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ATTEMPTS BY SOVIET RUSSIA TO SPREAD SOCIALISM AMONG TURKS THROUGH THE EDUCATION SYSTEM (1918-1922)

Abstract

A new era began for Turkey and Russia after World War I. The relations between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, which had been severed following the Armistice of Mudros, were re-established with the emergence of the Turkish National Movement. After the opening of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, relations officially commenced. In fact, both the newly forming Soviet Russia and the government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey made it a principle to act together due to their diplomatic isolation. In other words, the imperialist world was unwilling to recognize either the government of the Grand National Assembly or the Soviet Russian state. Deprived of the support of the Allied Powers, Soviet Russia developed diplomatic relations by supporting the government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. Thus, the two governments entered into a friendly relationship. This situation was in the interests of both states.

The diplomatic relations established by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey with Soviet Russia not only convey the message that Turkey is not alone against the Allied Powers but also boost the morale of the resistance in Turkey. Soviet Russia, on the other hand, believes that if the Turkish Nation succeeds in this struggle against the Allied Powers, it will greatly undermine the prestige of the Allied Powers in world politics and reduce the pressure directed towards themselves. However, Soviet Russia is also secretly planning to Sovietize the Turkish Nation.

Keywords: Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), Allied Powers, Soviet Russia, Communism, National Struggle, New World Newspaper, Propaganda, Publishing Activities

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1918-1922 ЖЫЛДАР АРАЛЫҒЫНДА КЕҢЕСТІК РЕСЕЙДІҢ ТҮРІКТЕРГЕ БІЛІМ БЕРУ АРҚЫЛЫ СОЦИАЛИЗМДІ ТАРАТУ ӘРЕКЕТТЕРІ

Аңдатпа

Бірінші дүниежүзілік соғыстан кейін Түркия мен Ресей үшін жаңа кезең басталды. Мудрос бітімінен кейін үзілген Осман империясы мен Ресей арасындағы қатынастар ұлт-азаттық күрестің басталуымен қайта жанданды. Түркияның Ұлы Ұлттық Мәжілісі (ҰҰМ) ашылғаннан кейін бұл қатынастар ресми түрде қалпына келтірілді.

Шын мәнінде, жаңадан құрылған Кеңестік Ресей мен ҰҰМ үкіметі халықаралық оқшаулану жағдайында өзара ынтымақтасу қағидатын ұстанды. Басқаша айтқанда, империалистік державалар ҰҰМ үкіметін де, Кеңестік Ресейді де мойындауға құлықсыз болды. Антанта елдерінің қолдауынан айырылған Кеңестік Ресей ҰҰМ үкіметін қолдау арқылы дипломатиялық қарым-қатынастарын дамытты. Осылайша екі мемлекет арасында достық сипаттағы қатынастар орнады. Бұл жағдай екі тараптың да мүдделеріне сай келді. Кеңестік Ресеймен орнаған дипломатиялық қатынастар Антанта елдеріне Түркияның жалғыз емес екендігін көрсетіп, ел ішіндегі қарсылық қозғалысының рухын күшейтті. Кеңестік Ресей болса, түрік халқының Антанта елдеріне қарсы бұл күрестегі жеңісі әлемдік

аренада Антантаның беделін түсіріп, өзіне бағытталған қысымды азайтады деп есептеді. Сонымен қатар, Кеңестік Ресей Түркия халқын кеңестендіру саясатын да жасырын түрде жоспарлаған еді.

Кілт сөздер: Түркияның Ұлы Ұлттық Мәжілісі, Одақтас державалар, Кеңестік Ресей, Коммунизм, Ұлт-азаттық қозғалыс, «Жаңа Дүние» газеті, үгіт-насихат, баспа қызметі

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ПОПЫТКИ СОВЕТСКОЙ РОССИИ РАСПРОСТРАНИТЬ СОЦИАЛИЗМ СРЕДИ ТУРОК ЧЕРЕЗ СИСТЕМУ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ (1918-1922)

Аннотация

После Первой мировой войны для Турции и России начался новый период. Отношения между Османской империей и Россией, прерванные после Мудросского перемирия, были восстановлены с началом национально-освободительной борьбы. После открытия Великого национального собрания Турции отношения официально возобновились. На самом деле, и новообразованная Советская Россия, и правительство ВНСТ из-за своей дипломатической изоляции сделали принципом действовать сообща. Другими словами, империалистический мир не хотел признавать ни правительство ВНСТ, ни Советскую Россию. Лишенная поддержки стран Антанты, Советская Россия развивала дипломатические отношения, поддерживая правительство ВНСТ. Таким образом, два правительства вступили в дружеские отношения. Эта ситуация соответствовала интересам обоих государств.

Дипломатические отношения ВНСТ с Советской Россией как давали сигнал странам Антанты о том, что оно не одиноко, так и поднимали моральный дух сопротивления в Турции. Советская Россия же считала, что успех турецкого народа в этой борьбе против стран Антанты значительно подорвет престиж стран Антанты в мировой политике и уменьшит давление, направленное на них самих. Вместе с тем Советская Россия втайне планировала советизацию турецкого народа.

Ключевые слова: Великое национальное собрание Турции (ВНСТ), державы Антанты, Советская Россия, коммунизм, национально-освободительная борьба, газета “Новый мир”, пропаганда, издательская деятельность

Introduction. In his report dated May 16, 1920, to V.I. Lenin, Soviet Foreign Minister G.V. Chicherin states that he met with the representatives of the Ankara Government, Ali Fuat Pasha and Halil Pasha, for more than three hours. He conveys that during the meeting, Halil Pasha requested ammunition and money as military aid. Furthermore, Foreign Minister G.V. Chicherin mentions that the Soviet Russia's agreement to provide material and weapons assistance to the Turks was seen not only as a union against Western imperialism but also as an opportunity to establish communism in Turkey. He also notes that by trying to provide support in every form for Turkey to defeat its Western enemies, Turkey's Bolshevism could be incorporated into Eastern policy⁴ [1].

Because the Turkish Nation consisted of workers and agricultural laborers; large landowners were not powerful either. Due to the inadequate railway system in Turkey, exports and transportation were insufficient. As modern agricultural methods could not be implemented, sufficient profit could

⁴ *Georgi Vasilyevich Chicherin (Георгий Васильевич Чичерин), People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Russians. Russian Marxist revolutionary, Soviet politician, diplomat, and historian. People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union from 1918 to 1930. A report note to Lenin about Soviet Foreign Minister G.V. Chicherin's meetings with Halil Pasha and Doctor Ali Fuat. RGASPI, Fund 159, Inventory 2, File 57, Sheet 1*

not be obtained from agricultural activities [2, p. 52]. There were no large industrial facilities in Turkey; banks, ports, trams, steamship companies, and factories were largely under the control of Greeks and Armenians [3, p. 38].

Soviet Russia was aware that the majority of the members of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) were ideologically distant from communism. In this context, the basis for the rapprochement between Turkey and the Soviet Union was not an ideological partnership, but rather a pragmatic cooperation approach shaped by the international political conjuncture of the time.

Ahmet Muhtar, the representative of the Turkish Foreign Ministry to the Soviets, clearly articulated this situation and emphasized in his statements to Soviet officials that the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) had only established a political alliance with the Soviet Union. In his speech at the Russian Assembly, it was expressed that the relations initiated by the TBMM with the Soviet Union were not ideologically based, but shaped in line with national interests. He explicitly stated that Turkey had no intention of adopting communist ideology, and in this context, there were no conditions in the agreements made between the parties regarding the adoption or implementation of communism in Turkey [4].

These explanations can be considered as an indication of the importance that the Turkish Grand National Assembly placed on the principles of national sovereignty and ideological independence in its relations with the Soviet Union. Although Turkey cooperated with the Soviet Union in the struggle against Western imperialism during this period, it did not envision a communist transformation in its own internal political and social structure. Therefore, this rapprochement was shaped as a strategic necessity of seeking balance in foreign policy and the national independence struggle.

We observe that the Russians' efforts to spread communism in Turkey began to intensify in 1920. In a report sent to Moscow by the Turkish Communist Party in 1920, it was reported that people supporting communism, such as comrade Salih (veterinarian) and Manatov (sheriff), had published articles about communism in the Eskisehir Newspaper. Additionally, they noted that such individuals were striving to change public opinion by publishing articles in national official newspapers [5].

On June 12, 1920, Manatov delivered a conference in the Ankara city garden, stating that communism would be the salvation of Turkish citizens, and read his article titled “The Future of the Communist Revolution” at this conference. Three days after this event in Ankara, Vakkaz Ferit from Harput also read an article on communism [6]. In his secret conference on communism, Vakkaz Ferit indicated that Salih, Manatov, and a secretary named Nuri in the Ministry of National Education were his supporters, and that they planned to meet with Vakkaz Ferit to establish the Bolshevik Communist Party.

On June 14, 1920, Vakkaz Ferit introduced the aforementioned supporters named Nuri and Salih to Nazım, the secretary of the Green Army. After Nazım received an oath of loyalty from these two, he gave each of them a copy of the Green Army's charter and then instructed them to organize the Ankara City Committee. Upon examining this charter, Salih and Manatov noted that it had many shortcomings, and even contained some articles that directly contradicted the principles and communism. They prepared the program and charter of the Turkish Communist Party. They sent the program they prepared to the headquarters of the Green Army, which had tasked them with organizing the Ankara branch, through Vakkaz Ferit. They announced that when accepting members to the party, they would only introduce them to this program. Thus, Salih, Manatov, and Ahmet Mustafa, who were the most active members of the Ankara organization, tried to gather educated people around them [7]. In their work, under the pretext of educating the public, they had planned to turn Turkish workers and peasants into communists.

In Eskisehir, there was also an organization of the Turkish Workers and Farmers Socialist Party. The Turkish Communist Party established its first organization outside Ankara by agreement with this organization. It is observed that communist propaganda was intensively organized on a large scale in both the center and some provincial areas under the guise of public education programs, increasing their membership. With the increase in membership, it was decided to print propaganda texts. Numerous illegal political propaganda brochures were written and prepared for printing. It is

seen that a supporter named Salih prepared a brochure titled “What is the old world, how will the new world be?” Also, Zinattula Navshiranov prepared a brochure for printing titled “The whole problem is that some are full while others live in hunger”. Monatov was sent to Eskisehir to print these brochures from the printing press belonging to Abdullah Necmettin's father, who was under the influence of Eskisehir socialists, and to order seals for the headquarters (Central Committee) and Ankara provincial committee. Additionally, Arif Oruç, one of the first members of the Eskisehir committee, carried out propaganda among the commanders and soldiers of the National Forces' flight detachment. Thus, Arif Oruç and Ethem had influenced Eskisehir. Moreover, the district printing press of Eskisehir also fell into the hands of the communists. In both printing presses, those who were members of communism were working. Therefore, the socialists printed their propaganda programs and brochures without any problems. At the same time, in June 1920, illegal political propaganda brochures were printed, including the first program presented by Hacıoglu Salih and two different versions of it [8].

Materials and Methods.

The article primarily relies on Soviet archival sources. In this context, the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) and the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI) have provided important and detailed information.

In addition to archival sources, the research also consulted the memoirs of witnesses of the period and individuals involved in political relations. In this context, Ali Fuat Cebesoy's “Moscow Memoirs” [9] and A. F. Miller's work titled “Kratkaya Istoriya Turtsii” [10] provide a chronological and detailed account of the relations between the Turkish and Soviet governments.

Some of the primary sources used in the study are as follows: Alptekin Muderrisoglu's “Financial Resources of the War of Independence” [2, p. 40], Stefanos Yerasimos's “Turkish-Soviet Relations in the War of Independence (1917-1923)”, and Hamit Erdem's work titled “The Year 1920 and the Left Opposition (Green Army Society, (Secret) Communist Party of Turkey, People's Communist Party of Turkey, (Official) Communist Party of Turkey)” [11].

The study of Soviet Russia's attempts to spread socialist ideas among the Turks through the educational system in 1918-1922 is based on a comprehensive methodological approach, including historical-genetic and historical-comparative analysis, content analysis of normative documents, as well as critical examination of archival and diplomatic sources. The historical-genetic method allows tracing the evolution of Soviet foreign policy and cultural-educational strategy towards Turkey in the first post-revolutionary years, revealing the relationship between the ideological principles of the Bolshevik leadership and the formation of educational initiatives aimed at Turkish society. The historical-comparative approach is used to compare the traditional Turkish educational model of the late Ottoman Empire and early Republic with cultural and educational projects promoted by the Soviet side through educational literature, courses, translation programs, and support for secular education. Content analysis is applied to study Soviet regulations, diplomatic agreements, materials of the People's Commissariat of Education and Foreign Trade, publications in the Soviet and Turkish press, which allows identifying the mechanisms of ideological influence used through education and cultural cooperation. Critical examination of archival documents - diplomatic correspondence, reports of Soviet missions, notes from members of the Ankara delegation, as well as Turkish state materials - provides a reconstruction of the actual forms of interaction and the extent of Soviet propaganda influence in the educational sphere. The application of a sociocultural approach allows assessing the perception of Soviet cultural initiatives by Turkish society, revealing the degree of their acceptance or resistance, as well as determining the influence of the Soviet educational model on the formation of new intellectual and political currents in Ankara. The comprehensive use of these methods provides a holistic and objective assessment of how the educational system and cultural programs became one of the tools for spreading socialist ideas among the Turks in 1918-1922.

Results and Discussions.

Communist Propaganda Activities Through the New World Newspaper

Soviet Russia initially planned to establish independent organizations of Turkish communists, workers, and peasant laborers to develop communism in Anatolia. Later, they aimed to gather loyal, reliable, and militant cadres around themselves to secure their existence as an independent party defending the interests of workers and peasants under the banner of the Third International. To accomplish this task, members of the Presidency of the Council for Propaganda and Action of Eastern Peoples, including Mustafa Suphi, İsmail Hakkı, and others, were in charge. The group gathered under the banner of the Third International was publishing a weekly newspaper called “New World” in Baku, which was widespread among the Turkish people. They were working diligently to communize Turkey and all Muslim peoples. In summary, they published the “New World” newspaper in Turkey by translating it into Turkish, along with brochures such as Marx's Communist Manifesto, Lenin's Biography, the Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), the Program of Turkish Bolshevik Communists, Labor and Capital, what is Bolshevism, and What is Soviet Power. The group led by Mustafa Suphi and İsmail Hakkı provided leadership to communist leaders working illegally in the regions of İzmit, Trabzon, Ankara, Konya, Adana, and İzmir [12].

However, the Bolshevism propaganda conducted by the Soviets among the Turkish people had caused doubt and even fear among the public.

The Central Committee of the Turkish People's Communist Party described this situation in their report sent to Moscow about “The educational history and activities of the Turkish People's Communist Party” as follows: This distrust of the Turkish people is formed due to the Unionists. As a result of the politics carried out by the Unionists deceiving the people, they see it as the main reason for the occupation of Ottoman lands. Finally, realizing that this was just a game of the Unionists, the people are organizing with the Kuva-yi Milliye to escape this situation. To eliminate the doubts formed among the people on this issue and at the same time to show the world proletariat that we have nothing in common with the defeated Committee of Union and Progress in world politics, Monatov publishes political propaganda brochures and programs, ensuring their widespread and intensive distribution among the people. Additionally, Ethem established the “New World” newspaper in Eskisehir to spread the idea of communism to the outside world. Arif Oruç was appointed as the chief worker. Monatov followed the publication of three issues of the “New World” newspaper in Eskisehir and published his articles related to communist propaganda in this newspaper.

Monatov had also published two articles on Bolshevism that he read at the workers' club and theater building in the “New World” newspaper. In general, Monatov published a political propaganda brochure in Eskisehir, along with a communist propaganda program conducted through a public education program. With his strong support for the opening of the “New World” newspaper, he returned to Ankara with a communist seal. Thus, Monatov greatly pleased the Central Committee of the Turkish Communist Bolshevik Party in Ankara and inspired new hopes. It was immediately decided to move the Central Committee to Eskisehir to be at the center of the working class's economic activity and simultaneously under the influence of such an important military force [13].

However, the Ankara Government was not allowing this situation to progress further. It is even said that the Central Committee of the Turkish Communist Bolshevik Party sent 14 inspectors to Eskisehir on behalf of the Ankara Government.

Additionally, when Manatov arrived in Eskisehir on July 10, 1920, to work in collaboration with the “New World” newspaper while awaiting the arrival of Zinetulla Navshirvanov and other members of the Central Committee, they reported that the newspaper had changed its direction, beginning to write with a nationalist and Pan-Islamist spirit, and that they tried to draw the attention of Arif Oruç and Ethem to this situation e [14].

Despite the newspaper's change in direction, Manatov and Zinetulla Navshirvanov had attempted to publish the Second Congress of the Third International in the “New World” newspaper. However, it appears that the “New World” newspaper, which had been established and operating in Eskisehir, had also come under the influence of the Ankara Government.

On September 20, 1920, Manatov and Zinetulla Navshirvanov left Eskisehir and came to Ankara to meet with the Central Committee. In this meeting, the Central Committee sent Manatov to Kastamonu to continue his organizational work. However, Manatov was arrested and interrogated by the military police on the orders of the Ankara Government. Subsequently, Central Committee member Ahmet Hilmi was arrested for distributing political propaganda brochures. Thus, at the end of July, the process of monitoring Communist Party members implemented by the Ankara Government intensified. Fear and unease emerged among the members of the Communist Party. The Central Committee issued the third circular in complete secrecy. This circular was also published to demonstrate the power of the Central Committee to the Communist Party members.

The Bolsheviks continued their organizational work secretly under the guise of an education program in Eskisehir, Yabanabad, Yozgat, Kastamonu, İnebolu, Karahisar, Konya, Sivas, and Trabzon [15]. In the parliamentary meeting on August 14, Mustafa Kemal stated that Turkish territories were being attacked and pressured from all sides, externally, and internally due to external influences. Mustafa Kemal mentioned that in the letters sent by Mustafa Suphi and his associates to the Ankara Government, they requested the establishment of an organization in Anatolia and stated that the aid provided by Soviet Russia would be carried out through the central committee of the party [9, p. 50-54].

The Turkish Government had decided to oppose the extraordinary activities of Soviet Russia's covert and overt communist organizations in Anatolia. It will be seen that Mustafa Kemal Pasha had his own plans against these Bolshevik schemes.

The Turkish Grand National Assembly could not openly launch a suppression operation against the communist activities that began to organize in Anatolia during the early stages of the National Struggle. For this reason, the Turkish Government established seemingly collaborative organizations such as the Green Army Society, [10, p. 106] the People's Group in Ankara, the United Communist Party of Turkey, and the People's Communist Party of Turkey, using former members of the Committee of Union and Progress Party and Pan-Islamism, in order to create an environment of necessary cooperation with the Soviets. The most influential of these organizations was undoubtedly the Communist Party of Turkey, founded on October 18, 1920. The purpose of establishing this party was to keep the socialist influences of left-wing opposition and communist parties on the Government under state control, then to ban all political organizations, and additionally to receive aid from the Soviets in the struggle against the Allied Powers [11, p. 140-146]. Thus, these parties balanced the spread of communism among the working and peasant classes in Anatolia and the political rapprochement and relations between the two governments. In this way, Mustafa Kemal Pasha had declared to the whole world that Turkey would never accept communism [16].

The officially recognized committees of the Turkish Communist Party openly began their activities on December 7, 1920, in the cities of Karahisar Yozgat and Kastamonu, and organized two official conferences. The first conference was held on December 14, 1920, on the topics of "Communism and women's rights" and "Islam and Communism". The second conference took place on December 22, 1920, addressing "What do the Bolsheviks advocate" and "Is there any benefit to the reconciliation of Anatolian proletarians with the West?" These topics served as a response to the hostile propaganda conducted among both women and the general public and had a significant impact on the Turkish people. Consequently, the Turkish Communist Party felt the need to purchase a printing press to begin printed propaganda and acquired half of the printing press belonging to Afyonkarahisar deputy Mehmet Shukru to commence these activities. However, due to the lack of paper and printing facilities, the opportunity to publish the "Emek" (Labor) newspaper only materialized in January 1920.

However, on January 22, 1920, while the seventh issue of the "Emek" newspaper was being prepared for publication, it was shut down by the Independent Court, established by a special law of the Grand National Assembly to exclusively examine cases concerning the military, on the grounds of "publishing articles that weaken the sense of national defense". At the same time, the editor-in-chief and member of the Ankara city committee, Abdulkadir, was arrested and handed over to the court [17].

The Bolsheviks secretly carried out their organizational activities under the guise of a public enlightenment program, establishing small communist organizations and spreading revolutionary ideas through passionate sermons in Bursa, Diyarbakır, and Mardin [18].

Publishing Activities of the Istanbul Organization

The Turkish Government, in need of external assistance against the Allied forces for the National Struggle, had to tolerate the pressure of communist press and some communist organizations in Ankara, Trabzon, Erzurum, Eskişehir, and other places due to the potential aid they could receive from the Soviets. Red literature was distributed everywhere, red newspapers were printed, mints and meetings were organized, speeches were given, and conferences were held [19].

Additionally, in a report sent to the Moscow Central Committee in 1920 by I. Hakkı, Cevad, and Kadir, members of the Turkish Communist Party's organizational bureau, it was stated that during September-October 1920, the Bolsheviks carried out thirty-two organizational activities as part of their covert and overt public enlightenment program; they also mentioned that they continued their work in Anatolia [20].

It is reported that an organization established by the Bolsheviks had been active in Istanbul since 1918. Some of those leading this organization were very familiar with the form of the workers' movement in the West, and had even personally participated in the speeches of the Spartacists in Germany, while also being well-acquainted with the situation in Hungary and Switzerland. The representatives of this organization had started publishing a magazine called “Aydınlık” (Enlightenment) with money sent from the Moscow center. This magazine had published its fourth issue by 1920. The magazine undertook the task of preparing revolutionary communist views among workers and youth.

Thanks to this magazine, there were also those who wanted to join the Bolsheviks. However, a warning letter was being sent from the Moscow Central Committee stating, “They should be very careful when accepting new members so that individuals with views of other parties do not enter the organization; they should accept purer youth who have not been influenced by various ideologies, especially bureaucratic-aristocratic tendencies” [21].

However, the British allowing strikes in various enterprises to harm businesses organized with French, Turkish, Belgian, and other capital in order to seize shares, and even providing assistance to labor leaders for the strikes to continue more successfully, had also prevented the distribution of communist literature and the publication of newspapers.

Moreover, in 1920, members of the Turkish Communist Party's organizational bureau reported to the Moscow Central Organization that they did not have a special newspaper in Istanbul, and that their communist comrades had to content themselves with occasionally publishing articles in existing newspapers that were more or less related to workers' activities. They emphasized that a socialist newspaper should be published and that they believed it could exist without circulation issues, but it should be a newspaper with a broader format, including literary content and more information like other published newspapers, because based on experience, it was found that newspapers dedicated to limited purposes became mere pens without cutting expenses. Thus, the Central Committee decided to continue the publication of the “New World” newspaper, which had long been the communist party's organ. They also thought that this newspaper, published in Turkey and Batum, would serve to prepare the masses' mood in favor of communism and thus provide a great service to their revolutionary goals. The Bolsheviks, confident that they had gathered enough strength to publish a newspaper in Istanbul without any interruptions or difficulties, were unable to provide even a weekly publication due to technical obstacles and the lack of an Arabic script keyboard [22].

Despite everything, the Soviets believed that the following arrangements were necessary in Istanbul:

Firstly, the continuation of the publication of the “Aydınlık” (Enlightenment) magazine being published in Turkey.

Secondly, to draw local Istanbul workers into closer cooperation by periodically publishing their demands and complaints in newspapers.

Thirdly, to publish a daily worker and peasant newspaper in Istanbul.

Fourthly, to gain leadership by joining trade unions in Istanbul, ultimately working to attract them to the Third International or Red unions.

Fifthly, to increase the publication of enlightening socialist literature on issues such as land ownership, cooperatives, colonies, national and other matters of the local people, both from a theoretical perspective and in popular language.

Sixthly, to publish a magazine related to socialism at least twice a week in Batumi.

Seventhly, to facilitate the entry and exit of political couriers intending to continue organizational work by establishing associations on the Black Sea coast and in Anatolia.

Eighthly, to ensure the convening of the second party congress after establishing full communication between local organizations [23].

Activities of the Batum Organization

By decision of the Central Committee in Moscow, an organizational bureau of the Turkish Communist Party was established, and due to the revolution in Georgia, Batum was chosen as the main center of activity. The selection of Batum as the central organizational bureau of the Communist Party provided direct connection with Anatolia and Constantinople. Thus, the Bolsheviks were able to obtain information about the current mood in Turkey and the policy pursued by the government.

The activities of the Bolsheviks' Organization Bureau in Batum are divided into two periods. The first is from June 15 to September 15, 1921. The second is from September 15 to the end of October 1921.

From June 15 to September 15, the Turkish Communist Parties Organization Bureau in Baku was forming two communication cells, one in the city of Rize and the other in the Lazistan sanjak. These cells were trying to send special brochures prepared by the Bolsheviks for the Anatolian people. For example, they had prepared publications titled "The History of Socialism and World Revolution", and also translated the play "The Great Communard" into Turkish. Measures were being taken to publish these books. Numerous "Call" bulletins were being published in the "Ishtirak" newspaper for workers and peasants. In addition, speeches, conferences, and meetings were being organized on various topics such as the Third International, Eastern peoples, Soviet power, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Red Army, etc. Due to the impossibility of maintaining secrecy, 3 people from Istanbul, 2 from Bursa, 2 from Ereğli, and 2 from Zonguldak were forced to leave Turkey.

The second period of the Bolsheviks' propaganda work in Batum began on September 15. To continue and expand these propaganda efforts, 16 more communists were invited and called, especially for the publishing house work in Batum. Thus, in Batum, there was a three-person Organization Bureau representative, a five-person publishing house, a three-person Batum organization, and a Batum cell affiliated with the Muslim branch of Batum communists.

On September 25, one person was sent to Constantinople by the RSFSC, and on October 8, four people were sent. On October 18, one person was sent to Rize, one to Trabzon, and one to Sivas. On October 20, two people were sent to Samsun and one to Trabzon under the pretext of a "Public education program". Additionally, 1500 gold rubles and 5 pounds worth of literature were provided as aid to the Constantinople organization, while 4 pounds worth of literature were provided to the Anatolian organization [24].

The Bolsheviks' secret organizations had conducted agitation among the Turkish people, staged demonstrations voiced on political issues to increase the revolutionary spirit, and organized conferences and rallies on program topics.

The publishing activities of the Bolshevik organizations were taking place in two locations, Batumi and Constantinople. From December 1, 1921, the Bolsheviks decided to publish the "Yeni Dünya" (New World) newspaper, which had been under the influence of the Ankara Government since 1920, in Batumi and Constantinople.

The Bolsheviks, who decided to publish the "Yeni Dunya" (New World) newspaper, were portraying Mustafa Kemal's politics as dictatorial. They believed that Anatolia's domestic and foreign policies had recently begun to take new forms, leading to a state ready for rebellion. Consequently,

they asserted that a newspaper defending the oppressed masses and criticizing the power of the bourgeoisie and militarism would gain more sympathy. Additionally, they clarified that by taking advantage of this situation, it would be possible to redirect all accusations previously aimed at communists towards the bourgeoisie, aristocracy, and militarism classes. They were planning to address the situation, considering that the Anatolian Government had not had a definitive policy towards Russia until now and had been acting with hidden objectives, but this would change soon.

For this reason, the “Yeni Dünya” (New World) newspaper also aimed to shed light on how suitable and applicable the Soviet system was for Muslim life and structure by regularly publishing the status of Muslim Republics affiliated with the RSFSR. The newspaper also published excerpts from revolutionary events, poems, serials, etc, convincing that socialism would bring peace and happiness to every human being. Additionally, with the financial support of the Moscow Central Committee, the “Aydınlık” (Enlightenment) magazine was being worked on as the only periodical publication that continued its existence as a socialist voice in Istanbul. Furthermore, the Bolsheviks' secret organizations, believing that individual articles in the “Aydınlık” magazine did not meet local needs, were also publishing articles in existing Istanbul newspapers that highlighted and defended workers' causes [25].

In a report sent by the Batum Chief Secretary to the Central Committee of the Russian Bolshevik Communist Party in 1922, it was explained that through the “Public Education Program”, Soviet Agitation and Publication Departments had sent propagandists to Istanbul, Trabzon, Rize, Erzurum, Bayezid, Samsun, Sivas, Tokat, Amasya, Ankara, Konya, Eregli, and Zonguldak. Additionally, to further strengthen their operations, it was mentioned that four responsible comrades were sent to Nakhchivan, on one hand to establish communication between Turkish stations and the Red Army, and on the other hand to establish connections between Persian and Armenian communist organizations and Soviet provinces. It was also noted that a special communication point was organized in Nakhchivan, and a party school offering six-week training was opened in Baku. Socialist revolutionary program literature was also translated into Turkish and published. The “Public Education Program” opened in Baku organized lessons and conferences for party members, soldiers, and working-class and peasant people. Concurrently, issues of the “New World” newspaper were being translated into Turkish and sent to the Turkestan and Nakhchivan regions [26].

Conclusion. The Bolsheviks' Communist Propaganda in Anatolia aimed to create an impact among workers, peasants, the poor, and laborers who constituted the majority of the Anatolian population by introducing the Communist Party as the “party of workers and peasants”. The party claimed to defend the rights of workers and peasants, and to struggle against despots, pashas, lords, bourgeois interest groups, usurers, and profiteers who used the wealth created by people's labor for their personal interests [27].

In this direction, the ultimate goal of the party was shown as the transition to a communal lifestyle based on brotherhood through the dictatorship of peasants, the poor, and workers. Through these propaganda efforts, the Soviets aimed to bring Turkey under their ideological influence and Russify it.

For this purpose, under the pretext of a “Public education program”, their main objective was to prepare the working masses of laborers and peasants for the struggle against the state by developing their political consciousness and spreading their culture and education.

After the assassination of Mustafa Suphi, the founding chairman of the Turkish Communist Party, and 14 of his comrades in Trabzon in January 1921, the party continued its activities illegally. However, shortly after, in September 1922, all activities of the Turkish Communist Party were completely banned.

The situation in Turkey between 1918 and 1922 forced Turkey into an alliance and cooperation with Russia. Russia took advantage of this political environment with Turkey to create a setting suitable for their ideology and implement an expansionist policy in Turkey. Although this situation was temporarily tolerated by the Turkish Grand National Assembly, from 1922 onwards, the organization of Communist ideology in Turkey was prohibited.

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