

[The Influence of the Russian defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 and of the Russian Revolution of 1905 on the Peoples of Asia.]

. . . The Russian historian Miliukov was forced to acknowledge that the Turkish revolutionaries in Paris watched very closely the development of the Russian revolution of 1905. However, ~~besides~~ in addition to the influence on the Turkish revolutionaries abroad, the Russian revolution had also affected the masses of the Turkish people as a whole, as well as the Turkish army. Up to 1906, the Turkish movement of opposition was concentrated exclusively outside the country and among the Turkish emigrés, in Geneva and Paris, being represented particularly by the Union and Progress party. But already in early months of 1905 the Young Turks become active on the Turkish territory proper, while the Union and Progress party establishes a network of organizations throughout Turkey. The movement becomes so strong that the Central Committee of the party leaves Paris and moves to Saloniki where the chief office of the movement directed against the Sultan government, is established. In 1907, and upon the recommendation of the Armenian party Dashnaktsutiun, a congress of all revolutionary parties and organizations working against the Turkish government, is held. A decision is made at this congress to launch a struggle against the Sultan government at the time of the thirtieth anniversary of Abdul Hamid's accession to power in order to overthrow him.

The Anglo-Russian project for the Macedonian reforms which was formulated at the historical meeting of the British King and the Russian Tsar in Reval on June 9, 1908, hastens the explosion. The Young Turks party decides to no longer delay the struggle against the Sultan.

The role which the Turkish army had played in the liberation movement is very great. However, one should not underestimate the role played in the constitutional movement by the backward elements of the Turkish population. It can be taken as an established fact that the Turkish movement of liberation was not limited to the army only as the bourgeois writers in Europe and tsarist Russia are inclined to represent. The Turkish revolution was an all-national movement in which all Turkish population had energetically participated. It is correct to say that of the two Turkish battalions which

were first to raise ~~the~~ revolt against the Sultan, the battallion under the command of Lieutenant Enver bey was made up mainly of soldiers, but the second and more numerous unit which advanced ^{??} under the command of Niazi bey, the commandant of the fortress Ren, was composed almost exclusively of non-military men. The significance of this fact is evident. Of the first two battallions who staged the revolt, there were more non-military than military men. Consequently, this early episode in the Turkish revolution. . . repudiates the notion that the Turkish revolution of 1908 was made exclusively by the army men.

The small army of ^{Niazi} Niazi bey and Enver bey proved invincible in the war against Abdul Hamid primarily because they were supported by the entire Muslim population of Macedonia and all Muslim peasantry of European Turkey. In all Turkish villages, the peasants supplied the volunteers with food, informed them of the movement of the government forces, and gave shelter and often concealed these volunteers. A large sum of money was offered for Enver's head, but the money did not tempt any one. Many villages openly refused to submit to the government's orders and to pay taxes. Following the Turkish villagers, the Bulgarian villages began also to side with ^{Niazi} Niazi bey. Only after the peasant masses had decisively expressed their sympathies with and their readiness to render assistance to the revolutionary plans of Niazi bey did the latter launched his victorious advance from one city to another. In general, the June revolution of 1908 can very well be characterized in its first stage as the rising of the Muslim peasantry of the European Turkey against the regime of Abdul Hamid, rather than a military coup d'etat. . . .

Ibid., pp. 186-96

The Young Turks' revolution of 1908 aroused considerable displeasure on the part of the bourgeois circles in Europe and Russia. It was feared that Turkey might be regenerated and consolidated, and therefore, its breaking up made more difficult. Such prospects could not be favored by the European imperialists and the Russian political party of the Constituent Democrats headed by Miliukov. Many Russian writers, both of liberal and radical camps, were sceptical of the possible Turkish revitalization; this opinion was upheld likewise by the considerable section of the West-European society and the press. . . .

It was only in the Muslim world, in Egypt, Persia, India, Tunisia, among the

intellectuals of Algeria and Morocco, in all Muslim colonies of Europe, and among the Muslims in Paris, London, Zurich, and Berlin that the news of the revolutionary occurrences in Turkey had been met with great enthusiasm. . . .

[Speaks again of the fact that the revolt of 1908 against Abdul Hamid was the revolt of the Muslim peasantry of all Turkey] Even when Austro-Hungary and Bulgaria attacked Turkey some time later, and when rumors were circulated about revolts all over Turkey, etc., who were the people who rose in defence of the country that was being treacherously attacked, and who saved it from impending catastrophe? It was not the army, because in spite of its heroism and patriotism, it was powerless at that time to parry off the attack. The defence came from the entire Turkish working class, and from other strata of the population. It was the civilian Turkey that had organized and carried out the famous boycott of the Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian goods and forced these countries to concede. It were the workers in the Turkish ports who had refused to unload the Austro-Hungarian ships and who threw the Austrian goods into the water; it were the Turkish shop owners who had refused to buy Austrian and Bulgarian produces, refused to consume Austrian sugar, and the village produces coming from Bulgaria... The bloodless economic boycott which was carried out with an amazing restraint and persistence by the entire Turkish population, proved to be a powerful instrument of national defence. . . .

In addition to the Union and Progress Party, other Turkish parties aimed at the establishment of a constituent regime in Turkey. They were: (1) The radical group of Prince *Sabahattin* ~~Sabahattin~~ Eddin which paid particular attention to the national question, and insisted on granting broad autonomy to various nationalities in Turkey; (2) the Party of Muslim Federation which unified the better enlightened peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, and the city proletariat. This party advanced a number of ~~demands~~ social and economic demands. . . . (3) The League of Osmanis constitutionalists; (4) Gachaka, the Armenian Social Democrats; (5) Dashnaktsunyun, the Armenian nationalists; (6) The Albanian Committee; (7) the Arab Committee.

At the congress of the above parties in Paris in 1907, the representatives of all the above parties decided to coordinate their efforts; outlined their minimum program, and a year later the wishes of this congress were realized. A constitutional regime was introduced in Turkey.

To sum up: If the Turkish revolution had its own characteristic in view of the role that was played in it by the army, it differed little as a whole from any other European revolution.

It was prepared and called forth by the economic development of the Ottoman empire, by the slow but persistent growth of the productive forces in the country which were breaking up the old political structure. This revolution was delayed at first, and later considerably hastened by the complications evident outside the Turkish territory; by the intrigues of Russia, Austro-Hungary, Britain in Macedonia, Arabia and Albania, and by the fear shared by the ~~enlightened~~ enlightened elements of the entire Turkish population of the complete disintegration of the Ottoman empire if the old regime was to stay. The Turkish officers played the role in the liberation movement in Turkey which is usually played in other countries by the ~~more~~ enlightened and educated elements of population. In Russia, such a role had been played by the Russian intelligentsia; in Persia by the clergy...; in India by the ^{Brahmins} Brahmins who were prosecuted by the British government for the revolutionary propaganda. In Turkey, however, it was the military cast, as was the case of the Russian Decembrists in 1825, that proved to be the most enlightened.

In analyzing the program advanced by the Turkish officers, and in studying the tasks which they assumed, we can see that these officers proved to be not only the defenders of the national interests and the sovereignty of Turkey, but that they were also the representatives of the Turkish liberal bourgeoisie which by that time was shaping up and consolidating its forces. . . . The task assumed by the Turkish officers did not fail as was the case with the Russian Decembrists in 1825, because the Turkey of 1908 was far ahead economically than Russia of 1825. The army marched on so easily because the Turkish peasants who made up the army, proved to be ready to accept new ideas, and did not remain indifferent to propaganda which the Committee of the Union and Progress party carried on energetically in the Turkish countryside. . . Turkey was saved thanks to the heroism of its proletariat, petty bourgeoisie, and the town population as a whole and the ^{economic} boycott of the enemy. . . But the Young Turks' revolution proved to be unable to solve the problems with which it was confronted so as to prevent the breaking up of the Ottoman empire. Actually it only hastened this process. . .

Ibid., pp. 196-207

The Young Turks did not justify the hopes which many European socialists had put in the Turkish revolution of 1908 ~~expecting~~ expecting that radical ~~reforms~~ social and economic reforms and the change of the national policy in regard to the Christian population of Turkey. Nonetheless, the Young Turks had introduced sufficient changes in the country to arouse against themselves the imperialist circles of the European states.

The Young Turks headed by Enver Pasha strove to strengthen the Turkish army; outlined a plan for laying out of highways and railway lines. They were the leaders of a powerful national movement in Turkey which awakened patriotic feelings among all strata of the Turkish population, as well as the desire to fight a life and death battle for the ~~extension~~ integrity of the Ottoman empire. Besides, the Young Turks' movement found a strong repercussion in the entire Muslim world, among the peoples of the Caucasus, Persia, Turkestan, Algeria, India, Morocco, Tunisia, and Tripoli. [Describes the attack by Austria, Italy, Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece].

The responsibility for the difficult situation in which the Ottoman empire found itself as a result of the coup d'etat of 1908 lies to a considerable extent with the Young Turks' party which was infected with the malady of a narrow and nearsighted nationalism and chauvinism while defending the principles of Panturkism and Panislamism. The Turkish revolution was an all-national Turkish affair, the result of the efforts and desires on the part of all classes of the Turkish population to struggle against the old despotic regime. But the leaders of this revolution, the Young Turks, were and have remained the representatives of the liberal Turkish bourgeoisie and the military cast. They could not abandon the psychology of their own class, and could not solve the national and racial problems. . . . The Young Turkish revolution failed to solve the national, peasant, and workers' problems. Some concessions to the spirit of the time were made, but they were not sufficient at the time when all European states came out against the Ottoman empire. Only the most radical and immediate rejuvenation of the country and the radical settlement of the national question in the sense of granting broad autonomy to the Christian population, could have provided new strength to the Ottoman empire in the struggle against the hostile coalition. . . .

It was only under the pressure of a sharply hostile policy of the Entente ^{that} did the Young
Turks

~~xxx~~ Turks abandon their Francophil and Anglophil sympathies. . . One can say that the entire period of the Young Turks' rule passed under the sign of the Anglo-French orientation. The admirers of the French and English political organization, the Young Turks deceived themselves by hoping that England and France would support Turkey simply because the latter had introduced a constitutional regime... Soon they were to face bitter disappointment. . . [Reference here to the Entente and tsarist Russia policies regarding the Straits] Soviet Russia has quite a different viewpoint in regard to the Dardanelles. Only if the Black Sea is controlled by the Soviets, and if the Red Turkish banner, or the banner of the Soviet federation of the Black Sea states, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~, ~~xxxx~~ ~~the Ukraine~~, ~~the Caucasus~~, and ~~Turkish Anatolia~~ is hoisted over Constantinople, would the Ukraine, the Caucasus, and the Turkish Anatolia be able to live in peace and to carry on constructive work.

TÜRKİYE SOSYAL TARİH ARAŞTIRMA ANKARI
TÜSTAV