

Turkey
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Influence of the Russian revolution of 1905 on revol. movement in Turkey

Kh.M.Tsovikian "Vliianie russkoi revoliutsii 1905 g. na revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v Turtsii" Sovetskoe vostokovedenie, Vol.3, pp.15-35

p.15 The revolutionary movement in Turkey, which had begun at the end of last century significantly increased under the influence of the Russian revolution of 1905; it embraced broad strata of the population of multinational Turkey and launched the struggle against Abdul-Hamid's absolutism.

The 1905 Revolution had a two-fold effect on Turkey. On one hand it provoked an uproar within the ~~governing~~ ruling classes, and on the other hand it activated the forces of the revolution.

p.19 Prior to the Russian revolution of 1905 the revolutionary movement in Turkey was very weak. The actions between the young Turk political groups and the national minority parties were not as yet coordinated. The work of the Young Turk organizations was concentrated in large cities of West European states, as well as in Egypt, Greece, and Bulgaria. Their activity lay in propaganda of the ideas of freedom and of constitution among a narrow circle of liberally inclined Turkish government officials, army and navy officers, and also among the students of the Stambul institutions of Higher Learning. Within the country the activity of the Young Turk parties was very limited. Absolutism was on a rampage....

After the Russian revolution of 1905 the situation changed....

p.20 The opposition movement let roots in various strata of all the nationalities in Turkey. It became accelerated particularly in Anatolia among the Turks and in the Arab regions of the empire among the Arabs. This opposition movement was headed by thousands of representatives of progressive intelligentsia.... who were being persecuted and exiled to the outskirts of the empire. After repeated routs of the underground young Turk organizations by 1905-1906 a large number of exiles had aggregated in the provinces. They were precisely the ones who headed this opposition movement.

p.22 Beginning with 1905 in a brief space of time the number of newspapers and periodicals issued by the Young Turk groups was doubled. In Egypt, Bulgaria, Switzerland, France, the Caucasus, etc. newspapers, journals, leaflets began to come out in Turkish, Arab, French Armenian, and Bulgarian languages. In spite of the fierce terror even in Turkey several newspapers were published....

The Syrian emigrés in Egypt, France, England and other countries of Europe began undoubtedly under the influence of the Russian revolution of 1905 to establish their first political circles. With the increase of revolutionary and opposition movements in Turkey the national Arab movement also increased.....

The Azerbaijanians, Tartars and Turks, arriving from Russia in Turkey for study at the Stambul schools and being under the effect of the Russian and Iranian revolutions promoted the spread of the ideas of freedom and constitution in Turkey. They gave much space in the columns of the Azerbaijan and Tartar newspapers to the description of the difficult economic and political situation of Turkey of which the Turkish press was forbidden to write.....

The basic masses of the opposition against the Sultan Government was far removed from the democratic ideas of the Russian revolution....

p.23 The existence of a large number of political groups and trends in the country, and especially abroad the existence of various trends even in the party of Unity and Progress testified to the heterogeneity of the Young Turk movement.....

and nationalities

Different classes/took part in this movement. The latter in the main tended toward separatism. The trend toward separatism complicated the struggle and weakened the all Turkish front against absolutism.....

p.25 Prior to 1905, under Abdul-Hamid, there was practically no open rebellion among the Turkish soldiers and sailors. The intolerable economic conditions in the army and the navy, the acceleration of iron discipline, ~~prolonged service~~ extended military service, their participation in punitive expeditions and the suppression of revolts among the Macedonians, Armenians, Arabs, Druz, Nestorians - all this aroused the army and navy against the Sultan Government.

In 1906 the growing discontent found its reflection in demonstrations and open action against the superiors and against the Sultan authority.....

p.28 Under the influence of the Russian revolution, beginning with 1905 along with unrest in the army and navy, unrest and rebellions flared up with renewed force among all the nationalities inhabiting Turkey.

The Macedonian and Armenian movements, which were basically peasant movements rose to a higher level. The Chetnik movement increased in Macedonia and partisan movement in Anatolia. These were joined by the national Arab movement....

p.29 The struggle against absolutism in Anatolia became particularly strong early in 1906. The urban merchant and petty bourgeoisie was taking part in this struggle.... The struggle of the masses was guided by the Federation of Osman revolutionaries and the Committees of Turkish liberals, the League of Osman Constitutionalists, the Committee of Unity and Progress, the Liberation League of the self-resigned (Janveren) and other organizations...

The Anatolian Turkish liberals following at first the example of the Russian, and particularly the Transcaucasian Armenian and Azerbaijan Liberal bourgeoisie developed a petition movement in all the Anatolian towns.... Other, more Leftist elements, and mainly the League of Osmanian Constitutionalists and the Liberation League of the Self-Resigned advanced the demand for a radical reconstruction of the existing state regime and government system. The Self-Resigned were even considering a general revolt. The Committee of Unity and Progress after the failure of the petition movement advanced the demand for the restoration of the constitution and counted on the support of the Turkish army and a military mutiny (in Erzerum).

Every one of these organizations had its own opinion on the question of the part which the Christian population was to play in the struggle against absolutism (the Armenian and Greeks). For instance the Committees of the Turkish liberals and at the start of the movement also the p.30 Committee of Unity and Progress were against the Armenian and Greeks acting jointly with the Turks.....

p.31 The petition movement together with the popular demonstrations and separate rebellions continued throughout 1906 and 1907. Whenever this form of struggle had no effect on the Sultan the leaders of the movement called upon the people to withhold payment of state taxes and levies. / This radical appeal to unsubordination produced a strong effect/ and unrest swept throughout Anatolia...and especially the Eastern districts. Erzerum played the leading part in the movement....The events were bloody in Erzerum....

p.32 The popular unrest, military mutinies and partisan action in Anatolia were not carried to a decisive end and were defeated every time because all these movements were not closely related with each other and the movement was lead by the top layer of the liberal bourgeoisie and landlords as well as bourgeois nationalist parties. The active participation in this struggle of the popular masses of various nationalities with their own demands was not p.33 included in the program of the leadership of the opposition movement; on the contrary it was beyond the boundaries which were set in advance by the leadership.

The Young Turk Erzerum Committee preferred to base itself only on the Turkish Army, to raise the revolt in the army and demand that the Sultan restore the Constitution of 1876. The leaders of the Erzerum Committee Khusein Tosum-bey and his comrades accelerated the propaganda in the army and scheduled the uprising for the autumn of 1907. But at the time the plan was to be put in action the conspiracy was exposed and Ahmed-pasha made short work of the plotters. The Committee as a whole was arrested. Tosum-bey was taken to Stambul and imprisoned, where he stayed until the revolution of 1908. The rest of the leadership of the Committee -

fifteen men - were exiled to Sinope in May 1908 for life at hard labor....

Late in 1907 after the suppression of the army mutiny the anti-government movement once more raised its head in Erzerum. A crowd of people seized the post and wired its demands to the Sultan. These demands of the Erzerum people were not given any attention and popular unrest continued through the next year....Large scale arrests began in AnatoliaAll prisons were filled to capacity....The Young Turk, foreign and Caucasian press carried accounts of the unrest in Turkey and revolts throughout Asia Minor....

....Ali Khaidar, the son of Midkhad-pasha wrote as follows in an article published during the Young Turk Revolution in the newspaper Neue Freie Presse:

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" It was much more likely "- Ali-Khaidar wrote -" that European Turkey would be the reservoir of the revolutionary movement. However the Turkish patriots ~~selected~~ chose Asiatic Turkey, rather than European Turkey ~~for~~ as the place of their revolutionary activity.... There/ in Asiatic Turkey/ the play was prepared, which was performed in Macedonia. The Young Turks chose Asia, for there there was no danger of provoking international complications. There propaganda was developed, which embraced all of ~~Turkey~~ Asiatic Turkey. This propaganda was not noticed, and even if notice of it was taken, it was not considered important. Erzerum was the center of the entire movement. The revolution was expressed in Asia in a number of revolts/ The fighting call of the movement was "the Constitution"/ This article was reprinted in the Tifliskie novosti, No.37, August 2, 1908/....

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/From Lenin, Sochineniia, XXI, pp.395-96/: "If we were to take as an example the revolutions of the Twentieth Century " - Lenin wrote - " then both the Portuguese and the Turkish revolutions will have to be of course recognized as bourgeois revolutions. Neither one nor the other have been "popular" revolutions, because the popular masses, their overwhelming majority did not come forth noticeably in either the former or the latter revolution actively, independently and with their own economic and political demands."

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