imperialist front Turkish delegate "impatient of these refinements, brought back the issue nearer home by calling for 'an anti-imperialist front'". Carr, 81-83.

Roy's appeal to support the forces that continue and radicalize the national revolutions in the East that were to be sold out by the bourgeoisie did not have a sound reflection in the Soviet foreign policy. The Eastern policy of the Soviets was flexible from the beginning and open to modifications pursuant to the political developments. But in the year 1922, Soviet foreign policy makers were decisive on the fact that as long as the contradictions and conflicts between the imperialists and the national bourgeoisies of the East existed, the Soviets would support the latter, striving to prevent a rapprochement between the two.

The Eastern policy was considered successful in reaching its goals in spite of its setbacks. The prevalent Soviet prestige among the Eastern masses all around the continent, direct and indirect military successes of the Soviets against Britain, as in the examples of expulsion of British troops from Enzeli or Resht in Persia; preventing the "routing of Kemal's Turkey" and contributing its victory over Greece hindering the turning of the Dashnak Armenia and Menshevik Georgia into simple instruments against the Soviets were all influential in forcing Britain to a peaceful policy towards the Soviets.

The threat in the colonies to be infected by the 'germ' of the revolution brought the consideration by British foreign policy makers that an armed conflict with the Soviets in the East was doomed to failure. The strategy that envisaged the alliance of European proletariat, Soviet Russia and the "oppressed people of the East" gave an invaluable fruit, pushing the Brits one step backward, even if not achieving the complete defeat of imperialist machinery of exploitation.²⁵⁶

To conclude this chapter, the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, Narkomindel, was born concurrently with the emergence of the necessity to defend the young Soviet state. This necessity shaped its structure and policies. The theoretical basis of the Soviet foreign policy, namely Marxism and Leninism, informed the Soviet foreign policy makers of the irreconcilability of

²⁵⁶ The success of Soviets Eastern policy was summarized by Pavlovich in an article entitled "The Meeting of the Road: Russia and Great Britain in the East" in *Soviet Russia and the East, 1920-1927*, eds., Eudin and North, 159.

the antagonism between the Soviet state and the capitalist states of the world; therefore of the ephemerality of coexistence. Soviet foreign affairs oriented towards prolong the period of coexistence of the Soviets and capitalist world as much as possible. For that cause various strategies and tactics were enhanced. To develop the legitimacy and recognition and to fight against the threat of isolation of the Soviet state, Narkomindel necessitated a proactive attitude, a strong diplomacy composed of capable diplomats, capable especially on making friends and contacts among the ruling circles of the capitalist countries where they were in charge.

To the end of 1921, and fullflegedly in 1921, the proclamation of the New Economic Policy was accompanied by a new diplomatic offensive. The ‘boss’ of this offensive was exclusively chosen by Lenin: a person, who, he thought, fit the requirements of the new era best. Examining the Tsarist foreign policies for a long time in Tsarist foreign affairs archive, writing a lengthy work on famous Tsarist foreign affairs minister Gorchakov, he learnt about establishing cordial and friendly relations with other states, regardless of their system of government.²⁵⁷ He modified this to the Soviet conditions and built a policy that would ensure the existence of the Soviet state in a hostile world.

Soviet foreign policy, which had utmost importance throughout the 1920s as the backbone of Soviet very existence, did not abandon its Euro-centric approach vis-à-vis the failure of European wide revolution. Eastern policy was not developed as an alternative to European centred policy, but as a complementary to that. Turkey, if we say over the venerable cliché, as a bridge between the East and the West, occupied in Soviet foreign policy a very striking place, which will be discussed in the next two chapters.

²⁵⁷ O’Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution*.

CHAPTER 3

A PAINFUL EXPERIENCE OF FAMILIARIZATION: ESTABLISHMENT OF SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS TURKEY

3.1 On the Political Situation: Why the Bolsheviks and Turkish Nationalists lured to each?

The end of the First World War with the victory of the Entente over the Central Powers to the end of 1918 exposed the Soviets an open risk of intervention towards the Russian territories. Characterizing the international situation in the autumn of 1918 Lenin wrote, “We have never been under a dangerous situation as such. Evidently, there are no more two, mutually devouring, enervating imperialist vulture groups whose strengths are close to each other. There remained only one group of victors, composed of British-French imperialists; it plans to allot the whole world among the capitalists. They determine their task as overthrow the Soviet power at all costs and change it with bourgeois power. It now prepares to attack Russia from the south, for example, through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea.”²⁵⁸

Lenin’s concerns came true in a few months. With the Mudros Armistice, the Straits were opened to British and French navies. In the second half of November 1918, Entente powers started to send arms and troops to the southern front of the Russian Civil War, namely to the Kuban region and Ukraine through Black Sea.²⁵⁹

The Soviets considered that Entente plans were not limited with this. Those plans were more comprehensive and amounted to an initiative to

²⁵⁸ Aleksandr Naumovich Kheyfets, *Sovetskaya Rossyja i Sopredel'nye Strany Vostoka v Gody Grazhdanskoy Voyny* (Moskva: Nauka, 1964), 78. In November 1918 the straits were opened to the British and French navies which completely endangered Soviet security. It might be the highest probable way of transition for the military support to the White Armies.

²⁵⁹ *Istoriya SSSR s Drevneyshih Vremen do Nashih Dney: v Dvuh Seriyah, v Dvenadsati Tomah*, том 7 (Moskva: Nauka, 1966), 453.

construct a new status quo in the East. According to this perspective, victorious Britain would strive to consolidate its loosening power in her colonies, enhance its sphere of influence to the non-Russian territories of former Tsardom and complete the task of partition of the Near East.²⁶⁰ Turkey both as the subject of imperialist invasion plans and as a possible means of the destruction of Soviet power due to its geographic location was to find a central place in Soviet eastern policy.

On the eve of emergence of national liberation movement in Turkey the Bolsheviks had a preliminary idea about this country. The source of this idea was first of all, advanced Russian oriental studies that had origins in the nineteenth century.²⁶¹ Secondly Lenin and some other figures of the Social Democratic movement in Russia had observed and analyzed the “Young Turk” revolution as a part of series of constitutional revolutions together with 1905 revolution in Russia and 1906 revolution in Iran, 1912 revolution in China and beginning of Indian nationalism. And finally, direct contact of the Soviet delegation with the Ottomans in Brest in the first months of 1918 and the following interactions mainly because of the problems on the Ottoman-Russian border until the breakup of official relations²⁶², the reports of the Soviet emissaries who were sent to different parts of Turkey from 1918 onwards, Russian soldiers who were members of revolutionary military committees and conducted propaganda in the Turkish territories after the ceasefire²⁶³ gave substantial idea about Turkey.

²⁶⁰ Kheyfets, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 78.

²⁶¹ On the Russian oriental studies and how its heritage was maintained during the Soviet times: Michael Kemper, “Red Orientalism: Mikhail Pavlovich and Marxist Oriental Studies in Early Soviet Russia” *Die Welt Des Islams* 50, no. 3/4 (January 1, 2010): 435–76. This issue will be broadly examined in the next chapter.

²⁶² Mavel Arsenovich Gasratyan and Moiseev Manvel Arsenovich, *SSSR i Turtsiya 1917-1979* (Moskva: Nauka, 1981), 15-17.

²⁶³ Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetler'le Görüşmeleri*, 32.

In understanding Soviet policy towards Turkey, the situation in the region beyond the natural territories of Russia, known as Transcaucasia²⁶⁴ or Southern Caucasia inevitably has an important place. The Unionist Ottoman government participated in anti-Soviet intervention in Transcaucasia after the outbreak of the revolution in Russia. Separating Caucasia from the Soviets was not only a German-Turkish project, but also of the Entente. After the conclusion of Brest-Litovsk on March 3rd, 1918, the Ottoman army occupied Kars and Batum with the encouragement of Germany. After the establishment of official relations and exchange of diplomatic missions, relations were soon to be halted because of the Ottoman initiatives towards Caucasia. Afterwards, as the Ottoman army had to ceasefire due to the Mudros Armistice, the Entente forces filled the vacuum left by them. However, it did not take long that the Entente decided to withdraw its forces from the region in March 1919. Therefore, the period examined in this chapter was a period that conventional war was left behind, however the rivalry between Entente and Soviet Russia remained and Turkey also made itself apparent in the region. A chaotic unity of diplomacy and armed conflict dominated the region with the involvement of the local powers in the game.

As it was stated in the introductory part, Soviet regional policy advanced through the gaps of the British foreign affairs.²⁶⁵ In a short time, it became evident that Britain together with the other Entente powers did not have the necessary human and material sources to control the whole Near East at the same time.²⁶⁶ Withdrawal from Transcaucasia open the way, though reluctantly to the Soviet influence in the region. In Turkey, apart from the control of

²⁶⁴ Henceforth, this term will be used.

²⁶⁵ As a matter of fact, it is possible to see the parallelism in this sense between the situation in the Near East and the situation in Europe. The question of what to do with the other loser of the World War, Germany became a big problem among the Entente forces and an obstacle in front of the reestablishment of European order. Soviet foreign affairs knew to make use of it very well. Soviet policy to play to the contradiction between Germany and rest of the big powers and the contradictions among the Entente on the subject gave fruitful results. The peak point of this policy was Rapallo Agreement with Germany in 1922. For details, see previous chapter.

²⁶⁶ Gökay and Yalçın, *Bolşevizm ile Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, xiii.

Istanbul and the Straits, Britain did not directly appear as a military force in the other parts of the country. Promotion of the Greek forces for the invasion of Anatolia in a short time revealed to be not the smartest idea vis-a-vis the strengthening Turkish national movement. Therefore, retrospectively speaking, it was relatively easier to challenge the British power that appeared with mediations instead of a direct confrontation with Soviet Russia. Still, its implicit existence that revealed itself in the support it gave to the enemies of Turkish national movement and Soviet Russia -Greece; the White Army and Transcaucasian governments respectively, caused Turkish-Soviet rapprochement.²⁶⁷

Ottoman maneuvers in Transcaucasia until the Mudros Armistice had left a legacy of suspicion about Turkish intentions in the region. Yet, the Soviets felt obliged to get into contact with the leadership of the newly emerging nationalist movement, an actor that perfectly fit the Soviet perspectives in eastern policy as a representative of the revolting peoples of the East against the imperialist domination; and that might play the buffer role against imperialist assaults towards Soviet Russia. Turkish nationalists also felt the indispensability to associate with Soviet Russia. As an alternative to the debates on adopting a mandate government, Soviet Russia might provide a way for exit to political independence. The seizure of political power by the Bolsheviks was generally received positively in Turkey. The demand for a non-annexationist peace and revelation of secret agreements of partition by the Bolshevik government created the hope that Russia left behind its Tsarist past.²⁶⁸

3.2 The Prelude: First interactions and considerations

During 1919, observing the quest for building a united liberation

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1990), 329. For a comprehensive study on the reflections in the Ottoman press on the October Revolution see: Uygur Kocabaşoğlu and Metin Berge, *Bolşevik İhtilâli ve Osmanlılar* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006).

movement in Turkey, Soviet foreign policy makers got into contact with Turkish statesmen whom they considered the representatives of the newly emerging movement. Leading members of the Party of Union and Progress, Enver Pasha, Talat Pasha and Cemal Pasha mainly from abroad with their close associates inside the country like Halil Pasha were most audacious in establishing the first contacts with the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks might have considered them the primary party to build an alliance between Soviet Russia and national movement in Turkey.

There are evidences on the fact that when the Triumvirate of the Union and Progress was approaching Soviet Russia they had in mind the idea of a certain Soviet-Turkish-German alliance. Especially Enver Pasha sought for an alliance against the Entente between these three powers and tried to persuade his German acquaintances in the army to this purpose.²⁶⁹ Given the victimization of Turkey and Germany by the victors of the World War, Soviet desire to keep both countries away from consolidation with Entente powers, the relations of the Unionists with Germany, their strong anti-British sentiments and their influence on the Muslim peoples of the East, seemed to present an appropriate base for such an alliance. However, very difficult political situation that Germany fell into was curbing this country to enter in such an alliance and give support to the National Liberation War in Turkey. Yet, we know that at the beginning, with the initiative of the Unionists, they did some material aid to Turkey through Russia.²⁷⁰ Secondly, as the responsible of the Turkish rout in the World War the Unionists were not likely to have such a credit from Turkish nationalist circles to be the representatives of Turkey in such an alliance. Thirdly, German-Soviet relations had a long way for an open collaboration. Lastly, the Soviets preferred to make use of the influence of the Unionist leaders, but always kept them in certain distance, since pan-Islamic claims of Enver Pasha were considered highly detrimental

²⁶⁹ Emel Akal, *Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında Mustafa Kemal, İttihat Terakki, ve Bolşevizm* (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2002), 80.

²⁷⁰ Gökay and Yalçın, *Bolşevizm ile Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, 87-88.

for the Soviet Eastern policy. Therefore, this idea became obsolete in a short time before it turned into a project.

The first contact of the Unionist leaders with the Soviets took place in Berlin in September 1919. The meeting was between Bolshevik Karl Radek who was at that time in prison, Enver and Talat Pashas who fled Turkey and moved to Germany in November 1918.²⁷¹ The meeting could be realized under the auspices of German authorities as Radek was taken to a private room in the prison where he could receive people.²⁷² Radek, in that meeting, proposed a Soviet-Muslim alliance between Nationalist Turkey and Bolshevik Russia and offered Enver Pasha to travel to Moscow. German general Köstring had already arranged his flight. The German support in the realization of Enver-Radek meetings and organization of Enver's journey to Moscow was the evidences of the communication for the German-Unionist-Soviet line. Enver Pasha could reach Moscow only in August 1920 since the plane he took had to make a forced landing and he was arrested in Kovno.²⁷³

A process of familiarization had started with these meetings between the Unionist leader and Soviet Russia, two actors that had their own agendas; yet, found a common ground to work with. However, the Soviet side was clear about the limits of that common ground. Pan-Islamism that was advocated by Enver as the unifying ideology of Eastern peoples was the red line of the Soviet government. As Chicherin noted it in a letter to Lenin and several other Bolshevik leaders "towards pan-Islamism we should approach as a hostile force with which there might be temporary dealing, like with Estonian or

²⁷¹ Akal, *Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında*, 79.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 247. The arrival of Enver Pasha to Moscow with two Turkish companions of him and a Russian pilot was reported to Lenin by Feliks Yedmundovich Dzerzhinskiy, Cheka representative of Council of People's Commissars on August 11th 1920. (RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 995) The story of the extremely adventurous journey from Berlin to Moscow was told by Enver himself to his uncle Halil Pasha, when they met in Moscow in Autumn 1920, with a very cold blooded manner. Halil Kut and Taylan Sorgun, *Bitmeyen Savaş: Anılarım ve Belgelerle* (İstanbul: 7 Gün Yayınları, 1972), 338.

Polish bourgeoisie.”²⁷⁴

Mustafa Kemal and his close circle had still long way to go before being recognized by the Bolsheviks as the sole representatives of the national movement. In the year 1919, it was difficult for the Bolsheviks to distinguish between Kemalist and Unionist forces, not only because the Unionists presented themselves as working on behalf of the national movement in Turkey, but also these groups were intermingled since there were many officers and politicians in the national movement who were once core cadres of the Union and Progress; furthermore though the leaders of the movement was out of the country, a powerful Unionist circle that acted as a political party preserved its existence during the years of National Liberation War and Enver was accepted as the leading figure for the future of Turkey for a significant number of nationalists.²⁷⁵

From the time the official relations of Soviet Russia with Turkey ceased to exist after the Armistice of Mudros in October 1918 until the first official correspondence was realized following the emergence of Ankara government, about one and a half year, was a period of uncertainty marked by attempts for forging a link between the two countries. Our knowledge about this period is limited with some assumptions that are based on several memoirs rather than concrete archival data.²⁷⁶

First official declaration of Soviet Russia towards Turkey that addressed “workers and peasants of Turkey” came in September 1919. Chicherin wrote it

²⁷⁴ March 1st, 1920, RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 2054

²⁷⁵ Paul Dumont, “La Fascination du Bolchevisme: Enver Pacha et le Parti des Soviets Populaires, 1919-1922” *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* 16, no. 2 (1975): 142. The role of former members of the Party of Union and Progress in the national struggle was controversial. They conducted their activities in a complicated network of relations. Several of them who at the beginning seemed to work for Mustafa Kemal later proved to have ulterior motive by either taking part in the establishment of the Communist Party of Turkey in Baku or by going along with the plans of Enver and several other prominent Unionists. For a full account of the role of the Unionists in the National Liberation War, see: Akal, *Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında* and also see: Erik Jan Zürcher and Nüzhet Salihoğlu, *Milli Mücadelede İttihatçılık* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003).

²⁷⁶ Stefanos Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri: Ekim Devriminden “Milli Mücadele”ye* (İstanbul: Boyut Kitaplar, 2000), 101.

and it was very close in content to the declaration addressing Persian people published a short time ago. It was not directly expressing the recognition of the newly emerging leadership of the national movement against the Entente occupation in the country. Still the timing was not a coincidence. It was the time when a congress in Sivas was convened in order to unite the representatives of resisting forces all around the country. Therefore, the message seemed to be sent directly to the congress:

Your country has always been a military camp. The European Great Powers, considering you a “sick man” have not only failed to offer you a cure, but, on the contrary, have intentionally maintained your condition... The salvation of your country and of your rights from alien and domestic vultures is in yourself.. You must be the masters of your land... But that is not enough. A union of the toilers of the world against the world oppressors is necessary. Therefore, the Russian Workers’ and Peasants’ Government hopes that you, the workers and peasants of Turkey, in this decisive and momentous hour will stretch out your fraternal hand to drive out the European vultures by joint and united effort, to destroy and make impotent those within your own country who have been in the habit of basing their own happiness upon your misery.²⁷⁷

The progress was slow; the respective steps were undecided and discontinuous. This stemmed from various concerns and considerations for both sides. Before focusing on the Soviet position, I will summarize the situation from the point of view of the leadership of emerging national liberation movement in Turkey.

In Turkey, it was largely considered by the leading commanders and politicians, Mustafa Kemal being in the first place, Soviet Russia’s support could provide an exit from the blockade imposed on the country by the Entente countries. Some historians assume that Mustafa Kemal must have met Bolshevik emissaries in Istanbul at the beginning of 1919.²⁷⁸ However, the first

²⁷⁷ Eudin and North, *Soviet Russia and the East*, 106.

²⁷⁸ Paul Dumont, “L’axe Moscou-Ankara: Les Relations Turco-Soviétiques de 1919 à 1922” *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* 18, no. 3 (1977) : 167.

concrete indication that we know on the emergence of Soviet-Turkish rapprochement was a meeting between Mustafa Kemal and his entourage with an unofficial envoy of the Soviets in Havza in summer 1919 during the preparations for gathering representatives of the resisting forces scattered all around the country. Hüsametdin (Ertürk), the last chair of Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa, in his memoirs, told the story of this meeting.²⁷⁹ He tells that Mustafa Kemal met with a Bolshevik marshall called Budjonny.²⁸⁰ In his words, Budjonny tried to learn about the character of the regime that was planned to be established after the liberation in Turkey. In a diplomatic answer, Mustafa Kemal replies that it would be state socialism rather than communism because of the incompatibility of this system with Turkish cultural and religious traditions as well as socio-economic structure of the country. We have no other register about the content of the meeting. However Yerasimos asserts that the person who met Mustafa Kemal cannot be Budjonny since he was proved to be somewhere else at that moment.²⁸¹ Another possibility, indicated by some writers is that, a group of communists affiliated to Mustafa Suphi who left Odessa at the end of May and arrived at a port in the Black Sea region in Turkey, might have been those Soviet emissaries who met Mustafa Kemal in Havza. This possibility seems stronger than the previous one since there is a coincidence of the time of the meeting and the arrival of the communist group to Black Sea region.²⁸² However, Perinçek asserts that this person should be a

²⁷⁹ Samih Nafiz Tansu and Hüsameddin Ertürk, *İki Devrin Perde Arkası* (İstanbul: Pınar, 1964), 198. Though the reality of this meeting has been long debated among the historians, Mehmet Perinçek convincingly shows that this meeting took place. Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeleri*, 32-36.

²⁸⁰ Semjon Mikhaylovich Budyonny was a high ranking Red Army Commander (in "Spravochnik Po Historii").

²⁸¹ From April to June 1919 Budyonny commanded 4th Cavalry Division of the Red Army; from June to November 1919 he was the head of 1st Cavalry Corps of the Red Army, *Ibid*.

²⁸² This group was first moved to Crimea from Moscow, in order to be closer to Turkey for political activities. When Denikin troops attacked this region at the end of April 1919, they moved to Odessa. It was in late May that they started their journey to Turkey, being divided into two groups, one aiming at Istanbul and the other Black Sea region. Gökay and Yalçın, *Bolşevizm ile Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, 84.

Soviet citizen and it is highly possible that he was Budu Mdivani, a Soviet official who worked for long year in Caucasia and was sent to Turkey in December 1920 as Soviet ambassador.²⁸³ What remains, as a fact is that a meeting between Mustafa Kemal and an unofficial Bolshevik representative took place in Havza.²⁸⁴ And we already know that Turkish part was keen on a compromise with the Bolsheviks in order to obtain arms, ammunition and money, which were very scarce in Anatolia after the armistice. However, Mustafa Kemal's telegram after this meeting on the possibility of action for a Turkish-Soviet alliance was replied by Kazım Karabekir, the commander of Eastern front²⁸⁵, on June 17th 1919, in a curbing tone. He warns that they should be slower and impartial in order to gain time and understand the real intentions of the Bolsheviks.²⁸⁶

Mustafa Kemal sent a very important letter in February 1920, to Kazım Karabekir and some other leading figures of the national movement, including the commanders in national movement and Rauf Bey²⁸⁷ in which he summarized the actual situation of the country. He considered an alliance with Soviet Russia as indispensable and a common effort in Transcaucasia in order to eliminate the possibility of a "Caucasian barrier", is the only way to break the blockade created by the Entente all around the country except, for now, the Caucasian front. The Caucasian front is the most suitable front for Turkey, for an armed resistance against the Entente. If Turkey can make a considerable contribution to the spread of Bolshevism in Caucasia and can achieve unity in struggle, Turkey will find the gate open from west to east, from Anatolia, Syria, Iraq, Iran to Afghanistan and India. Otherwise, the Entente will

²⁸³ Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeleri*, 36.

²⁸⁴ Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, 104.

²⁸⁵ 15th corp was the sole Ottoman corp that had not been dissolved at that moment.

²⁸⁶ Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, 105.

²⁸⁷ He was at that time in Istanbul as a deputy of Meclis-i Mebusan.

annihilate the country.²⁸⁸ The reply letter of Kazım Karabekir reflected the same curbing tone. He said the steps towards a convergence with the Bolsheviks should be taken extremely carefully. He asserts it should turn into the entrance of the war with Germany with blind eyes. He added the Entente was already suspicious about a Turkish-Soviet-German alliance. Giving more pretexts to Entente by taking rapid and positive steps towards the Soviets would only result in total destruction.²⁸⁹

The cleavage in terms of approaches toward Soviet Russia among the leaders of the liberation movement was a fact. However it was not as deep as some writers both from Russian and Turkish sides reflected it. The exaggeration about this cleavage brings about the impression that while one fraction of the leadership was inclined to close collaboration with Soviet Russia because of relative ideological intimacy, the other fraction strongly opposed this and advocated a rapid reconciliation and integration with the West. The reality was that leading figures as a whole had reservations and concerns about the relations with the Bolsheviks. What varied was the degree of those reservations and concerns. The ideological formation of the leadership cadres of the liberation movement in Turkey that was developed during the last few decades of the Ottoman State, aside from some very crucial variations, generated an essential Western orientation, strong anti-Russian and consequently anti-bolshevik or anti-communist sentiment which was evident in almost all prominent political figures of the era. In fact, although Mustafa Kemal's development and modernization project overlapped in some respects with the Soviets', he preferred to keep the distance for two main reasons. First, he supposed that under the Soviet assistance to Turkish nationalist movement and attempts for convergence with Turkey, there lied the traditional motive of Russian expansionism. Secondly, as he knew, sooner or later, with the victory of Turkish troops over the Greek army, there will be reconciliation between

²⁸⁸ Letter of Mustafa Kemal to the Commander of 15th Corp Kazım Karabekir, February 6th, 1920 (Karabekir and Özerengin, *İstiklal Harbimiz II* (İstanbul: Emre Yayınları, 2000), 994-1000).

²⁸⁹ Ibid, 1000-1002.

Turkey and the West. The French, the Italians and even the British had been making some amicable gestures towards the nationalist movement from 1920 onwards.²⁹⁰ For the time of negotiations, that would start when Turkey would be recognized as a sovereign state, he preferred to highlight his distance from the Soviets and the side of Turkey as pro-West, in the last instance.

In the case of different approaches between Kazım Karabekir and Mustafa Kemal in the period from summer 1919 to winter 1920, Mustafa Kemal thought that no time should be wasted in coming to an understanding with the Bolsheviks and hoped that trustworthy men could be sent to the other side of the Caucasus.²⁹¹ In contrast, Kazım Karabekir claimed that Bolshevism should be examined well and relations should be maintained impartiality until the intentions of the Bolsheviks were understood; meanwhile the way to negotiate the Entente should be kept open. In summer 1920, especially after the Sèvres Treaty was signed by the Ottoman government, we know that bolshevisization of Anatolia was mentioned as a serious possibility within the parliamentary circles and common men in Anatolia. Even Kazım Karabekir for his part was thinking of modifying Bolshevism to acclimatize it to Anatolia.²⁹² On 14th of August, four days after the signing of the Sèvres Treaty Mustafa Kemal publicly emphasized the common aspects of the communitarian spirit of Islam and Bolshevism. Though, these spectacular statements had nothing to do with the naive musings of Kazım Karabekir. For Mustafa Kemal the issue was to give confidence to the Bolsheviks and raise fears among the Great Powers. He actually saw no place for Bolshevism in Turkey. He saw Russian expansionism behind Bolshevism. The Soviet Republic was a valuable ally against “imperialism”; but there was no question of embracing Bolshevism or facilitating its propagation.²⁹³ Therefore the positions of the leaders were totally depended upon the circumstances.

²⁹⁰ Paul Dumont, “L’axe Moscou-Ankara”, 178.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 168 .

²⁹² Ibid., 173.

²⁹³ Ibid.

The reason why the leading cadre of the liberation movement in Anatolia was hesitant in its steps toward the Soviets should be inquired in other facts more than the cleavage between the leaders. First of all, until the occupation of Istanbul by the Entente forces in March 16th, 1920, there was a hope of reconciliation with the West cemented by the representatives of leading members of the Entente in Anatolia. With the occupation of Istanbul by Entente and dissolution of the Meclis-i Mebusan in Istanbul resulted in more or less clarification in the Soviet-orientation of the leadership of the liberation movement. Soviet interpretation on this clarification in the words of Lenin was, “Entente by refusing to give any concessions to Turks pushed the liberation movement toward the Soviets.”²⁹⁴

The oscillation of the leaders of the national liberation movement between Western capitalist world and Soviet socialism continued throughout the 1920s though never felt as strong as in the first phases of the National Liberation War.²⁹⁵ The participation of the Ankara government in the London Conference (February 1921), negotiations with France and signing an

²⁹⁴ From the report of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars on Foreign and Home Policy, December 1922: Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 31, 489. Ali Fuat in his memoirs confirms in a different way that Russian orientation was an obligation for the Turkish nationalist movement: “When it was recognized that the Allies, and especially the English, under the veil of an armistice, wanted to enslave and annihilate the Turkish nation... it was the USA which appeared most capable of checking English imperialism.. But America could not see the high position it might hold and in world policy of the future and returned to its old isolationist policy.. Turkey of necessity turned to Russians, who had for centuries been an enemy but who were making a pretense of devotion to the humanitarian principle which they proclaim” Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Siyasi Hatıralar* (Istanbul: Vatan Neşriyatı, 1957).

²⁹⁵ By the term “oscillation”, I mean the oscillation between the parties to be chosen for a strategic partnership. Adopting Soviet system had never been a real alternative for none of the leading members of the Republican cadres in Turkey Mustafa Kemal’s letter to American General Harbord who happened to be in Anatolia at the time of the congress in Sivas, heading an investigatory mission, on September 24th is illustrative in this sense. In the letter, he explained his political distance from the Bolsheviks denying any collusion between the nationalists and the Bolsheviks. Aiming at reassuring Europeans and Americans, it lay out arguments that would be repeated many times later on:

“...as for Bolshevism there is no place for this doctrine in our country. Our religion, our traditions, our social structure are hardly suitable for the implantation of such an ideology. There are in Turkey neither capitalists, nor are there millions of artisans and workers. Moreover we do not have an agrarian problem.” (Paul Dumont, “L’axe Moscou-Ankara”, 169)

agreement with this country (October 20th, 1921) were two moments that alarmed the Soviet foreign affairs for they were perceived as striking expressions of the desire of Ankara government for reconciliation.²⁹⁶

It should be added that, Kemalist leadership from the beginning turned the oscillation into a masterful strategy that would be main premises of the Republican foreign policy for long years. Mustafa Kemal openly defined this strategy in a telegram dated back to the very beginning of Turkish-Soviet interaction.

... notably in the case of increasing Bolshevik influence it will be convenient to stay impartial and force the Entente countries to recede, claiming that, otherwise Turkey will be in danger of Bolshevik invasion.²⁹⁷

Secondly, the suspicions about the intentions of the Soviets especially on the question that if they sought to bolshevisize Anatolia was highly influential on the actions of the leadership of the movement. Actually they only had very limited idea about the way Soviet foreign policy was conducted in Eastern countries. They just endeavored to make an inference by following the developments in the previously Tsarist territories that were overwhelmingly populated by Turkish Muslim communities. In the telegram quoted above, Mustafa Kemal refers to the establishment of Soviet regimes in Kazan, Orenburg and Crimea drawing the conclusion that the Bolsheviks were not used to repress the population because of local religion and traditions.²⁹⁸ Therefore Turkey could go along well with the Soviets without being bolshevisized. However, Turkey was among the countries where the impact of the October Revolution and consequent popularity of the new regime in Russia was felt most. The Bolshevik wave in the country, though lacked a substantial

²⁹⁶ Both incidents were met by the Bolsheviks with bitterness that was evident in some Soviet documents I will refer later.

²⁹⁷ From Mustafa Kemal to Kazım Karabekir, June 23th, 1919, Karabekir, Kâzım, and Faruk Özerengin. *İstiklal Harbimiz*, 192.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

organizational base, was an ideological threat for the newly emerging Kemalist leadership. This threat led the Kemalists on the one hand to extermination of the young and weak communist movement and on the other hand continuous demand from the Soviets for non-interference of internal affairs of the country, in other words for stopping the support given to the Turkish communists. Meticulous attention of the Kemalists to limit the material support from the Soviets with gold, arms and ammunition and to exclude the possibility of sending Red Army troops was partially related with the reluctance to allow another foreign country's troops inside the country, but on the other hand, without question, it was about the fear of increasing Soviet influence in Turkey.

3.3 Transcaucasia in 1920

In the year 1920, Transcaucasia became the “field of application” of the Turkish-Soviet convergence. Paradoxically, it became the field of a cruel cold war between the two powers, the Ankara government on the one hand, Moscow, on the other. It was not just a coincidence. After Britain left a power vacuum unwillingly but deliberately in the region²⁹⁹, everybody who had the ability to grasp the history of regional dynamics knew that the Soviet Russia was the number one candidate to fill that vacuum. However, both because the Entente did not retire from the region completely and continued to give support to the regional governments; and because in accordance with the strict decision of abstention from armed conflict due to the general foreign policy line of the Soviets and due to the necessities of other internal and external fronts of the Red Army, waited for the conditions to be matured in the region itself for the Sovietization. Extended uncertainty made the process more complicated and the Turkish nationalists did have an important part in this complication. In the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Ottoman government managed to take back the three *sancaks* commonly known as *Elviye-i Selâse*, which were ceded to the

²⁹⁹ Rumbold, Horace. *İngiliz Yıllık Raporları'nda Türkiye, 1920*. Compiled by Ali Satan. Translated by Burak Özşöz. İstanbul: Tarihçi Kitabevi, 2010., 164.

Tsarist Russia in 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War. The Entente could not achieve the elimination of the Turkish control in these cities right after the Mudros Armistice in November 1918. It could only be with the invasion of Batum by the British troops a year later, in November 1919.³⁰⁰ Now, these cities were included in *Misak-ı Milli*³⁰¹ and national forces in Anatolia had the calculation to take back these places by making use of the power vacuum mentioned above.

There were two possibilities discussed among the nationalist circles until Istanbul was occupied by the Allies. One was to support the Bolsheviks in Caucasia against the plans of Caucasian barrier of the Entente, as Mustafa Kemal envisaged it. By this way, it would be possible to receive a notable material aid for the war in Anatolia and to negotiate with the Bolsheviks for Elviye-i Selâse. On the other hand, with the accelerating efforts of Britain, the nationalists were tried to charm by some ambiguous promises to form an anti-Soviet front in Transcaucasia. Kazım Karabekir, having long conversations with Colonel Rawlinson was known to seriously think about this possibility. This British officer who was appointed as Entente Commander in Eastern Anatolia and Transcaucasia had the secret political mission to convince the Turkish nationalist leadership for reconciliation with Britain from 1919 onwards.³⁰² In their last meeting, he meant to promise Izmir and Istanbul in exchange to halting of the Bolshevik advance in Caucasia by Turkish troops. This was very charming in theory not only for Kazım Karabekir, but also for other leaders like Rauf and Fevzi Pasha.³⁰³ However, it had no practicability,

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ The National Pact.

³⁰² Rawlinson was arrested with the order of Ankara government after the occupation of Istanbul. He stayed in prison around a year. The book that he gathered his memoirs is useful for both learning the details of his experience in Turkey and to conceive the way the minds of British officials perceive the political actors, social dynamics and developments in the region. Alfred Rawlinson, *Adventures in the Near East, 1918-1922*. (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1924).

³⁰³ Gökay and Yalçın, *Bolşevizm ile Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, 94.

which became apparent a few months after these promises were given.

When Denikin's³⁰⁴ troops in the Northern Caucasia, in spite of the efforts to convey military support through the Black Sea by the Entente states, began to lose ground against the Red Army in the first months of the 1920s³⁰⁵, British and French governments contemplated on a Caucasian barrier against Soviet-Turkish communication for supporting the national movement in Turkey, for halting the Red Army's advance toward Southern Caucasia and to hinder the transition of Turkish nationalists to the region who were suspected to enable Soviet advance. In fact, for all the British civil and military strategic minds the Bolshevik control of the region was unavoidable and imminent. Due to economic and military shortages, after a brief but harsh debate between the foreign affairs and military officials of Britain, it was decided to support *Menshevik* government in Georgia, *Dasnak* Party in Armenia, and *Musavats* in Azerbaijan, instead of sending troops.³⁰⁶ However, in a short time, it became apparent that those forces did not have the strength to stop Red Army's march. Kazım Karabekir, who was at the beginning open to British proposals, transmitted by Rawlinson, saw clearly that Entente did not have the military capacity and political will to form a Caucasian barrier against the Soviets. Eventually, he decided to take action in favor of Soviet advancement. He thought the Turkish army should make use of the opportunity to occupy Elviye-i Selâse. As noted above, previously, Mustafa Kemal's report on the developments of Caucasia and his idea that the initiative of the Entente to build a Caucasian barrier between the Soviets and Turkey was direct threat to the national movement so that Turkish army should take action at the side of the Red Army was met by figures like Rauf Bey, Karabekir and Fevzi Pasha³⁰⁷

³⁰⁴ Denikin was the White Army Commander who operated in the Southern Front of Russian Civil War, namely Northern Caucasia.

³⁰⁵ On March 4th, Ordzhonikidze informed Moscow that the resistance of the enemy was broken in all the fronts. By the end of March, the remnants of Denikin Army escaped to Menshevik Georgia. (*Istorija SSSR*, 548)

³⁰⁶ Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, 113-114.

³⁰⁷ Minister of War in the Istanbul government at that time.

with suspicion. Rauf Bey, as the president of Meclis-i Mebusan in Istanbul even advocated to offer common action to the Entente in Caucasia. Kazım Karabekir was apt to maintaining impartiality and making the Entente convince that this position of Ankara government was best for the interests of the Entente. These considerations were compelled to change with the occupation of Istanbul and consequently the advance of the Red Army through Southern Caucasia. The popular opposition against the British existence in the country was radically growing. Actions against Britain in Caucasia had now a definite popular base. The occupation of Istanbul and the widespread arrests of Turkish nationalist politicians and soldiers marked a new phase in national movement since British irreconcilable attitude was overwhelmingly comprehended by Turkish nationalists.³⁰⁸

On March 16th the very day of the allied occupation of Istanbul, Mustafa Kemal wrote to Kazım Karabekir to immediately work for the Bolshevisization of Batum, of the Three Provinces (Kars, Ardahan and Artvin), of Georgia and Azerbaijan.³⁰⁹ On 17th, Kazım Karabekir requested Halil Pasha, high-ranking Ottoman commander and Unionist leader who was at the time present in Baku, to concentrate all the efforts for facilitate Sovietization of Azerbaijan and to prevent all anti-Soviet activities realized by other Unionists in the region, before all Enver Pasha's brother Nuri Pasha, who was working to organize the Muslim community in Dagistan against Denikin under the label of *Yeşil Ordu* (the Green Army).³¹⁰ Nuri Pasha and other unionists were organizing local people against the White Armies in Caucasia under the label of *Yeşil Ordu*.³¹¹

³⁰⁸ After quoting Mustafa Kemal's previous complimentary words about Britain right after the Mudros Armistice and saying that I don't know now how to explain these words because of the consequent evil role played by this country): The essential point was that the Brits were unaware of the fact that they propeled a nation to armed struggle for defending its dignity, whom they sickened by their unnecessary actions to the extent to cast doubt on the good feelings that this nation had for Britain for a long time. Rauf Orbay, *Cehennem Değirmeni: Siyasi Hatıralarım Vol. 2*, İstanbul: Emre Yayınları, 1993, 228.

³⁰⁹ Karabekir and Özerengin, *İstiklal Harbimiz Vol 3*, 1148.

³¹⁰ Kut and Sorgun, *Bitmeyen Savaş*, 322-324; Nuri Pasha and other unionists were organizing local people against the White Armies in Caucasia under the label of *Yeşil Ordu* (Green Army). (Karabekir and Özerengin, *İstiklal Harbimiz Vol 3*, 1142.) However, though they pretend to act in collaboration with the Bolsheviks, they had the ultimate goal of annexing this region to

The role played by the Unionists who were present in Caucasia in the years 1919-1921 is controversial. They were oscillating between two goals. One was in accordance with the necessities of the national struggle in Anatolia, they aimed to obtain Soviet material support in exchange for their service to the Bolsheviks in Caucasia. On the other hand, though they pretend to act in collaboration with the Bolsheviks, they had the ultimate goal of annexing this region to Turkey and realizing an Islamic Unity. This point was made highly clear by Soviet foreign affairs. The Soviets needed to gain the ability to address Muslims in the East. In the most general terms, for that purpose they created distinct organizations and the Ottoman citizens in the territories of former Russia who stayed there as war captives and the Unionist leaders and officers who were present in the region since the end of the War were utilized. However, the Soviets anticipated that the Unionists had a wider program. This program was pan-Islamist and the Soviets considered it a “hostile force”. Chicherin urges in his letter to Lenin, Krestinsky³¹², a senior member of Politburo and Narimanov³¹³ dated to March 1st, 1920, that in addressing the

Turkey and realizing an Islamic Unity. Therefore, they were reluctant to support the Sovietization of the region. This was made clear in comment of Halil Pasha, who was working like an adviser to the Musavat government in Baku, about Kazım Karabekir’s order, referred above: “None of us could carry out this order.” (Kut and Sorgun, *Bitmeyen savaş*, 327) On the other hand, maybe it was too late to stop Soviet march, it is commonly accepted that Halil Pasha and other Unionists like Fuat Sabit, Baha Sait, Küçük Talat and so on, played a crucial role in breaking the local resistance against the Bolsheviks by using their influence in the region. Yavuz Aslan, *Türkiye Komünist Fırkası’nın Kuruluşu ve Mustafa Suphi: Türkiye Komünistlerinin Rusya’da Teşkilatlanması (1918-1921)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1997), 81

311 Karabekir and Özerengin, *İstiklal Harbimiz Vol. 3*, 1142.

³¹² Krestinskiy Nikolaj Nikolaevich was a senior member of the Politburo of CC of RKP(b), he was also the member of Organizational Bureau of CC of the party, executive secretary of the CC of the RKP(b), Commissar of Finance of the RSFSR. (“Spravochnik Po Historii”)

³¹³ Narimanov Nariman Kerbalay Nadzhaf oglu was the member of Caucasian Revolutionary Committee, a bureau that was established for the construction of Soviet power in the Northern Caucasia and he was also member of the Transcaucasian Regional Committee of the Central Committee of the RKP(b). Later, after the sovietization of Azerbaijan, he became the head of Azerbaijan Military-Revolutionary Committee of RKP(b) and Foreign Affairs Commissar of Azerbaijan CCR. (“Spravochnik Po Historii”)

Muslims, the Soviets could never utter phrases like “Bolshevism is the best friend of Islam.” And he adds:

In our policy, the acts like the agreement of Committee of Caucasian Regional Committee of RKP(b) with the Young Turks in which, according to the information, Regional Committee gave them support with slogans and efforts in panislamic character. We cannot expect durable unions with our enemies and we can only compromise with them through attempts for such unions in which we would always politically be in the deceived side and in principle corroborate the reactionary ideology. Quite simply, we have to weight our each and every step with greater caution than before, when we have business with the Muslim World, particularly with panislamism.³¹⁴

The agreement that Chicherin refers in this letter was the one that was between the Unionist group led by Baha Sait and the Transcaucasian Regional Committee of RKP(b). Baha Sait and others were sent to Caucasia by the *Karakol Cemiyeti*³¹⁵. They established the Turkish Communist Party as a means to facilitate the relations with the Bolsheviks.³¹⁶ Baha Sait in the name of a representative of the national movement in Turkey achieved to conclude an agreement with the regional leaders of the Soviets in Baku. The agreement depends on the Soviet promise to support national struggle in Turkey and the Unionists promised, in return, to disseminate anti-British and pro-Sovietic ideas among the Muslim communities and fight against the White Armies in

³¹⁴RGASPI, f. 5, op. I., d. 2054.

³¹⁵A political society that was secretly established in Istanbul in order to work for the independence of Turkey by the members of Union and Progress. The leading figure was Kara Vasıf. This society acted and reflected itself as the leading organization of the national struggle in Turkey. That's why not so long after its establishment Kemalist leadership marginalized through manipulation and coercive methods. Akal, *Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında*.

³¹⁶Aslan, *Türkiye Komünist Fırkası'nın kuruluşu ve Mustafa Suphi*, 81. This Unionist “Communist Party” was expelled by Mustafa Suphi when he arrived at Baku after the Sovietization of Azerbaijan. (Erden Akbulut, *Millî Azadlık Savaşı Anıları: Affan Hikmet, Ahmet Cevat Emre, [Kazım Kıp], Cemile Selim Nevşirvanova, [Ziynetullah Nevşirvanov]* [İstanbul: TÜSTAV, Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı, 2006], 50)

Caucasia.³¹⁷ Both Soviet government and Heyet-i Temsiliye, the executive committee of the national movement in Turkey, reject to approve it. Heyet-i Temsiliye informed the Regional Committee of RKP(b) in Baku that Baha Sait and his entourages did not have the authority to act on behalf of Turkey.³¹⁸

It is commonly accepted that Halil Pasha and other Unionists like Fuat Sabit, Baha Sait, Küçük Talat and so on, played a crucial role in breaking the local resistance against the Bolsheviks by using their influence in the region, though it is difficult to confirm its extent. However, later, they preferred to reflect themselves as they were reluctant to support the Sovietization of the region, like Halil Pasha did in his memoirs. They would later claim that they were deceived by the Bolsheviks.³¹⁹

On March 29th Mustafa Kemal ordered Kazım Karabekir to advance Turkish troops to occupy the Elviye-i Selâse and the area between them and the Aras River.³²⁰ This occupation had a dual objective: to take back what was considered Turkish territory making use of the chaotic situation in the Caucasias; and to enable the direct contact of the two armies on equal terms. A month after the Ottoman Parliament dissolved itself in protest, the Grand National Assembly convened in Ankara on April 23rd 1920. The leader of the Anatolian resistance now seemed invested with legality. One of the first acts of Mustafa Kemal was to charge Halil Pasha and Fuad Sabit in Baku to negotiate with the Soviets. It must be considered the best way to keep Halil Pasha away from Anatolia. Meanwhile, the Red Army was prevailing in almost every fronts of the Civil War.³²¹ It was becoming evident that the Entente was losing

³¹⁷ Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, 127-129.

³¹⁸ Aslan, *Türkiye Komünist Fırkası'nın Kuruluşu ve Mustafa Suphi*, 80.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 82.

³²⁰ Paul Dumont, "L'axe Moscou-Ankara", 170.

³²¹ In the Northern front the troops of Kolchak and Judenich and the counter-revolutionary army in Turkestan were exterminated. In the south, Red Army troops defeated Denikin and entered Azov Sea and Black Sea. The Red Army appeared on the borders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. (Kheifets, *Sovetskaya Rossiya i sopredel'nye strany Vostoka v gody grazhdanskoy voyny*, 103) The final combat would take place in the second half of 1920 in

the chance to open a front in Caucasia in order to prevent Soviet-Turkish connection. On April 26th Mustafa Kemal sent a telegram to Kazım Karabekir as a draft of the first proposal of the Ankara government to Soviet Russia. He proposed collaboration against the imperialist countries. He proposed a military operation against the Dashnak Armenian government as a complement to a possible military action of the Red Army against Georgia. He also offers Turkish government's contribution for inclusion of the Azerbaijan within the Bolshevik states. Mustafa Kemal also requested from the Soviets an “advance payment” of five million gold pounds, ammunition, modern weapons, medical equipment and food for the Eastern Army.³²² This aid would help “expel the imperialist forces from the national territory” and ultimately “to conduct a common struggle against imperialism.” The emphasis was put on a common anti-imperialist struggle instead of any promise for adopting bolshevik principles.³²³ However Mustafa Kemal’s attempt to use Azerbaijan as a bargaining chip failed since the Red Army entered in Baku on April 27th.³²⁴ The proposal of Turkish military action towards Armenia was met with apathy by the Soviets since the Council of People’s Commissars had promised by a decree of January 11th 1918 to the Armenians of Turkey the right to self-determination and independence.³²⁵

During the year 1920, the Soviet government was in hesitation about the timing of an intervention to the Transcaucasia. When the Denikin troops were repulsed from Northern Caucasia the road to Baku was opened in front of the

Caucasia and Ukraine against Vrangeli’s troops, Menshevik Georgia and Dashnak Armenia as well as Poland.

³²² Kemal Atatürk, *Atatürk’ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri* doc. 288 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991).

³²³ Paul Dumont, “L’axe Moscou-Ankara”, 170.

³²⁴ This doesn’t mean that Turkish troops did not play any role in the insurrection in Baku. On 4 May 1920, G. K. Ordzhonikidze and C. M. Kirov, commanders of Red Army in Caucasia, informed Moscow that Turkish officers and soldiers played a central role in preventing members of Musavat government fleeing the country. (Kheyfets, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 108)

³²⁵ Paul Dumont, “L’axe Moscou-Ankara”, 170.

Red Army. The Bolsheviks did not encounter any serious resistance. The Musavat government, which was collaborating with Britain, suffered from not receiving the necessary support from the Entente. Its popularity among the population was on the decline. And the Soviets were not deprived of an organizational base in Azerbaijan, when the Bolshevik presence in the parliament and the trade unions of the country was concerned. No one could deny the strategic importance of this city. Besides that importance, Azerbaijan was the first Muslim country to be sovietized. This fact was opening a promising horizon in front of the Soviet power in terms of its Eastern policy. Now, the question was whether to keep on the march in the Transcaucasia. A letter dated to April 23th from Karakhan³²⁶ to Ordzhonikidze³²⁷ is illustrative for the considerations of the Soviets. It is understood from the text that previously the Caucasian Bureau of RKP(b) shared with Moscow its persuasion that a significant proportion of the Armenian army was ready to shift to the Soviet side. Karakhan informs that, Stalin was not satisfied with the evidences to support this persuasion. “The shift of two drays to our side does not give the guarantee of the transfer of a significant part of the Armenian troops to our side.”³²⁸ It was emphasized in the letter that it was not a good timing for further operation in the Transcaucasia given the continuation of war in other fronts. The Red Army was still dealing with Wrangel in Ukraine and the weight was especially given to the war with Poland.³²⁹ Karakhan insistently demanded the proper information about the attitude of Armenian soldiers and people towards Soviets since if there would be further military action the

³²⁶ Lev Mikhaylovich Karakhan was the deputy commissar of foreign affairs. He was responsible of eastern policy of Narkomindel. His Armenian origin caused suspicions among Turkish nationalist leadership circle. As the irony of fate he became Soviet ambassador in Ankara in 1934. (“Spravochnik Po Historii”)

³²⁷ Georgij Konstantinovich Ordzhonikidze was member of Caucasian Military Revolutionary Council of the Red Army and the member of the Caucasian Bureau of the Politburo of RKP(b) (“Spravochnik Po Historii”) He played a major role in the years in question in the transformation of Transcaucasia, therefore he was an influential personality in the Soviet policy towards Turkey.

³²⁸ RGASPI, f. 85, op. 14, d. 29 .

³²⁹ Ibid.

regional forces should stand on their own feet and should not ask for reinforcement.³³⁰

Earning time in Transcaucasia became extremely important for the Soviets. This impelled the Soviet foreign affairs to reconcile with the Armenian and Georgian governments. In the Armenian case though Soviets considered the project of Great Armenia as an unrealistic and dangerous adventure of Armenian bourgeoisie incited by the imperialist powers, Soviet foreign affairs was preparing for a peace agreement and believed in the necessity of “giving bread” to the Armenians. In the report of Caucasian Regional Committee of RKP(b) dating back to December 1919, it was asserted that although during the war the Armenians severely suffered from the feudal-repressive Ottoman administration and there was an objectively revolutionary essence in their struggle for independence it did not justify the project of the “Great Armenia”. First, as a matter of fact, the huge demographic movement in Eastern and Northern Anatolia changed radically the composition of the population to the detriment of the Armenians. “Turkish Armenia” literally remained without Armenians. The Armenian chauvinists encouraged by imperialism tries to drive the Armenian people to a new war which would be disastrous for both poor Muslims and Armenians. According to the report, the right for self-determination could not be considered independently from the historical conditions.³³¹ Although these ideas reflected the general approach of the Soviet government to the issue, on April 28th, Chicherin wrote Lenin that they should find a way to make Armenia not disturb them.

As a consequence of previous oppression towards the Armenians on the one hand, and the existence of powerful Armenian bourgeoisie on the other hand, the Dashnak influence has taken root on all the Armenian people. We need to establish such relations with the Armenians that they do not stand against

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ RGASPI, f. 5, op. I, d. 1202.

us. We will have to give them bread. Question about the agreement with Armenia will appear soon in such a manner.³³²

The Dashnak government was rushing for an agreement with the Soviets for several reasons. First of all, it wanted to prevent an intervention of Soviet Russia and guarantee its political power, on the event that neither the United States nor European powers fulfilled the requests of Armenia in order to resist against the Soviet power.³³³ The ongoing tensions in Azerbaijan-Armenian border regions, in Nahcevan, Nagorno Karabakh and Zangezur³³⁴ were worrying the Dashnaks about a possible alliance of Turkish and Soviet forces against Armenia. They claimed that nothing had changed in terms of the repression practiced upon the Armenian population in these areas where the Musavat were replaced by the Bolsheviks. The ongoing activities of the Turkish Unionists against the Armenians in the region and Soviet venerating reception of these people were irritating.³³⁵

3.4 When the Turkish delegation was in the Soviet Capital: Summer in Moscow

Chicherin sent a letter to Mustafa Kemal on June 3rd as a reply to his letter from April 26th. Mustafa Kemal's letter was the first letter that was sent

³³² Ju.G. Barsegov, *Genocid Armyan: Otvetstvennost' Turtsii i Objazatel'stva Mirovogo Soobshhestva* Vol. 2 (Moskva: Gardariki Moskva, 2003), 52.

³³³ AVPRF, f. 148, op. 3, 1, d. 3.

³³⁴ After the sovietization of entire Transcaucasia, Nahcevan and Nagorno Karabakh remained within the territories of Azerbaijan while Zangezur was given to Armenia. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union Nagorno Karabakh was seized by Armenia in a war with Azerbaijan. Both sides blames on the Soviet government because of the territorial decisions of 1921, since both sides claim right on the whole territory in question. To have an idea see: Jamil Hasanly, "Russian-Turkish Relations between the Sovietization of Azerbaijan and the Sovietization of Armenia" *Online Analytical Input From Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy* 5, no. 6 (March 15, 2012); Tofik Kocharli, *Armenian Deception: Historical Information* (Baky: M-Dizayn, 2004); Stanislav Nikolaevich Tarasov, *Mify o Karabahskom Konflikte: Sbornik Statej* (Moskva: Knizhnyj mir, 2012); P. Terrence Hopmann and I. William Zartman eds., "Nagorno Karabakh: Understanding Conflict 2013" (Johns Hopkins University School for Advanced International Studies, n.d.).

³³⁵ AVPRF, f. 148, op. 3, 1, d. 3.

by the Ankara government to Moscow. It mainly expresses the willingness to start official relations between the countries, to establish collaboration in the struggle against imperialist forces, proposes an action by the Turkish troops against the Dashnak government when the Red Army dealt with the Menshevik government of Georgia and finally asks for military and monetary aid.³³⁶ The letter was received by Moscow only in June. Chicherin's answer was hopeful in the sense that it recognized all the rights of Turkey for political independence and promised support to the national struggle. However, the parts where the right for self-determination in the regions whose populations were ethnically mixed was reminded was unlikely to delight the Kemalist leadership.³³⁷ Turkish Kurdistan, Turkish Armenia, Turkish Lazistan, Eastern Thrace were those regions. Chicherin's proposal included participation in referendums for self-determination those who migrated or were deported from their homeland.³³⁸ This proposal might be related to the "bread" issue referred above. These ideas that were considered unacceptable by Kemalist leadership were before all intended to Anatolian Armenians and were to be the main topic of tensions for a couple of years between Turkey and the Soviet Russia. Ankara seemed to prefer to overcome this crisis via diplomacy. Mustafa Kemal in his reply to Chicherin qualified "the Armenian crimes towards Turks living in Armenian territories" unacceptable, yet announced that they stopped the preparations for a military act towards Erivan relying on the Soviet mediation for territorial disputes.³³⁹

³³⁶ Atatürk, *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri* doc. 288.

³³⁷ Besides the negative article in the letter concerning the self-determination, Chicherin recognized the independence of Turkey, Turkish hegemony on the straits, invalidity of capitulations that had given to Tsarist Russia. British foreign affairs interpretation about these "favours" was a "parti a quatre" while they were dealing with Krassin, head of Soviet commercial delegation in London. Bilal N. Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk (1919-1938) (British Documents on Atatürk [1919-1938])* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000), 168.

³³⁸ DVP, II, 554-555; Aralov asserted that this proposals were dictated to Chicherin by Lenin. Semjon Ivanovich Aralov, "Po Leninskim Ukazaniyam," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'*, no. 4 (1960), 18.

³³⁹ Kemal Atatürk, *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri* doc. 320.

Mustafa Kemal's letter and Chicherin's reply took place during the time when Halil Pasha and Fuad Sabit went from Baku to Moscow to transmit Ankara's proposals.³⁴⁰ Cemal Pasha also arrived Moscow from Germany a couple of weeks after Halil Pasha's arrival. At that time, most probably, the Soviet government was not clear about the fraction between the leading cadre of national liberation movement in Ankara and the Unionist leaders. They lacked means to check if Halil and Cemal Pasha's actions corresponded the directives of Ankara. We know that while Halil Pasha was already in Moscow for more than ten days, the Soviet leaders in the Politburo meeting took decisions to obtain information about this person from the Caucasian Bureau.³⁴¹ His promises were tempting if only he was a reliable person who really represented Turkish national movement.

Chicherin summarized his conversation with Halil Pasha and Fuat Sabit, "who called himself communist", in a letter on June 16th to Lenin. Chicherin expressed in his appreciation of the words of the Turks since he thought, "convergence with the Turkish National Centre would immensely strengthen our Eastern policy." For the first time, Chicherin had the opportunity to learn from the first hand about the situation and the vision of the nationalists in Turkey: "National center has still not fragmented into parties; the domestic political program has not been formed yet. At least it will be a republic." Halil Pasha and Fuat Sabit explained that there was no real basis for communism, since Turkish society did not include a capitalist class, or big landowners. The antagonism was between the peasantry and petit bourgeoisie on the one hand, and with Western capitalism on the other. "We will have full freedom for propaganda." Halil Pasha promised to help the Soviets in Iran against the Shah and the feudal lords for an agricultural revolution. His agents in Iran would help the Soviets both in Afghanistan and India. Therefore, the center of gravity of the Middle Eastern policy of the Soviets would shift to Turkey. For the

³⁴⁰ Mustafa Kemal's letter reached Moscow in June 1920. Halil Pasha was already there since May.

³⁴¹ RGASPI, f. 1, op. 163, d. 65.

transportation of the Soviet aid to Turkey the Armenians should be persuaded to open the railway and the Georgians should also be urged for avoiding the British to seize the aid sent to Turkey.³⁴² Therefore, the details of the material support to the national struggle were discussed in this meeting.

While the news about territorial disputes between Transcaucasian republics, the Red Army and Turkish army was coming from the region on daily basis, the Soviet government was striving to settle the disputes in the region and concentrate on the perspective to establish a close connection with Turkey. Chicherin, in a letter to Ordzhonikidze on June 2nd, was considering the most striking reason to reach an agreement with Armenia and Georgia urgently, as the necessity to open a secure way of transportation between Soviet territories and Anatolia.³⁴³

At the beginning of July 1920, a Turkish officer Sherif Yusuf arrived at Baku from Trabzon with a message to be given to the Red Army unit in Azerbaijan. He destroyed the official letter on the way, because when he was on the board of the ship that brought him to Baku, he encountered a British submarine. Still, he managed to transmit full-fledgedly the content of the letter. In that letter³⁴⁴, it was stated that Halil Pasha went to Russia without the approval of the Grand National Assembly³⁴⁵. Either before being informed about this letter, or pretending not to know, Chicherin sent a note to Ankara on

³⁴² RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 57. Tefvik Bıyıklođlu claims that Chicherin requested the concession of Bitlis and Van to Armenia in this meeting and Halil Pasha approached this affirmatively. However there is no word about it in the conveyance of Chicherin about the meeting with the Turkish delegation. Tefvik Bıyıklođlu, *Atatürk Anadolu'da: 1912-1921* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet, 2000), 45.

³⁴³ RGASPI, f. 85, op. 3c, d. 2. At that moment, Armenian delegation was in Moscow, however because of the ongoing tensions in the region, process of reaching an agreement was prolonged.

³⁴⁴ In this letter or another one that was sent from the same center Ninth Army's commander Kazım Karabekir, during the same days, Eleventh Unit of Red Army was informed of the Dashnak attack to Oltu and Zengibasar and called for occupation of Zangezur by the Red Army. Kazım Karabekir in the letter felt the necessity to attentively distinguish himself from the Unionist officers, Nuri Pasha and others, in his own words, agitating at the moment in Caucasia on the account of former Musavat government and British imperialism. (Kheyfets, *Sovetskaya Rossiya i sopredel'nye strany Vostoka v gody grazhdanskoy voyny*, 120)

³⁴⁵ Kheyfets, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 110.

July 2nd to “transmit sincere and cordial sympathies towards the Turkish people on the occasion of Halil Pasha’s return to Turkey.” He added: “We are sure that arrival of Halil Pasha and the adviser of our embassy Shalva Eliava³⁴⁶ to Turkey will be an opportunity to reach a high level for the Turkish-Soviet relations.”³⁴⁷

Ankara had sent a plenipotentiary delegation in May to Moscow that could reach there only in July³⁴⁸ when Halil Pasha was leaving. Ankara, inspite of the concerns about relations with the Bolsheviks in varying degrees among the nationalist leaders, seemed to be convinced about the fact that only way to exit from the complicated situation of the country was converging with the Soviets.³⁴⁹ The delegation was exposed to a low-profile reception in Moscow.³⁵⁰ I will analyse the reasons below. Yet, it is a possibility that the perception towards Halil Pasha as a primary representative of Ankara might have pushed the Turkish delegation into a secondary position.

When the plenipotentiary delegation composed of Bekir Sami (as the head), Yusuf Kemal and Rıza Nur arrived at Moscow, an official welcoming did not take place. For several weeks they could not find an interlocutor.

³⁴⁶ Eliava was replaced by Upmal Angarski. Official explanation of the replacement was health problems of Eliava. (Footnote no 3 in DVP III,11) Upmal and some other officials of Soviet embassy traveled to Turkey together with Halil Pasha and they brought military equipment and money in gold to be delivered to Kazım Karabekir. Due to the hindrance of Menshevik government they together passed through the neutral zone between Georgia and Armenia. They met with official welcome in Beyazid and encountered ardent attention and interest of people of Erzurum, Sivas and Kayseri. They could only arrived at Ankara on October 4th. (Kheyfets, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 114)

³⁴⁷ DVP, III, 11. On July 10th or 11th, Moscow received a letter from Ankara that indicated Talat, Enver and Cemal Pasha’s were not authorized to act on behalf of Grand National Assembly and they did not have any relation with the movement in Turkey. Akal, *Moskova-Ankara-Londra Üçgeninde*, 2013.

³⁴⁸ The head of the delegation, the foreign affairs minister of Ankara government Bekir Sami informed Moscow with a telegram on July 4th that they were appointed to determine the basis of the diplomatic rapprochement and regulate the future relations between two countries. He added they were kept waiting for about a month in Erzurum since the Dashnak government of Armenia did not allow the delegation to pass through its territory. Bekir Sami demanded intervention of Soviet government to the situation. DVP, II, 556.

³⁴⁹ Akal, *Moskova-Ankara-Londra Üçgeninde*, 145-147.

³⁵⁰ For the whole story of this reception see: Ibid. 157-166.

During these times, as Yusuf Kemal narrated in his memoirs, the members of the delegation had to live on the breadline as all the other Muscovites because of the Civil War conditions of the country and expected the news from the Soviet government.³⁵¹ Meanwhile, overwhelming majority of the Bolshevik leaders including Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin and foreign affairs commissar Chicherin were in Petrograd for the Second Congress of the Komintern whose major theme was “Eastern Revolutions”. In the congress, after a debate on the definition of the socio-economic systems and class identity of political actors to be supported in the Eastern countries, Lenin’s position prevailed that advocated the necessity to support bourgeois revolutionaries as the leading force of the national liberation movements in most of the cases on condition that the communist and working class movements, though still weak, should secure their independent organizational structures.³⁵² It was noted in the final report of the Congress that the character of the revolutions would be decided by the level of development of the country in question.³⁵³ Yet, the position was defined in abstract terms and did not give a ready strategy. Most probably, neither the Soviet concerns and limitations; nor the newly emerged inexperienced body of Communist Parties that mostly concentrated on the revolutionary expectations from the West allowed developing a full-fledged strategy. Another factor that hindered such a strategy was that, being disappointed by the delay of the European revolution and still feeling insecure in spite of the successes in the Civil War, the Bolsheviks were occupied by opening a breathing hole in terms of conflicts with the West. Therefore, relations with Britain, the most dangerous enemy considered by them, were extremely important. They had to take careful steps in the East, a continent most parts of which were considered the zone of influence by Britain. We should also take into account material weakness and inadequacy of

³⁵¹ Tengirşenk, *Vatan Hizmetinde*, 148-149.

³⁵² See the previous chapter for the details.

³⁵³ Edward Hallett Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923 Vol. 3*, 236.

professional diplomatic cadres to be employed in Eastern affairs. This situation had a significant effect on the policy towards Turkey.

The ambiguity on policy towards Turkey resulted in indecisive and discontinuous steps in the talks with the Turkish delegation. The delegation was received by the deputy commissar of foreign affairs, Karakhan, once in the third week of July, after the delegation waited for an appointment for about three weeks in Moscow. Bekir Sami Bey in a note to Chicherin on 31st of July informed that it had been a week since the last meeting with Karakhan and the last meeting should have been a week ago.³⁵⁴ Chicherin's reply was received about two weeks later on the 13th.³⁵⁵ He informed Bekir Sami of the decision that the chief of economic law Sabanina and Eastern affairs specialist Adamova were appointed to the commission that was to work on the political issues between countries. The composition of the commission was also marked a low profile treatment.³⁵⁶

A subsequent letter from Chicherin to Lenin on September 28th gives the impression that the reason of the low profile reception of the Turkish delegation in Moscow was not about the underestimation of the place of Turkey in Soviet foreign policy. Turkey was the key to the Soviet security concerns in the South. It was on the one hand a potential ally that might be a hindrance on imperialist attacks to Russia and had certain influence on the Muslim world; on the other hand a potential enemy on the occasion that it reconciled with the Entente. The problem was rather the absence of a strategy in policy towards Turkey. Besides a powerful sense of history, the Bolsheviks had a little experience in relations with the political actors in Turkey. Besides the striking internal problems, before all, the threat to lose millions of people because of the widespread hunger in that devastated country, the main concern

³⁵⁴ DVP, III, 131.

³⁵⁵ The following day after the Turkish delegation received Chicherin's note visited Lenin in his office in Kremlin. Yusuf Kemal narrates in detail about the content of the meeting and their impressions about Lenin. He openly expresses their fascination by the talks and gestures of Lenin. Tengirşenk, *Vatan Hizmetinde*, 156-158.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

was on the course of action towards the Western capitalist world since it was considered the key on the solution of these problems and the fate of the war with Poland. Furthermore, Soviet Russia lacked the necessary diplomatic and economic capacity to enhance stable relations with a country like Turkey. In the aforementioned letter Chicherin proposes the immediate dispatch Shalma Eliava³⁵⁷ to Ankara as the plenipotentiary representative of Soviet Russia. The Politburo decided to send him to Ankara but later cancelled the decision.³⁵⁸ He claims Eliava's arrival to Ankara would make things easier to a great extent. It would increase the Soviet prestige in the eyes of the Turks. It would counterweight the disappointment of the Kemalists caused by the delays and insufficiency of the military and material aid.³⁵⁹

Chicherin was absolutely right in his assumption that the Kemalists were overwhelmingly disappointed vis-a-vis the insufficiency of the Soviet aid. They interpreted the fact generally as the reluctance of the Soviets for alliance.³⁶⁰ It also strengthened the hands of the opposers of Soviet-Turkish rapprochement. Together with this, rapid flourishing of leftist/communist organizations in Anatolia that were supposed to be supported by the Soviets, resulted in a more distanced attitude from the Turkish side.

³⁵⁷ Shalma Eliava was one of the outstanding cadres of the KomPar who were charged with Eastern affairs. Multiplicity of his responsibilities from 1919 to 1921 illustrates the fact that Soviet foreign affairs were conducted by very limited cadres. While he was representative of Turkistan commission of All-Russia Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars from 1919 onwards, he conducted duty of membership of Revolutionary Military Council of 11st army in Caucasian Front until April 1921. In July, he was appointed as the Soviet ambassador to Turkey, but he couldn't leave his position in Turkestan. At the same time, he became the Soviet ambassador to Persia. Same year, in 1921, he was appointed to the membership of Caucasian Bureau of Central Committee of RKP(b). ("Spravochnik Po Historii")

³⁵⁸ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 86.

³⁵⁹ RGASPI, f. 159 o. 2 d. 57, l. 4. ; Chicherin was complaining about the delays and irregularities in the dispatch of the aid to Turkey from the beginning. On June 28th, when an amount of money and ammunition was decided to be sent with Halil Pasha, the hesitation occurred in the Politburo about the matter caused distress of Chicherin: "In spite of the decisions taken in the politburo, we cannot receive the arms. Policy that is decided today and isn't fulfilled other day, aid that is promised today and is not given tomorrow discredit us and undermines (we feel it) our great authority and influence in the East" RGASPI, f. 5, op. 2, d. 314.

³⁶⁰ TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, 1. Dönem, III. Cilt, 185-190.

At the end of August, in spite of hardships in the talks, the two parts managed to form an initial draft for a friendship and cooperation agreement between the two countries.³⁶¹ However, after a little while a meeting between Chicherin and Bekir Sami gave the first sign that the draft might become obsolete. In this brief meeting, Chicherin asked Bekir Sami Bey, as claimed by the latter, if Turkey could grant part of Van, Muş and Bitlis *vilayets* to the Armenians. Bekir Sami in response, asserted the contradiction of this demand with “the national pact”. He then decided to send Yusuf Kemal back to Ankara and report the developments to the Grand National Assembly government. He was to decide whether to stay in Moscow to further the talks or leave for the country. The hesitation whether to stay or leave stemmed from the fact that the conclusion of the Sévres Treaty between the Istanbul government and the Entente both caused despair among nationalist circles and increased the urgency and vitality of an accord with the Soviets. In the report, the following salient thoughts were expressed, including assertions on the Soviet concerns on the Armenian issue:³⁶²

The leadership here is afraid that their negligence towards the Armenian cause and resolution of the Turkish-Armenian strife to the advantage of us, while in all the Western and American world the Armenians are considered innocent and suffering, will give a negative impression to the Western proletariat. Furthermore, they believe that sooner or later the Armenians will import communism and become a part of Soviet Federation. Therefore they consider pleasing the Armenian communists who work in the Yerevan government by granting them some Ottoman territories and by this means to achieve the overthrow of the Dashnak government as soon as possible.

The assertions of Turkey and Soviet Russia about the content of the meeting between Bekir Sami and Chicherin are contradictory. In the collective work of Soviet Academy of Science as in other histories, the historians

³⁶¹ Tengirşenk, *Vatan Hizmetinde*, 178-180.

³⁶² Tengirşenk, *Vatan Hizmetinde*, 163.

suggested that Bekir Sami who was himself a landlord, was under the influence of the Entente anti-Soviet propaganda and was a monarchist and pro-imperialist as some other figures in the leadership cadre of the national liberation movement who continuously attempted to ratten Soviet-Turkish rapprochement. Bekir Sami and some others were keen to collaborate with the Entente in the Caucasia against the Soviet Red Army.³⁶³ That is why he distorted the real content of the meeting. According to the annual reports of Narkomindel for the years 1919-1920, Chicherin did not ask Bekir Sami for territorial concessions.³⁶⁴

In the Russian version of explanation about the disruption of the talks, the problem emerged from the fact that neither the Turkish government nor the Dashnak government accepted the proposal of the Soviets intermediation about the resolution of the territorial disputes.³⁶⁵ The Dashnak government defended the position that was put by the Sevres Treaty. The representatives of Turkish government on the other hand wanted to secure the gains by Brest-Litovsk Treaty of March 1918, which was annulled by the Soviet government in September 1918.³⁶⁶ In one of the articles of the agreement initialized by the Soviet and Turkish delegations in August 1920, in pursuant of Turkish request, Turkey was defined as the territory remaining within the boundaries of “the

³⁶³ Gasratyan and Arsenovich, *SSSR i Turtsiya 1917-1979*, 30.

³⁶⁴ *Godovoy otchet NKID k VIII S'ezdu Sovetov RSFSR (1919-1920)* (Moskva: 1921), 69

³⁶⁵ During the time of presence of Turkish delegation in Moscow, Soviet foreign affairs were conducting parallel talks with Armenian Dashnak government. They concluded a treaty with Armenian delegation on August 10th. (Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk*, 286) Soviets considered the only through mediation of themselves could keep the Entente out of the Caucasian game. On July 17th, Chicherin asserted in his report presented to the All-Russia Central Executive Committee that Soviet Russia is the only possible actor that can work as mediator between Armenia and Turkey and added “only Soviet Russia, thanks to its prestige and influence on the masses of different nations can prevent this or that side from massacring the other nation.”³⁶⁵ (DVP, II p. 658) However, the developments showed that this assumption was very optimistic when Armenian-Turkish case was concerned. Being trapped by its own limitations, Soviets could enjoy a minor authority on the resolution of Turkish-Armenian issues. Eventually, “Armenian question” became a striking element of the implicit strife between Turkey and Russia and turned into the ostensible reason of the disruption of the Turkish delegation’s work in Moscow.

³⁶⁶ Gasratyan and Arsenovich, *SSSR i Turtsiya 1917-1979*, 29.

national pact”. In the meeting with Chicherin on August 25th, Bekir Sami wanted to establish that Soviet Russia automatically accepted the inclusion of Batum and some other regions in accordance with the caducous Brest-Litovsk Treaty by accepting the national pact. When Chicherin objected this *fait accompli*, he wrote a letter to him in the following day saying: “If your government once again decides to discuss already determined article, I will be compelled to ask permission for my colleague Yusuf Kemal to set out from Moscow tomorrow and travel to Trabzon in order to inform my government about this decision and to receive its orders about the issue”. In the same day, Bekir Sami asked for the necessary documents for the exit permit.³⁶⁷

3.5 Chicherin’s appraisal and strife among the actors of the Soviet foreign affairs

The Soviet documents reveal, contrary to the Soviet historiography, that Soviet foreign affairs requested land from Van, Bitlis and Muş regions for Armenia. In the memoirs of Yusuf Kemal and Ali Fuat³⁶⁸, which are the sole accessible Turkish sources about the contents of the talks with the Russians, Chicherin evidently reflected a neglectful attitude towards the Turkish cause and as if he acted to the advantage of the Armenian government. He was described as the representative of the old Tsarist foreign policy and tactics and in constant conflict with figures like Stalin on the issues concerning Turkey. It is surprising to see a similar view in a contemporary study that covers Soviet archival sources. Bülent Gökay asserts in “Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey” that the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of 16 March 1921 was signed against “the wishes of Chicherin.”³⁶⁹ The reality seems a little much complicated. Chicherin was following a delicate policy that focused on appeasing the tensions between

³⁶⁷ AVPRF, f. 132, op. 3, 2, d. 2.

³⁶⁸ Tengirşenk, *Vatan Hizmetinde*; Cebesoy, *Moskova Hâtıraları*. Ali Fuat was the first ambassador of Turkey and head of the second Turkish delegation in Moscow from February 1921.

³⁶⁹ Gökay, *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey*, 9.

different nationalisms of the region that had a certain historical background. The Soviet government was in decision not to enter further military conflict in Transcaucasia, which might have lured the imperialist aggression to the region once again and left the Soviet Russia deprived of the “breathing space” it most needed. Chicherin personally strove to keep the Armenian and Turkish nationalists apart from each other, and find a peaceful way to open the way for money and ammunition to be sent to Anatolia through Armenian territory. Reconciliation with Armenia meant, as he formulated before, “giving some bread” to the Armenian nationalists, which were continuously provoked by the Entente. Chicherin also had in mind, in pursuant with the Soviet policy towards West, the necessity to give the message to the Western public opinion that Soviet Russia would not disappoint the Armenians who had a large number of symphatizers also among the working class. In his letter to Soviet ambassador in Armenia Boris Legran, on October 29th, Chicherin urges the ambassador for abstaining from acts that contradicts with the Soviet government’s policy of reconciliation in the region. Otherwise, he reminds the strife that they created with the Armenian government, might result in giving pretext to the European enemies for further aggression against the Soviets, ruining the friendly relations with Britain and disappointment of the leftist public opinion of Europe. Because, there is a sensitivity towards the Armenian question among the bourgeois leftists and trade union movements. He adds that it would be killing to give the impression that the Soviets were engaging in a military alliance with Turkey. It was very important for Chicherin, “attain a transit through Armenia and to keep Armenia away from the Entente; but we should never strive to reach this purpose with menacing military scoldings.” For the disputed areas between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Chicherin thought that the military occupation of the Red Army in these regions should continue, while the final solution about the matter should be postponed to a more convenient time.³⁷⁰

³⁷⁰ RGASPI, f. 64, op. T., d. 21.

Chicherin's talks with the Unionists, Cemal Pasha and Halil Pasha, whom he considered the primary authorities of the "National Centre of Turkey", most probably left the impression that Turkey might give some territorial concessions.³⁷¹ Calculating the dire need of Turkey for the Soviet support, at a moment when a peace agreement like Sévres was signed by the Istanbul government and when all the possibilities of reconciliation with Britain were closed to the Turkish nationalists, he might really think that he could convince the Turks.³⁷² It is difficult to view Chicherin as an obstacle in front of Turkish-Soviet alliance when there are so many archival documents, which proves that Chicherin was the number one person who conceived the crucial place of Turkey in the eastern policy of the Soviets. As will be referred in the following parts, in many documents Chicherin was proved to be in a struggle for improving the comprehension of the leading cadre about the importance of Turkey in Soviet foreign policy and behaved extremely sensitive on the issue of military and financial aid to Turkey. Yet, it is also evident that Chicherin's and therefore Narkomindel's insistence about the territorial concession reflected his lack of understanding about the consequences of this insistence inside the Turkish national movements. A couple of documents pertaining to the following months reveal what kind of crisis on the Turkish-Soviet relations was created by Chicherin's insistence.

Upmal's telegram dated to October 18th, to Karakhan was on the reactions among Kemalist circles towards the Soviet territorial demand for Armenia. The National Assembly had witnessed harsh protests after the return of Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Yusuf Kemal about the request of giving Van, Bitlis and Muş to Armenians. This could place the Muslim East against Mustafa Kemal whose prestige was based on his determination to

³⁷¹ Gürün, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri 1920-1953*, 37.

³⁷² A letter from Soviet ambassador in Georgia, C. Kirov to Lenin dated to August 30th, reveals the Soviet lack of knowledge about the character of the Turkish national movement and the developments taking place within it. Kirov in the letter sends Lenin the resolutions of the Erzurum and Sivas Congresses that had taken place a year ago. Therefore, Turkish reaction against the territorial demands might have been unexpected for the Soviets. RGASPI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 15354.

accept everything other than attempts on territory.³⁷³ On 25th, after having a meeting with Yusuf Kemal, Upmal wrote Moscow explaining that “the Turkish delegations³⁷⁴ whose proposal was accepted by the Soviets, had unexpectedly been imposed with a condition of territorial concession to Armenians. This was attributed to the personal influence of Karakhan and Avanesov, that could not be purified by Chicherin in those circumstances. The expectation on behalf of the Armenians based on misinformation about the population in the three provinces risked Turkish confidence in the sincerity of the Soviet government and in its faith to his proclaimed principles on the national question. Upmal underlined that the idea to form Turkish Armenia would mean abandoning the idea of an alliance with Turkish revolutionaries. British influence would prevail, adding a southern front to the Polish and the Wrangel fronts.³⁷⁵ On November 9th, during the debates of Bolshevik rulers on conclusion of a new agreement with Armenia, Chicherin admitted to Stalin that to make the Turks accept the independence of “Turkish Armenia” seemed extremely difficult.³⁷⁶

Nevertheless, we will see much later that in the forthcoming months, this debate would go on and the Soviet foreign policy makers would be still discussing on the issue during the Moscow Conference in February-March 1921, and the tensions would reach to the extent that Stalin would write Lenin to ask him make Chicherin abandon his “stupid insistence.”³⁷⁷

³⁷³ AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, 232, d. 52993.

³⁷⁴ Upmal talks about more than one delegation, taking into consideration the Unionists.

³⁷⁵ AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, 232, d. 53001.

³⁷⁶ AVPRF, f. 4, op. 51, 321a, d. 54870.

³⁷⁷ In February 1921, Stalin made a small note for Lenin on the telegram sent by Ordzhonikizde both to Lenin and Stalin: “Yesterday, I just learnt that Chicherin some time actually sent Turks a stupid (and provocative) demand for purification of Van, Muş and Bitlis (Turkish provinces with overwhelming predominance of Turks) in favor of Armenia. This Armenian-imperialistic demand cannot be our demand. It is necessary to prohibit Chicherin from sending notes containing dictates written with a nationalist Armenian sentiment. RGASPI, f. 558, op. 1, d. 5214.

This unique event reveals that, contrary to the view that defines Soviet foreign policy as a product of a hierarchical and monolithic structure where all the decisions were taken directly by the Politburo and the Narkomindel just fulfilled the practical duties, Soviet foreign policy was made through a complicated process, which was not exempt from tensions created by different views and tendencies. The line of tension was present between the triangle of Politburo, Narkomindel and the local actors, such as members of diplomatic mission in a certain country, or the Red Army commanders and KomPar³⁷⁸ representatives in a region. In our case, as it has already been mentioned in this chapter, Narkomindel and Chicherin as its head, had constant complaints about the inadequacies of the diplomats sent to Turkey who were appointed in contravention of Narkomindel's preferences. We also know that there was a certain strife between the Narkomindel and Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee. The Politburo played the role of mediator. It is also possible to see a parallel network of relations depended on friendship or common historical background in the party also had a part, which sometimes became more "problem-solving" than institutional relations.

Back in summer, Ordzhonikidze who was striving to find a solution to the conflict between newly sovietized Azerbaijan and Dashnak Armenia about Nagorno-Karabakh, Nahcevan and Zangezour, in a telegram on July 19th, expressed his opinion in favor of Azerbaijan. He advised invitation of an Azeri delegation to Moscow and discuss all the issue regarding the territorial claims before concluding an agreement with Armenia.³⁷⁹ A few days later, Chicherin wrote Politburo about "the necessity to curb the 'Caucasian group of actors',³⁸⁰ that took an anti-Armenian stance, supporting territorial claims of Soviet Azerbaijan. Contrary to the decision of the Central Committee to pursue a policy of compromise with the bourgeois governments of Georgia and

³⁷⁸ Abbreviation often used by the Soviets for Communist Party.

³⁷⁹ RGASPI, f. 85, op. 13, d. 32

³⁸⁰ He evidently implies Ordzhonikidze before all.

Armenia to keep them away from the Entente, the Bolsheviks in Baku had promoted uprisings and insisted on annexing the disputed territories to Azerbaijan. A representative of Moscow had to be sent to Baku, either Sokolnikov or Zalkind, not in relation with Caucasian group of leaders³⁸¹ but with the ambassadors in the region appointed by the Narkomindel to arrange matters. Chicherin emphasized the timeliness of this operation reminding the necessity ‘to accelerate the implementation of our plans in Turkey’ by sending Eliava to Turkey ‘to start his political activities as soon as possible.’³⁸²

Chicherin tried to redesign the Soviet policy towards Turkey and Transcaucasia and wanted to establish a diplomatic network that would serve to that policy. However, there were various facts that either he could not predict or could not prevent their emergence.

3.6 Fall in the first stage of Turkish-Soviet rapprochement when the Caucasian question gets even complicated

Bekir Sami returned Ankara only in November. Before his departure from Moscow, the Ankara government defined the demands of Chicherin about territorial concessions to Armenia unacceptable and rejected to ratify the initialized agreement on the occasion that Chicherin did not withdraw his claims. Bekir Sami was ordered to wait in order to see if there would be any change in the Soviet position.³⁸³ This was notified to Moscow in October 21st. Bekir Sami’s journey back to homeland started right after receiving the telegram from Ankara. The agreement was not signed. Bekir Sami’s Journey was long enough to realize some talks and meetings in Caucasia. He was claimed by the Soviets to involve in anti-Soviet activities during his journey through Caucasia and especially strove for an insurrection in the Nagorno-Karabakh region:

³⁸¹ Members of the Caucasian bureau of the Central Committee of the RKP(b) are implied.

³⁸² RGASPI, f. 5., op. 2, d. 314

³⁸³ Kemal Atatürk, *Atatürk’ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri* doc. 320.

In October 1920, Ordjonikidze sent a telegram to Lenin in which he told the counter-revolutionary elements in Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh set great hopes on Enver and Turkish foreign affairs minister Bekir Sami agitated in Ingushetia for the independence of Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh.³⁸⁴

In the autumn of 1920, Caucasia witnessed the second round of the struggle between Entente, Soviet Russia and Turkey, where the newly emerged Caucasian Republics did not have a real initiative. The Dashnak government in Armenia and the Mensheviks in Georgia were under the heavy influence of the Entente. Azerbaijan was already included in the Soviet federative system in April. Minor political actors, groups or individuals emerged as the national representatives of the various peoples of the region were in contact with one or the other of the major powers. This was the second field of the battle, apart from the military front, where shifting alliances and intrigues were most dominant. Many Turkish officers and politicians from different fractions, most of the time difficult to distinguish for the interests of which power they worked, were also in the game. The Kemalists, Unionists and the Communists were there. Within the Turkish national movement there was again a cleavage in terms of strategy, whether to collaborate with the Entente to outmaneuver the Soviet Russia in Caucasia or act jointly with the Soviets in order to maintain the Caucasian corridor open for the contact of the two countries. The Soviet orientation of the Kemalist leadership had reached a decisive point. However there were some facts that blurred this decisiveness. First of all, Ankara government was continuing to have unofficial talks with the representatives of the Entente powers who tried to push Turkey to the battlefield against the Soviets with vague promises. Secondly these efforts

³⁸⁴ Kheyfets, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 124; Chicherin later, at the beginning of November, more openly uttered about the suspicions on Bekir Sami's activities in Caucasia together with Unionists: "Doesn't Bekir Sami prepare in Northern Caucasia the base for aggressive policy of Turkish nationalists who changed side, did not Nuri Pasha's policy triumph and Halil Pasha did not encourage Halil Pasha in his work in Kashgar, those are the questions that we still cannot answer. Are Bekir Sami and K. our friends or our enemies, we don't know it now." (AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39. p. 232. d. 54987)

were supported by a series of influential soldiers and politicians within the national liberation movement. Thirdly, the defeat of the Red Army in the war with the Polish troops near Warsaw in October showed that the continuity of the Soviet power was still on a knife-edge and far from being completely secure. One can add to these factors the Soviets' reluctance to accept Turkish claims on the territories in dispute with Armenia and Georgia, as once they had accepted in Brest; and the complaints about the delays and insufficiencies of the military aid demanded from the Soviets. Eventually, under these circumstances, without removing alliance with the Soviet Russia from the agenda, the Ankara government decided to take action on two issues that must have been predicted to irritate Moscow. One was the launching the operation to Armenia, which was abandoned in summer in accordance with the request of the Soviet government. Second one was to get a blow in the young communist movement of the country.

In June the tension in the Turkish-Armenian relations had come to the boiling degree. It was appeased for a while by the request of nonaggression and offer of mediation of the Soviets. The period of truce continued during summer was halted when the Dashnak government realized a provocative attack to Turkish troops in the Bardis region on September 24th. The Eastern Army presided by Kazım Karabekir took this opportunity to occupy Sarıkamış and Merdenek.³⁸⁵ The Turkish Army then stop on the Sarıkamış-Lologlu line, as it would be understood soon, in order to gather strength for an expedition towards inner Armenia.³⁸⁶

On October 6th Ahmet Muhtar Bey³⁸⁷ sent a telegram to Bekir Sami who was still in Moscow. He informed the foreign affairs minister that the operation against Armenia that had previously been envisaged but then postponed in June due to the request of the Soviet government was to be launched soon. He

³⁸⁵ Soviet historians claims that there was a cleavage within the Kemalists on whether launch an operation towards Armenia.

³⁸⁶ Kheyfets, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 124.

³⁸⁷ Deputy minister of foreign affairs at the time.

justified the action with the argument that Dashnaks wanted to play the same role that was being played by the Greeks in Western Anatolia and Rumelia in Caucasia, Eastern Anatolia and Iran.³⁸⁸ The decision was a *fait accompli* that was practically possible since the friendship agreement initialized in August in Moscow was not officialized. Yet, Ankara justified the decision by adding to the telegram the note that “[we] hope, after the defeat of the Dashnaks, the Armenian nation will recognize the realities and a government that comprehends the requirements of the day and the relations between Turkey and Soviet Russia will come to power.”³⁸⁹

The Soviet position here was that a war between Turkey and Armenia was most desired by the Entente. The Entente was using the Dashnak government in order to provoke Turkey and impel it to the battlefield in Caucasia which would weaken the Turkish Army in Anatolia and which might result in a clash between Turkey and Soviet Russia in Caucasia. They had some grounds to claim this. Although the Western-orientation of the Dashnak government was well known, Entente governments and USA as well were reluctant to make financial and military aid to Armenia. The equipment they sent to Armenia was useless.³⁹⁰ At the beginning of October when a war between Turkey and Armenia was imminent, the Entente did not do anything to stop the Turkish army. When, on October 2nd, British high commissioner in Istanbul Admiral de Robeck wrote British foreign affairs minister Lord Curzon if the Entente would seize Trabzon, it would be best support for Armenia. Curzon in reply said neither an allied occupation nor a Greek intervention to Trabzon was possible. On October 29th, Curzon wrote the British representative in Caucasia, more precisely that a military support to Armenia through Trabzon or any other place was out of question.³⁹¹ Soviet Russia

³⁸⁸ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları*, 92-93.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Kheyfets, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 138.

³⁹¹ Great Britain Foreign Office and E. L. Woodward, *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939* 1st Series Vol. XII (London: H.M. Stationery Off., 1946), 636.

inferred that the Entente aimed at encouraging Turkish Army enters into Caucasia and convincing the Kemalists to collaborate with them for an anti-Soviet Caucasian federation. If they would not be able to achieve reconciliation, then, Turkish presence in Caucasia would be a good pretext for the Entente for the occupation of Batum. Lloyd George's words in a meeting with representatives of France and Italy ignore the existence of a British encouragement to push the Turkish army towards Caucasia. But they also reveal that he was totally aware of the Soviet conviction of such an encouragement:

British agents reported that in the last few days the Bolsheviks had become convinced that Great Britain and the French were now engaging in stirring up Mustafa Kemal against them. The Bolsheviks believed that Mustafa Kemal intended to capture Georgia, Azerbaijan and Batum, and they were consequently sending troops to Azerbaijan, and it seemed quite likely that war would break out between the Bolsheviks and nationalists.³⁹²

He believed, Turkey turned his visor to the East, reviving the Pan-Turanist ideals and was not so much concerned with the Western provinces under Greek occupation.³⁹³ This latter observation was later proved to be incorrect. However, what is striking here is that the British government reveals its pleasure out of Turkish military action in Caucasia, for both it might result in the Soviet-Turkish military confrontation and it distracted the Ankara government's attention from the West to the East. Whether he also envisaged an intervention to Caucasia that would begin in Batum port with the pretext of Turkish occupation, as asserted by the Soviets, is unknown.

The Soviets were suspicious about how far the Turks intended to advance and if this expedition would turn into an attack to Soviet Russia itself if a confrontation occurs between the two armies. What really matters was the possibility that the Kemalist leadership who was heard to have secret talks with

³⁹² Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk II*, 438.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

the Istanbul government³⁹⁴ and Entente countries changed its orientation towards the West. Under these circumstances the Turkish intervention was considered not only unnecessary but also risky. However they must react very carefully for not pushing the Turkish government towards the West. They were in an uncomfortable position, desiring to defend Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan from the covetous regards of the Turks; but forced into a position of having to compromise.³⁹⁵ On the other hand, Soviet foreign affairs preferred a reconciliatory tone towards the Dashnak government. First they did not want to lose the contact with the Dashnaks whom, they considered were already heavily manipulated by the Entente. Secondly, under the conditions of international pressure on the Soviet government and with the limited power it could enjoy in international politics, they did not want to give more pretext to the Entente in order to disseminate anti-Soviet sentiments in the region. In this respect, they did not prefer to be seen in a close relation with the Kemalists.³⁹⁶ Under these circumstances, Soviet policy makers gave start to a debate within themselves in order to formulate a series of attempts that had to take into account the delicate balance in the region.

On October 13th, Chicherin wrote Boris Legran, the Soviet ambassador in Yerevan since June, about the reports he received from Ordzhonikidze in which mentioned a possible and immediate withdrawal of the Dashnaks from the government and asked if the communist could seize the political power

³⁹⁴ For them the change made by Entente in Istanbul government in October was a new sign of Entente project of tempting Ankara government. Ferit Pasha, an odious personality for the patriots of the country, was removed from government; and a new government led by Tevfik Pasha, who sympathized national movement, was established. This government assumed the role of an envoy between Ankara government and the Entente. Chicherin later in 1923 wrote in a letter to the Soviet embassy in Ankara that “when Turkey attacked Armenia we all were sure that it was the Entente that provoked the Turks, even it was not Britain, it was France.” (RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2 d. 57)

Defining Soviet consideration as being sure is a bit exaggerative, though. It is better to say that they had strong doubts.

³⁹⁵ Paul Dumont, “L’axe Moscou-Ankara”, 176.

³⁹⁶ Telegram of Chicherin to Legran, October 26th, RGASPI, f. 64, op. 1., d. 21., l. 191

without external support.³⁹⁷ Until that point, the Soviet government decided to propose an agreement in order to prevent the Dashnak government with the manipulation of the Entente further act to the detriment of Soviet interests in the region and to provide a base for Turkish-Armenian Peace talks. On the same day, Chicherin sent a telegram to Ordjonikidze asking him to warn the Turkish government about the fact that their military action in Armenia had been giving pretext for the efforts of the Entente to concentrate their military forces in Armenia.³⁹⁸

Meanwhile, in the second week of October, the Politbureau of Russian Communist Party(b) took definite decisions about Armenia in accordance with the proposals of Chicherin and Lenin's complete approval on it. Chicherin's proposal was 1) to agree with the opinion of the Central Committee, of the Armenia Communist Party(b) and the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of RKP(b) on the necessity of decisive action for establishing Soviet power in Armenia, 2) to afford Armenia political help in halting the further advance of the Turks, and 3) to support the new, Soviet government.³⁹⁹ Chicherin's stance was radically different a few months ago. He was complaining in a letter he wrote on June 29th, to Lenin about the precipitousness of "comrades in Baku" such as Ordzhonikidze, Mdivani⁴⁰⁰ and Narimanov to sovietize Georgia and Armenia. When the Central Committee rejected their proposals in this direction, in spite of this, they maintained their tactic of aggressive actions against Georgia and Armenia. He repines about the energy the Narkomindel spent to constrain them from aggressive actions.⁴⁰¹ Now, it was himself who uttered about the "necessity of decisive action to establish Soviet power in Armenia." Without any doubt, both Turkish attack on

³⁹⁷ RGASPI, f. 64, op., 1, d. 21, l. 183.

³⁹⁸ RGASPI, f. 85, op. 14, d. 18; RGASPI, f. 85, op. 14, d. 15.

³⁹⁹ Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 44, 446.

⁴⁰⁰ Budu Mdivani, soon to be appointed Soviet ambassador to Ankara.

⁴⁰¹ RGASPI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 332.

Armenia and Dashnak uncompromising attitude on the territorial claims made Chicherin's policy of stalling action in Transcaucasia impossible. The Caucasian Military Revolutionary Council, before all Ordzhonikidze himself, run out of patience, because, as they express it, the Dashnaks had provocative actions in the regions under Red Army's control, i.e. Zangezur, Karabakh and Nakhchevan.⁴⁰²

At the end of the month, a protocol as a project of an agreement was signed by Legran with Dashnak representatives on October 28th. It seems contrary to the politburo decisions. Or, while the Soviet government was planning to accelerate the efforts for the sovietization of Armenia, it desired to maintain a basis of reconciliation with the Dashnaks to the last point. According to that, Zangezur and Nakhchevan were left to Armenia in return to the right of transit the Soviet military and material dispatches from the Armenian territories. The Soviets also undertook the role of mediation between Armenia and Turkey; convincing Turkey stop the military offensive and recede to the borders until 1914.⁴⁰³ The atmosphere of the documents on the issue between Legran and Chicherin gives the impression that the protocol was overwhelmingly developed with the initiative of Legran. Chicherin complains for not receiving substantial information about the situation in Armenia and his ambiguous actions even conceal when, where and how he was moving in the territories of Transcaucasia. Chicherin was cautious vis-à-vis the protocol, though he thought that for obtaining transit from Armenia to Turkey, for stopping the Entente intervention in the region; and for reinforcing the Soviet prestige in the West a new agreement was necessary with the Armenians.⁴⁰⁴ He

⁴⁰² RGASPI, f. 85, op. 13, d. 58. According to the agreement that was concluded on August 10th in Tiflis between Armenia and Soviet Russia, these regions would be neutral. The region was under the occupation of the Red Army since the sovietization of Azerbaijan and now was responsible for preserving its neutrality. However, Dashnak government was complaining about the tolerance showed to the activities of bands composed of Tatars, Kurds and Turkish nationalists led by Halil Pasha and other Unionist commanders. (AVPRF, f. 148, op. 3, 1, d. 3)

⁴⁰³ RGASPI, f. 64, op. T, d. 21.

⁴⁰⁴ RGASPI, f. 64, op. 1, d. 21, l.

was receiving on daily basis news about the contacts between the Turkish government and Entente representatives.⁴⁰⁵ He was oscillating between agreeing with Dashnak Armenia and Menshevik Georgia in case of reorientation of Kemalist Turkey toward West on the one hand abstaining from frustration of the Turks. He envisaged possible Entente invasion of the Transcaucasia in case of Kemalists' reconciliation with the West.⁴⁰⁶

It is understood that Stalin travelled to Baku immediately after receiving the news about the agreement with Armenia. He attended the meeting in Baku, organized as a joint session of Central Committee of Azerbaijan Communist Party(b) and the Caucasian Bureau of Central Committee of RCP(b). The decisions taken here were in parallel with those of Politburo. In this meeting Legran suggested that the conclusion of the agreement with Armenia on the bases of Dashnak government's conditions, which were asserted for acceptance of the Soviet mediation for the solution of the dispute with Turkey, would be "profitable for Armenia by freeing it from the role of a tool in the hands of the Entente and even lead to the formation of a Georgian-Armenian union, which would secure the strengthening of the position of Russia in the Transcaucasia, though this kind of an agreement with them would not please the Kemalists. The proposal did not gain acceptance. For the ultimate decision would be given by the Central Committee. But the Politburo was not supporting the idea to concede Zangezur and Nakhchevan to Armenia.⁴⁰⁷ Legran, then, wrote to the Soviet embassy in Yerevan: "... they consider that we cannot in fact undertake anything regarding the Turkish attacks, although our attitude as before remains sharply negative. Formally, Turkey is not connected by treaty with us, and we cannot make any demands on it. ...they suppose in the case of the achievement

⁴⁰⁵ AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, 232, d. 54987.

⁴⁰⁶ RGASPI, f. 64, op. 1, d. 21, l.

⁴⁰⁷ RGASPI, f. 558, op. 1, d. 1986.

of peace with Armenia, would it be easily able to achieve transit, the transfer of the disputed territories to Armenia however is (too) high a price for that.”⁴⁰⁸

The correspondance between Chicherin and Stalin when Stalin was still in Baku reflects the great hesitation the Bolshevik leaders experienced. At the end, Stalin seems to pull the wires with and influenced the Politburo decision in the direction of the sovietization of Armenia instead of according with the Dashnaks.⁴⁰⁹

The taking over of Kars on October 30th and of Alexandropol (Gümürü) on November 7th proved without doubt the force of the Turkish army. Bugged down in the final offensive against the army of Wrangel in Crimea, the Soviets had no choice but to acquiesce. Therefore, by November the Soviet policy gained more or less certain direction, towards accelerating the sovietization of Armenia, to start the action towards the south of Caucasia in order to make the Turkish expedition a part of a joint effort, so that it could gain the ability to stop the Turks before further advancement of Turkish troops. As the troops of Kazım Karabekir were attacking from the West, the Russians advanced from the North. The Turkish military move thus took the veneer of a Turkish-Soviet campaign against the “lackeys of imperialism”. The risk of a clash between Turkey and the Soviets appeared to have been averted.⁴¹⁰ The action led by Kazım Karabekir did not come to a close. On November 11th, Chicherin sent a telegram to Mustafa Kemal, Kazım Karabekir, the Armenian Prime minister C. Vratsyan and B. Legran.⁴¹¹ He informed that, pursuant to Armenia’s appeal and preliminary acceptance of Turkey, the Soviet government assumed the task of mediation and authorized Budu Mdivani as plenipotentiary with this task

⁴⁰⁸ RGASPI, f. 64, op. 1, d. 21, l.

⁴⁰⁹ AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, 232, d. 54987; RGASPI, f. 558, op. 1. d. 1987 (Stalin in his letter to Chicherin also mentions the problems brought about the absence of a reliable Soviet representative in Ankara. He said “the person who were sent there (Upmal) until today did not satisfy the requirements of the relations”.)

⁴¹⁰ Paul Dumont, “L’axe Moscou-Ankara”, 170.

⁴¹¹ DVP, III, 325.

and sent him to the combat area. He concluded his telegram with his wishes for the non-fulfilment of any further military action.⁴¹²

By that time, still in Baku, Stalin had the control of Soviet actions in the region and conducted the preparations for a military conflict. It was a preparation for a number of possibilities. Apart from the agenda of the sovietization of Armenia and Georgia, the Soviet government considered a possibility of a clash with the Turkish troops and/or an Entente intervention towards Batum and Baku.⁴¹³ He was informing that the military capacity of the Army was still insufficient to take a military action.⁴¹⁴ Chicherin and Narkomindel seemed to a bit excluded from the conduct of the policies on Transcaucasia and Turkey. He was demanding from Stalin information about the developments on daily basis, on November 14th.⁴¹⁵ Next day, Stalin replied him with the information from Mdivani who was already in Yerevan⁴¹⁶:

Until 12th war continued between Armenians and Turks. On the 13th, after receiving our proposal for mediation, Turks stopped the action. Turks took Alexandropol, went until Amamlu (Hamamli) station. English and Vrangels' missions left Armenia. Intrigues of English commissar Ctoks failed. For the moment England did not manage to tame the Kemalists.

Then he specified his "advices" that he had given to Mdivani:

Check out the latest data from Turkey and inform about your conclusion. Do not quarrel with the Turks because of Dashnaks. Pay attention to Turks in the Batum region, do not ask direct question about withdrawal from the Turkish territory of the old borders until the formation of a joint commission, with our participation. Split the Dashnaks and lead the left part in the

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ RGASPI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 16244

⁴¹⁴ RGASPI, f. 558, op. 1, d. 1999.

⁴¹⁵ AVPRF, f. 148, op. 3, 2, d. 9.

⁴¹⁶ RGASPI, f. 558, op. 1, d. 5211.

formation of the Revolutionary Committee; do not make decisions without the approval of the Centre.

His comments on Mdivani give us an idea about the state of affairs in the Soviet foreign affairs and lack of institutionalization: “I know Mdivani since 1903 as a Bolshevik, he is above Eliava, no doubt with dignity he performs assigned missions. At this moment, he must be in Turkey.” Mdivani was still in Yerevan.

Mdivani arrived at Alexandropol on November 25th. He had the first meeting with Karabekir who was preparing for the peace talks with the Armenians. Mdivani told that Stalin and Lenin themselves explained that the Soviet side was ready for restarting the talks between two countries; and guaranteed Soviet Russia would not demand any territorial concession for Armenia.⁴¹⁷ When Mdivani repeated the Soviet offer for mediation, he took the reply that the Armenian government accepted all the conditions of the Turkish government; therefore they did not need Soviet mediation. And Karabekir concluded, nonparticipation of Soviet Russia in the peace talks with the Armenians did not rule out the possibility of diplomatic talks between Soviet Russia and Turkey talks, “like between two friends striving for the same goal.”⁴¹⁸ Therefore, Soviet Russia was excluded from the peace talks with Armenia.⁴¹⁹

On December 2nd, Turkey forced the Dashnaks to sign a treaty in Alexandropol (Gümrü) that meant the return of Armenia into a protectorate of Turkey. With the treaty, Armenia squeezed into the capital Yerevan, lake Sevan and around. The Armenian government recognized the Treaty of Brest-

⁴¹⁷ Tengirşenk, *Vatan Hizmetinde*, 200-202.

⁴¹⁸ RGASPI, f. 85, op. 14, d. 17, RGASPI, f. 64, op. 1, d. 21.

⁴¹⁹ In spite of its utterances, Dashnak government, with the inculcations of the Entente, was reluctant to give any role to the Soviets in the solutions of the conflict with Turkey. Woodward, *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939* Vol XII, 648.

Litovsk, accepted disarmament and opened the railways and other networks to Turkish control.⁴²⁰

By the time of the signing of the treaty, after the popular uprising in Icevan (Karavansaray) and Dilijan, the Soviet Republic of Armenia had already been proclaimed in the north and central Armenia and removed the Dashhaks from power.⁴²¹ On November 29th, Ordzhonikizde wrote Legran and Mdivani with the note “urgent, top priority”: “According to the newly obtained information, the Armenian Revolutionary Committee, received a lot of sentences from the peasants Dilijan district, crossed the border at night, greeted enthusiastically by the public. Take all measures in Erevan for supporting Terterjan group; and ensure their entry to the Revolutionary Committee and full security of the Dashnaks.”⁴²² The members of the Armenian Revolutionary Committee must be waiting somewhere in the Armenian-Azerbaijan border. With the news of the uprisings, they passed the border. Terterjan was the representative of the left, pro-Soviet Dashnaks. In the last days of the Dashnak power, Dashnak party was splitted into two groups, namely pro-Entente and pro-Soviet. The pro-Soviet group gave support to the sovietization of Armenia. On the same day, 29th, the new Soviet government published a declaration entitled the “Declaration of Armenian Revolutionary Committee that came from Baku together -with the 11th Red Army”. In the declaration, sympathy towards the rural workers of Turkey and support in their struggle against the Treaty of Sévres and Entente predators. And it added: “We also believe that it is not the sword of the winner that will dictate peace between Soviet Armenia and Turkey; but the work and fraternal agreement of the free peoples of the Soviet Armenia and revolutionary Turkey.”⁴²³

⁴²⁰ Bilge, *Güç Komşuluk*, 63.

⁴²¹ RGASPI, f. 85, op. 14, d. 37.

⁴²² RGASPI, f. 85, op. 14, d. 33.

⁴²³ DVP, III, 348-349

And on that very day that the Alexandropol (Gümri) Treaty was signed, on December 2nd, Ordzhonikizde wrote Lenin and Stalin coming from Erevan that the Soviet power was established in the capital city of Armenia. Until the arrival of the Revolutionary Committee to Erevan, all the power was handed over to the military command headed by Dro and military commissar of Armenia Silin. He added that the Revolutionary Committee received a greeting telegram from Turkish commander of the eastern front Kazım Karabekir and Turkish representative Kazım Bey. Ordzhonikizde wrote: “comrades coming from Alexandropol informs that the mood among the Turkish soldiers is very friendly to us and they bear red symbols and consider themselves Red Army soldiers.”⁴²⁴

This new situation casted a doubt on the validity of the Treaty of Alexandropol. The strife now was originating from different approaches of the sides about the Turkish-Armenian peace. The Turkish government claimed that the decisions of Treaty of Alexandropol was completely compatible with the principle of self-determination since in the regions annexed by Turkey overwhelmingly Turkish nationals were living.⁴²⁵ The new Soviet government in Armenia on the other hand, was insisting on the fact that the boundaries should be determined again on an equal and just basis and Turkey should stop the persecution and plunder the people of the regions under occupation.⁴²⁶ Soviet Russia’s considerations were parallel to Armenia but did not prefer to increase the tension with Turkey.

On 10th December T. Bekzadian, the Foreign Minister of the Armenian Soviet government, demanded from the Ankara government to accept officially the non-validity of the treaty signed with the Dashnaks and proposed negotiating a new accord that would take into account “the new situation

⁴²⁴ Grigoriy Konstantinovich Ordzhonikidze, *Stat'i i Rechi*. Tom 1, (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoy literatury, 1956), 142.

⁴²⁵ DVP, III, 397.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 378.

resulting from the sovietization of Armenia”.⁴²⁷ Bekzadian said he assumed that the National Assembly had “received with joy” the news of the revolutionary upheavals in Armenia and noted to his Turkish counterpart that the dark past should from now on “give place to the fraternal collaboration of peoples.”⁴²⁸

In the press of Entente countries, the rumor that the Turkish army was preparing to occupy Batum was in circulation. For the Soviets, it was for creating a pretext for an allied intervention in the region.⁴²⁹ Soviet foreign affairs clamoured against this possibility, sending a threatful note to Britain⁴³⁰ and addressing to the working masses of the Entente countries by radio⁴³¹. The Soviets considered it as an invasion plan that might extend to Baku and would draw Russia into the battlefield. On the other hand, Soviet foreign affairs kept on receiving news of rapprochement between the Ankara government and the Entente. The Ankara government’s definite denial of such a rapprochement seemed to fail to appease Soviet concerns. Kazım Karabekir handed over to Mdivani a copy of the telegram sent to him by Ahmet Muhtar on November 30th. In the telegram, it was indicated that Brits strove to drive a wedge between Turkey and the Bolsheviks by giving the impression that they promised Azerbaijan to the Turks in exchange for their contribution to an anti-Soviet front in Caucasia. The Ankara government authorized Karabekir to refute these rumours by every possible means.⁴³² On the same day, most probably, after seeing the content of Ahmet Muhtar’s telegram, Mdivani wrote from Yerevan, from the Soviet mission there, that, Britain was striving to win the Turks over. In a possible defeat of the Greeks, Britain might come with

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 331.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 330.

⁴³¹ Ibid., 329-330.

⁴³² AVPRF, f. 132, op. 3, 2, d. 1, l. 58.

some attractive offers. It is understood that though for the moment Ankara government did not lean to British offers, Mdivani thought, the things could change in the near future. For that reason he urged that the Soviets must start the talks with the Turkish government and formulate the relations as soon as possible. He also reminded the disadvantage of non-existence of a Soviet ambassador in Ankara. He said, neither his presence in Yerevan, nor his travel to Ankara would make any difference without any mandate.⁴³³ In response, on December 3rd, Chicherin wrote Mdivani his instructions and questions. He requested Mdivani inform the Turkish government of appointment and dispatch of a commission authorized for official talks and conclusion of a treaty and ask it when the Turkish side would send the people that were envisaged to participate in that commission and who these people would be.⁴³⁴ Curiously, he asked if the Turkish government agrees on the initialized agreement prepared by joint efforts of Soviet and Turkish representatives in Moscow in August. However, as it was referred above, in his telegram Mustafa Kemal wrote to Bekir Sami that he was authorized to sign the initialized document if the Soviet government withdrew the demand of territorial concession for Armenia.⁴³⁵ There are two possibilities. Either Bekir Sami never informed Chicherin of the content of the Mustafa Kemal's letter; or Chicherin pretends not to know why the Turks refused to sign the agreement.

A letter by Narkomindel that was sent to Politbureau of the RCP(b) on the same day Chicherin sent his telegram on the relations with Turkey to Mdivani, December the 3th, was illuminating the concerns of Soviet foreign affairs on the political situation in the South⁴³⁶. Sovietization of Armenia necessitated diplomatic coordination with Armenia, to avoid dissatisfaction of Soviet sympathizers. However, the peace conditions and demands of Turkey

⁴³³ RGASPI, f. 85, op. C/Turtsiya d.11.

⁴³⁴ DVP, III, 364.

⁴³⁵ Atatürk, *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri* Doc. 320.

⁴³⁶ RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 57.

vis-à-vis Armenia had to be monitored, unless which the Entente would not miss any opportunity to intervene in case of conflict. Chicherin pointed out the role of Mdivani on this issue and that he could say that ‘it was not the right time for an attack’.⁴³⁷ Expectation of more arms and gold would provide more power of influence in return. Following the sovietization of Armenia, sovietization of Georgia would be taken into consideration, meanwhile making an agreement with the Turks but not in the shape that might give harm to talks with Britain.⁴³⁸ At this point Chicherin underlined that there should not be any account on paper about the aids to Turkey. The independence of both Armenia and Georgia should be recognized, the boundaries to be clarified later. Nevertheless, “a part of the Turkish Armenia might be demanded, but not as an ultimatum since it might harm friendly relations.”

With the increasing concern about the possibility of reconciliation between Turkey and Britain, Soviet foreign affairs hastened the efforts of an agreement with Turkey that would prevent it involve in actions that might harm Soviet interests. The Soviet doubts were not deprived of an actual base. The declassified Entente documents has shown that the Entente forces were extremely concerned with the growing collaboration between two hostile countries, Kemalist Turkey and Russia. This collaboration was so drastic that it deepened the split in opinion among the Entente governments. Record of a meeting between the Entente representatives reveals not only the impact of the Soviet-Turkish collaboration, but also the diverging ideas about the applicability of the Sévres Treaty.⁴³⁹ However, the Soviet persuasion of an imminent reconciliation mostly created by the information coming from Soviet diplomatic mission and Soviet agents scattered around Turkey was unrealistic.

⁴³⁷ As we will see later, Chicherin is not pleasant with the work of Mdivani. Yet, here he pretends to interpret Mdivani’s concessive attitude towards the Turkish government on the issues concerning the developments in Caucasia with good intention.

⁴³⁸ Soviet Russia was conducting official talks with Britain for a commercial agreement. It was a strategy for breaking the isolation in Europe and evading the British threat for a while. See chapter 2 for details.

⁴³⁹ Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk II*, 432-441.

The documents showed that Entente powers, even the one talking in most conciliatory tone -France- were far from surrendering to Turkish demands. Moreover, they did not have any unity in idea and action within themselves for building up a concrete program in order to surmount their concerns about the Turkish-Soviet rapprochement. The badly organized attempts were doomed to failure.

On December 15th, the Turkish government officially informed the Soviet foreign affairs of the attempts of Britain via Istanbul government. In the notification it was purported that the Turkish government was maintaining its determined attitude against British offer and was added “all these shows the sincerity of our government about the common struggle for elimination of world imperialism that would sound the death knell of the contemporary capitalist regime.”⁴⁴⁰ In the telegram it was also asked about Soviet intentions on Georgia in order to decide on the Turkish government’s own decision. The telegram seemed to be the document of giving the guarantee that Turkey’s Soviet orientation had not been changed. Around the same days, the Soviet government was also convinced that for the time being a reconciliation between the Kemalists and the Entente could not be achieved. The reason for that was, for the Soviets, the British uncompromising attitude. British insistence on disregarding the emergence of new political will to the detriment of its intentions in Turkey and in other countries of the region, such as Iran, was to be very helpful for Soviet foreign policy. Though Soviets, as in the letter sent by Chicherin to Soviet ambassador in Georgia on December 10th, relieved with the idea that the “Kemalists once again enter into Soviet orientation”.⁴⁴¹ However, they knew that it was not something stable:

This does not save us from being subject to a serious danger in the near future. Particularly, seizure of Batum by the Turks is not acceptable for us. We should not abandon our peaceful political line that impedes the Kemalists from some actions

⁴⁴⁰ DVP, III, 396.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 374.

against us. There are many reasons that impel them to consort with us, yet it is necessary to be decisive.⁴⁴²

As mentioned before, Soviet foreign affairs conducted a meticulous diplomacy with Britain on the issues concerning this country. As Ali Fuat Cebesoy mentioned, though exaggeratively, in his memoirs, the Kemalists felt an analogical uneasiness about the Soviet contact with Britain⁴⁴³, as the Soviets felt about Turkish rapprochement with the Entente countries, before all with Britain. On the question about the essence of Soviet-British talks, Chicherin made a lengthy explanation to the Turkish government, that had the hidden message about Soviet foreign affairs insistence on open diplomacy and sincerity with friendly countries. Chicherin states, as the Western countries realized the decisive victory of revolution in Russia, they resorted to peaceful relations with the Soviet government through semi-official ways. Britain was using commerce as a means of developing a contact, but in a very dilatory manner in order to bring the Soviet government to its knees in the middle of a severe economic crisis in Russia. Britain demanded avoidance of any anti-propaganda in any of the countries where British interests existed.⁴⁴⁴ For the Soviets, this practically meant to give up all diplomatic relations with the Eastern countries and support them in their struggle for independence, therefore gave a negative response. Chicherin, in the same letter, dated December 19th, added his strong belief that none of the Entente countries could approach Turkey with a sense of justice and equality. They would consider taking by machination what they could not take by force. Therefore, he recommended Turkish government, at least to demand the Entente to make

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hâtıraları*, 98, 121, 197, 247.

⁴⁴⁴ This includes not only the colonies of Britain, before all, India, but those countries that Britain did not ceased to impose its de facto domination. Turkey was the most important in this category because the national movement that accelerated throughout the course of the talks between the Soviets and Great Britain was a matter of concern for the British government. In one of the meetings with the Soviet delegation, they directly asked about their relations with Mustafa Kemal. (Gökay and Yalçın, *Bolşevizm ile Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, 132)

all their offers in an official and written form. This was maybe the first open attempt of Soviet side to shape the way the Turkish government conducts its relations with the West. Further instances would be seen in near future, especially during the Lausanne days.

The new but temporary situation, failure of a possibility of Turkish government's reconciliation with the West encouraged the Soviets to work for restarting of the talks that had halted at the end of summer.⁴⁴⁵ The risks stemmed from the continuity of crisis on Armenian territory provided a significant urge for an official treaty that would be binding on Turkey and would, hopefully, limit its anti-Soviet actions. Ankara, though willing to reach an agreement urgently, was determined to use the occupied Armenian territory as a trump card in the talks. For that reason, it rejected the Soviet proposal to realize the conference in Moscow with the participation of representatives of Caucasian states and Soviet offer about mediation.⁴⁴⁶ This was not the only tension. While the Turkish side insisted on Baku as the place of conference⁴⁴⁷, Soviet foreign affairs invited the Turkish delegation to Moscow on the grounds that top foreign affairs officials would participate in the conference.

⁴⁴⁵ In the delegation that was sent to Ankara there were representatives of the Entente. They departed from Istanbul for Ankara in December. After arriving at Ankara, the failure of the attempt became apparent in a couple of days. Ankara government announced as if the members of the delegation were patriots who took shelter in Anatolia fleeing the repression and mal administration of Britain. It did not prefer to reveal the presence of the delegation in Ankara even in its own public circles. Rumbold, Horace. *İngiliz Yıllık Raporları'nda Türkiye, 1920*, 57.

⁴⁴⁶ Chicherin in a note to Turkish government, expressed his disappointment about the rejection of mediation offer on January 13th, 1921. DVP V. III document no: 258 p. 468.

⁴⁴⁷ It was the Turkish side that applied for a conference in Baku at the beginning of December.

CHAPTER 4

SOVIET-TURKISH RELATIONS TOWARD A FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENT: WINTER OR SPRING?

4.1 Towards the Moscow Conference

The first attempts for convocation of a conference between two countries' governments were marked by mutual suspicion. At the beginning of the new year, on January 8th, Mdivani was reporting to Moscow that Ankara was still distrustful about believing or not believing Soviet good intention. According to Mdivani, the steps taken by the Soviets for the last couple of months evoked in the Turks the belief that Soviets concerned with Armenian interests and did not care about the Turkish interests. The Turks had not forgiven the demand for Van, Bitlis and Muş⁴⁴⁸ The telegram of Ordzhonikizde from January 14th to Chicherin reveals that Ankara government did not receive an official sign of withdrawal of this demand. According to the information given by him, Turkish delegation composed of five people had been waiting in Kars for a week in order to receive an official guarantee that this territorial demand would not be brought forward in the Moscow Conference.⁴⁴⁹ Unless they receive such a guarantee, they were saying that they wouldn't continue their trip toward Moscow.⁴⁵⁰ Kazım Karabekir, on the same day, asked Mdivani to sent him the written version of what he said in Alexandropol about the Soviet readiness for an agreement and Soviet willingness to reach an

⁴⁴⁸ RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 2203

⁴⁴⁹ According to Hikmet Bayur, the delegation was informed by Bekir Sami, who was in Caucasia, where he stayed for a while for allegedly anti-Soviet activities on the return from Moscow, Narkomindel still maintained the territorial demands on behalf of the Armenians. Bayur, *Türkiye Devleti'nin Dış Siyaseti*, 69. That is why the Turkish delegation insistently asked for guarantee.

⁴⁵⁰ AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, 232, d. 53001.

agreement without any demand for territorial concession.⁴⁵¹ Turkish side needed a guarantee in order not to encounter an unpleasant surprise in Moscow. Mdivani fulfilled this request and the Turkish delegation once again set about for Moscow.

Meanwhile, again on the same day, Chicherin's sent a letter to Stalin, full of complains about the Turkish government. He mentioned the expropriations by Turkish army in the occupied territories of Armenia of the military supplies and means of production, deportation of local population and dispatch of war captives to Erzurum. He also passes the information coming from Upmal in Ankara and Sheiman in Tiflis. According to Upmal, reactionary circles within the governing cadre in Ankara prevailed over the others and they started to determine the foreign policy. Sheiman on the other hand, informed that Britain sent huge means for anti-Soviet agitation in Azerbaijan, and drawing attention to the intimacy of Karabekir to France and Britain⁴⁵² he concluded that Turkey and Entente works together on this issue and Georgia played the role of intermediary between Turkey and the Entente. This was the primary task of Georgian ambassador Cemen Mdivani in Ankara.⁴⁵³ According to him, Mustafa Kemal's and Entente's common goal was to form a Caucasian Federation, hostile to Soviet Russia. He mentions that they had a solid ground and evidences to prove the secret relations of Ankara government with Mensheviks in Georgia.⁴⁵⁴ Similar news was also coming from Ordzhonikidze: "With the Turkish occupation of Karaklis, their (Turkish) connection with the Entente in the Batum-Tiflis line has been fully achieved."⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵¹ Tengirşenk, *Vatan Hizmetinde*, 200-202.

⁴⁵² One should consider that Turkish government in its contacts with the Entente countries was trying to play the contradictions between them. Though to alter the Soviet power was the common goal, their interests in the region were not identical. France strove to delimitate the British ambitions for the domination of the Middle East and Caucasia on its own. This issue will be examined much later in this chapter.

⁴⁵³ He was the brother of Budu Mdivani, Soviet plenipotentiary.

⁴⁵⁴ RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 57.

⁴⁵⁵ RGASPI, f. 85, op. 16, d. 62; British interpretation of the Kemalist-Menshevik governments relations at the end of 1920: It remained and still remained to be seen whether there will be a

For Moscow, it was the time to decide on the future of Georgia. Actually, the decision delayed mostly due to the Lenin's, and therefore Narkomindel's cautious attitude. It was a time when the Soviets felt the utmost need of a perpetual peace. On the eve of the conclusion of British-Soviet commercial treaty, Lenin found an external intervention to Georgia risky, when the large sympathy towards the Menshevik government in the West and the strategic significance of the Batum port were considered.⁴⁵⁶ Yet, the report coming from Krasin who was engaged in talks with the Brits relieved the Soviet leaders since it indicated that Britain had already recognized the Caucasia as Soviet sphere of influence. Possibility of a Turkish intervention⁴⁵⁷ and the insistence of the Bolshevik leaders in Caucasia precipitated Red Army march. The outbreak of a popular revolt was followed by the Red Army's advance towards the inner parts of the country. Turkish army annexed Ardahan and Artvin on the bases of Turkish historical rights on the three border provinces (Artvin, Ardahan and Batum) and as a support to the "Georgian workers against the Menshevik government".⁴⁵⁸ When the Turkish delegation was getting closer to an agreement with the Soviets in Moscow, Turkish army occupied Batum. Ali Fuat Cebesoy in his memoirs explained the occupation as a response to the official request of the Georgian government.⁴⁵⁹ Only after the surrender of the

break over the question of Georgia, and especially Batum. At the time of writing it seems unlikely, and the recent rapprochement btw Georgia and Angora is probably merely due on the Turkish side to a desire to create an equality of strength as btw Moscow and Angora, rather than to any desire to help Georgia, or even to secure Batum quickly in the teeth of Bolshevik opposition. Rumbold, Horace. *İngiliz Yıllık Raporları'nda Türkiye, 1920*, 182.

⁴⁵⁶ Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 42, 246.

⁴⁵⁷ From December 1920 onwards, this possibility was on Soviet agenda since Mdivani was transmitting the information that intention for Batum was never totally ignored by Kazim Karabekir. RGASPI, f. 85, op. 16, d. 62.

⁴⁵⁸ DVP, III, 556.

⁴⁵⁹ Bayur approves this claim. "As Batum is concerned, the Georgian ambassador requested its occupation by us as a consignment" Bayur, *Türkiye Devleti'nin Dış Siyaseti*, 70.

Menshevik government, Turkish army retreated when the Soviets entered the city.⁴⁶⁰

The resolution of the crisis in Armenia was not easier. Soviet notes on the invalidity of Treaty of Alexandropol (Gümri), Soviet Armenian government's urges against the practices of the Turkish army in the occupied regions towards the people living in the region and their possessions did not result in any retreat from Turkish side. Moscow Conference started under these circumstances. The weirdest of all, there was a revolutionary committee composed of Communist Armenians in the occupied region. Armenian government soon abolished this committee on the grounds that people's power in an occupied region was out of question. Furthermore, according to the Armenian government, Turkish government was legitimizing its war crimes, thanks to the existence of this committee.⁴⁶¹ When Dashnak members revolted against the new Soviet government in Armenia, in February, while Soviet-Turkish conference in Moscow had already started, Soviet foreign affairs received many telegrams from the region informing the Turkish support to the Dashnaks. Even, Ordzhonikidze and Eliava expressed their opinion on the possibility that the Turkish army would evacuate Alexandropol if the Dashnaks recaptured the political power.⁴⁶² Even if these assertions had a real base, it is not reasonable to think that Kemalists dared to risk the Soviet support in their struggle in Anatolia for the sake of their ambitions in Armenia. Rather, it makes more sense to think that, Kemalists did everything to strengthen their voice in the table of the negotiations in Moscow, especially of those for the definition of the Turkish-Armenian frontiers.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁶¹ Kheyfets and Akademiya Nauk SSSR, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*.

⁴⁶² RGASPI, f. 85, op. 15, d. 163.

4.2 Soviet attitude towards Turkish Left and Kemalist interference to it

Besides from the Caucasian policy of the Kemalist government and suspicions about the “selling out” by them in favor of the Entente, another reason of the gloomy atmosphere in the relations of two countries was the fact since the beginning of Autumn, left and communist elements of the country were systematically suppressed by the government. Their propaganda was declared illegal, and their activities were hindered. This process reached its climax with the murder of 15 TKP members including their leaders Mustafa Suphi, in the Black Sea, which tragically finalized their attempt to return country from Baku in January 1921. To understand the reasons of this repression, and as a dimension of Soviet policy towards Turkey, a brief examination on the relations of Turkish government with the Turkish left and Soviet approach is needed.

When Ankara became the new center of the national movement in Turkey, this moderate Anatolian town became the stage of, among all the transformations, the flourishing of left-wing parties and movements. Right after the opening of the Grand National Assembly, ideologically hybrid *Yeşil Ordu* was established within the knowledge of Mustafa Kemal.⁴⁶³ It appeared as a coalition of the sincere leftists, Unionists and those who were affiliated to Mustafa Kemal.⁴⁶⁴ Ideologically, it manifested itself as a synthesis of Islamism, bolshevism and Turkish nationalism. The positive attitude of the Cemiyet towards an alliance with the Soviets provided the necessary support to Mustafa Kemal who believed the political obligation of convergence with the Soviets.⁴⁶⁵ All the members of *Yeşil Ordu Cemiyeti* were in the Assembly and they later called themselves as *Halk Zümresi*⁴⁶⁶, about 4 months after the

⁴⁶³ Akal, *Moskova-Ankara-Londra Üçgeninde*, 60.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 61.

⁴⁶⁶ People's Group

establishment of *Yeşil Ordu*.⁴⁶⁷ Appeared as the legal wing of the *Yeşil Ordu*, same ideological complexity and heterogeneity in terms of political affiliations of its cadres as in the case of *Yeşil Ordu* reflected itself in the program of *Halk Zümresi*.⁴⁶⁸ There were two other political programs brought forward by the Unionists, which were left-oriented in tone, in compliance with the general political atmosphere in Ankara.⁴⁶⁹ The Kemalist circle as a threat considered these attempts. That is to say, though at once these currents seemed to be under their control, it turned out to be that their rivals by raising the red flag in Ankara and rapproaching Moscow grabbed the chance to discard them. The political answer given to this situation by the government was the declaration of the Populist Program. It was presented to the *Meclis* on September 13th, 1920, by Mustafa Kemal as the declaration of the government.⁴⁷⁰ The program was defined as “*sui tefsir*”, meaning wrong interpretation, of the program of People’s Group. Yet, it succeeded to make the previous programs obsolete. The declaration turned into the draft of the first constitution of the New Turkey, *Teşkilat-ı Esasi*. Under the pressure of the leftist current, undoubtedly influenced by the October Revolution and the existence of Soviet power, the program rested upon a populist base, without getting to the heart of the principal contradictions within the society, confining itself with the critique of the previous maladministration as the source of the catastrophe the country experienced.⁴⁷¹ Although at the beginning the Kemalists were reluctant to put

⁴⁶⁷ For Akal, it was a new attempt of *Yeşil Ordu* to consolidate its power in the *Meclis* after the failure to secure Nazım Bey’s position as the ministry of interior when Mustafa Kemal and his group repelled him and his supporters in favor of Refet Pasha. (*Moskova-Ankara-Londra Üçgeninde*, 223)

⁴⁶⁸ Yet, it is still possible to call it a program of state socialism since it proposed elimination of private property, establishment of production and consumption cooperatives under state control, free education and health service by the state, establishment of Büyük Şura (Grand Soviet) as the supreme organ of legislation of the country etc. (Tunçay, *Türkiye’de Sol Akımlar I* [İstanbul: BDS Yayınları, 1991] 165-166)

⁴⁶⁹ Akal, *Moskova-Ankara-Londra Üçgeninde*, 225.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁴⁷¹ For the comments on the draft in the *Meclis* see: *Ibid.*, 231-242.

forward anything reminiscent of a reform, until the triumph of the national army, the political pressure seems to oblige them to do so. This obligation was realized in the most moderate way: the most radical provisions such as “the elimination of the oppression of imperialism and capitalism” or “Turkey is ruled by the People’s Government” were excluded in the *Teşkilat-ı Esasi*.⁴⁷² Seemingly, the counter-forces stepped in, and blaming the government for declaring a bolshevik program, forced the government to retreat to a more moderate document.⁴⁷³ During the process of legislation that turned the government’s draft into *Teşkilat-ı Esasi*, Turkish-Soviet relations entered into a tough period, with the failure of the talks in Moscow between the Turkish delegation headed by Bekir Sami and the Soviet government, the tensions emerged due to the Turkish-Armenian war etc. Therefore, it is quite reasonable to think that deterioration of the relations might have also given the result of a more moderate program. Yet, the case illustrates well the political influence of the conjunction in the region opened with the October Revolution.

The communist movement, composed of loose and dispersed elements, emerged in the middle of this political atmosphere. A party under the title of “Bolshevik Communist Party of Turkey” was established in June 1920 and then legalized, changing its name to “Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası”.⁴⁷⁴ This transformation was rather challenging. It is true that the communists in Anatolia were far from having strength to the extent that they could threaten the power of the Kemalist leadership. Their existence had rather an ideological meaning. Firstly, Kemalists were worried about the political pressure contributed by the communists besides Unionists and radical nationalist groups to conduct a progressive program that might threaten the interests of the wealthy classes of the society. They abstained from any early disintegration of the national movement. Secondly and perhaps more importantly, in the

⁴⁷² Ibid., 242.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 243.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 98

relations with the Soviet Russia, which was still considered as the sole power for exit from the blockade of the imperialist states while the experience in summer showed that it wouldn't be so easy to converge as it had been envisaged before, any political group that contend to be the addressee of the Soviets was found dangerous and necessary to eliminate. In the face of the intimate relations of the new Soviet representative in Ankara, Upmal and the Turkish communists might have shown the Kemalists that the situation was alarming and this current should be stopped while it was still weak. For that reason, by September 1920, the first coersive measures started to be taken against the Bolshevik Communist Party of Turkey, which within the months after its establishment started to use the name Communist Party of Turkey. The repressions forced the communists to transform the party into a legal one under another label.

Meanwhile, with the instruction of Mustafa Kemal, a legal Communist Party was established on October 18th. Mustafa Kemal himself and a number of people in his close circle also became members of this party. The other communist groups and their activities were declared illegal. This party, though its application to Komintern was returned, achieved to incorporate therefore liquidate Yeşil Ordu. It was mainly because the membership to Yeşil Ordu of Çerkez Ethem, the chief commander of the irregular armies, *Kuvay-ı Seyyare*, in Anatolia who successfully fought against the Greeks, yet eliminated as the result of his cruel rivalry with the Ankara government.⁴⁷⁵

The liquidation of Green Army, pacification of the People's Group in the parliament, the pressure on the illegal TKF in Ankara in order to make it unite with the legal TKP, resulted in the project of foundation of a legal party

⁴⁷⁵ Çerkez Ethem in his memoirs narrates the manipulation he exposed to by Mustafa Kemal. The transformation of the Yeşil Ordu into a military force with the participation of Çerkez Ethem bothered the Kemalists. Mustafa Kemal heralded Ethem in a letter that a new party affiliated to Comintern was established, "the Communist Party", and Ethem, Refet Bey and Mustafa Kemal himself were included in the central committee of this new party. Mustafa Kemal invited Ethem to publish the journal *Yeni Dünya*, in Ankara instead of Eskişehir. (Çerkez Ethem, *Anılarım* [İstanbul: Berfin Yayınları, 1994], 79). This was a move to liquidate Yeşil Ordu and passify Ethem without inciting Çerkez Ethem's negative reaction. For the whole story of political manipulation see: Akal, *Moskova-Ankara-Londra Üçgeninde*, 279-287.

composed of elements from TKF, the Green Army and the People's Group. The owner of the project was to a great extent, Soviet representative Upmal; and the objective was to form a powerful front that was represented in the *Meclis*. The party was officially founded with the name *Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası*⁴⁷⁶ (THIF) on December 7th, 1920. Surprisingly, the foundation was approved by the authorities, possibly thanks to parliamentarians in the party.⁴⁷⁷ Yet, it did not mean opening of a period of relatively peaceful conditions. On the contrary, after the foundation of the party, the detentions that had started already in the new year, reached to the parliamentarian members of the party, just two days after the massacre of Mustafa Suphi and his comrades.⁴⁷⁸ Soon, the party was dissolved. The members originally from the People's Group left the party, as it was accused of spying for Russia. Upmal was expelled and the isolation on the Soviet embassy tightened. None of the communists who suffered from the persecution had a doubt about the relation of this incidence with the invitation received by the government for London Conference.⁴⁷⁹

Mustafa Kemal, later in a closed session of the Grand National Assembly on January 22th, 1921, explained these attempts as necessity to take political measures instead of coercive ones, since first, it was crucial not to offend communist Russia, with which the relations had to go on and second it was impossible to eliminate an idea only with coercive methods.⁴⁸⁰ However, the

⁴⁷⁶ People's Communist Party of Turkey. The name of the party emerged as a concession to the non-communist elements involving in the foundation process. It was also functional to differentiate it from the previous illegal TKF. Akal, *Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında*, 291.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid, 292. For the story of the transformation from TKF to THIF see: Erden Akbulut and Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası 1920-1923* (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2007), 124-146.

⁴⁷⁸ Akal, *Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında*, 431. Mustafa Suphi and others were, surprisingly unaware of the existence of this new party in Ankara.

⁴⁷⁹ Akbulut and Tunçay, *Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası*, 143.

⁴⁸⁰ TBMM Gizli Celse Zabıtları 1. Cilt, 334.

days following the attempts of political manipulation marked such coercive methods against the communists and left-wing elements.

In the meantime, during the Baku Congress, Communist Party of Turkey officially declared itself, in Baku, on September 10th in the foundational congress, with the claim to unite all the communist elements inside and outside the country. One of the first decisions of the party was returning to motherland. Actually, Mustafa Suphi, as the head, informed Mustafa Kemal in August of the intention to return Turkey. Before receiving a reply, but expecting to receive a positive one, the first congress of the Party was convoked in Baku and took the aforesaid decision.⁴⁸¹ Yet, was severely rejected by the leader of the Liberation War with the excuse that they wouldn't allow any radical attempt that might ruin the "national unity", namely the political alliance between the different social groups of the society.⁴⁸²

In a letter to Ali Fuat on September 14th 1920 he expressed his bitter feelings towards the Bolsheviks for organizing the Communist Party of Turkey and aiming a "social revolution" in Turkey.⁴⁸³ In the same letter, he added that if the Soviets saw any prospect of communist success in Turkey, they would not initiate material aid to the Ankara government.⁴⁸⁴ What if the Soviets declared that they would maintain contacts with the Ankara government through the Communist Party of Turkey? Kemal remarked that "communist organizations in Turkey are therefore completely against the interests" of the

⁴⁸¹ Akal, *Moskova-Ankara-Londra Üçgeninde*, 262.

⁴⁸² Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar I*, 338.

⁴⁸³ Gökay, *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey*, 24.

⁴⁸⁴ This suspicion should be caused by the dispatch by Mustafa Suphi, one of the leading members of TKP and one of his most reliable comrades, Süleyman Sami to sound out Mustafa Kemal's views on Bolshevism. He was to find out whether Mustafa Kemal would authorize the establishment of a communist organization in Anatolia and whether such an organization could survive without making too many ideological concessions. Süleyman Sami was ordered to inform the government in Ankara that Soviet aid was to be conveyed to Ankara through the Turkish Communist Party and that the Party had, as a first batch, for the use of the Ankara government, fifty cannons, seventy machine guns and seventeen thousand rifles. (Paul Dumont, "L'axe Moscou-Ankara", 172)

Turkish national movement and had therefore to be “brought to a halt and kept at a distance whatever the cost.”⁴⁸⁵

While the leadership of the Turkish national movement was preparing to take severe measures to halt the leftist oppositional activities in Anatolia, what was the attitude of the Soviets towards these movements? Was it true as it was asserted in Mustafa Kemal’s letter to Ali Fuat, that the Soviets might see any prospect for a socialist revolution in Turkey?

The envisions of a Bolshevik revolution in Anatolia even if existed sometime between 1919 to 1921, they lost their weight categorically after 1921. Actually, Turkey at the beginning of 1920, “to bolshevize” Anatolia could only be one of envisions and admittedly not the strongest one.

As it has been summarized in the Chapter II, the strategy to be followed in the East was a controversial topic. Bolsheviks never followed purely “revolutionary policy”. Immense differences between the Eastern countries in terms of their internal social and political dynamics, unstable relations with the West, the forces leading the liberation movements in the colonial and dependent countries were obstacles in front of a decisive strategy. Therefore, Bolsheviks conducted hybrid policies depending on the developments and push the limits for furthering the Soviet influence to the detriment of the British in the continent.

In the summer of 1920, Turkish delegation in Moscow waiting for Soviet officials to start the talks for an agreement, most of the Bolshevik leaders were in Petrograd for the second congress of Komintern. “Optimism about the prospects of world revolution, which had seemed in partial eclipse during the winter of 1919-1920, was once more general” and many prominent Bolsheviks were oscillating between communist propaganda as a powerful tool of foreign policy and diplomatic and military alliance with non-communist states.⁴⁸⁶ However, the idea defended by Lenin against Roy and Sultan Galiev in the second congress of Comintern triumphed and Soviet foreign policy placed on

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*. Vol. 3, 250.

the support of the bourgeoisie leaderships of the national struggles in the East.

Particularly in Turkey, in spite of the existing weakness of the organized left, in the summer of 1920, everybody felt the strong ideological influence of the Soviet regime in Anatolia. Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East in September can be considered as the climax where a horizon beyond the framework of existing leadership of Turkish national struggle was strongly emphasized. Zinovyev, the President of the Komintern, expressed their support to Kemal, without undermining that Kemalist movement had nothing to do with communism. He also emphasized, as many others the importance of awakening class-consciousness among masses in Turkey and preserving the very existence of an independent socialist political line in the country. In the resolution on Turkish national struggle, it was proposed to declare that the Congress supported the movement Anatolia with the reservation that victory over the imperialist would not necessarily mean resolution of the problems of the working masses.⁴⁸⁷

In spite of the different views emerged in the last Congress of Komintern and in spite of the theoretical assumptions among Bolshevik leadership before all, Vladimir Ilyich himself, on the possibility of transition to socialism skipping the capitalist stage in the precapitalist societies of the East⁴⁸⁸, gradualism was the predominant paradigm of the Soviet foreign affairs in their examination of Turkey and other countries in the same category.⁴⁸⁹ Therefore,

⁴⁸⁷ “However, the Congress notes that the general-national revolutionary movement in Turkey is directed only against foreign oppressors, and that success for this movement would not in the least signify the emancipation of the Turkish peasants and workers from oppression and exploitation of every kind. The success of this movement would not entail the solution of questions which are of the greatest importance for the Turkish toiling classes, namely, the agrarian question and the question of taxes, and would not eliminate the principal obstacles to the liberation of the East, namely, national discords. The Congress finds it necessary to show particular caution in relation to those leaders of the movement who in the past led the Turkish peasants and workers to the slaughter in the interests of one of the imperialist groups and thereby subjected the toiling masses of Turkey to twofold ruin in the interests of a small group of rich men and high-ranking officers. The Congress proposes to these leaders that they prove in deeds that they are now ready to serve the toiling people and make amends for their false steps in the past.” (Riddell and Aves, “To See the Dawn, 335)

⁴⁸⁸ As discussed in the previous chapter.

⁴⁸⁹ Proletariat and peasants were required to subordinate their social programme to the

Soviet government's problematic relation with the Turkish left was much complicated than a mere *realpolitik*. Lenin was the one who first formulated "gradualism". Chicherin was the one to apply it in the Eastern policy. In the opening speech of the Moscow Conference, Chicherin stressed that the reason why a proletarian revolution took place in Russia while a national revolution was happening in Turkey was the different levels of development in respective countries. Turkey had not yet reached to maturity in terms of capitalist development for the emergence of a proletarian revolution and establishment of socialism.⁴⁹⁰

What was inculcated by the Soviets to the Turkish communists was preserving independence from the bourgeoisie political currents while showing a low-profile in politics and supporting the bourgeoisie revolutionaries in order to further the accomplishments of the bourgeois revolution in Turkey, as it was advised by Radek to the Turkish communists in Komintern in 1922:

"Your job as defenders of the independence of Turkey, which is so very important to the revolution, is not yet finished. Protest against the persecution, but understand, too... that you still have a long road to travel in the company of the bourgeois revolutionaries."⁴⁹¹

The Bolsheviks were categorically opponents of creation of *artificial* revolutions without emergence of the necessary objective and subjective conditions in 1920s. Even in the Transcaucasia, as the evidences show it, they waited to the last moment in order to prevent the Sovietization to take place as a pure external intervention. There are many correspondences in which

immediate needs of a common national struggle against foreign imperialism. It was assumed that a nationally minded bourgeoisie, or even a nationally-minded feudal aristocracy, would be ready to conduct a struggle for national liberation from the yoke of foreign imperialism in alliance with potentially revolutionary proletarians and peasants, who were only waiting for the moment of victory to turn against them and overthrow them. (Carr, *Bolshevik Revolution Vol III*, 483)

⁴⁹⁰ Kheyfets, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 108.

⁴⁹¹ Gökay, *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey*, 24.

exchange of information was realized between the Soviet diplomats/military officers in Transcaucasia and Moscow on the influence of Caucasian communists among the working masses. It is a historical fact that there is no Soviet vision of revolution that did not take into account if the conditions required for a socialist revolution exist in a certain country or not.⁴⁹² Turkish communist/leftist movement essentially lacked necessary strength to turn the national revolution that was taking place in the country into a social one though bolshevism attained certain legitimacy throughout Anatolia and had a voice in the parliamentary debates during the Liberation War. So, the desire of the Soviets was in the direction of establishment of communist parties that would organize and prepare for the future an independent working class movement.

The activities of the Komintern in Turkey and the implicit support given by the Soviet embassy to the Turkish communists should be assessed in this framework. At times, the apparent role played by the Komintern functionaries employed in the Soviet embassy caused problems between the relations of two countries. And the differences between Narkomindel and Komintern, which were discussed in the Chapter II, resulted in tensions between these two, in the case of Turkish affairs, as well. Another important aspect of the issue was the Soviet reluctance to support the communist activities that they considered out of their scope, contradicted to the objective interests of the Soviets in the Near East or just unrealistic. This point is extremely important in the appraisal of the relations between the Turkish communists and the Soviet Russia. It is hard to understand the complexity of the communist struggle in Turkey at the beginning of 1920s in general; the hopeful start and tragic end of Mustafa Suphi and his comrades in particular, without taking into account this point.

When the world war stroke and Turkey joined the war on the side of Germany, Mustafa Suphi was in Caucasia, as a pan-Turkish Ottoman, who had gone there in order to work among the population for his cause.⁴⁹³ The

⁴⁹² In the worlds of Leo Trotsky in the third congress of Komintern: "But Russia could, for this very reason, be interested only in " the internal logical development " of revolution, not in artificially hastening or retarding it." Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923 Vol. 3*, 397.

⁴⁹³ He fled the country in 1914 during his confinement in Sinop due to his opposition to the

Russians took him as a civil war captive and he got familiar to socialist ideas in this period.⁴⁹⁴ He was one of the interned Ottomans in Russia who had shown success in recruiting other Turkish and Muslim internees in the Red Army after the revolution. He came to Moscow and contacted the Committee of Muslim Affairs, a structure that was affiliated to the People's Commisariat of Nationalities. He started to publish a newspaper named "Yeni Dünya"⁴⁹⁵ in Moscow. The Central Bureau of the Muslim Organization of the Russian Communist Party appointed him as the chief of International Propaganda Department.⁴⁹⁶ He worked in Kazan in 1918 and then in Crimea in 1919 among the population of Turkic origin for dissemination of socialist ideas. In Crimea, he pioneered the establishment of International Eastern Regiment, which would soon show usefulness in repulsing the White Army troops in the region. He also achieved to send many Turkish communist cadres to Istanbul and other parts of the country during his presence in Crimea. After a brief service in Turkistan, he moved to Baku in the spring 1920 where he continued to carry out his multiple tasks, both propaganda activities towards the Muslim population of different ethnic origins; and organization and unification of Turkish communist groups inside and outside the country.⁴⁹⁷

Communist Party of Turkey as a uniform organization of all the Turkish communists was established on September 10th and was officially registered as the organization of the proletariat of Turkey by the Komintern.⁴⁹⁸ As noted

Unionist government.

⁴⁹⁴ Hikmet Bayur, "Milli Mücadeleye El Koymaya Çalışanlar" *Bellekten XXXV* no. 140 (Ekim 1971), 590.

⁴⁹⁵ New World

⁴⁹⁶ Eudin and North, *Soviet Russia and the East*, 78.

⁴⁹⁷ For a full-fledged biography of Mustafa Suphi see: Emel Akal, "Mustafa Suphi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasal Düşünce: Sol*, eds., Murat Belge, Tanıl Bora, and Murat Gültekingil (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: İletişim, 2007), 138-164; for a biography of historical importance see: Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev, "Mustafa Subhi i Ego Rabota", *Izbrannye Trudy* (Kazan': Gasyr, 1998), 335-339.

⁴⁹⁸ Akal, *Moskova-Ankara-Londra Üçgeninde*, 300.

above, concomitantly, the preparations for the return to the motherland were started. However, the news from Anatolia indicated the reverse conditions for communist activities. The communist persecution had already started. Şerif Manatov⁴⁹⁹, who worked actively for communist organization during the year 1920 in Eskişehir until the time he got arrested by the security forces of the Ankara government and he fled Turkey for Baku, openly objected the return of the communists.⁵⁰⁰ Süleyman Sami, who were sent to Anatolia for talks with Mustafa Kemal, also reported that Mustafa Kemal rejected the idea of presence of “organizers from outside”.⁵⁰¹ Yet, these news did not suffice to stop the preparations. The communists in Baku conducted a comprehensive program to prepare for a broad organizational work in Turkey with a rich content. They strove to make ready a big budget in order to realize their plans. However, their demand for financial support from the presidium of the Eastern Council of Komintern was rejected. To make matters worse, the communists were asked to grant a part of their budget to the Council. Finally, their plan to return Turkey was not approved with the excuse that the methods they envisaged to apply in their work in Turkey was not compatible with the objective conditions, which at the end would harm the revolutionary cause. While the Turkish communists prepared for a widespread and legal propaganda work, Komintern foresaw an illegal, small-scale organizational activity by a secret cadre.⁵⁰² Mustafa Suphi’s insistence met with a similar attitude in a meeting with the participation of Stalin at the beginning of November. Stalin told Turkish communists about the difficulties of struggle and explained them the impossibility to work as a small Soviet state with full-fledged functions and

⁴⁹⁹ Şerif Manatov was a Tatar nationalist who carried high-ranking duties in the first Bashkir Republic. He had very close relations with Moscow; and assumed an important position in the Committee of Muslim Affairs, an organ affiliated to People’s Commissariat of Nationalities in the year 1918. However, he lost credit from both nationalist circles and bolsheviks and traveled to Anatolia.

⁵⁰⁰ Yücel Demirel, *Dönüş Belgeleri-1* (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2004), 167.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 113.

⁵⁰² BCA 930.1/1.13.1.

paid officials in the middle of Anatolia.⁵⁰³ TKP's budget was reduced by two third.⁵⁰⁴ After the meeting, the central committee of TKP seemed to adopt a lower-profile in terms of their activities in Turkey. On November 8th, they declared their unconditional support to the Ankara government as the most important task of the moment.⁵⁰⁵ Soon, the decision on the hold of the return to Turkey was loosened. In Central Committee meeting on November 15th, the return plan rehandled and then the preparations restarted.⁵⁰⁶ The change in the decision about the return might also be the result of the change in the calculations of the Soviet government due to several new developments. By November, Turkish attack towards Armenia, for the Soviets, turned into an event unpredictable in terms of how far the Turkish Army might go. On the eve of Sovietization of Armenia, Turkish advance across the Transcaucasian lands was extremely disturbing. Secondly, Sovyet government was also uneasy about the news coming from Soviet embassy in Ankara on the secret talks between Ankara government and France; on the change in the Istanbul government, replacement of Damat Ferit with moderate Tevfik Pasha, and the delegation sent by the new government to Anatolia for reconciliation. Therefore, it is a possibility that in the face of suspicions about the upcoming steps of the Turkish government, to put the plan of the return of the Turkish communists into operation might have been considered an appropriate move.

Different from a few months ago, Mustafa Suphi and his comrades were now aware of the hardships that they might encounter in Turkey. An anti-

⁵⁰³ Demirel, *Dönüş belgeleri-1*, 308-310.

⁵⁰⁴ Akal, *Moskova-Ankara-Londra Üçgeninde*, 311.

⁵⁰⁵ Demirel, *Dönüş Belgeleri-1*, 154.

⁵⁰⁶ Akal, *Moskova-Ankara-Londra Üçgeninde*, 312. Turkish Red Regiment, which was decided to found by Committee of Muslim Affairs in 1918, was sent before the TKP members set out from Baku. Otherwise, it might be another reason of tension since it would give the intention that the communists were returning to the country with their armed forces. On the way, they found themselves in the middle of the battle between the Red Army and Armenian Army, and suffered heavy losses. The commander of the regiment turned back to Baku. The rest of the regiment could only be sent to Turkey after the massacre of the TKP members. The soldiers of the regiment were distributed to various fronts. *Ibid.*, 316.

bolshevik propaganda throughout Anatolia was conducted by pro-Western, anti-Soviet, right wing elements of Turkish politics. The Ankara government showed its reluctance to accept their return by every possible means. From the beginning of their entrance to country especially in Erzurum, they faced a cruel manner mostly due to the provocations and threats of the local authorities. They were sent to Trabzon in order to be deported. It was their final stop before they were massacred in the middle of the Black Sea in the boat that was taking them to Batum. Mustafa Suphi and fifteen other Turkish communist leaders were killed in the Black Sea on January 28th. The incident was a definite reason of hatred towards the Turkish government. Yet, Soviet reaction was not so harsh.

In February 1921, when the Turkish delegation was already in Moscow, Yusuf Kemal conveys in his memoirs from his conversations with Chicherin that Soviet foreign affairs uttered their consideration on inconvenience of a communist transformation in Turkey. Chicherin said that they knew very well that the situation in Turkey was not suitable for that; and the Soviet government never supported the excessive efforts of young and inexperienced communists in the Eastern countries.⁵⁰⁷ Therefore, while unwillingly approved the return of the TKP members to Turkey due to the insistence of, before all, Mustafa Suphi, and due to certain political calculations, they did not give the expected reaction against their massacre. It was a striking sign of the will of the Soviet government to reconcile with the Turkish government.

In the resolution adopted by Turkish Communist Party in 1923 it was contended that Ankara government reflected itself as Soviet friend and “leftist” by supporting Yeşil Ordu⁵⁰⁸ and then establishing a fake Communist Party in order to gain the trust of the Soviet government. However, it cruelly persecuted communists in Turkey especially when it needed to give a clear message to the Entente that it has nothing to do with Bolshevism or communism. According to

⁵⁰⁷ Tengirşenk, *Vatan Hizmetinde*, 205.

⁵⁰⁸ Green Army

the resolution, the realization of the Mustafa Suphi's and others' murder in January 1921 was directly related with the concurrent ongoing talks in London between the Turkish delegation and Entente diplomats.⁵⁰⁹ Yet, there was no reference to the Soviet attitude toward the persecution of the communists. One possibility is that the obligation of the Soviets to accord with the Kemalists was well understood and Komintern was the one to make the harsh denunciations on communist hunting of the Ankara government:

Remember comrades, that the gloom of dungeons could not obscure the sun of the revolution the Third International considers it an essential duty to do everything in its power to rescue you from the hands of your hangmen.⁵¹⁰

However the predominant idea in the minds of the bolshevik leadership was as it was summarized by Bukharin in the 12th congress of the Party in April 1923 that Turkey, “in spite of all persecutions of communists, plays a revolutionary role, since she is a destructive instrument in relation to the imperialist system as a whole.”⁵¹¹

4.3 Ardous process towards Moscow Agreement

Kemalists weighted Soviet reaction vis-à-vis the repressions on the communists. The low-profile of the reactions after the massacre in the Black Sea was an important sign that the Soviets did not consider these repressions as an obstacle to Soviet-Turkish convergence. The urgency to prescribe Turkish-Soviet friendship prevailed. By December the conditions for an agreement had already seemed to be formed. Eventually, the details that created new tensions were resolved. Both sides declared the composition of their delegations. Yusuf Kemal, the minister of economy, Rıza Nur, the minister of education, and Ali Fuat, prospective Turkish ambassador in Moscow, would represent Turkey.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 115.

⁵¹⁰ Eudin and North, *Soviet Russia and the East*, 153.

⁵¹¹ Carr, *Bolshevik Revolution Vol. 3*, 484.

Only eight days after the murder of Mustafa Suphi and his comrades, the Turkish delegation set out for their journey to Moscow.

In his memoirs, Yusuf Kemal (Tengirsenk), the head of the Turkish delegation, mentions that they met with a totally different attitude from the Soviets than the previous time, in summer 1920. Their trip was planned through Baku. After meeting several prominent Bolsheviks there, such as Eliava, Ordjonikidze and Narimanov, on February 6th, they departed from Baku to Moscow. On the way, he tells their train was stopped on various stations on the Red Army soldiers' request to see the Turkish delegation. After the mutual demonstration of sympathy, they were sent off with exclamations of "Hurrah!"⁵¹²

Meanwhile a new source of discomfort for Moscow emerged. As Entente attempts to convince the Kemalists to a Sevres like agreement with some minor changes through surreptitious channels failed, the new move was to convey a conference in London where the conflicting views of France and Britain would be tried to reconcile and to negotiate once again with Turkey about the terms of a new agreement to replace caducous Sevres.⁵¹³ Ankara government's acceptance to send a delegation to London right beside the delegation of Istanbul government revived the still fresh suspicions of Moscow. The invitation came after successful repulse of the Greek troops by the Turkish army in the vicinity of Inonu. Yet, Ankara government did not set much hope to the talks in London, rather they found a refusal at that point inconvenient. Mustafa Kemal did speeches emphasising that the participation in London Conference did not necessarily mean a break up with the Soviets. For him, Turkey should counter the Entente propaganda about warmongering of the Turks.⁵¹⁴ Yet, it was not easy to appease the Russians. The news coming from the Soviet press bureau (zavinformburo) in Trabzon headed by G.

⁵¹² Tengirşenk, *Vatan Hizmetinde*, 203.

⁵¹³ Gasratyan and Arsenovich, *SSSR i Turtsiya 1917-1979*, 34.

⁵¹⁴ *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 6 February 1921.

Astahov informed that “the general impression is that the Kemalists are very carefully establish the bridge for a possible transition to the Entente camp or, at least, for breaking up with the Soviet Russia.”⁵¹⁵

The head of the delegation to be sent to London was another source of discomfort for the Soviets. The Turkish foreign affairs minister Bekir Sami was still recalled with the irreconcilable attitude in summer and his counter-revolutionary activities in Caucasia during the trip back home. As a matter of fact, the diplomacy conducted, the promises given to and the agreements signed with the Entente states by Bekir Sami on behalf of Ankara government were such as to prove Soviet discomfort. Bekir Sami was said to promise Turkish contribution to a Caucasian Federation with the aim to counter the Soviet existence in the region.⁵¹⁶ French diplomat, a specialist on the Near East Franklin Bouillon was stating that France should conclude a treaty with Turkey, with the aim of spreading French influence in Caucasia and opening the path for Caucasian federation composed of independent Kuban, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Dagestan.⁵¹⁷ Bekir Sami signed agreements with French and Italian authorities. Both agreements included ceasefire and exchange of war captives. The agreement with Italy envisaged Turkihs-Italian economic cooperation for the development of Turkish economy. In return of the concession given to Italian capital like Eregli coalmines and others, Italy promised to support Turkey for the returning of Northern Trace and Izmir to Turkey.⁵¹⁸ In the agreement with France, the Turkish-Syrian boundary was determined where Cilicia remained as the French sphere of influence. Concession of Baghdad Railway construction was given to France, concession

⁵¹⁵ AVPRF, f. 132, op. 4, 6, d. 10.

⁵¹⁶ Documents on British Foreign Policy, XIII, 669, According to an assumption, British government had a clear idea that at that point an anti-soviet federation in Caucasia was not likely. Still they used these kinds of talks with Bekir Sami in order to stop the Bolsheviks supporting Turkish national movement. That is why they deliberately enabled the Russians to know the whole content of the talks with Bekir Sami. Kheyfets and Akademiya Nauk SSSR, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 89.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁵¹⁸ Rumbold, *İngiliz Yıllık Raporları'nda Türkiye 1921*, 40.

of Ergani mines as well. Bekir Sami's statements published in London newspaper *Petit Journal* about his content for the conclusion of French-Turkish agreement created a particular reaction in Soviet foreign affairs. France for a while was conducting a plan to create an anti-bolshevik camp in the Eastern Europe. It was planned to realize by stimulating the French influence in Poland and by luring Romania into the same camp. Turkey, with its unique geographical position, was a crucial candidate for this anti-bolshevik camp. After reminding all these points to Ahmet Muhtar, Chicherin in his note dated March 12th, asked whom Bekir Sami represented in London Conference: "Istanbul government or Ankara government? If it is Ankara government, is there a change in orientation?"⁵¹⁹

Bekir Sami's proposal of peace, which was more or less the replication of the national pact, did not gain recognition by the Entente. Therefore, the conference did not give a successful result. In Bekir Sami's return to Ankara, the agreements signed by him were not approved in the national assembly and he was dismissed from his ministerial post.

The talks in London were partly coincided with the ones in Moscow and the news from London immediately was received by the Soviet authorities via Krasin, the head of commercial delegation in London. The synchrony of the conferences served for something else. With the purpose to show the vulnerability of the "ally" of the Kemalist government, British press broadcasted false news on simultaneous revolts in Moscow and Petrograd against the Soviet government. A member of Turkish delegation later wrote: "We learnt from our delegation in Moscow that even a word written in the British press was not true about the disturbances in the Soviet Russia."⁵²⁰

Unofficial talks in Moscow started on February 21th and the conference was launched officially on February 26. It was declared to the Turkish delegation that due to the historical moment in the relations with Great Britain,

⁵¹⁹ DVP, III, 589.

⁵²⁰ A. M. Shamsutdinov and A. Hasanoğlu, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Yıllarında Türkiye-Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet, 2000), 46; Yusuf Kemal in his memoirs confirmed the words of this member of the delegation in London.

Soviet government couldn't venture a military agreement with Turkey. Instead, They proposed a friendship and fraternity agreement and promised continuing the dispatch of all necessary military and financial aid.⁵²¹

From the beginning of the conference to the signing of the agreement, which was based upon the draft signed by Bekir Sami and Chicherin in August with various amendments and supplements. Three commissions worked simultaneously during the conference: Political, judicial and editorial.

The conference lasted for about a month. The biggest issue that prolonged the talks was about the frontiers. It was not just a controversial issue on the table. There was an ongoing process in the region. As noted above, occupation of Batum by the Turkish army was imminent. Soviet leaders attributed the "deliberate defer" of the conclusion of the agreement by the Turkish delegation to the plans over Batum. Because as the agreement would be concluded, Turkish claims on Batum that was based upon Treaty of Brest Litovsk would become obsolete. Lenin wrote Chicherin that the reason why Turkey delayed the signing of the agreement in order to gain time when their troops advanced through Batum. He adds, "we shouldn't allow them to make use of this delay. Consider the following measure: give a half an hour break to talk to me, and let Stalin at that time openly talk to the Turkish delegation in order to clear the work and go until the end today."⁵²² Indeed, on that very day, the political commission⁵²³ of the conference came to an agreement on the frontiers. While Batum was given to Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic, it was accepted to grant the Turkish population there a wide sphere of autonomy and to Turkish merchants free transaction on the border. For the details, Turkish delegation asked for a distinct conference with Georgian SSR. In order to block any future demands for amendment on the frontier issues, Soviet delegation

⁵²¹ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hâtıraları*, 139.

⁵²² Lenin V. I. *Poln. sobr. soch.*, t.52, s. 92. 1.

⁵²³ Members of this commission were G. V. Chicherin, D. Korkmasov, Yusuf Kemal, Ali Fuat and Riza Nur.

required the decisions taken in Moscow conference as the basis for the future conferences.

In spite of the decisions taken in the conference, Turkish march to Batum continued. Member of Caucasian front Military Revolutionary Council Ordzhonikidze wrote Moscow that, when he informed Kazim Karabekir about the decision to leave Batum to Georgia in Moscow Conference, Karabekir replied he did not have any communication with the Turkish delegation there.⁵²⁴ Ordzhonikidze regarded this act as the initiative of Eastern Command of Turkish Army in order to spoil Soviet-Turkish agreement.⁵²⁵ On March 18th, the Menshevik government that had retreated to Batum from the capital left the city to Turkish troops, fleeing on an Italian ship. Kazım Karabekir in pursuant to the authority given to him by the Grand National Assembly, declared the unification of Batum with Turkey.⁵²⁶ It was a moment when the armies two “allied” governments, which not long ago signed an agreement, came closest to a clash. Caucasian Iron Cavalcade surrounded the city when the Turkish troops were still inside.⁵²⁷ It was not until when Revolutionary Military Council of Caucasian Front front received the official document of the Moscow agreement and conveyed it to the Turkish Army Command on 23th that Turkish troops started to leave the city. On the 24th, Ordzhonikidze informed Moscow that Turks had completely evacuated the city.⁵²⁸

The political commission also determined the Turkish-Armenian frontier. The fundamental decision was that Kars, Ardahan, Artvin were left to Turkey. The further questions on frontier issue would be decided in separate conference, which would take the principal decisions of Moscow Conference granted. Nakhchivan was a region both Turkey and Azerbaijan SSR had claims

⁵²⁴ AVPRF, f. 132, op. 4, 5, d. 22.

⁵²⁵ Shamsutdinov and Hasanoğlu, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Yıllarında*, 58.

⁵²⁶ Kheyfets, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 100.

⁵²⁷ Gökay and Yalçın, *Bolşevizm ile Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, 121.

⁵²⁸ RGASPI, f. 85, op. 15, d. 185.

on. Turkish Army entered the region during Turkish-Armenian war and declared Turkish government's jurisprudence in the district. However, Soviet part, depending on the invalidity of Alexandropol Treaty asserted that this district should stay as an autonomous part of Azerbaijan. At the end, the delegations agreed upon this principle, with the reservation, which was requested by Turkish delegation, that no other third state could claim this district.⁵²⁹

Apart from the articles on the frontiers, there were other striking articles that had important repercussions on Soviet-Turkish relations in the following years.⁵³⁰ According to article 4, both sides had the freedom to choose their system of government. This principle of non-intervention towards the system of government was especially important vis-à-vis the internal and external critiques on Turkish-Soviet relations. The article became a crucial tool in eliminating the doubts on the essence of these relations. Article 8 was completing the mutual guarantee of non-intervention. According to that, the parties accepted not to give any support to the establishment and existence of organizations or groups that were contender to political power in the other country or in the certain region of that country. The main targets in mind were communists in Turkey and nationalists in Central Asia. The articles 6 and 7 marked a clean sheet in the history of Turkish-Russian relations. All the previous treaties signed by the tsars and sultans were declared obsolete. All the capitulations and privileges granted to Russia in tsarist times were cancelled. As previously stated many times by the Soviets, in the 5th article, the new Turkish state was recognized as the only sovereign on the city of Istanbul and the straits. The regulations about the transactions regarding the straits were decided to be determined in another conference organized by the Black Sea states. With the notes exchanged concomitantly with the signing of the agreement, the parties undertook the responsibility of informing the other party in case of any fundamental change in foreign policy. In addition to this, the

⁵²⁹ RGASPI, f. 122, op. 1, d. 192.

⁵³⁰ For the whole text, DVP, III.

parties also undertook to inform the other party of any talks with other states and no to sign any agreement without the knowledge of the other party.⁵³¹ These provisions later would be both restricting on the maneuvers of the parties in the international arena and the base for mutual accusations about the violation of them.

The agreement and the notes were followed by a protocol about the Soviet financial and military aid to Turkey amounted 10 million rubles.⁵³²

Moscow Conference was held in very extraordinarily difficult conditions. The frontier issue tried to be solved under very unstable circumstances in the region. The conflict between the two parties, which almost escalated into a military clash, hardened the conduction of the talks. Lenin on March 10th was stressing, in the note he wrote to Stalin, how difficult to decide on any detail. He said, “we have to drive a hard bargain with the Turks whenever an agreement is to be concluded. Every point, every coma can be determined after exhausting struggles.”⁵³³ When explaining the importance of this conference to a group of workers and peasants in Moscow Soviet general assembly, Lenin couldn’t help admitting the low-profile of the talks.⁵³⁴ A few days later, on March 1st, Chicherin was informing Krestinsky, a senior member of the Politburo, that the relations with Turkey was in extremely critical stage. He mentioned the possibility of a complete change in political orientation of the Turks and he urged about the extremely hard situation that would be generated by this change in Soviet eastern policy. He pointed out that Turkish insistence about the border line that was determined by the national oath and about the validity of Alexandropol Treaty put the conference into a deadlock and he added: “Whatever the results of the conference would be, a very hard time is

⁵³¹ Shamsutdinov, *Kurtuluş savaşı yıllarında Türkiye-Sovyetler birliği ilişkileri*, 53

⁵³² Through a comprehensive study of the sources informing about the total aid done by the Soviets to the Turkish nationalists during the years of National Liberation War, Stefanos Yerasimos gave a reliable account. (Yerasimos, *Türk-Soviet İlişkileri*, 614-619)

⁵³³ RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 57.

⁵³⁴ DVP, III, 548.

waiting for us in our relations with Turkey”⁵³⁵ On March 3rd, Ahmet Muhtar in his note to Chicherin, would frankly speak about the political pressure that the proponents of Soviet-Turkish rapprochement in the government were exposed within the Grand National Assembly.⁵³⁶

Therefore, the conclusion of the agreement did not mark the elimination of tensions and doubts. As it will be discussed in the following parts of the study, the brief experience from the beginning of the first interactions between the Soviet government and national movement in Turkey to the conclusion of the agreement, would determine the coordinates of the basic issues and tensions of the parties. Yet, for both parties that considered an alliance an obligation for their foreign policy interests, this agreement terminated a state of relations that was totally ruleless and unpredictable.

Soviet writers frequently exemplified the importance attributed to the conference by the Soviets with the close attention of Lenin on the proceeding of the conference. Chicherin’s personal narration is quoted: “I recall during the Moscow Conference with Turkey, how carefully Vladimir Il’ich questioned me on the phone every evening about what was done during the day and with what kind of a lively interest he approached the fate of these talks.”⁵³⁷ Turkish and Soviet sided finally reached an agreement less than a month after the treaties with Iran and Afghanistan were concluded.⁵³⁸ It was a victory for the Soviets to be able to reach agreement with the national bourgeoisies of these countries that were evaluated under the same category as “semi-colonial”. These agreements, of which most striking ring was the one with Turkey, Soviet authorities officialized the unity of action against British imperialism. By any stretch of the imagination, it was a significant historical stage in the Soviet eastern policy. The coincidence of these agreements with the conclusion of a

⁵³⁵ RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 57. Chicherin saw the key to open the deadlock in sending a “real ambassador” to Ankara. This aspect of the issue will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁵³⁶ DVP, III, 514.

⁵³⁷ Chicherin and Trofimova, *Stat'i i Rechi*, 283.

⁵³⁸ Tengirşenk, *Vatan Hizmetinde*, 215.

commercial treaty in London was remarkable. Together they heralded a new period of Soviet foreign policy whose framework was determined on the one hand continuous quest for reconciliation with the Western countries and on the other hand leveraging its hand in European politics by maintaining certain power of influence in the East. This was the general framework, by no means exempt from failures and achievement both because of the state of affairs external to the Soviets and Soviet power's own limitations and abilities in terms of capacity of an effective foreign policy. This period would roughly continue until 1925.

4.4 After the agreement: Crisis and reconciliation (Spring-Autumn 1921)

Moscow agreement was by no means a moment that the parties a break from the existing problems among themselves. This fact soon became apparent right after the end of the Moscow conference. The Dashnak rebellion started in Yerevan could only be suppressed at the beginning of April. During the rebellion, Armenia witnessed an ambiguity about the possession of political power in the country. During those days, Soviet government put no pressure on the Turkish government in order them to give the instruction for the evacuation of Alexandropol, since there was the threat of a Dashnak invasion of the city. When the rebellion was suppressed, basing on the Moscow agreement, Soviet government asked for an immediate evacuation. When Kazim Karabekir refused to do that with the justification that Armenian government did not fulfill the requirements of the Alexandropol Treaty and did not concede the arms to the Turkish army. The reaction of Soviet side was very harsh. Soviets were considering the refusal of evacuation as Kazim Karabekir's personal initiative supported by the right-wing elements in Ankara.⁵³⁹ After the meeting with the Turkish ambassador Ali Fuat, Chicherin wrote to Ordzhonikidze: "Ali Fuat promised my immediate evacuation of Alexandropol. I inform him about the hooliganism of Kazim Karabekir with the warning that a war between

⁵³⁹ Soviets had a strong conviction that Turkish political cadre was definitely divided along pro and anti-Soviet lines. This topic will be handled later in this chapter.

Turkey and Armenian Soviet republic will mean a war between Turkey and Soviet Russia.”⁵⁴⁰ On 11th, Ordzhonikidze notified Moscow about the postponement of the dispatch of the gold and weapons that were to send to Ankara.⁵⁴¹ Turkish army evacuated the city on April 22th, after a note from Red Army Command in Caucasia informing that Red Army troops were standing at attention for a march towards the city.

Though until the Second World War Turkey and Russia would never come to a direct clash along the frontiers there would always be tensions regarding the region that was cut by Turkish-Soviet border. The treatment of Molokan and Orthodox Russian population historically settled in Kars and Artvin resulted in a new crisis to the end of spring of 1921. It came after a brief calm period following the evacuation of Alexandropol.

In mid April Turkish delegation headed by Yusuf Kemal went to Caucasia in order to meet with Ordzhonikidze, Soviet representative in Caucasian republics Legran and Azerbaijan's foreign affairs minister Gusejnov to exchange on on Turkish-Caucasian conference and the crisis in Alexandropol. The debate was on whether separate conferences with each republic would take place or one joint conference would be organized with the participation of all the Caucasian republics. Turkish side was especially insistent for Azerbaijan asserting historical and cultural intimacy of Turkey with this country. Finally the agreement that was reached on the issue was that there would be a common conference but separate treaties would be signed. However, for a long time Turkish side took no concrete step. Legran interpreted situation as Turkey lost its interest upon the issue since it was disappointed with the result that the conference with the Caucasian republics would only be a continuation of the Moscow Conference.⁵⁴² The first development after a long silence was Yusuf Kemal's request for designation of

⁵⁴⁰ DVP, IV, 50.

⁵⁴¹ Kheyfets, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 122.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, 162.

Ankara as place of the Caucasian conference.⁵⁴³ The Caucasian counterparts refused the proposal. None of the parties desired to be far from their center due problematic communication possibilities in the region. Late in August, for some reason, maybe because the current conditions of war, Turkish government consented to realize the conference in Kars and proposed third week of September as the date of the conference.⁵⁴⁴

Before the conference Chicherin's note to Soviet ambassador in Ankara Natsarenius was heralding the Soviet attitude in the conference. Soviet delegation would by no means agree upon any concession about borders that were not made in Moscow Agreement. And the delegation also wouldn't be demanding more than the Soviets had taken in Moscow at a time when Turkey was experiencing an extraordinary hardship in the war with Greece. He also mentions Yusuf Kemal's proposal for a wider agreement on all the issues regarding Turkish-Soviet relations. Chicherin reminded at the end of the note that that Soviet Russia did not have the necessary material conditions and arms to enter into any military adventure.⁵⁴⁵ Turkish government before the Moscow Conference did such a proposal. Soviet Russia with an absolute coherence with the policy of peaceful coexistence with the Western capitalist world, although it supported National Liberation War in Turkey rigorously abstained from any military clash with any of the Entente powers.

The decisions on Kars Conference taken in the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the RKP(b) on October 3rd, were totally compatible with the directives of Chicherin. Those decisions were embracing the principle to stay in the boundaries of the Moscow agreement and rejection of a military agreement between Transcaucasian republics and Ankara government. It was also decided to bring forward during the decision the question about using the pastures and salt pins in the Kagyzman region and the copper mines in Choroh

⁵⁴³ DVP, IV, 228.

⁵⁴⁴ DVP, IV, 293.

⁵⁴⁵ AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, 232, d. 52994.

region. In the meeting, it was also assumed that during the conference, none of the representatives of the Transcaucasian republics would act contrary to the unity of voice and action of the republics.⁵⁴⁶

Turkish government was preparing for the conference in a very difficult situation. The battle around Sakarya was still continuing, creating many hardships and political tensions. There were already personalities within the political circles who openly opposed the intimacy with the Soviets. The suspicions derived from the Soviet actions were generating real concerns in this atmosphere. Soviet embassy was under the pressure of the Turkish government:

Turkish government and especially Yusuf Kemal fear our imperialistic, great power politics that we developed with the new course in the internal policy and would be first practiced on the relations with the Anatolian Turkey. In all the conversations without exception, on Caucasian Conference or concession of Çoruh copper mines... Mustafa Kemal sees our intrigues in relation to Turkish government. Yusuf Kemal inferred from our insistence about the place of the conference to be Kars that we want to take Kars back and give to Armenia. Many times I listened Mustafa Kemal's and Yusuf Kemal's complaints about Moscow's support and aid to Enver Pasha and about a military preparation of Transcaucasian republics against Turkey.⁵⁴⁷

In the background of the opening of the conference in the last week of September, as proposed by Yusuf Kemal, with the enthusiastic welcoming of people in Kars to the foreign delegations, there was such a big cloud of suspicion. The Treaty of Kars was signed by Turkey on the one hand Transcaucasian Republics on the other hand on October 13th. Representative of Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (RSFSR)⁵⁴⁸, Ja. C. Ganecki was

⁵⁴⁶ RGASPI, f. 64, op. 1, d. 1

⁵⁴⁷ From the report of an official, B. Piskunov, in Soviet Mission, Ankara. AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, 232, d. 52992.

⁵⁴⁸ This title was changed to Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1922 December 30th. The change was realized through conclusion of an unification agreement between Russian SFSR, Ukrainian SSR, Belarusian SSR and Transcaucasian SSR. (*Istoriya SSSR*, 114-117)

also present in the conference and signed the Treaty. This agreement with Turkey marked an important stage for the Caucasian republics towards a Transcaucasian federation. Soviets neither before the conference, nor during its proceeding did not allow Turkey to enhance particular relations in each of the Caucasian republics and insisted upon conclusion of a single agreement.⁵⁴⁹ They were for a while acting with utmost concurrence and was preparing for a unification. In accordance with that, the only substantial difference of Treaty of Kars from Moscow Agreement was the article on the invalidity of all previous agreements signed by Transcaucasian states or agreements signed by a third country but had provisions regarding Caucasian states. The only exception was Moscow Agreement itself.⁵⁵⁰

4.5 If the Kemalists “surrender”: Enver Pasha crisis

In the summer of 1921, Turkish-Greek war reached to a very critical stage. Greek army offensive towards the inner Anatolia; and that evacuation of Ankara came to the fore, brought the Ankara government into a strong political pressure inside. It was exposed to the accusation from the “right-wing” for not to reconcile with the West missing the opportunities emerged up until that day; and instead to prefer to affiliate to Russia.⁵⁵¹ On the other hand, they had the intelligence that Enver Pasha was waiting with his forces in Batum for a possible failure or surrender of the Kemalists in order to enter to Anatolia. His entourages in Ankara were ready for a coup d’etat.⁵⁵² The part of the story regarding the Turkish-Soviet relations was the speculation that the Soviet

⁵⁴⁹ Three Soviet republics of Transcaucasia were unified under the title of Federal Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of Transcaucasia with an agreement signed by the representatives of the three republics, Armenian SSR, Azerbaijan SSR and Georgian SSR in March 12th, 1922. (L. V Zhukova and L. A Katsva, *Istoriya Rossii v Datah: Spravochnik* [Moskva: Prospekt, 2010], 162)

⁵⁵⁰ For the whole text of the Treaty see: DVP, IV, 420-429.

⁵⁵¹ The questions about the orientation of Turkey were especially raised during the session for the discussion and ratification of Moscow Agreement on July 21th. *TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi*, 1. Dönem, 11. Cilt, 53. Birleşim, 337-333.

⁵⁵² Gökay, *Bolşevizm ile Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, 158.

government supported Enver Pasha. Though Soviet foreign affairs had definitely refused that support, later, the documents revealed that connection.

A letter from Enver Pasha on February 1921 where he entitled himself as “former minister of war of Ottoman Empire and member of the triumvirate of the Young Turks” to Lenin reveals on the one hand that he was under the auspices of Soviet Russia and on the other hand he was acting according to his own agenda. Enver Pasha was in Germany. He informs Lenin that he decided to go Afghanistan through Bukhara without stopping by Moscow “to avoid prosecution of English”. He adds he decided to travel incognito and did not inform anybody about it in advance. He asks Lenin to inform Chicherin on the issue.⁵⁵³

During the days when Turkish-Soviet tension still did not come to a halt in connection with Alexandropol crisis, on April 22-23th, Narkomindel and Politburo discussed about giving a financial support to Enver for his activities and for publication of a newspaper in Turkey in Moscow in a series of correspondence. Therefore, it is understood that Russian Communist Party’s politburo released certain amount of financial resource to Enver Pasha in pursuant with the request of Chicherin.⁵⁵⁴

A correspondence from August 26th indicates the size of the joint plans of the Soviets with Enver Pasha. In his secret note from Tiflis to Moscow, to Lenin, Stalin and Chicherin, Ordzhonikidze mentions a mission called “Bagirov mission.”⁵⁵⁵ It is understood from the text that this mission was directly related to a plan for military and political alteration of the Kemalists by Enver and his forces in case of military defeat of Turkish troops or reconciliation of the Kemalist government with the Entente powers. He says, if this mission fails then “we bring about the hostility of Kemalist Turkey that might give any concession to Entente and strive to devastate us in Caucasia.

⁵⁵³ RGASPI, f. 2, op. 2, d. 516.

⁵⁵⁴ Rem Kazandzhian, *Bolşevik, Kemalist, İttihatçı İlişkileri: Yeni Belgeler 1920-1922* (Beyoğlu, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2000).

⁵⁵⁵ Enver was using this surname. AVPRF, f. 04. Op. 39. p. 232. d. 52992.

Although to have Enver is a political advantage for us, if fails we inevitably collide with the Turks.” It is also revealed that a group of people from Ankara who came to visit Enver in Batum or Tiflis planned to organize a conference.⁵⁵⁶ According to Ordzhonikidze, Budu Mdivani commented that it is not necessary for the time being and that Enver should be sent back.⁵⁵⁷ However, it seems that Chicherin did not agree on this. In accordance with the developments in Turkey, which was struggling in a battle whose result was unforeseeable, he must have envisaged, Enver could still be necessary. On September 13th, Stalin wrote Chicherin that Ordzhonikidze tried to persuade Enver to return to Moscow together, but he rejects. Stalin adds, “maybe, you were right, Enver is now necessary there. Let him operate.”⁵⁵⁸

Victory in battle of Sakarya would normally expected to put an end to the plans to alter the Kemalists with Enver group if necessary. However, activities of Enver Pasha in the Soviet territories and his supporters in Anatolia and in other places continued for a while to occupy the agenda of Soviet foreign affairs.

A month later, the report of Soviet ambassador Natsarenus to Moscow was reflected his uneasiness about the Enver issue. On October 16th, he reported, Mustafa Kemal had detailed information about Enver. “The asylum offered by Gyul'tsman to Enver (M. Kemal even knows that Enver uses the surname, Bagirov), Enver's trip to Batum at a very politically vivid moment, Gjul'cman's help to Enver in order him to contact with Anatolia, Enver's intention to infiltrate to Anatolia. All of them pour oil on the flames which now ignites Russian-Turkish relations.”⁵⁵⁹ Naceranus states that Turkish-Russian relations at that moment were ever worse than they had been in the time of

⁵⁵⁶ Halil Pasha mentions such a conference in his memoirs. But as he reflects, it is just a small meeting with the participation of Enver, Küçük Talat and himself. But Enver pretended to organize a conference; he did not contravened his nephew. Kut and Sorgun, *Bitmeyen Savaş*, 361.

⁵⁵⁷ RGASPI, f. 85, op. C/Turtsii, d. 5.

⁵⁵⁸ RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 824.

⁵⁵⁹ AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, 232, d. 52992.

London Conference in February. He proposes Soviet foreign affairs to avoid Turkish government to change side towards the Entente even at the expense of some new concessions.⁵⁶⁰ The day after Narkomindel received this report, Chicherin wrote the Politburo that he agreed with Natsarenus on the Enver issue. Yet, he asserts, Soviets should prepare for necessary maneuvers in Caucasia, which would only be realized in case of a substantial shift in Turkey's orientation.⁵⁶¹ It was at a time when, as will be discussed above, the Soviets extremely suspected about the secret aspects of French-Turkish talks that taking place in Ankara.

From the beginning, Chicherin was firmly defended the necessity to create an option to alter the Kemalists in Ankara. He believed in the power of Enver to influence his large network in Turkey and Anatolia. Unionist reflected themselves from the beginning deadly opponents of Great Britain and enthusiastic warriors of Asian independence. Ideologically, these features must have fit to the framework of Soviet eastern policy in 1920-1921. However, the considerations of Soviet leaders on the Unionists were transforming. Though the danger to lose Turkey to Entente was still burning, to confront with Ankara because of the unpredictable actions of adventours Enver was considered even more dangerous. Besides that, general tendency with the launching of NEP policy and peaceful coexistence, the priorities had changed in the East and Kemalists started to be perceived as suitable partners who looked more likely than before to triumph over the Greek army and gain country's independence from the Entente. Stalin wrote Chicherin on 17th, same that politburo received Chicherin's assessment on Naceranus's report. In this outspoken letter, he admits "we have committed the 'sin' of using Enver to intrigue against Kemal and betraying him for a moment." He suggested that it was the time to correct this error.⁵⁶²

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ RGASPI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 25721.

⁵⁶² RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 824.

Another secret telegram from Chicherin to B. Natsarenus, dated to November 6th, completes the previous correspondences and shed a little bit lighter on the issue. Chicherin informs Natsarenus of Enver's trip to Batum, his promise personally to Chicherin when leaving Moscow to wage a war against Mustafa Kemal on the condition of his "betrayal". However, he adds, "he breached the trust on him in Batum and we called him back to Moscow." Chicherin further explains that when Mustafa Kemal's luck turned,⁵⁶³ the instruction from Moscow not to allow Enver to Ankara came out to be so appropriate.⁵⁶⁴ Finally, Chicherin also seemed to leave plans over Enver completely behind. But it wouldn't take so long to convince the Kemalist leadership of outdatedness of Enver, since he soon appeared in Bukhara on the front line of Basmachi uprising against the Bolsheviks.⁵⁶⁵

Concomitantly with the disengagement of Enver Pasha from Soviet government and his preparations for organizing an uprising in Turkestan, the political opposition composed of his supporters in Ankara was losing their influence. This change was strikingly reflected in Soviet ambassadorial reports from Ankara to Moscow. But before touching upon the situation of Enverist opposition in Ankara, the conjunction that Turkey entered in the autumn of 1921, as in the way Soviet foreign affairs perceived it, should be portrayed.

4.6 When Soviet foreign affairs were isolated

Battle of Sakarya without any doubt marked a turning point that approximated Turkey to political independence. De facto authority of Government of Grand National Assembly in Ankara was consolidated. With the victory, the negotiations with the Entente powers also attained a new base. The idea that was discussed since the beginning of the year among the Entente powers - impracticability of Sevres as was- became much more dominant.

⁵⁶³ He must be talking about the victory in Battle of Sakarya in August-September 1921.

⁵⁶⁴ Kazandzhian, *Bolşevik, Kemalist, İttihatçı İlişkileri*.

⁵⁶⁵ Kheyfets and Akademiya Nauk SSSR, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya* , 181.

France gave the signs of difference in point of view on the “Near Eastern question” vis a vis Great Britain and Italy, unpleasant with the Greek initiative in Anatolia, watched for an opportunity to reconcile and benefit from economic concession granted by the Ankara government. From the September 1921 onwards, disintegration of the Entente powers in words and actions on the issues of the Near East seemed to deepen.⁵⁶⁶ Ankara government’s strategy to eliminate the hostility with the Entente powers one by one in order to concentrate on the war with the Greeks and isolate Greece and the Great Britain as the principal power behind Greece, seemed to prevail. French attempt in June to revitalize the treaty concluded by Bekir Sami and Franklin Bouillon in London but rejected by the Grand National Assembly failed. Now, by September, France was ready for further concession to the Ankara government. The Turkish-French talks that took around a month finalized with Treaty of Ankara on October 20th.

During this process, Soviet documents shows us that Soviet foreign policy makers were following the developments in Ankara with deep concern. The central concern was as it had become the principal feature characterizing Soviet view towards Turkey was the possibility of change in orientation. This concern cannot be explained simply as the fear of political reconciliation between Turkey and Entente powers. It should be evaluated in the wider picture of Soviet perception of world and foreign policy in accordance with this perception.

Soviet government from the beginning to the end of National Liberation War in Turkey abstained from direct military clash with the Entente. It pursued the same policy and achieved a “peaceful solution” even in Caucasia. The last advice to be given to the Turkish nationalists could be a “total war to the end”

⁵⁶⁶ The indignation of Great Britain due to the Treaty of Ankara was reflected in British annual reports. Brits were frustrated for France revealed the disunity of the Entente and encouraged the Kemalists by recognizing the legitimacy of their government by concluding a treaty. The treaty totally destroyed British hope to put into practice the Sevres Agreement with minor amendments difficulty of which was already seen in London Conference in February and in Paris Conference in June. The reasons were the reluctance of all the Entente states for using force, the disunity among them and the resistance of both fighting sides, Turkey and Greece. Rumbold, *İngiliz Yıllık Raporlarında Türkiye* 1921, 24-26.

since neither it had the ability to provide military and financial aid, nor had it the intention to a direct involvement in the war. Therefore, in principle, Soviets did not oppose Turkish attempts to eliminate the military fronts by reaching agreements with the Entente powers. The Soviet concerns concentrated on the content of the negotiations between Turkish and Entente governments. As Mustafa Kemal indicated in his conversation with Frunze, who would come to visit Ankara in December, when it comes to diplomatic efforts for peace without a decisive victory in war, agreement with the western countries means, “to kneel down before them.”⁵⁶⁷

Soviets envisaged that agreement with the Entente powers might have two important outcomes. One was a reopening of Anatolia for economic invasion by the Western capital. The other was the Entente might try to make use of these agreements in order to include Turkey in the anti-Soviet front.

None of the leading Turkish nationalists of the time believed that after the war economic reconstruction of the country could take place by its own means, without an external support. Turkish government was in pursuit of “innocent” foreign capital whose investments in the country wouldn’t result in political domination. In this sense, Turkish politician many times uttered their desire to attract American capital since they believed US did not have the perspective to establish political hegemony on the country. In 1921, French capital was also preferable to British capital. For, Turkey for a long time did not experience a direct military confrontation with this country. French enlightenment and French revolution occupied a crucial place in the political and ideological persuasion of a wide circle of Turkish nationalists composed of politicians, military officers and intellectuals. And since the beginning of the year French government pretend to respect Turkish nationalist movements vis-à-vis British “bluster”. An economic reconstruction depending on Soviet support was totally out of question not only because of Turkish doubts whether Soviet power was totally distinguishable from its Tsarist predecessor, but also

⁵⁶⁷ Kheyfets, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 85

due to the deficiencies of Soviet economy itself. Yet, economic aid to Turkey for reconstruction had always been a theme of Soviet foreign affairs.

According to the Soviet perception, external intervention to the economy by the Western capital was indistinguishable from the internal class dynamics. The theoretical basis of Soviet foreign policy and Marxist formation of the Soviet diplomats motivated to establish this unity. According to Soviet conception, Turkey, in the year 1921, started to give the first signs of integration to capitalist system as the mines, ports, railway constructions and other fields of economic operation were opened to foreign capital and a big bourgeois class was developing and integrating to this process. Before the attainment of political independence, the country was becoming integrated as a capitalist market. For the Soviets, capitalist Turkey, integrated with Western capital and surmounted the conflictual matters with the Western powers would inevitably fall into the anti-Soviet camp. This constituted the essence of the Soviet concerns.

First secretary of the Soviet embassy in Ankara B. Mikhaylov informs in his report, dated to November 8th, that Ankara had already established very close relations with the business people in Istanbul. The commissions coming from there were warmly welcomed.⁵⁶⁸ He mentions the big bourgeoisie (big in local terms) that dealt with the commerce of European goods and approximated to Europe. The members of this big bourgeoisie mostly lived in the coastal regions; demanded the government to establish “normal” economic relations with the West. The ruling party, Müdafı-i Hukuk, represented basically the interests of this section.⁵⁶⁹ Another section of the propertied classes composed of middle tradesmen who dominated the domestic market in the war years in the absence of international capital and acquired a significant amount of wealth, now needed European financial support due to the devastation of the

⁵⁶⁸ Report to Ordzhonikidze from Mihailov on November 8th, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 96.

⁵⁶⁹ Report to Chicherin from Mihailov in November, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T., d. 96.

economy in the war conditions and high taxes. According to the report this segment established close relations with the government.⁵⁷⁰

Therefore, Treaty of Ankara was supported and welcomed by the propertied classes that gave their support to the Liberation War. Soviet foreign affairs, in this sense, mostly paid attention to the economic aspects of the treaty. As Mikhaylov indicated, for them, the real striking part was not the document of the treaty itself, but its appendix that contained some economic provisions.⁵⁷¹ For the beginning, the concession of Baghdad railway construction in the part from Cilicia to Nusaybin, was granted to a French company in accordance with the Treaty.⁵⁷² On the same day with the note of Yusuf Kemal's letter to Franklin Bouillon⁵⁷³, Ankara government informed its counterpart that iron, silver and chrome mines in Karshut valley was granted to a French group for ninety-nine years. He added: "Turkish government is prepared to examine with utmost goodwill other requests of concessions for mines, railways, ports and ports...Finally, Turkey hopes that with the conclusion of Turkish-French Agreement French Government will authorize the French capitalists to enter into economic and financial relations with the Government of Grand National Assembly of Turkey."⁵⁷⁴ This attitude was extremely different from the attitude that the Ankara government assumed when Soviet government asked for a concession on the mining of coppers in Artvin, Borcka, which fell to the Turkish side according to the Moscow Agreement. Ankara government for a long time refused to accept the

⁵⁷⁰ Report to Ordzhonikidze from Mihailov on November 8th, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 96.

⁵⁷¹ Report to Chicherin from Mihailov in November, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T., d. 96.

⁵⁷² Great Britain. Parliament Papers. House of Commons. Cmd. 1556, Turkey No. 2. *Despatch from His Majesty's Ambassador in Paris Enclosing the Franco-Turkish Agreement Signed at Angora on October 20, 1921*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1921, 7.

⁵⁷³ French politician and parliament member who had contacts within Turkish political circles and who strove to achieve an agreement with the new Turkish government in 1920-21 period. He visited Turkey several times in order to see if there are the necessary conditions for such an agreement.

⁵⁷⁴ Great Britain. Parliament Papers. House of Commons. Cmd. 1556, Turkey No. 2. *Despatch from His Majesty's Ambassador in Paris Enclosing the Franco-Turkish Agreement Signed at Angora on October 20, 1921*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1921, 8

concession. After long and tireless requests of the Soviet foreign affairs Turkish side informed of the granting “as a sign of friendship.”⁵⁷⁵

Some other developments, brought forward in Soviet reports also served to consolidate the Soviet conviction. Right after the approval of the Treaty in French parliament preparations for the establishment of Turkish embassy in Paris was started. Ferit Bey, known to be a diehard opponent of the Soviets, was appointed the first ambassador to Paris. The report informs, he was dismissed from the position of finance minister thanks to the insistence of Budu Mdivani. Other staff was also chosen among Western-oriented Soviet opponents, such as Celal Sarbar, appointed to the first secretary of the embassy, who was a journalist in an Istanbul newspaper and Senuber Bey, financial adviser of the embassy, who was charged with preparation of Turkish-British agreement.⁵⁷⁶

The peak of Soviet tension was marked when rumours about the secret anti-Soviet articles of the French-Turkish Treaty reached to Moscow.⁵⁷⁷ On October 3rd, Soviet ambassador in Ankara Natsarenus wrote to Chicherin that the negotiations between Franklin Bouillon and Turkish government had ended. France promised to grant 2 million gold credit with six percent yearly interest for 51 years. Turkey promised to raise propaganda in Mesopotamia against Britain and halt the national movements in the French sphere of influence. Besides, Turkey would find a way to cancel the Moscow Agreement. It would also give support to the remnants of former governments in Transcaucasia, namely Musavats, Mensheviks and Dashnaks. He added, there would be soon changes in the cabinet of ministers since a few of them opposed to agree upon these provisions.⁵⁷⁸ Lenin shared this report from

⁵⁷⁵ DVP, IV, 707

⁵⁷⁶ Report to Chicherin from Mikhaylov in November, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T., d. 96.

⁵⁷⁷ Similar news came to Moscow much later on November 13th from London. The Soviet representative Krasin wrote the rumours about the secret articles of the French-Turkish Treaty. His claims coincided with those of Natsarenus. RGASPI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 22439.

⁵⁷⁸ RGASPI, f. 558, op. P, d. 388.

Ankara with Stalin with the note: “Comrade Stalin, how about this?” Same day Stalin replied Lenin: “We should keep our old position (formally) and on the other hand reinforce our Caucasian borders. The other day, Ali Fuat visited me. He said they could mediate between France and us. Moreover, he proposed the establishment of Russian-Turkish mixed commission of revolutionary propaganda against Britain in all of its colonies in Asia and Africa. All these reveals that the Turks already fix the things up and now they search for a new form of collaboration with us.”⁵⁷⁹

Right after the departure of Frank Bouillon from Ankara an Italian delegation headed by Signor Tuozzi arrived at the city with the purpose of a similar agreement with the Turkish government. The talks remained inconclusive for the moment; yet it showed the willingness of both Turkey and Italy to reconcile. Soviet embassy reported to Moscow that the process of reconciliation with Italy was a natural consequence of the agreement with France.⁵⁸⁰ Meanwhile, in mid-December, it was known by the Soviets that Turkey negotiated with British authorities in Inebolu. Due to the British insistence on not to make any concession about Istanbul and the straits the talks halted.⁵⁸¹

Soviet Russia attached importance to the French-British rivalry and conflictual interests of these two on the Near Eastern issues. According to the Soviet embassy, in Inebolu, Britain tried to understand the firmness of French-Turkish agreement; attempted to spoil this agreement by direct approach to the Turkish government; searched for a basis of a comprehensive agreement with Italy, on the condition, of course, of being in full conformity with the British interests and plans in the East.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ Report to Chicherin from Mikhaylov in November, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T., d. 96.

⁵⁸¹ Kheyfets, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 169.

⁵⁸² Report to Chicherin from First Secretary of Soviet Embassy in Ankara, Mikhaylov, December 21th, 1921, AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, 232, d. 52992.

In spite of the failure of these talks, Moscow felt isolated from the affairs in Turkey while Ankara was conducting a very intensive diplomacy with all the Entente powers almost at the same time. Mikhaylov's message in his report around the beginning of November to Chicherin⁵⁸³ was clear and it is not difficult to suppose that it must have done certain impact on Moscow. He asserted that it was possible to talk about "the new path" of Ankara government. He wrote even if there is no real provision in the secret part of the French-Turkish Treaty with anti-Soviet content, Turkish government knew very well what was the "wish" of France and that Turkey should fulfill that "wish" as a prerequisite in order to put the Treaty into effect. According the Soviet diplomats, although from official sources the explanation that rapprochement with the West did not mean leaving the positive relations with the Soviets behind, the public opinion was being prepared to the "new path".⁵⁸⁴

Worst of all, the Soviets deprived of any real local allies in the political arena of Ankara that could resist the "new path". Turkish left since the last year was paralyzed before it could become a real force that had the ability to shape the country's future. Soviet diplomacy could also see, like everybody did, that Enverist opposition was on the decline. As Enver himself was becoming *persona non grata* for the Soviets, concomitantly his group in Ankara was entering a process of disintegration, partly by luring to the side of the government, partly by eliminating through coercion.⁵⁸⁵ As a matter of fact, Soviet foreign affairs could more clearly see that there is no real ideological distinction between Enverist group and the Kemalist group.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸³ The date is not written but it must be at the beginning of November when the content of the report is considered. Report to Chicherin from Mikhaylov in November, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T., d. 96.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁵ Like it happened to Nurettin Pasha, former member of Central Command, Şükrü Pasha minister of education in Enver's time, Enver's brother Nuri Pasha, and Eyüp Bey, the former revenue officer of the Union and Progress. RGASPI, f. 85, op. T., d. 96

⁵⁸⁶ Mikhaylov letter to Ordzhonikidze on January 3rd, 1922, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 96

There were also facts that counterbalanced this dark picture for Soviet interests. After the Battle of Sakarya the country was materially in very poor conditions. The physical impossibilities made the continuation of war almost unthinkable. In a very short time, it became clear that France was neither willing nor able to help Turkey in the scale it promised. French opposition to Britain in Near Eastern affairs did not mean that France had the courage to completely break away from the “big boss”. Reconciliation with Britain was not likely because of the huge imperialist arrogance of its administration. Series of measures that had taken by the Soviet administration by the end of the year was also taken seriously by the Turkish government and created the fear of losing Soviet “modest” material support. According to Soviet diplomatic mission in Ankara, some steps taken by the Soviet were interpreted by the Turkish government as the results of conscious endeavour for disengagement, though it was not intended so. Recalling of Soviet ambassador Natsarenus to Moscow and Chicherin’s note on Molokan issue⁵⁸⁷ were among them.⁵⁸⁸

4.7 Frunze’s visit: Golden shot

In the mid-December, Ankara received an important guest from Soviet Russia. As portrayed above, it was a hard moment in Turkish-Soviet relations. And after the visit, it seems that the relations entered into a normal course. The point almost all the sources on the subject including the archival documents are united is that the visit had significantly positive impact on the relations. 36 years old charismatic and warm-hearted general of the Red Army, Mikhail Vasilyevich Frunze seemed to clear the air full of insecurity and mistrust.

⁵⁸⁷ Molokans were a section of Russian population, which was affiliated to Spiritual Christian faiths. That is to say, this people didn’t conform to the rules of the Russian Orthodox Church. That is why in the 1877-1878 Turkish-Russian War conjunction, they were banned as many other groups who were not obedient to the religious orthodoxy and they were given land by the government in the newly seized Kars province. Molokans living around Kars later became in issue between Kemalist government and the Bolsheviks mainly because of the treatment of this population by the Turkish local authorities.

⁵⁸⁸ Mikhaylov’s letter to Ordzhonikidze on December 21th, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 96.

Sometimes, the sources give the impression that Frunze had a magic wand that turned the things other way round. The reality was that Frunze did not have a magic wand. The visit coincided with a conjunction when both sides felt that they were doomed to each other. Frunze opened the way for a thaw and for a while restored the trust between the two sides that was highly damaged.

The decision for the visit of the delegation headed by Frunze was taken in August. It was about the project of an agreement between Turkey and Ukrainian SSR that was propounded by the Ukrainian SSR in May 1921. In August 1921, Ukrainian government appointed M. V. Frunze as extraordinary plenipotentiary to Ankara.⁵⁸⁹ However, as noted above, Frunze's mission was far more comprehensive and crucial than this. At a critical stage, when the news of growing relations with the Entente countries reached Moscow, Frunze was expected to regain the confidence of Turkish government. According to Soviet reasoning, the troubles and hardships the Turkish people was experiencing and the pressures from the Entente, when the suspicions about the Soviet intentions added, resulted in the consolidation of the right-wing opposition against the Kemalist leadership which was actually still close to the idea of alliance with the Soviet Russia. Therefore, Frunze would go to Ankara to strengthen the hand of "pro-Soviets" in the Turkish government.

According to the narrative of Glebov, an official in Narkomindel who was present in Chicherin-Frunze meeting before he went to Turkey, Chicherin said Frunze that the Soviet policy towards Turkey was a long-term policy. "It is Vladimir Il'ich's policy, therefore we should consider it my and your policy. Conjunctural arrangement is just fioritura."⁵⁹⁰ Chicherin stressed this point months ago on August 14th, when the battle between Turkish and Greek troops was going on at full steam. Who would triumph was unclear. Under these circumstances, he wrote Natsarenius to inform him about the planned mission

⁵⁸⁹ Fedor Nikolaevich Petrov and M. V. Frunze, *Zhizn' i Deyatel'nost'* (Moskva, 1962), 285.

⁵⁹⁰ Fioritura (Italian for "flourish", or "flowering") is the florid embellishment of melodic lines, either notated by a composer or improvised during a performance. Chicherin had an extensive knowledge on music and had a brilliant command on music terminology.

of Frunze to Ankara, that the Turkish national movement was strong and even if it lost in the battlefield it wouldn't cease to exist even if temporarily submitted to the Entente. The friendship between the two countries should be stressed more than any time in the time of hardships.⁵⁹¹

Frunze had a long trip from the Ukrainian capital of the time, Kharkov to Ankara. From Harkov to Batum, Trabzon, Samsun, Yahshi Han by sea, on the horses and finally by railway it took almost a month to reach Ankara. When he arrived on December 12th, Mustafa Kemal was in the front and foreign affairs minister Yusuf Kemal was in Konya conducting talks with Bullion and Mujen, two French officials who came Turkey in the process of conclusion of the Turkish-French Agreement. The talks in Inebolu were just finished with failure when Frunze was already in Turkish territory. Besides, Frunze encountered the Italian delegation that was about to return to Italy. Frunze and the Ukrainian delegation realized meetings with Turkish governmental circles while they were waiting Mustafa Kemal and Yusuf Kemal until 20th.⁵⁹² Frunze's speech in the Grand National Assembly reflected Soviet concerns about the ongoing talks with the Entente. He emphasized that there were common enemies who strove to drive wedge between Turkey and the Soviets. He uttered his trust on the Turkish administration and people against these intrigues.⁵⁹³

Frunze sent his impressions to Chicherin on 22th. First of all, he mentioned the extreme hardship of the people and extremely poor material conditions in the country, which might affect the fate of the war in a negative way. In spite of this dark situation, he added, people and the army still had the will and energy to fight. "On the one hand a salient consciousness that serious support can only come from us, but on the other hand the exitless situation leads to search for new paths." Mustafa Kemal and Yusuf Kemal ensured that Turkey bases on and will base on Russia. They were ready for a new

⁵⁹¹ "Novye dokumenti: Missiya M. V. Frunze v Turtsiyu," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'* (Ijul' 1960) 156, dok. no. 2.

⁵⁹² Kheifets and Akademiya Nauk SSSR, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 179.

⁵⁹³ Petrov and Frunze, *Zhizn' i Deyatel'nost'*, 286.

agreement for a stronger alliance and also ready to declare it to the entire World. For them, it was impossible to act contrary to the interests of the Soviet Russia in any negotiation with foreign countries. They said, it is impossible to explain a hostile act towards the Soviet Russia to Turkish people. Frunze reached the conclusion that the agreement with the French did not give the expected result –to stop the Greeks, the British conditions for peace were unacceptable for the Ankara government. Therefore, for the Ankara government remained the only option, namely to lean on Soviet support. Frunze told in the report that Mustafa Kemal gave him very confidential data about the military situation, as a sign of his trust to Frunze and Russia. According to Frunze's report, Mustafa Kemal added that if in 2-3 months the material conditions of the army and the state could not be improved, then it would become inevitable to reconcile with the West, which was the last thing Mustafa Kemal could desire, since he knew it meant enslavement of the country.⁵⁹⁴ At the end of the report, Frunze on these grounds demanded immediate dispatch of 3,5 million golden rubles to Ankara. And he also asked for planning the further support.⁵⁹⁵

Apart from the material support, this visit had important results. When Frunze was in Ankara Soviet Russia was still not sure about the secret articles of the Turkish-French agreement. The Turkish leaders gave the guarantee that there was no article against Russia in that agreement. The developments in the relations between Turkey and France did not give any sign of such articles, as

⁵⁹⁴ Frunze also reported some significant explanations of Mustafa Kemal that he made during the meeting on 21th: "In the the composition of the *meclis* (Grand National Assembly) the first group is the supporters of monarch and caliphate. They are religious functionaries, bureaucrats and big bourgeois. The second group consists of those who desires to reconcile with the West under the conditions whatsoever before the commercial life gets worse. These are our bourgeoisie, and a part of religious functionaries and bureaucrats. Third group is the democrats (*halkçılar*). They are against the monarchy, they have eastern and Soviet Russia orientation. They don't reject reconciliation with the West under certain conditions; however this shouldn't be contrary to the interests of the people and our friendship with Russia, knowing such reconciliation wouldn't last long. This idea rules the *meclis* and I am on the top of it. Kheyfets and Akademiya Nauk SSSR, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 181.

⁵⁹⁵ "Novye dokumenti: Missiya M. V. Frunze v Turtsiyu", 157-158, dok. no. 3. Frunze had already come to Ankara with certain amount of money and arms.

well. Therefore, Soviet Russia reached the conclusion that Turkish government was in search for alternatives but had not changed its orientation, yet.

The new relations of Soviet Russia with the West, primarily with Britain brought about the concern of a change in Eastern policy of Russia. The talks with Italy and Rumania in the autumn of 1921 refreshed this concern. Soviet's attitude to Enver Pasha was another source of concern. Mustafa Kemal did lengthy explanations about his thought on Enver Pasha to Frunze. For him, the presence of this "careerist adventurer" in Soviet territories was enough for worrying.⁵⁹⁶ Frunze gave guarantees about both issues, that the Soviet would never abandon to support Turkish national cause and he would convey the concerns about Enver to the authorities in Moscow and would impede any further relation with him.

Frunze's observations about the things that should be done about Turkey was in harmony with Lenin's and Chicherin's perspective. He conceived that after the political independence the Eastern nations would build a policy that would depend on full democratization and economic development under the leadership of the state sector.⁵⁹⁷ In the future, with the support of the developed socialist states, these nations might have an easy transition to socialism.⁵⁹⁸

It is not difficult to imagine that this visit also amounted a striking message to the Entente. It created a pressure on Britain for a more reconciliatory tone on the matters regarding Turkish national movement.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁶ Kheyfets and Akademiya Nauk SSSR, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 176.

⁵⁹⁷ A letter from Chicherin to Stalin that goes back to December 19th 1921, exemplifies this idea: "If we want to be successful in our policy towards Turkey, we should abandon a narrow political view point and develop an economic policy. In order to make Turkey to have a self-sufficient industry, we can give a few industrial plants that we don't use and some technical personnel, as well. Besides, we need to conclude an agreement about the sending of Turkish young people to Russia for the purposes of education." Lenin comments with a note with his handwriting: "Comrade Stalin, Can you send me a copy of your reply to Chicherin's letter. I think he is right" RGASPI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 25745.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., 183.

⁵⁹⁹ Gökay and Yalçın, *Bolşevizm ile Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, 181.

4.8 Transformation in Soviet policy and diplomacy towards Turkey

The fact that Soviet Russia never abandoned to prioritize Europe in its foreign policy and to consider Europe the centre of prospective socialist revolutions prevented a long term strategy toward the East. Since eastern policy was shaped in accordance with the developments in the West, it was flexible and unstable. Yet, there was a general framework of the Eastern policy that was originated on the assumptions suggested by Lenin, later interpreted into politics by Stalin when he assumed the People's Commissariat of Nationalities and finally by 1919 formulated as part of Soviet foreign policy.

For Lenin Soviet Russia was the epicentre of the class struggle that was taking place in the world stage and Bolshevik power was the leading force of the revolutionary front, a front composed of Soviet Russia itself, European proletariat and oppressed people of the East who arose for their national independence. No matter the national movements in the colonies and semi-colonies embodied bourgeois elements. The bourgeoisie of the East maintained its revolutionary essence contrary to the Western capitalist class. Therefore, Turkish national movement with its potential to be leading figure in the East had a crucial place in this framework. No matter who achieved the leadership of the movement, objectively Turkey was included in the revolutionary front against world capitalism. This was the apprehension at the beginning of the interactions. Turkey was indisputably an essential part of Soviet Eastern policy. Gradually from 1920 onwards, as the Soviet foreign policy institutionalized, Turkey became one of the indispensable pivots of that policy and remained in that position until the mid 1930s. This happened in spite of all the hardships, tensions and setbacks in the relations between the two countries. The period this chapter covers was a process of mutual familiarization. As the leading figures admitted at times, neither there was a clear idea about bolshevism and communism in Turkey among the nationalist circles, nor the Soviet leadership and government knew much about the political character of the national movement and its leadership. It was evident for the Soviet side that, in 10 months from May 1920 to March 1921, Soviet's knowledge and

assumptions about the developments and political actors in Turkey changed to a great extent. A striking example of this manifested itself in Chicherin's letters to Lenin about the issues concerning Turkey. In May 1920, for Chicherin "Turkish National Center" as he called the leadership of the national movement in Turkey, was open to a radical social program and though the social structure of the country was not convenient for construction of socialism, nationalist leaders were wide open without reserves to collaboration with the Soviets.⁶⁰⁰ It was the impression left by the reports of and conversations with the Unionist leaders who were present in Moscow in those days. 10 months later, in March 1921, Chicherin was complaining Lenin about the Turks for being pedantic bargainers⁶⁰¹ The time showed that Turkish nationalist leaders had many reservations about the Soviets, they were strongly anti-communist and Western-oriented. This brief time taught the Soviet foreign affairs the matters of utmost sensibility for the Turks, before all territorial matters. Soviet foreign affairs drew the inference from the oscillations of the Turkish nationalist leadership that Russia should strive to increase the level of material support to the Liberation War in Turkey in order to preserve the friendship with Turkey.

The painful process of getting acquainted to each other coincided with two important processes: First, the Kemalist leadership took hold of the monopoly of political power in the country. To the end of 1921, Soviet hesitation between either supporting the Kemalists or the Unionists disappeared due to the circumstances. Contrary to alleged eastern-orientedness of the Enver Pasha group, Kemalists were openly "western-oriented". The upcoming years would mark the reluctance of the Kemalists to take a position as the leader country of the East against the imperialist West, as it was desired by the Soviets. And, since the beginning there was no doubt for the Soviets about the class identity of the nationalist leaders of Turkey.⁶⁰² Yet, Soviet

⁶⁰⁰ Chicherin to Lenin, May 16th, 1920, RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 57.

⁶⁰¹ Chicherin to Lenin, March 10th, 1921, RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 57.

⁶⁰² It was as clear as in this Komintern declaration: "Frequently as shown at the Second Congress of the Communist International, representatives of bourgeois nationalism, exploiting

foreign affairs maintained its strong conviction to the assumption that Kemalists constituted the most revolutionary political current that had the power to determine the fate of the country. In Soviet description, rivals of the Kemalists were before all strongly anti-Russian and would submit to the Western powers as they had the chance to capture the political power. Soviet policy towards Turkey would be built upon this distinction regarding the Turkish internal politics.

Secondly, the process of familiarization overlapped with the process of ripening and institutionalizing of the Soviet foreign affairs. From the last phases of 1920, as the light at the end of the tunnel in the Civil War was seen, considering the necessity of time to survive until the eruption of the lagging European revolution, Soviet foreign affairs oriented towards establishing normal diplomatic relations with the capitalist world. This orientation was promising non-interventionist manner vis-à-vis the internal affairs of the countries in question. That is exactly what the Kemalists demanded from the Soviets. In order to provide the continuity of good relations with Turkey, the bourgeois bases of the new Turkish state and the political power of the propertied classes in Turkey should be taken for granted. In order to do that, Soviet foreign affairs necessitated a strong and institutionalized apparatus materialized in Narkomindel. At the beginning, Soviet foreign policy was produced and reproduced by multiplicity of the central and local actors that most of the time led to different results than aimed at. The local representatives had a large sphere of initiative. These actors were not limited to the diplomats appointed by Narkomindel.

In this period, there were Soviet missions and representatives in

the moral and political authority of Soviet Russia, and playing to the class instincts of the workers, have masqueraded their bourgeois democratic strivings in “socialist” and “communist” forms, in order to divert-sometimes unconsciously- the embryonic proletarian groups from the direct tasks of class organization (e.g., the Yesil Ordu, in Turkey, which painted Pan-Turkism in communist colors; the “state socialism” advocated by some representatives of the Kuomintang in China.” (Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Sovetskogo Soyuz, (RUSSIA) Institut Marksa-Engel’sa-Lenina and Béla Kun, *Kommunisticheskiy Internacional v Dokumentah*, 319). n the camp of the Entente.”

a large number of centers in Turkey and the Caucasus. Ankara, Trabzon, Erzurum, Tiflis, Batum, Baku and Erivan are the major centers. Soviet missions in those places consisted of personnel from not only Narkomindel but also from Komintern and other formations, including the Tcheka and the Soviet military intelligence (GRU).⁶⁰³

Though these agents constituted a good channel of information, as Bülent Gökay puts it, their expressions sometimes could be too subjective and misleading. When these people lacked the qualities compatible with the Soviet political objectives, crises emerged within the Soviet foreign affairs. The local representatives, including the diplomats and military people could either keep on the right side a of government circles in the country they worked or they were in state of confrontation. The experience of the Soviet foreign affairs in Turkey in the years 1920 and 1921 very clearly exemplifies this. It is enough to take a look at the correspondances about Upmal and Mdivani, two diplomats one was in conflict with Ankara government the other was accused by Chicherin of being too much tolerant to Turks. Chicherin was seeking for personally and politically strong people who could convey the Soviet foreign policy and decisions properly in Turkey. He severely reacted when the local actors behaved outside the decisions taken in Moscow. Lenin for all this time was the number one supporter of Chicherin vis-à-vis the Politburo, as seen in his personal notes with his handwritings on the letters sent by Chicherin to the Politburo. Sometimes when there is a big problem in this sense, the centre could take palliative precautions. An example of that was appointment of Mikhailov in the last months of 1921 to Ankara as the first secretary of the embassy in order to fill the gap left by Natsarenius's alleged insufficient conduction of the embassy's affairs. He was sent there from Kars, where was in charge of Soviet consul. Chicherin's persistent demand from the politburo to charge masterful people to the embassy in Ankara gave its first real fruit with Aralov that arrived at Ankara at the beginning of 1922.⁶⁰⁴ Starting with the

⁶⁰³ Gökay, *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey*, 31-32.

⁶⁰⁴ Until that time there is considerable number of documents on Chicherin's persistence on the

Frunze's visit as the extraordinary plenipotentiary of Ukrainian Soviet Republic, a certain level in the quality of the diplomats sent to Ankara was always maintained. A new period in terms of Soviet diplomacy in Turkey started by the beginning of 1922.

issue. He was constantly proposed new candidates among the Bolshevik circles who might fit the requirements of Soviet policy toward Turkey. For examples see: Chicherin's letter to Krestinskiy on December 7th 1920 in which he strove to explain the urgent necessity of a good ambassador to Ankara and he proposed Karl Danishevskiy, to this position (RGASPI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 16783). Danishevskiy was an officer in Red Army field headquarters. Chicherin considered that a mighty soldier would be welcomed by the Turks. Later in the first months of 1921, Chicherin reiterated his demands. In February when Turkish delegation and members of the Turkish embassy were already present in Ankara and the relations were not so smooth Chicherin reminded the same "bleeding wound". Upmal who advised from Ankara to stop all the aid to Turkey, should be called back. As his proposal for Danishevskiy was not accepted, he now asked for Vyacheslav Menzhinskiy a member of Thceka who, Chicherin contends, knew very well about Soviet eastern policy (RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 57). On March 1st, mentioning the critical stage that had been reached in Turkish-Soviet relations he reiterated the urgency of appointment of a high-level diplomat to Ankara. This time his candidate was Maksim Maksimovich Litvinov, an outstanding Bolshevik and very prominent diplomat, who previously served in Great Britain and USA and who would become the Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union in 1930 (RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 57).

CHAPTER 5

THROUGH THE PEACETIME: SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS TURKEY IN THE TIME OF TRANSITION

5.1 The phase of new diplomacy in Ankara: Aralov's arrival

Both sides acclaimed Mihail Frunze's visit as a success for it seemingly served to remove mutual lack of confidence. The visit also contributed to clarification of Soviet policy towards Turkey. The last months of 1921 witnessed heated debates on Turkey among the Bolsheviks. Narkomindel's insistence to hold Enver Pasha in reserve against the possibility if the Kemalists reconcile with the West on the terms imposed by the Entente, was the basic topic of tension. The messages sent from the Soviet embassy in Ankara were all in the direction that Soviet foreign policy should completely depend on the Kemalists who held the political power tight. Frunze became the one who most decisively gave the message that there shouldn't be any place to any further adventures in policies on Turkey. On January 9th, 1922, Mikhaylov, first secretary in the Soviet embassy in Ankara⁶⁰⁵, was informing Chicherin on the conclusion that he, Frunze and Abilov, ambassador of Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic in Ankara had reached about Turkish-Soviet relations. It was basically the consideration that Soviet policy towards Turkey should be built seriously and permanently upon Mustafa Kemal, himself. His power should be firmly supported. The games played with Enver should be left apart if the Soviets desire to make Mustafa Kemal "our man". Mikhaylov reminds the unpleasant history of Batum adventure and he claims

⁶⁰⁵ As it was explained in the previous chapter he was appointed temporarily in order to fill the gap left by the Natsarenius administration of the diplomatic mission. He was previously serving as Soviet consul in Kars and was a high level Bolshevik official in the Caucasian region who had very close ties with the personalities like Ordzhonikidze. The reports of Mijhalov give the impression that Soviet embassy under the administration of Natsarenius became a disorganized and problematic institution from where the news of scandals, personal conflicts and gossiping reached to Moscow. Mijhalov also complaint about the lack of staff and hoped that Aralov would come with a large group of diplomats. RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 96.

this adventure paved the way for Turkish-French agreement.⁶⁰⁶ This message would become the basis of the activities of new ambassadorial staff headed by Semjon Ivanovich Aralov that arrived in Ankara in January 1922.

Throughout January, Mikhaylov while waiting impatiently Aralov's arrival to handover the mission in Ankara, he continued to send Bolshevik leaders messages about the current political atmosphere in Ankara. On January 17th, he reported to Chicherin and Ordzhonikidze, that "Turks settled their course solidly on the collaboration with Russia. They are expecting assistance from us... They see that international situation and the cleavage between France and Britain don't allow a real support from the Entente powers. And they observe that Soviet Russia has been strengthening its international position. They desire to act in collaboration with Russia in order to utter Turkish demands in the conference in Genoa and in the conferences to be held in the future... Irrespective of the appraisals of the existing political regime, it is clear that Turkey need assistance. Mustafa Kemal can be leader of a democratic administration that ends in a Soviet system, or he can go astray. He has the power at the moment and he holds it tight. Now, as the iron is still hot, it is possible to lure the bourgeois democratic strata towards the Soviets."⁶⁰⁷

New ambassador Semjon Ivanovich Aralov was a high-ranking commander of the Red Army who showed usefulness as a soldier and as an intelligence officer in the South Eastern front of the Civil War. Chicherin from the beginning of the official relations with Ankara claimed the necessity to appoint a military officer as Soviet ambassador to Ankara since the ruling group of the "New Turkey" was overwhelmingly composed of high-ranking members of the Ottoman army. Now, his wish was fulfilled through a senior commander who also proved his diplomatic talent when he served as the ambassador in Lithuania in the year 1921. Aralov was coming with a large group of colleagues, a sign that demonstrated the importance attributed to

⁶⁰⁶ RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 2204.

⁶⁰⁷ RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 96.

Turkey. Aralov when he was appointed to Turkey, was informed about the intention of Soviet foreign policy makers to build up a long-term strategy on Turkey that would prove to be resistant to transient fluctuations in the relations of the two countries. Lenin himself warned Aralov about the centuries old feeling of the Turks towards Russia, an amalgam of hatred and suspicion, which could only be removed by a very patient and meticulous mode of action.⁶⁰⁸

Aralov and the new staff of the Ankara embassy set off from Moscow at the end of December. When they arrived at Tiflis, Enver Pasha, who was also present in Tiflis at that time, invited Aralov. Aralov refused the invitation in spite of all the insistence of Enver's aide due to the consideration that such an encounter would have very negative repercussions on Ankara government.⁶⁰⁹

Frunze's mission left Ankara in the last days of 1921. They encounter around Samsun with the new Soviet diplomatic mission headed by Aralov on their way to Ankara. The encounter of two missions provided opportunity for transmitting significant amount of experience and observation from the former to the latter. Frunze largely narrated the current situation in the society, army and ruling circles. He mentioned that supporters of friendship with the Soviets within the society and within the government were quite populous. Aralov and the members of the mission were also impressed with the interest of the Turkish men and women they met on the way to Ankara. Especially striking was the interest of the Turkish peasants towards the Soviets. They seemed to know about the transformations in Russia and curiously asked questions about the current situation of the Russian peasants. Frunze confirmed the unique sympathy towards the Soviets among various sections of the society and politics, which, he considered, amounted to a big advantage of Soviet policy

⁶⁰⁸ "The propaganda that Russia is the primordial enemy left a lasting impression on the people in Turkey that fought against Russia for centuries. To erase that impression will take time. We have to show that the Soviet Russia is different from tsarist Russia not with words but with our deeds." Semen Ivanovich Aralov, *Vospominaniya Sovetskogo Diplomata 1922-1923* (Moskva: Izd. Instituta Mezhdunarodnyh otnosheniy, 1960), 36.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., 39.

toward Turkey. When it came to the collaboration with a political leadership, which the Soviets categorically defined as “bourgeoisie”, Frunze’s reaction was illustrative about the Soviet view on Turkey in the year 1922. Anatolij Glebov, Soviet man of letters and diplomat, who was in Aralov’s mission and who would serve as the second secretary of the Soviet embassy in Ankara in 1922 and 1923, livingly narrates in his book composed of stories and memoirs on Turkey, the very moment when Frunze defended the “line of friendship” with the Kemalists.⁶¹⁰ One of the members of Aralov’s mission was a journalist, who “a short time ago joined in the ranks of Bolsheviks abandoning the Menshevik-Internationalist group.” During the conversation with Frunze on various themes regarding Turkey, the murder of the fifteen Central Committee members of the TKP in the Black Sea and connivance of the Kemalists in this murder was mentioned; and the journalist sarcastically said “What friends and allies!” “Frunze's face changed and his eyes darkled as if a blue sea suddenly faded when the clouds blocked the sun.” And Frunze said: “If we were talking about Mustafa Kemal’s admission to our party, I wouldn’t recommend him. He ideas are not identical with ours; but we are allies in the war against the powers that wanted to destroy us and that now want to destroy Turkish independence... Once again I repeat: Don’t forget that Lenin was talking in this way. Line of friendship with Turkey is his line, line of the Central Committee, line of Chicherin and my, and in the end it is the basis on which I conducted talks with Kemal. But your line is the line of Dan and Volskii!” According to the writer, Frunze intuited the journalist’s Menshevik background and blamed him of thinking like Menshevik and SR leaders Dan and Volskii who demanded, in the 8th Congress of the Soviets, immediate break of the relations with the Kemalists. Frunze clarified the position of the Soviet government. Mustafa Kemal told him about his plans for the transformation of the country. Frunze’s comment was that these plans were far from the plans of a socialist revolution, as far as the ground from the skies. However, “what kind of socialist revolution we are talking about in a country where high qualified workers are not more

⁶¹⁰ Atatolij Glebovich Glebov, Liniya Druzhyby, *Rasskazy o Turtsii*. (Moskva, 1960), 42-43.

than three thousand, and number of the members of the Communist Party is hardly five hundred in a thirteen million population. Communism for Turkey: something for far future. We are not intending to export it. We are not adventurers and not dreamers, we are Marxists.”⁶¹¹

The impact of Frunze’s visit survived for a while. Mikhaylov’s letter to Ordzonikizde, written on January 3rd, was mentioning the visit as a historical shot.⁶¹² From the autumn of 1921 onwards, as the Turkish army proved its superiority over the Greek forces in Anatolia in Battle of Sakarya, the Entente attempts to convince the Turks to a peace with partial gains of the Turkish part were accelerated. Turkish part was hesitant. In order to impose Entente the conditions whose framework was drawn by the National Oath, Turkey needed a definite military victory. However, as Mustafa Kemal noted in his conversation with Frunze, without a substantial material support from abroad Turkey would sooner or later resign itself to the conditions of the Entente. In the following months, as the Soviet documents informed, Turkey tried hard to force Soviet Russia in order to make it the major financier of the Liberation War. Besides, during the preparations for the final blow, consolidation of the political alignment with Soviet Russia was important for the later negotiations with the Entente. For these reasons, Soviet-Turkish friendship entered into its best time ever since the beginning.

5.2 Short-lived honeymoon in the spring 1922

Aralov and other members of the Soviet mission could reach Ankara only on January 26th. Several months following their arrival marked full-fledged, regular and stable diplomatic relations. New ambassador instantly started to consolidate existing relations and establish new contacts within governmental and societal circles. His first report dated to March 1st 1922, to Chicherin was written in a very positive manner:

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 96.

Now, for certain, Turkish government, all the urban and rural population, the army have positive feelings towards Russia. Sympathy towards Russia also spreads among the politicians.⁶¹³

He had the privilege to work with several talented cadres of the embassy, like the first secretary and the consul of the embassy, A. N Golub⁶¹⁴, the second secretary A. Glebov and chief of the press bureau, G. Astahov. The experienced Azeri ambassador Abilov was also quite utile.⁶¹⁵ In his memoirs, Aralov tells that Mustafa Kemal personally gave close attention to him. Though it is difficult to know the extent of this interest, Aralov's assertion must be at least partially correct, even alone the invitation made by Mustafa Kemal to him for a trip to the front is considered. The trip that was realized during March-April 1922 was organized around visits to various destinations in the western front of the Liberation War, including six infantry divisions, three cavalry divisions, two headquarters, two corp headquarters and hinterland military enterprises in Konya.⁶¹⁶ The trip, in which Soviet military attaché Zvonaryev and Abilov were participated besides Aralov, coincided with a time of preparations for the great offensive of the Turkish army.⁶¹⁷ It was an important moment for the Soviet delegation since they familiarized with strong and weak aspects of the Turkish army⁶¹⁸, political view of the Kemalist

⁶¹³ From, RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 117: Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeleri*, 336.

⁶¹⁴ He was familiar with Turkey since he previously served as Soviet consul in Trabzon. Aralov, *Vospominaniya*, 39.

⁶¹⁵ RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 96 After the unification of Soviet republics he moved to a position in the Soviet embassy.

⁶¹⁶ Aralov, *Vospominaniya*, 76

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ Observing en face the material needs of the army, apart from confirming the continuity of the promised assistance in terms of military equipment and financial source, Soviet delegation made some immediate, though symbolic gestures, like donating 20 thousand Turkish lira for establishment of a printing house and for buying a cinematograph to be used in the political education of the Turkish soldiers. Ibid., 87-88.

leadership and had the chance to share the experiences of the Red Army's Civil War experiences.⁶¹⁹ The exchange of ideas once again thickly highlighted the differences between two countries. When Aralov mentioned the importance of political propaganda towards the soldiers in the fronts, Mustafa Kemal objected this on the ground that for the time being they did not prefer any political/ideological disunity within the army. He suggested there was no substantial existence of a working class in Turkey, the overwhelming majority of the society was composed of peasants. That is why the people's power could not be based upon a conscious proletariat. For that very reason, Turkish independence could only be realized by the collaboration of different segments of the society, a collaboration that shouldn't be spoilt by highlighting social and political differences among those segments.⁶²⁰

Meanwhile, the Turkish foreign affairs minister Yusuf Kemal was in Europe in order to have talks with the Entente representatives and also in order to present the Turkish cause to the European public opinion.⁶²¹ While the Soviet delegation was still in the front, the news about the Yusuf Kemal's return to the country reached to the military quarters where the delegation was hosted. With this news, the new proposal of the Entente for peace was also started to be talked on. This new proposal was also compatible with the spirit of Sevres and hardly approximated to the least demand of the Turkish nationalists.⁶²² On April 4th, Aralov informed Moscow about French plans to

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., 78.

⁶²⁰ Ibid., 84-85.

⁶²¹ As Yusuf Kemal explained to Aralov, his mission was a substantial examination on the position of West, searching the ways to conclude a peace with Greece, to take Istanbul and the Straits. On the straits, Aralov reminded the 5th article of the Moscow Agreement as the valid principle in the settlement of the Straits issue (From RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 117, Perinçek, Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeler, 338). Yusuf Kemal was reported by the British Foreign Affairs to travel to Europe with a budget of 160 thousand Turkish Liras. 110 thousand of it was devoted to secret purposes (Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk (1919-1938) Vol. IV*, 219). In the secret session of the Meclis on March 30th, Yusuf Kemal defined the purpose of his visit to Europe as to inform and to get informed (*TBMM Gizli Celse Zabıtları III*, 172).

⁶²² For the negative repercussions of the talks in Paris in Turkish political circles and public opinion see the British report dated back to April 4th, 1922: Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk (1919-1938) IV*, 232-233.

convince the Turkish government to submit the Istanbul government by giving promises to modify Sevres. He advised to launch a widespread campaign in Russian and Transcaucasian press against this attempt.⁶²³ On April 5th, Karakhan, deputy commissar of foreign affairs, wrote to Aralov: “The fundamental question that attracts our attention is about the talks that Yusuf Kemal conducts with the Entente and the Istanbul government.” He adds that they still did not know the conditions that came to the fore during these talks. He says that Soviet government did not have the intention to retreat from Moscow Agreement.

The 5th article of that agreement on the solution of the problem about the Straits should be realized through a conference where Black Sea countries should attend, must be fulfilled. The only advantageous part of this agreement for us is the 5th article. The rest is the gifts given by us to Turks. During the talks, you should stress that Moscow Agreement was absolutely in accordance with the National Pact. And Turkey built up all its strategy during the conference on making us accept the boundaries required by the National Pact. However now by opening our decision on the Straits in the talks with the Entente, they themselves violate the National Pact. Any concession about the decisions in the Moscow Agreement should be written, you shouldn't promise anything verbally. Otherwise they can distort and misrepresent it.⁶²⁴

It is understood from this correspondence that the issue of the Black Sea Straits that would be the top issue of the Lausanne process came to fore as early as in the spring 1922, during the talks of Yusuf Kemal with the Entente. And it is also clear that Soviet foreign affairs alerted immediately since this issue was the crucial element of Soviet security concerns. Later in October, Aralov retrospectively interpreted to Chicherin the situation of the springtime in terms of French-Turkish talks and the Soviet position:

⁶²³ RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 2204.

⁶²⁴ AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, 233, d. 53021.

I had conveyed you my conversations with Mustafa and Yusuf Kemal. The conclusion is that the Turkish government has serious second thoughts. Before the offensive, approximately in March, French started supply of arms. In March-April there was a rupture in Turkish-French relations. This time we started to enjoy very good relations with the government. We were contacting almost on daily basis. My visit to the front happened at that time. Mustafa himself or through his men requested arms or money. In May, the rupture was over and Turkish government was distinctly driven to French side. French gives military assistance through Inebolu and Mersin. And this is not a cheap assistance. Mustafa hesitated and awaited our decision. However, in this critical conjunction, we haven't managed to enhance our assistance. Turkey did not have any other option. It is in a crisis, and though the army is in a good spirit, the needs cannot be adequately matched... Remember that in March, they accepted common action in foreign policy. They could have sign a suitable agreement with our pressure.⁶²⁵

Issue of material assistance and economic collaboration

According to Soviet perception, meeting Turkish demands on material assistance had utmost importance while Turkish army was preparing for the great offensive. As the Soviets couldn't meet those demands adequately, rapprochement of Turkey to France became natural. It is possible to come to the conclusion that Kemalist governments put a considerable pressure on Russia through its ambassador, making Aralov felt the importance of the material assistance on daily basis. If material assistance was understood as a crucial tool to maintain the alliance with Turkey, it is important to glimpse why this matter became so problematic. The expectation from the Soviets in terms of material support was something that Mustafa Kemal and others kept always on the agenda in their dialogues with the Bolsheviks. In an ambassadorial report to Moscow sometime in March or April 1922, Aralov wrote that Mustafa Kemal came to the embassy and talked on the issue of military aid. According to Aralov, French aid had a price and they asked for more concession. As Aralov conveyed, Mustafa Kemal said that in case of inability to increase Soviet aid, the relations of two countries wouldn't break down.

⁶²⁵ AVPRF, op. 39, 39, d. 53180.

However, in that case it would be difficult to prevent the collapse of the national movement. Aralov commented that the assistance had utmost importance if the Soviets intended to carry on the Eastern policy. Aralov's impression about Mustafa Kemal was that, even though he made great diplomatic moves with cunningness, he was a sincere person; and it was easy to work with him on tactical issues. For the future of both Turkey and the East, it is possible to influence Mustafa in the positive direction.⁶²⁶ The main reason behind the inability to meet Turkish demands, apart from the economic shortages that Soviet Russia itself suffered, was lack of a consensus among the leading Bolshevik cadres on the priority of Turkey in Soviet foreign policy. Narkomindel had to exert every effort in order to keep the promises given to Turks. Chicherin's letter dated back to February 22th reveals this reality in a dramatic way. The letter was written to Molotov, executive secretary of the Central Committee of the RKP(b) and also a candidate member of the Politburo. The letter displays how Chicherin rages against the proposal to cancel the dispatch of the aid promised to Turkey:

Comrade Sokolnikov⁶²⁷ proposed something horrible, even impossible to define in the commission on Turkey. He proposed not fulfilling the undertaking of the Moscow Agreement and not paying the decided amount until the date we had determine (until March 16th). This amount was saved in Tiflis for this purpose, and Turkey via its own agents learnt about that. He in this way proposes to deceive Turkish peasants and artisans who believed us, to disgrace ourselves in front of all the Eastern people, to make them never believe us again, to make them hate us as liars; and to crucify me in front of the Eastern people and destroy my political life. I cannot allow anybody to vote for this proposal, which means nothing but political suicide. All this is the most horrible thing that I have experienced for the last four years.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁶ AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, 238, d. 53180.

⁶²⁷ Grigoriy Yakovlevich Sokol'nikov was deputy commissar of finance in February 1922. He became the commissar of finance of the Soviet Russia from November 1922 to 1926.

⁶²⁸ RGASPI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 22843.

Lenin, as many times he did, although this time he was incapacitated having a recent stroke, examined the situation and made a note at the end of Chicherin's letter to Molotov: "Comrade Molotov, I absolutely agree with Chicherin and I propose: To recognize Chicherin's stance and to realize the payment in the determined duration."⁶²⁹ This intervention resulted in removal of resistance against the material assistance to Turkey. On March 7th, Karakhan informed Aralov that 2,5 million golden rubles would be sent to Turks.⁶³⁰

Another issue about the material assistance was the problems emerged in the organization of the dispatches of the donated arms and money. The hardships of transportation and lack of true communication between the center and local Soviet officials made the dispatches highly complicated. Chicherin was again appears as the number one actor who strove to solve the complications. This situation can be exemplified through very curious operation for the utilization of the Tsarist arms in Anatolia by the Turkish army. According to the narrative told by Soviet historian Kheifets, Kazım Karabekir was deliberately keeping the Russian arms that were left in the eastern Anatolia at the end of the First World War and not sending them to Ankara. Chicherin charged N. A. Ravich to collect all the arms in Kars, Erzurum, Sarıkamış, Bitlis and Van and send them to the western front of Turkish Liberation War through Batum and Samsun.⁶³¹ Though it is difficult to know exactly⁶³², why those Russian arms remained intact in Eastern Anatolia and weren't send to the western front, we know that Soviet Russia organized

⁶²⁹ RGASPI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 22843.

⁶³⁰ Kheifets, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 188.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, 188-189.

⁶³² Soviet mistrust towards Kazım Karabekir became stronger each day. A sign of that was hidden in the directive sent to Aralov by Karakhan on March 7th 1922, about the dispatch of 3,5 million golden rubles to Ankara. In the directive, Aralov was ordered to organize the delivery of the money himself by sending a courier to Tiflis, guarded by a reinforced group of escorts and by taking the delivery directly from the courier in Ankara, instead of using Karabekir as the intermediary for the dispatch of the money. DVP, 5, 143.

their collection and sending to the western front from a telegram of Chicherin to the Soviet representative in the Transcaucasian republics, Legran. This telegram also illustrates the organizational problems that can occur during the transportation of the materials. In the telegram, he informs about Ali Fuat's note on the problem that the Turks when through when they wanted to obtain visa from Soviet consul in Kars, for their wagons full of arms to be sent from Eastern Anatolia to Western Anatolia via Tiflis-Batum line. Chicherin asked for an immediate order to Norman, Soviet consul in Kars, in order to make him give the necessary visas to the Turks in charge for the transportation of the arms.⁶³³ Later, when Chicherin was Lausanne as the head of the Soviet delegation who was present there for the peace conference, he had to deal with similar issues concerning the dispatch of material aid. As we said before, Chicherin was in Berlin for treatment and rehabilitation due to his health problems during the second half of the year 1922 and he traveled to Lausanne directly from Berlin.⁶³⁴ In his absence, the dispatch of the arms to Turkey promised to Rıza Nur during his visit to Russia⁶³⁵ in April 1922 was mysteriously unfulfilled. Though related authorities claimed they did send, Ordzhonikidze who coordinated this kind of transactions in Caucasia said he did not know anything about it. Chicherin considered that Soviets fell into a position of a fraud. The fact that Turks trust to the Soviet government was harmed with that incident; and that Turks received the necessary arms from France in their last battle with the Greeks resulted in distancing of the Turks

⁶³³ DVP, 5, 106.

⁶³⁴ O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, 94.

⁶³⁵ At the beginning of April 1922, a delegation presided over by Turkish Minister of Health Rıza Nur went to Kharkov in order to realize the exchange of the ratifications of the agreement between Turkish government and Ukrainian SSR; and then Rıza Nur moved to Moscow with a special duty, taking Mustafa Kemal's letter to Lenin. In the letter: "In the face of the new methods utilized by the imperialist countries, I believe that our countries should constitute a bloc stronger than ever. The assistance you have done us many times have great importance in this sense. I hope you you will discuss this with Rıza Nur. And I hope you won't reject the continuation of this assistance in such circumstances." (AVPRF, f. 132, op. 7, 8, d. 2)

from the Soviet sphere of influence.⁶³⁶ Therefore, in spite of the support given by the Soviets to the liberation movement in Turkey, the inadequacy of that support and organizational problems in the last phase of the war resulted in the entrance of the Soviet Russia into the Lausanne process at a disadvantageous position. At least, it was how the Soviet foreign affairs perceived that phenomenon.

Helping Turkey in war expenditures was only one part of a wider picture of economic collaboration, since, as it was indicated at the beginning of this chapter, much earlier than the end of the war, Turkey's financial and technical needs for building a national economy was on the agenda which required, for the Turkish governmental circles, an external support. Bolshevik foreign policy makers, who believed in the long-term necessity to keep Turkey in a close distance, considered that such a support to Turkish economy should be given by the Soviets for two reasons. First they hoped to be able to motivate Turkey to construct a national economy where the resources of the country were exploited for the large state-owned investments and the majority of the economy was under state control. Secondly, to reduce the need for foreign capital coming from the imperialist countries was crucial to prevent political domination of those countries over new Turkey. Throughout the period, since the end of 1921, Soviet diplomats in Turkey were reporting about the contracts signed between the Turkish government and western companies. Soviet plenipotentiary in Ankara, Mikhaylov indicated on January 3rd, the importance of Soviet material support if Soviet Russia wanted to play a role in the future of the New Turkey, he also mentions the expectations of the ruling circles in Ankara to enhance economic and financial ties with Moscow.⁶³⁷

Months before the Great Offensive of the Turkish army, there was a silence in the fronts. That silence provided the necessary atmosphere for flourishing of considerations and attempts for the reconstruction of the country.

⁶³⁶ RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1985.

⁶³⁷ RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 96.

In fact, for Aralov, the West started to flirt with Turkey, by abandoning the military front, until the ultimate settlement of the issues. France acted like an “honest broker” in this period.⁶³⁸ The Ankara newspapers were talking about the necessity to find foreign finance in order to bind up the wounds and to achieve economic development. The negotiations for certain concessions to foreigners in the construction works, mining and production in the country had already started. Visits of French, Italian and American capitalists to Anatolia in pursuit of profitable contracts became frequent.⁶³⁹

Soviets discerned in the earlier phases, that in the new period the factor to determine the Soviet power of competition with the Western powers and its influence on Turkey would be the Soviet economic aid to Turkey. Mustafa Kemal’s letter from January 4th to Lenin, reflecting the positive attitude of the Turkish government in those days to Russia, with its emphases on the parallelism between new Turkish and Soviet systems, on the reasons of natural convergence against the Western capitalism was promising a striking role to the Soviets in the near future of Turkey. For Mustafa Kemal, Turkey was passing through a big social transformation that was not well followed from abroad. He indicated that whereas the principle of separation of powers, which served to ratify capitalist domination, was applied in the West, Turkey preferred a system that concentrates all the powers under popular sovereignty. In that sense, it was much closer to the Soviet system than to the Western liberal democracies. In terms of social composition of the country, it was also closer to the Soviets since the parasitic, wealthy class of the country that had been influential in the imperial times was eliminated with the drive of the social conditions. Now, even the big landlords became impoverished and everybody in the country without exception has to work. “In this sense, Turkey is closer to Russia than to the West, especially to the Russia of the final

⁶³⁸ From RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 117, Perinçek, *Atatürk’ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeler*, 339.

⁶³⁹ Astahov, *Ot Sultanata k Demokraticheskoy Turisii*, 5. The book contains the articles of the chief of press bureau of the Soviet embassy in Ankara, Astahov, written between spring 1922 and autumn of 1923. Gasanova Ye. Yu., “Voprosy Ideologii Kemalizma v Trudah Sovetskih Uchenyh” (Moskva: Nacionalny komitet istorikov Sovetskogo Soyuza, 1974), 3.

months.” Here, he might refer to the emerging social composition of the Soviet Russia with the recently started implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP). With the NEP, ideal of absolute equality was withdrawn. Instead, a space was opened for free market and private economic actors.

Mustafa Kemal suggested in the letter that the ground of convergence between Turkey and Soviet Russia should be the Western imperialism, which was the basis and bearer of capitalism. Turkey with its institutions and administration could only trust on Soviet Russia and couldn't have any common feeling with the Westerners. After clearing the lands of Turkey from the enemies, the task would be to nationalize the useful economic enterprises in Turkey that were possessed by the foreign capitalists. Those foreign capitalists, he wrote, did not allow Turkey an economic rebirth. The framework drawn in Mustafa Kemal's letter could do nothing but strengthen Soviet persuasion about the necessity of economic assistance for durable political friendship.⁶⁴⁰ Aralov established a commission to search on Turkish economy and find out the possibilities of economic collaboration. In March, he wrote: “The orientation of Turkey towards Russia is related to their expectation to receive aid from us, to the situation in the fronts and to the development of our international position. However, in case of weakening of any of these factors, Western capital would take hold of Turkey step by step.”⁶⁴¹ Aralov's appraisal about the French capital in Anatolia was striking in the sense that it displays how and why the Soviets regarded French existence in Anatolia as a major challenge to Russian influence:

About the question on concessions: The oil wealth in the Erzurum and Van region was granted to the French company. Later, many other foreigners came with the offer of oil exploration. Concessions issue is highly important. If the French capitalists come with fairly serious offers, these offers will be accepted under existing financial circumstances and the need of

⁶⁴⁰ RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1520.

⁶⁴¹ From RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 117: Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeler*, 336-337.

development of the country. One shouldn't close the eyes to the fact that influence of France is, after us, much stronger than the German influence. The reason of entering the World War was imperialistic ambitions of Germany. They did not directly confront with France and they believe in French humanism. In this sense it is necessary to dwell on the issue of Erzurum oil. In my opinion, it will be negative to leave this in the French hands.⁶⁴²

For Aralov, the essential task of the Soviets in the East, and in Turkey as an Eastern country, was to help to build self-sufficient industries.⁶⁴³ In spite of these appraisals, Soviet Russia couldn't make his presence felt in the economic life of Turkey. It was due to mainly two reasons: The Ankara government was not willing Soviet direct investments basically for political reasons. It was most evident, as briefly discussed in the previous chapter, in Turkish reluctance to give concessions in the mining sector to Russia and preferred capital of other countries.⁶⁴⁴ Shortly, it was understood that Soviets did not have the strength to compete with any imperialist power in economic sphere. The suggestions such as sending Russian engineers and technical staff to Turkey in order to consult in the construction of industry, establishing a Bank of East and a joint-stock company in Turkey for import of Russian goods⁶⁴⁵ or education Turkish students in Soviet universities in order to help Turkey to bring about a qualified work force of Turkish industry⁶⁴⁶ did not meet the Turkish need for direct

⁶⁴² AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, 238, d. 53180.

⁶⁴³ From RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 117: Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeler*, 337.

⁶⁴⁴ The British high commissioner of Istanbul Horace Humbold noted in his report to Curzon: "The Angora government were being pressed by the Russian to grant them mining concessions, and would probably have to give them more than twenty mines. Their only hope was to obtain more favourable terms from French before the 20th March, when they would have to give a definite answer to the Russians. This question was of vital importance for the Angora government." Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk (1919-1938) IV*, 220.

⁶⁴⁵ Mikhaylov letter to Ordzhonikizde on January 3rd, 1922, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 96; First report of Aralov to Moscow on March 1st, 1922, From RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 117, Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeler*, 339.

⁶⁴⁶ Karakhan's letter to Turkish ambassador Ali Fuat on the possibility to accept a hundred Turkish students to the Soviet universities, DVP, 5, 130-131; Aralov also mentions about this

investments. Furthermore, for certain reasons, neither in sending qualified staff to Turkey nor in accepting Turkish students to Russian universities Soviet Russia couldn't make much progress.

What they did was to strive for increasing the commercial exchange between two countries. The first step taken was to establish a commercial affairs office within the Soviet embassy on April 19th 1922. Aralov was provisionally appointed the first representative of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade.⁶⁴⁷ A month later, a Vneshtorg representative was appointed. Turkish government notified its desire for an immediate conclusion of trade agreement to the new representative, Ordinski. On May 25th, Aralov informed the Turkish government that in accordance with this desire, a commission recently established to work for the possibilities of commercial activity between two countries was to arrive to Turkey. He also wrote in the same letter that Vneshtorg would give oil to the Turkish ministry of defense in a very low price.⁶⁴⁸ Soviet Russia opened commercial agencies in the port cities including Izmir, Istanbul, Mersin and Samsun. In the wartime conditions, the commercial transactions doomed to remain limited; nevertheless, on some items Soviet Russia became an important supplier for Turkey. Oil exports from the Soviet Republics was especially leading aspect of Turkish-Soviet trade. For that purpose, Vneshtorg opened the branches of Azneftesindikat, a company for oil exports and imports, in Kars, Samsun, Trabzon and Istanbul. Only in the year 1922, Azneftesindikat sent 9294 tons of kerosene and 340 tons of oil through Batum.⁶⁴⁹

On October 28th Soviet Vneshtorg delegation in Ankara, which was

offer, as something that still had not been realized two months after it was notified to the Turkish government. AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, 238, d. 53180.

⁶⁴⁷ Common abbreviation that was always used in the documents for the Commissariat of Foreign Trade was Vneshtorg.

⁶⁴⁸ DVP, 5, 417.

⁶⁴⁹ Yusuf Ali Ogly Bagirov, *Iz Istorii Sovetsko-Turetskikh Otnosheniy v 1920-1922 gg. Po Materialam Azerbajdzhanskoy SSR* (Baku: Akademiya Nauk Azerbajdzhanskoy SSR, 1965), 134.

authorized to sign an agreement with Ankara started talks for this cause with the authorities in Ankara. However, this first attempts failed due to Turkish objection to Soviet state monopoly over commercial activities and demand for diplomatic privilege to the Vneshtorg representatives of the Soviet Russia in Turke.⁶⁵⁰ The presence and activities of the Vneshtorg representatives in Turkey would be always a delicate matter since the Turkish government accused those representatives of involving in political propaganda and spying rather than trade. The trade monopoly and the activities of Vneshtorg was also a controversial issue that caused split in opinion among Soviet foreign policy makers. This point will be touched upon much later in this chapter.

Soviet diplomatic missions starts to enhance their political and social network

Starting with the new period of Soviet diplomacy in Turkey, Soviets became much more concerned about how to increase Soviet influence in Turkish society and politics. Apart from the considerations on the initiatives in the field of economy, increasing recognition of the Soviet diplomacy and establishing relations with the important social and political figures became important part of the diplomatic mission's work. In spring time, Aralov informed Karakhan about his activities in Ankara. According to the information he gave, he was writing letters to all the Soviet consuls in Turkey reminding them that their primary duty was to get into close contact with local Turkish public opinion and to increase Soviet influence in this way. "I talked about this matter with Mustafa⁶⁵¹. In my presence, he called all the governors and ordered them not to create barriers to Soviet consuls and to solve the emerging problems in the locality. He added the Soviets were their best friends."⁶⁵² In his memoirs, Aralov tells us that Soviet embassy was a center of

⁶⁵⁰ Kheifets, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 193-194.

⁶⁵¹ Mustafa Kemal

⁶⁵² AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, 238, d. 53180.

attraction in his time and from day to night the embassy used to receive Turkish guests and gifts from people from all around the country.⁶⁵³ The embassy also turned into a center of information on political and economic reform. One month after his arrival, ambassador Semen Aralov reported that he had met with many different ministers and parliament members who had sought counsel on everything from systems of import regulations to education reform. By his second month, Aralov had met several times with Sırrı (Day), the minister of public works, to discuss what Turkish and Soviet policy should be regarding concessions for economic development granted to the West.⁶⁵⁴

On the other hand, with the new term, Soviet foreign affairs started to interpret the Turkish approach towards Soviet Russia through the struggle between contending political forces of the country. On the one hand, for the Soviets, there were Mustafa Kemal and his adherers who had a clear stance against imperialism and its collaborators inside the country, before all the sultanate, religious authorities and big landowners. Mustafa Kemal and his group believed that Turkish independence was possible only with alliance with the Soviets. On the other hand, the members of the opposition, which was called the Second Group, were essentially against the friendship with the Soviets. They were right-wing politicians who tended to reconcile with imperialism, who represented the interests of comprador commercial bourgeoisie, big landowners and who had strong bonds with the sultanate and used religious propaganda against the government; and were against alliance with the Soviets. Though they covered their anti-Soviet sentiments with forged courtesy in their relations with the Soviet diplomats, they always worked to break the good relations with this country.⁶⁵⁵ Rauf Bey (Orbay), Kazım Karabekir, Refet Pasha (Bele), Ali Fuat (Cebesoy) were among the leading figures of this group. Soviet diplomats were apt to blame this group, especially

⁶⁵³ Aralov, *Vospominaniya*, 110-111.

⁶⁵⁴ Hirst, "Eurasia's Discontent", 155.

⁶⁵⁵ Aralov, *Vospominaniya*, 139.

Rauf Bey, the prime minister in 1922 and Kazım Karabekir, the commander of the Eastern front, for the controversies emerging at times between Turkey and Soviet Russia.⁶⁵⁶ Aralov in his memoirs accused the reactionary clique of Rauf Bey for complication the Straits question which was essential for Soviet-Turkish relations. Rauf Bey was also responsible for the tensions related to foreign trade monopoly of the Soviets and the Soviet commercial representatives and consulate issues.⁶⁵⁷ Later, in the Soviet historiography on Turkish-Soviet relations in the 1920s, this way of analysis would be sharpened. While Mustafa Kemal would be declared as the champion of Turkish-Soviet relations and glorified, his opponents were denounced as the liquidators of Turkish-Soviet friendship. In the reports, the cleavage between the two groups in terms of their attitude towards the Soviets was interpreted in a more balanced manner.

Genoa Conference and its reflections on Turkish-Soviet relations

As it was explained in the second chapter, Soviet Russia was invited to Genoa for a conference organized under the auspices of the Great Britain to discuss on the economic recovery of Europe at the beginning of 1922. Soviet government asked Krasin, now diplomatic and commercial representative of RSFSR in Britain⁶⁵⁸, to put pressure on British government in order to make Turkey invited to the Genoa Conference.⁶⁵⁹ However, Soviet attempts failed. The proposal of Soviet Russia was rejected with the pretext that Turkey was

⁶⁵⁶ Aralov interpreted the appointment of Rauf Bey to prime ministry by Mustafa Kemal as a tactical move against the opposition. For him, Mustafa Kemal calculated that in this way he could inactivate Rauf Bey as one of the leaders of the opposition. Aralov also strikingly indicates: "The politicians in Turkey, in some way or other, started to separate. We, the diplomatic representatives of Soviet Russia in Turkey, had to take this into account." *Ibid.*, 127.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁶⁵⁸ Soviet Russia was not represented at ambassadorial level in Britain at that time, due to the fact that Britain did not officially recognize the Soviet government inspite of the trade agreement signed in March 1921.

⁶⁵⁹ Chicherin's letter to Krasin, January 21th, 1922, DVP, 5, 59. Litvinov also asked V. V. Vorovskiy, head of Soviet commercial delegation in Italy, to remind Soviet proposal for the participation of Ankara government in the Genoa conference. DVP, 5, 78.

not a European country. The conference for Britain was also an opportunity to neutralize Russia in Near Eastern issues since there was a general idea in Europe that Turkish nationalists could survive thanks to Russian support. It did not take long that the rumors about Soviet-British agreement against Turkey, which supposedly would take place in Genoa, quickly spread in Ankara.⁶⁶⁰ Aralov gave an interview to *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, while the conference in Genoa was still unfinished⁶⁶¹, with the objective to put an end to the rumors about rift between Russia and Turkey in the Genoa process. He said, we were not hopeful when we were going there. He added:

Hostile capitalist countries desired to preserve their unfair policies. The only reason behind our participation was our will to pave the way for economic relations and to show that they also need us. Our second purpose was to put an end to the propaganda against us. Our delegation was quite successful. We demanded Turkish participation more than once and told them that it was not possible to take decision on the Near East without their presence. The imperialists strive to drive a wedge between two countries. Yet, our relations are better than ever.⁶⁶²

The failure of the Genoa Conference and conclusion of Rapallo Agreement with Germany by the Soviets during the conference, an action that totally disregarded the will of European Powers, relieved Turkish government and appeased the concerns. In conclusion, Aralov asks if the negative aspect of revealing the conspiracy of Turks was stronger than its positive aspect.⁶⁶³

During the conference, Entente delegations demanded the Soviet government, in a memorandum dated May 2nd, to defend peace under solid neutrality in the Asia Minor. Soviet delegation in their answer, expressed their

⁶⁶⁰ Astahov, *Ot Sultanata k Demokraticheskoy Turtsii*, 5.

⁶⁶¹ The dates of the conference were from April 10th to May 19th 1922.

⁶⁶² AVP, f.132, op. 7, 68, d. 86.

⁶⁶³ Mustafa Kemal enjoyed the news about Rapallo saying that “This is a brilliant victory of your delegation against the Brits. It really makes me happy.” Aralov, *Vospominaniya*, 127.

surprise that the demand for peace by the Entente came right after they refused to invite Turkey to the conference in spite of Soviet request in this respect.

Presence of Turkey in the conference might have enabled reconstruction of peace in the Asia Minor. On its behalf, Russia, as its close relations with Turkey are concerned, might have worked for accomplishing this end, too. About the solid neutrality during the war time in the Turkish territory, demanded from the Soviet government in the memorandum, this neutrality cannot be different from the one required by the international law and agreements from all other states.⁶⁶⁴

This incident was the first open support of Soviet Russia to the new Turkey in the international arena. In the following years, this kind of collaboration would be one of the most significant aspects of Turkish-Soviet relations. According to Aralov, Yusuf Kemal after returning from Europe at the beginning of April 1922, stated in the Grand National Assembly: “The prestige and importance of Anatolian Turkey exceptionally stands thanks to Soviet Russia and our friendship”.⁶⁶⁵

Ali Fuat incident

On April 22th, something very curious happened in the house on Bol'shaja Dmitrovka Street, which was allocated to the Turkish military attaché. Members of State Political Directorate⁶⁶⁶ raided the house with the accusation that four military diplomats of the Turkish embassy in Moscow conspired against the Soviet government, striving to collect intelligence on the Red Army. The objective of the raid was to obtain the documents handed over to the Turkish diplomats by two Soviet citizens. Indeed, a suitcase full of documents was seized; however Turkish ambassador Ali Fuat with various

⁶⁶⁴ DVP, 5, 366.

⁶⁶⁵ Aralov to Karakhan, April 10th 1922, DVP, 5, 207.

⁶⁶⁶ Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie (GPU) was the intelligence service of the Soviet Russia since February 1922, when it replaced Emergency Committee, Tcheka.

excuses, including his health problems, prevented the opening of the suitcase. This incident turned into a diplomatic crisis between the two governments. Narkomindel first requested sending off the four Turkish officers who were accused of involving in conspiracy⁶⁶⁷, in the face of Ali Fuat's resistance and counter accusations asked Turkish government for the recall of Ali Fuat Pasha.⁶⁶⁸

The diplomatic crisis, until reaching certain agreement about its settlement, created a very negative atmosphere. Ali Fuat claimed that it was a provocation in order to create a pretext of divergence because Soviet Russia and Britain reached an agreement before Genoa Conference against Turkey. This claim seemed to receive wide acceptance among the Ankara's political circles.⁶⁶⁹ In the Great National Assembly, the deputies commented that Turkey was surrounded by enemies and it was alone in the world.⁶⁷⁰ Abilov narrated that Mustafa Kemal visited him a couple of time and he was nervous and silent in those visits.⁶⁷¹ Glebov also mentions Mustafa Kemal's extremely frosty manner during their encounter in Gazi's house in order to give him the letter written by Aralov on the incident in Moscow. "The head of the Assembly seemed to me inhospitable as he had never been. Saying hello with explicit negligence, he darted such a heavy, lancinating glance under his aggressive, gingery eyebrows, that I lost control of myself, and with a harsh movement he almost pulled out the envelope from my hands." Ismet Pasha was also present in Mustafa Kemal's residence at that moment. "In the room, Ismet Pasha

⁶⁶⁷ DVP, 5, 274-276. The officers were Captain İdris (Çora), Major Ziya (Ekinci), Captain Saim (Önhon) and Captain Emin Bey. Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, 454.

⁶⁶⁸ DVP, 5, 379. Although Ali Fuat qualified the incident as a Soviet provocation in his memorial on his Moscow days (*Moskova Hatıraları*), he mentioned the lack of experience of the Turkish military ateches that caused the revelation of their intelligence activities within the Red Army. (*Siyasi Hatıralar I*), Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeleri*, 140.

⁶⁶⁹ From Aralov to Karakhan, May 6th, 1922, RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 117; Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeleri*, 365.

⁶⁷⁰ TBMM Gizli Celse Zabıtları III, 172, 434-450.

⁶⁷¹ Kheifets, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 195.

putting his hand on his back, was going back and forth in silence, lost in thoughts.”⁶⁷² When Glebov was leaving, Mustafa Kemal thought him that he would reply the letter, but for now it was necessary to tell Aralov that, “it will be better for you and for us not to quarrel.”⁶⁷³ The following day, Mustafa Kemal warmly received Aralov in his summerhouse. In the Aralov’s report on the issue, Aralov told that although Mustafa Kemal did not take the incident seriously, he was concerned about the repercussions of it since Turkey seemed to be insulted in the eyes of world public opinion and Turkish people.⁶⁷⁴ Aralov reported that he worked hard to remove the negative feelings left by the incident through long conversations with Mustafa Kemal, Yusuf Kemal, with all the directors of Anotolian Agency, Ahmet Agayev and others. He sent a diplomatic note and made an interview with Hakimiyet-i Milliye.

The insistent efforts of the Soviet side in order to make the Turkish government accept to elucidate the incident resulted in a common decision to decipher the documents in the suitcase and the crisis was appeased in the mid June. Narkomindel interpreted this incident as the counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet action of Ali Fuat Pasha, who strove to drive a wedge between Turkey and Soviet Russia.

Though the problem seemed to settle, its effects continued and joined to other factors that damaged bilateral relations. Aralov reported on June 1st that the work of the embassy came to stop; the politicians with whom the embassy established good relations started to stay aloof. The commercial relations were delayed. And some practical issues like opening of the Soviet consulate in Mersin, the Soviet ship called Enosis, that was seized by Turkish authorities in the Black Sea; and the prevention of travel of Turkish diplomatic mission

⁶⁷² Glebov, *Liniya druzhby. Rasskazy o Turtsii*, 65.

⁶⁷³ Ibid., 66. Glebov’s comment in the book is that at a time when Kemal himself felt the power and value of Soviet support more than any time, this Moscow incident could only be the provocation of Rauf Bey.

⁶⁷⁴ From Aralov to Karakhan, May 6th, 1922, RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 117; Perinçek, *Atatürk’ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeleri*, 366.

headed by Galip Pasha to Buhara by Moscow, remained unsettled.⁶⁷⁵ Turkish politicians were blaming on Karakhan about the Ali Fuat incident, considering him number one enemy of the Turks. For them, it was all because Chicherin was not in charge and, Karakhan deputized him. While a year and half before Chicherin was the reason of problems between two countries, now he was the one who protected Turkish interests.⁶⁷⁶

5.3 Rise of anti-communism in Ankara: Summer 1922

From spring to summer, in Turkish-Soviet relations we observe a dramatic setback, which requires explanation. Yet, since the axis of this work is the Soviet policy-making, it is important to display how Soviet foreign affairs perceived the developments that led to an apparent deterioration in the relations. First, it might be useful to quote Aralov's explanation that he made in his report to Chicherin on October 11th, 1922:

France saw our shortcomings and losses and started a campaign against us. Concurrently, it inoculated fear from Britain to the hearts of the Turks. It tried to use Genoa Conference against us and disseminated the versions of our secret agreement with Britain. It is possible to talk about deterioration in relations due to the incidents staged by the henchmen of France like Ali Fuat, Hamdullah Suphi and Galip Paşa... Of course if these incidents had not taken place, Turks still would have oscillated. This shouldn't be used to justify the political errors of Turkey... Britain convinced France and Italy with threat and courtesy, with using all its influence to prevent Turkish movement towards the Straits and Thrace. Towards the Peace Conference the Straits will be full of occupying forces and the conference will be realized without the settlement of this problem. Turkey by falling into this trap betrayed both itself and Soviet Russia.⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷⁵ From RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 117; Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeleri*, 376.

⁶⁷⁶ Legran, Soviet diplomat in Transcaucasia was another official in Narkomindel who was hated by the Turks because he was allegedly responsible of all the problems experienced by Turkish citizens and merchants about visas and border crossing. *Ibid.*, 380.

⁶⁷⁷ AVPRF, op. 39, 238, d. 53180.

Towards the end of the war a shift in the Ankara government's orientation took place. As the Soviet diplomats suggested, it might be due to the fact that, in the absence of the necessary Soviet support, Turkish government had to compromise with French. And concomitantly with this, the right-wing elements in the governmental circles in Ankara exerted some authority in the internal and foreign affairs of the country. Or it was just a reorientation towards the West, as Turkey felt less obliged to Soviet Russia and with the knowledge that Soviet Russia would never abandon totally supporting Turkey. Ankara, receiving several guarantees from the French, considered that they now have the necessary strength to activate diplomatic moves and open a place for itself in the European politics. Irrespective of the authenticity of these assumptions, before the final blow over Greek troops and start of the peace talks with the Entente, Soviet government received strong signals from the Turkish counter-part that Turkey would follow a more balanced line between the West and Soviet Russia and would not abstain from acting against the will and interest of the latter in order to reach the goals on the basis of Turkish cause.

Several developments might have made the Soviet diplomats think in that way: The Moscow incident, rise of Rauf Bey to prime-ministry, arrival of French colonel Mouglin at Ankara in June, visit of British General Townshend and rumors coming on daily-basis to the Soviet embassy about the agreement with this general and Turkish government to start peace talks,⁶⁷⁸ prohibition of TKP congress in July, though it was allowed before Rauf Bey became minister, prohibition of communist propaganda and renewal of communist hunting⁶⁷⁹,

⁶⁷⁸ Aralov, *Vospominaniya*, 123.

⁶⁷⁹ In autumn of 1922, after the congress of the Turkish Communist Party that took place secretly in Ankara, the members of the party were imprisoned, the party was dispersed (Xenia Joukoff Eudin and Robert Carver North, *Soviet Russia and the East, 1920-1927: A Documentary Survey*, 114). The persecution was carried out until November 20th, the date that the Lausanne Conference began. In the Fourth Congress of the Komintern that took place coincided with the Lausanne conference, from November 5th to December 5th, the persecutions severely denounced with a declaration and the Kemalist leadership of the Turkish national movement was accused of desiring "to appropriate to itself the fruits of the victory won at the cost of the immense sacrifices of Turkish communists and working people." According to Komintern Turkish nationalist government was ready to come to terms with the

sabotage of the Soviet embassy building in August 15th.

Colonel Mougin came to Ankara on June 8th, 1922. His official duty was making observations about the implementation of the Turkish-French Treaty that had been signed in October 1921. He was especially instructed to control if the rules on the border and customs issues were implemented properly. However, beyond these official duties, he worked as unofficial representative and a French agent during his stay in Turkey almost for three years.⁶⁸⁰ While he strove to develop Turkish-French relations, he also worked hard to vitiate the Soviet presence in Ankara. As noted above, Aralov achieved to turn the Soviet embassy into a center of attraction. He was omnipresent. He established contacts with the ministers and bureaucrats; used to participate in the sessions in the *Meclis*; and give public conferences and made declarations. Mougin taking Aralov as an example became a well-known person in Ankara in a couple of weeks.⁶⁸¹ He established an intimate relation with Mustafa Kemal.

One of the actions of Mougin against Soviet influence was to propose a military alliance, tried to convince the government to conclude a reconciliatory

imperialists for the sake of certain concessions in favour of the Turkish grand bourgeoisie. Yet, the stand taken by Komintern vis-a-vis the communist persecution in Turkey, the policy to support national bourgeoisie in their struggle for democracy and independence remained intact. On the same day this declaration was published by the Fourth Congress of the Komintern, Karl Radek in his speech to the Congress said: 'We do not for a moment regret telling the Turkish communists that their first task after the formation of the party was to support the national liberation movement.... Even now, with the persecutions, we say to our Turkish comrades, do not let the present moment blind you to the near future. Defend yourselves against your persecutors . . . but do not forget that historically the time has not yet come to take up the decisive battle; you have still far to go.' (November 20th, 1922, *The Communist International Documents* Vol. 1, 380)

⁶⁸⁰ Paul Dumont, "A l'Aube du Rapprochement Franco-Turc: Le Colonel Mougin, Premier Représentant de la France Aupres du Gouvernement d'Ankara (1922-1925)," in *La Turquie et la France à l'époque d'Atatürk: études*, ed. Sina Akşin, Paul Dumont and Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont (Paris: Association pour le développement des études turques, 1981), 75. Mougin was not only a masterful agent but had the capacity to contribute Turkish-French rapprochement thanks to his previous experiences in Turkey and his command on the complexity of the Turkish affairs. He first came to Turkey in February 1919 as an action agent. He established good relations in Istanbul with the close circle of Mustafa Kemal. On February 1921, he joined the French delegation in London Conference. He was hard working, had a sense of humor and a practical mind. He defined himself in his unpublished memoirs as a "crazy turcophile". *Ibid.*, 76.

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

peace agreement with Britain and to break up with Soviet Russia.⁶⁸² His work had a dual character. While he tried to convince Turks for rapprochement, he also endeavored to convince France to accept Turkish demands. He did not hesitate to draw attention to “Bolshevik threat” whenever necessary in his reports.⁶⁸³ The reports on the problems faced by the Soviet diplomatic mission in Ankara were always focusing one point: French initiatives and influence together with the strengthening of anti-Soviet right-wing politicians in Ankara resulted in cooling of relations. Glebov, as he told his book, even believed that the prohibition of TKP congress and the sabotage of the Soviet embassy were part of a joint plan of Mougín and Rauf Bey.⁶⁸⁴ Both Aralov’s impressions from his conversations with Rauf Bey, and the information the embassy gathered indicated a simple fact: Those within the ruling circles who opposed the Soviet friendship exerted their authority on the decisions regarding the communist current.⁶⁸⁵

The right-wing elements undoubtedly played a crucial role in anti-communist actions directed to the Turkish communists and the Soviet embassy.⁶⁸⁶ However, it would be misleading to put all the blame on the role played by them. As Carr puts it, when the time of reconciliation was approaching, Ankara generated a concern “to demonstrate its ideological independence” from Soviet Russia.⁶⁸⁷ This tendency got even stronger with the

⁶⁸² Aralov, *Vospominaniya*, 122.

⁶⁸³ Dumont, “A l’Aube du Rapprochement Franco-Turc”, 81.

⁶⁸⁴ Glebov, *Liniya druzhby. Rasskazy o Turtsii*, 75-76.

⁶⁸⁵ On February, 1923, at a meeting, Ahmet Agayev commented Aralov that the negative attitude towards the ambassador could be explained with the influence of Rauf bey and others. Mustafa Kemal was misinformed. He was told that Aralov sent a negative report to Moscow about Turkish army. Return of Ali Fuat from Moscow, Suat from Tiflis –an anti-Soviet foreign affairs bureaucrat contributed to Rauf Bey’s efforts. Agayev comforted that this was a temporary situation, when Ismet Pasha got back from Lausanne, the things would be settled. (From RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3. d. 122, Perinçek, *Türk-Rus Diplomasinden Gizli Sayfalar*, 146)

⁶⁸⁶ George S. Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1967), 110.

⁶⁸⁷ Carr, *Bolshevik Revolution Vol. III*, 476.

final victory over the Greeks and as the immediate result of this victory, the replacement of Lloyd George government, which approached and acted positively towards integration of Soviet Russia into European system, by the right wing forces' with strong anti-Soviet sentiments.

The repression on the communists was not a new phenomenon. The government gave many signs of the fact that it would not allow to open a room to a left-wing opposition. What was interesting was the loosening of this decision and allowing THIF to organize itself as a legal party in the spring of 1922. For Carr, it was a gesture in response to the Soviet efforts to provide Turkish government an invitation to Genoa Conference. In this way a second period of activity was opened for THIF, though was not exempt from repression.⁶⁸⁸ When the party applied for convocation of a congress, it was first approved then prohibited by Rauf Bey's government. Yet, extensive preparations for the congress already progressed, including organization of travel of foreign Komintern members to participate in the congress. Traveling of Komintern officials Zorin and Sadul, among others, especially attracted hatred of the authorities. The government reacted by halting the activities of Vneshtorg.⁶⁸⁹

In the summer 1922, the different approaches to the communist activities in Turkey between Narkomindel and Komintern seemed to become apparent. On July 21th, Komintern members in Ankara reported to Moscow that Aralov was leaning too much on Mustafa Kemal and he damaged Komintern's support of the communist elements in Turkey.⁶⁹⁰ Aralov on the other hand blamed Komintern to harm the Soviet interests in Turkey due to its weakness of misunderstanding the political processes and situation of the working class.⁶⁹¹ As it was reflected in his reports, Aralov had very little credit and a large

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., 439.

⁶⁸⁹ Kolesnikov, *Atatürk Dönemi Türk-Rus İlişkileri*, 32.

⁶⁹⁰ RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 118.

⁶⁹¹ RGASPI, f. 495, op. 154, d. 770.

distrust towards the Turkish communists. This last incidence, the convocation of the THIF congress against the will of the government and participation of Komintern members to it had strikingly negative effects on already isolated presence of the Soviet diplomacy in Ankara. This was the last turning point on the decision of the Soviet foreign affairs. The work for widening the sphere of Soviet influence would more decidedly than before concentrate on the ruling elite.

5.4 Victory and Peace: The story of how Soviet Russia was isolated from Near Eastern issues

Russia maintained its “temperate” support to the Turkish Liberation War throughout the months before the victory. While underhanded financial and military assistance kept to be done, anything to cause military confrontation with Britain was meticulously avoided, instead Soviet foreign affairs made do with strong declarations and diplomatic notes for the sake of Turkish sovereignty rights and against violation of laws of war. A striking example of this was Soviet note during summer time to the British, French and Italian governments that constituted occupant forces of Istanbul and the Black Sea Straits, for their safe conduct to Greek battleships from the Dardanelles.⁶⁹²

However, in the brief period after the defeat of the Greek army, when the ambiguity about the fate of Istanbul, Straits and Thrace was continuing and the tension between Ankara government and Britain reached its utmost level, Soviet Russia abstained from giving guarantee to the Turks for a common military action against the Brits.⁶⁹³ On its behalf, the matter that Soviet Russia was most occupied with was the security of the Straits. When Soviet Russia protested the passage of Greek battleships from the Dardanneles, British foreign affairs reminded in response that the pre-war agreement about the neutrality of the Straits was violated as a result of the passage of the battleships

⁶⁹² DVP, 5, 506-507.

⁶⁹³ Gökay, *Bolşevizm ve Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, 193.

Goeben and Breslau from the Dardanelles. And from that very moment onwards, the Straits had been open to the battleships of all nations.⁶⁹⁴ On the face of the reports about the secret talks between Turkish government and Entente countries, Soviet government knew much earlier about the possibility of concession of Turkey about the Entente demands for the Straits: namely, continuation of the status of the states that allowed free passage of battleships under Entente control. In the Moscow Agreement, however, it was agreed that about the issues concerning the Turkish Straits would be decided in a conference convoked by the Black Sea states. Now, Soviet Russia had the strong impression that Turkey tended to deviate from that point. On September 12th, Narkomindel sent a note to British foreign minister Curzon, which pointed out the inadmissibility of the British stand on the Straits, with its allies unilaterally regulating the regime of the Straits without taking the consent of the countries that had vital interests on Black Sea.⁶⁹⁵ The tension between the Soviet Russia and Great Britain reached its climax point when after a series of moves; Britain seized de facto control of the Straits, by concentrating its forces in Dardanelles.

On September 23th 1922, from a British radio, it was broadcasted, “any action of ships between Istanbul, Black Sea, Sea of Marmara and the Straits has been stopped. British battleships will open fire to the ships that violate this decision.”⁶⁹⁶ Curiously, the acceleration of the tensions on the Straits coincided with the talks with British businessman L. Urquart, for a concession that was planned to be given in accordance with the framework of the New Economic Policy. Krasin, diplomatic and commercial representative of Soviet Russia in London and Urquart signed a contract on October 6th, 1922.⁶⁹⁷ Although a

⁶⁹⁴ DVP, 5, 507-508.

⁶⁹⁵ DVP, 5, 574.

⁶⁹⁶ Soviet note about this matter was replied by the British foreign affairs with denial of an official blockade. The reply was mentioning only about possibility of making search in the ships that passed from the Straits. DVP, 5, 760.

⁶⁹⁷ DVP, 5, 608. The contract was never ratified by the Soviet government mostly because the European states were demanding to payment of the Tsarist debts in return for the credits. The

discussion whether taking directly part in the Dardanelles crisis or not took place between the Bolshevik leaders, the decision, with the pressure of Chicherin, was in the direction not to increase the tension.⁶⁹⁸

The Dardanelles crisis emerged after the defeat of the Greek Army by Turkey. Britain sent a call to its European allies, as well as its dominions for defending the Straits from the Turks. It received positive reply only from the New Zealand and Australia. Even France moved its forces in Istanbul from Asian side to European. In the brief time until first the resignation of conservative members of the British cabinet including Lord Curzon and then Lloyd George himself, Turkey approximated most to a clash directly with Britain. With a decree, British government ordered General Harington, the commander of the British troops in Turkey, to inform the Turkish army about the fact that if Turkey did not withdraw its dangerous military concentration around the Dardanelles at a given time, British troops would open the fire on the Turkish troops. Lloyd George government was considering evacuating the Dardanelles due to Turkish threat as a big blow on British prestige. However, Turkey did not have the intention of a clash with Britain. Mustafa Kemal had sent a telegram to General Harington informing him of his order to his commanders for holding the occupied territories by their troops but abstaining from any clash with the British troops. He also said in the same telegram to General Harington that, he was ready to accept the partial demilitarization of the Straits in the future, on the occasion that Britain withdraws its forces in the Asian coast like Italy and France did.⁶⁹⁹ With the knowledge of these considerations, General Harington refused to give such an ultimatum.⁷⁰⁰ It was

overt explanation of the cancellation of Urquart concession was British hostile attitude towards Turkey. Carr, *Bolshevik Revolution, III*, 402.

⁶⁹⁸ Gökay, *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey*, 193.

⁶⁹⁹ Sevtap Demirci and Mehmet Moralı, *Belgelerle Lozan: Taktik-stratejik-Diplomatik Mücadele: 1922-1923* (İstanbul: Alfa, 2011), 50.

⁷⁰⁰ Aptülahat Akşin, *Atatürk'ün Dış Politika İlkeleri ve Diplomasisi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991).

just before the talks in Mudania started on October 3rd. Neither the allies', nor the British public opinion could allow venturing a new war after 8 years of warfare. Lord Curzon's position that grounds itself on the possibility of "peaceful" solution to the Near Eastern crisis triumphed over Lloyd George's position.⁷⁰¹

Even if Soviet Russia abstained from direct involvement in the crisis between Turkey and Britain, though it was about most crucial security issue of Russia itself, Narkomindel couldn't help giving advices for the talks in Mudania and expressing its concerns about the losing the war on the table which was won in the battlefield.⁷⁰² However, the first crisis between Turkey and Soviet Russia that broke out towards Lausanne was not because the different positions about the regime of the Straits or Turkish "concessive" attitude in Mudania. It was about the participation of Soviet Russia in the Lausanne Conference. Aralov sent a telegram to Karakhan on September 23th about the possibility of the attempts to exclude the Soviets from the peace talks in Lausanne. He advised to explain the Turks firmly the importance of Soviet participation for the interests of both countries; and forced them to insist on Soviet participation.⁷⁰³

With the notes sent by Narkomindel to the Entente on September 24th and October 19th, Soviet Russia stated that the recognition of Turkish territorial integrity was obligatory for a peace, that Soviet Russia was the first state that recognized the territorial integrity of Turkey, that Straits and all other issues about the Near East were particular concern to Russia and that it was impossible to achieve a real peace without the participation of the Soviets in the conference.⁷⁰⁴ In a short time, it was clear that the Entente had decided to exclude the Soviets from the conference. Moreover, Soviet deputy diplomatic

⁷⁰¹ İnönü, *İsmet İnönü'nün Hatıraları* II, 72.

⁷⁰² July 19th, 1923, From Surits to Karakhan, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 103.

⁷⁰³ RGASPI, f. 5. o. 1. d. 2205.

⁷⁰⁴ DVP, 5, 593-595; 621-623.

representative in London, Jan Antonovich Berzin drew Narkomindel's attention to the fact that Ankara and Paris governments agreed upon Soviet partial participation in the conference since both considered that the conference should be between the Entente and Turkey.⁷⁰⁵

British move to prevent Soviet participation in Lausanne was reflected British cunning diplomacy. At the end of September, British government offered unofficial talks to Litvinov who was at the moment in Berlin for treatment. The meeting would be between Litvinov and Curzon and would be about the Near Eastern question and possible Soviet mediation between Turkey and Britain. Soviet Russia did not reject the offer with the reservations that Soviet Russia wouldn't be in any attitude against the interests of Ankara government and the talks should be not in London but in another European capital.⁷⁰⁶ This reply was conveyed to Ankara government. At the beginning of October, due to the restrained manner of the Soviets and because of the talks in Mudania stopped any further communication about the issue with the Soviets.⁷⁰⁷

At the beginning Turkish attitude was ambiguous. Aralov wrote on September 23th that Rıza Nur informed him that Turkish government would insist on Soviet participation to the conference.⁷⁰⁸ Aralov and Rıza Nur⁷⁰⁹ had conversations on the matter of cooperation in Lausanne for three days. At the end, Aralov got the impression that Rıza Nur was abstaining from joint diplomatic action. He used Mustafa Kemal's absence as an excuse for his ambiguous behavior.⁷¹⁰ When finally, Aralov could meet with Yusuf Kemal,

⁷⁰⁵ From Berzin to Karakhan, September 27th, 1922, DVP, 5, 600.

⁷⁰⁶ DVP, 5, 608.

⁷⁰⁷ DVP, 5, 760.

⁷⁰⁸ DVP, 5, 590.

⁷⁰⁹ Rıza Nur was deputizing Yusuf Kemal in ministry of foreign affairs due to the fact that Yusuf Kemal was in the front together with Mustafa Kemal.

⁷¹⁰ Aralov, *Vospominaniya*, 163.

Yusuf Kemal mentioned the folkishness of the French in their relations with Mustafa Kemal. They were complaining about British government that prevented the economic relations between France and Turkey. They promised to help Turkey in Lausanne and advised that it would be much better if Turkey distanced itself from Soviet Russia.⁷¹¹ Yusuf Kemal added that, yet Gazi firmly refused such advices. According to Aralov, in spite of the provocations of the Unionist in order to disincline towards Soviet Russia and to convince a closer cooperation with the Entente diplomacy, Mustafa Kemal firmly defended friendship with the Soviets. However, Aralov, who in the recent past could meet Mustafa Kemal very frequently, did not have the chance to see him in this period.⁷¹² Finally, it was understood that Turkey as a matter of fact preferred to take part in the conference without Soviet Russia. İsmet Pasha's explanation was that Turkey wanted to appear in the conference as an independent power, for not to revive the image of the past times when Turkey was dependent on other states.⁷¹³ And according to Aralov, he added: "It will be quite difficult without you. However spiritually you will be there with us."⁷¹⁴

Finally, Soviet government received the invitation of the Entente for partial participation to the peace conference in Lausanne on October 30th. An interesting debate took place between Narkomindel and Politburo about the content and language of the reply to be given to the Entente. It is convenient to take the letter of Chicherin to Stalin on 31th at length, since it gives a comprehensive idea about the developments and head of Narkomindel's approach:

⁷¹¹ Ibid., 163-164.

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ İsmet İnönü, *İsmet İnönü'nün Hatıraları: Cumhuriyetin İlk Yılları II* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet, 1998), 48

⁷¹⁴ Aralov, *Vospominaniya*, 172

Although I enclose herewith the project of a reduced reply in the spirit of the offer reported to you by a group of comrades, I myself strongly oppose such a response. In the note of the Entente the ambiguity is about whether we attend for discussion or decision. There is no ambiguity about the scope of our participation: we are invited only to talk about the Straits. If we restrict ourselves with asking for the explanation of the ambiguity, it means without any struggle we accept the limitation of our participation in the conference. We are categorically informed that: Russia is invited only for participation on the question about the Straits. If we don't reply it with protest, it will mean we withdraw our position of equal rights and active policy.

Right now I received an important message from Ankara. Ismet Pasha informs, 'formulation of the regime of the Straits enlarges the framework of the National Pact and Moscow Agreement to the advantage of Turkey. We of course agree upon your point of view. But on the question of strengthening the Straits we cannot propose your formulation in the conference because Western Powers would take it as desire to close the Straits, and this will constitute for us an unsuitable situation. Actually, without reinforcement, with our own forces we can always guarantee the freedom of the Straits, not allowing of course the transition of battleships.' About the participation of Russia: 'Turkey doesn't consider Russian participation necessary, since Turkey will talk about the conclusion of peace only with the Powers with which it is in state of war. Participation of Russia will create a situation as in the past when all the Powers decided on the fate of Turkey. For that reason we cannot demand the participation of Russia in the peace conference.' It is understood that Turkey agreed with the Entente for restriction of Soviet participation only with the strait issue; and for taking the Straits back from the Entente without the right to reinforce them militarily. We should remind Ismet Pasha that Tsarist Russia was intervening to abolish the sovereignty of Turkey; we on the other hand want to participate to work for achieving the sovereignty of Turkey. So it is now clear that we will not be allowed to the conference until the Straits question will started to be discussed. So our delegation doesn't need to go there around November 13th. To go there and wait in the entrance hall is definitely inconvenient. We should send there a nimble agent that will establish contact with everybody, agitate and inform us. Exactly for they won't allow us to the beginning of the conference, we should in most decisive form demand to participate in it fully. We don't lose anything, since we have already been invited and this invitation cannot be taken back and more than that we won't receive

anything. We can expose and insult them in most unceremonious manner...⁷¹⁵

Lenin for this time surprisingly did not agree with Chicherin. He found the language of the note proposed as reply to the Entente note on Soviet participation far from being diplomatic. This proposal was the one that was considered “reduced” by Chicherin. He wrote on 31st to all politburo members and Chicherin: “Stress 2-3 times that we don’t reject the participation, use a diplomatic language. As I quickly went through the note, it did not appear to me as such.”⁷¹⁶

And Litvinov who was deputising Chicherin in foreign affairs, had a different approach than Chicherin, too: He thought that objection to the restriction on Soviet participation in Lausanne in spite of the support of the Turkish side on the restriction would put the Soviet government in a difficult position. Insisting on full participation in the conference inspite of Turkish will would be equal to claim that Soviets could defend Turkish interests better than Turkey and this kind of an attitude would be highly reminiscent of the Tsarist times.⁷¹⁷ However, the note sent by Narkomindel with Chicherin’s signature on November 2nd, was exactly in the line with what Chicherin had thought on the subject. It was an open protest where the reasons for Russia’s insistence on full participation were also explained in detail.⁷¹⁸ Chicherin once again triumphed.

Soviet government prepared to the conference in the most meticulous way. Lenin followed closely these preparations in spite of his advanced illness. As Chicherin put it, it was the last contribution of Lenin to Soviet foreign policy.⁷¹⁹ In spite of all the preparations, Soviet foreign policy makers were not

⁷¹⁵ RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1982.

⁷¹⁶ Vladimir Il’ich Lenin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniy*, t. 45 (Moskva: Gos. izdvo. polit. litry, 1958-1965) 239-244.

⁷¹⁷ November 1st, 1922, Litvinov to Politburo. RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1984.

⁷¹⁸ DVP, 5, 650-653.

⁷¹⁹ Kheifets, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 204.

sure about the process and the results of the conference. On October 30th, Lenin wrote Krasin: “Lausanne Conference is still a big question mark.”⁷²⁰ Turkish position, that gave its signals from roughly beginning of summer onwards, constrained Soviet foreign affairs and caused a hesitant manner instead of a decisive diplomatic onslaught on European enemies.

5.5 Lausanne Crisis in the Soviet policy toward Turkey

Lausanne Conference was opened on November 20th, however Soviet delegation headed by Chicherin participated in December 1st. Yet, Soviet Russia did not give up claiming the right of participation in the conference on the ground that all the near eastern issues were related to the Straits and Russian and its allies economic and political interests. On November 27th, two members of the Soviet delegation, V. Vorovski⁷²¹ and H. Rakovski⁷²² gave a diplomatic note to the Entente with this content.⁷²³

The day after the Soviet delegation arrived at Lausanne, Chicherin sent his first impressions and remarks on the conference to Litvinov who was still in Berlin. Because of the significance of his comments, it is worth to include the full text of the letter here:

Dear Comrade,
I arrived at Lausanne only yesterday. In the following days I write more in detail. Already in Berlin, American journalists reported as if the conference was on the eve of disruption and they predicted that even I might not have caught it. Here in Lausanne, periodically wave of pessimism arises and then falls down once again. It occurs to me that all of this is bluff, deliberately released during the talks. Curzon is the definite host of the conference⁷²⁴, French abjectly follow him; Mussolini

⁷²⁰ Lenin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniy*, t. 54, 304.

⁷²¹ Soviet diplomatic representative in Italy.

⁷²² Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine.

⁷²³ DVP, 6, 20-21.

⁷²⁴ Curzon as a gifted experienced and very cunning British politician managed to dominate the

definetely lost his self-dependence. First he went his way, but now he obeys the Powers on everything. British sit in seclusion and from that place Curzon commands everything and put the British press into play. Turks conduct a meager policy, as if they want to cheat someone but at the end yield and obey him. I attach the copy of the chiphered message that I have sent to Ismet today. Ismet is deaf and inarticulate person, totally unskilled diplomat. When they are with us, they shower us with suavities and assurances of unlimited friendship. At the same time, however, they slip buzzwords here and there, that they are willing to allow the passage of the battleships through the Straits, -though no more than two at the same time, for battleships allegedly cease to threaten Constantinople when they go further on the Black Sea. We directly told him: If you are with us, do not allow the battleships; If you allow a battleship - you are against us, like Damad Ferid.⁷²⁵ I arrived just yesterday and maybe I am mistaken, but I have the impression that our state of total isolation is not only in Lausanne, but it is in general. Neither British, nor French showed any desire to talk about whatsoever with us.

With communist greetings,
Chicherin.⁷²⁶

conference by capturing the presidency of the conference and chiefdom of most of the commissions. Demirci, *Belgelerle Lozan*, 85. Demirci also draws attention to the fact that British close follow up of the Turkish correspondance between Ankara and Lausanne provided a huge advantage to Curzon since he knew in advance the strategy and steps to be taken by the Turkish delegation. *Ibid.*, 98.

⁷²⁵ Chicherin here doesn't mention the reply of Ismet Pasha to his "bitter words", which Ismet Pasha himself tells in his memoirs: "Now, we came here thanks to the war. Our armies are in contact with the British armies and they are on the frontier. It was decided in that the armies would be face to face but not take action. If the conference stops, action will be free. I can deny everything I told in the session on the Straits and then starts the war. Are you ready? Chicherin told be that we go to Moscow and examine the developments there. I said: Listen to me Mr. Chicherin. I will start the war and then we will meet in Moscow? Do you mean to say that? I will start the war, then afterwards we meet. It is not possible. You are not ready. You do everything for peace. We also decided to make peace. For an issue that will be settled in time, for the Straits issue, we don't intent to declare war today." İnönü, *İsmet İnönü'nün Hatıraları II*, 77. Aralov, when talking on the same issue with Primeminister Rauf Bey was subject to a similar question: In the case of renewal of war because of the Straits issue, are you willing that Turkey continue the war? Aralov insisted that European powers did not have the possibility to wage a war in the Near East once again. From Rauf Bey to Ismet Pasha, December 10th, 1922, Bilâl N. Şimşir, *Lozan Telgrafları: Türk Diplomatik Belgelerinde Lozan Barış Konferansı Vol. I* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1990), 188.

⁷²⁶ RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1985.

The very first day of his presence in Lausanne, Chicherin strikingly felt the isolation towards the Soviet Russia, which was a result of British strategy to keep Russia out of Near Eastern issues and categorically prevent any attempt of Turkish-Soviet collaboration. Although the strife between the Entente governments was apparent, British delegation under the leadership of Lord Curzon⁷²⁷, seemed to dominate the Entente diplomacy in Lausanne. British dragoman, a Near Eastern specialist, who for long years worked on Turkish economy, politics and culture, Andrew Ryan was a member of British delegation. In his memoirs named “the last of the Dragomans” he elaborately portrays the general situation in terms of the positions of the Entente governments and Turkish delegation in Lausanne:

The Lausanne Conference derived a singular interest from the fact that it was the first gathering of the kind, after the 1914-1918 War, at which the Allies met an ex-enemy power on equal terms. Every one of the innumerable points discussed had to be threshed out to the last sentence, almost to the last comma. The strength of the Turks lay in the fact that the responsible leaders knew their own minds and were prepared, though not eager, to fight again if necessary for anything which they considered vital. None of the Allies could contemplate such an issue with equanimity. The best that could be said for the three principal Powers on the other side –Great Britain, France and Italy- was that they were much less disunited than they had previously been, now that was no question of any government in Turkey other than that of Angora and that of the Greeks had been expelled from Asia Minor. France had secured her own major interests by the Franklin-Bouillon agreement. Italy could nurse her dreams of a field for future expertise in Asiatic Turkey without fear of finding the Greeks in possession... The three powers in fact, if not prepared to fight for anything, presented a relatively united front at Lausanne, though they were more united on some questions than on others.⁷²⁸ Most of the other

⁷²⁷ He also presided over the conference.

⁷²⁸ This relative unity was achieved thanks to Curzon’s efforts preceding the conference. Since he knew that he had to reconcile with Poincare and Mussolini to restrict the ‘excessive’ Turkish demands, he presented a memorandum and underlined that in the case of refusal of the memorandum he wouldn’t participate in the conference. The support of Poincare was especially crucial. Consequently, Poincare, before the start of the conference agreed upon the demilitarization of the Straits, Syrian and Iraqi border, Western Thrace and continuation of the

delegations took their cue from them in a general way, except the Russians, who, however, were officially concerned only in the Straits question. The Government of the United States took part as 'observers' only.⁷²⁹

On December 3rd, Soviet delegation protested once again with a note to the delegations of other countries present in the conference and declared that Soviet government wouldn't be under obligation to accept the decisions taken in the conference, in their absence.⁷³⁰ Notes of Chicherin that he sent to Litvinov on December 5th reveal that the gloomy atmosphere surrounding the Soviet delegation that got heavier with total and constant isolation. As a striking sign of that isolation, he mentions that no single journalist from the West asked for an interview. For Chicherin, although Entente countries had conflictual interests on the Near East, they formally acted as a united front in the conference. Turkish position was built on cunningness and foot dragging.⁷³¹ On December 9th, Chicherin stresses that that conference was characterized as a duel between Britain and Russia since France totally submitted to Britain in eastern affairs and Italy did not have the ability to act independently. Therefore, the sole representative of the Entente in eastern policy was Britain. Turkey couldn't conceal its weakness and in spite of a stubborn attitude, seemed ready for reconciliation since nobody believed that Turkey could continue the war. Therefore, for Chicherin the only element in

occupation of Istanbul until the peace agreement was signed. France also agreed in general terms about the reparations and pre-war concessions. Curzon's impression about Mussolini was that he wouldn't raise too many difficulties in the conference in the case Italy could obtain certain gains, like Dodecanese and economic concessions. Demirci, *Belgelerle Lozan*, 69-71.

⁷²⁹ Andrew Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans* (London: G. Bles, 1951), 174-175. İsmet İnönü expresses similar observations about the Entente position. Italy was in pursuit of restoring its impaired prestige, France far before the peace conference achieved good relations with the Turkish government. Turkish delegation approached positively to the French delegation headed by primeminister Poincare. However, "In practice, everyday it was seen much better that British efforts resulted in unity among the allies at a level stronger and higher than we had envisaged." İnönü, *İsmet İnönü'nün Hatıraları II*, 63.

⁷³⁰ DVP, 6, 30-31.

⁷³¹ RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1985

the conference that resisted to the terrorization of the small countries by the Entente was Russia. Chicherin informs they contacted with either Ismet Pasha or Rıza Nur on daily basis. And the thing to be done, at that moment, he considers, was to prevent the Turks to give excessive concessions. And in the case that the Turks gave more concessions, Soviets should leave the conference without signing the agreement. This kind of action wouldn't harm Soviet prestige, on the contrary reinforce it.⁷³² On December 12th, Chicherin mentions Litvinov that the members of their delegation were often discussing if the Turks were naive or cunning and betrayer. "All of us with various nuances consider neither one thing nor the other. The reality is more complicated. There is cunningness, naivety, cowardice and sophisticated maneuvers in the Turkish actions. All their behavior cannot be considered from the start to the end as a comedy play arranged with the allied Powers." The approach of the Turkish delegation was to separate the matter of Black Sea Straits from the security of inner territories of Turkey. For the Soviets the security of southern borders was up to the security of Turkey and without closure of the Straits it is not possible to talk about the security of Istanbul. Turkey on the other hand, for Chicherin, considered that they defend the Turkish territory by keeping their hands of the Straits. And they plan to leave the Entente and Russia *tete-a-tete*; and Turkey will watch and seek for its own profits. "In our conversations, Turks assert theory, very similar to ours during Brest Litovsk period. They consider to continue war impossible and they also think that the concession about the Straits is only temporary." It is understood that in order to appease the Soviet delegation, Ismet Pasha and Rıza Nur told that would have heavy conditions that led the Turkish people feel closer to Russia. For them the struggle was just starting and Turkish people disappointed by the "Curzonian peace" will fight side by side with Russia.⁷³³

⁷³² Ibid.

⁷³³ RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1985

As Chicherin reports on December 19th, Rıza Nur said to the Soviet delegation that Moscow recently tried to intimidate Ankara by threatening breaking up the relations etc.

He thinks that the result of this kind of behavior will be pushing Turkey to look for more support from the West. Turks define their agreement with the Entente as the Turkish Brest-Litovsk. Rıza Nur reminds that already in 1920 than in 1921 in Moscow and during his visit to Kharkov and Moscow Turks proposed to make an alliance with us. In his words, Turks understand very well that the flow of foreign capital aims at enslavement of the country... They will now energetically expel the foreign elements from the country. They are forcing to send Greek population, turkify the banks and commercial enterprises etc. The economic life will bear a national character directed against the West...⁷³⁴

The considerations of the Soviet delegation about the Turkish diplomacy in Lausanne were unstable. The members of delegation could bear different opinions. As noted above, they hardly understand the essence of Turkish behaviour: Was it naive or cunning? Rıza Nur's comparison of the ongoing talks with Brest-Litovsk seems to reverberate among the Soviet delegation. Rakovski, for instance, compared Soviets present position to that of the leftist SRs during the Brest talks.⁷³⁵ The opinion on the Turkish delegation would continue to transform throughout the conference and at the end Chicherin would acknowledge Turkish triumph in peace talks. However, something remained intact: Soviet foreign affairs concerns about the future relations with Turkey. For Chicherin, the future of the relations with Turkey was completely complicated, that should be treated most carefully and meticulously. And taking any wrong steps would be fatal.⁷³⁶

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

⁷³⁵ Ibid. Those who opposed the talks conducted by the Soviet delegation in Brest claimed that reconciliation with an imperialist power especially under such conditions very negative for Russia was not only a betrayal to Russian working class but also to the German workers who sought for their own revolution.

⁷³⁶ RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1985.

The report from Chicherin to Litvinov on December 21th draws attention to the differences between the attitude of the delegation in Lausanne and Ankara government. He wrote that even if Turkish delegation did not inform the Soviet delegation of everything, yet, overall, they kept hold of the Soviets in the talks and inform them in advance about their steps. According to Chicherin, this was not the case in Ankara:

I think, the biggest crime they committed that time was to frame up on the Straits behind our back. There was an agreement beforehand, it is certain. It is clear in the conversations of Mdivani⁷³⁷ and Aralov with Mustafa Kemal and others, which were known by us before my departure from Moscow. This *fall from grace* of the Turkish government might have happened in Mudania or in the talks with French Bouillon; but in any case it was some time before Mdivani arrived at Ankara. Turkey only now faces the consequences of the promises given that time and Ismet largely reduce and limit the evil produced in Ankara.⁷³⁸

Memorandum of Soviet Delegation to the conference, published on December 30th, was a large summary of the developments of the last two decades in Soviet eyes, in terms of imperialist aggression, ethnic and regional conflicts, revolts incited or at least manipulated by the imperialist Powers. The Treaty of Sevres, by giving a full-fledged account of its provisions, was condemned for it was an attempt to destroy the rights of a people for a free and decent life for the sake of satisfaction of monopolistic interests and imperialistic thirst for territorial control. Soviet delegation highlighted the fact that in spite of the indisputable victory won by the Turkish people, imperialist governments were still in quest for an imposition under the label of peace agreement, which reflected the spirit of the Sevres. In this sense, the Soviet delegation composed of Russian, Ukrainian and Georgian members, declared

⁷³⁷ Mdivani was sent to Ankara for direct talks with the Turkish government about the upcoming peace conference in October. Kheifets, *Sovetskaya diplomatiya i narody Vostoka*, 204 He had a conversation with Mustafa Kemal on October 30th. Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeleri*, 152. Then he joined to the Lausanne delegation of Soviet Russia. From Rauf Bey to Ismet Pasha, December 20th, 1922, Şimşir, *Lozan Telgrafları* I, 251.

⁷³⁸ RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1985.

in advance null and void in legal and moral terms, any concession imposed on Turkey by the block of large and small states that sought for the renewal of the old privileges related to the regime of capitulations.⁷³⁹

The same day Chicherin reported Litvinov about the repercussions of the memorandum. He says it was something unexpected and it created a sensation and attracted the attention of the journalists. He adds that they aimed at brewing questions and unfolding the conflicts.

We couldn't wait anymore since the allies intend to present the Turks a preliminary project of agreement. They on purpose spread rumors that it will be no more than an ultimatum. It is this very moment, a moment of tranquility when the attention is less distracted by other matters, was the most suitable to publish our memorandum. It will be like *vade mecum* to our associates on the Eastern question; and via multiplicity of Muslim organizations that exist here it will infiltrate in the East and play a big role. It will reinforce our political situation in the East and must serve as a basis for further relations with Turkish people, no matter what kind of intrigues the Turkish Pashas invoke. After the presentation of our memorandum, the thing to be done is to follow the upcoming developments. We should then decide on the suitable moment to make another presentation for explaining our reasons to reject signing the convention about the Straits.⁷⁴⁰

During the conference, as the process for coming to a conclusion on the future of the Straits proceeded in the way most undesired for the Soviet interests, Soviet delegation became surer about the fact that the new regime of the Straits was decided long before Lausanne.

More than once, I asked Lev Mikhaylovich⁷⁴¹ for trying to explore the correspondence between Entente and Turkey about the Straits issue. In the journal '*Correspondance D'Orient*' I found quite a lot of documents that I did not know before. They

⁷³⁹ DVP, 6, 123-133.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁴¹ He is referring to Lev Mikhaylovich Karakhan.

show that a year ago the Constantinople government agreed about demilitarization; and Mustafa Kemal at the very moment of his victories, more than a month before Mudania, trying to placate the Entente, agreed the free passage of battleships and demilitarization. We don't have all the documents; but those that we have show that long before Mudania Kemalists sacrificed the Straits to placate the Allies.⁷⁴²

As envisaged by Chicherin, the Straits issue turned into an wrist wrestling between Soviet and British delegations. Turks seemed to the Soviet delegation to fade from the scene. Head of British delegation Lord Curzon planned to kill two birds one stone through an agreement with Turkish delegation. He would make the Turks accept British position about the Straits and create a formal divergence between Turkey and the Soviets.⁷⁴³ He did everything to achieve the latter. The Soviet demands about the conduction of the talks on the Straits were ignored. The political decisions about the Straits were left to the group of experts in spite of the Soviet insistence for establishment of a sub-committee⁷⁴⁴; and demilitarization of the Straits was decided with a *fait accompli*.⁷⁴⁵ Lord Curzon with his insults showed how far he could go in order to eliminate any cooperation between Turkey and Soviet Russia. According to Joseph Grew, who was present in the conference as a member of American delegation, told in his memoirs that, when Chicherin explained his opinion about the Straits, Curzon asked Ismet Pasha his own opinion. Ismet Pasha explained that though he is most close to the Soviet position, he wanted to hear the ideas of other countries. In response Curzon: "It means, Turkey cannot explain its own opinion about a matter that concerns Turkey most, instead, Russians put themselves in the place of Turks and explain their opinions on their behalf." He added, "if I had closed my eyes, I

⁷⁴² From Chicherin to Litvinov, February 3rd, 1922, RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1988.

⁷⁴³ DVP, 6, 71

⁷⁴⁴ From Ismet to the Turkish cabinet, December 18th, 1922, Şimşir, *Lozan telgrafları* I, 240

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid. Soviet expert on the Straits issue caught Turkish and British experts in a private meeting. Aralov informed of Soviet protest about the exclusion of Soviet experts from the debates. From Rauf Bey to Ismet Pasha, December 12th, 1922, Şimşir, *Lozan telgrafları* I, 207

would have believed that Chicherin placed a fez on his head and presented himself as Ismet Pasha.”⁷⁴⁶

British position depended upon the principle of international administration of the passages from the Straits.⁷⁴⁷ In practice, it would amount to British control over the military activity in the region and in the Black Sea. Keeping its defensist policy in the foreign affairs, Soviet Russia desired a regime that would keep the imperialist military forces away from the Black Sea. This might only be achieved through the full control of Turkey over the Straits and prohibition of the passage of the battleships.⁷⁴⁸ Turkish position on the other hand, as explained many times by Ismet Pasha, was based upon a temporary retreat on the Straits issue for the sake of aimed territorial gains. The calculation was that even if British-Russian forces clashes in the Black Sea, it wouldn't necessarily mean a threat to Anatolia or an obligation of Turkish involvement in the conflict. However, there was another reality beneath the surface too. Turkey had another concern than the territorial gains. Still having in mind the Russian threat of older times, and with a belief that, in spite of all the ideological verbosity, Soviet Russia was the inheritor of the Russian Empire and whatever the ideological mask they put on their face was, they defend the ever-present interests of Russia. Therefore, leaving the Straits to international control would mean not to be alone with Russia in the Black Sea and balance Russian naval force in the Black Sea with those of European powers.⁷⁴⁹

Soviet impression was that Turks gave certain promises before Lausanne. Still, there wasn't a sham fight in the negotiations between the Entente and

⁷⁴⁶ John Grew, *Atatürk ve İnönü*, 17.

⁷⁴⁷ Gökay, *Bolşevizm ve Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, 209. Britain and Russia seemed to mutually change their position in the nineteenth century. That time, Britain against the Russian threat defended the closure of the Straits; Russia strove for the opposite.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁹ Mustafa Türkeş, “Atatürk Dönemi’nde Türkiye’nin Bölgesel Dış Politikaları (1923-1938)” International Conference: Atatürk and Modern Turkey (Ankara: AÜ Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayını, 1998), 132.

Turkey in Lausanne. On the contrary, Turkish delegation tried to build a position. However, finally, with the pressure of Ankara and also with the inculcations of the Entente and American diplomats, Turkey approximated to British position.⁷⁵⁰ In Soviet view, they did this with the confidence to the standing eastern policy of the Soviet Russia that included as a crucial aspect, friendship with Turkey. Secondly, they also believed their indispensability because of the isolation that Soviet Russia encountered in the international arena. Therefore, they could do with the Soviets, what is convenient for them.⁷⁵¹

In the final decision, which was agreed by the Turkish delegation on December 20th, the right of free passage to the battleships was recognized with the reservation that those ships could not be bigger than the biggest fleet of Black Sea states; none of them could be more than 10 tons and could never be more than 3 in number.⁷⁵²

Armenian question was crucial matter that was desired to be utilized by especially British diplomacy. According to Chicherin, Armenian question very strongly worried British and American public opinion. Yet, both Soviet

⁷⁵⁰ On December 4th, Chicherin told Litvinov about the explicit words: “Even I insist on full closure of the Straits to the battleships, Ankara will repudiate this.” (DVP, 6, 41). The anecdote told by Grew exemplifies how the imperialist powers tried to infiltrate fear from Russia into the minds of Turkish delegation. The talks between Ismet Pasha and Curzon revealed that there was the threat of closing the Straits to all the battleships and fortifying them by the Turks, in accordance with the Russian proposal. This undoubtedly will result in elimination of all guarantees for free trade; and sooner or later, Russian control over the Straits. Child told Ismet Pasha: “You build a fortress in Dardanelles. There is no question as soon as you can hold it. But if someone takes it from you, what will happen? Isn’t it better if you don’t have a fortress and instead accept an international agreement?” It was good that Turks, before they took a certain decision learnt both ours and allies’ sincere opinions. It appears that, Turkish delegation understood that they went too far in cooperation with the Russians and started to afraid more from a possible Russian threat. Grew, *Atatürk ve İnönü*, 19. Finally, this last anecdote gives an idea about the true essence of British diplomacy in Lausanne: Curzon told that (on the Straits issue) Allies had their last word and gave the Turks final concessions... Later Curzon told that they played a big gamble and made a funny expression of himself with objective eyes: “I talked to the Turks with a sarcastic tone as if they were defeated enemies who came into the presence of the victors in order hear their conditions of peace.” As Curzon said, Ismet could give a confident and firm reply and could put the Allies into a hole. *Ibid.*, 22.

⁷⁵¹ From Chicherin to Litvinov, January 9th, 1923, RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1988.

⁷⁵² Gökay, *Bolşevizm ve Emperyalizm Arasında Türkiye*, 209.

delegation and American observers believed that Curzon was just using the issues on minorities in general and Armenian question in particular together with the issue of capitulations, in order to drive the Turks into a corner and to settle the dispute on Musul in favor of British interests.⁷⁵³ France was absolutely in another position. The difference in point of view on Armenian question revealed itself during the talks in the conference. For example, Curzon once in the commission for minorities “with his usual rudeness” spoke to the Turkish delegation: “Before the war, 3 million Armenians used to live in Turkey; now they are left 150 thousand. Where are the others? Did they kill themselves?”⁷⁵⁴ The project that was envisaged by Britain was to create a center in Asia Minor for the Armenians who were deported from their homelands during the World War. The Armenian diaspora organizations were supporting the idea. However, the approach of Turkey about the project was absolutely negative. About the matter, Soviet delegation offered to shelter a significant number of émigrés to the Soviet territory.⁷⁵⁵ On December 24th, Chicherin mentions in his report the visit of World Armenian League. The representatives of the League asked for the intervention of the Soviet delegation for formation of an Armenian center for the Armenians departed from the Near East to other sides of the World. Chicherin reminded that the Soviet delegation was excluded from the talks with the exception of the sessions on the Straits issue: “So let those who created the trouble, clear up the mess. The Armenians suffer from the fact that the Entente instrumentalized them, let them now clear up the case.” Chicherin added that until that time, Britain armed the Dashnaks in Kermanshah, Tavriz and in Karadag against the Soviet republic. Now it was Britain’s turn to compensate those it manipulated.

⁷⁵³ Sevtap Demirci, ed. *Strategies and Struggles: British Rethoric [sic] and Turkish Response :the Lausanne Conference (1922-1923)* (İstanbul: Isis Press, 2005), 97.

⁷⁵⁴ DVP, 6, 123-133.

⁷⁵⁵ DKP, 6, 166, doc. 83 And they once again protested their exclusion from the conference when Armenian question was addressed. DKP, 6, 166, doc. 84.

The league agrees on all of them, but warns that there is no other option. I said if the plan to form an Armenian center fails, than Armenians should be settled to different countries. We contemplated on the total number of the Armenians and if it is possible to settle them in southern Russia. Rakovski said that they could be settled to Ukraine. Today I received Nurandungijan. He says, the Dashnaks sing completely different song now, and they work side by side with him, leaving apart the previous party accounts. They now allegedly admire what the Soviets did to Armenians and they stopped fighting with the Soviets. I repeated him that we are working on solutions about the settlement of the Armenian population. He suspected if the Armenians could live in such a cold climate.⁷⁵⁶

On December 26th, the commission on the minorities heard Armenian delegation. Turkish delegation did not attend the commission meeting and protested the participation of Armenian delegation. This delegation was not affiliated to the Armenian government. Accepting the ex-Turkish nationals to a conference as an internationally recognized element meant, for Chicherin, accepting Turkish Armenians' organization a *de facto* government.⁷⁵⁷ The appraisal of the Soviets on the minority issue was indicated in the same memorandum published on December 30th. According to the memorandum, hundred of thousands of Armenians, Greeks, Turks, Bulgarians and so on were killed and dispossessed as a result of imperialist madness for invasion and annexation. The best thing to be done for those masses was to provide a normal life in the Near East and eliminate the reasons of the new wars. The Soviet delegation protested in the memorandum Entente imposition about the rights of national minorities. For the delegation, the practices imposed by the imperialist countries were not only insufficient but also aimed at maintaining their control in the region and legitimize the existence of League of Nations. The delegation proposed a separate conference for national minorities, which would include a debate on the situation of all peoples in this category in all over the world.⁷⁵⁸

⁷⁵⁶ RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1985.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁸ DVP, 6, 123-133.

On February 4th, Lausanne Conference was disrupted when Lord Curzon decided to leave the city because of Ismet Pasha's refusal of Entente agreement project in a 4 hours private meeting.⁷⁵⁹ In Grew's words, Curzon was so much annoyed and told that Pasha said nothing other than those old and simple words: "National sovereignty, independence".⁷⁶⁰ According to Ismet Pasha, the reason that disrupted the conference was an incorrect calculation of the Entente. They planned to impose their positions with a *fait accompli*.⁷⁶¹ Actually, now Curzon was in a hurry to settle the peace in most favorite terms for Britain, since the future of the talks became vague with the new cleavage among the Entente due to the Ruhr occupation of France on January 11th.⁷⁶² He was so much confident about Turkish decisiveness to make a peace for all costs.

This was a move in order to reverse the point reached in the conference, which was to the advantage of Turkey. Soviet delegation also accepted this. The balances had been changing in favor of the Turkish delegation. While at the beginning Chicherin had rather pessimistic view and was afraid of too many concessions to be given to the Entente by the Turkish delegation, he now was talked about the upcoming victory of the Turks in Lausanne. On January 10th, he wrote Litvinov:

Here in Lausanne Entente receded against Turkey on all the issues. Capitulations practically rejected, Entente's proposal to appoint a special observer about minorities representing League of Nations was refused. Turkey is the real victor. Krasin and I paid a visit to Ismet who drew our attention to the fact that the allies recently change their positions. Ismet said that he clearly conceived that this was a result of Turkish-Russian united front,

⁷⁵⁹ Official talks ceased on January 27th. For a couple of days, the negotiations were conducted behind the closed doors. Demirci, *Strategies and Struggles*, 109.

⁷⁶⁰ Grew, *Atatürk and İnönü*, 41.

⁷⁶¹ İnönü, *İsmet İnönü'nün Hatıraları II*, 93.

⁷⁶² It was when the Conference in Paris on reparations resulted in failure on January 4th. Poincare decided to go and withdraw what is the right of France directly from Germany.

and it was necessary to maintain this in the future. All the successes of the Turks are up to this diplomatic factor. It is necessary to inform Aralov in order that he can remind Ismet's statement.⁷⁶³

On January 13th, he added to the victories gained by the Turkish delegation: "The Entente has stopped to demand a national center for the Armenians. They accepted that only the non-muslims would be recognized as minorities. Turkish laws will have power of sanction on everybody with the exclusion of family and inheritance law, which will be arranged seperately. Entente demand for appointment of a special controller in Leauge of Nations for Turkey was rejected."⁷⁶⁴

When the British delegation put forward an agreement with halfhearted support of other Entente powers Chicherin declared Turkish delegation that they would explicitly express that the agreement was being imposed to the Turks. In the same letter that Chicherin told about this plan to Litvinov on February 1st, he complained about the private talks between Britain and Turkey. Ismet Pasha, according to Chicherin, resented when he mentioned in his speech the secret talks without the Soviet delegation.

In my opinion Ismet is afraid of Ankara where there is a strong current for us, which is insufficiently utilized by Aralov.⁷⁶⁵ Definetely clear that Ismet is afraid of someone in Ankara and for that reason he considers impossible not to refute my words about the secret talks. If overt skirmishes start between us, it might be negative for both parts. Tomorrow with comrade Vorovski we are going to think about a formula to avoid undesired overt polemic and at the same time not to go in the

⁷⁶³ RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1988.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁵ This impression must be related to the information coming from Moscow about the guarantee given by some deputies in Ankara that an agreement contrary to Soviet interests wouldn't be ratifies in the Grand National Assembly. (From an intelligence report dated January 5th, Demirci, *Strategies and Struggles*, 111.) However, Aralov with an insisting manner conducted talks with Turkish authorities, before all, with Rauf Bey in order to put pressure on the Ankara government about the Straits issue. Şimşir, *Lozan Telgrafları I*, 207, 251.

direction to meet too much Ismet's wishes.⁷⁶⁶

On February 3th, a day before the disruption of the conference, Chicherin's words reflected the atmosphere: "Entente makes concessions after concessions to Turks. On the essential issues the concessions have been already made. Nevertheless, pessimism dominates. I continue to be in contact with the Turks in the way I informed you many times."⁷⁶⁷

Chicherin later took credit for Ismet Pasha's refusal to sign the British agreement project by encouraging him against the Brits:

There is one more factor: Turkish fear from Britain. Particularly, in the period of Lausanne conference, it was evident that the only country that the Turks were afraid of, but soundly afraid of, was Britain. They have the all-mighty imagination of Britain. Many times I had to show Ismet and others in detailed analysis the hand of Britain in political relations in Europe and in particular in the Balkans, was not that long. At the moment when the agreement project was submitted to the Turks with an ultimatum, they couldn't hide their worry and depressed mood. Ismet, in pale with a hogged smile, was asking me about the possibility of hostile actions of Britain. Rank and file staff and the journalists were even more explicitly concerned. I spent many efforts to incite vigour in this scared people. For the first time, I told Ismet that, in my opinion, Britain in reality strove for a separate agreement with Turkey. He widely opened his eyes. Then, I explained that for me, Britain was conducting the affairs in the direction to get rid of French control... In general, my role was to introduce Turks who were naive and knew little about Europe about the complicated situation and intrigues of the European diplomats. I warned them against any danger and pitfalls and at the same time constantly indicated them the weak position of Entente and the possibility to disunite Britain and France. After my explanations Ferid's trip to Paris and Muhtar's trip to London took place in addition to concomitant secret talks of Turks with the French in Italy. (This last fact is extremely secret).⁷⁶⁸

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁸ Chicherin to Aralov, February 20th, 1923, RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1990. Chicherin seems to exaggerate his role a bit in influencing the thoughts of the Turkish delegation.

Soviet delegation was totally excluded from the second stage of the Lausanne conference with the excuse that Turkish delegation did not ask for any amendment in the convention of the Straits. Chicherin had declared that the Soviets wouldn't sign the convention. Those states that convoked the conference asked if there was any change in the Soviet decision on the convention.⁷⁶⁹ Before April 9th, when the conference reopened, Narkomindel took several steps in order to prevent the exclusion. On February 6th, a diplomatic note was sent to the general secretariat of the Conference. In the note, on the ground that no decision was taken on the Straits issue, the secretariat was asked to be informed about the new starting time and place of the continuation of the Lausanne Conference.⁷⁷⁰ Ismet Pasha and Rauf Bey were called for a refusal to this exclusion. In spite of these initiatives, Soviet government wasn't even informed about the continuation of the conference. Chicherin ordered Vorovskiy, Soviet representative in Italy, to go to Lausanne with two others as observers.⁷⁷¹ The hosts were very unpleasant with their unexpected Soviet guests. On May 9th, Vorovskiy reported that a fanatic group of youngsters threatened him with expelling him by force from the country. He mentioned the indifference of the Swiss authorities though the news about the threats to the Soviet delegation was on the news everyday. Vorovskiy added to his report his opinion that behind this group there must be some international powers.⁷⁷² He also wrote his wife that all the game is played for isolating the Soviet Russia and prevent its influence on Turkey. On 10th, a White Russian named Polunin murdered him. For the Soviets, there was no doubt about his connections with imperialist intelligence services.⁷⁷³ As it was explained in the

⁷⁶⁹ Aralov, *Vospominaniya*, 200.

⁷⁷⁰ DVP, 6, 180.

⁷⁷¹ Kheifets, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 208.

⁷⁷² From Vorovskiy to Soviet ambassador in Germany C. I. Brodovskiy, DVP, 6, 283-284.

⁷⁷³ DVP, 6, 304.

second chapter, this murder did nothing but extended the strife between Britain and Soviet Russia.

In the absence of the Soviet delegation, issues of the Thracian border, Aegean islands, Turkish-Irak border, minorities and the capitulations were debated. Turkey achieved most of his essential goals. The solution of Musul question was postponed and delegate to a commission of League of Nations. Besides, the previous proposal for the Straits regime without further debate was accepted. A large territory in Asian and European coasts of Marmara and the Gallipoli peninsula decided to be demilitarized. The decisions to be taken for the passages of the battleships were left to an international commission affiliated to the League of Nations. Soviet government agreed to sign the Straits Convention, with the reservation to do it in Rome instead of Lausanne due to the Soviet protest to Swiss authorities for their negligence in Vorovskiy murder. Soviet ambassador I. O. Iordanskiy in Rome signed the Convention. But the Soviets never ratified it.

On May 12th, Chicherin spoke about Lausanne in the Plenum of Moscow Soviet:

...Comrade Vorovskiy was killed on a glorious historical duty in Lausanne where a diplomatic battle of great importance between awakened and rising East and the Western imperialism that desired to keep its domination over it; and where Soviet republics serve its historical role as friend of the oppressed people warring against the imperialist yoke.

In Lausanne conference, two worlds came to face-to-face, old western administrations that had no idea about what the demand of full independence, politically and economically, means, which was the necessity, as air, to the Turkish people. Great diplomatic successes of Turkey in Lausanne were far from getting closer to the minimum necessity of Turkish people, but they were considered incredibly remarkable to Western administrations from which these concessions were taken. These diplomatic successes of the East in the person of Turkey were possible thanks to the diplomatic united front with the Soviet republics.⁷⁷⁴

⁷⁷⁴DVP, 6, 304-309

Soviet government acclaimed the victory of Turkey in Lausanne before all it was a huge success in terms of forcing the imperialist countries for the first time to recognize Turkish government as an equal participant of the conference on equal terms. Achievement of Turkey's formal economic and political independence was the most striking element of Soviet policy toward Turkey. Yet, the inherent appraisal of the Soviets was that in the event that Turkey had conducted the talks in Lausanne in full cooperation with the Soviet delegation, the victory would have been much more brilliant for the Turkish people. Turkish preference of presenting Turkey as the sole payer without any allies in Lausanne was of course related with the desire to show the West its political and ideological distance from Soviet Russia. It was very well understood by the Soviet foreign affairs.

At the beginning of Soviet-Turkish relations, while Soviet foreign affairs placed Turkey as the pivot of the Soviet eastern policy, their consideration was to attribute Turkey a vanguard role in a united eastern front that struggled against the imperialist oppressors. In spite of Kemalist rhetoric that considered Turkey a part of oppressed East, future prospect of Turkey that was envisaged by the Kemalists was undoubtedly western-oriented. However, in the later days of the Liberation War, it was understood that Turkey tended to negotiate with the West whenever a diplomatic basis emerged and primarily aimed at joining the league of western countries even if it cost Soviet friendship. The last attempt of the Soviets to encourage Turkey for the leadership of anti-colonial struggle and for taking the initiative in the Arab revolts was decisively repelled by the Turkish government.⁷⁷⁵ Lausanne amounted to an official demonstration that in the new phase of the relations the task to enhance Soviet influence in the

⁷⁷⁵ Hirst, "Eurasia's Discontent", 4. In a conversation between Chicherin and Ismet during the last week of December, Chicherin raised the question of policy towards the Middle East. He mentioned a large Arab confederation and asked for Ismet Pasha's opinion. Ismet Pasha replied that he had never thought on an Arab policy. He asked if Turkey would like to govern Arabs. Ismet Pasha told that Arabs had such a desire, and if they left free, they would vote for us. However, Turkey did not want any other nation, Turkey wanted to live single. Şimşir, *Lozan Telgrafları I*, 273.

country was much more complicated in the sense that Soviet diplomacy had to deal with Western rivals in completely unequal terms.

Turkey sought for a honorable place in the Western capitalist world. Demirci quotes Robert Gilbert Vansittart's, Curzon's special secretary, words: "My impression is that the Turks were waiting and hoping for one thing and one thing only, an absolute proof of the willingness of the British to be friends with them again. The issue in Turkish mind is Great Britain or Russia. I believe if they got that proof they would not hesitate to throw over the Russians".⁷⁷⁶ In spite of the Lausanne victory, Turkey for some more years did not have normal relations that would open the way for British financial aid that Turkey most needed in the years of reconstruction. It undoubtedly left room for Soviet-Turkish friendship. Yet, Turkey could find other western partners that significantly challenged Soviet influence.

⁷⁷⁶ Demirci, *Strategies and Struggles*, 81.

CHAPTER 6

ISOLATION AND READJUSTMENT OF THE POLICY

6.1 Isolation of Soviet foreign affairs

During the first stage of Lausanne Conference, while Soviet delegation tried hard to change the mind of the Turks on the Straits issue, Aralov accompanied those efforts in Ankara by frequently meeting with Rauf Bey. Rauf Bey once expressed his displeasure in a letter to Ismet Pasha, complaining about a boring conversation with Aralov on the Straits.⁷⁷⁷ A large part of Aralov's memoir is devoted to the expressions of his disdain from Rauf Bey and the right-wing opposition. The disdain was not personal. Soviet ambassador strongly believed that the existence of this opposition and their presentation at the level of primeministry was a very detrimental factor for the Soviet influence, which proved itself in many occasions. Finally, he linked his forced departure from the embassy with Rauf's intrigues. Though we know the hostility of the opposition towards Soviet diplomacy, we don't know the extent of its influence. Furthermore, it is hard to explain the allegations about Aralov's relations with the Turkish communists and his consequent departure from the office solely with some intrugues. Rather, it is more reasonable to think that it was about the oversensibility of the Turkish government as a whole against communist activities and intolerability toward Soviet diplomatic mission in Ankara that pushed the limits of diplomacy, at a time when the peace agreement with the Entente powers was about to be signed. In the first report of the new ambassador, Yakov Zaharovich Surits⁷⁷⁸, the parts where he

⁷⁷⁷ Şimşir, *Lozan Telgrafları I*.

⁷⁷⁸ He was a member of Bund, Jewish socialist party in Russia, in 1902 and the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1903. He was arrested in 1907 and freed in 1910. After he regained his freedom he fled Germany and stayed there until the revolution. From 1918 until 1948 when he retired, he worked for Narkomindel. Before Turkey, he served in different levels in Denmark, Afganistan, Turkistan and Norway. He left Turkey in 1935 when he was appointed Soviet ambassador in Berlin.

mentions about the attitude towards the Soviet embassy confirm the latter argument:

The situation in Ankara is extremely depressive. Our embassy is almost entirely ignored. Our diplomatic notes are left unanswered. Personal contacts in one way or other are avoided. Almost every week, the passage of our officials from the borders are prevented with the pretext that it required permission from the foreign affairs. Our personnel that doesn't bear diplomatic passport has to go to police for registration. Our couriers to Batum are prevented. The passports given by our embassy are not accepted and those who have our passports can be deported without any procedure. Our embassy is heavily isolated. We are left apart from the living world with a Chinese wall. It is such a terror that not only the "representatives of the Turkish public opinion" but any living being don't risk to pass close to the Russian "sefaret",⁷⁷⁹ without a special permission. Especially delicate is the situation about the foreign trade. Though the import of Russian goods is not prohibited, the organs of Vneshtorg⁷⁸⁰ are prevented to circulate their own goods. Any Turk who has relation with the Vneshtorg casts all the doubts on himself. This situation dissuades the Turks to involve in commercial relation with the Vneshtorg. None of the Vneshtorg personnel is allowed to travel in the country. It is impossible in such an atmosphere to be skeptical and nervous. I have to set to my challenging work in such circumstances. With the fear to be lost in details and lost my perspective, I have deliberately overlooked many violations. And I have decided to clarify this: Whether all these take place because of a shift in the course of Turkish government, or as a result of a preventable misunderstanding, mutual mistakes or bad intensions of certain people?⁷⁸¹

It is possible to say that Aralov was the ambassador of a transitional period. It was when the Turkish foreign policy as the consequence of colossal changes was being readjusted. The ambiguities related to the quest for most convenient conditions in order to build a new country compatible with the

⁷⁷⁹ The word of embassy in the Ottoman Turkish.

⁷⁸⁰ Soviet People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade

⁷⁸¹ From Surits to Karakhan, July 19th, 1923, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 103.

norms of “contemporary western civilization” and the repercussions of this quest in the West inevitably reflected in the Turkish policy towards the Soviets. The new ambassador after getting rid of his astonishment in the face of the isolation the Soviet embassy suffered in Ankara, very wisely searched for the source of that isolation. In spite of the challenges, Soviet foreign affairs did not intend to discard friendship with Turkey as an important element of Soviet foreign policy. A readjustment accompanying the change in the conditions in Turkey and in the Turkish foreign policy was needed. Surits who served in Ankara for more than 10 years and represented in this sense stability in Soviet policy towards Turkey, was a serious, respected diplomat who could organize his work in Ankara in a target-oriented way, compatible with general objectives of Soviet Union⁷⁸². With the reports of high quality he sent from Ankara, with the large network of relations with Turkish statesmen and important social figures he contributed a lot to the shaping of Soviet policy toward Turkey.⁷⁸³

Surits’s first meeting with the primeminister Rauf Bey was highly unpleasant, according to Surits’s report. While Surits mentioned that the misunderstandings between the two governments could be easily surmounted in the face of strong bonds and common interests, reminding the primeminister with a very “careful tone” the Soviet support to Turkey during the Liberation War and Lausanne Conference, Rauf Bey insistently kept talking “on a level of ‘high politics’” about Soviets detrimental actions. Some of his accusations

⁷⁸² With the agreement of unification signed between the Soviet republics, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and generally in short Soviet Union started to be used. Zhukova and Kacva, *Istoriya Rossii v Datah*, 163.

⁷⁸³ While we witness Chicherin’s complains about almost all the representatives sent to Turkey, Surits exclusively was honored with his compliment in an indirect way. For a couple of months until arrival of Surits, Soviet diplomat Marsel' Izrailevich Rozenberg served as the top executive of the Soviet embassy. Surits, when arrived at Ankara, primarily learnt the existing situation from him. When Surits refered in his letter to Rozenberg’s comments, Chicherin advised him not to yield to Rosenberg’s pessimism and disparaged Rosenberg for his anecdotal aphorisms and doubtful information that based upon unreliable politicians. July 12th, 1923, RGASPI, f.159, op. 2, d. 57 When Surits criticized Chicherin for being unfair to Rozenberg, Chicherin advised him comparing his own reports with those of Rozenberg, than he claimed he would see that there is world of distance between those reports. July 23th, 1923, RGASPI, f.159, op. 2, d. 57.

were Soviet support to the anti-government elements, violation of the article related to Batum in Moscow Agreement through tortures⁷⁸⁴ to the Turkish citizens, treatment to them like a second-class citizen, restrictions on the commercial goods, opening arbitrarily new embassies.⁷⁸⁵ The trade monopoly imposed by the Soviet state and the Soviet consulates were two disturbing matters for Turkish government, which we will briefly discuss later in this chapter.

Now, if we return to Surits's question if the problem is related to a general change in Turkish orientation or it is something that was caused by unimportant misunderstandings... Surits highlights the role of the Narkomindel's mistakes in deterioration of the relations. Yet, for him, they were not decisive. He defined Turkish politics "rationalist". "When it comes to British insults, if the Turkish leaders find convenient, these insults can be ignored and the tone and tactic can be agilely changed."⁷⁸⁶ The same tolerance never showed towards Soviet mistakes. For that reason, the main reason of conflict seemed to be the new western orientation of Turkish politics.⁷⁸⁷ Still, Surits cared about the mistakes of Soviet foreign affairs in policy and tactics towards Turkey since with only indisputably legitimate policies Soviet influence could be kept and consolidated in this country. Therefore, he presented a balance sheet for the previous practices of the Soviet Russia in Turkey, which constituted the most striking part of his first report.

He emphasized the fallacy of the efforts for leadership on the Turkish foreign policy. He claimed that Soviet Russia insufficiently considered national self-respect of the Turks and failed to calculate truly if the pressure applied on the Turkish government was compatible with the specific weight of the Soviet

⁷⁸⁴ There are always disturbances in the two sides of the Turkish-Soviet border. However, it is hard to talk about a systematic torture of the Turkish citizens.

⁷⁸⁵ RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 103.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid.

Russia in terms of political significance for Turkey. He also criticized the superficiality of Soviet methods of influence:

In general, our policy was reduced to ‘priding on easy victories’ by strengthening our foreign influence through the most primitive means like speeches in the cocktails, ostentatious information etc. Turks were irritated by our mentoring, our constant inculcation about necessity to struggle against western imperialism, and our emphasis on the hostility of the foreign capital⁷⁸⁸. Especially our tactic during the Mudania talks disturbed them. We forced them to continue their attack and not to reach agreement... Turks have many bitter memories as such in Lausanne too. They were disturbed by our ‘protective’ tone they perceived in our declarations and speeches. It was contrary to their desire to show self-sufficiency and to arrogate the victory only on themselves. It is possible to admit that Lausanne did not give the expected results in mutual relations...the position of our delegation was not understood by the Turkish rulers; they considered that it primarily served for Russian interests... Another negative aspect of Lausanne was that Turks witnessed our weakness in international field and understood that our influence on the West was an illusion.⁷⁸⁹

Surits also brought into question the way and form of Soviet protection of the Turkish communists, which in Surits’s opinion, was reminiscent for the Turks, of Tsarist protection of the Ottoman minorities. This was due to the excessive intimacy of the Soviet embassy to Komintern’s work. Whenever Soviet influence on the Ankara government lost its weight, the reaction or the pressure put on the same government was almost always in the line of Komintern. This situation casted a doubt about Soviet intentions. Another controversial issue for Surits was the foreign trade monopoly of the Soviets imposed also on Turkey, which caused serious problems between two countries. This will be discussed at length later in this chapter. Finally, he

⁷⁸⁸ An example of this is: “Everyday, I draw their attention to the danger of giving concessions. They object me saying that they are under pressure, that they have to give guarantee and since they cannot do this by money what remains is to do it by natural resources.” Aralov, 1 Mart 1922, From RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 117, Perinçek, *Atatürk’ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeler*, 340.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid.

referred to pint-size incidents that contributed to the tension between two countries; like the Ali Fuat incident.

As Chicherin noted it during Lausanne Conference, the new period after Lausanne for Soviet diplomacy was to be much more complicated than before, related to the fact that Turkey got rid of war conditions and was less isolated than before. This new situation left no room for any possibility to make mistakes that harm the Soviet influence. Surits reminded that there was still a place of Soviet Russia in Turkish foreign policy and sympathy towards the Soviets among the Turkish people remained intact. Though political isolation of Turkey by the West continued a couple of years more due to the unsolved problems, Turkish economy started to integrate with the Western capitalist world. Soviet influence should be maintained at a time when the Western capital started to flow faster than before into the country.

6.2 Turkish economy and Foreign Capital: Soft spot of the Soviet Russia

In Chapter IV, Soviet perception about economic relations between two countries in a transitional period from wartime to political independence in Turkey was discussed. Narkomindel and all the Soviet diplomats who were charged in Turkish affairs had the same opinion that, in order to achieve stability and perspective in relations with Turkey, Soviet Russia should concentrate on economic relations, leaving aside political adventurism. This new line required a true analysis of the Turkish economic structure and economic orientation of the new political power.

Turkey was totally ruined in the long war years. The dominant opinion of the day was that the peace and political independence achieved thanks to colossal sacrifices could be maintained only through economic development, and construction of a self-sufficient economy. Kemalists considered that this required a general mobilization and avoidance of conflict between social classes of the country. While the peasants were blessed as the masters of the nations, the need for wealthy businessmen in the country was highlighted on all occasions. The peasantry suffered from heavy *aşar* tax. Land was another issue. An agrarian reform was the most urgent matter of the peasantry.

However, things were dragging. Soviet Russia revised its perspective. The Soviet expectation during the first years of the relations, for a radical program in favor of the peasantry and overwhelmingly based upon the state control over the economic activities came to nothing.

Now, the Soviets assumed that Turkey was in a phase of capitalist development advanced through business in the hands of conflicting segments of commercial bourgeoisie and a weak industrial bourgeoisie. Still, they considered that, there is a room for Soviet political and economic influence in this country. First, although Turkey advanced on a capitalist development, the contradiction between the central capitalist countries in terms of their expectations from the relatively new geographies where capitalism was flourishing and the countries like Turkey where the ruling classes aspired for an independent political and economic existence would remained unsolved for quite a longer time. Secondly, the divergences within the Turkish politics did not correspond to different class interests. And the government as a whole, although there were high level politicians and bureaucrats whose identity was directly related to one or other segment of the dominant classes, was not directly representing the interests of the dominant class. Rather, the dominant politics was divided through the lines of a “national program” and a more “integrationist” one. Correspondingly, another important line of cleavage was between the republicans and constitutionalists. The different segments of dominant class were attached to one or the other line in accordance with their interests:

It is more difficult than it is in the West to demarcate with clear lines between political groups where the class distinctions are not explicit, the personal influence is decisive and the civil society is weak. It is possible to come to the erroneous conclusion that the political groups that in reality represent combined class interests are representatives of crystalized social classes. Without doubt, Kemalism today advances on the basis of peasantry, petit bourgeoisie and artisans in favor of maintenance and strengthening of of achievements of Turkish revolution. It follows an inclusive policy that depends on reconciliation between classes on the face of extremely hard internal and

external conditions. It also tries to absorb the alien elements that draw attention to the weaknesses in national and international policy. The Unionists on the other hand, work for port town bourgeoisie and strive to get closer to France in economic relations, while in their struggle for political power and against Kemal, they collaborate with the monarchist mullas, a collaboration, which made them closer to Britain in international politics.⁷⁹⁰

The conclusion of these analyses was that Soviet foreign affairs could influence the Turkish government, which sincerely sought a national program and represent the progressive wing of the politics in Turkey. With this idea, Aralov accepted Mustafa Kemal's invitation for participation to Izmir Economic Congress, convoked in February-March 1923. It was an important opportunity for both making observation on newly emerging national economic structure of the country and giving messages of the Soviets to the participants coming from different sections of the society. Aralov together with Abilov traveled to Izmir with their wives and the guests of Mustafa Kemal and his wife, Latife Hanım. Aralov delivered a speech in the congress in which he drew attention to the importance of economic independence from the imperialist West and the demands of the peasantry.⁷⁹¹ This congress, for the Soviets, was reflected the will of the "nationalist" sections and achieved to be held against all the efforts of the 'national reaction' composed of "mullas, frustrated with the idea of the possibility of secularization of the vakıfs and the providing of education by the civil political authority; agrarian feudal elements, hatefully following the growth of the 'third estate' and finally unsuccessful carierists of all colors, playing inside the 'opposition'".⁷⁹² Aralov reported that although the organizers and official speakers of the congress believed the non-existence of the classes, the delegates were categorized in class terms:

⁷⁹⁰ From Surits to Chicherin, October 4th, 1923, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 103.

⁷⁹¹ Nimet Arslan, ed., *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri 1-3*. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997).

⁷⁹² Astahov, *Ot Sultanata k Demokraticheskoy Turtsii*, 53.

Workers, peasants, artisans and industrialists, bankers and merchants. The biggest delegation was of peasants and they immediately uttered their demand for the abolishment of *aşar*. The workers group was controversial because Aralov suspected how many of them were really workers.⁷⁹³ Yet, Astahov stated in his notes on the congress that in the workers group composed of 89 people, the number of real workers was about 50 people. Almost all of them were from the plants in Izmir vilayet and Istanbul. Most of them were exploited by the foreign capital, so in comparison to other groups workers constituted the most irreconcilibly hostile group to foreign capital. Their demands bore strikingly class character.⁷⁹⁴ For Aralov, the congress was very important for Turkey and mobilized especially peasants and merchants and brought in economic consciousness on the class basis, which surmounted the limits of national struggle. The congress marked a new phase for Turkey in its struggle for independence and mobilized the grass-root level. That's why the government was a little bit uneasy about the congress.⁷⁹⁵ For Astahov, who was present in the congress, the most influential of all groups was the composed of merchants, bankers and industrialists. The merchants were not the ones from Ottoman times. You can call them new rich, or nepman. They enriched through military supplies of European war. They were all mobile, lively operators "who gained a militant, class character not in the caravansaries of Diyarbekir, not in teahouses of Erzurum, but in the offices in Pera, Galata and Izmir quay."⁷⁹⁶ The industrialist, though small in number, called the tune in the group of industry-artisanship. This was the first signs of Anatolian industry, owners of manufacturing plants, small soap factories, western type engineers, advocates

⁷⁹³ The chief of the group was Aka Gündüz who had a bad reputation for the Soviets. The secretary of the group on the other hand was a merchant who previously asked for granting a Soviet foreign trade agency. February 23th, 1923, Aralov to Karakhan, From RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 122:g; Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeleri*, 394.

⁷⁹⁴ Astahov, *Ot Sultanata k Demokraticheskoy Turtsii*, 57.

⁷⁹⁵ Aralov to Karakhan, From RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 122:g Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeleri*, 395.

⁷⁹⁶ Astahov, *Ot Sultanata k Demokraticheskoy Turtsii*, 56.

who defend the class interests of their clients.

The hatred towards foreign capital that was perceived as an exploitative element and responsible of the bankruptcy of Ottoman economy was at the highest level. Several proposals were given against the existence and operations of foreign capital inside the country. The peasants group proposed cancellation of Ottoman tobacco regie, which had been granted to French capital. Another proposal came from the businessmen about putting prohibitive tariff on Cardiff⁷⁹⁷, which did not allow development of coal industry in Zonguldak and in other regions. Another one was prohibition of free entrance of foreign ships to Anatolian ports, in case of acceptance of which would affect most the Italian capital. The proposals in this kind met overwhelming support in the congress.⁷⁹⁸

In this transitional period mentioned, the primary concern of Turkish government was to contract with “reliable” economic partners for reconstruction of the country on the one hand, to avoid any relations with abroad that was reminiscent of capitulations on the other hand. That is why, while they strove to cancel some economic concessions, previously given to Western countries, they also worked to reach economic agreements on new conditions with the West. This quest for foreign capital was conducted in the middle of a popular campaign that reflected a big hatred towards foreign capital. It was necessary to stress the decisiveness of Turkey for political and economic independence. Mustafa Kemal’s word in Izmir Economic Congress was elucidative: “We need capital, we are ready to give them necessary guarantee, under the condition that they will act in accordance with our law. Before, foreign capital had privileged position. Our government was the gendarmerie of foreign capitalists.”⁷⁹⁹ However, in the years 1922 and 1923, imperialist aspirations towards Turkey were still based upon the previous

⁷⁹⁷ British coal mining region in the Wales most of the time referred as the coal center of the world.

⁷⁹⁸ Ibid., 59-61.

⁷⁹⁹ Astahov, *Ot Sultanata k Demokraticeskoy Turtsii*, 53.

colonialist codes.⁸⁰⁰

In the Surits's report from October 4th, 1923, he conveyed his conversation with Mahmut Esat (Bozkurt), who was chief of the economic commission of the Grand National Assembly. It is convenient to mention that conversation here, since his appraisal reflected the dominant ideas of the time. For Mahmut Esat, there were two main tendencies within the Turkish statemen: For one, Turkey would continue to be a country of raw materials for quite a long time more; for that reason, it should concentrate entirely on agriculture. Second tendency considers acceptance of foreign capital something not only inevitable but also desirable; and claimed that through the help of the foreign capital, Turkey should turn into an industrial country. Mahmut Esat, who would later be known as an anti-liberal, statist politician, described his position somewhere inbetween these two tendencies. For him, foreign capital was a necessity, however its field should be restricted to reconstruction and its privileged should remain in local level. State borrowing shouldn't push the limits of the budget and the credits received from abroad should be used for reconstruction of ruined regions. Mahmut Esat, as most of the Turkish politicians, did not believe the substantiality of Russian economic aid. He supposed that the economic relations between Turkey and Soviet Union could be as exchange of goods.⁸⁰¹

Relations with foreign capital were common issue for both countries. As it was discussed in Chapter 1, in the framework of NEP, Soviet Russia started efforts to lure foreign capital for deriving income from rich resources of the country. Aralov mentions in his reports that Turkish politicians at times asked for advice about the concessions issue⁸⁰². Chicherin, right after he left

⁸⁰⁰ N. G. Kireev, *Istoriya Turtsii v XX Vek*, 189-190.

⁸⁰¹ His impression from the Soviet activity on trade until that moment was negative: Russia, instead of developing economic relations is more interested in creating a politically profitable situation for itself and providing official recognition to Vneshtorg. RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 103.

⁸⁰² "The Bolshevik interest in Turkish economics had been increasing as the Turkish army brought the Independence War to a successful conclusion. In February 1922 ambassador Aralov had requested clarification of Soviet policy on economic concessions to foreign

Lausanne, wrote ambassador a letter to Aralov, emphasizing that Turkish government had entered a new phase in which it would work to lure the Western capital for reconstruction. Under these circumstances, “our economic policy is an example of how foreign capital can be used without becoming dependent upon it.”⁸⁰³

Neither in Soviet Russia nor in Turkey the relations with foreign capitalists were trouble-free. While Soviet government tried to find peculiar solutions to disagreements with the foreign investors that came to country for profitable concessions, through at times remarkable compromises from Soviet side. However, when it comes to Turkey, Soviet foreign affairs was highly suspicious about Turkish government’s decisions in the process of opening the country to foreign capital. That is why Soviet diplomats in Turkey used to follow closely the developments in this field.

British, French and American capital was especially under scrutiny. Germany was a little bit outside the scope. Germany was the country alliance with whom in the World War resulted in a catastrophe for Turkey. For that reason, Kemal stayed aloof from German orientation for a long time in the foreign policy. Yet, there was a certain interest towards German capital, for Germany did not have the possibility to pursuit an aggressive policy in its current position. However, economic links were recently started to establish.⁸⁰⁴

Reintegration of British capital to Turkish economy was problematic. On the one hand, for the Soviets, lied Turkish strong fear from Britain. Chicherin noted in Lausanne that he laboredly could appease the Turkish delegation when it was revealed that Curzon was preparing to give the agreement project as an ultimatum; and that very day, he added, he realized the unprecedented Turkish

countries, so that he might give advice to the Turkish politicians who were asking him about the matter”. (From RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 2204, Hirst, “Eurasia’s Discontent”, 123). In December 1922, “as Turkey’s relations with European capital improved, Aralov’s tone became more urgent and he pleaded with Moscow to take immediate measures to counter the growing influence of French capital.” (From AVPRF, f. 4, op. 39, pap. 238, d. 53180, Hirst, “Eurasia’s Discontent”, 123)

⁸⁰³ From RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1990; Hirst, “Eurasia’s Discontent”, 123.

⁸⁰⁴ From Surits to Narkomindel, November 14th, 1923, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 103.

fear from Great Britain.⁸⁰⁵ This fear also revealed itself in the approach towards British capital. In Lausanne, when the issue of the Ottoman debts was debated, Ismet Pasha resisted the Entente's demand to receive the debt payments in gold. Lord Curzon was frustrated. He said:

We will reach a conclusion in the conference. We are not going to leave here pleasantly. In none of the issue you please us...You reject everything. At the end, we decided to put everything you rejected into your pocket. Your country is devastated. Won't you reconstruct it? Where will you find the finance for it? Today, only the guy by my side⁸⁰⁶ and I have the money. Don't forget whatever you reject is in my pocket. Where are you going to find the money? From French?⁸⁰⁷

Rapprochement with British capitalists, in this sense, was risky. Needless to say that Britain was the most hated among the imperialist countries in the East in general, and in Anatolia, in particular. The difficulty to change the mood among the masses was a factor that complicated British reentrance in Anatolia. Still, there were in the Turkish political and business circles that had an interest towards connections with British capital. Nevertheless, Britain desired to reach a certain level of economic influence in Turkey but its tactics was different than France. France conducted a public relations campaign through turkophile officials who were sent to Turkey or made write pro-Turkish articles in the newspapers. Britain strove to persuade Turkish notables with threat of the things it might possibly do to the detriment of the recent achievements of the New Turkey. According to Surits, the leading figure of the anglophiles in Turkey under the influence of this British tactic was Rauf Bey. Those anglophiles activated naval forces of the Turkish army. Besides, there was a small section of emergent industrial bourgeoisie, which had the potential to seek British patronage. They were interested in British Cardiff. They also

⁸⁰⁵ From Chicherin to Aralov, February 20th, 1923, RGASPI, f. 5, op. 1, d. 1990.

⁸⁰⁶ He refers to the head of American delegation Child.

⁸⁰⁷ İnönü, *İsmet İnönü'nün Hatıraları* II, 89.

needed means for transportation of British imports to Turkey. However, in the long run, as this bourgeoisie got matured, their interests would contradict with those of British capital. The most striking question for the future of the British capital in Anatolia for Surits was that if the British imperialism would undertake the role to support the economic development and industrial force or would restrict itself with raw material plundering. Until that moment, Britain had shown no other sign than the latter. The railways constructed by them had been between the coast and a line parallel to that coast. They never intended to enlarge that construction to the inner parts of Anatolia. They never supported development of coal mining industry for not creating a competitor to Cardiff products. For oil, they long since set their mind on annexing Musul, which was already a big source of tension between Turkey and Britain. For the Soviet ambassador, inspite of British efforts and existence of small-scale supporters of Britain in Turkey, political problems and the conflict between Turkey's national interests and British economic ambitions, a British orientation in economy was unlikely.⁸⁰⁸

In general, Britain was considered as the biggest threat by Soviet foreign affairs for the future of the Soviet power. However, when it comes to Soviet policy towards Turkey, in the transition period from Liberation War to Republican Turkey, French political and economic influence was the primary challenge to the Soviets. From 1921 onwards, France preferred to develop a separate relation with the Ankara government at the expense of a united policy of the Entente. After Ankara Agreement was achieved in October 1921, France, by utilizing various policy tools, managed to secure certain economic concessions and keep its traditional role as a creditor of Turkey. According to the Soviet appraisal, the commitment of Turkish intellectuals and progressive politicians to the ideals of the French Revolution provided a motivation for rapproachment with France. A group of merchants that replaced the role of Greek and Armenian merchants in trade with Europe was, for Surits, ready to collaborate with French capital. However, Turkish-French relations were not

⁸⁰⁸ From Surits to Chicherin, July 19th, 1923, RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 103.

exempt from tensions. First of all, French common action with Britain in Lausanne in spite of all the prior promises left a bad taste. Syrian question remained unsolved and constituted potential source of tension. Secondly, France with two thirds of the debt securities of the Ottoman Bank in hand, primarily concentrated on making the new Turkish government pay the Ottoman debts with their interests. For the Soviets, what was reasonable for France was to form enterprises in Turkey that would enable a fast cash outflow in necessary cases, instead of longterm investments for production. Besides, the concessions given to France in Zonguldak and Cilicia made those places to be under the threat of French military occupation, like it happened in Ruhr. The sections of the dominant class that manufactured for the domestic market and that were most affected by the heavy taxes due to foreign debt payments would be, for Soviets, reluctant to further economic integration with France.⁸⁰⁹

USA on the other hand, was considered by Turkish government, a convenient candidate, in the sense that this country was supposed to lack any political ambition towards the Near East. The only thing that dampened the positive reputation of the Americans in this sense was their support to the Armenians after the World War and especially during the Lausanne conference, when creation of an Armenian center in Anatolia was brought into question. Still, Turkish government seemed willing about giving a priority to American capital and make sacrifices to lure it when necessary. However, American attempts for economic gains in Turkey were just starting in the year 1923 and geographical distance was still an obstacle in that era in front of the large and intensive overseas investments. For Soviets, Chester project constituted an ambitious plan for American part, that heralded American spread to the East. However, its future was uncertain.

Until the moment, Soviets told in July 1923, the only concrete achievement of the Americans was replacing Russian oil by Standard Oil, during the time when Turkish-Soviet relations were most strained in 1922-23. Still, Russian kerosene and gasoline had a market in Turkey, but Americans

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid.

had the advantage to make the distribution through Turkish merchants, which was an advantage vis-a-vis the monopoly character of Vneshtorg distributions.⁸¹⁰

To sum up, in the republican era, Soviets expected a growing pressure of foreign capital in Turkey. However, due to peculiar reasons in relation to each of the imperialist countries, easy and smooth plunder for the part of the imperialist capital was not expected. Before all, Soviet foreign affairs foresaw an objective contradiction to be emerged in the near future between the imperialists and “national sections” of Turkish bourgeoisie that sought for independent and powerful existence. This expectation was in conformity with the appraisal on the Eastern question that was made in the final declaration of the 4th Congress of Komintern:

It is precisely this weakening of imperialist influence in the colonies, together with the steadily growing rivalry between different imperialist groups, that has facilitated the growth of indigenous capitalism in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, a growth that is continuing to move beyond the narrow, restricting confines of the imperialist rule of the Great Powers. Up to now Great-Power capital has been trying to isolate the backward countries from world economic trade by insisting on monopoly rights to the super-profits from its commercial, industrial and fiscal exploitation of these countries. The demand for national and economic independence put forward by the nationalist movement in the colonies is in fact a reflection of the needs of bourgeois development in these countries. The progress of indigenous productive forces in the colonies thus comes into sharp contradiction with the interests of world imperialism, since the essence of imperialism is its exploitation of the different levels of development of the

⁸¹⁰ Before, already in March 1922, Aralov informed Moscow of the competition over oil supply in Turkey. And the progress in the railway construction by the Americans starting from Samsun, passing through Erzurum and Van and reaching Iranian markets and oil fields on the one hand, and the one between Yumurtalık, Diyarbakır, Bitlis and Mediterrenian on the other, American capital captured the Turkish and Iranian oil markets. Americans in their competition on oil with the Soviets had the advantage of Turkish government’s reluctance to trade with Russia under the conditions imposed by the Soviets. Aralov informs in his memoirs that during 1922, primeminister Rauf Bey ordered the suspension of the exports of Soviet firm Nefteeksport. He also conveys that Rauf Bey threatened him with enlarging the field of activity of the Standard Oil. Aralov, *Vospominaniya*, 161.

productive forces in the different sectors of the world economy in order to extort monopoly super-profits.⁸¹¹

Therefore, though economic conditions, domestic necessities of the Soviets and political hindrance to their economic activities in Turkey by the Turkish government prevented a true competition with the imperialist countries in Turkey, they considered that there were still things to do; because Turkey was and was going to necessitate economic collaboration with the Soviet Union, the sole country that did not aim plundering of the country. Soviet Union should take into account the new orientation of Turkey, should recognize the irreversibility of this orientation and abstain from pushing Turkey to the opposite. It should also adapt to the new era considering the objective possibilities and its own subjective limitations. In the field of economy, Soviet Union should concentrate on finding convenient ways to increase the volume of trade with Turkey.⁸¹² This assessments bring us once again to the subject of Soviet trade with Turkey and Soviet trade monopoly.

6.3 A delicate issue: Soviet Trade Monopoly

As it was noted in the previous chapter, Soviet trade monopoly and the activities of Soviet Foreign Trade Commissariat (Vneshtorg) in Turkey had been a delicate issue between two countries. A correspondence from October 1922 reflected the tension between the two sides accumulated throughout the past six months. On October 24th, just several days before the Soviet delegation arrived for talks in order to sign a trade agreement with Turkish government, Turkish foreign affairs sent a note to Moscow via Aralov, which was strikingly, determined the future of the commercial relations of two countries. In the note, it was stated that, in spite of the explanations of Soviet embassy in Ankara about the powers of the Vneshtorg agencies abroad, Turkish government refused to treat these agencies as governmental agencies. The

⁸¹¹ *The Communist International, 1919-1943; Documents Vol I, 384.*

⁸¹² RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 103.

justification was that such agencies could only act in accordance with certain articles of an agreement between states. However, such an agreement, yet, did not exist between Turkey and Soviet Russia. In the note, it was added that, these agencies could neither be treated as private enterprises for the procedure required by the existing laws for foreign enterprises and legal entities had not been fulfilled. For these reasons, Turkish foreign affairs asked Moscow for halting of the activities of Vneshtorg agencies.⁸¹³ Soviet embassy retorted the note in two days time. The language of the note was tough and threatening. It questioned the intention of Ankara's hostility towards the Soviet Vneshtorg agency since this agency was established with the support and approval of Ankara government in spring 1922. The note reminded that overwhelming part of the activities of the agency was supplying goods in different quantities to the various ministries in Ankara. It also claimed that Soviet government did not act with the expectation of driving profits from Vneshtorg activities in Turkey. Soviet government underlined that if Turkey had desire for a trade agreement with Soviet Russia, the attitude towards the trade agency of the Soviets was irreconcilable. Because, the attempt to halt the Vneshtorg activities, causing all the spendings made for establishment of the agency go to vain, would mean a big blow on not only trade with Russia but also with the other Soviet states. The note is finalized with the claim that the decision of the Ankara government was not related to economic reasons. This note did not reverse the attitude of Ankara government towards the Vneshtorg agency in the country. On November 13th, the Turkish gendarme came and lifted down the Soviet flag and state emblem from the Vneshtorg office in Ankara.⁸¹⁴

On January 9th, 1923, Ismet Pasha asked about the prohibition of Vneshtorg activities to the Council of Ministers after his conversation in

⁸¹³ DVP, 5, 635-636.

⁸¹⁴ AVPRF, op. 7, 8, d. 8. Another aggression towards the Vneshtorg offices happened in Trabzon. Some unknown people painted on the state emblem on the Vneshtorg building. Rauf Bey when mentioning this incident to Ismet Pasha on January 11th, 1923, claims that inconsiderate men of the local merchants who suffered from the Vneshtorg activities in Trabzon did this. Şimşir, *Lozan Telgrafları Vol. 1*, 367.

Lausanne with Chicherin and People Commissar of Foreign Trade (Vneshtorg) Krasin. He wrote, although he knew the reason of this prohibition, as “working of the Vneshtorg agencies like consulates⁸¹⁵ and lack of legal framework due to the absence of a trade agreement between the countries”, he said, he thought that a temporary solution was found and the preparations for a trade agreement were accelerated.⁸¹⁶ Two days later, Rauf Bey replied Ismet Pasha that apart from treating the Vneshtorg agencies as private enterprises there was no repression applied on them. And he denies the gendarme raid in Ankara. He wrote, “in spite of the notice for lifting down of the Soviet flags and emblems in the Vneshtorg buildings, it was not done. Government act tolerantly on the issue.”⁸¹⁷

The letter of a Vneshtorg functionary in Moscow, M. Orumkin, to Chicherin and to all Politburo members, on July 18th, 1923, reflects the extent of the repression that Vneshtorg faced in Turkey:

We can say that, in the last six months, we are having an economic war with Turkey. They prohibited landing of our goods in the Turkish ports. Recently, they even prevented our ships dock at the Turkish ports. According to the telegram that was sent from the Foreign Affairs not only the Russian citizens but also for instance Persians that come from our territory with our visa are not allowed entering the country. Our goods in transit are kept in Istanbul... This is equal to expropriation. Ankara government turns a blind eye to Vneshtorg treating it a private enterprise. Among these repressive practices, there is also travel restriction imposed upon our commercial representative who has to travel outside the city for business. As the Ankara government took the control in Istanbul, our conditions in this city significantly worsened... We still don't know what kind of measures are taken by Narkomindel against

⁸¹⁵ Vneshtorg agencies used to give visa to items of the merchants who trade in Soviet territories. However in some places where there was no Soviet consulate like in Istanbul, Vneshtorg representative also used to give personal visas.

⁸¹⁶ Şimşir, *Lozan Telgrafları Vol. 1*, 356-357.

⁸¹⁷ Şimşir, *Lozan Telgrafları Vol. 1*, 367.

this situation that affects our organs and commercial goods in Turkish territory.⁸¹⁸

This rigidity had several sources in the opinion of Soviet foreign affairs. First of all, Ankara government had political concerns. The government was afraid of the fact that economic power captured by the Soviets on the basis of a privileged status in Turkey could result in economic dependence on the Soviets and growing ability of the Soviets to manipulate Turkish internal and external politics. Besides, it considered opening of Vneshtorg agencies in Ankara, as the center and in several Turkish cities as a threat since they suspected the extent and content of the activities conducted in those places. Secondly, trade monopoly of Soviet Russia meant deprivation of Turkish merchants operating between the Soviets and Turkey of an important source of profit. Frustration of those merchants inevitably reflected as a pressure on Turkish government. The practices of Vneshtorg for the control of imported items to the Soviets most of the time caused suffering of the Turks who traded with Soviet Russia.⁸¹⁹ Finally, not less influential factor was Turkish sensibility against any diplomatic privilege given to a foreign state for economic activity in the country, which for them highly reminiscent of capitulations. Turkish government was open to advantageous concessions granted to foreign capitalists; but when it comes to the states, they had quite negative attitude. Bolsheviks also thought that Turkey was reluctant to allow the Soviets to extent the commercial activities in the country, with the concern that it might debilitate Turkey in negotiations with the Western capitalists. As one of the possible factors, even not the decisive factor, Soviets also envisaged the role of Raul in the crisis on commercial relations. The following appraisals from Chicherin and Surits reveal the wide examination of the reasons of this

⁸¹⁸ RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 56.

⁸¹⁹ İsmet Paşa talked to Chicherin and Krasin about the difficulties suffered by the Turkish trade ships in Georgia. Şimşir, *Lozan Telgrafları Vol. 1*, 356-357. Rauf Bey also mentioned that Turkish couriers in Batum were sent to Tiflis for visa. The packages without verified lists were sent to Tiflis from Batum and then back to Trabzon. Rauf added that Turkey did not do the same to the Soviet trade items and gave visa everywhere. From Rauf Bey to İsmet Paşa, February 5th, 1923, Şimşir, *Lozan Telgrafları Vol. 1*, 495.

problem that the Narkomindel involved. These appraisals did not exclude the impact of the mistakes committed by Vneshtorg in its activities in Turkey. Back in July Chicherin replied Surits's first report from Turkey. Surits was pessimistic about the future of the Vneshtorg in Turkey taking into account the observations and information he received from Rozenberg. Chicherin replied him:

You are absolutely right in pointing at our mistakes as the source of the anger that large section of Turkish merchants felt against our Vneshtorg. Yet, it is also important to examine the general orientation of Turkey and their struggle against our "pro-capitulations" Vneshtorg. The question if the change in their general orientation affects their attitude towards Vneshtorg is quite interesting. Your first report casted my doubt. You say that Turks are reluctant about continuation of Vneshtorg even in a mild way. Aralov came to an opposite conclusion from his conversation with Mustafa Kemal. Ismet Pasha was also talking in different way. It seems to me that Turks take a position starting the bargain with a high price; but it never means that they won't change their negative position after long procedures. You know the East. One should know that the East always sets the bargain with a high price. Remember that Curzon defined it in Lausanne "*bazarlık*"⁸²⁰. Likewise, it is important to reveal the role of Caucasian Rauf, who bears personal enmity towards us.⁸²¹

The new Soviet ambassador Surits directed harsh criticism to Vneshtorg activities. He asserted that contrary to the expectations, the economic policy of the Soviet Union in Turkey did not serve to increase political influence in this country. That policy made reverse effect. He added:

We don't consider the fact that while our Vneshtorg organs present themselves as barriers against the incursion of stronger capital, in the weak countries, they turn into organs of economic exploitation. We overlook the reality that the leitmotif of today's Turkish politics in struggle against the capitulations. They treat

⁸²⁰ Turkish word for bargaining, borrowed from Persian language.

⁸²¹ July 12th, 1923, RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 57.

it an issue of gaining independence. In this sense, the statist character of our Vneshtorg arouses hatred among them.

For Surits, as the policy of trade monopoly did not bring a political gain, it was not profitable in economic terms, either. He considered important to renounce demands extremely harmful for the Turkish commercial bourgeoisie, such as the insistence to supply the Soviet goods to the Anatolian clients without any middlemen. Surits also proposed to renounce the diplomatic privileges that were demanded to be given to the Vneshtorg representatives. He thought most important was solemnly doing business. For him, only in this way, Turkey could see before the Soviet Vneshtorg an equal partner that did not contemplate domination over a foreign country.⁸²²

Those criticisms were partially accepted by Chicherin, though the ideas here are not compatible with the framework drawn in the diplomatic note by Soviet embassy dated to October 26th, 1922, which was referred above. However, the common point reached was that, irrespective of the mistakes committed by Vneshtorg, the difficulties experienced in commercial relations with Turkey were more related to the different socio-economic structures of two countries. Surits states in his July 19th report that the campaign against Vneshtorg is not the result of certain mistakes but a plan contemplated in order to eliminate the monopoly character of Soviet trade.⁸²³ Therefore, Surits proposed to rethink Soviet commercial activities in Turkey on the basis of a looser status.

This proposal should be assessed in a wider framework since in those days there was a debate among the Bolsheviks about the extent of the state monopoly on foreign trade. Though it was a time of free transactions in the domestic market in accordance with the New Economic Policy, Soviet state maintained trade monopoly. However, one of the outstanding figures of the

⁸²² RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 57.

⁸²³ Ibid.

RKP(b) Nikolaj Ivanovich Buharin⁸²⁴ and People's Commissar of Finance Grigorij Jakovlevich Sokol'nikov found the monopoly detrimental to the Russian economy and incompatible with the general line of the NEP. On October 6th, 1922, in the direction of Sokolnikov's proposal, in the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the RKP(b), a decision that would enable to "implement a number of separate decisions of the Council of Labour and Defence on temporary permission for the import and export of individual categories of goods or on granting the permission for specific frontiers" was approved. Lenin, who had serious health problems in those days so followed the developments from outside, wrote a letter to Stalin in order to state his objection. He reminded that in the absence of the necessary control over the free transactions, this kinds of relaxation would result in not only a great loss of the Soviet state in commercial revenues but also a rapid enrichment of a segment of merchants who massively exported Soviet goods, which had extremely advantageous prices in comparison to prices outside the country.⁸²⁵ In the same letter he added the note that: "I have just been informed (1.30 hours) that some business executives have applied for a postponement." However, the polemic continued. People's Commissar of Foreign Trade (Vneshtorg), Krasin wrote his thesis in defense of the trade monopoly. Against Buharin's critique towards the bureaucratic system of operation in the Vneshtorg, which caused inefficiency, Lenin asserted on December 13th of the same year, in his letter to Stalin, that the question of the inefficiency of Vneshtorg is only a minor part of the general inefficiency of all the People's Commissariats due to their general social structure. Lenin highlights the problems about the standards of public officials. About Buharin's accusation of Vneshtorg's inability "to mobilise the peasants' stocks of goods and to use them for international trade", Lenin reminds Krasin's remark on the formation

⁸²⁴ In the years 1922-1923, when the trade monopoly was debated most, senior Bolshevik Buharin was a member of the Central Committee of RKP(b), he was candidate member of Politburo, member of Komintern's executive committee and managing editor of Pravda. He was one of the most fervent advocates of the New Economic Policy.

⁸²⁵ *Collected Works* Vol 33, 375-378.

of mixed companies for the mobilization of peasants stocks and goods, which enable the Exchequer, obtain no less than half of the profits from this mobilization. He accused Buharin for defending the foreign revenue go “wholly and entirely into the pocket of the Nepmen” instead of “our proletarian state.”⁸²⁶ Krasin and Lenin also thought that the tariff system was not effective in preventing the wealth of the country to go into the pocket of Nepmen or foreigners.⁸²⁷

This debate finalized with the victory of trade monopoly advocates. However, several eastern countries enjoyed a privileged position. Turkey together with Iran and Afganistan was one of them. Soviet Russia sought a basis for conciliation on the “economic war” with Turkey, which did not undermine the basic principles of the trade monopoly. A special commission within the Central Committee of RKP(b) was founded to work on a conciliatory basis. In conformity with Surits’s proposals, Soviet Union recognized partial freedom to imports and full freedom to the exports.⁸²⁸ The talks for a trade agreement restarted. However, Turkish side still tended to procrastinate since Soviet agreement project was considered to contain very strongly capitulations-like articles.⁸²⁹ Finally, the Soviet proposal for a temporary status presented by the Soviet commission was accepted.⁸³⁰ In December 1923, Turkish government declared the abolishment of the restrictions before the Soviet trade. On January 31th of the next year Vneshtorg ordered temporary facilitation of exports of several items to Turkey and Turkish import goods composed of agricultural products and small handicrafts. For the export and import of goods listed by Vneshtorg any

⁸²⁶ Ibid., 455-456.

⁸²⁷ Ibid.

⁸²⁸ This arrangement was in favor of Turkish merchants while it aimed at preventing, though partially, the profits of Soviet merchants to the detriment of state incomes.

⁸²⁹ From Rauf Bey to Ismet Pasha, January 11th, 1922. Şimşir, *Lozan Telgrafları Vol. 1*, 367.

⁸³⁰ Kheifets, *Sovetskaya Diplomatiya*, 213-214.

document wouldn't be asked in the Turkish-Soviet borders unless their value exceeded 20 thousand Turkish Lira.⁸³¹

However, the structural differences and political concerns prevented uncomplicated and growing commercial relations. An agreement could be signed only in 1927.⁸³² Though the volume of the trade increased three times afterwards, in the 1930s, place of Turkish-Soviet trade in Turkish foreign trade was not more than 6-7%.⁸³³

6.4 Soviet appraisal on the Turkish politics

Previously, until the time that the Kemalists proved their endurance in power, Soviet foreign policy makers oscillated between different actors to be supported in Turkey. The communists, ironically, were the least possible contenders to political power in the appraisal of the Soviets. What fell to their share was supporting the struggle led by bourgeoisie nationalist leaders against the foreign oppressors and the feudal elements in the country, without losing their independent existence and without putting aside their task to organize emergent working class. Communists could have a future in the country, but at that moment there were objective and subjective limitations that hindered their political claims. In a country where there was no industry, where overwhelming majority of the population was composed of peasants and where feudal elements still dominated the social formation, communists could only prepare themselves patiently for the future. The problems that emerged as a result of the ambiguities in strategy and differences between the views of Narkomindel and Komintern ceased to exist in reality as Soviet government decided fully invest on the Kemalists; and as Komintern policies was adjusted to a compliant line with the Soviet foreign policy objectives. Still, the

⁸³¹ DVP, 7, 51-52.

⁸³² Ali Suat Bilge, *Güç Komşuluk*, 104.

⁸³³ V. N. Koptevskiy, *Rossiya - Turtsiya: Etapy Torgovo-ekonomicheskogo Sotrudnichestva* (Moskva: IV RAN, 2003), 88.

Komintern activities in Turkey and Komintern declarations against communist persecutions in Turkey continued to be a reason of tension between the Kemalists and the Soviet government. Actually, this matter was always present as a subject of diplomatic relations. The developments in the relations of both sides with the Turkish communists most of the time had been flares of upcoming tensions between two countries.

A document from 1924 reveals that Komintern actions could still that time bother Narkomindel members. Astahov, who worked in the Soviet embassy in Ankara as the chief of the press bureau of the embassy, wrote in his next working place, Berlin to Chicherin about a Komintern declaration from spring 1924, in which Kemalist government was accused of returning Bulgarian rebels to Bulgarian authorities. He was angry because he thought it was another initiative to spoil Soviet policy towards Turkey. It is convenient to quote this document here at length since it not only informs us about an incident in 1924 but also illustrates Narkomindel's concerns and interpretations about Komintern's actions and relations with Turkey:

About the "Call" of ECCI⁸³⁴ published in Correspondance Internationale no: 19

With analogy to many times repeated incidents, though I am no more in Turkey, I can say what kind of impressions this call made on Ankara government including Mustafa, what kind of conclusions they reached, even if they kept their silence due to the circumstances.

They interpret this call as:

1. Direct hostility towards themselves
2. A call that aims to overthrow Ankara government. Here the memories of the first years revive in their minds: they remember Enverization, communization memories and they come to the conclusion that similar tendencies are being rebuilt.
3. An attack to Mustafa⁸³⁵ as a person (Pasha with big caps)

They asked themselves what motivated the Bolsheviks –no matter for them if Narkomindel or ECCI, for calling their

⁸³⁴The Executive Committee of the Communist International

⁸³⁵He refers to Mustafa Kemal.

friends as “hangman”, “having mood reminiscent of the bloody manner of the sultan” etc. Since the Turks take our document seriously, they cannot imagine that it is about not accepting several Bulgarian rebels and returning them to Bulgarian authorities. For them, these kinds of incidents that contradict with the common attitude towards the Kemalists and storm in a teacup don’t have any meaning. Especially when the Turks with all their strength resist to the one-sided impositions of the foreign capital, before all Mustafa realize the reforms that are all beyond our expectations and when they take serious risks against reactionism and has sufficiently proved their republicanism...⁸³⁶ Moreover, it is significant that the “call” dated to three months after the incident had happened.⁸³⁷

Astahov estimated that the Kemalists related this “call” with Soviet rapprochement with Britain in summer 1924.⁸³⁸ For him, together with the false messages given in some Soviet publications that Soviets no more needed the Turks, his call undermines Soviet policy towards Turkey and gave very useful pretext to the Soviet opponents within the country, like Rauf, Karabekir, in order them to weaken the position of Mustafa Kemal and Ismet. Finally, he clearly explains the position of Narkomindel:

In general, it is impossible to understand which fractions the ECCI considers more republican and revolutionary than the Kemalists. There is NO single political or social group that shows a least existence and is organized on a very basic level that can compete with the Kemalists with radical and progressive motivations. Did not the lessons taken from the experiences with THIF⁸³⁹ and the Enverists suffice? These “dust

⁸³⁶ Astahov was known with his good relations with Turkish politicians. He was considered one who knew well the concerns of Turks and acted most of the time “like a Turk”. (Aralov, *Vospominaniye*) Therefore, his views on the practices of the Turkish government might have not fully reflected the view of Narkomindel. Yet, first his words had a strength as an experienced diplomat in Turkish affairs, second, his framework was compliant with that of Chicherin and Narkomindel.

⁸³⁷ Autumn 1924 (estimated), RGASPI, f. 82, op. 2, d. 1328.

⁸³⁸ As the result of the summer talks, Britain officially recognized Soviet Union. Neilson, *Britain, Soviet Russia and the Collapse of the Versailles Order*, 43.

⁸³⁹ People’s Communist Party of Turkey

particles” undermines our support in 1920-21, Frunze’s visit and our actions in Lausanne. Unfortunately, these blunders have a systematic character and are reminiscent of our mistakes in the year 1920 like dispatch of Suphi, Golman and Enverization. Until when will our Eastern policy thesis, which has been formulated, argued in detail and recorded in Komintern congresses, party meetings etc., be unnecessary/useless in the eyes of many of our comrades?⁸⁴⁰

Relations with Enver and Soviet support to the actions of the Turkish communists in the past are characterized as mistakes. However, the letter also shows that, in the year 1924, lack of a full consensus among the Bolsheviks was making itself evident.

It is important to note that in the letter the Kemalists are considered the only effective and progressive force in the country that the Soviets could rely on. The left-wing opposition in general and the communists in particular did not amount to a real power to be supported in the country for the Soviets. Although the working population overwhelming of which was composed of poor peasantry suffered from the material conditions of the devastated country and heavy taxes, the “populist” opposition composed of the “populists, socialists and the communists” couldn’t have a strong voice in the *meclis*, lacked a concrete program that included proposals for economic reform. According to Aralov’s report from June 1922, as Aralov proposed them to establish a strong peasant party, the members of this group expressed their fear from Mustafa Kemal as the sole authority recognized. They were afraid of uniting since they did not trust each other. The left opposition, according to Aralov, layed their hopes too much on the Soviet embassy. However Aralov expresses his reluctance to involve in domestic affairs of the country, especially after Ali Fuat incident.⁸⁴¹ When Aralov wrote this report the right-wing opposition was still far from serious existence. However, things got changed as the delicate issues related to political regime, social reforms and

⁸⁴⁰ RGASPI, f. 82, op. 2, d. 1328.

⁸⁴¹ From RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 117’den: Perinçek, *Atatürk’ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeleri*, 387-388.

foreign policy orientation came to the fore as the war ended. The exclusion of the second group from the *meclis* with the elections in April 1923 and establishment of People's Party in September 1923 did not prevent the activities of the right-wing opposition. Soon enough, several outstanding commanders and politicians of the Liberation War formed a separate group, which would then in 1924, turned into Progressive Republican Party. During the time when Surits sent a report to Moscow on September 5th, 1923, hot debates were taking place in the *meclis* on the draft of the new constitution proposed by the People's Party leadership. Besides the insistence on the principle of division of powers, the limitation of Mustafa Kemal's powers was another demand of the opposition, though opposition members did in indirect ways.⁸⁴²

Ex-Unionists were organically linked to the right-wing opposition. They were no longer a main topic of Soviet agenda after Enver's death in Turkistan when the Red Army suppressed the Basmaci revolt led by him. Until his death, Enver's group in Ankara was already losing power as a result of clever tactics of Mustafa Kemal. However, when the Liberation War was over, their voice once again began to be heard louder in politics. Unionists were an embedded element of that opposition, instead of a distinctly organized group. Yet, they were present; and their economic and political rapprochement with France was drawing the attention of the government for a while. The same issue came to fore in the Soviet foreign affairs correspondances.

On September 29th, 1923, Chicherin sent a "top secret" letter to Stalin⁸⁴³ on Turkish affairs. Referring to Surits's report about the fact that the oppositional elements activated with the elimination of war threat, he asked Stalin's idea about relations with the Unionist who were called previously by the Soviets "Enverists".⁸⁴⁴ Chicherin stated that this group showed a serious

⁸⁴² RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 103.

⁸⁴³ And copies of the letter would be sent to Kamanev and Zinovyev.

⁸⁴⁴ RGASPI, f. 82, op. 2, d. 1328.

existence with a constant power. Chicherin added: “Before Enver’s betrayal, we supported the Unionists just in case... A reverse policy is possible: Not to have any contact with them and to strive for concessions from Kemal in return to our support.” Then Chicherin explained why they should support the Kemalists instead of the Unionists:

At the moment while the Unionists oriented towards France, Kemal decisively froze the ties with the French. A conflict is possible between them because of Syria. Many Unionists who were removed from power by the Kemalists took up business and entered into relations especially with French capital. While Unionists bear panturkist ideas, Kemalists endeavor to fulfill the task of founding a Turkish state, which doesn’t have an instinct for expansion. Kemalists are occupied with Musul where the road to Iran passes through and northern Syria where Turkish population lives. Inside the country peasant ideology that forced them to be pasific abstain from adventures. Kemal with all his strength works to organize the rebirth of the economy.

He added that although there was a flirtatious relation with British government, it was something tactical for the Kemalists. Britain supported the insurrections in Konya and Aydın, protected the dethroned Sultan, and flirts with the khalife. For the Kemalists, it was also impossible to converge with France since this country supported the Unionists against them. Chicherin came to the conclusion that Soviets should give an explicit support to the Kemalists and convince them that convergence with the Soviets would strengthen their position, would help them to fight with the Unionists and to continue the foundation of “peasant Turkey”.⁸⁴⁵ A week later, on October 7th, Chicherin this time wrote to the secretariat of RKP(b). Mentioning his letter to the Stalin and Politburo members in which he asked about supporting Kemalists against the Unionist opposition, he informed that Politburo had not reach a full-fledged idea. Perhaps, Politburo decided that they needed more data in order to come to a conclusion. Chicherin wrote in the letter to the secretariat that he sent a list of questions to Surits and asked for not making

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid.

any decision before the answers of those questions arrived.⁸⁴⁶ The questions are striking in the sense that they reveal the Soviet concerns and priorities in the Turkish affairs. Chicherin asked Surits if there was any intelligence about Turkey-Poland rapprochement and if any interest towards the Turkish policy to support separatist tendencies in Caucasia emerged in the Polish circles; if France incited this separatism and propagate Turkish-Polish and Rumenian rapprochement⁸⁴⁷ and if the Kemalists were inclined to France. He also asked in what direction the Unionist desired to change the country. Isn't the Unionism a force that acts for the separatism in Caucasia? Do the Kemalists struggle against the liquidation of the domestic achievement of national revolution and do the Kemalists have the support of the masses?⁸⁴⁸

The questions show that Soviet foreign affairs had serious security concerns and were scared about the inclusion of Turkey in the anti-Soviet front built by France. The most delicate security issue was related to provocations in the Caucasia. The general conviction was summarized in Aralov's report dated to March 1922.⁸⁴⁹ According to Aralov, the military capacity of Turkey did not allow an aggressive attitude towards RSFSR and Transcaucasian soviet republics. For him the sole threat was the counter-revolutionary Transcaucasians, among others, Circassians, Dagestanis, who had contacts with the pro-Western Turks from Turkey. He claimed that they together built a "spider net" in the region. Yet, Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish government did not recognize the Caucasian organizations and they are afraid of those organizations. He was suspicious about other members of the Grand National Assembly. He was referring to the right-wing opposition in the *Meclis*.

Eventually, Soviet foreign affairs became clear about the fact that a

⁸⁴⁶ RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 57

⁸⁴⁷ Poland and Rumenia were accepted as satellite states of France. For the system alliances of France see: Carr, *International Relations between the Two World Wars*, 31-43.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁹ From RGASPI, f. 544, op. 3, d. 117'den: Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeleri*, 342.

sustainable policy towards Turkey was possible only by a decisive support to the Kemalist government, which they assumed, most progressive actor in the country that had a real power, pacifist, unadventurous, and confined itself to reconstruction of the country.

6.5 Readjustment of the Soviet foreign affairs

By the end of 1923, Kemalists appeared as the most reliable actors for Soviet policy towards Turkey. Yet, Soviet foreign affairs maintained the conviction that in case of improvement in relations between Turkey and Western capitalist states, Soviet government could find itself in hostile camps with Turkey. For that reason, they foresaw an unstable period where Kemalist Turkey oscillated between West and Russia.⁸⁵⁰ However they also appraised that there were structural limitations of an easy integration of Turkey to the world capitalist system. They identified it as the contradiction between the imperialism and the national bourgeoisie of newly born independent states. Considering all the possibilities, Narkomindel continued its close follow on the Turkish-Western relations, as it did from the very beginning. Now, in the new situation, foreign policy makers hoped that against the increasing hostility of internal right-wing opposition and pressures from the imperialist states would make the Kemalists understand the importance of friendship with the Soviets for their very existence.⁸⁵¹ Imperialist assaults, hopefully, sooner or later, would cause Turkey approach to the idea of an Eastern front and convergence with the Soviet Union.⁸⁵²

Chicherin in his article dated to August 1923 drew the framework of the support given to the national bourgeoisie of the semi-colonial countries. According to the article, existence of powerful bourgeoisie that led the revolutions in these countries and their re-emergence as strong nation-states

⁸⁵⁰ RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 103.

⁸⁵¹ RGASPI, f. 85, op. T, d. 103.

⁸⁵² Ibid.

fully complied with the Soviet interests. He acclaimed the bourgeoisie as objectively most progressive class in the East. In these countries capitalism should flourish and communist movement should support the modernization of these countries. Class struggle by the proletarians against their emergent bourgeoisie should go side by side with the national struggles. So much so that, if bourgeoisie betrayed the struggle one day and collaborated with the West, proletariat would take over the leadership of the struggle.⁸⁵³

Therefore, Turkey as a new nation-state that had a long way to go before it settled its problems with the imperialists and was recognized, as a legitimate partner in the international politics should be supported politically and economically. Adjustment of Soviet policy towards Turkey was rising on this simple reasoning. However, Soviet policy was vulnerable in the sense that if Turkish “national bourgeoisie” would resist to the pressures for political and economic submission of the West and if the Soviets would appear as the primary advocate of the sovereignty of Turkey, it required substantial material support in terms of financing the reconstruction of the country. However, the Soviets at that time were deprived of such capacity. Both sides were aware of that fact. To compensate this, Soviets offered a higher level of political cooperation, enhancing the scope of the 1921 Moscow Agreement. This was achieved in 1925.⁸⁵⁴

Another striking role that was envisaged to be played by the Soviets was to work as a consultant to the Turkish modernization. In fact, in many field Soviet experience had been an important reference for the Turkish

⁸⁵³ Chicherin suprisingly added that once the Narodniks in Russia accused the Russian Marksist of betrayal because they believed the necessity of capitalist development in the country as a bas efor proletarian revolution. Eudin and North, *Soviet Russia and the East*, 194-196.

⁸⁵⁴ According to a Soviet document, a letter from Chicherin to Central Committee with a copy to Politburo, Narkomindel Collegium and Frunze dated to January 1925, the first proposal to enlarge the Moscow Agreement by concluding a new one came from Rauf Bey in 1923 (RGASPI, f. 82, op. 2, d. 1328). It is interesting, if not controversial that at a time of an apparent strife in the Turkish-Soviet relations and during the time of talks with the Western Powers a Turkish primeminister known with his anti-Soviet sentiments makes such a proposal that would further the Turkish-Soviet convergence.

modernizers. As early as spring 1922, Aralov mentions in his report about the widespread demands for data on law, economy, education, woman rights, agriculture etc. Aralov asked Moscow for the decrees of the Sovnarkom⁸⁵⁵ and documents about these fields.⁸⁵⁶ These demands continued in an increasing pace throughout 1920s and 1930s; and deepened with the mutual visits of political and professional delegations and individuals.

Secondly, cooperation in the international field was proved to be relatively persistent. During the 1920s, when the great powers played hard to move their embassies to Ankara from Istanbul, when issues like Musul and Northern Syria, Ottoman debts, Turkish membership to League of Nations, among others, prevented normal relations with the West, Turkey resorted to Soviet support to break its isolation in the West.

⁸⁵⁵ Council of People's Commissars

⁸⁵⁶ From f. 544, op. 3, d. 117: Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetlerle Görüşmeleri*, 343.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The period that has been discussed in this dissertation was one of those episodes when the history flows faster than any other time. It was a period of political transition in Anatolia, in the region surrounding it and in the world. It was the high time to put the world order in its place, which was totally destroyed in the World War. Yet, there was not any single person, even among the top decision makers of the world, who knew exactly how to fix the balances of international politics. The situation was slightly different from the pre-war years. The war broke out as a result of a deadlock between the imperialist powers in their rivalry over the world domination. Now, there were winners and losers. Yet, the winners did not know how to share the booty. Great Britain wanted to maintain its world leadership, with less economic power and military capacity than it had in the pre-war time. France and Italy were “demanding justice.” They could not solve any single problem among themselves. According to Adam Ulam, a mainstream American historian, the international bourgeoisie was much weaker and more disunited than the most revolutionary socialist had dared to hope before 1914.⁸⁵⁷

They altogether descended upon Germany and imposed Versailles; but they could not agree on how to put into practice this one of the most brutal peace agreements that the history had ever seen. A similar situation emerged in the Near East. It was the time of partition and sharing of the Ottoman State, which they had kept alive for many years due to the disagreement among themselves. But now, even the most powerful did not have the sufficient power to decide on how to do it. On the top of these problems, a mob that called themselves the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia and turned their former ally

⁸⁵⁷Ulam, “Anatomy of Policymaking”, 23.

into a state of terror. There could not be a worse scenario for the imperialist powers than witnessing this mob to establish an alliance with the emerging nationalists in Anatolia, who turned their Near Eastern plans upside down.

The tone of these sentences exactly reflects the mood of the imperialist decision-makers, which was evident in their secret talks for the partition of the countries and their perception of world as was reflected in the records of these talks and in the official correspondences. Imperialist arrogance and capitalist greed seemed to keep them from thoroughly evaluating the essence of the developments in the Near East; and the Soviet policy toward the East in general, toward Turkey in particular. In the year 1920, neither the continuity of the Soviet power nor the victory of Turkish nationalists seemed likely to the imperialist powers. Both of these actors constructed their foreign policy on the impotence and blindness of imperialist politics in the post-war conjunction.

In this study, emergence of Turkish-Soviet relations in such a conjuncture has been examined with a specific focus on the Soviet policy and diplomatic practices towards Turkey. This focus has stemmed from two purposes. First one was to make a critical review of the existing literature on the Turkish-Soviet relations in the period under question and to display the fallacy of some orthodox approaches towards the subject by examining the Soviet archival records on Turkey. Second purpose was to question the orthodox and revisionist paradigms on Soviet history in general, Soviet foreign policy in particular and approaching the subject with a different perspective that considers the Soviet policy and diplomatic practices regarding Turkey as a case of revolutionary diplomacy of a genuinely new type of state.

I have made an effort to figure out the coherence of Soviet policy towards Turkey by contextualizing it in terms of theoretical bases and general outlook of Soviet foreign affairs; and to clarify the direction of the Soviet foreign policy from within the totality of the chaotic events and daily actions. In the same framework, I have tried to explain the transformation of Soviet considerations on the future of Turkey as the Soviet government got familiar with the political and social situation in the country. Another important issue for the study was *how* was the Soviet policy towards Turkey

made in the years in question. Who were the policy makers? Did the power of policy-making simply concentrate in the hands of Politburo members; or the structures, before all, the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs played a part? Was the policy-making a conflictual process or a smooth one? I will now briefly summarize my conclusions.

The ground of the first contacts, which evolved into official relations by April 1920 with the letter of Mustafa Kemal, on behalf of the government of the Grand National Assembly, to People's commissar of foreign affairs, Chicherin might be described as follows. For the Turkish side, as envisaged first by Mustafa Kemal himself, an alliance with Soviet Russia was only the possible way to break the blockade created by the Entente in the regions surrounding the country. If the only exit way -Transcaucasia was also blocked with an Entente set, the only hope to take the country out of the circle of fire would be impossible. Apart from these strategic calculations, the message of the October Revolution towards "the oppressed people of the East" that had reached to Asia Minor made the Soviet power a reliable partner in the struggle against imperialist aggressors. Soviet Russia, on the other hand was approaching to the end of the Civil War, with victories one after another in different fronts of the war with the White Armies. These victories, gained over the counter-revolutionary forces supported by imperialist countries, revealed the difficulty to destroy the Soviet power from today to tomorrow. Yet, the failure of the Red Army in Warsaw against Pilsudski's Polish troops showed the limits of the revolutionary advance. In this stalemate, the main Soviet concern was to maintain the situation that brought about a breathing space to the socialist power. In this sense, a dual policy by the Soviet foreign establishment was built. While a diplomatic offensive was launched towards the Western countries, political alliances were established with the national movements of the East in order to spread Soviet influence and undermine imperialist hegemony, which in turn, according to Lenin's conception, would amount a big support to the struggling working classes of the West against their bourgeoisies. The coincidence of the conclusions of the commercial treaty with Britain, long after energetic efforts of Soviet diplomacy, and the Moscow

Agreement with the Kemalist government in March 1921 exemplifies well the dual policy of Soviet foreign affairs in the West and in the East.

The Turkish national movement was potentially an important ally to the Soviet Russia for two reasons. First, a victorious sovereign Turkey who had good relations with Russia would provide the security of the southern borders of the country. Second, the Soviet side did not have a clear idea in the beginning about who the leader of the national movement in the country was, and how the ideological and political character of the leadership was. Soviet foreign affairs had only the knowledge that the wave of the October Revolution had already reached to Anatolia; and the class identity of the leadership of the national movement, as in several other eastern countries, was “bourgeois”. The expectation was the repulse of the military operations in the country guided or realized by the Entente powers and clearing of the country from “feudal” elements: the monarchy and the landowners. Turkey was considered as a semi-colonial country of peasants, and the newly emerging bourgeois power was categorically acknowledged as in alliance with the poor peasantry. Therefore, the Soviet foreign policy makers hoped that on this social ground and with the Soviet support, Turkish bourgeois revolution could radicalize and realize a system close to “state socialism”. The messages given by the Unionist leaders were absolutely in that direction. Some of Mustafa Kemal’s explanations also gave rise to such thoughts. In this sense, the Turkish national movement was placed to the forefront of the Eastern “enlightenment” and expected to play crucial roles for the emancipation of the Muslim population.⁸⁵⁸

The relations that were started on the grounds explained above, had always been painful, with full of ups and downs and mutual suspicions. These suspicions were by no means groundless. A striking example was the support

⁸⁵⁸ Mehmet Perinçek claims that “Eastern alliance” or “union of Eastern peoples” was a common idea in Anatolia in the period when Frunze visited Ankara. As an example Yunus Nadi, after the conclusion of Turkish-Ukrainian Treaty, brought in question the alliance of Eastern nations. Frunze reported after his departure from Turkey that in Turkey the Soviet republics were considered as a unifying center for the Eastern peoples against the Western Entente. Mehmet Perinçek, “Frunze’nin Yemeğinde İmzalanan Anı Defteri,” *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 251 (Kasım 2014): 60–69.

given to Enver Paşa and other Unionists by the Soviets. This support was maintained roughly until the end of 1921, in spite of the protests coming from the Kemalists. The Soviets both planned to make use of Enver's prestige among the Muslims in the East and to "backup" the Kemalist leadership in case of its surrender to the western powers. The Kemalists on the other hand, extremely disturbed the Bolsheviks with their moves towards reconciliation with France, since the Bolsheviks were aware of the French intention to alienate the Turks from Soviet Russia.

Throughout the years in question, the parties sized each other up in several crises. The name of the crisis in the years 1920 and 1921 was the Armenian question. The Soviet strategy towards Dashnak Armenia was irreconcilable with the Turkish aspirations. The Soviet main concern was to abstain from any tension in Transcaucasia that would untimely expose them to a military conflict with the Western powers. While striving to maintain the peace in the region, the Soviet government watched for the suitable time and social conditions for the sovietization of the Transcaucasian republics. In this sense, Soviet foreign affairs preferred to keep the Dashnak government at a close distance; preventing common action of this government with the Western powers. In the meantime, they tried to create a cleavage between the left and right fractions of the Dashnak party.⁸⁵⁹ That is why, concomitant with the presence of Turkish delegation in Moscow for the official talks with the Soviet government in the summer 1920, Dashnak representatives, invited by Narkomindel, were also there for a similar purpose. Though it was ignored in the Soviet historiography, this situation played a role in the failure of Turkish-Soviet talks. It is understood not only from the narratives of the Turkish eyewitnesses but also from the Soviet documents that, while concluding a treaty with the Dashnak delegation, the Narkomindel promised them certain territorial concessions from Turkish side. Chicherin's utterance of this to the head of Turkish delegation Bekir Sami became the outward reason of the

⁸⁵⁹ In fact, sovietization of Armenia took place under the leadership of a coalition composed of Armenian communists and left-wing Dashnak members.

interruption of the talks. It was a significant occasion for the Soviet foreign affairs in which the Turkish persistence on achieving the National Pact and the intolerance to any demand regarding Armenia were tested. After a debate lasting for months between the Narkomindel, Politburo and local actors of Soviet foreign affairs in the autumn of 1920, the Soviet government overtly expressed the withdrawal of the demand. Secondly, in the face of raising tensions between Armenia and Turkey and failing to convince the Soviets for a common action against Armenia, the Turkish government decided a military operation depending on its own forces around October 1920. While the Soviet government turned a blind eye on the issue at the beginning, it then started to follow the developments with a growing concern. On the eve of the sovietization of Armenia, the ambiguity of the extent of the Turkish military assault was worrisome. This time, the Turkish side tested the Soviets and moved when it was understood that the Bolsheviks would not give an aggressive reaction to military operation towards Armenia. In both cases, it was a striking fact that Soviet foreign affairs experienced hardships in the Turkish affairs due to lack of familiarity with the realities of Turkey, especially in terms of the “red lines” of the Turkish nationalists; and of how far they could go in their aspirations.⁸⁶⁰

Another constant matter of tension between the parties was about the Turkish communists. On the heyday of popularity of left-wing ideology, -a fact directly related to the very existence of the Soviet power, the attempts to synthesize Islam with socialism gained ground and Green Army and People’s Group were introduced to political life in Anatolia. Meantime, both in Turkey and in the Soviets, the political will manifested itself in order to unite disorganized communist groups. First, a party with the name the Communist Party of Turkey or Bolshevik Communist Party of Turkey was established in

⁸⁶⁰ Yet, Chicherin states in a letter to Surits in the summer of 1923 that they were always sure about the essence of the Turkish nationalists and they never hesitated about the fact that Turkish assault towards Armenia was a result of imperialist encouragement (RGASPI, f. 159 op. 2, d. 57). However, during the days of Turkish-Armenian war the Soviets did not act with such a clear mind, they just had suspicions about the Turkey’s “flirtation” with the Entente.

May 1920. Later in September, Mustafa Suphi and others declared the Communist Party of Turkey in a foundational congress. Turkish government was in feeling of being trapped by the political pressure of both left-wing and conservative currents in the Grand National Assembly and by the obligation to converge with the Soviets. For the Kemalists, what was certain was that triumph of communism in Anatolia would mean Russian domination. Therefore, they needed a very delicate policy that would eliminate the left pressure on the government without offending Soviet Russia. They tested and saw that the Soviet side was decisive to build a friendship with the Kemalist power, no matter what the cost. Thus, the repressions on the left-wing of the national struggle in Anatolia, including the communists, started in Autumn 1920, and continued at intervals. Actually, the lack of a strong reaction from the Soviet side about these repressions had an important political reason: not to lose the alliance of the Kemalists that were increasingly consolidating their political power. Among the political calculations of the Soviet foreign affairs, a socialist revolution in Turkey never took place. They neither believe in the suitability of social conditions in the country, nor the strength of the communist movement. On top of that, by the end of 1920, the Bolsheviks started to concentrate on consolidation of the Soviet power as the hope for proliferation of the revolutions in various countries lost its vividness.⁸⁶¹

Clarity about the Turkish affairs could only be achieved with the beginning of 1922. Frunze's visit might be taken as a turning point in this sense. Frunze's inculcations about the obligation to rest entirely upon the Kemalists and stop to disturb them by supporting other contenders of political power had a significant impact on Soviet foreign affairs. Aralov, who reached Ankara in January 1922, tried to rebuild the Soviet diplomatic mission with a new understanding. He strove to limit the embassy's relations with the Turkish

⁸⁶¹ For the change in the agenda of Komintern and the discourse of the Bolshevik leaders see: Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, 410-413.

communists in spite of the pressures put by the Komintern. He worked to increase the Soviet influence among the political circles as well as in the public opinion. The Soviet embassy in his time turned into a center of attraction. However, his assignment coincided with the last phases of the Turkish Liberation War, when the Turkish government was preparing for the last assault against the Greek army on the one hand, and striving to figure out the peace conditions of the Entente and looking for a way to impose its own conditions as much as possible, on the other. In this atmosphere, the government, with the increasing influence of the conservative elements, severely broadened the efforts to give the impression of strife with Soviet Russia. It was a message to the Entente that for realization of the Turkish demands, the friendship with the Soviets could be sacrificed. Many large and small problems emerged between the parties, some of which was caused by the Soviet errors, presented the excuse for the isolation of Soviet foreign affairs in Turkey, which most severely felt in the Soviet embassy in Ankara.

Yet, the conditions of the new term in relations with Turkey were most crystallized during the Lausanne process. While the Turkish delegation was exposed to the pressure of the Soviet delegation in Lausanne, in order to make Ismet Paşa impose the Entente powers a common stance with the Soviet government on the Straits, Aralov in Ankara strove to surmount the political isolation the Soviet diplomatic mission experienced. Towards the end of the Lausanne process, the new ambassador Surits, with an effort to help his government for developing a new strategy in Turkish affairs, made several well-rounded appraisals on the Turkish-Soviet relations. He proposed to take precautions to strengthen the still existing Soviet influence in the Turkish politics and society before it totally ceased to exist. Among those precautions, most striking ones were a more respectful attitude towards the will of the Turkish government, the elimination of the aspects of Soviet Vneshtorg that most disturbed the Turks and the abandonment of protection over the Turkish communists. It is possible to say that his comments were taken into consideration, to an extent by the Soviet foreign policy makers. After an intensive period of familiarization, the Soviet government could now clearly

see the strict western-orientation of Turkey and witnessed that the Soviet friendship was “dispensable” under certain conditions, the bourgeois base of the government was in the process of strengthening and it was a pipe dream to expect a radicalization of the revolution in Turkey depending upon a peasant dynamism. It was also unlikely that Turkey wished to pioneer the Eastern awakening against the West. During the Lausanne Conference, Ismet Paşa overtly refused Soviet proposals of this kind. Turkey should be assessed as a valuable partner in the European politics, whose dominant class seemed to long have tensions with the imperialist powers. Furthermore, the Kemalists, according to the Soviet foreign affairs, constituted the most progressive element of the country, which had the power to transform the country. Their opponents were severely anti-Soviet reactionaries. In this sense, the strategy to fully support the Kemalists became unrivaled in Soviet appraisal.⁸⁶²

Beyond caricaturizing the picture that the decisions on the future of the country were exclusively in possession of the Politburo members; and without ignoring the weight of this structure, it can be said that the policy-making in Soviet Russia in the first years was realized in a complex set of processes, in which multiple structures involved. This argument can be directly observed when foreign policies are concerned in 1920-1923 period. Inexperienced in world affairs, the Soviet government needed a full-fledged foreign affairs structure that possessed masterful cadres with a vast knowledge of world affairs, diplomatic skills and strategic thinking. Chicherin, ultimately, was chosen for this post, who, different from most of the Bolsheviks, had strong bonds with the tsarist foreign affairs thanks to his

⁸⁶² A Politburo report on Turkey, dated to June 19th, 1924, reveals, the security concerns also determine the Soviet appraisal. In the document, it was emphasized that economic and political hardships of the foundation process of the new republic avoided Turkey any aggressive action against the Soviet Union, before all in the Caucasia. There were problems between two countries, like the issues concerning consulates and the citizens of each country that experienced troubles in the other country, or the intelligence work of the Turkish government, conducted with the counterrevolutionary elements in Caucasia. Yet, these problems were not significant, as those between Turkey and Britain or Turkey and France. Therefore, the best for the sake of Soviet security is not to allow those problems turn into conflicts and concentrate on development of economic relations. (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 444)

family and his post in the ministry. He, personally and the ministry, the Narkomindel played very active role in the decisions concerning international relations, which was also the case in Turkish affairs. The examination of the developments in Turkish-Soviet relations in the years in question reveals not only the crucial role of Narkomindel, but also how the local cadres, such as diplomats in Turkey and commanders in Transcaucasia involved in decision-making. It is also possible to say that this decision-making process was by no means exempt from tensions. On the contrary, as at times reflected in the tone of the correspondences, there were different positions on matters, which sometimes turned the matters into crisis. Two examples that were mentioned in the dissertation were elucidative. The first was Chicherin's insistence on the territorial concessions to be taken from Turkey in favor of Armenia. His futile insistence that caused the failure of the first attempt for convergence could be broken by the Politburo, especially with the urge of Stalin, months after the territorial concession was first uttered by Chicherin. Secondly, maintaining the collaboration with Enver Paşa is also seemed to be at the disposal of Narkomindel. In the face of increasing disturbance of the Ankara government and Enver Paşa's increasingly unstable moves, the Politburo once again intervened in the matter that would put an end to the collaboration with the Unionist commander. The tensions between Narkomindel and the Revolutionary Military Committee of Transcaucasia were also observable in the documents. The Politburo worked as the arbiter in the conflicts between these two. Another factor was the cadres of the Soviet diplomatic mission in Turkey. At a time when the initiatives of Soviet diplomats in their places of duty were important, the incapacity of the Soviet diplomats who were sent to Ankara in terms of establishing proper relations and gaining credibility made part of the Soviet efforts go in vain. Frunze's visit and Aralov's appointment, two commanders respected by the Turks, changed the course of the relations in favor of the Soviets for a while.

The dissertation, which has been formulated as a case-study perceives the Soviet foreign policy practice on Turkey in the period of 1920-1923 as a

practice of revolutionary diplomacy. Transcending the limitations posed by two dominant elements of Soviet foreign policy historiography, namely the “Tsarist-Soviet continuity” approach or “national interest-world revolution” dilemma, it tries to explain the matter from within how the Bolsheviks, as committed Marxist-Leninists, appraised the world affairs. The first socialist power of the world, lacking the knowledge of any previous experiences, was trapped between the irreconcilability of two antagonistic socio-economic systems, socialism and capitalism, and the obligation to live side by side for a while with the latter. Soviet eastern policies were marked by the quest to surmount this congestion and consolidate the Soviet place in the world during the time of, as it was called, “peaceful coexistence”. This quest was coherently reflected in the policy towards Turkey. Soviet foreign policy was day-to-day reformulated in accordance with the new developments and as Soviet foreign affairs deepened the knowledge on the international system and its elements. The Soviet vision of Turkey also transformed in time, which was accompanied by a rectification in the policy toward Turkey. The consideration on Turkey as a typical Eastern peasant country was abandoned. In stead, Soviet foreign affairs placed it as a backward capitalist country, which had incompatibility with the imperialist powers. As the collaboration with the governing elite of this country improved, the elimination of that incompatibility would be deferred. The studies that will focus the republican era in terms of Soviet appraisals and policies on Turkey might give us a complete picture of a revolutionary diplomacy practice in the interwar period. Besides, a focus on the Turkish side, namely, Turkey’s appraisal and policy toward the Soviet Russia, when hopefully one day the foreign affairs archive will be accessible for the researchers, will certainly help us for a more sophisticated insight.

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APPENDICES

1. TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu çalışmada incelenen dönem tarihin her zamankinden hızlı aktığı dönemlerden biridir. Anadolu’da onu çevreleyen bölgede ve bütün dünyada bir siyasi geçiş süreci yaşanmaktadır. Dünya Savaşı’yla alt üst olan dünya düzenini yerli yerine oturtma dönemidir. Ancak bunun nasıl yapılacağı konusunda dünya politikasını belirleyen temel aktörlerin zihninde bile bir netlik bulunmamaktadır. Bu belirsizlik söz konusu olduğunda durum savaş öncesinden pek az farklıdır. Savaş emperyalist rekabetin barış koşullarını ortadan kaldıracak ölçüde kızışması neticesinde kopmuştu. Savaş sonrası kazananlar ve kaybedenler vardır. Ancak kazananlar savaş ganimetlerinin paylaşımı konusunda anlaşmazlık içindedirler. Bir yandan da savaş kendi ekonomilerine ve toplumsal istikrarlarına büyük bir darbe anlamına gelmiştir. İngiltere daha az ekonomik güç ve askeri kapasite ile savaş öncesi dünya egemenliğini korumak istemektedir. Fransa ve İtalya “adalet” istemekte ve savaş sonucu paylarına düşenlerden hiçbir biçimde memnun olmamaktadırlar. ABD savaş sonunda kendi hinterlandından çıkıp dünya siyasetinde etkili bir aktör olmaya heves etmiş ancak bu yöndeki karar hızla revize edilmiştir. Ana akım bir Amerikalı tarihçi olan Adam Ulam’a göre herhangi bir devrimci sosyalistin 1914’ten önce arzulayacağından çok daha güçsüz ve birlikten yoksun bir uluslararası burjuvazi egemenlik sorunlarına çare aramaktadır.⁸⁶³

Dünya Savaşı’nın kazanan emperyalist ülkeleri hep birlikte Almanya’nın üzerine çöktüler ve Versay anlaşmasını dayattılar. Ancak insanlık tarihinin gördüğü en acımasız hükümleri taşıyan bu anlaşmayı nasıl hayata geçirecekleri konusunda anlaşmazlığa düştüler. Benzer bir durum Yakın Doğu’da ortaya çıktı. Zaman, uzun yıllar bölüşüm konusundaki anlaşmazlık sayesinde ayakta kalmayı başaran Osmanlı Devleti’nin ne şekilde ortadan kaldırılacağına karar

⁸⁶³ Adam B. Ulam Adam B., “Anatomy of Policy,” in *Soviet Foreign Policy, Classic and Contemporary Issues*, Frederic J. Fleron Jr., Erik P. Hoffman, Robbin F. Laird (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1991) p. 23

verme zamanıydı. Ancak şimdi en güçlü unsur olan İngiltere bile bu konuda bocalıyordu. Bütün bu sorunların tepesinde kendine Bolşevik diyen bir çetenin eski müttefik Rusya'da iktidara el koyması ve ülkeyi bir terör ülkesine çevirmesi vardı. Emperyalistler için bu çetenin Anadolu'da yeni yeni ortaya çıkan milliyetçilerle ittifak yapması ve Yakın Doğu planlarının altüst olmasından daha kötü bir senaryo herhalde olamazdı. Emperyalist politika yapıcıları Yakın Doğu sorununa gerçekten böyle yaklaşıyordu. Bu tarihçilerin erişebildiği gizli görüşme tutanaklarında ve raporlarda açıkça görülmektedir. Emperyalist kibir 1920 yılında Sovyet iktidarının sürebileceği ve Türk milliyetçilerinin Anadolu'da zafer kazanabileceği ihtimalinin görmezden gelinmesine neden oldu. Hem Bolşevikler hem de Kemalistler stratejilerini biraz da savaş sonrası konjonktüründe büyük güçlerin bu körlük ve yetersizliği üzerine kurdular.

Çalışma temel çizgilerine işaret ettiğimiz bir dönemde Sovyet Rusya'nın Türkiye politikasına odaklanarak Türk-Sovyet ilişkileri yazınına katkıda bulunma amacı taşıyor. Böyle bir odaklanma ihtiyacının nedeni Türk-Sovyet ilişkileri üzerine yapılmış olan çalışmalarda genellikle Sovyetlerin Türkiye politikalarını belirleyen teorik çerçevenin ve siyasi bağlamın görmezden gelinmiş olmasıdır. Türk-Sovyet ilişkileri bağlamında Sovyetlere ilişkin anlatının özellikle Türk dilindeki çalışmalarda eski varsayımları ve önyargıların tekrarı üzerine kurulu yüzeysel bir bakış açısıyla ele alındığı görülmektedir. Sorun kısmen Türkiye'deki resmi tarihçiliğin genel sorunlarıyla, kısmen de Rusça arşiv belgelerinin halen çok az araştırmacı tarafından incelenmiş olması ile ilgilidir. Rus dilindeki yazın ise güncel çalışmalarla yeterince zenginleştirilmemektedir. Sovyet döneminde konuyla ilgili yapılmış çalışmalar faydalı olmakla birlikte aynı resmi anlatıyı tekrar etmekte ve sorularımıza yanıt vermek konusunda yetersiz kalmaktadır. Araştırma konusu olan ülkelerin dışında Sovyet dış politikasına ilişkin büyük bir yazın mevcuttur. Ancak bu yazın içinde Sovyetlerin Türkiye politikasına odaklanan çalışma

bulmak çok zordur.⁸⁶⁴

Bu çalışma “Yeni Türkiye’nin” ilk yıllarında Türk-Sovyet ilişkileri konusu ile “Sovyet Rusya’nın ilk yıllarında Sovyet dış politikası” konusunu entegre etme girişimidir. 1920-1923 döneminin Türk-Sovyet ilişkileri açısından özel anlamları bulunmaktadır. Sovyet iktidarı 1920’de iç savaşta Kızıl Ordu Beyaz ordular üzerinde üstünlük sağladığı bir sırada varlığını sürdürmesini sağlayacak bir “soluk alanı” yaratmak için yeni bir dış politika açılımına imza atmıştı. Aynı anda Sovyet hükümeti ile Türk milliyetçi liderleri arasında ilk yakınlaşma ortaya çıkıyordu. Kurtuluş Savaşı’nın zaferi ve Lozan süreci ilişkilerde yeni bir sürecin başlangıcına işaret etti. Türkiye politikasının gözden geçirilmesi ile Sovyetler Türkiye’yle ilişkilerin sıcaklığını korumasını garanti altına alacak şekilde yeni döneme adapte oldu. Bu bütünüyle o zamana kadar belli ölçüde başarılabilmiş olan Sovyet iktidarının tanınırlığı ve meşruiyetini kalıcı hale getirmek yönündeki mücadelenin bir parçasıydı. Dolayısıyla çalışma ilişkilerin başladığı ve karşılıklı aktörlerin birbirini tanıdığı bir evre ile (1920-1921) yeni bir başlangıç için Türkiye politikasının gözden geçirildiği süreci (1922-1923) kapsamaktadır.

Sovyet Rusya o güne kadar dünyanın bilmediği ilkeler üzerine kurulu yeni bir devletti. Devrimden birkaç yıl sonra kesinleşen Sovyet devriminin Avrupa’da başka devrimler tarafından takip edilmediği ve yeni Sovyet iktidarlarının ortaya çıkmadığı gerçeği kurumsal bir dış politika aracının kurulmasını gerektirdi. Bu araç o günkü kurumsal kısaltmasıyla Narkomindel⁸⁶⁵, diğer devletlerle normal ilişkiler geliştirmek ve Sovyet iktidarını güvenli ve sürdürülebilir bir varlık zemini kazandırmak için geleneksel diplomasi yöntemlerine de başvuracaktı. Sovyet dış politika yapımı hiçbir biçimde yalnızca Narkomindel’in karar ve eylemlerinden ibaret değildi. Bununla birlikte Rusya Komünist Partisi (bolşevik) Politbürosunun her şeye kadir liderliği ile tüm dış politika yapım sürecini belirlediği yaygın inancını da sorgulamak gerekir. “Sovyet Hariciyesi” dendiğinde karar alma sürecinde etkin

⁸⁶⁴ Son yıllarda bu konuda yapılmış önemli çalışmalardan biri için bkz.: Samuel J Hirst, “Eurasia’s Discontent: Soviet and Turkish Anti-Westernism in the Interwar Period” 2012.

⁸⁶⁵ Dış İşleri Halk Komiserliği

olan bir dizi yapıya işaret edilmektedir: Politbüro, Narkomindel, Parti Merkez Komitesi, Kızıl Ordu ve istihbarat teşkilatı üst kurmayı, Komintern merkezi kurulu, diplomatların, istihbarat görevlilerinin, ordu komutanlarının ve Komintern görevlilerinin içinde olduğu yerel aktörler. Sovyet dış politikası zorlu bir süreç sonunda şekillenmektedir. Özellikle kurumsallaşma düzeyinin görece düşük olduğu ve kurumlar arası iş bölümünün netleşmediği ilk yıllarda politika yapım sürecine katılan aktörlerin geniş bir inisiyatif alanı vardı. Çiçerin'in yönetimi altında, Narkomindel yabancı ülkelerde diplomatik faaliyet yürüten etkin bir kurum haline geldi ve zaman içinde Politbüronun nihai karar verici pozisyonunu korumasına rağmen Narkomindel Sovyet dış politikasını şekillendiren temel unsur haline geldi. Bu nedenle, çalışmada genelde Sovyet dış politikası, özelde Sovyet Rusya'nın Türkiye politikası incelenirken Narkomindel anlatının en merkezi unsuru olarak ele alındı.

Kapitalizmin en yüksek aşaması olarak emperyalizm analizinden hareket eden Bolşevikler dünyayı sınıf mücadelelerinin sahası olarak görüyorlardı. ulusal devletler arasındaki eşitsiz ilişkilerde kendini dışa vuran ulusal birimlerin dünya kapitalist sistemine eşitsiz olarak eklememesi gerçeği bu mücadelenin monolitik bir yapıda seyretmesini önlüyordu. Öte yandan, ülkeler arasındaki eşitsizliklerden bağımsız olarak ve kapitalist sistemden kopuşun bütün dünyada aynı anda gerçekleşmesinin imkansızlığına rağmen ülkelerin yaşadıkları devrim süreçleri arasında bir bağ bulunmaktaydı; çünkü tüm kapitalist ülkeler görünmez bağlarla birbirlerine bağlıydılar. İşte bu bağ kapitalizmin ve sosyalizmin geleceği açısından büyük bir önem arz ediyordu. O nedenle Sovyet hariciyesi yabancı bir ülke için politika geliştirirken işe onun kapitalist dünya sistemi içindeki konumunu tespit ederek başlıyordu. Türkiye politikası geliştirilirken de durum aynısıydı. Sovyet sınıflandırmasına göre yarı-sömürge bir doğu ülkesi olan Türkiye anti-emperyalist cephenin ön saflarında yer alma potansiyeli taşıyordu. Kurtuluş Savaşı boyunca Türk ulusal hareketi emperyalizme karşı mücadelede Doğunun ezilen halklarının öncü kuvveti olarak görülüyordu. Türkiye'de cumhuriyetin ilanı aşamasında bu çerçeveye belli oranda değişime uğradı. Emperyalist ülkelerle savaş sonrası konjunktürde ortaya çıkan ulus devletlerin ulusal burjuvazileri arasında

öngörülebilir bir gelecekte ortadan kalkmayacak bir nesnel karşıtlık olduğunu düşünen Sovyet yönetimi, Türkiye'yi anti-emperyalist cephenin önemli bir unsuru olarak görmeyi sürdürdü. Türkiye'nin bu konumunun sürmesinin garantisi her şeyden önce Sovyetlerle kurduğu dostluk ilişkisinin devamlılığına bağlıydı. Her iki durumda da, Kurtuluş Savaşı sırasında ve Türkiye'nin savaş halinden çıktığı hemen sonrasında Türkiye Narkomindel'in önerileriyle uyumlu olarak Sovyet dış politikasında önemli bir yer teşkil etmeye devam etti.

1920ler boyunca Bolşevik liderler ve Sovyet dış politika yapıcılarını Türkiye'nin toplumsal ve siyasi yapısını tanıma süreci yaşadılar. Ancak, en baştan itibaren, ulusal hareketin liderliğinin karakterini ve oryantasyonunu bildikleri ve Türkiye tarihi üzerine dikkate değer bir birikime sahip oldukları için, Türkiye'nin kapitalist gelişmenin geri aşamalarında olması ve işçi sınıfı ile komünist hareketin çok güçsüz olması sebebiyle Bolşevikler hiçbir zaman Türkiye'de bir sosyalist devrim fikrine yaklaşmadılar. İç dinamikleri bakımından gerekli koşulların yokluğunda sosyalist “devrim ihracı” 1920lerin başında Sovyet politikasının bir parçası değildi. Devrim ihracı yalnızca Sovyet dış politikasının teorik temellerine aykırı düştüğü için dışlanmıyordu. Sovyet Rusya'nın böyle riskler alacak gücü ve araçları yoktu.

1920'lerin ilk yarısında Türk-Sovyet ilişkilerini inceleyen böylesi bir çalışmada Türkiye'deki komünist harekete geniş ölçüde yer verilmesi herhalde beklenen bir şey olurdu. Ancak çalışmada komünist harekete oldukça sınırlı bir yer ayrılmıştır. Bunun nedeni Sovyet Rusya'nın Türkiye politikasının ilk gelişim aşamalarında “yatırım yapacağı” temel siyasi aktör konusunda “ulusal burjuva” siyasi aktörler lehine ve komünistler aleyhine bir tercihte bulunmuş olmasıdır. Dolayısıyla, tartışma Türkiye'nin ne zaman ve nasıl sosyalizme geçiş yaşayacağı değil, diğer doğu ülkelerindeki gibi, burjuva devrim süreçlerinin ne kadar ileri taşınabileceği, ne kadar radikalize olabileceği, ve bu radikalleşmeden ne gibi siyasi faydalar sağlanabileceği üzerinedir. Sovyet liderleri Türk devriminin radikalleşmesinin bu ülkenin batıyla ilişkilerinin gidişatına ve Sovyetlerle dostluk ilişkisini ne kadar koruyacağına bağlı olduğunu düşünüyorlardı. 1920'ler boyunca Türkiye kapitalist bir yoldan ilerlese de batılı ülkelerle çelişki ve çatışmalarını çözemedi. Bu da Türkiye'yi

birleşik bir Sovyet karşıtı cephenin kurulmasına karşı değerli bir partner haline getiriyordu.

Sovyet Rusya'nın kapitalist hegemonyayı tehdit eden bir güç olarak ortaya çıkması ülkeler arası küresel rekabet koşullarını değiştirdi. Bunun nedeni Sovyet Rusya'nın kapitalist devletler arası rekabetin sınırlarının ötesinde, özel mülkiyetin, emek sömürsünün ve yoksul ülkeler üzerindeki emperyalist tahakkümün ortadan kaldırılmasını öneren yeni bir sosyo-ekonomik sistemin temsilcisi olarak belirmiş olmasıydı. Türk milliyetçileri “Yeni Rusya” ile batı dünyası arasındaki uzlaşmaz çatışmayı ulusal hareketin ortaya çıkışının çok başlarında kavradılar. Stratejilerini bu çatışma üzerine kurdular ve bu stratejinin siyasi bağımsızlık için anahtar rolde olduğuna inandılar.

“Kemalist Türkiye” her bir tarafla pazarlık yaparken diğer tarafa yaklaşma tehdidini kullanıyordu. Aslında, Kemalist kadrolar komünizmin tehditkar soluşunu kendi enselerinde hissediyorlardı. Bağımsızlık yolunda komünist Rusya'dan faydalanırken ülkede komünist akımın meşrulaşmasını önlemek gibi hassas bir görevle karşı karşıydılar. Bu görevin gerilimden azade olması mümkün değildi. Her şeyden önce, Rusya'yla dostluk stratejisinin lider kadro içinde taraftarları ve muhalifleri vardı. Kimi Sovyet eylemleri hakkındaki şüphelerin Sovyetlere karşı düşman bir atmosfer yarattığı günlerde Sovyetlerle ilişkilere muhalefet edenler sesini daha fazla yükseltiyordu. Anadolu'nun ortasında yeni rejim kurumsallaşmaya başlarken kapitalist ilişkiler de ciddi bir hızla serpilirdi. Bu Türkiye'nin yeni koşullarda kapitalist dünya ekonomisine yeniden entegre olması anlamına geliyordu ve kaçınılmaz olarak Sovyet Rusya'dan uzaklaşma ve anti-komünizmin önemli bir unsur olarak Türk iç ve dış siyasetini etkilemesi gibi sonuçlar yarattı.

Türkçe ve Rusça çalışmalarda Türk-Sovyet ilişkilerine yapılan güzellemenin aksine iki taraf da birbirinin sözlerine herhangi bir içtenlik atfetmiyordu. Karşılıklı kuşku iki ülke ilişkilerindeki belirleyici faktörüydü. Pek çok çalışmada, Bolşevikler ve Kemalistler arasındaki “ideolojik” yakınlık abartılır. Öte yandan iki ülke arasındaki dostluğu yalnızca Avrupa'ya coğrafi yakınlık ve ortak düşmanlık temelinde gelişen reelpolitik hesapların sonucu

saymak da eşit derecede yanıltıcıdır. Bu akıl yürütmeye göre, Türk-Sovyet ilişkileri “mantık evliliği”nden başka bir şey değildir. Siyaset münhasıran siyasi elitler tarafından icra edilen bir şey değildir; onların siyasi ve ideolojik tercihleri de toplumların kaderinin belirlenmesindeki tek parametre değildir. Sık düşülen bir yanlış Türk-Sovyet yakınlaşmasını Mustafa Kemal ve onun yakın çevresi ile bolşeviklerin pragmatizmi ile açıklamaktır. Bu yaklaşım problemlili ve yüzeyseldir; çünkü bu “realist” yaklaşımlar iki ülke arasındaki ilişkileri güvenlik konusuna indirgemektedir ve bu ilişkilerin bağlamını oluşturan sosyo-politik boyutu göz ardı etmektedirler. Bu ilişkiler tartışılırken, “Reelpolitik hesapların” ötesinde mevcut siyasi atmosferin ve anti-empyalizm ve halkçılık gibi Ekim Devrimi rüzgarı ile yayıldığından kuşku duyulamayacak ideolojik kodların etkisi hesaba katılmalıdır. Bölgemizde özgürlük ve eşitlik ideali daha önce hiç bu kadar popüler olmamıştı. Sol siyasetin Asya’da hiçbir zaman dikkate değer örgütlü bir güç haline gelmemiş olması ya da sosyalizmin Küçük Asya’ya hiçbir zaman ciddi bir projeye dönüşmemesi, Türkiye’deki kurucu iradenin bütünüyle sol unsurlardan yoksun olduğu ya da Türkiye’nin yeni siyasi liderlerinin içeride bu unsurların basıncını hissetmediği anlamına gelmez.⁸⁶⁶ Böyle bir atmosferde, iki ülke arasındaki yakınlaşma basit bir pragmatizmin ötesinde doğal, beklenir ve hatta kaçınılmaz bir seyir izlemiştir.

Özetle, bu çalışma “barış içinde birarada yaşam” politikasının yürürlükte olduğu dönemde Türkiye’nin Sovyet dış politikası içindeki yerini incelemektedir. Sovyet dış politikasının bütününde olduğu gibi, Türkiye politikasının da şekillendirilmesinde Sovyet dış işleri halk komiserliğinin ve 1920’ler boyunca dışişleri halk komiseri olarak görev yapan G. V. Çiçerin’in benzersiz bir rol oynadığı iddia edilmektedir. Türkiye politikası bir tanıma süreci içinde ve Sovyet yönetiminin farklı bileşenlerinin yürüttüğü bir tartışma

⁸⁶⁶ 14 Eylül 1920 tarihli Mustafa Kemal’in Ali Fuat’a meclisteki Halk Zümresi ile ilgili yazdığı mektuptan: “Mecliste ahiren meydana çıkan Halk Zümresi bizim tanıdığımız arkadaşlardır. Bunlar memlekette bir içtimai inkılabın kısmen olsun lüzumuna kani olanlardır. Bu teşebbüsün mehalikini ihata edememektedirler. Hükümetten ayrı bir zümre yapmaktan vazgeçirmek istedik, mümkün olmadı. Fakat şimdi halkçılık programı altında Hükümetçe bir program kabul ettik. Halk zümresi kendiliğinden dağılmış gibidir.” Ömür Sezgin, *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı ve siyasal rejim sorunu* (Ankara: Birey ve Toplum Yayıncılık, 1984), p. 47, dipnot no: 19.

eşliğinde şekillendi. Çalışmada incelenen dönemin sonunda Türkiye’de devrimin radikalleşeceğine ilişkin beklenti değişse de, Türkiye’nin Sovyet politikasındaki yeri sabit kaldı. Sovyetlerin Türkiye’ye atfettikleri önem değişmeden kaldığı için Sovyet hariciyesi Türkiye politikalarını ve çalışma biçimini gözden geçirdi. En başından itibaren Türkiye politikasının geliştirilmesi ve onun yeniden formüle edilmesi Sovyet dış politikasının genel perspektifiyle uyum içinde gelişti.

Nisan 1920 itibariyle Büyük Millet Meclisi adına Mustafa Kemal’in Çiçerin’e yazdığı mektupla resmi bir nitelik kazanan temasların zemini şöyle gelişti: Türk tarafı için, öncelikle Mustafa Kemal tarafından öngörüldüğü üzere, Sovyet Rusya ile ittifak Antant ülkelerinin bölgedeki ablukasını aşmanın tek mümkün yoluydu. Eğer tek çıkış yolu olan Kafkaslar’da bir Antant duvarı örülürse ülkeyi ateş çemberinden çıkarma hayali bütünüyle ortadan kalkacaktı. Bu stratejik hesapların ötesinde, Ekim Devrimi’nin mesajı Küçük Asya’ya ulaşmış ve Sovyet iktidarının güvenilir bir partner olabileceği milliyetçi çevrelerde yaygın bir kanaat haline gelmişti. Diğer yandan Sovyet Rusya İç Savaş’ın sonuna yaklaşırken Beyaz ordulara karşı birbiri ardına zaferler kazanıyordu. Bu zaferler karşı devrimci güçleri destekleyen büyük güçlere de Sovyet iktidarının bugünden yarına yok edilemeyeceğini göstermiş oldu. Yine de, Varşova önlerinde Pilsudski’nin Leh ordusu karşısında Kızıl Ordu’nun yaşadığı devrimci ilerleyişin sınırlarını da göstermiş oldu. Bu pat durumunda, Sovyetlerin temel kaygısı sosyalist iktidar için bir soluk alanı yaratmaktı. Bu nedenle Sovyet hariciyesi tarafından bir ikili politika inşa edildi. Batılı ülkelere yönelik bir diplomasi açılımına imza atılırken bir yandan da doğuda ulusal hareketlerle ittifak ilişkilerine gidiliyordu. Bu ittifaklarla doğuda Sovyet etkisini arttırmak, emperyalist tahakkümü geriletmek ve bu sayede Lenin’e göre batılı emekçi sınıfların kendi burjuvazilerine karşı mücadelelerinde onlara doğudan destek vermek amaçlanıyordu. İngiltere ile bir ticaret anlaşması imzalandığı sırada, Mart 1921’de Türkiye ile imzalanan dostluk anlaşması Sovyet hariciyesinin doğuda ve batıda yürüttüğü ikili politikaya iyi bir örnek teşkil eder.

Türk ulusal hareketi Sovyet Rusya için temelde iki nedenle iyi bir

müttefikti. Birincisi, zafer kazanan egemen bir Türkiye Sovyetlerin güney sınırlarının güvenliğini sağlayacaktı. İkincisi, Türkiye’de potansiyel olarak ortaya çıkacak yeni rejimin burjuva karakter taşımakla beraber “devlet sosyalizmi”ne yakın bir biçim kazanabileceği ve bu sayede batıyla mesafesini korurken Sovyetlerin istikrarlı bir müttefiki olabileceği düşünülüyordu. Ulusal mücadelenin burjuva liderleri yoksul köylü tabanından aldığı kuvvetle ülkedeki feodal unsurlara ve emperyalizme karşı mücadele ederken radikalleşecek, Sovyetler bu radikalleşmenin uluslararası dayanağı olacaktı. İlişkilerin başlangıcında bazı ittifakçı liderlerin Sovyet temsilcilerine verdikleri mesaj bu yöneydi. Mustafa Kemal’in bazı açıklamaları da bu tür düşüncelere yol açıyordu. Bu bakımdan başlangıçta Türk ulusal hareketi doğu “aydınlanması”nın öncü kuvveti olarak görülüyor ve Türkiye’deki devrimin Müslüman nüfusun kurtuluşunda önemli bir rol oynayacağı düşünülüyordu.

Yukarıda bahsedilen zeminde ortaya çıkan ilişkiler her zaman sancılı, inişli çıkışlı ve karşılıklı kuşku yüklü oldu. Bu kuşkular kesinlikle temelsiz değildi. Çarpıcı bir örnek Enver Paşa’ya ve diğer ittifakçılara Sovyetler tarafından verilen destektir. Bu destek Kemalistlerin protestolarına rağmen kabaca 1921 sonlarına dek sürdü. Sovyetler hem Enver Paşa’nın doğudaki prestijinden yararlanmayı hesaplamış hem de Kemalistlerin batıya teslim olması ihtimaline karşı Enver ve çevresini yedekte tutmayı düşünmüşlerdi. Öte yandan Kemalistlerin Fransa ile uzlaşma arayışları da Bolşevikleri olağanüstü derecede huzursuz etti ve Kemalistlerin er ya da geç batıyla uzlaşacağı konusundaki kuşkularını besledi.

Çalışmada incelenen dönem boyunca her iki taraf da çeşitli krizlerde birbirlerini tarttı. 1920 ve 1921 yıllarında iki ülke ilişkilerini en fazla etkileyen konu Ermeni meselesiydi denebilir. Taşnak Ermenistanı’na dönük Sovyet stratejisi Türk milliyetçilerinin istekleriyle çelişiyordu. Sovyetlerin temel kaygısı Kafkasya’da kendilerini batılı güçlerle zamansız bir askeri çatışmaya sürükleyecek herhangi bir gerilimden kaçınmaktır. Bölgede çatışmasızlığı korumaya çalışırken, Kafkas cumhuriyetlerinin sovyetizasyonu için doğru zamanın gelmesi ve gerekli toplumsal koşulların oluşması bekleniyordu. Bu nedenle Sovyet hariciyesi Taşnak hükümetinin batıyla işbirliği yapmasının

önüne geçmek ve onu kendine yakın bir mesafede tutma çabası içindeydi. Aynı zamanda Taşnak partisinin sağ ve sol unsurları arasında bir ayrışma yaratmaya çalışıyordu. Bu amaçlarla ilk Türk heyetinin Moskova’da bulunduğu 1920 yazında Taşnak temsilcileri de Narkomindel tarafından başkente çağrılmıştı. Sovyet tarih yazımında görmezden gelinse de, bu durum o yaz Türk-Sovyet görüşmelerinin başarısızlıkla sonuçlanmasında belli bir rol oynadı. Türk tanıklıklarının ve Sovyet belgelerinin gösterdiği üzere, Taşnak hükümetiyle pazarlıklar sürerken Narkomindel bir miktar Türkiye toprağının Ermenistan’a bırakılmasını Türklere kabul ettirmeyi vaat etmişti. Çiçerin’in bu talebi Türk heyeti başkanı Bekir Sami’ye dile getirmesi görüşmelerin kesilmesinin görünen nedeniydi. Bu olay iki tarafın ilişkilerinde aylara yayılan bir krize sebep oldu. Türkiye’nin Misak-ı Milli’deki ısrarı ve Ermenistan’a karşı herhangi bir toprak tavizi konusundaki tahammülsüzlüğü bu krizle birlikte Sovyet hariciyesi tarafından test edilmiş ve geri adım atmak zorunda kalan tarafı Sovyet Rusya olmuştu. Narkomindel, Politbüro ve Türkiye ve Kafkasya’daki Sovyet temsilcileri arasında aylara yayılan bir tartışmanın sonunda, Sovyet yönetimi açıkça talebini geri çektiğini bildirdi. İkincisi, Ermenistan ve Türkiye arasında tırmanan gerilim ve Sovyetlerin ortak bir harekate yanaşmaması sonucu Türk hükümeti bağımsız hareket etmeye karar verdi ve Ekim 1920’de Türk birliklerini Ermenistan içlerine sürdü. Başlangıçta Sovyet hükümeti durumu görmezden gelse de, gelişmeleri kaygıyla izlemeye başladı. Ermenistan’ın sovyetizasyonunun arifesinde, Türkiye’nin askeri hareketinin boyutlarına ilişkin belirsizlik kaygı vericiydi. Bu kez, Türk tarafı Sovyetleri bir teste tabi tutuyordu. Bolşeviklerin Ermenistan’a yönelik askeri operasyonlara üst perdeden bir cevap vermeyeceklerini anladıkları oradan saldırının boyutlarını genişlettiler. Her iki durumda da, Sovyet hariciyesinin Türkiye gerçeğine aşına olmamaktan kaynaklı yaşadığı zorluklar, özellikle de Türk milliyetçilerinin “kırmızı çizgileri” ve niyetlerini hayata geçirmekte ne kadar ileri gidebilecekleri gibi konularda yaşadığı bocalama çarpıcıydı.

İki taraf arasındaki bir başka sabit gerilim konusu Türk komünistlerle ilgiliydi. Sol ideolojinin popülerliğinin en üst düzey olduğu zamanlarda İslam ve sosyalizmi buluşturmaya çalışan girişimler ortaya çıktı ve 1920 yılında

Yeşil Ordu ve meclisteki uzantısı Halk Zümresi kuruldu. Aynı sıralarda, hem Türkiye’de hem de Sovyet topraklarında dağınık komünist grupları bir araya getirme amacı güden siyasi iradeler ortaya çıktı. İlk olarak Mayıs 1920’de Türkiye Komünist Partisi ya da Türkiye Bolşevik Komünist Partisi adıyla Türkiye’de bir parti kuruldu. Eylül ayında ise Bakü’de Mustafa Suphi önderliğinde Türkiye Komünist Partisi’nin kuruluş kongresi yapıldı. Türk hükümeti sol ve muhafazakar grupların baskısını, bir yandan da Sovyetlerle yakınlaşma ihtiyacını hissediyordu. Kemalistler için, Anadolu’da komünizmin zaferi Rus egemenliği anlamına gelecekti. O nedenle Sovyet Rusya’nın şimşeklerini çekmeden ülke içindeki sol basıncı ortadan kaldırmak istiyorlardı. Sovyetlerin ne olursa olsun kendileriyle ilişkiyi sürdürmek konusundaki kararlılıklarını test ettiler. Sovyetlerin Anadolu’da solun tasfiyesine büyük bir tepki göstermeyeceği kısa sürede ortaya çıktı. Böylece Ağustos 1920 itibariyle komünistler de dahil olmak üzere ulusal mücadelenin sol kanadı üzerinde baskılar başladı. Bu baskılar ilerleyen aylarda fasıllarla devam etti. Sovyet yönetimi giderek iktidarını güçlendiren Kemalistlerle ittifakını yitirmek istemiyordu. Zaten siyasi hesapları arasında Türkiye’ye yönelik bir sosyalist devrim beklentisi yoktu. Ne toplumsal koşulların ne de ülkedeki komünistlerin gücünün böyle bir tasavvur için elverişli olmadığını düşünüyorlardı. Genel olarak da, 1920 sonu itibariyle, Avrupa’da dahi devrimin yayılması beklentisi canlılığını yitirmişti.⁸⁶⁷

Yine de Sovyetlerin Türkiye konusundaki özellikle ittihatçılarla Kemalistler arasındaki salınımlarından kaynaklanan belirsizlikler, ancak 1922 başlarında Frunze’nin Ankara ziyareti ile ortadan kalkabildi. Bu açıdan Frunze’nin ziyareti bir dönüm noktası olarak alınabilir. Frunze’nin bütünüyle Türkiye politikasını Kemalistler üzerine kurma ve başka iktidar alternatiflerini desteklemeyi bırakma konusundaki telkinleri Sovyet hariciyesi üzerinde önemli bir etkide bulunmuş gözüküyor. 1922 Ocak ayında Ankara’ya gelen yeni elçi Aralov Sovyet diplomatik misyonunu yeni bir anlayışla yeniden inşa

⁸⁶⁷ Komintern’in gündemindeki ve Bolşevik liderlerin söylemindeki değişim için bkz.: Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. Vol. 3*, pp. 410-413

etti. Komintern'in baskılarına rağmen elçiliğin komünistlerle olan ilişkilerini sınırlamaya çalıştı. Ülkede mevcut yeni iktidara tam destek verdiklerini her fırsatta ifade etti. Siyasi çevreler ve kamuoyu üzerinde Sovyet etkisini arttırmaya çalıştı. Bu dönemde Sovyet elçiliği bir çekim merkezi haline geldi. Aynı dönemde Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı son aşamalarındaydı, barış ihtimali belirmişti ve Kemalistler mümkün olduğunca kendi koşullarını kabul ettirdikleri bir yeni barış için batıda zemin yokluyordu. Bu koşullarda, muhafazakar siyasal unsurların da etkisiyle hükümet Sovyet Rusya ile arasında bir ayrılık varmış izlenimi uyandıracak adımlar atmaya başladı. Bu Antant ülkelerine Türk taleplerinin yerine getirilmesi karşılığında Sovyet dostluğunun feda edilebileceği mesajını vermek için gerekliydi. Taraflar arasında bir kısmı Sovyet hatalarında kaynaklanan irili ufaklı sorunlar Sovyet hariciyesinin Türkiye'de izole edilmesinin gerekçesini oluşturdu. Bu izolasyonu en derinden Ankara'daki Sovyet diplomatik misyonu hissediyordu.

Türkiye'yle ilişkiler bakımından Sovyetlerin karşı karşıya olduğu yeni koşullar kendini en fazla Lozan sürecinde gösterdi. Lozan'da Sovyet heyeti İsmet Paşa ve Türk heyetini boğazlar meselesinde kendileriyle ortak bir tutum konusunda ikna etmek için sıkıştırırken Ankara'da Aralov Sovyet elçiliğinin yaşadığı izolasyonu aşmaya çalışıyordu. Lozan sürecinin sonlarına doğru, yeni elçi Surits hükümetinin Türkiye ile ilgili yeni bir strateji geliştirmesine katkıda bulunmak amacıyla Türk-Sovyet ilişkileri üzerine bir dizi kapsamlı rapor hazırladı. Türk siyasi ve toplumsal hayatında halen var olan Sovyet etkisini bütünüyle yok olmadan güçlendirmek için bir dizi önlem önerdi. Bu önemler arasında en fazla öne çıkanları Türk hükümetinin iradesine karşı daha saygılı bir tutum, Sovyet dış ticaret politikalarının Türkiye'yi en fazla rahatsız eden yönlerinin gözden geçirilmesi, ve Türk komünistlerine destek ve korumanın terk edilmesi idi. Sovyet yönetimi yoğun geçen bir tanıma sürecinin sonunda Türkiye'nin yeni yöneticilerinin katı batıcı yönelimini ve Sovyet dostluğunun belirli koşullar altında onlar açısından vazgeçilebilir olduğunu anladı. Aynı zamanda hükümetin burjuva temelini güçlenmekte olduğu ve köylü dinamizmi üzerine kurulu bir radikalleşmenin ham hayal olduğu görüldü. Türkiye'nin batıya karşı doğu halklarının uyanışının öncüsü olma niyeti de

yoktu. Lozan Konferansı sırasında İsmet Paşa bu yöndeki Sovyet önerilerini net biçimde geri çevirmişti. Türkiye'nin daha uzun süre emperyalist güçlerle gerilim yaşayacakmış gibi görünen egemen sınıfıyla uzlaşmak ve bu ülkeyi Avrupa siyaseti içinde değerli bir partner olarak görmek yeni dönemin gerçeği ile daha fazla uyuşuyordu. Üstelik Sovyet algısında Kemalistler ülkedeki dönüştürme kapasitesine sahip en ileri siyasi güç olmayı sürdürüyordu. Onların muhalifleri katı biçimde Sovyet karşıtı olan gericilerdi. Bu nedenle Kemalistleri destekleme stratejisi rakipsiz biçimde Sovyet politikasında egemen hale geldi.

1920-1923 döneminde Sovyet Rusya'nın Türkiye politikası üzerine yapılan bu çalışma Sovyetlerde dış politikanın yapım sürecine ilişkin olarak da önemli bazı gerçekleri ortaya koymuştur. Ülkenin geleceğine ilişkin kararların münhasıran Politbüro tarafından alındığı yönündeki yüzeysel yaklaşımın aksine, Sovyetlerin bu incelenen dönemde kararların çok sayıda yapının devreye girdiği ve parti kamuoyunun ve toplumun beklentilerinin belirleyici olduğu karmaşık bir süreçte belirlendiği anlaşıldı. Dış politika belgelerinde bu süreci aydınlatan çok sayıda veri mevcuttur. Dış politika tecrübesi olmayan Sovyet hükümeti dünya işleri üzerine birikim sahibi, diplomatik ve dil becerileri olan iyi kadroların oluşturduğu dört başı mamur bir dış işleri yapısına ihtiyaç duydu. Böyle bir yapıyı kurma görevini üstlenen Chicherin pek çok Bolşevikten farklı olarak ailesi ve devrim öncesi dış işleri bakanlığındaki görevi nedeniyle dış politika konularında önemli bir tarih, kurumla işleyiş bilgisine ve tecrübesine sahipti. Çiçerin öncülüğünde kurulan Narkomindel ve Çiçerin'in kendisi diğer dış politika başlıklarında olduğu gibi Türkiye politikasının şekillenmesinde son derece aktif bir rol oynadı. Yalnızca Moskova'daki bakanlık değil, bölgeye gönderilen diplomatlar ve askeri görevliler de son derece etkin biçimde Türkiye politikasının karar ve uygulama aşamalarında rol oynuyorlardı. Daha önce belirtildiği gibi, bu aşamalarda Sovyet yönetimi kendi içinde pek çok gerilim yaşıyordu. Bu gerilimlerle ilgili iki çarpıcı örneğe çalışmada geniş biçimde yer verilmiştir.

Birincisi Çiçerin'in Ermenistan'a Türkiye'nin doğu bölgesinden toprak verilmesi konusunda Çiçerin'in ısrarıyla ilgilidir. Çiçerin'in Türkiye ile bir anlaşma için yapılan görüşmelerin kesilmesinde büyük rol oynayan bu konudaki ısrarı ilk dile getirilişinden aylar sonra Politbüro'nun, özellikle de Stalin'in devreye girmesi ile kırılabilmişti. İkincisi Enver Paşa'nın desteklenmesi konusundaki ısrar da büyük oranda Narkomindel'in tasarrufu gibi görünüyor. Ankara hükümetinin konuyla ilgili artan rahatsızlığı ve Enver Paşa'nın giderek istikrarsız ve öngörülemez hale gelen eylemleri karşısında, Politbüro bir kez daha devreye giriyor ve ittihatçı liderle işbirliğine son vermek için Narkomindel'i gerekli adımları atmaya zorladı. Narkomindel ve Kafkaslarötesi Devrimci Askeri Komite arasındaki gerilimler de belgelerde açıkça görülebilir. Pek çok durumda Politbüro bu iki unsur arasında arabulucu rolü oynadı. Bir başka faktör Ankara'daki Sovyet diplomatları idi. Görev yerlerinde aldıkları inisiyatifin büyük önem taşıdığı bir dönemde Ankara'ya gönderilen Sovyet diplomatlarının yetersizlikleri ve yanlış kararları ikili ilişkilere çok olumsuz biçimde yansıyor. Türklerin saygı duydukları bir komutan olan Frunze'nin ziyareti ve ardından yine Kızıl Ordu'daki başarılı görevleri nedeniyle Kemalistlerin ciddiye aldıkları Aralov'un elçi olarak atanması bir süre için ilişkilerin gidişatını Sovyetlerin lehine değiştirdi.

Bu çalışma Türkiye örneğinden hareketle ele aldığı Sovyet dış politika pratiğini bir "devrimci diplomasi" pratiği olarak görmektedir. Çalışmada, Sovyet dış politika tarih yazımının iki yerleşik yaklaşımı olan "Çarlık-Sovyet sürekliliği" ve "ulusal çıkar-dünya devrimi ikilemini" aşan bir yöntem benimsendi. Marksist-Leninist dünya görüşüne bağlı Bolşeviklerin dünyayı nasıl algıladıkları konusuna odaklanıldı. Dünyanın ilk sosyalist iktidarı sosyalizm ve kapitalizmin iki farklı sosyo-ekonomik sistem olarak uzlaşamayacağı gerçeği ile belirsiz bir süre için kapitalizmle birlikte yaşama zorunluluğu arasında sıkışmıştı. Sovyetlerin doğu politikaları tam da bu sıkışmayı açmak üzere formüle edilmişti. Sovyetlerin düşman bir dünyada kendini var etme çabası doğrultusunda geliştirdiği doğu politikası ile Türkiye'ye yönelik politikaları arasında mutlak bir tutarlılık vardı. Sovyet

dış politikası neredeyse günlük olarak gelişmelerle bağlantılı biçimde güncelleniyordu. Sovyetlerin Türkiye vizyonu da zaman içinde dönüştü ve bu dönüşüme Türkiye politikasında bir düzeltme eşlik etti. Türkiye'nin tipik bir doğulu köylü ülkesi olarak gören yaklaşım terk edildi. Onun yerine, emperyalist ülkelerle uzlaşamayan geri kalmış bir kapitalist ülke yaklaşımı benimsendi. Türkiye'nin yönetici sınıfı ile işbirliği sürdürüldüğü sürece bu sınıfın batıyla uzlaşmasının geciktirilebileceği hesap edildi.

Cumhuriyetin ilerleyen yıllarına odaklanan ve İkinci Dünya Savaşı'na kadar Sovyetlerin Türkiye politikalarını inceleyen çalışmalar bir devrimci dış politika pratiği olarak Sovyetlerin Türkiye politikalarını ve bu politikaların değişimini daha bütünlüklü biçimde görmemize yardımcı olacaktır. Aynı şekilde Türkiye tarafına odaklanan, yani Türkiye'nin Sovyet politikalarını inceleyen çalışmalar da bu alandaki birikimimizi derinleştirmemize büyük katkıda bulunacaktır. Ancak bunun için Türkiye'deki dış işleri arşivinin açılmasını beklemek dışında fazla seçeneğimiz bulunmuyor.

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