

THE COMMUNIST IMPACT ON TURKEY AND IRAN,

1918-1954

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TÜRKİYE SOSYAL TARİH ARAŞTIRMA VAKFI

Two basic factors, above all, have conditioned the Communist impact on Turkey and Iran. First, Turkey and Iran for centuries have been neighbors of Russia. Together with Afghanistan they constitute today the only major non-Communist area which directly borders on Russia. The Russian drive toward the Turkish straits and toward India dates back at least to Peter the Great. For three centuries the Ottoman Empire was almost constantly at war with Russia, with peaceful interludes of only a few decades at a time. Persia, for almost as long, has been caught in the crossfire of Russian and British imperialism. Yet the fact that non-Communist Turkey and Iran today border on Russia without any Communist satellites between also means that they are the only neighbors which, thanks to good fortune, to their own courage, and to foreign support, have been able to resist the recent Soviet advance.

Second, both Turkey and Iran are countries with a non-Western tradition. They have had to fight hard to maintain their independence against Western political and economic domination, while trying, for the sake of survival, to adopt Western military, economic, social, and political patterns. The Bolsheviks call such countries "semi-colonies of the Imperialist Powers," and we in the West, with slightly less condescension, speak of "underdeveloped countries." Like others in this category, Turkey and Iran have been susceptible to subversion not by Marxian but by Leninist Communism. The Communists, that is to say, have allied themselves not with an all but non-existent industrial proletariat, but rather with nationalist anti-Western aspirations.

Iran today is the weakest, Turkey one of the strongest, links in Western defenses against Soviet expansion. Yet we must not jump to the conclusion that the Turks are somehow congenitally immune to the Communist virus. The current trial of 167 leaders of an alleged secret Communist party in Turkey fails to bear out the confident assertion of one of our foremost area experts--that "Turkey . . . produces /no/ Communist leaders ready to sell her out to Russia."<sup>1</sup> In the following remarks I shall give more time to Turkish Communism which has received far less attention in the headlines and in scholarly studies than Communism in Iran. Turkey, moreover, happens to be the country with which I am more intimately familiar.

The Turks and Iranians have known for some decades what many of us in the West realized only much later--that Bolshevism is a more virulent form of the old Russian imperialism with far more dangerous weapons at its disposal. Even in Turkey and Iran, however, this diagnosis was not formulated immediately upon the success of the Bolshevik revolution. The Communist impact on the two countries, in fact, has gone through three distinct phases. The first, from 1917 to 1921, coincided with the original Communist bid for world revolution. The following two decades--the period of the NEP and of Socialism in one country--brought an interlude of relatively peaceful coexistence. The third phase has been one of renewed Soviet expansion and aggression, tendencies which in this area became evident as early as 1941.

1. Lewis V. Thomas in Thomas and Frye, The United States and Turkey and Iran (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), p. 133.

The collapse of the Czarist Empire left a power vacuum around the Black and Caspian seas which was not filled until 1921 when the Bolsheviks completed their reconquest of these peripheral areas. Somewhat earlier, in the fall of 1920, the Communists held a giant Congress of the Peoples of the East in the transcaucasian city of Baku. Delegates came from as far as Morocco and Manchuria, but the largest single delegations significantly represented Turkey and Iran. Here Comintern leaders such as Zinoviev, Radek, and Bela Kun, called on the millions of Asians and Africans to "declare a true Holy War against the English and French robber-capitalist."<sup>2</sup> The basic Soviet concept of strategy in three continents has remained unchanged since that time. As Stalin was to put it some years later, Soviet Russia and Communist groups abroad constitute the main force of the world revolution; the peasant masses in the colonial and dependent countries, and nationalist revolutionary movements supported by them, supply the "direct reserves"; while conflicts among capitalist interests are the "indirect reserves."

The principal Soviet techniques of direct conquest and of infiltration and subversion were all tried out in Turkey and Iran during this first phase. Some of the events in Iran in 1920 and '21 today look like a dress rehearsal for the drama staged on the same scene twenty-five years later. In May 1920 local rebels and trained Communists, protected by an invading Red army, proclaimed a Persian Soviet Socialist Republic in the Northern Iranian province of Gilan. A year later Gilan Communists and Soviet troops were marching on Teheran. In the capital itself a Council of Trade

2. George Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran (Ithaca, 1949), p. 7, quoting from Zinoviev's address.

Unions had formed and promptly affiliated with the Communist Profintern while an Iranian Social Democratic Party had become a willing tool of the Communists. Suddenly, however, the Red army contingents were withdrawn, thus permitting Reza Khan's Cossacks to put a speedy end to the Gilan Soviet. It appears that then, as in 1946, Russia quit nibbling at Iran in hopes of one day swallowing it whole.

It was Turkey, however, which during this early period seemed to offer the more favorable soil for Communism. At the time of the 1917 revolution the Bolsheviks primarily appeared as the enemies of Turkey's archenemy, the Tsar, and by signing a separate peace with Germany the Soviets materially aided the faltering cause of the Central powers. Later, when Mustafa Kemal courageously undertook to save the Anatolian mainland from allied conquest he appealed for financial and military aid to the Bolsheviks, who were then engaged in a life and death struggle against the same Western powers. Vague ideas of radical social reform which were rife among the Anatolian nationalists added to the revolutionary ferment assiduously exploited by the Communists. At one time, in 1920, five or six Communist organizations, both secret and open, were operating simultaneously in Turkey.

The most colorful among these was an organization formed in Anatolia in 1920 and known as the Green Army. Its secretary-general was Hakki Behic, who for a short time also was Minister of the Interior in the Ankara nationalist government. A force of irregulars which did invaluable service on behalf of the Kemalist cause was at the direct disposal of this Green Army organization. Its secret aim was to establish a Moslem

Socialist Union in the Middle East. In negotiations conducted in Moscow between Turkish pan-muslims and the Bolsheviks it would seem that each side was trying to exploit the other for its own ulterior aims. At Mustafa Kemal's insistence the Green Army was soon dissolved, but its guerrilla fighters openly defied orders from Ankara Headquarters. Their leader at length deserted to the Greek lines. Three other organizations were frankly Communist. One was a Turkish Communist Party founded among Turkish prisoners of war in Baku in 1918, and another was operating in allied-occupied Istanbul. A third incited a rebellion among the workers of Eskisehir immediately in the rear of the troops of the Western front which then were fighting both against the Greeks and the insurgent irregulars of the Green Army. These tense weeks in the fall and winter of 1920 were perhaps the one time in her history when Turkey was closest to falling under Communist domination.

How precarious the situation was is attested by Mustafa Kemal's own conduct. As a result of negotiations in Moscow in the summer of 1920 he had become convinced that Russia would give no more than token aid to his cause and would not hesitate to use the Turkish nationalists as a pawn in her own efforts to obtain favorable treatment from the West. "Since the aim of Communism is unconditional subjection to Russia," Kemal stated in a dispatch to one of his front commanders, "the purposes of its organization /in Turkey/ are diametrically opposed to our own. We must in every way stop and remove the secret communist organizations."<sup>3</sup> Yet Kemal's

3. Quoted in Ali Fuad Cebesoy, Milli Mücadele Hatıraları (Istanbul, 1953), p. 474.

position was desperate enough to force him to seek help where he could find it. He therefore added: "Naturally I do not see fit to oppose Communism and Bolshevism publicly."<sup>4</sup> In order to cope with the growing menace of Communist agitation; Kemal in October 1920 hit on the ingenious device of requesting some of his close associates to form a so-called "Turkish Communist Party." The general secretary once again was Hakki Behic, the pan-muslim leader of the defunct Green Army. Other prominent members included Tefvik Rüstü Aras, who later was to become Kemal Atatürk's longtime foreign minister, and Celal Bayar, later a leader of Atatürk's and İnönü's People's Party, founder of the Democratic Party, and today President of the Turkish Republic. Kemal's aim in sponsoring this official Communist group became clear when the party stated, in its first circular, that "no society or committee, and no person without written authority and an official identity card /from this party/ will henceforth be allowed to be active on behalf of Bolshevist or Communist principles."<sup>5</sup> Secretly all the top-ranking military commanders were to sit on the party's central committee, it being understood that Communist agitation in the army would be strictly confined to the highest ranks. Nevertheless, a perusal of the debates of the Ankara Grand National Assembly of this period reveals that many of Kemal's loyal followers were prepared to take the public proclamations of this puppet Communist party at face value. Thus a future Kemalist stalwart spoke of Communism as "an ideology that has

4. Ibid., p. 475

5. Quoted ibid., p. 508

shaken the earth, that has given a new impulse to the Muslim world, that is smashing and destroying /our European enemies/--an ideology that has opened up the brightest of horizons before us . . . . The principles of Bolshevism are the scientific principles that will save the country, that will save the nation, that will save mankind."<sup>6</sup> Toward the end of 1920 another Communist group, the People's Socialist Party, came out into the open with supporters both within and outside of the Assembly as well as in the daily press.<sup>7</sup>

As soon as Kemal felt more sure of himself he put a determined stop to any further flirtations with Communism. Following the treaty of friendship with Russia of March 1921, in which each side promised not to intervene in the other's affairs, bonafide Communists in increasing numbers were brought before Kemal's revolutionary tribunals. Since 1922 all Communist activity has been illegal in Turkey. Later Atatürk was to declare publicly: "We must never forget that the greatest enemy of the Turkish world is Communism. It must be crushed wherever it appears." In Turkey, therefore, as in Iran, the first phase ended with the expulsion and suppression of Communism.

The Russian-Turkish friendship treaty of 1921 mentioned earlier, together with a treaty concluded between Russia and Iran one month earlier, inaugurates the second phase--a phase of normal and externally peaceful relations. The diplomatic history of this period is well known. As early

6. Muhittin Baha (Pars), November 22, 1920

7. It is possible that this party is identical with the organization earlier active in Eskisehir. According to Tarik Z. Tunaya (Türkiyede siyasi partiler /Istanbul, 1952/, (pp. 531f.), however, they were separate.



as 1918 the Bolsheviks had renounced all Czarist concessions in Turkey and Iran--an easy propaganda gesture, since it was highly doubtful at the time whether the Soviets would ever be able to benefit from these. In the 1921 treaty the Soviets also returned to Turkey the border districts of Kars and Ardahan which had been annexed by Russia in 1878. Evidently Russia, during the period of the New Economic Policy and of the bitter struggle between Stalin and Trotski was in no position to pursue an expansionist policy on her Southern border. An influential school of thought in the Kremlin, moreover, argued that the regimes of Kemal in Turkey and Reza Khan in Iran had the makings of genuine revolutionary anti-Western movements which deserved a measure of benevolent support. The deputies of the Comintern-controlled Social Democratic Party even supported Reza Khan when he proclaimed himself Shah of Iran in 1925--which did not stop Reza from outlawing Communism shortly thereafter.

Economic relations during the same period became increasingly closer. During the thirties the Soviet Union materially assisted Turkey in her efforts to overcome the depression by a program of state sponsored industrialization. Similarly Russia controlled over one-third of Iran's foreign trade. As late as 1935 premier Ismet Inönü, speaking to the National Assembly, referred in glowing terms to Turkey's "ever warmer friendship" with Soviet Russia. "The beautiful products of Soviet industry are rising in our own new industrial life as tokens of eternal friendship. Our close and sincere friendship with the great Soviet Union is every day becoming more extensive and more intensive both in the political and in every other sphere."<sup>8</sup>

8. March 7, 1935

Despite these cordial official statements and the assurances of the treaties of 1921 notwithstanding, the Soviet Union continued its secret subversive activities in both Turkey and Iran.<sup>9</sup> Tabriz for many years became the headquarters for GPU activities throughout Southwest Asia. In 1927 the Soviets concluded a secret agreement of mutual assistance with the Kurdish chieftains of Mahabad in Northwest Iran. Traditionally Communist agitation in that country has been most intensive among the national minorities, including the Armenians, Azeri Turks, Kurds, and Assyrians. Other Communist leaders have traditionally been recruited from among disaffected intellectuals caught in the spiritual malaise of countries whose concrete performance of necessity lags behind their aspirations of rapid Westernization. An outstanding example is Nazim Hikmet, widely considered the most gifted Turkish poet of the late 'twenties. After several minor arrests for Communist activity he was finally convicted to a lengthy prison term in 1932, from which he was released only by a general amnesty in 1950. Currently he can be heard reading his own versified diatribes on the people's war in Korea or against Mr. Dulles over Radio Moscow's Turkish transmissions.

This last detail illustrates a general rule. Whenever the ground gets too hot for them the Soviet Union has tried to withdraw its agents to Russia where they receive additional training while waiting for their

9. At the same time the Communists have tried to use every chance to give their activities a legal cover. Taking courage from the formation in 1930 of a loyal opposition at Kemal's own behest, the leader of the Eskisehir communists of 1920 applied to the authorities for permission to found a "Labor and Farmer's Party of the Turkish Republic." The permission was denied.

next assignment at home. Such was the story both of the Turk Dr. Sefik Hüsni Deymer and the Iranian Ja'far Pishevari. Deymer led the Communist group in Istanbul in 1919, and Pishevari was Commissar of Interior in the Gilan Soviet Republic. In the twenties both men escaped to Russia where they served the Soviet Union and the Comintern in a variety of capacities. Later they returned. Deymer in 1946 founded a Turkish Socialist Toilers' and Peasants' party which was promptly dissolved for its Communist leanings; today he is once again on trial as the leader of an alleged underground Communist Party. Pishevari gained notoriety as a leader of the Tudeh and premier of the Azerbaijan People's Republic.

In the late thirties official Soviet relations with Turkey and Iran cooled off markedly. Kemalist Turkey had earlier shown its independence of the Kremlin by sheltering Trotski after his flight from Russia. The re-militarization of the straits in 1936 and the Sa'dabad pact of 1937 among Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan were all interpreted by Moscow as so many hostile moves. The Germans at the same time outpaced Russia in their trade with Turkey and Iran. By concluding an alliance with France and Britain in October 1939, Turkey definitely aligned herself with her former Western enemies.

Russia's entry into the Second World War opened the third phase--of renewed pressure, aggression, secret organization, and attempts at subversion and expansion. Joint British-Russian occupation of Iran in 1941 gave the Soviets direct control of the fertile Northern Provinces. The sudden introduction of democratic freedoms, moreover, allowed the Communist Tudeh party to emerge as the only well-disciplined political force

in the street, the parliament, and the press. At wartime allied conferences Russia exerted constant pressure to get Turkey to enter the war. Remembering what fate befell other countries first occupied by the Germans and later "liberated" by the Red Army we can be grateful today that Turkey resisted that pressure. As the war drew to a close Russia demanded a revision of the Turkish friendship pact of 1921--the conditions eventually announced being the cession of Kars and Ardahan and a modification of the regime of the straits. Turkey, it must be remembered, was in an extremely vulnerable position--between the pincers of the Greek Communist rebels in the West and the Azerbaijan Soviet Republic in the East, and without any assurance of outside support. Although some prominent politicians<sup>10</sup> all along had counseled a policy of conciliation toward Russia, President İnönü courageously decided to let the Russian treaty lapse rather than grant any of the demands.

In 1946 and '47 the Soviet Union suffered its first major setback in the cold war--over the questions of Azerbaijan and Iranian oil. A shrewd and risky gamble by Iran's premier Ahmad Qavam and Western support for his country in the United Nations had forced Russia into a position where direct intervention might easily have set off a world conflict. She was thus caught in the dilemma of continuing support for her puppet Republics in Azerbaijan and Persian Kurdistan or withdrawing so as to allow free elections for a parliament that was to ratify a major oil concession for the Russians. The Soviets tried the second alternative--and in the end lost

10. Notably Tefvik Rüstü Aras; see his Görüşlerim (Istanbul, 1945).

not only Azerbaijan but the concession as well. Gavan, at the end of his breath-taking tight-rope act, ousted the Tudeh from his cabinet and undertook a first round-up of its followers in the country. In 1949 the Tudeh was officially banned although, under the chaotic conditions prevailing at the time of Mosaddeq, this did not appear seriously to hamper its effectiveness.

While the events of 1947 constituted a direct and immediate loss to the Soviets they also implied a hope for a long-range indirect gain. For when the majlis rejected the Russian concession it also insisted upon a renegotiation of the agreement with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company--an action that led eventually to the complete ouster of British interests from Iran. The hectic three years of the Mosaddeq regime (1951-1954) brought an intensive three-way struggle between Mosaddeq's own National Front, the fanatical mobs at the disposal of Mollah Abo-l-Qasim Kashani, and the Tudeh party--each side trying to exploit the other two and egging them on to greater intransigence. Mosaddeq's nationalism clearly was directed against Russia as much as against Britain. His first bill on the oil question, making it a punishable crime for any minister to negotiate a foreign concession, was passed by the majlis in December 1944 and caused the angry departure of the Soviet Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Kavtaradze, who was in Tehran for the very purpose of obtaining such a concession. This and the fact that old Mosaddeq until just before the end resisted the temptation of throwing himself into the arms of the Soviets and the Tudeh is a tribute to his stubborn courage and his impartial xenophobia. When he finally succumbed to the temptation, his own days as

Iran's virtual dictator were numbered. Although it is too early to assess the ultimate effects of the Zahedi coup it would seem that on balance Persian nationalism and independence, and not Communism, has gained from the oil crisis.

In Turkey the protracted diplomatic negotiations with Russia in 1945 and '46 coincided with a major change in internal policy. For the first time in twenty-five years the government openly encouraged the free formation of opposition parties. This development was to culminate in the displacement of İnönü's Peoples's Party by Celal Bayar's Democrats following the free elections of 1950. The gradual and voluntary abdication of dictatorship in Turkey was the direct continuation of a trend that had been interrupted by the war. At the same time it was an opportune move that smoothed Turkey's way into the United Nations and measurably facilitated the quest for Western allies in her lone stand against Soviet pressure. Inevitably, however, the more liberal climate made it possible for that same pressure to be applied on a larger scale within Turkey herself.

Communism has remained illegal in Turkey--as have political movements based upon ethnical, regional, or religious programs. The major landmarks along Turkey's increasingly pro-Western course were the proclamation of the Truman doctrine (1947), her inclusion in the European Recovery Program (1948), participation in the Korean war (1950), admission to the North Atlantic alliance (1951), and the conclusion of the pacts with Greece and Yugoslavia (1953) and with Pakistan (1954). These steps were accompanied by recurrent flurries of Communist agitation matched by a periodic tightening of repressive measures. In December 1945 a student mob in Istanbul

smashed the printing presses of the newspaper Tan which since the end of the war had become increasingly subservient to the Soviets. The police were careful to protect the demonstrators rather than their targets and intervened only when the procession headed for the Soviet consulate. The Socialist Toilers' and Peasants' Party, mentioned earlier, was closed in December 1946 after only six months of existence.<sup>11</sup> In the winter of 1947/8 three younger faculty members were ousted from Ankara University on charges of Communist leanings<sup>12</sup> and other dismissals followed throughout the school system; Communist propaganda among college students allegedly was carried on through such cover organizations as the Istanbul College Students' Association and the Turkish Youth Association; a Progressive Young Turk Union was active among Turkish students in Paris. In 1949 the anti-Communist paragraph of the penal code was sharpened. Shortly after Turkey's entry into the Korean war one of the Communist ex-lecturers at Ankara, Behice Boran, was arrested together with the other members of a Peace Partisans' Society which under her direction had attempted to distribute 25,000 copies of a leaflet protesting Turkish participation in Korea. Legal proceedings against a half dozen allegedly Communist periodicals followed.

11. The order, issued by the military commander of Istanbul in virtue of his wartime emergency powers, also applied to the Turkish Socialist Party--professedly a group with an evolutionary Marxist program, headed by Esat Adil Müstecabi. This party was reopened in June 1950 after the Supreme Court had set aside the conviction of its leaders, but closed again exactly two years later on renewed charges of Communist activity.
12. Their court trial, which lasted from June 1948 to February 1950, resulted in minor jail sentences for two of the defendants and acquittal for the third (Pertev Naili Boratav).

Finally, in January 1951, the police began a systematic roundup of Communists throughout the country, and a further amendment to the penal code later that year provided the death penalty for top Communist agents. The arrests culminated in the trial of 167 Communists which began in October 1953. The social composition of this group may throw some light on the tactics and the nature of the appeal of Communism in Turkey. According to one tabulation<sup>13</sup> it included 156 men and 11 women; and, among others, 43 workers, 35 government officials, 34 college students, 6 teachers, 15 other professional or white collar workers, 3 businessmen, and 2 soldiers. The defendants placed in positions most sensitive for national security were two teachers at military academies; one assistant manager of a munitions factory; two geologists (whereof one oil expert) in the government Minerals Research Department; as well as various employes in the Foreign Office and National Assembly printing presses, the government Information Service, and the semi-official newspaper Zafer. The main centers of Communist activity, apparently, were Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and the coal-mining district of Zonguldak.

It is impossible to estimate the numerical strength of Communism in Turkey--except to say that it probably is diminutive and, under present conditions, does not seem to constitute a serious threat. No Communist front party has ever participated in parliamentary elections; and, judging from the showing of similar splinter groups, it seems safe to say that any such party would hardly have gathered more than a few hundred, at most a

13. Vatan, Istanbul, October 15, 1953



few thousand votes. Although some Communist agitation at one point was reported among Istanbul dock workers, there seem to have been no major instances of sabotage. The monotonous propaganda blasts of the Turkish programs of Radios Moscow, Kishinev, Sofia, and Baku<sup>14</sup> seem so remote from day-to-day Turkish realities that it is hard to conceive that they could attract a sizable audience. 167 alleged Communists make an impressive crowd in a court room but they do not add up to a creditable fifth column. Above all, despite the frequent reference to peasants or farmers in the names of Communist parties, Turkish peasants have been conspicuously absent from all lists of Communist suspects unearthed by the police or tried in the courts. And over 80 per cent of the Turkish working population to this day is engaged in farming.

Perhaps the nature of the Communist impact on Turkey and Iran may be assessed by listing the major factors that would tend to make these countries liable to Communist subversion and the assets which stand on the other side of the balance. Such a calculation also may bring out some of the significant differences between the two countries.

As liability no. 1 I would identify the traditional existence of anti-Western feeling. Such feeling is amply justified by the two countries' history of military defeat, political subjection, and economic exploitation at the hands of European powers. This liability is counterbalanced in both countries by two factors--though the total balance is more favorable in

14. See the Radyo Dinleme Bülteni issued several times weekly by the Department of Press, Broadcasting, and Tourism, Ankara. I am indebted to Mr. Halim Alyot, former director of that agency, for permission to scan this material.

Turkey than in Iran. The first is their memory of prolonged Russian aggression and their consequent clear appraisal of the nature of the Soviet threat. The other is their long experience in the conduct of an independent foreign policy. The same combination of courage and political realism which led Turkey to seek cordial diplomatic relations with the Soviets in the 1920's has caused her to resist Soviet pressures and build up her alliance with the West since 1945. And Premier Qavam of Iran can claim the honor of being one of the very few statesmen who have ever outwitted the Communists at their old game of national front coalition. Both these factors--proximity to Russia and experience in international politics--differentiate Turkey and Iran sharply from their Arab neighbors. While Turkey and Iran never completely lost their independence to the West the Arabs were dominated by foreigners from the time of the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century until the Second World War. It is inconceivable that any Turkish or Iranian statesman should throw himself into the arms of a totalitarian world conqueror with the same foolhardy naivete that drove Rashid Ali or with the cynicism that drove the Mufti of Jerusalem into the arms of Hitler. The additional resentment of the West which one might have expected in both countries as a result of Kemal's and Reza's forced-draft Westernization was in large part neutralized through a compensatory glorification of the Turanian and Iranian past.

Liability no. 2 I see in the persistence of a traditional feudal structure in an age where highly mobile and flexible social structures alone are capable of survival. The liability is not the traditional structure itself. We in the West increasingly realize what the Communists have known all

along--that it is not poverty that tends to breed Communism but rather the painful cleavage between reality and aspiration. Communists have been recruited among the disillusioned poets and jobless intellectuals, the factory and refinery workers, and the underpaid government officials--all of them groups that were torn out of their traditional context without having found a satisfactory place in a new scheme of things. By contrast, the peasant masses in Turkey and Iran, by their very ignorance and because their outlook is bounded by their village community with its age-old mores, have so far proven immune to any foreign ideology.

The danger is precipitous or superficial Westernization without thought of the social tensions that will arise in the inevitable period of transition. The sudden introduction of democratic freedoms by the powers occupying Iran in 1941 benefited no one more than the Tudeh. The experience to date with the farm mechanization program in Turkey, on the other hand, seems to provide a good example of smooth transition. The program, which has brought about a spectacular increase in cereal acreage and productivity, so far has resulted in no serious social upheavals such as a large-scale displacement of peasants or farm labor. In fact the greater demand for skilled and unskilled labor seems to have led to a net in-migration into the most highly mechanized districts. The job, however, is not complete: a collapse of domestic wheat prices, at present pegged far above the level of a glutting world market through inflationary subsidies, could have disastrous effects. On the Turkish labor scene the government's policy of encouraging industry and union organization while stubbornly refusing to recognize organized labor as an equal partner is

creating tensions which it requires all the tact and diplomatic skill of our FOA mission and of enlightened Turkish officials to channel into positive directions.

The Persian experience since 1941 points to a specific weakness of social structure brought to the fore by the impact of Western culture on countries such as Turkey and Iran. This is the disinclination to form associations for abstract long-range objectives. It corresponds closely to the reluctance in "underdeveloped" countries to undertake productive long-term investment as opposed to speculative ventures or landownership. Both tendencies are amply accounted for by a history of autocracy, military invasion, and general insecurity. Yet the one is as fatal to democratic institutions as the other is to a capitalist economy. Here again Turkey is far better off than Iran. Three decades of unchallenged rule by the Republican People's Party and its enlightened bureaucracy have gone far toward creating a tradition of devoted public service at least among the educated urban class.

The most serious danger arising from present cultural tensions in the two countries--and throughout the Near East--would lie in an alliance of Communism and religious fanaticism. The triangular game of coalition and blackmail among Mosaddeq, Kashani, and the Tudeh gives an idea of the potential dynamism of such a combination. In Turkey it is often assumed that various extremist religious tendencies are in fact allied to Communism. Thus the semi-official Zafer wrote that "The Reds attempt to propagate Communism in semi-intellectual circles and /religious/ reaction among the

ignorants,"<sup>15</sup> --and similar quotations could be compiled ad libitum. Plausible though it seems, the assertion appears, for the present, to rest entirely on conjecture. If any solid evidence existed the government would surely have used it in its running court battle with both types of extremism. It must also be admitted that few public figures in Turkey today have escaped being called Communists or tools of Communism--from Presidents İnönü and Bayar down to the humble teacher who wrote the book A Village in Anatolia.<sup>16</sup> For the future, however, one hesitates to dismiss the possibility of a "short-circuit" between extreme right and extreme left, even for Turkey. Examples such as the Iranian case, the reported Communist connections of the Mufti and the Moslem Brotherhood, and the recent Iraqi election alliance between extreme leftists and right-wing nationalists are too close for comfort. Even the large political parties in Turkey tend to attach greater importance to short-run tactical considerations than to fundamental principles, and the ideological flexibility of the religious-conservative Nation party has been truly disconcerting. Communism and religious "reaction" have a common enemy--the existing regime--and a common basis of recruitment--those caught in the clash of two cultures. At the same time they potentially complement one another. Religious

15. Editorial by Mümtaz Faik Fenik, January 19, 1951. In the debate on the latest tightening of the anti-Communist clause of the penal code former Chief Justice Halil Özyörük stated categorically: "Communism is using religious beliefs as a means to its ends" (Grand National Assembly, November 26, 1951). And Ahmed Emin Yalman, the liberal newspaper editor, on the occasion of the recent Communist trial, wrote an article entitled "Attack from Five Columns"--the other four being the Nation Party and various religious-reactionary groups including the perpetrators of the attempt on Yalman's life in November 1952 (Vatan, October 11, 1953).
16. Mahmud Makal. See the introduction by Lewis V. Thomas to the English edition (Oxford University Press, 1953).

extremism commands the possibilities of a wider appeal which Communism so patently lacks; the Communists, on the other hand, would supply the central direction, organizational experience, and clear program of action whose absence has been the greatest single handicap of the religious fanatics.

The third and final point of my account--lack of national cohesion and absence of a constructive, healthy nationalism--is a liability that applies primarily to Iran and hardly at all to Turkey. The Turkey of Atatürk, İnönü, and Bayar, despite its many problems and shortcomings in terms of its own standards, is today a full-fledged and highly homogeneous nation in the Western sense. Iran, by contrast, offers the spectacle of a disjointed congeries of Persians, Azeri Turks, Kurds, and Armenians, of nomadic tribes and settled population. In speculating on the causes we must once again bear in mind the history of Turkish and Iranian contacts with the West. Turkish Anatolia, after the First World War, was faced with a sudden head-on assault from the West implying the threat of complete political extinction. In the ensuing War of Independence most of the remaining Armenian population was killed, and the Greeks subsequently were exchanged against the Turkish minority in Greece--leaving behind only the Kurds who, as Sunni Moslems, have been far easier to assimilate. The Turkish population of Anatolia itself, in battling for independence and survival on their own soil, was for the first time in history welded into a nation--a nation that has proven itself capable of setting high goals and of going far toward attaining them. Iran, exposed to a process of slow strangulation at the hands of Britain and Russia, has fought with desperate courage; yet she never experienced a national rebirth comparable to that of Turkey.