

**TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH THE BOLSHEVIKS
(1919-1922)**

A Master's Thesis

by

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**DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
BILKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA**

May 2007

To my parents, my brother and Sean...

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(1919-1922)**

**The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
of
Bilkent University**

by

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
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I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.

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ABSTRACT

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While the Russian Empire was completely destroyed by the Bolshevik Revolution of 6-7 November 1917, the Ottoman Empire gave its last breath in Mudros Armistice in 18 October 1918. There would be a new beginning without return for both nations from then on. The Bolshevik Government in Russia and Ankara Government, which was the leader of the resistance in Turkey, started to fight against the common enemy. Both of the governments aimed to prove themselves, while Bolsheviks were trying to declare and expand their regimes and movements, to the World. Right at that point, Moscow and Ankara became allies against the Imperialist European States. However, their friendship was not without a cost. While Bolsheviks were aiming to expand their regimes to Anatolia and if possible aimed to make Anatolia a Socialist Republic of the Soviet Union, Kemalists aimed to get material and spiritual support of the Bolsheviks without adopting their regimes in Anatolia. Thus, Turkish-Bolshevik relations would change everyday according to these aims. This study evaluates the relations between the Bolshevik Government in Russia and the Nationalist Movement (later Ankara Government) in Turkey during the Turkish War of Independence, and explains the dimensions and reasons of this alliance.

ÖZET

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Master Tezi, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Yar. Doç. Nur Bilge Criss

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Rus İmparatorluğu 6-7 Kasım 1917 Bolşevik Devrimiyle tamamen yıkılırken, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu son nefesini 30 Ekim 1918 de Mondrosta verecektir. Artık her iki devlet içinde geriye dönülmez yeni bir başlangıç başlayacaktır. Rusya’da iktidara gelen Bolşevik Hükümeti ile Türkiye’de ayaklanmanın öncülüğünü yapan Ankara Hükümeti ortak düşmana karşı savaşmaktadır. Her iki hükümetde kendisini ispatlamak, Bolşevikler için rejimini ve hareketini de, dünyaya duyurmak ve yaymak amacındadır. İşte bu noktada Moskova ve Ankara Emperyalist Avrupa Devletlerine karşı birbirlerinin müttefiki olurlar. Fakat dostluk ilişkileri karşılıksız değildir. Bolşevikler kendi rejimlerini Anadoluya yaymak ve mümkünse Anadolu’yu da Sosyalist bir Cumhuriyet olarak Sovyetler Birliğine katma arzusundayken, Kemalistler Anadoluyu Bolşevik egemenliğine sokmadan Rusların maddi ve manevi desteklerini almak arzusundadır. İşte bu arzular arasında gidip gelen Türk Bolşevik İlişkileri de hergün değişmektedir. Bu tez çalışmasında Rusya’daki Bolşevik Devleti ile Türkiye’deki Milliyetçi Hareket (daha sonradan Ankara Hükümeti) arasında Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı esnasındaki ilişkileri inceleyerek, iki ülke arasındaki müttefikliğin boyutlarını ve nedenlerini açıklamaya çalıştım.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the victory of the Russian Empire in the first Crimean War of 1774 and the peace treaty of Kuchuk Kainarja, which gave the Russian Empire a territorial outlet upon the Black Sea, and the question of the Straits became the main issue in the relations of the Russian and Ottoman Empires. Russia and the Ottoman Empire, two imperial adversaries that had fought with each other four times in the nineteenth century¹, began the twentieth century with hostilities towards each other, and once again they found themselves in the opposite sides in the First World War.

The historical developments of those two countries were very much alike; both Empires were ruling over different nations, where they had similar problems in keeping their nations under their power; both Empires tried so hard to be accepted in the European Concert, and to be accepted as one of the Great Powers, where Russia could join the league as opposed to the declining Ottoman Empire; and finally their destinies towards the end of the Great War were also the same, when both the Romanov and Ottoman dynastic rule ended, although the end came a little later and less cruel for the latter.

¹ Those four wars were: The War of 1806-1812, The War of 1829, The Crimean War of 1853-56, and the War of 1877-78 (Doksanuç Harbi)

This thesis aims to evaluate the relations between Bolshevik Russia and Anatolia, between 1919 and 1922, during the Turkish War of Independence from the Anatolian perspective.

The chronology spans the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and the Nationalist Movements in Anatolia, until the end of the war in 1922.

Even though one can argue that relations between the two countries can change dramatically throughout history and adversaries can become very close allies, my main question in this thesis is why that change in Russian-Turkish relations had happened during the Turkish War of Independence. The Bolshevik Revolution took place a year and a half before Mustafa Kemal's entrance to Samsun, which generally is known as the beginning of the Nationalist Movement in Anatolia. Bolshevik Ottoman relations were also friendly for a while but these peaceful times did not last even for a year and until the Nationalists' contacts with the Bolsheviks the Ottoman Empire did not have a representative in Russia since August 1918. What was so special about the circumstances of the Bolshevik Government in Russia and the Nationalist Government in Anatolia at the time? Was it only the current situation which pushed Ankara and Moscow towards each other or was it also the means of the Bolshevik regime that could be adapted by the Turkish Nationalists? These were the main questions that I searched during my study.

Bolshevik Russia and Kemalist Turkey were useful for the external policies of both governments. They both needed to be accepted as independent states by the winners of the Great War together with their new regimes and rulers. To achieve that goal, they needed each other, this is obvious, but was it the only reason?

Bolshevik Russia faced a civil war right after its revolution, which was sponsored by the Western Powers to prevent Bolshevism spreading around.

Therefore, Anatolia, which was fighting against the Allies and their sponsored Greeks, was a natural ally for the Russian Government, but it was also the idea of legitimizing their regime by spreading it to Anatolia, while Anatolia carried out its own resistance. Exporting its ideology to Anatolia was Russia's main goal in improving its relations. Interestingly, Bolshevism started to become influential in Anatolia especially during 1920, together with socialism, which was already emerging under the Ottoman Empire before the Bolshevik Revolution. Maintaining a similar regime in a neighboring country, which was not a part of former Russian Empire, would be the biggest victory for the Bolsheviks over the Western Powers.

On the other hand, the Nationalist Movement in Anatolia, headed by Mustafa Kemal, also needed to establish itself as a power, and needed to legitimize itself by being recognized. Bolsheviks were the first to recognize the Ankara Government and to open an Embassy in Ankara, which gave political strength to the Grand National Assembly against the Allied camp. Throughout the War of Independence there were two governments in the Ottoman Empire. Ankara was fighting against the enemies, which were supported by the İstanbul Government by not doing anything against their invasion of the country. Therefore, Ankara's regime was clearly to be different from the İstanbul one. When Bolshevik Russia recognized the Ankara Government over the İstanbul one, it was a big victory for the Nationalists, which also helped them to have direct contacts with the Bolshevik Government.

My main argument in this thesis is that the Bolsheviks were very important for the Nationalists, not only with their financial and military assistance to Anatolia, but also with their political pressure on the Allied powers. Turning towards the

Bolsheviks or ‘Bolshevizing’² Anatolia was used by Mustafa Kemal as a threat against the Allied powers to make them reconsider their attitudes towards Anatolia; while on the other hand, it was used to gain the assistance of Bolshevik Russia and its support for the Nationalist Movement by establishing close relations and seen as a supporter of Bolshevism. However, later Ankara also realized that its relations with the Allied Powers helped to push the Bolsheviks to accept or facilitated certain policies towards Ankara, i.e.: Moscow fastened signing the Moscow Treaty, after the Allies invited Ankara Government to the London Conference.

This thesis also covers Turkish-Caucasus Republics, and Turkish-Ukrainian relations, which all became Soviet Republics under the Soviet Government. Therefore, when I mentioned Soviet Russia, Soviet Government, or Moscow, I cover all the Soviet Republics that were parts of Soviet Russia. I mention here only Ukraine and the three Caucasian Republics because these were the main republics that Ankara was in relation with, and they were the most influential ones than the other republics in Nationalist-Bolshevik relations. Ukraine became a part of the Soviet Government in December 1917. The Caucasus region started to fall under Bolshevik rule following the Allied withdrawal from the region. Azerbaijan was first to fall under Bolshevism, in late April 1920. Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia was formed in December 1920, while Georgia fell under Bolshevism in March 1918.³

The thesis is divided into four main parts following the introduction. The first chapter focuses on the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, its effects on the Ottoman Empire, the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty, and the relations between Bolshevik Russia and the Ottoman Empire until the Nationalists took control in Anatolia. The chapter also includes socialist movements in the Ottoman Empire

² The term ‘Bolshevizing’ was used to set Bolshevik type of regime in Anatolia. It does not mean a Bolshevik invasion of Anatolia.

³ Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995) pp.159-165

during and after the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution that were already in contact with the Bolsheviks, and were important for the future relations of the their peoples.

The second chapter covers the Nationalists taking power and forming resistance to the occupation of Ottoman lands; first contacts with the Bolsheviks and the decision to choose Bolshevik Russia as an ally; Bolshevik aid to the Nationalists, their respective aims towards each other, and the conduct of their relations until the second half of 1920. This chapter also covers the socialist and communist parties in Anatolia that were established after the start of the Nationalist Movement, together with some outside Communist Parties that were influential in Nationalist-Bolshevik relations.

The third chapter examines the relations starting from mid-1920, with Bekir Sami's commission to Moscow; the Armenian and in general Caucasian problems between Ankara and Moscow; talks for and the signing of the first official treaty between Bolshevik Russia and Nationalist Government in Ankara, Treaty of Moscow; Enver Pasha's role in their relations. The chapter comes up to Kars Treaty of October 1921.

The fourth and final chapter covers the period starting with the Kars Treaty up to the end of the Turkish War of Independence, until September 1922, and the conclusions.

My main point in this thesis is to prove my argument, which is that the Nationalists turned to the Bolsheviks because of the Allied pressure over the Ottoman Empire and mainly Anatolia. My point in this study is that Bolsheviks played a very crucial role for the Anatolian Movement, and that the Nationalists were very successful in using Bolsheviks against the Allied camp, but this policy came to live because of the Allied pressure. Western pressure established friendly relations

between the Nationalist Government in Anatolia and the Bolshevik Government in Russia, who were both fighting against Western imperialism.

Most of the literature that exists about the Nationalist-Bolshevik relations of the time are either taking the Bolshevik side and give too much credit to the socialist movements in Anatolia, or they do not give enough credit to the Bolshevik influence to the Turkish War of Independence, by trying to diminish their role. Books about Turkish Communist Party, Mustafa Suphi, and communist activities of the time generally take the pro-Bolshevik view of Anatolia, as if the main goal of the Nationalists were to accept the Bolshevik ideology. However, Mete Tuay’s *Türkiye’de Sol Akımlar* (Leftist Movements in Turkey) is a very crucial source in explaining the socialist movements in the Ottoman Empire, their programs, members and activities starting from 1908 up to 1925, without giving extra credits to any parties. George Harris’ *The Origins of Communism in Turkey* was also a very important source for understanding the ideology, reasons and termination of communist organizations and parties in Anatolia.

My main sources were the ones that were based on archival sources and the memoirs of the generals, politicians, and important figures of the time. Mehmet Perinek’s *Atatürk’ün Sovyetler’le Görüşmeleri* is very important because it is based on Soviet archives as well as Turkish archives, together with other important sources both in Turkish and in Russian. Some of the meetings between the Nationalists and the Bolsheviks were pointed for the first time in Perinek’s book. He emphasized that the Nationalist perspective towards the Bolshevik Government was being cautious against their ideology, while trying to gain their friendship and financial assistance. Stefanos Yerasimos’ *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri* gives the full scripts of the meetings, documents, and agreements between two governments based on Soviet and Turkish

archives. Bülent Gökay's *A Clash of Empires: Turkey Between Russian Bolshevism and British Imperialism 1918-1923* is also based on British, Russian and American archives and papers of the time. Gökay's book aims to provide a documentary source of the struggle for power and influence between Britain and Soviet Russia in the region, which put Anatolia in the middle of two powers.

Memoirs of important figures like Kazım Karabekir (*İstiklal Harbimiz*), Ali Fuad Cebesoy (*Moskova Hatıraları*), S.I.Aralov (*Bir Sovyet Diplomatının Türkiye Hatıraları*), Yusuf Hikmet Bayur (*Yeni Türkiye Devletinin Harici Siyaseti*), Falih Rıfkı Atay (*Çankaya*), Hüsamettin Ertürk, Frunze, Veysel Ünüvar...etc, are very important in understanding the situation of the time and the ideology of both the Bolshevik and Anatolian leaders. However, some of them were written long after the Turkish War of Independence, and were influenced by the change of politics of their times. Hüsamettin Ertürk for instance tried to distance himself from the Unionists as much as possible, while it is known that he was the head of the secret organization of the Unionists' *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*. Karabekir, on the other hand, implied that he was against accepting the Bolshevik ideology in Anatolia, while it was him who went as far as changing the epaulets of the soldiers with the Bolshevik symbols and names. Therefore, I took their knowledge of the historical facts by separating their own views. Emel Akal's *Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında Mustafa Kemal İttihat Terraki ve Bolşevizm* was very helpful in analyzing the historical facts by separating them from the subjective views of the authors of the memoirs.

Newspapers and articles during the Nationalist Movement pointed the events with more reality and objectiveness than the later ones. Therefore, journals like *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi*, newspapers like *The New York Times*, and books that used newspapers of the time like Uygur Kocabaşoğlu-Metin Berge's *Bolşevik İhtilali ve*

Osmanlılar, Jane Degras's *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy 1917-1923* were also my main sources in this thesis. Other sources that I used in this study also helped me examining the events from different view of points with different arguments.

There is an enormous number of sources on the Bolshevik-Nationalist relations but not all of them concentrate on the relations during the Turkish War of Independence. I tried to use the most important and related ones, but I am also aware of that there are still a lot to look at. This is a masters' thesis and therefore I think my sources were enough to point that it was the Allied pressure that pushed the Nationalists towards the Bolshevik Government.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND

2.1 The Bolshevik Revolution and Peace Treaty

Ottoman-Russian relations changed dramatically after the outbreak of the two Russian Revolutions in 1917. The Russian Empire had to concentrate on internal affairs, rather than trying to pursue the war. The Tsar faced the end of his reign and so did the whole tsarist regime in Russia. Petrograd no longer looked forward to the conquest of İstanbul by the Russian Army as had been promised to them in the secret Treaty of Constantinople (April 26, 1915) by the British. As Falih Rıfki Atay wrote in *Çankaya*, if Lenin hadn't overthrown the Tsar and if Russia had won the war, İstanbul would have become a Russian city. 'For this reason one would like to put a bust of Lenin in a corner of İstanbul,'⁴ he said, although he may have exaggerated Lenin's role: it was the Provisional Government that overthrew the Tsar, not the Bolsheviks. Then, too, Russian armies had been bleeding to death on the Eastern Front long before the revolutionaries took over in Russia.

The first news about the Bolshevik Revolution came on November 8, 1917 to the Ottoman Empire, from its chargé d'affaires in Stockholm, Esat Bey. He wrote

⁴ Falih Rıfki Atay, *Çankaya* (İstanbul: Pozitif Yayınları, 2004) p. 178

that the revolution, which had been expected for sometime, had happened in Russia, and the Bolsheviks could take over St. Petersburg easily; and that there was an expectation that the new Russian government would sue Germany for peace.⁵ For the Ottoman Empire, the possibility of a peace treaty was much more significant than the news about the Bolshevik Revolution itself.

The expected Bolshevik decree on peace was declared by the Deputies of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' the day after the October Revolution happened:

The Workers' and Peasants' Government, created by the revolution of 24-25 October [6-7 November], and based on the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, proposes to all belligerent peoples and their Governments the immediate opening of negotiations for a just and democratic peace...By such a peace the Government understands an immediate peace without annexations (i.e. without seizure of foreign territory, without the forcible incorporation of foreign nationalities), and without indemnities.⁶

This decree on peace was addressed more to the peoples of the belligerent states than their governments: it was Bolshevik propaganda. This decree was not taken seriously by any state, because no one recognized the Bolsheviks yet. However, the prospect of a peace without annexation and compensation received favorable notice in the Ottoman press.⁷

The new government of Russia promised to denounce secret treaties of the Tsarist Empire, and called to abolish the secret diplomacy between Russia and the states involved. "...it [the Government] will at once begin to publish in full the secret treaties concluded or confirmed by the Government of landowners and capitalists from February to 25 October [7 November] 1917." The decree also implied that an

⁵ Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1990) p.327

⁶ Decree on Peace, Declared by the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, November 8, 1917. See Jane Degras, *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy 1917-1924* (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege Oxford University Press, 1951) p.1

⁷ Kurat, pp. 327-328

armistice could be concluded in three months time.⁸ In the decree of November 21, 1917, the Central Executive Committee sent its orders to the Russian Commander-in-Chief, General Dukhonin: he was to ‘...propose to all belligerent nations and to their Governments an immediate armistice on all fronts and the immediate opening of negotiations with a view to concluding peace on democratic principles...’⁹ General Dukhonin later was removed, and assassinated because he didn’t obey this order to end the war and sign a peace treaty immediately. Krilenko became the new Russian Commander-in-Chief, and he started negotiations for an armistice.¹⁰

On the 22nd of November 1917, Leon Trotsky declared that Russia wanted a peace based on collaboration of the peoples and that Russia had nothing to hide. According to Trotsky,

The Russian people, and the peoples of Europe and the whole world, should learn the documentary truth about the plans forged in secret by the financiers and industrialists together with their parliamentary and diplomatic agents. The peoples of Europe have paid for the right to this truth with countless sacrifices and universal economic desolation.

Therefore, the ‘secret diplomacy and its intrigues, codes, and lies’ was abolished by the Workers’ and Peasants’ Government of Russia.¹¹ This statement was also aimed to gain public support both inside and outside of Russia. Denouncing the secret treaties signed by the Tsarist Government and by the Provisional Government would make the governments of Europe angry, while their people would learn the secret plans of their governments and support the new ‘honest’ regime in Russia. This attitude of the new government in Russia gave some relief to the Ottoman Empire, which had been concerned about possible Russian expansion

⁸ Degras, p. 2

⁹ Order of the Central Executive Committee to Gen. Dukhonin. See Degras, p.3

¹⁰ Uygur Kocabaşoğlu- Metin Berge, *Bolşevik İhtilali ve Osmanlılar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006) p.125

¹¹ Statement by Trotsky on the Publication of the Secret Treaties, 22 November 1917, Degras, pp.8-9

towards Turkey for more than a century, especially after Russia had gained Western support during the Great War.

The first news about the denunciations of ‘secret’ treaties was published in Russian newspapers, in *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. And immediately this shocking news appeared in Western newspapers the day after it was published in Russia. The Ottoman press received and published the news three-four days later than the Western States. Turkish newspapers started to publish articles praising the Bolsheviks, while criticizing Allied policies for their real and secret aims over territories of the Ottoman Empire.¹²

The terms of the secret Treaty of Constantinople, signed in 1915 between Russia, England, and France, which gave Constantinople, the Straits, and Eastern Thrace to the Russian Empire, were published in the British newspaper *Manchester Guardian*. In April 1915, the Allied Powers included Italy in their secret policies, where they promised Italy the Mediterranean region of the Ottoman Empire if it enters the war on the Allied side. Secret Agreements continued with the Sykes-Picot Treaty in 1916, in which Asiatic Turkey and the Arab lands, basically the entire Near East, were divided between France and England. In spring of the same year Tsarist Russia was included in this treaty, while Italy was included the year after.¹³

The *New York Times* gave the news entitled ‘Petrograd, Nov.23.’ It was emphasized that the first confidential State document to be published by the Bolsheviks was about the Russian desire to acquire ‘the Dardanelles, Constantinople, the west shore of the Bosphorus, and certain defined areas in Asia Minor.’ The news about the division of the Ottoman territories continued:

¹² The Turkish newspaper, *İkdam*, published the news about denouncing secret treaties by saying “Bravo Bolsheviks!” Uygur Kocabaşoğlu- Metin Berge, *Bolşevik İhtilali ve Osmanlılar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006) pp.112-113

¹³ A.M. Şamsutdinov, *Mondros’tan Lozan’a Türkiye Ulusal Kurtuluş Savaşı Tarihi 1918-1923* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 1999) pp. 15-16

It sets forth the demand of France and England that Russia agreed to the freedom of Constantinople for cargoes not from or to Russian ports, the retention of the hold of the Mussulman (sic) on places in Arabia under a separate Mussulman (sic) Government, and the inclusion of certain parts of Persia in the sphere of British influence. This document indicates that Russia agreed on the whole, but proposed an amendment demanding a clearer definition in regard to the Government of Mussulman (sic) territory and the freedom of pilgrimage...¹⁴

On November 29th, the news from the *Manchester Guardian* was published in the *New York Times*. ‘...Alexandretta (Asiatic Turkey) was to be a free port and Palestine a protectorate under Russia, France, and Great Britain. Great Britain was to receive the neutral zone in Persia, except Isfahan and Yezd, which were to go into Russian sphere.’¹⁵

The Bolshevik Government of Russia realized that it needed to win the support of all groups living in Russian lands. The Turkic-Muslim population¹⁶ was numerous enough not to be underestimated. In order to win their support the Council of People’s Commissars announced a declaration to the Muslims of Russia and the East, on December 3, 1917.

Moslems of Russia, Tatars of the Volga and the Crimea, Kirghiz and the Sarts of Siberia and Turkestan, Turks and Tatars of Trans-Caucasia, (sic) Chechens and mountain Cossacks! ...Henceforward your beliefs (sic) and customs, your national and cultural institutions, are declared free and inviolable! ...We declare that the secret treaties of the dethroned Tsar regarding the annexation of Constantinople, confirmed by the deposed Kerensky, are now null and void... Constantinople must remain in the hands of Moslems... We declare that the treaty for the partition of Turkey, which was to despoil it of Armenia, is null and void...¹⁷

Even if it seemed that the Bolsheviks aimed to give independence to the Muslim population of Russia, in fact they aimed to export their own regime all around Russia

¹⁴ *The New York Times*, Nov 25, 1917, p.1

¹⁵ *The New York Times*, Nov 29, 1917, p.5

¹⁶ The Russian Turkic-Muslim population was almost 20 million at that time. See Kurat, p.329

¹⁷ Appeal of the Council of People’s Commissars to the Moslems of Russia and the East, 3 December 1917, Degras, pp. 16-17. For the Turkish text, please see Kurat, pp.649-652

and outside of it through different nations, and religions. The Bolsheviks were successful in spreading communism to the Muslim population and especially among Ottoman prisoners of war who remained in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution. Mustafa Suphi¹⁸, whose activities will be discussed below, was one of the main Turkish-Muslim actors spreading communist ideas to Ottoman prisoners of war.

The Bolsheviks needed to keep their promise to the Russian population to end the war and they needed to rush to sign a Peace Treaty in order to concentrate on rebuilding their nation. For this purpose, the representatives of Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire came together in Brest-Litovsk, and signed an armistice to start negotiations for the future peace treaty, on 2-15 December 1917.¹⁹ On December 3, 1917, the Ottoman Foreign Minister, Ahmet Nesimi Bey, informed the Ottoman parliament (*Meclis-i Mebusan*) about the Russian call for peace. He said that:

...There is nothing to prevent us from starting negotiations with the Russian government, which does not support ideas that reject our independence and sovereignty...there is no reason not to maintain political, economic, neighborly relations with this peace loving

¹⁸ Mustafa Suphi was born in 1883 in Giresun. He studied in the Law School in İstanbul and then went to Paris, where he studied Political Sciences. When he was in Paris Suphi worked for *Tanin* newspaper, and became a revolutionist by learning about proletariat organizations, labor unions. Suphi came back to Turkey after the Revolution of 1908, and started to work for *Tanin*, *Serveti Fünun*, and *Hak* newspapers. In 1912 he started to publish *İfham* to help forming the *Milli Meşrutiyetperver Fırkası*, which started his fight with the Unionists. In 1913 Grand Vizier Mahmut Şevket Pasha was assassinated and one article of *İfham* was seen related to this assassination and Mustafa Suphi was exiled to Sinop together with Ferit Bey, from where they fled to Sevastopol in Crimea on May 24, 1914 and landed in Balaklava on May 29th. Suphi left Crimea for Baku on July 1914, where he wrote several articles in newspapers. Later in the same year he left Baku for Batumi, where he was arrested by Russia and sent to Kaluga as a prisoner of war. When he was in the Ural in 1915, he joined the Russian Socialist Democrat Workers Party and became active around the Turkish prisoners of war. From 1915 on Suphi supported socialist-Marxist ideology. He became an important Bolshevik supporter around the Turkic-Muslim population later, and after his arrival in Moscow on 1918, he became a member of 'Moscow Muslim Station' and published *Yeni Dünya* newspaper. He opened Turkish Left Socialists First Congress and formed Turkish Communist organizations around the Turkish population in Russia. Until his death in January 1921, Suphi formed several Turkish Communist organizations and aimed to establish communism in Turkey, and he published different papers to spread his ideology and to fulfill his aim. For more information about Mustafa Suphi see; Burhan Tuğsavul, *Mustafa Suphi ve Yoldaşları* (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2004), Yavuz Aslan, *Türkiye Komünist Fırkası'nın Kuruluşu ve Mustafa Suphi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1997).

¹⁹ Kurat, p.332

Russia. Russia will receive from us, the same amount of friendly relations and sincerity that they are showing to us.²⁰

This was the friendly response of the Ottoman Empire to the Bolshevik overtures. It was hoped that an armistice could be made not only with Russia but also with the Allied Powers, who might be discouraged to continue fighting after Russian policies were announced.

According to the agreement in Brest-Litovsk, there was the need for a separate Russian-Ottoman armistice in order to officially end the war between these two countries. For this reason, the Russian and Ottoman plenipotentiaries came together in the Russian occupied Ottoman city, Erzincan. After deliberation, an agreement with fourteen articles was signed on December 5-18, 1917(1333).²¹ This armistice would form the basis of the future peace treaty-Brest-Litovsk- between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, and it marked the first official agreement between the Ottoman Empire and the Bolsheviks. With this agreement the Russian-Ottoman War, which had started in October 1914, officially ended.²²

The Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk²³ was worked out between Russia and Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire as early as the 3rd of March; ratified by the Soviet Government on March 18th and by the Ottoman Parliament (*Meclis-i Mebusan*) on March 28th. The first article of this treaty announced that the state of war ended between Germany, Austria- Hungary, Bulgaria, and Ottoman on the one part and Russia on the other part. The Articles about the

²⁰ Uygur Kocabaşoğlu- Metin Berge, *Bolşevik İhtilali ve Osmanlılar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006) p. 128

²¹ Kurat, pp. 332-333

²² For the full text of the agreement please see Tülay Duran, 'Bolşeviklerin Osmanlı Devleti ile Yaptıkları ilk Anlaşma', *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi Dün/Bugün/Yarın* (no.37, September 1970) pp.18-20

²³ For detailed information about the Brest-Litovsk see John Wheeler-Bennett, *Brest Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace, March, 1918* (London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's, 1966). For detailed information about the Russian-Turkish side of the Brest-Litovsk, see Selami Kılıç, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkilerinin Doğuşu* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1998)

Ottoman Empire in the Brest-Litovsk Treaty had mostly been decided already, in the Erzincan Agreement. In article four of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, it was declared that Russia would evacuate the provinces of Eastern Anatolia immediately. It was announced that Kars, Ardahan, and Batum would be cleared of Russian troops, and that Russia would leave the national and international relations of these districts to their own population to reorganize. Article five included the removal of the mines in the Black Sea by Russia, while article eight mentioned the release of the prisoners of war of both Ottoman and Russian sides to return to their homeland.²⁴ The Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk ended hostilities in World War I, not only between Ottoman and Russia, but also across the Eastern Front; from Poland to the Caucasus. Russia, one of the biggest adversaries of the Ottoman Empire, was officially out of the war, even giving up all its conquests. The Ottoman Empire could only hope for a similar settlement with other belligerents.

At the beginning of 1918, Ottoman troops started to move into the former Ottoman lands that were given back to the Empire according to the Erzincan Agreement. After the Agreement, the Russian troops started to leave the occupied lands and security in those lands was left to armed bands of Armenians, who were massacring Turks. In order to prevent Armenian attacks and to take these lands back, Ottoman troops advanced to the East on February 12, occupying Erzincan first. Later, on March 12, Erzurum was regained. The Ottoman Empire had reached its 1914 borders once again towards the end of March 1918. However, the Ottoman Empire was promised its 1877-78 borders according to Brest-Litovsk, and so Ottoman troops advanced east once again. Batumi was occupied on the 14th of April, while Kars was

²⁴ “The Peace of Brest-Litovsk- The Treaty of Peace between Russia and Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey,” 3 March 1918. See *Jane Degras*, pp.52-55. For the Turkish-Russian part of the treaty, see Stefanos Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri* (İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1979) pp.44-49

gained back on the 23rd of April²⁵. These last advances of the Turkish troops worried the Armenians as well as Bolsheviks, who were still supporting the Armenians over the Turks.

As another article of the treaty suggested, the Ottoman Empire assigned Galip Kemali Bey as the first Ottoman Ambassador to Bolshevik Russia. He was specially assigned for this job, since he was a Turanist, who according to Ottoman policies would be supporting the rights of Turkic-Muslim population of Russia. However, there were more obstacles than he thought to implement his policies. Russia was trying to spread Bolshevism among prisoners of war, who were to be sent back to their homelands according to Brest-Litovsk. In order to promote Bolshevik ideas among the Ottoman prisoners of war, a newspaper, entitled *Yeni Dünya* (New World), started to be published in Moscow on April 1918, directed by Mustafa Suphi.²⁶

This newspaper was published for socialist Muslims and was clearly supported by the Soviet Government. Mustafa Suphi was a real enemy of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), and for this reason he was a good candidate for Russia in its propaganda against the Ottoman Empire. From the first publications of *Yeni Dünya*, Mustafa Suphi started to harshly criticize the CUP for the recent situation of the Ottoman Empire. The leaders of the CUP were criticized for inheriting Abdulhamid's fortune, for living in wealth while the nation was in poverty, and for changing their names into 'Pasha's. The only way that would save the Empire, according to Suphi, was '...again liberty, again revolution. However, this time it won't be a revolution that shines from the epaulets of a Pasha and several officers; but

²⁵ Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1990) p.408

²⁶ Kurat, p.431

it will be real liberty, real revolution that breaks off with storms from people's souls that starts a fire from their hearts.'²⁷

This newspaper was distributed to Ottoman prisoners of war and to the relevant places for free. Finally, Galip Kemali Bey protested the publications about the Ottoman Empire of *Yeni Dünya* to the Soviet Foreign Ministry, on May 22. According to the second article of Brest-Litovsk, the parties would stay away from any provocations and protests against one another's government, state, or military. Kemali Bey protested that *Yeni Dünya*'s publications were against the second article of the Treaty, and therefore needed to be closed down. On the contrary, the Russian Government did not see the same necessity to shut the newspaper down, and they published the ambassador's protest in Russian newspapers, which got a lot of criticism from both the Russian and Suphi's papers.²⁸ Even though the Ottoman Embassy sent three protests about *Yeni Dünya* to Chicherin, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, nothing happened and *Yeni Dünya* continued its activities in the same manner and distributed its publications around the Ottoman prisoners of war for free.

However, problems between the Ottoman Empire and new Russian Government were not only about Suphi's activities in Russia. Shortly after signing the Brest-Litovsk, Russia started to forget about its obligations towards Turkey. When Russian soldiers were leaving the occupied Ottoman lands, they turned over their positions and their guns to the Armenians, who were looking for a chance to take revenge against the Turks for the 1915 deportations. Hostilities towards civilians in the Eastern parts of Ottoman Empire increased immediately after the Russian withdrawal, which led the Ottoman side to take precautions on its own. On February 12, 1918, the

²⁷ Yavuz Aslan, *Türkiye Komünist Fırkası'nın Kuruluşu ve Mustafa Suphi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1997) pp.27-29

²⁸ Mustafa Suphi wrote an article with the title of 'Answer to the Ottoman Ambassador,' on May 30th where he criticized Galip Kemali Bey for his protest to *Yeni Dünya*'s publications. See Kurat, pp.434-435

commander of the 3rd Army, Vehib Pasha, under orders of Enver Pasha, marched towards Erzincan to seize back the lands turned over in the Erzincan Agreement. Erzincan was retaken on February 13, while Erzurum was taken back on March 12. By that time, Brest-Litovsk was signed and the future of Kars, Ardahan, and Batum were decided to be assigned according to plebiscites in those cities.²⁹ Those cities were under the rule of the Transcaucasian Commissariat by Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, which was created after the Bolsheviks took power in Petrograd. It was on November 11, 1917, when political and social organizations in Tiflis decided to establish 'an interim government' for the region, in the name of Transcaucasian Commissariat, or *Zakavkom (Zakavkazskii Kommissariat)*.³⁰ The Transcaucasian Commissariat declared an independent Transcaucasian Federation on April 22, 1918. 'It was by its very nature a transient arrangement, given that the three principal nationalities here had little in common save territorial proximity.'³¹

The Transcaucasian Commissariat declared that it did not recognize Brest-Litovsk and thus did not want to give Kars, Ardahan and Batumi back to the Ottoman Empire. Vehib Pasha ordered Armenian and Georgian troops to evacuate these lands, and turn them over to the Turkish troops on March 10. After this Ottoman demand, negotiations between the Commissariat and the Ottoman Empire began.³² Meanwhile, it became clear that it was difficult for Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan to work together for common interests under one federation, and the Ottoman Empire was in favor of signing separate agreements with all three states. Finally, Georgia and Armenia declared independence on May 26th, while Azerbaijan declared its independence on May 28th. The Ottoman Empire signed separate Peace Treaties with

²⁹ Akdes Nimet Kurat, pp. 466-467

³⁰ Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985) p.106

³¹ Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995) p.151

³² Kurat, pp. 466-467

both Armenia and Georgia on June 4th, according to which not only Batum was going to be given back to the Ottoman Empire, but also the territory known as Ahıska and Ahalkalek. The border between Georgia and the Ottoman Empire reverted to the 1828 borders, while with Armenia and Azerbaijan, it was to be the 1877-78 borders, and moreover war in the Caucasus was officially ended for the Ottoman Empire. In the treaty with Azerbaijan, there was a very important article (article 4), which gave Azerbaijan the right to ask military support from Turkey to secure itself inside its borders.³³ This article was very crucial for the Ottoman Empire, since it gave Turkey the right to intervene in the region. Those were the times that all the Ottoman Empire's and especially the CUP members' policies in the Caucasus were based on the independence of the nations, which would be willing to ally with Turkey, as for the Muslim-Turkic nations of the region, desires were as high as greater unified Turkic State.

With the collapse of the Tsarist rule and diminishing number of Russian soldiers in the Caucasus region, nations in the region once again started to gain their own power. Azeris realize that 'the door' of help that they needed for independence 'was wide open to the Turks, their co-religionists and ethnic cousins, to whom they were strongly sympathetic. Were an Ottoman army to advance into the Caucasus towards Baku, they would find, waiting to welcome them, a fifth column a million or so strong.'³⁴

Baku was part of Azerbaijan and a very important part of it, but it was also very important for Russia because of its petroleum. Russia managed to establish a 'Red Republic' in Baku on March 18th with the help of Armenians, who were very hostile towards civilian Muslims. Therefore, Azerbaijan asked the Ottoman Empire,

³³ Kurat, pp. 477-478

³⁴ Peter Hopkirk, *On Secret Service East of Constantinople* (UK: Oxford University Press, 1994) p.253

according to the 4th article, to send forces to help rescue Baku. In order not to provoke a reaction from Germany, which also was very interested in those lands, it was decided to form an 'Islamic Army', which would be formed inside Azerbaijan but manned by the Ottoman forces. Finally, Baku was taken on September 15, 1918.³⁵

All these events happening in the Caucasus affected Ottoman-Bolshevik relations negatively. The Ottoman Ambassador to Russia, Galip Kemali Bey, decided that it was not necessary for him to stay in Moscow since he wasn't listened to by the Bolshevik Government in any case. Besides, it was not safe for ambassadors to live in Moscow at that time-the German Ambassador, von Mirbach, was assassinated on July 6. Therefore, Galip Bey left Russia on August 9, 1918. After hearing of the fall of Baku, Russia also decided to cut off its relations with the Ottoman Empire, and sent a note of protest on September 20th.³⁶ Russian- Ottoman friendship was officially over, and it seemed that a new movement and government in Turkey would be needed to regain Bolshevik friendship. Seeing the importance of Bolsheviks for the future of setting the Eastern borders of Turkey and the hostility of the Bolsheviks towards the Allied Powers, one of the first policies of Turkish Nationalists would be to seek good relations with Bolshevik Russia.

³⁵ For more information about regaining Baku see Kurat, pp. 527-543.

³⁶ Kurat, pp. 428-551

2.2. Socialist Movements in Turkey Before the Nationalist Takeover

The short period of positive attitude of the Bolshevik leaders towards the Ottoman Empire increased Turkish support for the new government in Russia. The positive impression of Bolshevism was so widespread in the Ottoman Empire that students of the İstanbul University wanted Lenin to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.³⁷

The change in government did not only happen in the Russian capital; the Ottoman capital also needed a change. Even if conditions were different in the Turkish case, the failure of the ruling party in İstanbul and the loss of war that increased the interference of the Allied Powers, who resented by the members of the Ottoman government, created need for a change in the ruling power in İstanbul. The Union and Progress (CUP) held its last Congress in İstanbul from November the 1st to the 5th, 1918. According to Stanford Shaw, it was a big shock to the members of the party to learn that Enver Pasha and Cemal Pasha had fled to Germany together with some of their associates.³⁸ However, this decision was defended in the Committee's meeting. Kara Kemal had previously suggested that some of the leaders flee the country and according to this decision Enver Pasha, Talat Pasha, Cemal Pasha, Dr. Nazım, Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir, Dr. Rusuhi, Azmi Bey and Bedri Bey left the capital in a German submarine for Sevastopol in the Crimea, a city under German occupation at that time.³⁹

³⁷ A. F. Miller, *Otcherki Noveishei Istorii Turtsii* (Maskva-Leningrad: Izdatelstva Akademii Nauk CCCR, 1948) p. 103. This incident was proudly related to the First Congress of the Comintern in March 1919, by the Turkish delegate, Mustafa Suphi. See George S. Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Publications, 1967) p.37. According to Kocabaşoğlu- Berge, those students also hanged the picture of Lenin at the university building. This picture was taken down by orders of the French General Franchet d'Espèrey later. See Uygur Kocabaşoğlu- Metin Berge, *Bolşevik İhtilali ve Osmanlılar*, p. 130.

³⁸ Stanford J. Shaw, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish War of National Liberation 1918-1923 A Documentary Study*, vol. 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000) p.177

³⁹ Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar (1908-1925)*, vol.1 (İstanbul: BDS Yayınları, 1991) p.75

The Ottoman Empire also started to feel the impact of the Russian Revolution directly. Influenced by the Bolshevik Revolution, new socialist parties were established one after another in the Ottoman capital. The first was to be formed on December 1918, under the name of Social Democratic Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Fırkası*). The leader of this party was a former CUP member, Dr. Hasan Rıza (Soyak). Social Democratic Party introduced a program which gave considerable attention to labor matters, and had a supporter like Zinniatullah Navshirvanov.⁴⁰ However, this party had neither its own publication, nor a very large following, and was dissolved by its own members in four years.⁴¹

On February 20, 1919, a far more influential socialist party was established with the name of the Socialist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Sosyalist Fırkası- Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası*). The leader of this party was Hüseyin Hilmi, known as ‘Hilmi the Socialist’ (*İştirakçı Hilmi*). This party was more organized than the Social Democratic Party, and had several branches in İstanbul, one in Paris, and for a time it was active in Eskişehir as well, where it published the paper entitled *İşçi* (Worker), from 1919 to 1921. Hilmi started to publish the periodical *İdrak* (Comprehension) between April 28, 1919 and July 22, 1919, which was his party’s organ.⁴²

There were more socialist organizations and parties to be formed by Turkish students in Germany. They learned about socialism and Marxism in Germany and organized the Turkish Workers Association (*Türkiye İşçi Derneği*) among the young workers who were sent to Germany. At the same time, they formed a political branch under the name of Workers and Peasants Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi ve*

⁴⁰ Zinniatullah Navshirvanov was a Tatar from Russia, who came to İstanbul University as a student at the end of the First World War. His communist activities in Turkey would continue within and outside of this party and we will come across his name later again. Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey*, p.37

⁴¹ Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey*, pp.38-39. See also Tunçay, *Türkiye’de Sol Akımlar (1908-1925)*, vol.1, p.42, and Shaw, vol. 1, p.194

⁴² Tunçay, *Türkiye’de Sol Akımlar (1908-1925)*, vol., p. 38. See also Shaw, vol. 1, pp. 196-197

Çiftçi Fırkası) in May 1919, which published a journal, *Kurtuluş* (Liberation). Some of the members of this party could be described as ‘progressive nationalists, interested in modernizing Turkey,’ who later became important figures in the Kemalist movement.⁴³ When the members of this party came back to the Ottoman Empire they established their party in İstanbul as Turkish Workers and Peasants Socialist Party (*Türkiye İşçi ve Çiftçi Sosyalist Fırkası*) in September 1919. According to George Harris, this organization was a small front for the later Turkish Communist Party and was finally suppressed in 1925.⁴⁴

Despite the fact that none of these socialist parties played a major role in Turkish politics, they were significant for their ideology, which would open the road to communist movements in Turkey later. They were not organized well enough, and none offered much hope for resisting the Allied occupation of the Empire. Effective resistance was left to the successors of the CUP.

2.2.1 KARAKOL (*Black Arm/Guard Society*)⁴⁵

Organized resistance to the occupation of Anatolia started with the underground organization, *Karakol*, which was founded in late November 1918.⁴⁶ *Karakol* was a continuation of the intelligence organization of the CUP⁴⁷, *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* (Special Organization). Most of *Karakol*’s members were former *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* members. The directors of *Karakol* were Kara Kemal and Kara Vasıf Bey, who,

⁴³ Harris gives Mehmet Vehbi Sarıdal and Nurullah Esat Sümer as examples. See Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey*, p.40

⁴⁴ Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey*, pp. 39-41

⁴⁵ Here I will give brief information about the organization. More information about its activities will be given in a chronological order in different parts of this thesis.

⁴⁶ Nur Bilge Criss, *Istanbul Under Allied Occupation 1918-1923* (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 1999) p.99

⁴⁷ For detailed information about the role of CUP in the National Resistance see chapter 3, ‘The Unionist Contribution to the National Resistance Movement’ in Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1984) pp.68-106

according to Emel Akal, were closer to Talat Pasha than to Enver, and were assigned to form this organization by Talat Pasha himself, after he fled the country.⁴⁸ According to Hüsamettin Ertürk, Kara Kemal invited Kara Vasıf to his house and had a secret meeting with him, where Kara Kemal said that ‘it was Talat Pasha’s order (to Kara Kemal) before his escape, to unite the Unionists in a secret organization and to set a secret password to recognize each other.’ The name *Karakol* was mentioned by Talat Pasha, and Kara Kemal said to Kara Vasıf that *Karakol* was a good name because it combined both their names. It was this meeting between Kara Kemal and Kara Vasıf on which the name and the password (K.G.) were decided.⁴⁹ It is also rumored that after Talat Pasha’s assassination, it was Kara Kemal who prevented Enver Pasha’s intervention in Ankara’s policies.⁵⁰ The Central committee of this organization was formed by Baha Said Bey, Kara Vasıf Bey, Refik İsmail Bey, Kemalettin Sami Bey, Galatalı Şevket Bey, Edip Servet Bey (Tör), and Ali Rıza Bey (Bebe).⁵¹

The aim of this organization was described in its declaration which proclaimed that,

The activities of Karakol inside the country are confined to protect and, where non-existent, establish national unity and territorial integrity by legitimate means, behind the scenes. When faced with oppressors of freedom and justice, however, we shall resort to revolutionary ways. We shall fight and die as free men rather than live as prisoners in shame.⁵²

⁴⁸ Emel Akal, *Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında Mustafa Kemal, İttihat Terakki ve Bolşevizm* (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2002) p.160

⁴⁹ Samih Nafiz Tansu, *İki Devrin Perde Arkası* (İstanbul: Ararat Yayınevi, 1969) p. 223

⁵⁰ After Talat fled to Berlin, and Mustafa Kemal’s activities in Anatolia, combining the military forces and forming a National Resistance, Talat supported Mustafa Kemal and saw him as the leader of this movement, and so did Talat’s men. Akal, p.117

⁵¹ Fahri Can, ‘Karakol Cemiyeti Nasıl Kurulmuştu?’, *Hatıralar, Vesikalar, Resimlerle Yakın Tarihimiz*, 4:48 (24 January 1963) pp.257-258. According to Hüsamettin Ertürk, Yenibahçeli Şükrü, Çerkes Reşid, and he himself were also in the central committee of this organization. Tansu, pp. 223-224

⁵² Criss, *Istanbul Under Allied Occupation 1918-1923*, p.100

The socialist character of this organization was mentioned in the 3rd article of *Karakol's* declaration. According to this article, '*Karakol* takes its power from...peace loving delegations, and all the socialist and proletariat groups' international deliberations, and from Turkish, Muslim world's hearth, and from anyone and any organization that accepts its (*Karakol's*) aim.'⁵³ Future policies of *Karakol* (having relations with Bolshevik delegations...etc) emphasized the socialist character of this organization, or so it seemed.

It was *Karakol's* decision to start the National Resistance in Anatolia, but having the Allied forces in İstanbul made it impossible to start the resistance at the capital, and Mustafa Kemal was to seek that goal outside the capital, in the heart of Anatolia. Mustafa Kemal, who was in İstanbul from November 19, 1918 to May 16, 1919, had close relations with *Karakol* members in İstanbul. He even had a secret meeting with Ali Fethi Bey, Kara Kemal, İsmail Canbulat, and a fourth person, where they decided to form a 'revolutionary committee.' This committee would change or assassinate the sultan, overthrow the government, and would take more determined actions with the new government after overthrowing the incumbent one. However, when Canbulat wanted to stay as a reserve in case of failure of this action, made the others suspicious. Then the others said that they wouldn't establish such a committee without Canbulat and wanted to dissolve the committee. They did so and Canbulat left the meeting, but the others established the committee again after Canbulat left. Later they realized that assassinating or changing the sultan wouldn't save the Ottoman Empire, so they dissolved their committee entirely.⁵⁴ Mustafa Kemal started to develop the idea of going to Anatolia to start the National resistance, and he stayed

⁵³ Fahri Can, 'Karakol Cemiyeti Nasıl Kurulmuştu?', p. 258

⁵⁴ Atay, *Çankaya*, pp. 170-171

in contact with the Unionists, military intelligence, and *Karakol* until, during and after his journey to Anatolia.

As the national resistance moved to Anatolia, *Karakol* formed a line of transportation and communication (*Menzil Hattı*) between İstanbul and Anatolia, through which they smuggled arms and men to Anatolia for the resistance.⁵⁵ *Karakol* sent its members to both Erzurum and Sivas Congresses and sent their support to unify the resisting organizations under *Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti* (the Anatolian and Rumelian Defense of Rights Committee). Publications of the Amasya Decisions and regulations of the Anatolian and Rumelian Defense of Rights Committee were carried out by *Karakol* and Kara Vasıf, who also attended the Congress of Sivas.⁵⁶

Although *Karakol's* members were warned by Mustafa Kemal not to act separately and to inform the Nationalists about all their actions, and later were ordered by Kemal to cease all their activities, *Karakol* refused to accept those orders, and also refused to see Ankara as the center of the resistance.⁵⁷ *Karakol* was composed largely of former CUP members and started to see itself as the leader of the Turkish National Resistance. This made Mustafa Kemal suspicious about their real aims as a rival organization to the Kemalist Movement. Baha Said, a *Karakol* member, went to Baku in 1920, where he signed an alliance with the Bolsheviks on January 11, 1920, as representative of the Anatolian Movement, *Karakol*, and leader of the Uşak Congress. Kara Vasıf sent information about this agreement to Mustafa Kemal on February 26, 1920, which was refused by the Ankara Government immediately. Mustafa Kemal was very angry that Kara Vasıf had approved such an

⁵⁵ Criss, *Istanbul Under Allied Occupation 1918-1923*, p.103. See also in Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, p.83

⁵⁶ Emel Akal, pp. 170-171

⁵⁷ See Emel Akal. She describes the organization, its leaders and their characters, *Karakol's* relations with Mustafa Kemal, the CUP, and Bolsheviks.

agreement without the permission and information of the Representative Committee (*Heyet-i Temsiliye*), and he repeated that Ankara did not recognize any separate organizations. Mustafa Kemal asked them to cease all of their actions, and unite with Ankara.⁵⁸ However, *Karakol* continued its activities until the Assembly in İstanbul dissolved itself, when the British troops entered the parliament to arrest several CUP members, on March 16, 1920. Some of the leaders and members of *Karakol* were arrested and sent to Malta, while some fled İstanbul and joined Ankara, and others fled to Erzurum to join Enver Pasha in the Caucasus.⁵⁹ The weakening of *Karakol* helped Ankara to become the only center for the National Resistance and the only representative of this movement inside and outside the country; however *Karakol* was not dissolved completely until 1926.

The Bolshevik Revolution did not change only Russia. But its direct and indirect influence had a great effect over Europe as well as the Ottoman Empire. Bolsheviks were fighting against the Allied supported White Army, while at the same time were desperate to legitimize their regime by expanding it both inside and outside of Russian borders. The Ottoman Empire on the other hand, had lost its power and legitimacy over its own lands in Mudros Armistice of 1918, even though it felt so relief a year ago, when Russia was out of the war and later the Bolshevik Government declared peace.

Just like in Russia, there were many people in the Ottoman Empire who were seeking to save and rebuild their country. Their struggle was not a class struggle as it was in Russia; theirs was the future of Ottoman Peoples. Since the end of the Great War a nationalist movement started to be formed around Turks. Seeing the injustice

⁵⁸ Akal, pp.282-285

⁵⁹ Rauf (Orbay), Kara Vasıf, and Galatalı Şevket were arrested. Kazım (Orbay), Yarbay Seyfî, Binbaşı Naim Cevat were some of the *Karakol* members that fled to Erzurum in May 1920. See Akal, pp.280-281.

of the Allied Powers in supporting the minorities over the majority in the Ottoman Empire, and the incapability of the Ottoman Sultan in the capital, Nationalists decided to take action for their nation. This awakening of Anatolia would be the main issue during 1919. Anatolia was never going to be the same.

CHAPTER 3

MEETING THE BOLSHEVIKS

3.1 ‘The Year of Decision’

As Evan Mawdsley writes in his book on *The Russian Civil War*⁶⁰, the year 1918 was the ‘Year of Decision’⁶¹ for the Bolsheviks, when Russia was faced with the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, and tried to carry out its revolution inside and outside the Russian territories. For Turkey the ‘Year of Decision’ was 1919. It was in this year that the country decided to resist the Allied occupations of the Ottoman lands, the Allies’ enforcement acts of the coming Treaty of Sèvres, and finally the Greek occupation of Western Turkey. This year was crucial for the Turkish Nationalists in deciding the future of Turkey, organizing the resistance, devising new policies for the future of the collapsing Empire, and finding new friends willing to assist the Nationalist Movement.

The official founding date of the Turkish Nationalist Movement, which led to the Turkish War of Independence, was May 19, 1919: the day Mustafa Kemal arrived

⁶⁰ Evan Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987)

⁶¹ This is the title of the first chapter of Mawdsley’s book, which is about the year, 1918. This is also the title of the third chapter of Uygur Kocabaşoğlu- Metin Berge’s book. ‘1918: Karar Yılı’ in Uygur Kocabaşoğlu- Metin Berge, *Bolşevik İhtilali ve Osmanlılar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006) p. 137

in Samsun from İstanbul, and began organizing Turkish resistance against foreign occupations. From the very first moment of his arrival, it was clear that most Anatolian Turks would follow Mustafa Kemal to reform the empire, but the way to do this was left to Mustafa Kemal and his associates to decide. However, popular support alone was not going to be enough; the lack of necessary weapons made foreign help compulsory for the National resistance of Anatolia.

While Nationalists were searching for outside assistance, the first question was where they could find support. The machinations of the Western Powers as well as small minority groups, Armenians, Kurds, and Greeks on Ottoman lands, together with the difficult social conditions of Anatolia at that time limited the Nationalists' options. America's close relations with the Western Allies and Great Britain also restricted Turkey's options.

The northern neighbor of Turkey, Bolshevik Russia, soon emerged as the best candidate; as one of the first activities of Bolsheviks was to denounce the secret treaties of the Tsarist Government, and declared that Constantinople and the Straits should stay in Turkish hands after they took over power in Russia. The Bolsheviks also favored the withdrawal of Western Powers from Anatolia and the Caucasus.⁶² These common interests dramatically reversed the historical pattern of Russian-Turkish relations. The number of people who favored an American mandate for Anatolia started to decrease, whereas those who looked towards Bolshevik Russia grew in number.

The need for an ally was made more desperate by the Greek invasion of Ottoman lands, which started on May 15, 1919 from Smyrna (İzmir), and sparked the nationalist movements in Anatolia which led the search for aid. The settling of

⁶² Harish Kapur, *Soviet Russia and Asia 1917-1927. A Study of Soviet Policy Towards Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan* (Geneva: Imprimerie Genevoise, Victor Chevalier, 1966) pp. 90-91

Allied troops in Odessa and later in the Crimea, in an effort to help the White Russian Armies, helped promote the Russian need for a friend in the south, and defined the future Bolshevik foreign policy towards Anatolia.

The relations between the Bolsheviks and Nationalists revolved around the axiom of ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend’. Therefore Greeks in Anatolia, sponsored by the British to fight against the Nationalists, became the enemy of Russia, whereas Nationalists fighting against the Greeks, who were backed by the British, became the friend of Russia.⁶³ This was why the Nationalist Movement in Anatolia was welcomed in Moscow as ‘the first Soviet Revolution in Asia.’⁶⁴ There was also the Muslim population of Russia, which needed to be pleased and appeased. Helping Muslim Turkey, in its war against the West, could create a positive image for the Bolsheviks among the Muslims of the former Tsarist lands of Central Asia, and the Muslim world in general.

As soon as Mustafa Kemal came to Samsun, the Turkish National Resistance took form. Secret organizations and congresses started to be formed one after another, each promising to change the future of the Anatolian People. The British High Commissioner in İstanbul, Admiral A. Calthorpe, warned the Ottoman Foreign Minister of some “serious” movements of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) agents, in Sivas and Konya, in July 1919.⁶⁵ These organizations and congresses in Anatolia seemed to threaten the Allied forces in İstanbul. However, Kemal Pasha’s relations with the Bolsheviks were even more threatening to the

⁶³ Nur Bilge Criss, ‘Images of the Early Turkish National Movement (1919-1921)’, in Mustafa Soykut (edt.), *Historical Image of the Turk in Europe: 15th Century to the Present* (İstanbul: off-print, 1998) p.270. A similar phrase was used by Kazım Karabekir during his meeting with Mustafa Kemal in İstanbul on April 7, 1919, when he saw the Greek ships anchoring off İstanbul: ‘It would be natural for us to ally with the enemies of our enemies.’ See Shaw, vol.2, p. 942

⁶⁴ *Izvestia*, April 23, 1919. See Ivar Spector, *The Soviet Union and the Muslim Worlds 1917-1958* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959) p.64

⁶⁵ Criss, ‘Images of the Early Turkish National Movement (1919-1921)’, p. 261

Allies. Emel Akal wrote that as early as August 1919, British intelligence started to be worried about Bolshevik-Nationalist connections. When the British General Hebri's aide-de-camp arrived to Nazilli in August 1919, he asked local National Forces if the National Movement was a Bolshevik Movement and whether the Movement was carried out by and for the CUP.⁶⁶ In other words, British intelligence knew all about the Bolshevik role in the Anatolian Movement.

According to the memoirs of Hüsamettin Ertürk,⁶⁷ Mustafa Kemal held meetings with a Bolshevik delegation in Havza. The head of this delegation was the Russian Colonel Semyon M. Budyenny (also spelled Budennii, Budyonny; later Marshall). Budyenny promised Mustafa Kemal arms and ammunitions, and he asked the Nationalists to fight against their common enemy, the Allies, in return. Budyenny also tried to understand the real aims of the National Movement, and he asked Mustafa Kemal about the regime of his movement. Budyenny's real intention in asking this was of course to see if the Anatolian Movement would support Bolshevism and set a similar, if not the same, system in Turkey. He was pleased with Mustafa Kemal's answer, which was 'State Socialism' that would be established according to Bolshevik principles. Another important point of their meeting was how the Nationalists were going to fight against the common enemy, while according to the Mudros Armistice terms, the Ottoman Army was disarmed and all the stocks of arms and ammunitions were confiscated by the Allies. Budyenny finally made his point, which was that Russia was ready to give all the necessary equipment to the Nationalists if they would do what the Bolsheviks wanted; to abolish the sultanate

⁶⁶ Emel Akal, *Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında Mustafa Kemal, İttihat Terakki ve Bolşevizm* (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2002) P.187

⁶⁷ He was one of the heads of the intelligence service of CUP, *Teskilat-ı Mahsusa* in İstanbul. For detailed information about *Teskilat-ı Mahsusa*'s activities see Polat Safi's unpublished MA thesis. Polat Safi, *The Ottoman special organization-Teskilat-ı Mahsusa: a historical assessment with particular reference to its operations against British occupied Egypt (1914-1916)* (Ankara: Bilkent University, 2006)

and caliphate, and to establish a communist regime in Turkey. Mustafa Kemal was very careful not to promise anything but also not to put relations in a difficult situation with his answer. Kemal said that sultanate was already very weak and almost collapsing, while the caliphate was a very sensitive issue for the Muslim World, which was essential in fighting against Britain; and finally to establish communism was impossible for the time being. It was necessary to explain it to people first. He pointed the situation of the Anatolia at the time, and that what the Colonel wanted was to be done after regaining independence. According to Ertürk, this meeting was very successful for the Nationalists and the Russian delegation left Anatolia, pleased with the new Movement there.⁶⁸

While the Nationalist- Bolshevik relations started to worry the Allies, the question of accepting Bolshevik regime in Anatolia became the main topic of discussion among the Nationalist leaders. As early as June 1919, Mustafa Kemal wrote to Kazım Karabekir from Amasya that the Nationalists decided to accept Bolshevism and Bolshevik aid against Allied occupation. The 3rd paragraph of Mustafa Kemal's letter stated that "...since the Islamic population of Kazan, Orenburg, Kırım accepted Bolshevism, and since it is not against the religion, it was decided that it [Bolshevism] is not an objectionable for the country."⁶⁹ However, the concerns of Kazım Karabekir about such acceptance and his telegram on 17th of June about Bolshevism to Mustafa Kemal caused the Nationalists in Amasya to reconsider

⁶⁸ Samih Nafiz Tansu, *İki Devrin Perde Arkası*, 1969 (İstanbul: Ararat Yayınevi) pp. 344-348. The meeting between Mustafa Kemal and the Bolshevik delegation is referred to only in Hüsametdin Ertürk's memoirs, and a lot of other authors find this meeting very controversial. According to Stefanos Yerasimos such a meeting had happened but not between Mustafa Kemal and Colonel Budyenny, but between a representative of Mustafa Suphi (TCP) and Mustafa Kemal. According to Yerasimos, Budyenny could not be in Anatolia at that time, and there was no evidence of him being in Anatolia, whereas Mustafa Suphi wrote that in May 1919 two ships went to Turkey-one to İstanbul and the other to Anatolia- from Odessa, and Yerasimos assumes that the one for Anatolia might have come to Samsun, and met Mustafa Kemal in Havza later that month. Stefanos Yerasimos, pp.107-108. Emel Akal also agrees with this idea, that Mustafa Kemal met Mustafa Suphi's delegation in Havza. Emel Akal, pp. 185-186.

⁶⁹ Emel Akal, p.185

their decision. According to the new decision of the Nationalists, the acceptance of Bolshevik aid would not include direct occupation or intervention of Bolshevik forces, but merely using the possibility of Bolshevizing Anatolia would serve as a threat against the Allied Powers, if they would not end the occupation.⁷⁰ Even though such a letter from Mustafa Kemal and a reply from Karabekir exist the real intention of Mustafa Kemal was never to accept any foreign interference or domination over Anatolia. Such a letter might have been written to see the other generals' views on accepting direct foreign influence. Mustafa Kemal declared in a circular telegram to Anatolian officials, as early as June, 3, 1919, that 'Turkey must have complete independence, and the majority in the purely national districts of the country shall not be sacrificed in favor of the minority.'⁷¹

İsmet Bey and Hüsrev Bey's letters to Kazım Karabekir at the beginning of June show the debate between the Nationalists about Bolshevizing Anatolia or accepting an American mandate. In his letter on June 1, İsmet Bey summarized the news he got from İstanbul newspapers that the Ottoman Government was in favor of a French-British mandate, while 'a mass that can be expressed as majority (or the majority of people that I know) prefers American mandate...'⁷² On the other hand Hüsrev Bey's letter from Mustafa Kemal's headquarters in Havza, emphasized Bolshevism, and the importance to learn more about it for Anatolia:

...before everything else it is needed to contact the Bolsheviks, to understand their principles...to decide how to apply it [bolshevism]...to get arms, ammunitions and provisions in order to assure a response to the occupying enemies...because we accepted

⁷⁰ Mustafa Kemal's letter to Kazım Karabekir, June 23, 1919. See, Kazım Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz* (İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1969) pp. 56-57. According to Emel Akal, Kazım Karabekir exaggerated the situation in his book to give himself more importance and share in the final decision of Bolshevization. Emel Akal, p.184

⁷¹ Roderic H. Davison, 'Turkish Diplomacy From Mudros to Lausanne', *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923* (USA, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990) p. 209

⁷² İsmet Bey's letter to Kazım Karabekir, June 1, 1919. See in Karabekir, p.58

only Bolshevik essentials...we cannot shelter against British, Greek, Italian bullets by saying that.⁷³

These two letters summarize the sensitive and controversial times of the Nationalists in deciding the future of Anatolia and its peoples, and how to accomplish it. It was a rational policy to start negotiations with the Bolsheviks and to try to get their assistance, but even the Nationalists were not clear about what Bolshevism and good relations with the Bolsheviks meant; would it be only foreign aid-in terms of money, guns, ammunitions- or political and military intervention to Turkey? Direct intervention of the Bolsheviks to Anatolia, which might have ended in Russian occupation, was as dangerous as any other intervention. Besides, there was another issue that of whether to accept the American mandate, which still needed to be resolved, before starting to talk about accepting Bolshevik type regime in Anatolia.

3.2 The American Mandate Issue

In both the Congresses of Erzurum and Sivas (1919), the importance and the need of foreign aid were discussed. At the same time, accepting a foreign mandate in order to maintain the Turkish territories altogether, started to be seen as another solution. The leaders of the Nationalist Movement were divided on their decision of whether it should be the American or Bolshevik mandate to be accepted. The voice of people who thought that Turkey should accept the American mandate was very strong during the Erzurum and Sivas Congresses.⁷⁴ While simultaneously some thought being under the mandate of a foreign state was the only way to survive

⁷³ Hüsrev Bey's letter to Karabekir, June 7, 1919. See in Karabekir, pp.60-61

⁷⁴ Karabekir wrote that İsmet Pasha and Hüsrev Bey were in favor of the American mandate. See, Karabekir, pp.57-58

during the summer of 1919, it was not rational to accept this without fighting first for independence.

It was Talat Pasha's preference to work with America against the Allied powers, especially against England. Supporting America against Britain might have been an important tactic. However, Talat Pasha was obviously not privy to the information that London had suggested to Washington that the USA take over a mandate over Armenia and/or Turkey. Talat Pasha sent a letter on October 8, 1918 to the American President asking him 'to take the responsibility to restore the peace between all the hostile belligerent states...'⁷⁵ He believed that America could be a mediator for the peace which would serve Turkish interests better. Following Talat's policies, it was mostly *Karakol* members who were in favor of the American mandate. Kara Vasıf wrote a letter to Mustafa Kemal during the Erzurum Congress, in which he emphasized that it was the common decision of İstanbul organizations and parties to accept the American mandate.⁷⁶ By underlining that the decision was taken with common support, this letter aimed to put pressure on those who were still not clear about accepting to American mandate, especially Mustafa Kemal.

In her letter to Mustafa Kemal, Halide Edip wrote about the needs of the Turkish nation and the ability of America to fulfill those needs. According to Halide Edip, even if America had no interest or demand to accept a mandate, its ambition to prove its moral superiority to the European Powers, would help to convince them to accept the mandate:

America is not inclined to accept a mandate in the Orient and is anxious to avoid incurring any trouble for herself in America. But, in virtue of their systems and their ideals, the Americans consider themselves superior to European nations and treat this question as one that affects her pride. If any people in any part of the world

⁷⁵ Emel Akal, p.256

⁷⁶ Emel Akal, p.256. Some of the famous people whose names were given in the decision taken in the letter were: Halide Edip, Kara Vasıf, Dr. Esat Pasha, Reşat Hikmet, Cevat (Çobanlı) Pasha.

appeal to America in true sincerity, she takes a pride in showing Europe what an exalted form of administration she is capable of organis[z]ing for the benefit of such a nation.⁷⁷

Halide Edip also mentioned that they (the İstanbul network) were trying to delay the American Commission in İstanbul, until the opening of the Congress at Sivas, and were trying to send an American journalist to attend the Congress.

Some sources claim that Mustafa Kemal was also in favor of the American mandate, but if he really was, that decision would have passed in the Congress very easily, as he was the elected head of the Congress. Quite the contrary, Mustafa Kemal made it very clear in his letter of August 19, 1919 to Ali Fuad (Cebesoy), Commander of the XXth Army Corps, that to accept a mandate would not secure “the unity of the nation, integrity of the country, its independence and sovereignty...” therefore, Kemal continued, “...we prefer that our negotiations and relations with foreign countries shall be conducted in the name of the nation, founded on the proceedings of the Congress.”⁷⁸ Moreover, he asked what would be the benefit for America to take over a mandate for Turkey, if, as Halide Edip and others suggested, the United States would be promoting Turkish independence and interests.

An American Representative in Turkey, Bie C. Ravndal, wrote several letters to the State Department in Washington on the American mandate issue in 1919. On July 31, 1919, Ravndal wrote,

The leaders of the political parties in İstanbul have signed a document that shows them being in favor of the American mandate...this document is not to be published now, but shows the real demands. The Heir apparent is in favor of American mandate; however, the Sultan is reluctant for religious reasons, as he sees all the Americans as missionaries.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Halide Edip's letter to Mustafa Kemal, August 10, 1919. Kemal, *A Speech*, pp.83-87. For the full text of this letter see also in Rauf Orbay, 'Rauf Orbay'ın Hatıraları', *Hatıralar, Vesikalar, Resimlerle Yakın Tarihimiz*, 3:31 (27 September 1962) pp. 144-145

⁷⁸ Kemal, *A Speech*, pp. 91-92

⁷⁹ Ravndal's telegram to the US State Department, on July 31, 1919. For the full text see Orhan Duru, *Amerikan Gizli Belgeleriyle Türkiye'nin Kurtuluş Yılları* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 2001) pp.36-37

In August, Ravndal stated that it was more rational for America “to spend millions on being a mandatory power instead of spending billions on war.” According to Ravndal, Arabic speaking lands should be left and the rest of the Empire should be divided into three mandate districts as: one in İstanbul, one in Anatolia, and one in Armenia.⁸⁰ People in İstanbul, who supposedly had relations with Americans and worked so hard to convince the Congress to accept the mandate, had not realized the real intentions of dividing the country into three separate parts and forming an independent Armenian State. This idea of Ravndal suggests that Mustafa Kemal was justified in not agreeing to an American mandate.

An American journalist, Louis Edgar Browne of the *Chicago Daily News*, who was independent from American government commissions, came to Sivas to follow the Congress. He also met with Mustafa Kemal to learn more about the Nationalists.⁸¹ The journalist was welcomed as the representative of the American Congress, by most of the Nationalists. To clear misunderstandings, Mustafa Kemal mentioned his meeting with Mr. Browne at the Sivas Congress, in which Browne made it very clear that he had no official status whatever and ‘he[L.E.Browne] denied that he said that America will undertake the mandate, but, on the contrary, declares that in his opinion it is probable that she will not accept it.’⁸²

Mr. Browne was received and hosted as a delegate of America, even if he was only a journalist. He was seen as a representative in Anatolia by America, and a negotiator for friendly relations between Turkey and America. He believed in the righteousness of the Nationalist Movement and supported it in his writings later. He believed that if American people could learn more about Anatolian affairs and

⁸⁰ Duru, *Amerikan Gizli Belgeleriyle Türkiye'nin Kurtuluş Yılları*, pp.37-38

⁸¹ Andrew Mango, *Atatürk* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1999) p.247

⁸² *A Speech*, p.92

people, the American Government would be more willing to help the Anatolian Movement. For this purpose, he advised the members of the Sivas Congress to write a letter to the U.S. Senate and ask to send an investigating committee to Anatolia. After his advice was accepted in the Congress, Mr. Browne wrote the letter in English himself.⁸³

The first part of Browne's letter, summarized the proceedings of the Sivas Congress, and its aims. The crucial portion asked the U.S. Congress to

...send a committee, compound of our [Congress] members, to all parts of the Ottoman Empire. This committee, formed by people that have no personal interests and are objective should investigate the state and conditions that actually exist in the Ottoman Empire. Such an investigation should be done before arbitrary decisions are to be taken according to a peace agreement about the future of the population and the land of the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁴

This move bought Mustafa Kemal some time to begin negotiations with Moscow, before a clear decision would be taken about the American mandate issue. He was never convinced, as Mr. Browne also told him, that America was ready to accept a Turkish Mandate. Therefore, the Nationalists needed to seek alternative ways to find foreign help to their movement.

⁸³ Akdes Nimet Kurat, 'Sivas Kongresi ve Amerikalı Gazeteci Edgar Louis Browne', *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi Dün/Bugün/Yarın*, 11:62 (November 1972) p.15. In this article, Prof. Kurat also explains all the details about Mr. Browne's journey to Sivas from İstanbul, how he made his contacts through Halide Edip (Adivar), and his positive image of Anatolian people and movement during his journey. In this article Mr. Browne is written as the builder of the friendly Turkish-American relations through his positive articles in American newspapers. The full article is in *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi Dün/Bugün/Yarın*, 11:62 (November 1972) pp.13-16.

⁸⁴ For the full text please see: Sabahattin Selek, *Anadolu İhtilali*, vol.1 (İstanbul: Kastaş A.Ş. Yayınları, 1987) p.293, in Akdes Nimet Kurat, 'Sivas Kongresi ve Amerikalı Gazeteci Edgar Louis Browne', pp.15-16. Also in Rauf Orbay, 'Rauf Orbay'ın Hatıraları', pp. 147. However, Mustafa Kemal wrote in 1927 that he remembers 'a document to this effect was drawn up and signed by the Chairman of the Committee, but I cannot remember exactly whether it was sent off or not. In any case, I never attached any particular importance to it.' *A Speech Delivered by Mustafa Kemal*, p.100

3.3 Contacts With the Bolsheviks

While the mandate issue was left without any solution, Mustafa Kemal was searching for an alternative way of getting foreign aid as opposed to accepting the American mandate. According to him, working with the Bolsheviks, who were also fighting against the common enemy, might help the Nationalist Movement to fight for Turkish independence without becoming the mandate of an outside power. For this purpose he decided to send a commission, headed by Halil Pasha (Kut),⁸⁵ to Moscow in September 1919, to establish connections with the Bolshevik Government and to get arms and ammunitions and financial aid from them.⁸⁶ He insisted on concrete promises from Russia, before any decisions about a mandate would be taken.

At the same time, the Bolsheviks, eager to learn more about the conditions of the Ottoman Empire and the new movements in Anatolia, sent the General Chief of the Caucasus Army, Comrade Chalva Eliava, to İstanbul, a month or two after the Sivas Congress. In this visit, Eliava contacted the nationalist organizations in İstanbul, and told them that Russia would recognize Turkish national rights, and that the Bolsheviks would start to assist the Turkish Nationalists immediately against the imperialists.⁸⁷ Kazım (Özalp) also stated in his memoirs that a Bolshevik Russian came to Balıkesir from İstanbul to contact the Nationalists. Emrullah Bey, the

⁸⁵ Halil Pasha was Enver Pasha's uncle. He was arrested in İstanbul by the orders of the British High Commissioner, and was sent to Bekirağa Prison. He escaped from prison on August 8-9 1919, with the help of *Karakol*, and went to Sivas in September 1919, from where he would be sent to Russia. Halil Pasha was the Commander of the 6th Ottoman Army during the First World War, and towards the end of the war he was heading some movements in the Caucasus, therefore he knew the region very well. For more information about Halil Pasha, see Taylan Sorgun, *Halil Paşa; İttihat ve Terakki'den Cumhuriyet'e Bitmeyen Savaş*, 2nd edition (İstanbul: Kamer Yayınları, 1997). In his memoirs, Halil Pasha wrote that it was Mustafa Kemal who sent him a letter and asked him to flee and join the national resistance. After receiving this letter Halil Pasha told the *Karakol* Committee that it was time to flee from the prison. Taylan Sorgun, p.280

⁸⁶ Alptekin Müderrisoğlu, *Kurtuluş Savaşının Mali Kaynakları* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1990) p. 535. Also in Kapur, *Soviet Russia and Asia 1917-1927*, p.91

⁸⁷ Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları* (İstanbul: Vatan Neşriyatı, 1955) p.60

Bolshevik translator, told the Nationalists that the Bolsheviks were ready to give guns, money, ammunition, and even send Turkestani soldiers as the Nationalists wished, but only if they would accept the Bolshevik path and announce that the Nationalists shared Bolshevik ideas. However, the Nationalists in Balıkesir were not sure of the real intentions of this Bolshevik emissary and they did not want to make any promises. Therefore, they did not accept this agreement, but told the Bolshevik delegate that there was no hostility towards them and that the Bolsheviks were accepted as friends of the Nationalists. After this meeting, the Bolshevik delegate left Balıkesir by promising to send guns and ammunition secretly to the Nationalists. Later, it was learned that the occupying British authorities had arrested this man on his way back to İstanbul.⁸⁸ Even though there was not much information about the real intentions of this particular Bolshevik emissary and whether he was representing the Bolshevik Government in Russia or not, his effort to contact the Nationalists illustrates the importance of the success of the Nationalist Movement for the Bolsheviks.

Mustafa Kemal's letter to his colleagues on February 5, 1920, where he summarized the situation by the end of the previous year, shows the importance of the connection with the Bolsheviks. In his letter, Kemal Pasha emphasizes the Allied threat in the Caucasus.⁸⁹ By promoting the independence of the Caucasian states - Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan- and using them against the Bolsheviks, the Allies aimed to block Turkish-Bolshevik connections and alliance in the region. At the same time, the Allied powers were sending more troops to the Caucasus, in order to fight against both the Bolsheviks and Turkey. Mustafa Kemal stated that the success

⁸⁸ Kazım Özalp, *Milli Mücadele 1919-1922* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1985) p. 74

⁸⁹ A British warship anchored at Baku and Batumi on December 24, 1918, and started to occupy cities in Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus region. Britain later, on April 12, 1919, occupied Kars, which was aimed to be given to the Armenians. For the British policies in the Caucasus region, see Stanford J. Shaw, vol.2, pp. 919-938

of this Allied policy would be a disaster for Turkey and even the end of the Turkish nation, because cutting Turkish connection from the Caucasus and the Bolshevik region, would lead to the immediate occupation of entire Turkey by the Allies from the Caucasus. Therefore, the priority of the Turkish Army should be the preservation of the communication with the Caucasian states and not letting the Allied blockade succeed. If Allied policy would succeed, then the Nationalists should merge their military strategy with the Bolsheviks against the Caucasian states in order to prevent their alliance with the Allied powers. The Caucasus land blockade was seen as the biggest threat for the future of the Nationalist movement, which was trying to form and strengthen its relations with the Bolsheviks, and receive aid from them. Mustafa Kemal also wrote that if the Allied powers desired Turkish military resistance against the Bolsheviks, then they should meet Turkish demands, starting with the end of their occupation of the non-Arab territories of the Empire.⁹⁰ This message to the generals illustrated the real aims of the Nationalist movement, which was to use any foreign power that could help to regain Turkish independence. It was Allied policies, which pushed the Nationalists towards the Bolsheviks, and not any particular sympathy with Bolshevism.

Doctor Fuad Sabit Bey, an emissary of Kazım Karabekir, joined Halil Pasha's commission on its way to Moscow. It took them several months to get to Moscow and establish contacts. According to the Politburo catalogues, the meeting between Halil Pasha's commission and the Bolsheviks took place on May 15, 1920.⁹¹ The Turkish Commission met the Russian Foreign Commissar Georgy Vasilyevich Chicherin, Chief of the Foreign Ministry Lev Mikhailovich Karakhanyan (Karakhan), and the Commander-in-Chief General Sergei Sergeevich Kámenev.

⁹⁰ *Aydınlık*, 14 November 1999, pp.10-11

⁹¹ Federalnaya arhiva slujba Rossii. *Politburo Agenda of the Meetings, 1919-1952 Catalog* (Moscow), vol.1 (1919-1952, 2000) p. 64

Doctor Fuad sent the results of the Moscow meeting to the commander of the 3rd Division, Rüşti Bey, in his letter on June 3, 1920, where he first mentioned Russian concerns about the aims of the Turkish movement, and whether it might turn against the Bolsheviks in the future. However, the Bolsheviks were convinced to aid the Anatolian group after they were told that the needs of the Turkish movement were very different from those of the European states, and that the Nationalists did not aim towards an expansionist and imperialist policy like the Allied Powers. He also wrote that the Bolsheviks would give one million in gold as money, sixty thousand rifles, (20 thousands Russian, 20 thousands British, and 20 thousands French) and for each rifle three thousand cartridges, 112 cannons, and 10 heavy cannons.⁹²

Halil Pasha was more concise than Doctor Fuad in his letter to Mustafa Kemal, on June 4th, 1920. According to Halil Pasha, the Bolsheviks did not want to publicly announce their aid to Turkey, even if they had decided to help the Turkish movement:

It has been decided to help our War of Independence. However, the aid will not be announced now. It is decided to send two million lira, half of it will be sent as gold, 20 thousand British, 20 thousand Russian and 20 thousand Japanese⁹³ totally sixty thousands rifles for three army corps, and for each rifle two or three thousand cartridges...108 British field guns and...ammunitions, and 12 heavy cannons...British artillery shells (approximately from the 10,5 ones) will be sent.⁹⁴

However, in Halil Pasha's memoirs, it is said that the amount of the aid to the Turkish commission in money was: three million Russian (rubles?) gold, and eight ingots, one kilo each; gold to be melted in Anatolia. On the way back to Anatolia,

⁹² Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, p. 739

⁹³ In Doctor Fuad's letter it was French rifles instead of Japanese.

⁹⁴ Erol Mütercimler, *Kurtuluş Savaşına Denizden Gelen Destek. Sovyetler Birliğinden Alınan Yardımlar. Kuva-yı Milliye Donanması* (İstanbul: Yaprak Yayınları, 1992) p. 108. See also in Karabekir, p.749.

some of the shipment would be lost to the Armenians, who stopped the Turkish delegation on the road, in Nahçıvan.⁹⁵ According to General Veysel (Ünüvar), who was with the Bolsheviks in Nahçıvan for eight months on his way home as a former prisoner of war in First World War, Halil Pasha received financial aid of two million (rubles?) gold.⁹⁶ Halil Pasha had no more difficulties after this, and could turn safely back to Doğu Beyazıt and he delivered the aid to Kazım Bey (Orbay). On the other hand, according to Alptekin Müderrisoğlu, Halil Pasha brought ingots of gold worth of one hundred thousand lira.⁹⁷ Mehmet Perinçek, on the other hand, did not give an amount but mentioned that the gold was accounted in Erzurum in September 8, and 200 kilograms of the gold was taken for the Eastern Army while the rest was sent to Ankara.⁹⁸ At the meantime, Turkey and Russia agreed in sending some of the assistance through Black Sea from Russian ports to Trabzon. Nur Bilge Criss's grandfather's memoirs notes that Halil Pasha sent some of the money (gold) in olive oil cans (*teneke*) by fishing boats (*taka*) to Trabzon, since he was more astute than relying on one route, though we don't know how much.⁹⁹ In his book, Erol Mütercimler wrote that from September 1920 transportation of ammunitions and money from the Russian Ports to Trabzon started.¹⁰⁰ However, Emrullah Nutku wrote that first transportation from the Black Sea started in September 1920 carrying

⁹⁵ Taylan Sorgun, *Halil Paşa; İttihat ve Terakki'den Cumhuriyet'e Bitmeyen Savaş* (İstanbul: Kamer Yayınları, 1997) p.331. The amount of the lost gold is not clear but it is said that the gold was carried with horse cars, and seven of the horse cars were left in the place that the delegation was attacked, and one of them was found latter with some missing amount. *Sorgun*, pp.334-335

⁹⁶ Veysel Ünüvar, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Bolşevkilerle Sekiz Ay* (İstanbul: Göçebe Yayınları, 1997) p.61

⁹⁷ Alptekin Müderrisoğlu, *Kurtuluş Savaşı'nın Mali Kaynakları*, vol.2 (İstanbul: Kastaş Yayınları, 1988) p.640

⁹⁸ Mehmet Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetler'le Görüşmeleri; Sovyet Arşiv Belgeleriyle* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2005) p.59

⁹⁹ From my conversation with Nur Bilge Criss.

¹⁰⁰ Mütercimler, *Kurtuluş Savaşına Denizden Gelen Destek. Sovyetler Birliğinden Alınan Yardımlar. Kuva-yı Milliye Donanması*, p. 116

the ammunitions and money that Yusuf Kemal sent from Russia.¹⁰¹ Therefore it is plausible that Halil Pasha brought more money and some of it was sent to Trabzon through the Black Sea.

Even if there are some differences between Doctor Fuad's and Halil Pasha's letters, they were mostly referring to the same thing. However, the most important revelation in their letters was that some CUP members intended to go to countries like India, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkestan to expand the Bolshevik Revolution. In Cemal Pasha's letter to Mustafa Kemal from Moscow on June 3rd 1920, he wrote about his future plans about going to Afghanistan to help establish a Bolshevik-style Revolution in Afghanistan.¹⁰² This increased Kemal Pasha's concerns about the activities of CUP members, who were far from helping the Anatolian movement.

3.4 Establishment of the Grand National Assembly

In existing circumstances, there will then be no obstacle, so far as I can see, to the Bolsheviks' obtaining full control of the Caspian, to their seizing Baku and Enzeli, overrunning Georgia and Northern Persia, and, what is especially important from the point of view of peace in Turkey, joining forces with Mustafa Kemal, whom the occupation of Constantinople will probably decide definitely to ally himself with Bolshevism. [Vice-Admiral Sir John M. de Robeck, British High Commissioner in Constantinople, 18 March 1920.]¹⁰³

The biggest step of the Nationalists for the future of Anatolia was the opening of the Grand National Assembly in Ankara on 23rd of April 1920, which declared itself the only representative of Anatolia. When the British Intelligence Officer,

¹⁰¹ Emrullah Nutku, 'İstiklal Savaşında Denizciler: İlk Deniz Nakliyatı', *Hatıralar, Vesikalar, Resimlerle Yakın Tarihimiz*, vol.2, pp.186-187

¹⁰² For Cemal Pasha's letter see Karabekir, pp. 744-746

¹⁰³ Bülent Gökay, *A Clash of Empires: Turkey Between Russian Bolshevism and British Imperialism 1918-1923* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997) p.63

Captain John Bennett went to the parliament in İstanbul and arrested Kara Vasıf and Rauf Bey on March 16, 1920, which led the Parliament to dissolve itself in protest of the arrests on March 18th¹⁰⁴, it became clear that the capital of the Ottoman Empire could no longer be the representative of the free will of the country. Davison put it as: 'If the Greek landing of the 1919 had created the nationalist movement in Turkey, the British occupation of Istanbul converted the movement into an effective separate movement.'¹⁰⁵

Even if the British aim was to put pressure and punish activities of the Nationalists and secret organizations, they helped opening the road for the Ankara Government; since it would not be legal and would create power struggles to have two parliaments at the same time. Therefore, the dissolution of the parliament in İstanbul increased the support of the Nation towards the Ankara Government.

The importance of communication with the Bolsheviks and the need for Bolshevik aid for the coming war were crucial for the Ankara Government. For this purpose, Mustafa Kemal sent a letter to Lenin three days after the opening of the National Assembly, in which Kemal proposed the establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Lenin's government, and formally asked for Soviet aid to Anatolia in its struggle against the Western Imperialists.¹⁰⁶ Chicherin replied to Mustafa Kemal's letter on June 2, 1920, where in the name of 'the people of the Federal Republic of Workers and Peasants', Chicherin accepted Grand National Assembly's foreign policy principles and declared that the Bolsheviks were happy to start diplomatic relations with Ankara. The Soviet reply also illustrated the importance of the Turkish Movement for the Soviet Government.

¹⁰⁴ Criss, *Istanbul Under Allied Occupation 1918-1923*, p.65

¹⁰⁵ Davison, 'Turkish Diplomacy From Mudros to Lausanne', *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923*, p. 212

¹⁰⁶ Xenia Joukoff Eudin & Robert C. North, *Soviet Russia and the East: A Documentary Survey* (Stanford University Press, California, 1957) pp. 106-107

In order to bring about amicable relations and enduring friendship between Turkey and Russia, the Soviet Government proposes the immediate establishment of diplomatic and consular representations...The Soviet Government is following with the greatest interest the heroic struggle which the Turkish people are waging for their independence and in the present difficult days of Turkey it is happy to establish a firm foundation for the friendship which is to unite the peoples of Turkey and Russia.¹⁰⁷

As the British High Commissioner in Istanbul, Robeck, pointed out the day Istanbul Parliament dissolved itself, the more pressure was put on Turkey the more they turned towards Bolshevik Russia. Despite the fact that Russia was seen as a long time enemy for Turks, any help and relations were welcomed in times of Nationalistic War. It was so ironic that Turkey, a country that had tried in the past to please the West in order to take their support against the Russian Empire, was now trying to form its first diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia.

3.5 Socialist Movements in Turkey After the Nationalist Takeover

The first half of 1920 not only saw the dissolution of the İstanbul parliament (16 March 1920), and the establishment of the Grand National Assembly in Ankara (23 April 1920), but also faced a power struggle between the Ankara Government and newly emerging socialist parties.

3.5.1 Baku-Turkish Committee / The Turkish Communist Party

Before discussing the Baku Committee, one needs to examine the origins of the Turkish Communist Party, which was formed in 1918, by the Communist

¹⁰⁷ 'Reply from Chicherin to Mustafa Kemal's Note Proposing the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations.' For the full text see: Degras, pp.187-188

International.¹⁰⁸ Some of the Ottoman prisoners of war, who had been captured by Russians during the First World War, became Bolsheviks after the revolution in Russia. They went to the Turkic-Muslim parts of Russia and started to get organized. Mustafa Suphi helped organize the First Turkish Left Socialist Congress in Moscow, on July 25, 1918. He also helped form Turkish Communist organizations in cities such as Moscow, Kazan, Samara, Saratov, Rezan, and Astrakhan. Later that year, Mustafa Suphi joined the First Muslim Communist Congress in Moscow, and became the head of the Turkish Section of the Bureau of the Eastern Nations Center. He continued his activities in the Crimea and Odessa until he went to Turkestan in 1919, where he formed the Turkish Red Army in Tashkent. With the Soviet invasion of Azerbaijan, Suphi went to Baku and took over the Turkish Communist Party.¹⁰⁹

During and after the First World War, many CUP and intelligence members were active in Turkistan regions, especially in Baku. Those people, together with the commissions sent by Anatolia to start negotiations with the Bolsheviks-Halil Pasha, Dr. Fuat, Baha Sait- worked to Bolshevize Azerbaijan against Denikin's army. As Karabekir wrote in his memoirs, first there were two groups in Azerbaijan: Halil Pasha, Küçük Talat, Baha Sait, Komiser Tahsin in one group, and Dr. Fuat Sabit, Yüzbaşı Yakup, Süleyman Efendi in the other. Despite their differences, they started to work together against British policies in Azerbaijan, forming the Baku-Turkish Committee (Turkish Communist Party-TCP). Baku-Turkish Committee aimed to cleanse the region of British influence, and ultimately to form an independent Azeri state that would work with the Bolsheviks-to Bolshevize the region- and to form contacts between the Bolsheviks and Nationalists in Anatolia. Even if the Turkish Party in Baku was not in favor of the entrance of the Red Army into Azerbaijan, it

¹⁰⁸ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları*, pp.35-36

¹⁰⁹ Tunçay, Vol 1, pp.99-100

was decided to let the Red Army in, to be able to fight against the western powers that prevented the Committee to succeed.¹¹⁰ The Turkish Communist Party sent a letter to Karabekir on April 10, 1920, in which explained the recent situation in the region and asked the Nationalists to contact the committee rather than persons from now on in their relations with the region and the Bolsheviks.¹¹¹

After the entrance of the Red Army to Baku, April 29, 1920, the influence of the former CUP members over the Baku-Turkish Committee declined, because Bolsheviks brought Mustafa Suphi to Baku. Mustafa Suphi took over the committee and fired some of the Unionists from the party.¹¹² The Turkish Communist Party¹¹³ had opened new branches other than Baku in İstanbul, Zonguldak, Trabzon, Rize, Nahçıvan, Northern Caucasus, and in the Black Sea regions of Anatolia. They even organized a Turkish Red Army in Baku, formed of the former Ottoman prisoners of war in Russia.¹¹⁴ The Turkish Communist Party started to seek direct relations with the Ankara Government, to mediate the negotiations between the Bolsheviks and Nationalists, to Bolshevize Anatolia, and to form a Turkish Communist vassal State of Moscow. For this purpose, Mustafa Suphi sent Süleyman Sami to meet Mustafa Kemal, and to explain their aims to Ankara.¹¹⁵ Interestingly though, as soon as Süleyman Sami arrived in Anatolia, he declared that he was entering into the Nationalists' service, that he was ready to receive orders from Ankara, and that the Turkish Communist Party did not know that he was a Unionist.

¹¹⁰ Karabekir, pp.573-75

¹¹¹ Karabekir, pp.576-78

¹¹² Emel Akal, pp.292-293

¹¹³ For detailed activities of TCP under Suphi, see Yücel Demirel, *TKP MK 1920-1921: Dönüş Belgeleri-1* (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2004)

¹¹⁴ Tunçay, vol.1, p.100. Turkish Communist Party accepts September 10, 1920 as its official date of establishment. This was the day Turkish delegates of the First Eastern Nations Assembly met and had a separate meeting. That day Mustafa Suphi was elected as the head of the TCP, and it was decided to change the center of the organization to Anatolia. See Tunçay, p.102

¹¹⁵ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları*, p.36

In mid-August, Mustafa Kemal and Süleyman Sami had a meeting, in which Mustafa Kemal asked about Russian and TCP relations and whether Russia would help the Nationalists. Süleyman Sami responded that their relations with Russia were very good and they were following and getting information about Russian and Turkish relations. He continued,

The RSFSR had decided to help destroy our common enemy, that is imperialists, and to save oppressed nations. However, Anatolia being so far from communism may create some suspicions in Russia about Turkey. In order to take definite and extensive help, Turkey needs to open its doors to communist ideas. No doubt that our proletarian nation will save itself from the oppressors with acculturation and education.¹¹⁶

Mustafa Kemal stressed the fact that the Committee of Defense of the Rights of Rumelia and Anatolia (*Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*) and the Grand National Assembly, which was elected by them, were based on the Soviet systems, and for this reason, there was not a need for outside organizations to define and interfere in Anatolian relations. The only official representative was the Grand National Assembly.¹¹⁷

This meeting was important for both sides; Mustafa Kemal expressed the importance of the Anatolian movement and that there was only one official representative of it, the Grand National Assembly. The need for Bolshevik help and support to Anatolia was inevitable, but the unification of the separate Turkish organizations to push for independence was also very important. This meeting and the letter from Mustafa Suphi, which Süleyman Sami brought, proved to the Nationalists that TCP was going to intervene in Ankara's business. However, it became clear that Ankara also had some agents inside the TCP, to be used against the party itself when it would be necessary.

¹¹⁶ Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetler'le Görüşmeleri: Sovyet Arşiv Belgeleriyle*, p.249. For the full meeting see document 1 (Belge 1)

¹¹⁷ For the full text of this meeting, see in Perinçek, pp. 248-250

2.5.2 *Yeşil Ordu (The Green Army)*

The spring of 1920 witnessed some very important Unionist events. With the dissolution of the parliament in İstanbul and the *Karakol* organization, some of the Unionists had to flee to Ankara and joined the Ankara Government. However, some of them were so accustomed to organize secretly that in the spring of 1920, underground organizations were formed by the former CUP members in Anatolia. *Yeşil Ordu* was one of these secret organizations. The formation and the real aims of this organization are still subject of controversy, but as Mete Tunçay wrote in his book, the official *Yeşil Ordu* was formed in opposition to the conservative people of İstanbul, who accused the National Movement of being Bolshevik and therefore infidel. As opposed to this argument, some generals, soldiers, and people in Anatolia decided to join *Yeşil Ordu* to point that Bolshevism respected Islam, and therefore relations with Bolshevik Russia were harmless and necessary.¹¹⁸

According to Tokat deputy Nazım Bey, *Yeşil Ordu* was formed to fight against Western Imperialism, and was formed by 14 members of the Grand National Assembly, which proves that it was not unknown by the GNA and Mustafa Kemal.¹¹⁹ Members of the Central Committee were, Şeyh Servet (Deputy of Bursa), Dr. Adnan (Minister of Health), Hakkı Behiç (Minister of the Economy), Eyüp Sabri (Deputy of Eskişehir), Yunus Nadi (Deputy of İzmir), Hüsrev Sami (Deputy of Eskişehir), İbrahim Süreyya (Deputy of Saruhan), Reşit (Çerkez Ethem's brother, Deputy of Saruhan), Sırrı (Deputy of İzmit), Mustafa (Deputy of Kozan), Hamdi Namık (Deputy of İzmit), Muhittin Baha (Deputy of Bursa), and Nazım Bey (Deputy

¹¹⁸ Tunçay, vol.1, pp.84-85

¹¹⁹ Tansu, *İki Devrin Perde Arkası*, p.545. In the regulations document of the Green Army, it is written that there are 25 members in the Central Committee. For the full text of the regulations see Tunçay, *Türkiye'de SolAkımlar-I (1908-1925) Belgeler*, vol.2, pp. 207-210.

of Tokat).¹²⁰ The head of this organization was known to be Hakkı Behiç, and Emel Akal assumes that he was the leader; on the other hand Mete Tunçay claims that this is false, and the real leader was the Trabzon Deputy Nazım Bey.¹²¹ Even if some generals-like İsmet İnönü-wrote that Mustafa Kemal did not know and was not involved in *Yeşil Ordu*,¹²² the list above and the general consensus shows that he knew about it and at the beginning he even supported it.

The Leaders of the Green Army constituted the ‘Populist Group’ (*Halk Zümresi*) as early as April 1920, in order to represent their organization in the Assembly, where the organization was supported by 85 deputies. Very influential names, deputies from the parliament started to publish communist newspapers and their propaganda started to be effective around Nationalists. This was creating divisions in the parliament, but Mustafa Kemal allowed his very trusted editor, Yunus Nadi, who also joined the ‘Populist Group’ to publish the ‘Populist Program’ (*Halkçılık Programı*). The ‘Populist Program’ was ‘a protest against imperialism and capitalism that the Assembly later published as a preface to its first organic statutes’ (the first constitution of the Grand National Assembly-*Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kanunu*- in 1921).¹²³

There was even a theory that the formation of the Green Army was supposed to impress Moscow in that Anatolia was also in favor of a revolution based on the Russian model. Considering the times, Russia put pressure on Anatolia to accept Bolshevik principles and to set communist parties, TCP sent delegates to expand their programs to Anatolia when the İstanbul Parliament was dissolved, and the Greeks were advancing further inside of Anatolia. Forming and supporting a group

¹²⁰ Tunçay, vol.1, p.85

¹²¹ Tunçay, vol.1, p.85. Akal gives a quote from Celal Bayar, in which he claimed that the Green Army was formed by Hakkı Behiç. Akal, p.318

¹²² Akal, p.314

¹²³ Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey*, pp.74-75

named Green Army was not the worst thing happening in Anatolia at that time. On the contrary, such policies were favored by Russia, whose help was essential for the Nationalists.

At the same time, the Green Army remained as a secret organization, and the head of the Grand National Assembly, Mustafa Kemal, distanced himself from this organization. This was another move of caution not to increase Western fears of the Ankara Government of being Bolsheviks themselves. However, Ankara wanted to use the threat of Bolshevism as a trump card against Allied policies. Such a difference between the head of the Nationalists and supporters of the Green Army aimed to convince the Allies that if they worked with the Nationalists, they may prevent Ankara from falling to Bolshevism.

Later on, Çerkez Ethem¹²⁴ joined the Green Army organization, and this added an important number of armed men (partisan units) to the organization. This increase in members, arms and power of the organization caused concern to Mustafa Kemal, and he tried to cede its actions and shut it down. However, his first attempt to close down the Green Army's activities was unsuccessful, and the organization shifted to Eskişehir, the town that was under Ethem's control.¹²⁵ In time, the Green Army started to be perceived as being loyal to Enver Pasha, who was expected to enter Anatolia from the East to save it from the Allies. At the same time Kazım Karabekir assigned a small military unit, which was sent to Ankara from Erzurum under the leadership of Cafer Bey, as a unit of the Green Army. This was written up in the

¹²⁴ Çerkez Ethem was born in 1885 in Bandırma. He was one of the most important and powerful figures of the early period of the National Resistance Movement. Later he started to act separately and revolted against the formation of the Regular Army. With his guerrilla movement, *Kuva-yi Seyyare*, Ethem opposed to the Ankara Government and started to work against them in 1920. Towards the end of 1920, beginning of 1921, he and his forces were followed by the Turkish forces-mainly İsmet (İnönü)'s forces in the First İnönü Battle along with the Greek Army. Later Ethem joined the Greek Forces and ended in Greece. For detailed information about Çerkez Ethem, see Ahmet Efe, *Çerkes Ethem*, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: Bengi Kitap Yayın, 2007)

¹²⁵ Mete Tunçay, vol.1, p.85

press as Enver's Green Army was about to enter Anatolia.¹²⁶ However, the relation between the Green Army and the Unionists in the Caucasus was not only a legend made up by the people or the press, it was real. In his letter to Rauf Bey after his return from Malta, Hakkı Behiç wrote that they formed a secret organization in order to steer the country into Bolshevism, which he believed was a common decision of himself and Mustafa Kemal. The name of this organization was the Green Army, and that they were in contact with their friends in Turkestan, Iran, and Azerbaijan to take their advice and to assimilate outer organizations with the Anatolian one.¹²⁷ No doubt that these "friends" of Hakkı Behiç were those Unionists in the Caucasus in general, and Enver Pasha in particular.

All these controversial activities of the Green Army, together with the direct interference of the Bolsheviks in Turkish communist organizations, including the Green Army,¹²⁸ were fatal. The Green Army was completely dissolved in the Fall of 1920, and its members shifted to the other communist organizations and parties in Ankara, while Çerkez Ethem was to take refuge with the Greek Army and ended up in Greece.

As mentioned before, the year 1920 was crucial in the sense that it was the most active year of the secret and official communist organizations in Anatolia. Since these organizations had similar names, and were formed by similar members, and by the same Bolshevik agents-Sherif Manatov, Ziyetullah Nushirvan (Nushirvanov) - they are often confused. To avoid such mistakes these parties are differentiated according to their establishment dates: **I-** The Turkish Communist Party (the secret

¹²⁶ Akal, pp. 320-324

¹²⁷ Tunçay, vol.2. pp. 232-233

¹²⁸ Stalin's protégé, Sherif Manatov, is known to have come to Anatolia toward the end of May 1920, and he operated for the Bolsheviks in Anatolia. With easy access to Mustafa Kemal and the other leaders, Manatov even tried to convert Anatolian leaders to adopt the Soviet System. When these communist organizations were banned, Manatov was arrested, but with the interference of the Soviet Embassy in Ankara, he was deported.

one, known to be established in Ankara)-14 July 1920; **II-** The Turkish Communist Party (the one that was taken over by Mustafa Suphi in Baku)-10 September 1920; **III-** The Turkish Communist Party (official one, Mustafa Kemal ordered to establish this party in Ankara)-18 September 1920; **IV-** The Peoples Communist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası*, official, established in İstanbul)-7 December 1920.¹²⁹

3.5.3 *The (Secret) Turkish Communist Party (Hafî Türkiye Komünist Partisi)*

At the beginning of summer 1920, Anatolia was under the siege of communist ideas. Several Turkish Communist organizations had been formed in Turkestan, and they were very active in exporting their ideologies and organizations to Turkey. In Baku, former CUP members were active in convincing former Ottoman Generals in the region that the only way for independent Anatolia was to Bolshevize it. Mustafa Suphi was working very hard to influence Anatolia, and to send his men there, while Russia itself was the biggest player in exporting its regime to Anatolia.

Under the influence of this ideological siege, the secret Turkish Communist Party (TCP) was established in July 1920. The general consensus is that this party was the Anatolian branch of Mustafa Suphi's TCP, and was formed by Sherif Manatov- the first official Soviet representative to Turkey in presence of the Grand National Assembly.¹³⁰ Fethi Tevetoğlu quotes from Prof. Jäschke that 'the agent Bashkir Sherif Manatov, established the Turkish Communist Party secretly in

¹²⁹ Fethi Tevetoğlu, *Türkiye'de Sosyalist ve Komünist Faaliyetler (1910-1960)* (Ankara: Ayyıldız, 1967) p.186. Even if the establishment dates of the Secret Turkish Communist Party and the Peoples Communist Party of Turkey are different, they were the same organization. The party was established secretly on 14th of July and continued its activities secretly until December 7th, when it was recognized and allowed to act. Fethi Tevetoğlu, p.190

¹³⁰ Tunçay, vol 1, p.94

Ankara, on 14 July 1920.’¹³¹ Other famous members of the party were; Major Salih (Hacıoğlu), Şeyh Kudbettin, Ziyetullah Nushirvanov, and some members of the ‘Populist Group’ (Nazım Bey’s-Deputy of Tokat-group).¹³²

In the Party’s manifesto, it was written that the TCP neither had relations with the British servant, the İstanbul Government, nor the Kuva-yı Milliye Government, established by Unionists, because its communist claims in reality represented deceptive nationalism.¹³³ The Party’s program demanded the total transformation of Turkish society as follows: ‘the introduction of a pyramidal system of “Soviets” to administer the country in the name of the proletariat ...the abolition of private property, the nationalization of all commercial and industrial enterprises...the imposition of heavy taxes...with the abolition of money as a medium of exchange.’¹³⁴ Taken together, all these articles would eliminate Mustafa Kemal and the National Assembly’s power in Anatolia. Ankara was trying to defeat the invading Greeks, and trying to be recognized as an independent state in the eyes of the Allies, whereas these communist organizations were publishing programs that would only weaken the war effort.

The increase of interference of the Bolshevik and outside organizations in Anatolian politics; the determination and independence of their activities from the Ankara Government, greatly concerned Mustafa Kemal. It was obvious to him that having communist organizations and parties was crucial for Bolshevik-Nationalist relations, but they were also damaging Ankara’s power. On the other hand, a communist party under his control might satisfy Russia, while decreasing intervention of the outsiders. For this purpose, Mustafa Kemal ordered the

¹³¹ Tevetoğlu, *Türkiye’de Sosyalist ve Komünist Faaliyetler (1910-1960)*, pp.188-189

¹³² Tunçay, vol 1, p.94

¹³³ Tunçay, vol 1, p.97

¹³⁴ Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey*, p.72

establishment of an (official) Turkish Communist Party, while deporting Sheriv Manatov because of his activities. The establishment of the Turkish Communist Party, made the secret organizations to take new measures to differentiate themselves. The secret Turkish Communist Party thus restyled itself on December 7, 1920, as the Peoples Communist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası*).

3.5.4 The Peoples Communist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası*)

Some of the founders of *Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası* were: Deputy of Tokat Nazım Bey¹³⁵, Şeyh Servet (Deputy of Bursa), Mehmet Şükrü (Deputy of Afyonkarahisar), Baytar Binbaşı Salih Hacıoğlu, and Ziyetullah Nushirvanov.¹³⁶ This time the founders and members of the party tried to develop a program which better reflected the reality and conditions of the country. They also emphasized the aptitude of Islam towards socialism, in order to win support from the Green Army and the Populist Group (*Halk Zümresi*) members, and the masses. However, this party was not very successful. It was closed soon after its establishment, in the general suppression of socialist activities in Anatolia following the Çerkez Ethem rebellion.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Nur Bilge Criss points in her book that Fehime Sultan, daughter of Sultan Murad V, discovered that Damat Ferid Pasha was trying to ‘induce dissension between the people and the Nationalist forces...’ according to Fehime Sultan Nazım Bey, Deputy of Tokat in the Grand National Assembly, was Damat Ferit’s agent ‘who was paid 4,500 LT to start an opposition party in Ankara, which he did (the self-proclaimed People’s Socialist Party), the *Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası*.’ The same Nazım Bey was arrested in 1921 for establishing a secret communist party, and for forcibly trying to take over the government. However, later the same year he and his friends were pardoned and let free. Criss, *Istanbul Under Allied Occupation 1918-1923*, p.121

¹³⁶ Tunçay, vol 1, p.97

¹³⁷ Tunçay, vol 1, pp.97-98

3.5.5 *The (Official) Turkish Communist Party (Resmi Türkiye Komünist Partisi)*

The official Turkish Communist Party was established on September 18, 1920, by Mustafa Kemal. At the time the Greeks were advancing east, while Turkish troops had not yet had any serious success stopping them. The parliament in İstanbul, was dissolved but the Allies had not yet recognized the National Grand Assembly, and power struggles between former CUP leaders and members were not yet cleared up. In addition to all this, Russia was trying to impose a communist system on Anatolia; such a system was very popular among some of the deputies, generals, partisan groups-that helped the Ankara Government, as well as former Unionists.

To suppress all communist activities and groups was impossible, because most of them were acting secretly and had strong connections with Bolsheviks abroad. Such a policy would damage Bolshevik-Nationalist relations very badly at a critical time during the Greek advance. Meanwhile, the Turkish delegation in the Kremlin had difficulty in negotiation with the Bolsheviks, and negotiations had even broken down at the end of August 1920, because of the disagreement over the Armenian question.

Since Mustafa Kemal ordered the establishment of the official TCP, the party had followed his policies, rather than blindly supporting Bolshevism. *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, which was the official newspaper of the Ankara Government, and Yunus Nadi's *Anadolu'da Yeni Gün* newspaper, which was the official paper of TCP, reflected the real policies of Ankara on Bolshevism.

At the present moment, the program of communist ideas is not only harmful, but even ruinous, for our country. When a soldier realizes that there does not have to be a fatherland, he will not go out to defend it; hearing that there does not have to be hatred of nations, he will not go out and fight the Greeks...It is first of all necessary

to become acquainted with Soviet Russia...For what concerns the present moment, in the interest of the country *we must counteract all the agitators and propagandists who have come on their own initiative, without consent of our ruling organs*. [Only] Turks can introduce Bolshevism, and Bolshevism can be introduced [only] from above.¹³⁸

Both newspapers emphasized that there was not need of a bloody revolution in Turkey, as in Soviet Russia, and they also used Islam to convince masses that socialism was close to their religion. Kemal's TCP was established to eliminate other communist organizations like the Green Army and the Populist Group, and to unite and control them under one organization. It was successful in recruiting Çerkez Ethem, and tried to establish connections with the Unionists abroad. Therefore, the party shifted from Mustafa Kemal's control in time, and finally was dissolved following Çerkez Ethem's rebellion.¹³⁹

To understand the real aims in establishing an official Communist Party in Anatolia, we have to evaluate other events between Russia and Turkey. Since Mustafa Kemal entered Samsun the Nationalist Resistance to the invasion of Turkey developed, and the importance of Russian aid became the main concern of the Nationalists. They sent several commissions to Moscow to have direct connections and to negotiate for help.

¹³⁸ *Anadolu'da Yeni Gün*, Nov.18, 1920 in Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey*, p.82

¹³⁹ Tunçay, vol.1, p.94

CHAPTER 4

BEGINNING OF AN ALLIANCE

The second half of 1920 and the beginning of 1921 were very complicated and crucial times for Anatolia. Relations between the Powers were changing so dramatically that it was very difficult to decide and proceed on one policy. The British arrests of members of the Parliament in İstanbul (March 16th 1920) increased public support for Ankara. The British withdrawal from the Caucasus in August 1919¹⁴⁰ left Ankara with more decision-making responsibility for the region, which led to problems with Russia. At the same time communist activities started to increase in Anatolia, and these became more radical.

Soviet Russia started to become more influential in Anatolia through its agents, and the Turkish Communist Party, headed by Suphi, also started to act against Ankara's interests. Suphi made it very clear in his letter to Turkish Nationalists that Moscow was going to deal with Anatolia through the TCP, therefore he implied that Ankara needed to have good relations with and support the TCP. This created a power struggle in Ankara at the time when unification was crucial in fighting against foreign invaders. The TCP intervention was therefore not needed and of course was

¹⁴⁰ British warships helped evacuate White Armies from the Black Sea region several times in 1920, and left the region completely by June 1920

not welcomed by Kemalists. In the second half of 1920, in order to unify power in the Grand National Assembly, some parties and organizations were shut down- like the Green Army, (secret) Turkish Communist Party, the Peoples Communist Party of Turkey- and some radical people were arrested-like Deputy of Tokat, Nazım Bey- and some Russian agents, who were acting against Ankara's interests- like Sherif Manatov, were deported. Shutting down communist organizations in Anatolia sent a strong signal to Bolshevik Russia, which never officially demanded that Turkey become a communist state, but always worked towards this objective.

The British withdrawal from the Caucasus left Ankara and the Bolsheviks alone to decide the future of the region, with their troops facing each other directly. Until the British withdrawal from the Caucasus, defeating the British blockade, giving independence to the Caucasian States, and securing the land road between Russia and Anatolia in the region were common policies between Ankara and Moscow. Therefore, Turkish Nationalists even supported the Bolshevik take over of the region at the beginning, because that was against British interests. Mustafa Kemal offered to help the Bolsheviks secure Azerbaijan and include that country inside the Soviet State, while helping to Sovietize Georgia. He had also promised to fight together with Russia to share Armenia, in his letter asking to start mutual relations, in April 26th 1920.¹⁴¹ However, with the complete British withdrawal, the region was now going to become a battlefield for Turkish and Bolshevik policies and later, almost, for their troops.

Moscow never sought to secure the independence of the Caucasian States. The region started to fall under Bolshevik rule very quickly after the British withdrawal (Baku had already fallen under Bolshevik rule in April 1920), and Kemalists needed

¹⁴¹ Arsen Avagyan, 'Kemalistler, İttihatçılar ve Bolşevikler: Kurtuluş Savaşında Ankara-Sovyet İlişkileri', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 159 (March 2007) p. 17

to act fast in order to secure Anatolia's borders and get the lands that were given back to Turkey according to Brest Litovsk- a treaty that Bolshevik Russia had agreed in terms and also signed. But it was not 1918 anymore, and Turkish Nationalists realized that the Bolsheviks, whom they had supported to gain power in the Caucasus region, were not going to cooperate with Ankara's interests in the region easily. Meanwhile, the Greeks were advancing further in Anatolia, and the Allied powers were forcing the Sultan to sign the disastrous Treaty of Sèvres. Could Ankara have turned its back on Moscow at this time? No matter what the real aims of the Bolsheviks were, Nationalists had to continue their relations with the Soviet Government and even improve them. Therefore the second half of 1920 and the beginning of 1921 was a time of continued efforts to improve relations with Russia, while trying to prevent Moscow's political and military intervention in Ankara's policies.

4.1 Bekir Sami's Commission to Moscow and the Bolsheviks

Halil Pasha's successful mission to Russia had convinced the Ankara Government of the importance of direct connections between Ankara and Moscow. For this purpose, the National Assembly decided to send an Embassy to Moscow and start official relations. This decision was the very first made by the newly formed Government of the Grand National Assembly, which underlines the importance of the Bolshevik aid to the Nationalists. The head of the delegation was Bekir Sami (Kunduh) Bey,¹⁴² the Foreign Minister, together with the company of Yusuf Kemal

¹⁴² Bekir Sami was a Circassian, who was experienced in a wide range of civil service posts, and important provincial governorships from the time of Abdulhamid II on.

(Tengirşek), the Minister of the Economy, and Osman Bey, Deputy of Rize.¹⁴³ The very same day the commission left Ankara for Moscow, May 11, 1920, the İstanbul Government, *Bâb-ı âli*, received the Sèvres Treaty.¹⁴⁴ On the same day, the Grand National Assembly was praising the Bolshevik Government by reading aloud the declaration to the Moslems of Russia and the East, which had been announced by the Council of People's Commissars on December 3, 1917.¹⁴⁵ The more pressure the Allies put on the İstanbul Government, the more they pushed Kemal and the Nationalists into the Bolsheviks' arms. Moscow was also pleased by these events and was working for closer relations with the Nationalists against the West.

Bekir Sami and his commission arrived in Moscow on the 19th of July 1920, and meetings between the two sides started immediately. However, by the time the Turkish Commission began to work in Moscow, things were already changing dramatically in the Caucasus, and Bolshevik policies were beginning to concern the Nationalists. Russia signed a treaty with Armenia on August 10, 1920¹⁴⁶, which recognized Armenian control over territories that had belonged to Turkey. According to this recognition, Nahçıvan and the land road between Russia and Anatolia would fall under Armenian control. This event became the main topic of the Turkish and Russian delegates in Moscow for a couple of months, because Russia would not accept Turkish jurisdiction over those territories, and demanded that Turks

¹⁴³ Yusuf Kemal Tengirşenk, 'Milli Mücadelede Ruslarla İlk Temasımız', *Hatıralar, Vesikalar, Resimlerle Yakın Tarihimiz*, 43:4 (20 December 1962) p.98

¹⁴⁴ Erol Mütercimler, *Kurtuluş Savaşına Denizden Gelen Destek* (İstanbul: Yaprak Yayınları, 1992) p.108. See also Mehmet Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetler'le Görüşmeleri: Sovyet Arşiv Belgeleriyle* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2005) p. 51

¹⁴⁵ Salahi R. Sonyel, *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Dış Politika*, vol. II (Ankara : Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991) p.7

¹⁴⁶ The same day, Ottoman Government in İstanbul signed the Treaty of Sèvres, which was never accepted by the Ankara Government and remained as an ineffectual document.

cede the territory to Armenia.¹⁴⁷ According to Yusuf Kemal, in one of the meetings between Chicherin and Bekir Sami, Chicherin demanded Van and Bitlis for the Armenians, and he also told Bekir Sami that the Bolsheviks had left both of the two roads between Russia and Anatolia under Armenian control. In another meeting, Chicherin showed Russian newspaper reports to the Turkish delegation, which announced that Russia had not only left control of the roads passing through Armenia to the Armenians, but they had also placed the Şahtahtı Road under Armenian control. After this meeting, the Turkish delegation demanded to see Lenin and talk to him directly, since meetings with Chicherin were not achieving any success. Lenin, on the other hand, as Yusuf Kemal wrote, was sorry- or seemed as if he was- to have signed an agreement with Armenia.¹⁴⁸

Finally, towards the end of August 1920, a draft Treaty was agreed between Ankara and Moscow, and Yusuf Kemal returned to Ankara to inform the Grand National Assembly about the decided articles. In his letter to the Grand National Assembly from Trabzon, Yusuf Kemal wrote that he was bringing one million gold rubles¹⁴⁹ and one railway car full of Mauser rifles with him in the train, and some more weaponry was added on the way in Rostov. Yusuf Kemal also wrote that eight more railway cars full of Mauser rifles and mitrailleuses (machine guns) were ready at the station in Moscow as well. Another important point in his letter was that Karahan told the Turkish delegation that the Bolsheviks had opened a credit in the

¹⁴⁷ Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, *Yeni Türkiye Devletinin Harici Siyaseti* (İstanbul: Bürhaneddin Matbaası, 1935) p. 64. See also Roderic H. Davison, 'Turkish Diplomacy From Mudros to Lausanne', *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923* (USA, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990) p.215

¹⁴⁸ Yusuf Kemal Tengirşenk, 'Milli Mücadelede Ruslarla İlk Temasımız', pp. 98-99

¹⁴⁹ Ali Fuat Cebesoy wrote that the amount was worth of 'half a million Turkish liras' at that time. Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları*, p. 82. According to Sean McMeekin's conversion in his forthcoming book, *History's Greatest Heist: The Looting and Laundering of Russia's National Patrimony by the Bolsheviks, 1917-1922*, two gold rubles were worth of one dollar at that time, and his conversion of a dollar to today is one to a hundred. Therefore, 1million gold rubles would be 500 thousand dollars at the time, and 500.000 dollars is 50.000.000 dollars today.

Turkish account in Italy, which had some amount of one to three million Italian liras.¹⁵⁰

4.2 The Armenian Handicap

While meetings between the Turkish Delegation and the Moscow Governments had difficulties, Turkish-Armenian relations got even worse. As British troops evacuated Batum in July 1920, Ankara sent an ultimatum to Armenia to cede the city, which had been given back to Turkey in a plebiscite after Brest-Litovsk. Azerbaijan was already under Soviet domination by then, and it was clear that Turkey would not get the territory that officially belonged to it through diplomatic talks. At the same time, seeing the shift of power in the region towards the Bolsheviks, Armenia tried to obtain Bolshevik help against Turkey. The Armenian Social Democratic Party, 'GNCh.AK', sent a letter to Lenin, on September 10, 1920, stating that Karabekir and Kemal were "pursuing a policy of genocide"¹⁵¹, similar to that of the CUP in 1915, with the aim of total extermination of the Armenian nation." With this letter, the Armenians demanded protection from the Soviet Government against Turkey.¹⁵² On the other hand, since the beginning of 1920, Karabekir, as the Commander of the Eastern Army, was sending letters to the Armenian Government to stop massacring the Muslim people inside its borders. Karabekir pointed out that Armenian massacre of Muslims had increased since February of the same year.

¹⁵⁰ Yusuf Kemal Tengirşek, *Vatan Hizmetinde* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1981) pp.174-175.

¹⁵¹ I quoted from the author's book. Bülent Gökay probably meant 'massacres' since the word 'genocide' was found and started to be used in 1948.

¹⁵² Bülent Gökay, *A Clash of Empires: Turkey Between Russian Bolshevism and British Imperialism 1918-1923* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997) p. 85

These types of protest letters were also sent to the Armenian Government from Ankara, by Mustafa Kemal.¹⁵³

Since the situation with the Armenians did not improve, Karabekir sent several letters to Ankara demanding action against Armenia starting from April, which proposal was, however, not accepted in consideration of Nationalist-Bolshevik relations. The Soviet Government, fearing a war between Anatolia and Armenians, sent a letter to Kemal Pasha on June 3, advising that the parties settle their conflicts in a peaceful manner, and offering to be a mediator between Anatolia and Armenia. This offer was accepted by Ankara, and Mustafa Kemal replied to the Soviet letter on June 20, informing Moscow that Ankara had postponed its operation due to the Soviet proposal, while also complaining that Armenians continued hostilities and the Soviets were doing nothing to prevent this.¹⁵⁴ Receiving these kinds of letters from Soviet Russia, Ankara did not want to act independently in the Caucasus; as such action might ruin Bolshevik-Nationalist relations. It was more rational to wait and see if the Bolsheviks would do anything to settle Armenian-Turkish conflicts peacefully.

At the same time in summer 1920, local civilian leaders in Erzurum were concerned about Bolshevik activities in the Caucasus, and they needed to be assured by Karabekir that the GNA did not have any intention of becoming Bolshevik. Despite such concerns about Moscow's design on the region, Ankara needed to maintain contacts with the Bolsheviks and Soviet material aid in its war of Independence now more than ever, and so took pains to maintain friendly relations. "The officer thus sent from the XV. Army Corps, Karabekir's Army Corps, removed

¹⁵³ See Karabekir's letter to General Staff of the Armenian Republic on March 22, 1920. Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, pp. 523-525.

¹⁵⁴ Harish Kapur, *Soviet Russia and Asia 1917-1927* (Geneva: Imprimerie Genevoise, 1966) p. 96. See also Veysel Ünüvar, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Bolşeviklerle Sekiz Ay 1920-1921* (İstanbul: Göçebe Yayınları, 1997) pp.33-34.

their Ottoman style gold braid epaulets, sensitive to the hostility of the Bolshevik side to such decorations.” After this, Karabekir redesigned the epaulets himself and informed Ankara of it.¹⁵⁵ In his book, Veysel Ünüvar, who was a general staff officer of the 11th Division of the Turkish Army in the Caucasus at that time, also states that they all took off their ranks, and sewed red stars on their kalpaks because the Bolsheviks did not want soldiers to have different epaulets, ranks and insignia on their uniforms. Ünüvar also explains that when they met Halil Pasha, he told them to use Bolshevik signs as well. Couple of days later, the 11th Division received its new name and seal from its headquarters, from Kazım Karabekir, as; *İnkılab-ı Türkiye Şark Cephesi Kızıl Müfrezesi* (Turkish Revolutionary Red Army of the Eastern Front).¹⁵⁶

While Karabekir was trying to reassure the locals of GNA’s real intentions dealing with the Bolsheviks, he also needed to control the increase of Bolshevism around locals and certain organizations in Erzurum. Karabekir received several commissions in his headquarters making cases for a Bolshevik GNA. Therefore, he issued an order to his officers on August 3, in which he forbade ‘low level contacts’ with the Baku Turkish Communist Party members. Later that month, Mustafa Suphi asked and obtained permission to visit the GNA in Ankara.¹⁵⁷ However, at the same time, Karabekir rejoiced over the Bolshevik victory over Poland, and said that after the victory the Bolsheviks will assist Anatolia in its fight even more, and the Allied powers, which had ‘the sole hope’ for Poland, now would face ‘...a great sensation’

¹⁵⁵ H.B.Paksoy, ‘U.S. and Bolshevik Relations with the TBMM Government: The First Contacts. 1919-1921’, *The Journal of Sophia Asian Studies*, 12(1994) pp. 226-227

¹⁵⁶ Ünüvar, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Bolşeviklerle Sekiz Ay 1920-1921*, pp. 55, 57. Mete Tunçay wrote an introduction to this book and he points that even if both Ünüvar and Karabekir stated in their books that some Turkish soldiers interacted with Bolshevism and this was not a problem, the 11th Division was abolished and its soldiers were scattered, when the division was shifted to the Western Front.

¹⁵⁷ Paksoy, ‘U.S. and Bolshevik Relations with the TBMM Government: The First Contacts. 1919-1921’, p. 227

in their camp.¹⁵⁸ Turkish Nationalists were facing both fear and necessity for the Bolsheviks, but it did not stop them to continue their friendly relations with Russia against the Allied camp.

The material aid from Soviet Russia to Anatolia, which was very crucial for Turkish Nationalists, was facilitated by the railway line between Erzurum in Turkey and Baku in Soviet Azerbaijan. The greater part of this line, however, was controlled by the Armenians. Finally, seeing that Armenia was going to fall under the Bolshevik regime, which would mean that the Bolsheviks neighbored Turkey, and realizing that Bolsheviks would not support Turkish interests over the region, Ankara let Karabekir undertake operations against Armenia on September 20, 1920.¹⁵⁹

In order to clear the land road between Anatolia and Russia, Kazım Karabekir attacked Armenian positions from Erzurum in late September 1920, and pushed the Armenians back in six weeks from Kars to Alexandropol. The Turkish advance threatened the Bolsheviks, who started to pressure the Armenian government to make an immediate peace, which would stop further Turkish advance. Finally the treaty of Alexandropol (*Gümri*), Ankara's first international treaty, was signed by Kazım Karabekir on December 2, 1920, between Turkey and Armenia. According to this treaty, Kars was returned to Turkish control, and the land road to Russia from Anatolia was opened again.¹⁶⁰

However, at the same time, Bolshevik forces, invited in by the Armenians, entered Armenian territory and declared that a pro-Soviet Government was formed in Erivan shortly after the Treaty of Alexandropol was signed. The new Soviet Government of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia repudiated the Treaty

¹⁵⁸ *The New York Times*, 17 August 1920.

¹⁵⁹ Mustafa Kemal's letter to Kazım Karabekir, on September 20, 1920. See Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, pp. 830-831

¹⁶⁰ Kapur, *Soviet Russia and Asia 1917-1927*, pp.97-99. See also Davison, 'Turkish Diplomacy From Mudros to Lausanne', *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History*, p. 216

between Ankara and Armenia claiming that Russia was not part in the negotiations. Moscow also demanded a Turkish withdrawal from Armenia, but Ankara insisted to have the Dashnak Government as a negotiator. Even though, Turkey was reluctant in taking the Armenian Government as a representative in this situation and was happy with the agreement, the Treaty of Alexandropol was never ratified, therefore was not legitimate.¹⁶¹

Only after the settlement of the Armenian issue- even though it was left to be negotiated later between Moscow and Ankara- could Russian-Turkish negotiations continue in Moscow, but mutual trust now began to unravel. Ankara realized once again that it needed to play between the Allied powers and the Bolsheviks, but increasingly Turkish leaders were reluctant to take one side or the other, since neither party was trustworthy.

While Ankara started its operation to Armenia, the Third International organized the First Congress of the Peoples' of the East in Baku. This congress aimed to spread the Bolshevik Revolution around the Eastern Nations, and to find solutions for the occupied nations in their fight against the 'imperialist powers.' Enver Pasha also attended the Baku Congress of September 1, 1920, together with other representatives and delegations of the Muslim people of Tsarist Russia, as well as Mustafa Suphi, and some delegations from the GNA. In his report, Enver Pasha said that 'it was the Defense of Gallipoli that helped the Bolshevik Revolution to happen in Russia, and that he was always an anti-imperialist...if the Soviet regime was established at that time [during the Great War], he would support it by then...'

¹⁶¹ Stanford J. Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. 3, part. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basınevi, 2000) pp. 1505-1506.

Enver also promised to work with the Third International to spread the Bolshevik regime in the Eastern Nations.¹⁶²

According to Eudin and North, the Soviet policy of that time was to form a Soviet federation in the whole Caucasian region by including Anatolian Turkey as well. They gave Pavlovich's statement as an evidence of Moscow's real aims:

...a Soviet coup in Armenia will serve as the first step toward the creation of a Soviet federation in the Caucasus, i.e., of Georgia, Armenia, and Anatolian Turkey, a federation which, on its part, will serve as the starting point around which there will soon be united other Eastern states.¹⁶³

The trust between Ankara and Moscow was damaged from both sides. Moscow was concerned about a possible Turkish rapprochement with the Allied Powers, and feared that Kemal was negotiating with the Sultan, whereas Ankara was concerned about the shift of Russian policies in the Caucasian region and Eastern Anatolia, and communist activities directed towards Anatolia. This is why the Ankara Government decided to deal with the Armenians by using force. However, at the same time, the continuation of friendly relations with the Bolshevik Government was the main goal for Ankara. Therefore Mustafa Kemal appointed Ali Fuat Pasha (Cebesoy) as Ankara's Ambassador to Moscow, and sent a message to the Moscow government emphasizing commonalities between their peoples. He ended his message thus: "the high moral authority enjoyed by the R.S.F.S.R. among the toilers of Europe, and the love of the Muslim world for the Turkish people will bring the unification of the masses of the world against the imperialists of the West."¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Selçuk Gürsoy, *Enver Paşa'nın Sürgünü* (İstanbul, Salyangoz Yayınları, 2007) pp.23-24

¹⁶³ Eudin & North, *Soviet Russia and the East: A Documentary Survey*, p. 109

¹⁶⁴ Eudin & North, *Soviet Russia and the East: A Documentary Survey* p. 110

4.3 Same Aim Different Ideologies

While the Turkish delegations were trying to build relations with Russia in Moscow, Soviet Russia also sent a delegation to Anatolia to learn more about Ankara and to have direct information from the capital of the Nationalist Movement. This Soviet delegation was originally going to be headed by Comrade Shalva Zurabovich Eliava, however, because of his illness it was headed by Y.Y.Upmal, who came to Anatolia together with Halil Pasha's delegation.

The Bolshevik delegation arrived in Ankara in early October 1920, and the Russian Embassy was opened as the first foreign Embassy of the newly emerging Turkish State, on the third anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, on November 9th 1920.¹⁶⁵ The opening of the Soviet Embassy in Ankara was a very big step in direct line communications between Ankara and Moscow, and it was also an important message to the West in reconsidering their relations with Ankara.

This direct communications between the Russian emissaries and Mustafa Kemal made it easier for the Nationalists to see the real aims of the Bolsheviks towards Anatolia. Mustafa Kemal and Upmal had several meetings where they talked openly about domestic and international politics of Turkey. On January 1st, while celebrating the New Year, Kemal and Upmal had a long talk about the Turkish Army, politics, and communist parties in Turkey.

According to Upmal, it was impossible to fight without ideology; therefore soldiers should be able to join political parties. As opposed to him, Kemal saw a big danger in allowing soldiers join parties, because it would lead to diversity in the army, which could destroy the fighting ability of the army. "When one day one general gives an order to a person from another party, that person can disobey it by

¹⁶⁵ Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetler'le Görüşmeleri; Sovyet Arşiv Belgeleriyle*, p. 70

claiming that it was against his ideas.” Anatolia was fighting for its independence, and the only ideology for the Army had to be ‘Independence’. What Upmal meant by allowing politics in the army was of course letting communist ideology to grow around the soldiers, and to let the Peoples Communist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası*) to work freely around the soldiers. Kemal pointed that the generals were already active in politics, but letting certain ideologies in the army was a different subject. He openly said that certain people and groups were claiming to work for communism, but in reality were working only against the GNA. If they continued doing this, then he would prohibit those people from entering parties.¹⁶⁶ It was clear that Upmal was interested only in encouraging communist activities around the army, which at the time needed to concentrate on fighting. More interesting was that Upmal was openly supporting the Peoples Communist Party of Turkey, which was working among the soldiers, spreading communism.

In their last meeting, Upmal and Kemal were once again on different sides of almost every topic they were talking about. The first topic of this meeting was Çerkez Ethem, who had recently escaped to the Greeks and started to work with them. Interestingly in a Russian archival document from this time, it was written in parenthesis that “the official government publication about Ethem’s taking the Greek side and working with Allies is a lie and provocation.”¹⁶⁷

On another front, Mustafa Kemal was criticizing the Russian Embassy and its delegates of supporting and even protecting some communist people and organizations that had been arrested and banned by the Ankara Government because of their illegal actions. He emphasized to Upmal that communist activity against the

¹⁶⁶ January 1, 1921. See in Perinçek, *Atatürk’ün Sovyetler’le Görüşmeleri; Sovyet Arşiv Belgeleriyle*, pp. 252-258

¹⁶⁷ There are some notes in parenthesis in the documents about the Upmal-Kemal’s meeting. Those parentheses were added by the Russians. That sentence was added in parenthesis on Mustafa Kemal’s words about Ethem. Perinçek, p.265

GNA, and against the war effort, was increasing. Therefore, if certain organizations were banned it was for good reason. Upmal, on the other hand, was supporting the *THİF* and its members that were arrested, and claiming that they were much more real communists with real ideology than the official TCP, and that banning them gave the wrong signal to Moscow about Ankara's real aims. When the topic came to Mustafa Suphi in Erzurum, Kemal told Upmal that there were some people rising against him, and the government had to evacuate Suphi and his team out of the town for their safety, and that they would be sent back to Russia.¹⁶⁸ Kemal pointed that Suphi was respected very much in Russia, and that even Lenin was asking about Suphi's ideas on Eastern Nations. However, most of the people in Anatolia were against Suphi, and Kemal would not act against the wishes of his people. The most important part of the conversation was where Kemal underlined Ankara's policies against the communist organizations: He told Upmal that there wasn't a general anti-communist policy in Anatolia, but that the government was acting only against communists who were interfering with Ankara's policies. "It is needed to be understood that even Communism is our job in Turkey. No country can put conditions to us to become communist. This is our right."¹⁶⁹

It is interesting that Kemal and Upmal were talking so openly to each other in their meetings. Even though Moscow's material aid was essential for Ankara, Nationalists made it very clear that they were not going to let Russia intervene in their business, while Bolsheviks made it clear that they were going to support communists inside and outside of Anatolia against Ankara. This openness might also be a result of the new options for both sides: Ankara was invited to the London Conference together with the İstanbul Government, whereas Russia was trying to

¹⁶⁸ This meeting, between Kemal and Upmal, took place on 24th January of 1921, four days before the murder of Mustafa Suphi and his team in the Black Sea.

¹⁶⁹ Mehmet Perinçek, pp.271-273.

sign a trade agreement with Britain. However, all these showed Ankara's leaders that they needed to take more serious actions against outside communist organizations. Mustafa Suphi and 14 of his friends, all high ranking members of the Baku TCP, never made it back to Russia.¹⁷⁰

The day after the murder of 15 TCP members, Kemal had a meeting with Comrade Eshba¹⁷¹ on January 29, 1921, when the deaths were not publicly known yet. This time, Mustafa Kemal was praising the Bolshevik Revolution and trying to explain his own revolution to Comrade Eshba, who had come to learn more about the Ankara Government. In this meeting, Mustafa Kemal talked about the position of the 'despotic sultan' who led to the disaster of the Ottoman Empire, and he openly said that with the new constitution -constitution of January 20, 1921, *Teşkilatı Esasiye Kanunu*- of the Grand National Assembly, Anatolia was going towards becoming a republic. At the same time, Kemal emphasized that Turkey had a very similar regime to the Bolsheviks: the only difference was that all the administrative organs were formed by the people in Anatolia, whereas it was done by the representatives of the smaller organs electing the larger ones in Russia. While Kemal assured Comrade Eshba about acting together with Russia against the Allies in the Conference in England, he complained about Bolshevik actions in the Caucasus. Mustafa Kemal emphasized that Bolshevik attitudes created mistrust between people. For example, reports of the Bolshevik invasion of Baku mentioned that many people had been assassinated without any reason, and that the Bolsheviks had massacred Muslims in

¹⁷⁰ Even though Ankara refused being responsible of the deaths of Suphi and 14 members of TCP, it was the Ankara Government who sent invitations to Suphi to come to Ankara, and never let him to proceed with his trip. Karabekir did not let Suphi and his friends to go to Ankara from Kars according to the order from Ankara, and therefore the group had to go to Trabzon, where they were going to pass the Black Sea and reach Russia. None of them survived. See Burhan Tuğsavul, *Mustafa Suphi ve Yoldaşları* (İstanbul: TÜSTAV, 2004) pp. 34, 40, 42, 44.

¹⁷¹ Comrade Eshba was a Communist, who established a Bolshevik military-revolutionary committee in Sokhumi, in summer 1918 and later established the Communist Party of Abkhazia in March 1921. Eshba demanded the direct integration of Abkhazia to Russia and the Communist Party of Abkhazia became a part of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Turkestan. Kemal also said that he couldn't understand why the Bolsheviks would prevent an agreement between Turkey and Armenia, by claiming that Armenia was a communist state, while Turkish troops defeated Armenia.¹⁷² Mustafa Kemal knew that this meeting was made only to learn more about the Nationalists and if they were or would be working with the West, and betray the Bolsheviks. Especially after the invitation of the Turkish Nationalists to the London Conference, Bolshevik concerns about possible alliances between Ankara and Allied Powers had increased. For this reason, Kemal was careful not to make any promises that may restrict him in the future, and not to give wrong signals to the Bolsheviks, which may create more problems in relations with them.

4.4 Success at Home Success Abroad

Towards the end of 1920, an unexpected change happened in Greece. The young King Alexander's sudden death-bitten by a monkey- led to peoples' demands for the return of Constantine, Alexander's father, who wanted his country to stay neutral in the Great War, and for this reason had been deposed by the Allies in 1917. Even though Great Britain kept announcing that the financial assistance to Greece would be cut off if Constantine returned to the throne, the importance of Greece for the preservation of the British interests over the Turkish lands, was clear. "A Greater Greece would safeguard Britain's interests in the eastern Mediterranean, and was determined to salvage the essence of the treaty of Sèvres."¹⁷³

¹⁷² For the full Turkish and Russian texts of the document of the meeting between Mustafa Kemal and Comrade Eshba in Ankara, in 29 January 1921, see *Aydınlık* 7 November 1999, Pp. 16-17-18

¹⁷³ Andrew Mango, *Ataturk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (New York: The Overlook Press, 1999) p. 306

Ankara's success and the advance on the Western Front put pressure on the Allies in their Turkish policies. General İsmet (İnönü)'s victory over the Greeks-First İnönü Battle (6-11 January 1921) along with the defeat of French-Armenian forces in Maraş in mid-1920- gave relief to the Ankara Government, while strengthening its influence both inside and outside of the nation. The power of the Grand National Assembly was assured with this victory, and it proved to be the only credible representative of the nation, which forced not only the Bolshevik Russia but also some European states to make agreements with it. In order to restore their goals, the Allied Powers organized a conference, which would bring the representatives of the Allies, Greece, and Turkey together in London in February 1921.

Ankara was improving its position in both domestic and international affairs more every day, and this gave concern to the occupying powers. It became obvious that denying the recognition of the GNA was not working for the Allies. By the end of 1920, Turkish troops were advancing in the Caucasus, having already defeated the Armenians; borders were changing and treaties were signed one after another; and the Ankara-Moscow communication was proceeding from several channels. Even though the İstanbul Government had accepted and signed the Sèvres Treaty, Ankara had never accepted it and was not going to obey it; the GNA was suppressing internal opposition, was unifying and increasing its power in Anatolia; and most important, Turkish troops were increasingly successful against the Greek army. Therefore, the Allies saw a need of doing something to stem the further advance of the Ankara Government. Seeing the influence of Mustafa Kemal over the Turkish nation, the Allied States, this time, decided to invite Kemal or his representatives to the conference, together with the Ottoman delegation.

Even though this conference was all about forcing Turkey, this time also Ankara, to sign the Sèvres by making little changes in the treaty, inviting Ankara was an important step because it officially meant that Allies recognized the Ankara Government for the first time. As important as the Allied invitation of the Ankara Government, was the attitude of the İstanbul delegation towards the Ankara delegation in London is also worth mentioning. The head of the İstanbul delegation, Grand Vizier Tevfik Pasha, gave the word to the Ankara delegation, when it was given to him, by saying that ‘the actual right of speaking should be on the real Deputies of the State, therefore it should be given to the Ankara Delegation.’¹⁷⁴ This gesture was tantamount to official recognition of the Ankara Government by İstanbul, and this also led other states to recognize Ankara as a negotiator and representative of the Turkish State. Both France and Italy wanted to make secret agreements with the Ankara Delegation in London, and Bekir Sami signed agreements with both countries, which were not agreed to by the GNA and Mustafa Kemal, who did not want to restrict himself by agreeing to certain rights for France and Italy.

4.5 The Moscow Treaty

The Turkish Delegation in Moscow made a draft treaty between the two governments, but the negotiations were not completed, and Yusuf Kemal returned to Ankara because the Bolsheviks were postponing to sign a Treaty of Friendship. Even though Ali Fuat was assigned as the Turkish ambassador and sent to Moscow, it was not clear when an agreement would be signed between Russia and Turkey. In

¹⁷⁴ Sabahattin Selek, *Anadolu İhtilali*, vol.2 (İstanbul: Kastaş Yayınları, 1987) p.571

the meantime, the British started to be more threatened by a possible Bolshevik-Turkish alliance, and realized that they had to do something to prevent this. They let İstanbul send a mission to Kemal Pasha, which left the city on December 3, 1920. Even though this mission was not allowed to enter Ankara, it was enough to scare the Bolsheviks about a possible Ankara-İstanbul agreement, and the Soviet Government asked Ankara to send its delegation immediately back to Moscow to re-open the diplomatic negotiations.¹⁷⁵ As a result, Yusuf Kemal and his commission left Ankara for Moscow, and joined Ali Fuat on the way, and reached Moscow on February 19, 1921.

The negotiations between the Ankara delegation and the Bolshevik Government in Moscow were threatened once again over the issue of control in Batum. This city had long been disputed between the Ottoman and the Russian Empires. It was left to Russia after the 1877-78 war between the two empires, until it was given back to the Ottoman Empire according to Brest-Litovsk. The Ottoman Empire had advanced on the city in April 1918, but could not keep it after the British moved into the region and took control of Batum as well. However, with the withdrawal of British troops from the region in July 1920, Batum-just like the rest of the Caucasus-became another object of contention between the Bolsheviks and the Nationalists.

While Moscow was still trying to declare the Treaty of Gümrü null and void and demanding a Turkish withdrawal from Soviet Armenia, the Red Army started to cross the Georgian borders. At the beginning of 1921, the Bolsheviks started to advance towards Georgia and Batum, which had been controlled by the Mensheviks until then. In view of this, the Georgian emissary to Ankara asked Turkey to take

¹⁷⁵ Kapur, *Soviet Russia and Asia 1917-1927*, p. 103

over Ahıska, Ahılkelek, and Batum to secure those lands on March 8th.¹⁷⁶ After this demand, Ankara sent an ultimatum to Georgia and demanded the territory. Georgia accepted Ankara's demands, and Kazım Karabekir sent his troops to the city on March 11, 1921, a week before the arrival of the Red Army troops. A possible clash between the Nationalists and Bolshevik troops was barely prevented by the Turkish and Russian commissions in Moscow, Yusuf Kemal and Chicherin.¹⁷⁷ Finally, the 'Friendship and Brotherhood' Treaty of Moscow was signed between the Soviet Russia and the Grand National Assembly on May 16, 1921.¹⁷⁸

According to the Moscow Treaty, Russia accepted the Turkish borders as they had been declared in the *Misak-ı Milli* (National Oath), which included Kars and Ardahan inside Turkey, whereas Ankara agreed to turn Batum back to Georgia. Russia gave up its demand on capitulations, and agreed to postpone a decision on the future of the Straits. Ankara requested a hundred and fifty million gold rubles from Moscow and a lot of weaponry, however the Bolsheviks promised to give Ankara only ten million gold rubles, twenty thousand guns, two hundred mitrailleuses, and a certain amount of cannon and military supplies.¹⁷⁹

According to Yusuf Kemal, Russia promised to give ten million gold rubles¹⁸⁰ yearly for the Turkey's economic development for numerous years.¹⁸¹ And as the

¹⁷⁶ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları*, p. 151

¹⁷⁷ Davison, 'Turkish Diplomacy From Mudros to Lausanne', *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923*, pp. 218-219

¹⁷⁸ The real date of the Moscow Treaty, according to Yusuf Kemal, was 22 or 23 of March 1921. However, Yusuf Kemal demanded to put March 16th, the anniversary of the official occupation of İstanbul by the Allied troops '...the saddest memory of my [Yusuf Kemal] life that I will never forget', to imply the importance of this Treaty, which turned one of the biggest enemy of Turkey (Russia) into a friend. Yusuf Kemal Tengirşek, 'Milli Mücadelede Ruslarla İlk Temasımız', p.99. However, in the author's book, *Vatan Hizmetinde*, the date is written very clearly as 18th of March. *Vatan Hizmetinde*, pp. 217-218.

¹⁷⁹ Tengirşek, *Vatan Hizmetinde*, pp. 215-216

¹⁸⁰ This amount would be 5 million dollars at the time, which is 500.000.000 dollars today. Sean McMeekin, *History's Greatest Heist: The Looting and Laundering of Russia's National Patrimony by the Bolsheviks, 1917-1922* (forthcoming in November 2007)

first installment, they gave five hundred thousand gold rubles to Yusuf Kemal, of which he gave a hundred thousand of it to the Turkish attaché, Saffet (Arıkan), to buy necessary equipments from Germany (like planes), and brought the remaining four hundred thousand to Kars.¹⁸²

As Stefanos Yerasimos pointed in his book, the Moscow Treaty was the first treaty that was not imposed by force to one another during the history of these two countries.¹⁸³ With the Moscow Agreement, *Misak-ı Milli* and the Grand National Assembly were recognized for the first time in an agreement by another country, and the Eastern borders were clearly defined diplomatically, which meant that Turkish divisions could be shifted to the Western Front. Ankara had an official ally, which goal it had worked for almost two years to achieve, and could use its alliance with Bolshevik Russia as a bigger political threat against the Allied Powers. Moreover, the Turkish Army would be reinforced with new guns and ammunitions, while Ankara now had the money to finance its war of independence.

4.6 The Aftermath of the Friendship Treaty

Nationalist-Bolshevik relations were set with the Moscow Treaty for a short period of time. Small scale fights in Batum were solved after the agreement, and Turkish troops started to withdraw from Ahıska and Ahılkelek, after Russian protests. On March 28th, both sides agreed and signed the protocol about the

¹⁸¹ Russia later claimed that this amount (ten millions gold rubles) was the total aid that was agreed, not the yearly amount. As it will be mentioned later this amount was the total money that Russia gave to Turkey from 1920 to 1922.

¹⁸² Tengirşenk, 'Milli Mücadelede Ruslarla İlk Temasımız', p.100. According to Sabahattin Selek, one hundred thousand gold rubles were given to Saffet (Arıkan) and Nuri (Conker), who supposedly lost the whole money on the stock exchange in Germany, while they were trying to increase the amount. Selek, *Anadolu İhtilali*, vol.1, p.137

¹⁸³ Stefanos Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri* (İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1979) p.325

exchange of prisoners of war, in Moscow. Later Moscow asked Ankara about Bekir Sami's agreements in the London Conference, and was relieved to learn that the GNA did not accept those agreements, and had replaced Bekir Sami with Yusuf Kemal.¹⁸⁴ The Moscow Treaty also comforted Ankara about the danger posed by Bolshevism, so that people, who had been arrested a couple of months ago because of their secret communist activities, were let free.¹⁸⁵

However, Gümrü was not going to be an easy solution. Russia needed this city to be able to control the whole of Armenia, which at the time was facing some revolts against the Red Army, and Russian troops could be sent through the railway road passing from Gümrü. The Armenian Government demanded, from Karabekir, that the city be emptied of Turkish troops, while Karabekir demanded Armenia to recognize the Moscow Treaty. At the same time, Moscow also demanded a Turkish withdrawal from the city, and stopped the delivery of the gold and ammunition to Turkey on the road, while the General of the 11th Red Army Division, A.I. Hekker, wrote to Karabekir that he would not be responsible for a possible clash between the Red Army and the Turkish Army in Gümrü, because if Turkish soldiers would not leave the city, Hekker would send in his soldiers too. This small scale crisis was solved with the decision of the Turkish delegation-on the way back to Anatolia, in Baku- that the Caucasian Representatives of Soviet Government and representatives of the Caucasian States would have separate agreements in one Conference with Ankara, which was decided to be held in Kars, while at the same time Ankara decided to withdraw from the city.¹⁸⁶

As it was the main goal of both Ankara and Moscow, the Friendship Agreement alarmed the Allied Powers and America. In a report of February 25, 1921, the

¹⁸⁴ Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, p.326

¹⁸⁵ Selek, *Anadolu İhtilali*, vol.2, p.614

¹⁸⁶ Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, pp. 328-331

Bolshevik activities were accused to be less energetic in Constantinople than in Europe, while it was pointed that Bolsheviks were more active in Angora and Asia Minor, and that they were in alliance with Kemal's forces. However, Bolshevism was not seen as a threat at the time.¹⁸⁷ On the other hand, after the Moscow Treaty, Bristol's report on June 29, 1921, informed the Department of State of the British arrests of about 75 Bolsheviks 'due to the belief that the Bolsheviks here have been furnishing money to the local revolutionary elements with a view to causing a local Turkish revolution which would act in conjunction with Kemalist movement in Asia Minor.'¹⁸⁸ Couple of days after, in June 2, 1921, another report informed the Secretary of State about the arrival of a Bolshevik Mission to the Angora Government on June 10th, with 'a considerable sum of gold rubles for propaganda purposes in Anatolia.'¹⁸⁹ It is clear that the relaxed air about Bolshevik activities in Anatolia changed dramatically after the Moscow Treaty and Ankara-Moscow relations started to be observed more carefully by the Allies and United States.

Although the Moscow Treaty marked a turning point in Nationalist-Bolshevik relations, it was not enough to create full trust between the two governments. Regarding the Caucasus, what both sides demanded from each other was much more than they could give. The Soviet Government did not demand openly to form a Soviet regime in Anatolia, but it always supported communist actions in Anatolia and was scared that Ankara might turn towards the Western Powers. Therefore, the Bolsheviks needed to intervene in both Ankara's domestic and foreign relations. The Allied invitation of the Ankara Government to the London Conference, and Bekir

¹⁸⁷ From the U.S. High Commission to the Secretary of State, on February 25, 1921, in *Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-1929*, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Microcopy no.353, Roll 20, 867.00 Political Affairs: 867.00B/- (Ankara: US Embassy Office of Information and Public Documentation, 1961)

¹⁸⁸ From Bristol to Department of State, on June 29, 1921, in Roll 20, 867.00B/1

¹⁸⁹ From Rear Admiral U.S. Navy, United States High Commissioner to the Secretary of State, on June 10, 1921, in Roll 20, 867.00B/2

Sami's agreements with France and Italy-even if Ankara assured Moscow that those treaties were not accepted and signed by the GNA- threatened Moscow in turn. After the Friendship Treaty, Russia was neighboring Turkey directly, which meant it needed to more carefully monitor Ankara's business with the Allies. At this point Enver Pasha, who came to Moscow in August 14, 1920, became an important political weapon for the Soviet Government against Ankara. Before continuing our examination of Bolshevik-Nationalist relations, it is necessary to briefly examine Enver Pasha's activities in Russia.

4.7 Enver's Role in Kemalist-Bolshevik Relations

After the Congress of Baku, Enver Pasha¹⁹⁰ went to Moscow and from there he returned to Berlin. Right after the Congress, Enver Pasha and his followers formed a Union of Islamic Revolutionary Committee (*İslam İhtilal Cemiyetleri İttihadı-İİCİ*) to replace *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*.¹⁹¹ Anatolia was the main working area of the organization, and it started to open offices in Turkey.¹⁹² İİCİ published a journal,

¹⁹⁰ For detailed information about Enver Pasha's activities in Russia see Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Makedonya'dan Ortaasya'ya Enver Paşa 1914-1922*, vol 3 (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1978). Masayuki Yamauchi, *Hoşnut Olamamış Adam-Enver Paşa Türkiye'den Türkistan'a* (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları)

¹⁹¹ Selçuk Gürsoy points that the working area and countries that were planned to send agents for the İİCİ were just the same as it was for *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* during the First World War. Even the names of the Arab representatives of the organization were the same as it was in *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*- Emir Şekib Arslan, Şeyh Abdülaziz Çaviş, Ahmed Fuad, Mehmed Başhempa...etc. See Selçuk Gürsoy, *Enver Paşa'nın Sürgünü*, pp. 24-27. This information helps explain that Enver Pasha was forming a similar system to the CUP and was planning to unite Islamic Nations against the Allied Powers, especially against England, while at the same time was forming his staff to become the head of the Nationalist Movement in Anatolia. Hüsametdin Ertürk, on the other hand, wrote in his memoirs that in their last meeting before fleeing from the country, Enver Pasha ordered Ertürk to shut down *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*, and to establish *Umum Âlemi İslam İhtilalTeşkilatı*. Ertürk was appointed as the head of the İstanbul office of this new organization. According to this information, one can argue that Union of Islamic Revolutionary Committee was the continuation of *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* and was established long before 1920. Tansu, *İki Devrin Perde Arkası*, pp. 179-185.

¹⁹² From the letter that was sent to Berlin in the name of İİCİ from İstanbul, we know that at the beginning of 1921 İstanbul office was opened. The letter informed the center of the establishment of the new office in İstanbul in January 6, 1921. See Gürsoy, p. 27.

Liva-el İslam, the first issue of which, on March 15, 1921, led with the news of the assassination of Talat Pasha by an Armenian in Berlin.¹⁹³ After the assassination of Talat Pasha, Enver would try to unite the Unionists under himself and İİCİ.

After coming back to Moscow, Enver Pasha also stepped up his activities in Anatolia and opened the Anatolian branches of his organization under the banner of *Halk Şurular Fırkası*. However, Ankara had already begun to see Enver and his organizations as a threat to the unity of the Nationalist Movement, and started to ban Enver's influence in Anatolia. Halil Pasha was told that he could not stay in Trabzon, where he came on March 21, 1921, because Ali Fuad warned Ankara of his membership in the organizations.¹⁹⁴ Ankara, which had sent Halil Pasha as a negotiator to Moscow a year ago, was now afraid of his mission and activities in the name of İİCİ in Anatolia. Hearing the way Halil Pasha had been treated in Trabzon, Enver Pasha wrote to Mustafa Kemal, telling him that everyone was working towards the aim of Anatolian Independence, and that he and his followers would not stand to stay outside (of the country) forever. In another letter to Mustafa Kemal, in June 17, 1921, Enver Pasha accused Kemal of lying about Enver and his friends' activities, even though Enver was informing Ankara all about his actions. Enver Pasha even wrote that the reason for these kinds of actions against himself was Kemal's 'personal ethic and his ambitions.' Shortly after writing this letter, Enver would leave Moscow and to go to the Turkish border in Batum.¹⁹⁵

In May-June 1921, Karabekir was receiving reports from Ali Fuat, Fevzi Pasha and Mustafa Kemal, who were all concerned about a possible Soviet invasion of Anatolia from the Caucasus. However, according to Karabekir, these concerns were unfounded and the Soviet Government would not think about invading Anatolia,

¹⁹³ Gürsoy, p. 31.

¹⁹⁴ Gürsoy, pp. 35-36.

¹⁹⁵ Gürsoy, pp. 36-38.

while it was busy establishing its regime in the Caucasus. Moreover, Karabekir thought that it was an Allied policy to increase Ankara's concerns about Russia, so that the GNA would not shift its Eastern troops to the Western Front before the Sakarya Battle. On the other hand, as mentioned above, Enver's activities in Anatolia were increasing, and there were people expecting him to come back and to take over the control of the Anatolian Movement.¹⁹⁶ Mustafa Kemal knew that the Bolshevik Government was behind this. Kemal's warnings of Karabekir, about his concerns of Soviet penetration were not the results of Allied propaganda, but to prevent a sabotage of the Nationalist position from behind. Moscow really was behind Enver Pasha and his activities. Chicherin's letter to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party on April 22, 1921, had emphasized the importance of supporting Enver against Mustafa Kemal, because of Enver's influence over the Muslim population -forgetting the declined popularity of Enver Pasha after the Sarikamış Tragedy in December 1914-January 1915- and his 'better' understanding of the Bolshevik regime than Kemal. Soviet financial assistance to Enver and for his actions was also demanded in the same letter, which was accepted by the Party on the next day.¹⁹⁷ As is clear from Chicherin's argument to support Enver, Moscow was not clear about the intentions of Mustafa Kemal, and was scared of a possible alliance between Ankara and the Allies. Therefore, the Bolsheviks saw the need to support an alternative leader, who had the same, if not a greater reputation as Mustafa Kemal in Anatolia and around the Muslims in the Caucasus, as a back up. Enver Pasha was also seen closer to Moscow and to its regime than Mustafa Kemal,

¹⁹⁶ Sami Sabit Karaman, 'Enver Paşa ile Nasıl Mücadele Ettim', *Hatıralar, Vesikalar, Resimlerle Yakın Tarihimiz*, vol.1, p.308.

¹⁹⁷ Arsen Avagyan, 'Kemalistler, İttihatçılar ve Bolşevikler II: Mustafa Kemal'e Karşı Enver Kartı (1920-1922)', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 160(April 2007) p. 39

who had banned communist parties, organizations, and was known to be behind of the murders of Suphi and 14 members of the Turkish Communist Party.

While Ankara was trying to improve its relations with Soviet Russia after the Moscow Treaty, the Allies pushed the Greeks to start another battle after they could not get what they wanted from the London Conference. Even though the Turkish Army won another victory over the Greeks in the Second İnönü Battle (23-31 March 1921), later in July the Turks retreated to the Sakarya zone in the Eskişehir-Kütahya Battle (10-24 July 1921). This withdrawal of the Turkish Army was criticized very harshly in the parliament and the General Commander, Fevzi Bey, was criticized for giving up without fighting. After several meetings in the parliament, it was decided to make Mustafa Kemal the commander-in-chief of the Turkish Army (August 4). Even though this decision reflected a general consensus of the deputies, different factions supported it for different reasons. Some of the deputies were really in favor of Kemal as commander-in-chief, and thought that he could change the direction of the war. However, the other group was in favor because they believed the situation was very bad and that even Kemal would not be able to save it, therefore a defeat under Kemal as commander would decrease his supremacy, and could open the road for other leaders, clearly Enver Pasha.

As mentioned before, there was a division between the Unionists, around Talat Pasha and Enver Pasha. Talat's followers were closer to Mustafa Kemal than Enver's and accepted his leadership, while Enver's followers were waiting for a suitable time for Enver Pasha to come to Anatolia and to assume leadership of the Nationalist movement. Sabahattin Selek divided the Unionists that opposed Mustafa Kemal into two groups: the ones that accepted his leadership until victory in the war and planned to overthrow him then, and the ones who wanted to bring Enver Pasha

back and overthrow Kemal during the War of Independence. This second group increased their activities to bring Enver to Anatolia during summer 1921. According to the letter of Sami Sabit (Karaman), the Commander of the 13th Division in Trabzon, to Karabekir written on November 11, 1921, there were 40 deputies in favor of overthrowing Kemal, but who were waiting because of the war situation.¹⁹⁸ As Selek also quotes from Yakup Kadri (Karaosmanoğlu), there were even some deputies who thought that the War of Independence would not be won unless Enver Pasha took over the Turkish Army.¹⁹⁹

In the meantime, Moscow was also following all the news from Anatolia. The defeat of the Turkish Army in July and its withdrawal encouraged the Soviet Government to take stronger measures promoting Enver in case of a Greek victory over Anatolia. The Soviet Foreign Minister, Chicherin, had a secret meeting with Enver Pasha on July 28th, after which Enver left Moscow for Batum, on the 30th, which was followed by other unionists-Halil Pasha, Doctor Nazım, Naim Cevat, and Doctor Captain Faik. In addition to Enver's trip to Batum, Russia also shifted 10-15 thousand Muslim- Red Army soldiers to Baku.²⁰⁰ As Ali Fuat Cebesoy mentioned in his memoirs, the Soviet Government was getting ready to help Enver Pasha enter Anatolia from the East in case of further withdrawal of the Turkish Army. This Russian policy was announced openly to Ankara's Ambassador, Ali Fuat, on August 17. Chicherin told Ali Fuat that "Even if we want to help Turkey, *de facto*, by sending a Russian Division to the Turkish Western Front, we cannot finance it and

¹⁹⁸ It was the Deputy of Ardahan, Hilmi Bey, who told Sami Sabit that there were 40 deputies ready to overthrow Mustafa Kemal in the Parliament. Karaman, 'Enver Paşa ile Nasıl Mücadele Ettim', vol.1, p.308. Hilmi Bey would be arrested and executed in İzmir assassinations in 1926.

¹⁹⁹ Selek, *Anadolu İhtilali*, vol.2, p. 606

²⁰⁰ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları*, p.227

also we know that you would not accept it. I wonder if it is possible for Enver to enter Anatolia with a Muslim Army?”²⁰¹

The Turkish defeat of the Greek Army in Sakarya Battle (23 August–12 September 1921) averted a possible civil war, which would have been sponsored by Soviet Russia, and established Mustafa Kemal’s leadership once again inside and outside of Anatolia. Moscow had to reconsider its support for Enver against Mustafa Kemal, who had just had a big success over the Greeks, while some Deputies were getting ready to leave Ankara and to go further east against a Greek invasion of the city. Chicherin’s letter of November 1, 1921 to Sergey Petrovich Natsarenus²⁰², points to the worries about Enver Pasha’s intentions held by the Soviet Government. In the letter, Enver’s ‘pan-Turkic’ and ‘pan-Islamic’ activities were compared to Mustafa Kemal’s more exclusively National activities. Enver’s greater need for direct financial subvention than Kemal to help him succeed, when he would be in power, was also another problem for the Bolshevik leaders, who were having financial difficulties themselves.²⁰³ Moscow thus rescinded its support for Enver Pasha, and even replaced its diplomatic representative in Ankara, Natsarenus, who was working with Enver’s followers, in line with Ankara’s demands.²⁰⁴ It became clear for Enver Pasha that his road to power in Anatolia was cut off now more than ever, and the threat he posed for the Ankara Government had been defeated together with the Greek Army in the Battle of Sakarya.

The Bolshevik flirtation with Enver Pasha against Mustafa Kemal also proves that there was never a clear understanding or trust between Ankara and Moscow.

²⁰¹ Cebesoy, p.229

²⁰² Natsarenus was the First Secretary of the Russian Embassy of Ankara in 1921-22.

²⁰³ Arsen Avagyan, ‘Kemalistler, İttihatçılar ve Bolşevikler II: Mustafa Kemal’e Karşı Enver Kartı (1920-1922)’, p. 45

²⁰⁴ Salahi R. Sonyel, *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Dış Politika*, vol.2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991) p. 184. See also Selek, *Anadolu İhtilali*, vol.2, pp. 681-682

The Kemalist-Bolshevik alliance was a consequence of a British, and more general Allied pressure on the Eastern Peoples', which united Ankara and Moscow around the same idea: combining their forces against imperialism. The British High Commissioner in İstanbul, John de Robeck's statement of August 15, 1921²⁰⁵, shows how concerned Britain was against a possible fall of Anatolia under the Bolshevik rule:

We should realis[z]e that this is a propitious moment to bring about a settlement in Turkey, and it is vital to us that we set up a buffer between our Empire and Russia. Unfortunately our withdrawal from Caucasia led to the occupation of these small republics by the Bolsheviks.²⁰⁶

Towards the end of summer 1921, Ankara's policy of using the Bolsheviks against the Allies reversed itself. In its relations with the Allied Powers during and after the Sakarya Battle-Ankara was trying to make a new agreement with France replacing Bekir Sami's agreement during the London Conference, and this was even used as leverage to force Russia to reconsider its relations with Enver. The refusal to make promises to Soviet Russia-like accepting communism in Anatolia- allowed Ankara to fulfill its policy of balancing the powers against each other to procure its independence. Even though there were discussions about Bolshevizing Anatolia during 1919, Kemalists knew well that they could not trust the Soviet Government and their policies. Therefore, having close relations with Moscow and trying to get Bolshevik financial assistance were always subordinate to preserving its own policy of independence, Ankara's main goal. Moscow's relations with Enver Pasha proved once again the proper sense of Kemal's strategy of "playing the field," rather than having only one ally for the Anatolian Movement.

²⁰⁵ Bülent Gökay refers to this date, but by 1921, John de Robeck was no longer the British High Commissioner, but resumed duties as Commander of British Mediterranean Fleet.

²⁰⁶ Gökay, *A Clash of Empires: Turkey Between Russian Bolshevism and British Imperialism 1918-1923*, p.113

CHAPTER 4

PEAK OF RELATIONS

5.1 The Kars Agreement

As the relations between Ankara and the Caucasian Republics-Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia- were left to be decided in future negotiations according to the 15th article of the Treaty of Moscow; Yusuf Kemal, the head of the Turkish delegation, Sergo Ordzhonikidze, the Caucasian Representative of the Soviet Government, and Aleksandr Svanidze, the Georgian Foreign Commissar, decided on April 25, 1921 to organize a conference in Kars to conclude agreements with Ankara and the separate Transcaucasian republics.²⁰⁷ However, the Turkish-Greek battles during the spring and summer of 1921 delayed this conference. After the success of the Sakarya Battle, and the declined threat of Enver Pasha for the Ankara Government, the Soviet Ambassador to Ankara, Sergey Petrovich Natsarenus, requested on August 20 to hold the conference in Kars soon, a request which was followed by the Armenian Foreign Commissar, Askanaz Mravyan, on August 24th.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Bülent Gökay, *A Clash of Empires: Turkey Between Russian Bolshevism and British Imperialism 1918-1923*, p. 115

²⁰⁸ Gökay, p. 116

The Conference of Kars was opened on September 26, 1921 and was concluded with the Agreement of Kars between Ankara and three Caucasian Republics on 13 October 1921. The Kars Conference was represented by Karabekir as the head of the Turkish delegation, by Yakov Ganetski as the Russian representative, by Behbud Sahtahinski as the head of the Azerbaijanian delegation, by Shalva Eliava as the head of the Georgian delegation and by Georgian Foreign Commissar Svanidze, by Askanaz Mravyan as the head of the Armenian delegation, and by Poghos Makinyantsiyan as Armenian Internal Commissar.²⁰⁹ According to this agreement, the eastern borders of Turkey²¹⁰ were defined. As it was decided in the Moscow Treaty, Batum was given to Georgia while Kars and Ardahan were left to Turkey. Nahcivan was agreed to be an autonomous place under Azerbaijanian control by both Ankara Government and Armenian Republic. Previous agreements between the three republics and Turkey were accepted as null and void -except the Moscow Treaty- which officially meant that the Treaty of Alexandropol for instance was not a legitimate treaty. GNA and the three Caucasian Republics agreed not to accept any agreement that were and would be forced to any of them, and states were not going to recognize any agreement that would not be recognized by the other three. Ankara and the Georgian Republic would decide the opening of the Straits to all commercial vessels in a future agreement about the navigation and commerce from the Straits.²¹¹

Even though the Treaty of Kars was almost the repetition of the Moscow Treaty, it was very important because this treaty ended all the conflicts about the eastern borders of Turkey. With the agreement on the disputed topics especially between Ankara, Georgia and Armenia, Ankara got relief and could concentrate

²⁰⁹ Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, p. 938

²¹⁰ As it was written in the agreement, the term 'Turkey' meant all the lands that were included in Misak-ı Milli, which was accepted in 28 January 1920 in İstanbul.

²¹¹ For the full text of the articles of the Kars Agreement see: Karabekir, pp. 954-958. See also Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, pp.420-425

more on its Western borders. It once again became officially clear that the only representative of Anatolia was the Grand National Assembly, and three Caucasian Republics would take only GNA as an interlocutor. After this agreement Nationalist-Bolshevik relations also improved since the Caucasian States-Turkish relations were affecting Ankara and Moscow's relations directly.

5.2 Frunze's Mission to Turkey

After the Kars Agreement, Ankara and Moscow switched to the next step of friendly relations with Frunze's mission to Ankara. It was decided in the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party to send the Secretariat of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Mikhail Vasiliyevich Frunze²¹², to Anatolia on August 9, 1921. The aim of Frunze's mission would be to conclude a Friendship Treaty between Ukraine and Turkey, while strengthening Moscow's relations with Ankara by sending the rest of the promised money to the Ankara Government.²¹³ The timing of this mission was right at the heart of the Sakarya Battle, which also aimed to declare Russian support for Ankara; even though the outcome of this battle was uncertain. The importance of preserving friendly relations with the Nationalists made Moscow organize Frunze's mission to Turkey. This mission was best described by the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Buro), Vyacheslav Molotov, in his statement to Frunze in 3 October 1921:

²¹² Mikhail Vasiliyevich Frunze (1885-1925) was the General of the Ukrainian Air and Naval Armed Forces, member of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, member of Soviet Commissariat. He later would become the Commissariat of the Defense, replacing Trotsky, and Politburo reserve member.

²¹³ Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, p.337. Frunze took one million and a hundred gold rubles from the Soviet Representative in Tiflis, B.V. Legran, to be given to the Ankara Government. Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri*, p.342

Although you are going officially to Ankara on behalf of the Ukraine, politically your visit will be considered as an expression of friendship of all the Soviet republics of Russia...Therefore your visit will play a role to counterbalance of all those influences which pushes Turkey to the Allies' sphere of influence...Try to study in detail the state of the Turkish army...We must know to what extent the Turkish Army remains and is bound to remain as efficient, serious military factor...We must know...whether we should expect some surprises...We must know not only whether Turkey remains as an efficient military factor but also whether there are any grounds to consider that it [the Turkish army] intends to turn against us as a result of an agreement with the Allies.²¹⁴

This statement shows the importance of friendly relations with the Anakara Government for Russia against the Allied camp, while they were not clear about the strength of the Turkish Army. Another important point is that Moscow was very interested to know the position and ideology of the Turkish Army, and wanted to learn if it had an intention of turning against the Soviet Union. This was the dilemma of both sides from the beginning of their relations; preserving friendly relations while always considering the possibility of hostile including military actions against each other. However the 'imperialist' Allied policies pushed two governments for an alliance. This was described in Chicherin's statement to Frunze before his departure for Turkey:

Friendship line with Turkey is not conjectural but principal matter. This is Vladimir Ilich's line. Opposition against the imperialist browbeating combines all the suppressed nations together. This is the base; it is needed to act according to this base.²¹⁵

Even though Frunze's mission was decided in August it could start from Ukraine after the conclusion of the Kars Agreement, on November 5, while Moscow was replacing its Ambassador to Ankara Natsarenus with Semiyon Ivanovich

²¹⁴ Gökay, *A Clash of Empires: Turkey Between Russian Bolshevism and British Imperialism 1918-1923*, p. 113

²¹⁵ Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetler'le Görüşmeleri; Sovyet Arşiv Belgeleriyle*, pp. 114-115

Aralov.²¹⁶ As it was told to him, Frunze observed everything in Turkey during his trip and wrote his impressions in his memoirs.²¹⁷

Frunze's mission to Turkey was welcomed with celebration in a friendly atmosphere. As it was aimed Ankara and Ukraine signed a Friendship and Brotherhood Treaty, which was basically the repetition of the Moscow Treaty on January 2, 1922. According to this treaty; both parties agreed not to accept any treaty that had been forced to one another. Both parties accepted the borders as they were decided in the Moscow Treaty. Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine would accept Turkey as it was described in *Misak-ı Milli* in January 28, 1920, and Turkey would accept Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine as an independent and sovereign state inside the Soviet Union. Both sides agreed to decide the future of the Black Sea navigation in a Conference with all the contiguous states. As they were both contiguous states to the Black Sea, there wouldn't be any agreement without the attendance of both of them about international rivers that fall to the Black Sea.²¹⁸

After the Friendship Agreement, Frunze left Ankara on January 5th, 1922, and gave his report on Turkey to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party on February 2, 1922. According to his report the Central Committee decided to send the rest of the promised 10 million gold rubles to Ankara, which amounted to 3.5 million gold rubles.²¹⁹ Frunze also comforted Moscow about the Turkish-French rapprochement and agreement of 20 October 1921. He pointed that this agreement had nothing against Turkish-Soviet relations, quite the contrary it deepened the gap and unity between the Allied powers, while strengthening the Turkish power at its

²¹⁶ S. I. Aralov, *Bir Sovyet Diplomatının Türkiye Hatıraları* (İstanbul: Burçak Yayınevi, 1967) p.13

²¹⁷ Frunze even mentioned Kızılırmak River's fish in his memoirs. For detailed information about his trip to Turkey see Frunze's memoirs compiled in Ahmet Ekeş, *Frunze'nin Türkiye Anıları* (İstanbul: Düşün Yayıncılık, 1996). However this book only includes Frunze's coming to and departing from Ankara, his time in Ankara is not included.

²¹⁸ For the full text of the agreement see Yerasimos, pp.445-449

²¹⁹ Yerasimos, p.346

Western Front.²²⁰ On his way back to Russia, Frunze met Aralov in Samsun, where Frunze summarized his trip and his impressions of Turkey in big enthusiasm and excitement. Frunze also told Aralov to continue the Soviet help to the Nationalists which he pointed was very important for Ankara and that Mustafa Kemal trusted this help very much.²²¹

Friendly relations between Ankara and Moscow continued with the new Soviet Ambassador's arrival to Ankara. Aralov arrived to Ankara on January 26, 1922, and together with the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan's Ambassador, İbrahim Maharremoğlu Abilov, became a trustful friend for Mustafa Kemal. Kemal's invitation of Aralov, Abilov, and Russian Military Attaché, Zvonaryev to the front in March²²², to show the strength of the Army together with the necessary things that the army needed immediately, attests to the trust and importance that was given to the Soviet Government. In this inspection the Soviet delegation committed the rest of the promised money-3,5 million gold rubles²²³- which was decided to send after Frunze's report on Turkey, to the Ankara Government.²²⁴

Even though there were some small scale conflicts from time to time, Turkish-Soviet relations became friendlier than ever towards the end of 1921 and during 1922. Direct communications, Nationalis' military successes against the Greek Army together with political successes against the Allied camp, the openness about Ankara's politics to the Soviet delegations, and Soviet financial and political support were the main causes of the good relations between Ankara and Moscow. The

²²⁰ Ahmet Ekeş, *Frunze'nin Türkiye Anıları* (İstanbul: Düşün Yayıncılık, 1996) p. 110-111. Also in *Perinçek*, pp. 122-123

²²¹ Aralov, pp.46-50

²²² For the detailed information about Aralov and Abilov's visits of the Turkish Front in March 27 1922 see. Aralov, pp.84-104

²²³ 3.5million gold rubles were 1.750.000 dollars, which is worth of 175.000.000 dollars today. Sean McMeekin, *History's Greatest Heist: The Looting and Laundering of Russia's National Patrimony by the Bolsheviks, 1917-1922* (forthcoming in November 2007)

²²⁴ Perinçek, p.132

strength of the friendly relations prevented Ali Fuat Pasha's event²²⁵ and the fire²²⁶ in the Soviet Embassy in Ankara to reach levels of crisis between the two governments. Mustafa Kemal's close relations with the Soviet Ambassador and his often visits to the Embassy were used by his opponents as a case against Kemal and the Bolsheviks. Mustafa Kemal was very often accused of being a Bolshevik and working to establish a Soviet system in Anatolia. Kemal, on the other hand, did not see any problem in inviting the Soviet Ambassador and some delegates to the Western Front and informing them about Turkish positions. This was to maintain and strengthen the good relations with Soviet Russia.

After the Great Offense and the Victory over the Greeks in August 1922, the Turkish Army would launch towards Gallipoli, where the British forces were, and demanded of the Allies to turn the Turkish lands back. After the victory over the Greeks, the War of Independence was practically won, but the Allies were still controlling İstanbul and the Straits, Gallipoli and Western Thrace. Therefore, when the Turkish Army marched towards North-West, a possible Turkish-British War started to become the new scenario. The importance of Soviet friendship became crucial in this new crisis.

²²⁵ The Turkish Embassy in Moscow was surrounded by CHEKA and some people were arrested for getting involved in espionage with Polish and British delegates in April 22, 1922. It became a bigger issue when Ali Fuat said it was a provocation and rejected to talk with Vice-Chairman of the Soviet Foreign Commissar, Karahan. This event ended by calling Ali Fuat back to Turkey. Ali Fuat and 15 deported people left Moscow in May 10, 1922. Soviet Russia would apologize later in July 2, 1922, but Ali Fuat would be appointed to a new job while he was getting ready to go back to Russia. Ali Fuat was replaced with Ahmet Muhtar (Mollaoglu) Bey. See the details of this event in Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları* (İstanbul: Vatan Neşriyatı, 1955) pp.329-348. See also in Perinçek, pp.139-141.

²²⁶ The Soviet Embassy in Ankara was set on fire in August 15, 1922. However both the Turkish Government and the Russian Ambassador had no doubts about the event being a swaddling to weaken friendship between two nations. Aralov wrote in his memoirs that Rauf Bey was responsible in setting the Embassy on fire together with the other reactionarists in the Turkish Parliament, who were against Soviet Russia. See in Aralov, p. 126. While Aralov was accusing the reactionarists in the Parliament, his First Secretariat in the Embassy, Anatoli Glebov, was accusing the French Government, and pointed that Western States had their share in this event together with Turks who hated the Soviet Government. See Perinçek, p.147

Soviet Russia was also a party in the Strait issues; therefore in case of a British-Turkish War it wouldn't be only Turkey fighting against Britain. At the time the only agreement about the future of the Straits was agreed upon between Turkey and Russia in the Moscow Treaty. According to the British intelligence, Mustafa Kemal asked Aralov whether Russia would act against the Balkan States in case of their intervention together with the Allies against Turkey, and got the full support of Soviet Russia in Turkish action against the Allies.²²⁷ Moreover, Mustafa Kemal also asked Frunze, if Ukraine would act against Romania when the time would come. The Caucasian Soviet Army was increased in case of a need to help the Turks. Perinçek reported that even the sea route, which would carry the Red Army divisions to help Turkey, was decided, and that the Soviet Government announced to Mustafa Kemal during the Gallipoli Crisis (Chanak Crisis) that 'the Red Army was ready to bleed together with the Turkish Army.'²²⁸ Moscow sent telegrams to the Foreign Ministers of Great Britain, France, Italy, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and to the Prime Minister of Egypt on 24 September 1922. The Soviet Government protested the British behavior regarding the future of the Straits and İstanbul in its notes, and pointed that the Straits issue should be solved by the Black Sea Powers parallel to Article 5 of the Turkish-Soviet Treaty of March 16, 1921.²²⁹

It is clear that Ankara played its Soviet trump very well during this crisis and together with the willingness for peace negotiations of the British General Harington in İstanbul, who did not deliver the British ultimatum to Ankara Government about emptying the Natural Zone immediately, it was decided to organize the Conference

²²⁷ From the British Secret Intelligence Reports in Salahi Sonyel, *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Dış Politika*, vol.2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991) pp. 275-276

²²⁸ Perinçek, p.149

²²⁹ Gökay, p.141

in Mudanya, which ended with the Mudanya Armistice in September 11, 1922 between the Allies and GNA.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

According to an American teacher in Robert College, Laurence Moore, ‘Kemal Pasha has been uniting the Turks under the common idea of a fatherland, something that has never before been considered in Turkey.’ Mr. Moore’s report in *The New York Times* on Turkey published on January 22, 1922, pointed the dilemma of Bolshevizing or saving the country in which the solution for independence was without Bolshevizing the country. ‘...if Mustafa Kemal’s labors are permitted to bear fruit, and if Turkey and the Allies can settle their differences, there will be no danger from the Bolsheviki at the Dardanelles,’ while at the same time Moore pointed that ‘...Unless they [Turks] are driven to the wall by the western nations, there is no danger, under the ideals of Government that Kemal has set up, of an invasion by the Bolsheviki.’²³⁰ It was the current situation of Anatolia after the First World War, in which Allied Powers gained enormous power over the Ottoman Empire and kept pressuring it. Allied pressure led the Nationalists to search for an ally in the region against the Western Powers and their imperialist policies.

²³⁰ *The New York Times*, 22 January 1922.

When the Allies enforced the Mudros Armistice and started to confiscate the Ottoman arms and ammunitions, the Nationalists reacted by concealing whatever guns and ammunitions they could to prevent them falling under Allied hands. When the Allies sponsored Greeks to invade Ottoman Lands, the Nationalists went into Anatolia and started their resistance. At that time the necessity for arms, ammunitions, money and political support became an important issue for the Nationalists. Since the Bolsheviks were also fighting against Allied imperialism, Bolshevik Russia was open for the Nationalists in Anatolia. Therefore, Bolsheviks became the first aim of the Nationalists to start communication and form an alliance with.

When the Allied powers, especially Britain, were in the Caucasus region, the threat of invading Turkey from the East pushed the Nationalists to support Bolsheviks who were setting Soviet regimes in the Caucasus. Ankara's help in leading Azerbaijan to fall under Soviet regime in 1920 was to prevent the British influence in the region. The British threat was so high that Mustafa Kemal would send a letter to Lenin promising to work together in the Caucasus.

When the Allies were forcing the Sultan to sign the Sèvres Treaty, and later pushed to abide by it, Ankara sent delegations to Moscow and demanded their aid and alliance. After the British invasion of the İstanbul Parliament, Ankara opened its own Assembly (Grand National Assembly) and decided to send Bekir Sami's delegation to Moscow as one of the first decisions of the new parliament. The more Allies put pressure on Ankara, the more Nationalists were pushed towards the Bolsheviks. Ankara continued friendly relations with Bolsheviks even when Moscow was backing Enver Pasha and sent him to Batum, from where he was planned to take over the Nationalist Movement in Anatolia, in mid-1921, because the

Greek Army pushed the Turkish Army back to the Sakarya line. The Allies increased their pressure to make Ankara agree in Sèvres terms, and made the Greeks to advance further in Anatolia.

Russia was Ankara's biggest trump card against the Allies and friendly relations between this two 'long-time enemies' was crucial in completing its military actions with a strong diplomatic card. This policy was successful, because we see that Allies invited the Ankara Government to the London Conference and later tried to send some delegations to negotiate with the Nationalists, and tried to blockade Ankara's relations with Moscow.

The Nationalists used the possibility of Bolshevizing Anatolia by accepting its regime against the Allies, while at the same time they used possible invasion of Anatolia by the Allies, and Britain neighboring the Soviets in the South as a threat against Bolsheviks. This was the main policy of the Ankara Government in its relations with the Bolsheviks, during the War of Independence. We see that Bolsheviks fastened the signing of the Moscow Treaty, after a mission from İstanbul was sent to Ankara in December 1920, and after the Ankara Government was invited to the London Conference.

Interestingly, both the Bolshevik and the Turkish sides were so clear and open towards each others. Even though, Ankara was desperate to take any aid from Moscow, the Nationalists never gave any open promises to the Bolsheviks about accepting their regime in Turkey. From the beginning of the Turkish resistance Russia knew Ankara was not working to establish a communist state. Zinoviev's²³¹ speech as the president of the congress during the Congress of Eastern Peoples, which was held in Baku in September 1920, is a good example of their understanding

²³¹ Grigorii Evseevich Zinoviev (1883-1936), was a Bolshevik revolutionary and a Soviet communist. He became in charge of Petrograd and defended the city during the Civil War. Later he would work against Stalin with Trotsky.

of Ankara. Zinoviev denounced Enver and the Turkish group in the congress of being 'calif-supporters' and he criticized the 'pseudo-Soviets such as are now sometimes being offered to you in Turkey.' However, he also noticed that Turks were opposing Britain, just as the communists, therefore;

...we give patient aid to groups of persons who do not believe in our ideas, who are even opposed to us on some points. In the same way the Soviet Government in Turkey supports Kemal. Never for one moment do we forget that the movement headed by Kemal is not a Communist movement. We know it.²³²

The Bolshevik leader, Lenin, also knew very well that Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish Nationalist Movement were not socialists. Lenin made this point once again to Aralov before his departure for Turkey. 'Mustafa Kemal Pasha, of course, is not a socialist...but a good organizer...He understood the importance of our socialist revolution very well, and he is positive towards Soviet Russia...' ²³³

Meetings between Mustafa Kemal and other Soviet deputies, such as Upmal and Eliave, also are examples of their openness towards each other. Article 8 of the Moscow Treaty was about not to permit any group that would aim to overthrow of the other government. This article, for Moscow, was protection against pan-Turanian movements on its soil, while for Ankara it meant protection against Bolshevizing Anatolia, as it happened in the Caucasus and other places. However, in this openness, both Moscow and Ankara found some grounds to cooperate with each other: the Allied pressure on both parties was the main ground.

Even if Ottoman-Bolshevik relations were friendly after the Bolshevik Revolution we see that very soon in mid 1918 Ottoman-Bolshevik relations would be damaged and even would be cut off until the Nationalists took over. While the diplomatic relations between Russia and Ottoman Empire were cut off, the Bolshevik

²³² Davison, 'Turkish Diplomacy From Mudros to Lausanne', *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923* (USA, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990) p.216
S. I. Aralov, Bir Sovyet Diplomatının Türkiye Hatıraları (İstanbul: Burçak Yayınevi, 1967) p.38

influence over Anatolia in its organizations and parties increased and several Socialist organizations were established in Anatolia in 1918 and 1919.

After the Nationalist takeover and their contacts with the Bolsheviks, suffering under the Allied pressure pushed the Nationalists to turn their face towards the so-called long-time enemy of Turks, to Russia. Interestingly Russia welcomed this new friend, since it was also suffering from the same enemy, even if its leaders knew very well that Kemalists had no intention of becoming Bolsheviks. We also see that during the Amasya Meetings, Erzurum and Sivas Congresses, Bolshevism was discussed in great detail and it was even decided to accept it if things would worsen.

However, later in 1920 we see the formation of socialist and communist organizations and parties in Anatolia directly by the Ankara Government in order to control and contain the Bolshevik influence over Anatolia, because at that time GNA in Ankara established itself as the only legal power in Anatolia. Accordingly, everything should be done through the Parliament, not by outside organizations or people. This brought the end of some communist parties and the death of Mustafa Suphi and his colleagues, who were working to establish communism in Turkey, independent from the Ankara Government. There are some arguments that some of the Nationalist leaders and former Unionists, important figures during the Independence War, were communists themselves and demanded a Bolshevik type of regime in Anatolia, and therefore they established connections with the Bolsheviks. However Ankara's policy of suppressing communist activities when they increased their power and started to work independently from the Ankara Government, proves that the Nationalists did not aim to establish a Bolshevik type regime in Anatolia, but they were just using the possibility of Bolshevizing Anatolia to get Bolshevik assistance against the Allied camp.

Even though suppression of communist organizations was a big problem between Moscow and Ankara, the Nationalists' advance over the Armenians, their defeat of the Greeks in İnönü and more important the Allied invitation of the Ankara Government to the London Conference accelerated Moscow to sign a friendship agreement with Ankara. While the Allies were inviting Ankara to London to set an agreement to prevent further Turkish advance and to break the alliance between Ankara and Moscow -towards the end of 1920 the Bolshevik assistance started to come to Anatolia, the ammunitions and money that Halil Pasha brought to Anatolia was only one example of that assistance- Russia invited Ankara's delegation back to Moscow to complete its agreement with Ankara before Turkish-Allied relations improved. Again later in the same year, Russia would push Ankara to start the Kars Conference after seeing the Turkish success in the Sakarya Battle, while France was also trying to settle friendly relations with Ankara to separate it from its Bolshevik alliance, as well as to promote its own national interests in Turkey in defiance of the wartime Alliance with Britain. It became clear that Ankara had a good political card against both the Allies and Bolsheviks.

The total Soviet assistance to the Nationalists is still not certain, but the general consensus is that Russia sent 10 million gold rubles according to the Moscow Treaty, together with Halil Pasha's gold which was worth of 100 thousand liras, plus one million gold rubles that Yusuf Kemal brought in October 1920, total 11 million gold rubles and 100 thousand liras worth of gold. No doubt that in those conditions of Anatolia this amount together with the ammunitions, which were also significant, was very important for the Nationalist War. However the events show that diplomatic relations and agreements between Ankara and Moscow were much more influential over the Turkish victory than the amount of assistance. The Russian

support of Ankara prevented a new crisis over the Natural Zone-known as Gallipoli and North West of Anatolia- between Turkey and Britain. Russia's insistence that Ankara be invited to discuss the Straits issue at the Genoa Conference, along with Russian backing for Ankara during the Chanak Crisis, put pressure on the Allies, especially Britain, forcing them to reconsider their policies towards Ankara.

The formation of the Nationalist-Bolshevik relations during the Turkish War of Independence was the fruit of the desperate situation of the Allied invasion of Ottoman lands for the Turkish side, while for the Bolshevik side it was the same powers that tried to suppress Russia and fought against Bolshevism. Therefore the Allied pressure was the biggest instrument in the formation of and strengthening the relations between Ankara and Moscow.

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