

# ATATÜRK'S MOVEMENT AT ITS START: THE VIEWS OF OUTSIDERS (1919-1921)

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## INTRODUCTION

The Turkish Nationalist movement which Mustafa Kemal Atatürk officially led as of May 19, 1919, was generally misunderstood by foreign observers for three reasons. First, the Nationalist movement won broad popular support without appearing to have a coherent policy or ideology. Because the Nationalist movement aimed at preserving the country's territorial integrity and creating an independent Turkish national state within these borders, it attracted support from groups of every shade of the political spectrum. Approval of Mustafa Kemal's program was registered not only among conservative religious factions, the military, and supporters of the monarchy,<sup>1</sup> but also among the socialists and other leftist groups. These diverse elements were drawn to Mustafa Kemal's Nationalist movement precisely because its political program urged popular effort against common, external enemies while it remained sufficiently vague on the political structure of the future Turkish state so as not to alienate any one group or faction. Second, the Allies disagreed among themselves over the future of Turkey, which affected their understanding of events and developments in the country and contributed to the overall picture of confusion. Third, Mustafa Kemal's own charisma and his sudden and enormous personal popularity among the Turkish populace were not easily or correctly comprehended by foreigners.

This paper examines how the Allies failed to understand the dynamic changes within Turkey that were brought on by the Nationalist movement, as well as how Mustafa Kemal exploited the Allies' errors of judgment and analyses to have the Treaty of Sèvres rendered null and void. Views of outsiders may shed some light into his non-dogmatic and at times ambivalent stance. Furthermore, contrary to the assumptions of those who try to draw the psychological profile of a self-proclaimed demi-

<sup>1</sup> Falih Rıfka Atay, *Çankaya* (İstanbul: Doğan Kardeş Matbaacılık Sanayi A.Ş. Basımevi, 1969), pp. 170-172.

god or a miracle worker<sup>2</sup>, Mustafa Kemal's domestic politics point only too well to his awareness that he was not an undisputed leader. His acceptance at the international level, on the other hand, owed a lot to the war weariness and the fear of Bolshevism in Europe, opposing national interests of the Allies, and Muslim sentiments towards Turkey which the Allies had to take into consideration. Mustafa Kemal emerges as a fine diplomatist and a great strategist even at the beginning of the Kemalist movement based on the evaluations of foreign observers.

## PART I

### PRELUDE TO THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

At the end of World War I, the Mudros Armistice was signed on October 30, 1918, by the Ottoman Minister of Marine Rauf Bey (Orbay)<sup>3</sup>. The armistice provided for the opening and the occupation of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus by the Allies. Apart from the demobilization of the Turkish army, the most important article of the armistice which had implications in the immediate future for Turkey was the Allies' right to occupy any strategic point in case they felt their security was threatened<sup>4</sup>. By April 1919, Italy occupied Antalya and its environs, following the French occupation of Cilicia. On May 15, the Greeks landed troops in Izmir. By May 26, a British government spokesman was to claim in the House of Commons that the occupation of İzmir was carried out under the direct orders of the Supreme Council of the Paris Peace Conference in accordance with the terms of the Mudros Armistice<sup>5</sup>. Yet the invasion was not an Allied effort but solely a Greek operation. While Anatolia was slowly invaded, the Ottoman government in İstanbul remained helpless, making faint efforts to ease the terms of the occupation. The Allies did

<sup>2</sup> For example, see Norman Itzkowitz's "Religion, Turkish Nationalism and the Immortal Atatürk," paper presented at New York University, The 4th Annual Summer Institute, June 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Rauf bey became the only Ottoman Minister to join the Nationalists when he returned from exile and imprisonment in Malta.

<sup>4</sup> J.C. Hurewitz (Ed), *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, Vol. II, 1914-1956 (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1956), pp. 36-37.

<sup>5</sup> E. L. Woodward and R. Butler (Eds), *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Series I, Vol. IV, (London: Oxford University Press, 1952-), p. 654. (Henceforth British Documents).

not formally occupy İstanbul until March 16, 1920, but by then the occupation was merely a formal declaration of what was already an actuality.

The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) leadership had fled the country when the armistice was signed. Enver Pasha, the most colorful of the so-called Triumvirate, reached Berlin via the Crimea where he established contact with the Soviets through Karl Radek, a member of the Communist Party Central Committee, and an active agent of the Third International. Eventually, Enver Pasha went to the Caucasus with his rather unrealistic theories of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islam. He adopted the latter concept in order to circumvent Russian objection to his activities. Enver Pasha, thus, proposed inducing revolutions among Central Asian Muslims against British authority in the area. It is interesting to note that although the British were fully aware of the lines of communication (mostly through letters) between Enver Pasha and Mustafa Kemal during 1920-1922, they were quite ignorant of the contents of these letters, which revealed a total disagreement and a definite lack of cooperation between the two men<sup>6</sup>. This was another and yet a major factor in making it difficult for foreigners to determine the identity and the political credo of the Nationalists.

In July 1919, Admiral A. Calthorpe, the British High Commissioner in İstanbul, sent a letter to the Turkish Foreign Minister informing him of "serious" movements in the districts of Sivas and Konya which appeared to be "directed by the agents of CUP"<sup>7</sup>.

In August, *The Times* reported,

*A train containing war material handed over to the British authorities by the Turkish forces at Erzerum, according to the armistice, has been held up between Erzerum and Sarikamis! Probably Kazim Bey is party to this breach and Mustafa Kemal is probably working with him... Bolshevik agents are working in Turkey and in the Transcaucasus with those of the wealthy, if somewhat disorganized, members of CUP<sup>8</sup>.*

<sup>6</sup> Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Makedonya'dan Ortaasya'ya : Enver Paşa*, vol. III (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1978), p. 520.

<sup>7</sup> *British Documents, op. cit.*, p. 688.

<sup>8</sup> *The Times*, August 5, 1919.

The news report symbolically called this connection the "Enver-Lenin line."

During July-August 1919, *Le Temps* observed that the Nationalist forces were not brigands being led by adventurers, but that the movement was a legitimate effort to prevent the partitioning of Turkey. *Le Temps* concluded that Europe should not treat Turkey as if it is an inherited entity to be shared<sup>9</sup>.

Early in October 1919, the British Military Attaché, Lieutenant Colonel Ian Smith was to report,

*The Nationalist movement is not CUP at present, although there are CUP people among it. It will, however, become so unless we give some sign... Under CUP propaganda they may develop a real anti-British feeling.*<sup>10</sup>

Further, he urged the British government to recognize the seriousness of the Nationalist movement and advised against suppressing it. Smith maintained that backing the Damad Ferid Pasha cabinet against Nationalist sentiment was damaging to British interests because it alienated patriotic Turkish opinion<sup>11</sup>.

The *New York Times*, also in October, referred to the Nationalists as "Young Turks" when reporting the occupation of Konya by Kemal's forces and two days later stated that Mustafa Kemal was in possession of "what may become the Sultanate of Iconium"<sup>12</sup>.

Back in June of 1919, the Turkish delegation in Paris under Damad Ferid Pasha had been coldly received by the Allied Supreme Council. Mustafa Kemal had made extensive use of this episode by denouncing Damad Ferid Pasha and caused his government to fall<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> İzzet Öztoprak, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Türk Basını, Mayıs 1919-Temmuz 1921*, (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1981), pp. 100-101.

<sup>10</sup> *British Documents, op. cit.*, pp. 792-94.

<sup>11</sup> The French had already alienated patriotic Turkish opinion when, with great fanfare, General Franchet D'Espèrey entered Istanbul on a white horse.

<sup>12</sup> *The New York Times*, October 9, 1919.

<sup>13</sup> Roderic H. Davison, "From Mudros to Lausanne," *The Diplomats*, G. Craig and F. Gilbert (Eds), (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 179.

A new government under Rıza Pasha included a majority of nationalists and sympathizers of Mustafa Kemal. *The Times* announced the event in October under the headline "Young Turks Again In Power" and reported that this was "tantamount to a return to power of CUP... with whom Mustafa Kemal is allied."<sup>14</sup> In reality, there was no longer a CUP; the membership had voted to dissolve the party at its last Congress in November 14-19, 1918<sup>15</sup>. The identification crisis was in part due to the fact that Mustafa Kemal was not known to the outsiders as anyone other than a bright military commander in the Gallipoli campaign; in part to the fact that the Nationalist movement was not yet a unified front<sup>16</sup>.

During 1919-1921, there were approximately ninety-six newspapers published in Turkey and twenty-six of these were overtly supporting the Nationalist cause<sup>17</sup>. The censorship which had been lifted at the end of the war was applied again in 1919 under the orders of the Sultan. For this reason, much of the political news carried by these newspapers was a mere translation of news items appearing in foreign newspapers. Besides the presence of the usual number of foreign correspondents in Turkey, there were two newspapers published in Istanbul in English, *The Bosphore* and *The Orient News*, and two in French, *Le Journal D'Orient*, and *Le Moniteur*<sup>18</sup>. Thus, the channels of communication were relatively open as far as foreign correspondents were concerned, but news regarding the Nationalist movement was generally obtained second-hand in Istanbul through minority informants. In fact, the only minority representative who spoke in favor of the movement was the Grand Rabbi of Turkey, Nahoum Efendi. *The New York Times*, commenting on an interview with him which appeared in *Le Matin* said,

*While his statement does not coincide with other reports from Turkey, his opinion should be received with respect. (He kept seventy-five schools, with more than 30,000 students, of the Israelite Alliance going in Turkey during the war.)*<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> *The Times*, October 13, 1919.

<sup>15</sup> Sabahattin Selek, *Anadolu İhtilâli*, (İstanbul: Doyuran Matbaası, 1981), p. 85.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279. In June while the Erzurum Congress met, there were other independent national congresses meeting in Western Anatolia. It was not until August that all congresses communicated and pledged unity.

<sup>17</sup> Öztoprak, *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *The New York Times*, November 10, 1919.

Nahoum Efendi had stated that the Nationalist movement was not directed against Allies, and the Mustafa Kemal was neither an adventurer nor a fanatic. He was loyal to the sovereign and his objective was to apply the Wilson formula - Turkish regions should remain Turkish and nothing more. The Grand Rabbi was wrong only on one account - Mustafa Kemal's loyalty to the sovereign. The Jewish community had no grievances against the Turks; in addition, the persecution of Jews in Thrace under Greek occupation may have contributed to the positive approach of the Jews to the Nationalist movement.<sup>20</sup>

**L'Humanité**, the news organ of the French Socialist party, was the only newspaper in France which sympathized totally with the Nationalists<sup>21</sup>. On the other hand, the owner of **L'Excelsior** was Greek, and **Le Temps** had quite a few Greek shareholders<sup>22</sup>. There were also several Turkish public relations efforts abroad trying to promote the Nationalist cause, but these efforts did not nearly equal the Greek and Armenian propaganda which was occurring in the United States and Europe. Following the armistice, the Association for the Preservation of Turkish Interests was formed in Lausanne by several Turkish intellectuals. Also, during 1920-1921, a newspaper entitled **Les Echos de l'Islam** was published in Paris by Turks<sup>23</sup>. It was not until April 1920, that the **Anadolu Ajansı** was established by Mustafa Kemal in Ankara. It transmitted news and views of the government in Ankara abroad.

In March 1921, the private secretary of the United States Ambassador in Rome stated in a memorandum to Washington that there was an unofficial legation (headed by Galib Kemali Bey) of the Ankara government in Rome posing as a newspaper agency, carrying out "Kemalist propaganda."<sup>24</sup> This communiqué is interesting because throughout 1919-1921, there was an effort on the part of the Nationalists to combat misinterpretations of their intent. Yet, the lack of a comprehensive line of poli-

<sup>20</sup> Mark Lambert Bristol, "War Diary", 25 May 1919. Unpublished Papers. The Library of Congress.

<sup>21</sup> Öztoprak, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Department of State, Records Relating to the Internal Affairs of Turkey, March 11, 1921. The National Archives, Microfilm. (Hereafter U.S. Records), "Military Affairs and the Army" 867.20-867.21.

tical path outweighed their efforts and resulted in views which will be analyzed in the following sections of this paper. The actual priorities of the Nationalists were to dispose of the enemy and to survive: this did not include public relations. Frequently, their line of conduct was determined by the way outsiders viewed them so that when the West displayed hostility, the Nationalists got closer to Russia. Disappointment with the Western style reforms also may have contributed to their considering the socialist alternative. However, although there was a turnabout as soon as the Western powers began negotiating treaties with the Ankara government in 1921, the relationship between the two events was hardly a causal one. Zealous Bolshevik propaganda outside of Ankara's control had posed a threat to the Nationalist movement which led Mustafa Kemal to suppress the legitimate Turkish Communist party. By 1923, the only traces of socialism left in the system were Mustafa Kemal's principle of "Populism" and centralized administration. Thus, the eclectic nature of government in Turkey was determined to some degree by the attitude of outsiders.

## PART II

### HOW THE GREAT POWERS VIEWED THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT IN 1919

In 1919, the British views were still representative of the Allies' approach to the Nationalists. The United States, as a potential mandatory power and by virtue of its distance was in a somewhat different position. Bolshevik Russia, on the other hand, was making its foreign policy known in spite of an ongoing civil war and the precarious condition of its government.

#### *The British Views*

Although its correspondence and official announcements generally reflected the Allies' views, the British government was quite aware of the beginnings of dissension among the Allies. In July, Admiral A. Calthorpe urged Arthur Lord Balfour, Lord President of the Council, to make a decision limiting Greek occupation, because coupled with the Italian occupation, this would contribute to nationalist reaction<sup>25</sup>. In August, Prime Minister Lloyd George was cautioning Tommaso Tittoni, the Italian Fore-

<sup>25</sup> *British Documents, op. cit.*, p. 666.

ign Minister, that it would be "fatal" if Italy kept soldiers in Southern Anatolia. Then, "some other" power would inevitably occupy the North which would incite rebellion among the Turks. He stated that the Turks, unlike the Arabs, would never accept partitioning of their country. Lloyd George urged Italy to confine itself to securing only economic rights<sup>26</sup>. Not only did such a request not alter the reality of the occupation, but later E. Venizelos, the Greek Premier, justified their advances into the interior on grounds that the Italians had already advanced up the Menderes river<sup>27</sup>. At the same time, Admiral Calthorpe demanded that the Ottoman Minister of War remove Mustafa Kemal from his official appointment because he was causing "serious trouble"<sup>28</sup>. When Mustafa Kemal did not obey orders and return to Istanbul, Admiral Calthorpe decided that the Turkish government should treat him as an outlaw, and subsequently the government obliged him<sup>29</sup>. Late in July, Admiral Calthorpe, based on Mustafa Kemal's forming a Congress in Erzurum, predicted the

*establishment of an independent and probably intensely fanatical and anti-European government in Asia Minor, rejecting authority of Constantinople and sovereignty of Sultan*<sup>30</sup>.

By August, Admiral Calthorpe was referring to the Nationalist movement as the "Chauvenist movement"<sup>31</sup>.

Throughout 1919, reports regarding Mustafa Kemal's political identity kept reaching the British government. George Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary, was informed that Enver Pasha was in close touch with Mustafa Kemal, which automatically implicated the latter as a CUP adherent<sup>32</sup>.

Early in August, Admiral J. de Robeck replaced Admiral Calthorpe as the British High Commissioner in Istanbul. Calthorpe's recall, according to a British official, was due to the fact that the British government

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 680.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 688.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 690.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 604.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 712-714.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 721.



had realized what a mistake the occupation of İzmir had been and held Calthorpe responsible for the dimension it took<sup>33</sup>. Admiral de Robeck informed Lord Curzon in September that Mustafa Kemal had affirmed he was not connected with the CUP, but the Grand Vizier maintained contrary.<sup>34</sup>

The British attitude towards Turks as being incapable of accomplishing much of anything was best symbolized in Admiral Richard Webb's words. (Webb was with the British High Commission in Istanbul). In a letter to Sir Cecil Crowe in Paris, he stated "The situation in the interior, due practically entirely to the Greek occupation of Smyrna, is getting more hazy and unsettled. Were this anywhere but Turkey, I should say we were on the eve of a tremendous upheaval"<sup>35</sup>.

In September, there was a rumour about a secret agreement between the Sultan and British representatives on accepting a British mandate over Turkey<sup>36</sup>. *The Times* reacted with self-righteousness; the rebels would not hear of a British mandate! The reason for this rejection was that the Nationalists and the CUP were one and everyone knew that the CUP was anti-British. *The Times* report did not make any allowances for the fact that the Nationalists might have had a will of their own<sup>37</sup>.

In November, the Ottoman cabinet of Damad Ferid Pasha fell. According to Admiral de Robeck, the new cabinet was "composed of men who are respectable, but who have been in the main, nationalist, and in some cases, also CUP sympathizers"<sup>38</sup>. Mustafa Kemal was still a "good deal of an enigma"<sup>39</sup> to the Admiral and since many CUP members had joined the Nationalists, he thought soon they would become one.

In November, the British High Commissioner informed Lord Curzon that even though Mustafa Kemal Pasha guaranteed the security of the Christians in Anatolia, as long as they did not engage in a threat to the

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 790. Mr. Mohler's private correspondence with Sir Cecil Crowe in Paris.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 780.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 733.

<sup>36</sup> *Elaine D. Smith, Turkey: Origins of the Kemalist Movement (1919-1923)*, (Washington, D.C.: Judd and Detweiler Inc., 1959), p. 23.

<sup>37</sup> *The Times*, November 4, 1919.

<sup>38</sup> *British Documents, op. cit.*, p. 782.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

Empire, the promise emanated from “an irresponsible Nationalist leader who regards the surviving Armenians and Greeks as so many hostages for the exaction from the Allies of more favorable terms of peace for his own country”<sup>40</sup>.

By the end of 1919, the British government was caught in a dilemma, the causes of which were unleashed by its own policies. On the one hand, there was a legitimate government of Turkey in Istanbul, and, on the other, there was a viable Nationalist entity with which to reckon. Furthermore, in December, the Pan-Islamic sentiment among Muslims under foreign domination came to the attention of the British government. Admiral de Robeck informed Lord Curzon that

*The Nationalists and CUP elements in Turkey have realized the extent to which the country has been enfeebled by the war, both in men and resources, and how much it is at the mercy of the victorious Entente Powers. It is but natural that they should endeavour to draw fresh strength from other Moslem countries, such as Persia, Egypt, India and the Arab world. Moreover, both the Bolsheviks and the Turkish Nationalists have this in common, that they may both expect to profit from the arousing of an anti-British and Pan-Islamic sentiment amongst the Mohammedans of the Central States, and it is therefore to be anticipated that efforts are being made with this end in view*<sup>41</sup>.

Mustafa Kemal was indeed seeking support from other Muslims, yet it was by no means through CUP elements. Ironically, at the time, Enver Pasha, the ex-CUP leader, had aligned himself with Pan-Islam in order to evade Russian hostility towards Pan-Turkism. Mustafa Kemal took a different path. In the next two years, he was to align himself with some Arabs against the French, and more significantly, with the Indian Muslims and Afghans. Diplomatic relations with Afghanistan may have been necessary in order to curb Enver Pasha’s activities in Kabul and to prevent him from speaking on behalf of the Nationalists. The British failed to see the true ideological cleavage between Enver Pasha and Mustafa Kemal. To the extent that they perceived any difference, the difference between the two men struck them as just another example of “oriental” competition for power, and not one of philosophy.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 875.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 974.

*United States' Views*

American views carry significance because of their even handed approach to Turkey at that time. The United States' interest in Turkey was essentially confined to trade and missionary work. The U.S. High Commissioner in Istanbul, Admiral Mark L. Bristol, became disillusioned with the Allies' intrigues over Turkey, and his views were highly affected by the turn of events. Very early in 1919, Admiral Bristol recommended to Washington that there should be only one mandate over Turkey, both because the Greeks were showing signs of imperialistic aims and because they had proven unfit to handle other races when they persecuted Jews in Thrace. The antagonism between the races, according to Bristol, was made up of religious, political and personal differences which ran very deep, and, therefore, the Greeks should not be granted territory, either in Thrace or in Asia Minor<sup>42</sup>. Furthermore, a telegram from Venizelos, sent from Paris to Athens, authorizing aid for small militia formations in Samsun and Trabzon "for a future array," convinced Admiral Bristol that the ultimate objective of the Greeks was to present the Peace Conference with a *fait accompli* on the Black Sea coast, with Greek military control of Pontus<sup>43</sup>.

In May, *The New York Times* reported that the proposed partition of the country had aroused the Turks to unite in a nationalist movement where Young and Old Turks had joined forces<sup>44</sup>. Implicit in the news was the fact that the Ottoman government was not happy with the situation any more than the Nationalists were.

In July, Admiral Bristol reported,

*Thus far little knowledge has been obtained of what is being done by the Congress called to meet at Erzeroum. Some influential Turks have gone to Asia Minor to try to prevent any disturbances and assist this nationalistic movement. It remains to be seen whether this movement is a sincere effort to do something constructive for the improvement of the Turkish people. There are some reports that this movement is simply an organization to arm people to massacre the subjugated races...*

<sup>42</sup> Bristol, "War Diary", *op. cit.*, 25 May, 1919.

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Records, *op. cit.*, April 25, 1919.

<sup>44</sup> *The New York Times*, May 31, 1919.

*However, it would seem that the Turks should have better common sense than to carry out such a program*<sup>45</sup>.

In August, Bristol wrote,

*The reports of disturbances in Asia Minor are being exaggerated. I hardly believe the Turks are planning any immediate outbreak but are organizing for a defensive action against any partitioning of Turkey. It is quite apparent any organization of this kind, which is done peacefully, is rather to be commended than condemned. Without any direct proof, I have a feeling that in the Greek, Armenian and certain foreign quarters, there is a tendency to expose the organization in Asia Minor as evidence that massacres are about to take place. It is not conceivable that the Turks would be so foolish. The present Turkish government is opposed to this organization and there is some belief that the opposition is directed or at least encouraged by foreign interests also, it is thought that the government is sympathizing with this organization, secretly, and outwardly pretending to suppress it*<sup>46</sup>.

In September, Admiral Bristol predicted that the Nationalist Congress at Sivas would be the forerunner of a movement which would produce serious changes in the country "unless the present Armenian and Greek propaganda, coupled with European intrigue, is stopped, and definite decisions rendered in the near future by the Peace Conference"<sup>47</sup> Admiral Bristol also telegraphed Washington reiterating that the chief aim of the "insurgents" was to defend Turkey against the Greeks and to institute a nationalist government. He added that the insurgents were unanimously in favor of American aid<sup>48</sup>. The United States Peace Mission report stated that the Sivas Congress indicated a strong anti-British attitude and had resolved to cooperate with "Georgians, Tartars, dissatisfied Persian and Arab tribes" against the British<sup>49</sup>.

In October, **The New York Times** attributed the downfall of the Damad Ferid Pasha cabinet to the occupation of Konya by the National-

<sup>45</sup> Bristol, "War Diary", *op. cit.*, 20 July, 1919.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 August, 1919.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 September 1919.

<sup>48</sup> U. S. Records, *op. cit.*, September 16, 1919.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, September 12, 1919.

ists and stated that Cemal, the new Minister of War,<sup>50</sup> was Mustafa Kemal's political ally<sup>51</sup>. Perhaps taking advantage of the more favorable atmosphere provided by the new cabinet, Mustafa Kemal sent a personal representative, Colonel Vasif Bey, to call on Admiral Bristol. Vasif Bey confirmed Admiral Bristol's views on the Nationalist position and informed him that the French were already making overtures to the nationalists. General D'Espèrey had told Vasif Bey that the interest of France in Turkey was purely material and that they could evacuate Adana if given a monopoly over the cotton crop<sup>52</sup>. To the fair-minded American, this was just another example of European intrigue, but Vasif Bey's point was to relay the message that the Nationalists were being recognized as a force.

Later in October, *The New York Times* reported that the Nationalists would now support the government and abstain from interference with the government's acts<sup>53</sup>. Actually, this was a premature statement, but the news source was London. The wishful thinking of the British was not realized when on October 22, the Amasya protocol was signed between the new Ottoman government and the Nationalists. Not only was Mustafa Kemal interfering with the government, he was becoming its guiding light.

#### *Views of Bolshevik Russia*

Although there was no official relationship during 1919 between the Nationalists and the Bolsheviks, Russia was beginning to show signs of interest in Mustafa Kemal. This interest stemmed partly from doctrinal reasons, but mainly from the presence of Allied troops in the Crimea. When the civil war in Russia turned against the White Armies, the Allies were alarmed and landed troops in Southern Russia. Therefore, to the Bolsheviks, the Nationalist organization in Anatolia presented a splendid opportunity for solidarity in an effort to undermine the Allies, especially after the Erzurum Congress called for resistance to foreign occupation.

<sup>50</sup> Not to be confused with the Cemal Pasha of the CUP leadership.

<sup>51</sup> *The New York Times*, October 7, 1919.

<sup>52</sup> Bristol, "War Diary", *op. cit.*, 7 October 1919.

<sup>53</sup> *The New York Times*, October 15, 1919.

*Izvestia* interpreted the Nationalist movement as the beginning of a Communist revolution in Turkey and predicted that this revolution would be a continuation of the Bolshevik revolution<sup>54</sup>.

In September, there was an appeal from the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Georgy V. Chicherin, to the workers and peasants of Turkey. Chicherin stated that the only way to free Turkey from foreign yoke was for the workers and peasants to take their fate in their own hands and revolt against "exploiting pashas."<sup>55</sup> However, an analysis (in 1920) of the Turkish society by a Turkish Communist Party<sup>56</sup> member, Dr. Fuat Sabit, was to reveal to the Soviet leaders in Moscow that the Nationalist organization did not fit into the mold of a simple class struggle. In Turkey, landowners were not capitalists because agriculture was not modernized and did not yield large profits. Most peasants owned land, and the civil service and officers' corps were open to everyone, regardless of class<sup>57</sup>. This discovery, therefore, coupled with other political realities, led the Bolsheviks to support the Nationalists on the lines of mutual political interests. If the Nationalists succeeded, the British encirclement of Russia in the Caucasus and Turkey would cease. Moreover, the Greek presence in Anatolia was objectionable to the Bolsheviks, because the Greeks were backed up by the British. So, the Bolsheviks had every reason to support the Nationalists, in spite of their "bourgeois" flaw.

The views of the British, the Americans and the Bolsheviks are representative of the confusion with which the Nationalist movement was perceived at its inception. The British had been preoccupied with the pro-German (therefore anti-British) sentiment of the CUP leadership during World War I. Any organization challenging their position had to be a continuation of the CUP spirit and, therefore had to be broken. They espoused the partitioning of Turkey. However, partitioning to the British meant more spheres of influence for themselves through the Greek, Armenian and Kurdish autonomous regions, as opposed to having to confront

<sup>54</sup> *Izvestia*, April 23, 1919, as cited in Alptekin Müderrisoğlu, *Kurtuluş Savaşının Mali Kaynakları* (Ankara: Maliye Bakanlığı 50. Yıl Yayınları, 1974), p. 521.

<sup>55</sup> Jane Degras (Ed), *Soviet Documents On Foreign Policy*, Vol. I (1917-1924), (London: Oxford University Press 1951), pp. 164-167.

<sup>56</sup> This was the Turkish Communist Party founded by Mustafa Subhi and at the time was located in Baku.

<sup>57</sup> Müderrisoğlu, *op. cit.*, p. 524. Selek, *op. cit.*, pp. 426-427.

the Italians and the French directly by partitioning the country among the three. The outlook of the United States, on the other hand, was against the partitioning of Turkey. Admiral Bristol, also saw that this policy would lead to more bloodshed and proposed a mandate of one power over Turkey until such time (perhaps a generation) that the people could be educated in self-government, and then form an autonomous state. He believed that this approach would satisfy the Wilsonian principle of self-determination without further hostility. The Bolshevik approach and promises of aid to the Nationalists, symbolized both the relief of having found a potential ally against the Western powers and an effort to create a positive image in the Muslim world by fraternizing with a Muslim country.

These three different and opposing views were to give much leverage to Mustafa Kemal in negotiating both with the Westerners and the Bolsheviks. These views also helped define his concept of nationalism. The highly nationalistic orientation of Republican Turkey owed much to Western attitudes which were, on the whole, condescending. Later, Mustafa Kemal's eclectic political system was to borrow both from the West and socialism, and he redefined the systems to the extent that no one could mistake him (without going into polemics) for following a single model, thereby adhering to any specific foreign politics.

### PART III

#### 1920: AN EVENTFUL YEAR

##### *Towards the Treaty of Sèvres*

During 1920, the views of the Western powers towards the Nationalists changed, with the exception of the U.S. High Commissioner's outlook. Two of the most significant factors affecting this change in attitude were the widening splits between the Allies and the fear of Bolshevism, which became especially acute after the Bolshevik-Kemal rapprochement. That the Treaty of Sèvres made this solidarity effective was not an acknowledged fact in Britain. The French and the Italians, on the other hand, were overtly altering their policies.

According to a French author, Gaston Gaillard, in 1920, Mustafa Kemal's movement was a national movement rather than a nationalistic one, because it asserted itself at all echelons. In 1919, Marshal Abdullah Pasha, who was ordered to reach Mustafa Kemal in Trabzon and con-

vince him to give up his command, had not even stirred from Istanbul. Furthermore, the Anatolian governors and military commanders, who had been summoned to the Porte, had not arrived, either feigning illness or making some other excuse<sup>58</sup>. Hence, the Old Turks clandestinely supported the Young Turk.

In January 1920, the new Ottoman parliament met and ratified the National Pact, which spoke to the indivisibility of Turkey. This action, coupled with news of Nationalist victories against the French, in Maraş, sealed the fate of the Rıza Pasha cabinet.<sup>59</sup> In March, following the formal occupation of Istanbul, the cabinet was dissolved and the British exiled most of the nationalist deputies to Malta. The British discontent with the Rıza Pasha government was inherent in Lord Curzon's statement to the House of Commons earlier in March:

*Mustafa Kemal is the official governor of Erzurum and that, in itself, constitutes a link between him and Constantinople which leads one to think that any attempt to disown responsibility for what the Young Turk may be doing in Asia cannot successfully be made in Constantinople... In flagrant violation of the Armistice, there has been a constant interchange of arms and armed men between the capital and the Nationalists<sup>60</sup>.*

After the Nationalist-oriented cabinet was dissolved, Sir Cecil Crowe wrote home from Paris that the concept of Christian hostages was a dangerous tool in Mustafa Kemal's hands, but the British had and would have many Turkish hostages-ex-CUP people and the nationalist deputies in Malta<sup>61</sup>. Admiral de Robeck was not in favor of blowing up forts in the Dardanelles or of actively suppressing the Nationalists as had been suggested by the Foreign Office as a reprisal against the Nationalists. He maintained that Mustafa Kemal would react to this with counter-reprisals against Christians in Anatolia and could very well cut off food supplies to Istanbul by holding up the Anatolian railways<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>58</sup> Gaston Gaillard, *The Turks and Europe*, (London: Thomas Murky and Co., 1921), p. 87. (The French edition of the book is dated August, 1920).

<sup>59</sup> Davison, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-179.

<sup>60</sup> *The Times*, March 12, 1920.

<sup>61</sup> *British Documents, op. cit.*, p. 914.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 977.



At this point, even Damad Ferid Pasha, who was no ardent supporter of Mustafa Kemal, had to be virtually forced into disavowing the Nationalists<sup>63</sup>. But, disavowed they were. On April 5, 1920, a **firman** from the Sultan announced to the people the ultimate disavowal of the Nationalists and was accompanied by a **fetwa** from the Sheikh-ul Islam who called it a holy duty to kill them<sup>64</sup>. Mustafa Kemal, having been quite aware of the fact that declaration of war had to be sanctioned by the Sheikh-ul Islam, had taken measures to win over some of the higher clergy in Anatolia. Claiming that the Sultan and the Sheikh-ul Islam in Istanbul were acting under foreign pressure, he had a counter-**fetwa** issued. The echo of this act in far-away America, as reflected in **The New York Times**, was that Mustafa Kemal had designated Sheikh-ul Islam the "Chief of Dervishes in Anatolia"<sup>65</sup>. This gentleman was to be the representative of the "church" in the Nationalist government. **The New York Times** concluded that the Nationalists were thus contemplating the creation of an entirely separate government, with a caliph and possibly a sultan of their own. **The Times**, on the other hand, was hopeful that when the Imperial **fetwa** was communicated to the Anatolian population, the Nationalists, whose influence was already on the wane, would lose altogether<sup>66</sup>.

In May, **The New York Times** published an interview of Paul Williams, the **Chicago Tribune** correspondent, with Mustafa Kemal. Kemal used the opportunity to communicate that his aim was to maintain the integrity of the Turkish territory as it stood under the Armistice. He stated that the Nationalists were depending on the aid of all of Islam because the Turks were the last of the Muslim races to remain free. The Nationalists had ample assurances from other Muslims for help. "His statement carried no threat, when answering the question of aligning with the Bolsheviks" Williams noted. Mustafa Kemal said "If the Allies insist on partitioning Turkey, and there is no outside help, we will willingly accept it (i.e., Bolshevik help)"<sup>67</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, March 30, 1920.

<sup>64</sup> Selek, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-80.

<sup>65</sup> *The New York Times*, April 13, 1920.

<sup>66</sup> *The Times*, April 19, 1920.

<sup>67</sup> *The New York Times*, May, 4, 1920.

By the time this interview took place, Mustafa Kemal had sent a memorandum to Chicherin proposing the establishment of diplomatic relations. This gesture was motivated by the hope of obtaining financial aid from Russia because Mustafa Kemal was already convinced that the coming Peace Treaty might compel the Nationalists to fight. In June, Chicherin's reply was favorable<sup>68</sup>.

*The fear of Bolshevism, however, had a fortunate consequence later on, as it brought about in 1920 a complete change in British ideas concerning Turkey and Constantinople. The London Cabinet realised that the Turks were the first nation that the Bolshevik propaganda could reach, and to which the Moscow Government could most easily and effectually give its support against British policy in Asia Minor, which would make the situation in the East still more complicated. So, in order not to drive the Ottoman Government into open resistance, England first showed an inclination to share the view, held by France from the outset, that the Turks should be allowed to remain in Constantinople<sup>69</sup>.*

Following a fervent campaign from religious quarters in the United States, President Woodrow Wilson sent a note to the Allies intimating that the Turks should not be allowed to remain in Istanbul<sup>70</sup>.

In June, Admiral Bristol wrote to Washington,

*During the afternoon Miss Annie T. Allen, of the Near East Relief called to explain her trip to Angora. Miss Allen was informed that thus Mustafa Kemal and his followers believed that America had joined the Allies against the Turks and are not neutral. It was even intimated that it would be best for all Americans to leave Turkey. This latter may be a bluff. They would not allow Miss Allen even to go to Konia, so it would appear that they wanted her to return to Brussa and to Constantinople so that she would report what she had heard... Miss Allen attended the meetings of the Nationalist Parliament and was struck with the orderly way in which they were conducted and the democratic way in which Moustafa Kemal presided over the meet-*

<sup>68</sup> Soviet documents On Foreign Policy, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-188.

<sup>69</sup> Gaillard, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100-102.

*ings. Miss Allen dined with Moustafa Kemal and was struck with his democratic surroundings. His whole staff had dinner with him*<sup>71</sup>.

Domestic politics aside, there was no apparent change in the American official position towards the Nationalists.

### *The Allies Part Ways*

In 1920, there were serious splits among the Allies. In April, **The New York Times** reported that the French and the Italians were critical of the Allied occupation of İstanbul<sup>72</sup>. In June, Admiral Bristol informed Washington that the French were negotiating with the Nationalists and a French mission had been to Ankara and had agreed to an armistice in Cilicia. The terms of the armistice included no provisions regarding the Armenians, because the Armenians were still Ottoman subjects<sup>73</sup>.

As Anglo-Hellenic designs on Turkey unfolded, American and French officials reported certain schemes. Early in 1920, an agreement was signed to establish a Ponto-Armenian Federation. At the same time the Greeks had come to an understanding with the British for the establishment of an Anglo-Hellenic army, just in case the Armenians went over to an anti-British power. The British had no documentation of such plans, only the Greeks. The document for plans to land Greek troops in Transcaucasia was written by a M. Manoussou, president of the Greek National Council in Armenia, and was brought to the Paris Conference<sup>74</sup>. In June, Lloyd George stated, in the House of Commons, that no obligations had been entered into by Great Britain to give assistance to the Greeks in their operations against the Nationalists<sup>75</sup>.

At the same time, **The New York Times** reported that the French press resents the Hythe Conference actions of May 1920, reiterating partition, sanctioning war on the Turks, and handing over to Greece the task of settling affairs in the Near East. Robert Lambel of **La Liberté** was quoted as saying, "What will it cost us to support it? Is France, the secular protector of Islam, going to lose all her advantage and prestige and

<sup>71</sup> Bristol, "War Diary", *op. cit.*, 13 June, 1920.

<sup>72</sup> *The New York Times*, April 22, 1920.

<sup>73</sup> Bristol, "War Diary", *op. cit.*, 6 June, 1920.

<sup>74</sup> U.S. Records, *op. cit.*, January 1920.

<sup>75</sup> *The New York Times*, June 29, 1920.

her political tradition in supporting the most determined enemies of the crescent, and those, moreover, who have never ceased to covet Constantinople?"<sup>76</sup>.

By late 1920, Admiral Bristol stated that propaganda had begun concerning the treatment of Christians in Pontus. Since even the Greeks admitted that they were not in a majority in this area, an accompanying document obtained from a French Naval Intelligence officer pointed to the imperialistic Greek aims. The French source maintained that the Greeks had sent officials, a year ago, to England to be instructed in colonial governing. All evidence pointed to a secret agreement between Greece and England, regarding the Near Eastern policy<sup>77</sup>.

**The Times** attacked the Italian attitude towards the Nationalists as follows:

*The activity of the Nationalist propagandists seem to have its effect in certain European, specially Italian, circles here. In these circles, the idea that peace can only be made with the Nationalists seems to be gaining ground. It is difficult not to see in this attitude proof that those financial influences which, before the war worked for the CUP, and are still in contact with Djavid Bey and other shining lights of this notoriously corrupt oligarchy, are now working for the restoration of CUP under Nationalist camuoflage*<sup>78</sup>.

Yet, from the Nationalist viewpoint, it was still too soon to depend upon French and Italian action. There were yet French forces on the Black Sea coast, around Zonguldak, where coal resources were of much interest. **The Times** reported that the French force there was entrenching, due to rumors of a Nationalist attack<sup>79</sup>. According to an American official in Athens, the British, the Greeks and the French had also agreed to a plan whereby the French would hold the European shore of Marmara, the British would retain the Asian shore, and part of the Greek army would march from İzmir to Marmara to cut off the Kemalist forces operating there<sup>80</sup>. This strategy succeeded, and by July, the commander of

<sup>76</sup> *The New York Times*, June 22, 1920.

<sup>77</sup> U.S. Records, *op. cit.*, November 1920.

<sup>78</sup> *The Times* June 10, 1920.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, June 26, 1920.

<sup>80</sup> U.S. Records, *op. cit.*, June 20, 1920.

the Nationalist forces in Thrace, Cafer Tayyar Bey, was taken prisoner and his forces were defeated. A British source from Athens reported that the "Greek troops, at British request, started cleaning up the peninsula of Nicomedia (İzmit) of Kemalistic hordes"<sup>81</sup>.

However, the French attitude to the Anatolian Nationalists seemed to be different. In July, Admiral Bristol telegraphed Washington:

*Effective French-Italian opposition to the attempted decisive operation by Greek forces against Anatolian Nationalists (is) daily more evident. Neither France nor Italy, for political and economic reasons, desire complete destruction of (the) Kemal movement*<sup>82</sup>.

In August, with the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres,<sup>83</sup> propaganda about the Nationalist strength being on the decline was escalated in Europe. Admiral Bristol stated otherwise :

*Mustafa Kemal's forces are not as demoralized as reports circulated in the European press, especially in the Greek and English press, would have people believe. They are recruiting and organizing to resist a further advance of the Greeks, if not to take offensive against the Greeks. The Mustafa Kemal government is better organized and in departments, so that if Mustafa Kemal was superceded, there is no doubt that the Nationalist movement would continue without him*<sup>84</sup>.

Late in September, *The Times* reported that the Porte had asked for financial assistance from the Allies for the pacification of Anatolia against the adventurers who controlled the Nationalist forces :

*(An) act of common justice and prudence of Allied governments could give the legal government of Turkey the necessary financial aid for this purpose. Failure of kemalist forces to resist Greek advance, despite anti-Greek propaganda suggest that they would be equally helpless against any organized attack*<sup>85</sup>.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, July 23, 1920.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, July 30, 1920.

<sup>83</sup> *Diplomacy In the Near and Middle East*, op. cit., pp. 81-89.

<sup>84</sup> Bristol, "War Diary", op. cit., August 1920.

<sup>85</sup> *The Times*, September 27, 1920.

After all, the Greeks had done their part and it would be unfair to demand further efforts from them when Turkish troops, if properly equipped, should be able to do the work.

An American scholar was to attribute the splits between the Allies to the fact that the division of Turkey had given France too small a share for them to make an engagement in a new war worthwhile. The Italians, on the other hand, were disappointed with the British for making concessions to Greece, at their expense. Hence, the Franco-Italian support of the Nationalists<sup>86</sup>. What this analysis did not take into account was European public opinion, and the dimensions of the Kemal-Bolshevik rapprochement.

#### *Turkish Nationalist and Bolshevik Relations in 1920*

As of yet, there is fragmentary information about the extent of socialist activity in Anatolia during 1919-1921. In May 1920, a Communist party was formed in Ankara under the auspices of Mustafa Kemal<sup>87</sup>. Contrary to some views, this was not a gesture to appease the Russians, for although they encouraged socialist activity, at no time did the Bolsheviks make aid contingent upon the Ankara government becoming socialist. Besides, Turkish socialism was not even favorably viewed in Russia because it put nationalism above socialism<sup>88</sup>. The Ankara Communist party had as its policy not federation, but alliance with Russia. When, in January 1921, Mustafa Subhi, leader of the Turkish Communist Party, located in Baku, was murdered in Trabzon along with some followers, the relations between Ankara and Moscow did not alter. Subhi was on his way to untie the two Turkish parties.

In Ankara, Mustafa Kemal was seriously studying socialism as a potential system for Turkey, but when confronted with communist elements

<sup>86</sup> Frank H. Simonds, "Greek vs Turk: A New Phase of the Eastern Question," *American Review of Reviews* 62 (Aug, 1920), pp. 159-168.

<sup>87</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-170.

<sup>88</sup> Walter Laqueur, *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1956), p. 209. Also see "The Socialist Party in Turkey," *Narodnyi kommissariat po inostrannym delam, Biulleten* 92 (sep, 1921), p. 81. According to this article, Hilmi Bey (the Leader of the Turkish Socialist party) was an agent of England, the party was without principles and did not have any connection with scientific socialism. Moreover, it was accused of adhering to the revisionist German school of socialism.

beyond his control, he ended up rejecting it<sup>89</sup>. Another consideration in his mind might have been how to explain the adoption of a Russian system to the populace; the system of an age-old enemy - "Moskof."

Political reality aside, the Nationalist-Bolshevik rapprochement was taken very seriously in the West. In June, *The New York Times* quoted Cemal Pasha, the Minister of War, in regard to the attitude of Turkish leaders towards the possibility of establishing a communist form of government, as having said: "With us, it is not a question of Bolshevism or democracy, but of life or death"<sup>90</sup>. A decision in favor of a Soviet would not be opposed by Young Turks, the newspaper concluded.

In July 1920, Halil Pasha obtained gold, ammunitions and arms from the Bolsheviks<sup>91</sup>. This was followed by one million rubles of gold in October, with more to come<sup>92</sup>.

There were also gestures of solidarity from the Bolsheviks. In August, the American mission in İstanbul intercepted a radio message sent to London from Moscow. It said, "Please send to (the) Russian and Azerbaidjan representative Litvinvov the following: Azerbaidjan Soviet government consents to exchange British prisoners taken in Baku for Turks' Kemalists arrested in Constantinople whose list will be sent in a few days"<sup>93</sup>. Whether this materialized or was even relayed to the British is not clear.

Nine days after the Treaty of Sèvres was signed, *The New York Times* reported that Mustafa Kemal frankly admitted cooperation between the Nationalists and the Bolsheviks.

*He declared that bolshevism is not incompatible with Islam and expressed the belief that Turkey could not possibly suffer a worse fate than the destruction planned for her in the Peace Treaty.*<sup>94</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Selek, *op. cit.*, pp. 590-591. Also see Ivar Spector, *The Soviet Union and The Muslim World 1917-1956*, (Seattle, Washington: The University of Washington Press, 1956), pp. 34-44.

<sup>90</sup> *The New York Times*, June 17, 1920

<sup>91</sup> Halil Pasha, during this trip was to rescue the author's grandfather Fesa Bey (Evrensev), one of the first pilots of Turkey, and who had been a POW in Russia since 1915. Halil Pasha met him coincidentally as he was begging on the streets of Moscow, posing as a deaf-mute for he had refused to learn Russian all along.

<sup>92</sup> Müderrisoğlu, *op. cit.*, pp. 520-549.

<sup>93</sup> Bristol, "War Diary," *op. cit.*, August 22, 1920.

<sup>94</sup> *The New York Times*, August 19, 1920.

The polemical value of such a statement must have been obvious to the Americans because *The New York Times* correspondent in Athens stated that he had reservations about despatching the following message, relayed from İzmir:

*The government of Ankara took an oath of fidelity to the Turkish Soviet... A proclamation has been issued by Mustafa Kemal announcing expropriation of the wealth of Christians and Muslims alike which will be utilized to further the cause of the Turkish Soviet regime*<sup>95</sup>.

By December, another American view suggested,

*Mustafa Kemal concluded an alliance with Lenine at Moscow which assures financial and military help in restoring pre-war Turkish territory, in return for which the Bolsheviki are to obtain facilities for their propaganda themselves to continue hostilities against the Allies*<sup>96</sup>.

It is all the more interesting that even in December 1920, Lloyd George was still directing all his attention to the CUP legacy and avoiding Kemal's rapprochement with the Bolsheviks. He interpreted the ongoing Turco-Armenian border dispute within the context of Pan-Turkism. The day after the Gümrü Treaty was signed between Turkey and Armenia, returning Kars and Sarikamış to Turkey, Lloyd George had stated that,

*The Bolsheviks believed that Mustafa Kemal intended to capture Georgia, Azerbaijan and Batum, and they were consequently sending troops to Azerbaijan, and it seemed quite likely that war would break out between the Bolsheviks and the Nationalists... They (the Nationalists) meant to extend to the East; they wanted their own old homelands, for instance Turkestan, and they were not thinking of Smyrna and Thrace... Everything seemed to point to Mustafa Kemal's ambitions being in the Eastern direction. The Turks, as he had said, were thinking much more of Batum than they were of Smyrna... He sincerely trusted that at a time when the mind of the Turk was fully engaged elsewhere, the Allies would not ask him to turn back West. This, in his view, would be the greatest folly... For many years Great Britain*

<sup>95</sup> *The New York Times*, December 21, 1920.

<sup>96</sup> "The Turk on Top Again," *Outlook* 126 (Dec, 1920), pp. 670-671.



*and France had spent millions (of) sterling in buttressing up the wretched Turkish Empire, and the Turks had then betrayed them shamefully in the last war. They had closed the Straits and they had shot down the French in thousands in Gallipoli*<sup>97</sup>.

Lloyd George was not only unable to forgive the Turks for their role in the War, but he was also unable to see that the Bolsheviks were not about to support Armenia for fear that in so doing they would compromise their new and highly-desired relationship with an "ally" in the South.

While the main provisions of the treaty of Sèvres were to remain intact, the Allies were willing to make few modifications to appease both Turkish governments. At a meeting prior to the London Conference, Lloyd George said to the European Prime Ministers :

*Whenever the Turks had quarrelled in the past with Russia they had been forced to turn for assistance to Western powers. Mustafa Kemal was an oriental, and must be treated as such. One of the great principles in dealing with Orientals was to let them make the first offer. He (Lloyd George) was all for concluding peace with Mustafa Kemal, but it would be fatal to proclaim this to the world as the object of the Allies. If this were done, Kemal's price would immediately rise and his terms would become impossible*<sup>98</sup>.

Thus, 1920 ended with still very diverse perceptions of and approaches to the Nationalist movement, which by this time had been established as a Nationalist parliament and one whose legitimacy was beginning to be sanctioned by some foreigners.

## PART VI

### TOWARDS RECOGNITION

Nineteen-twent-one began with the London Conference to which Bekir Sami Bey, the Foreign Minister of the Ankara government was officially invited, following some diplomatic maneuvering on Mustafa Kemal's part. This conference was instigated by the first victory over the Greeks

<sup>97</sup> *British Documents, op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 846.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 851-852.

on January 1921, at the battle of İnönü. **The Times** reported that since the Greek premier was ready to throw out the Turks from Anatolia, the Allies had a moral obligation to the Greeks for the military work they had done in the past<sup>99</sup>. Consequently, since the British had no intention of making major compromises the conference was unproductive. However, it made contact with the French and Italian prime ministers possible for Bekir Sami Bey.

Both Briand and Sforza promised support to the Nationalists. Mustafa Kemal, at this time, did not need to discourage them. Subsequently, **The Times** reported that Mustafa Kemal stated in **Hakimiyet-i Milliye** that they were friendly with Russia but communism was a social question and the social conditions of Turkey did not permit its application. Therefore, the socialist parties among the Nationalists had realized this fact and had ceased their activity<sup>100</sup>. Indeed, Mustafa Kemal had by then dissolved the short-lived official Turkish Communist party for reasons which had little to do with appeasing the West. The Nationalists were in a position of relative strength and Mustafa Kemal had no use for further factionalism in the Grand National Assembly. Furthermore, Bolshevik propaganda in Anatolia was outside of his control and the Nationalists could not afford to permit that. This action, however, did not deter the Treaty of Friendship from being signed between the Ankara government and the RSFSR on March 16, 1921<sup>101</sup>.

In March, an American journal echoed the Greek interpretation of Mustafa Kemal's personality:

*Unless all impressions of the Pasha's personality in the press of Athens do him grave injustice, he has these moods of violence in which he possesses himself of whatever takes his fancy, including young ladies.*

After describing his physical features, the article continued :

*Mustafa Kemal Pasha accordingly, can not be a born Turk. There is something Saxon in his general physiognomy... Mustafa is affirmed by some of the Greeks to be in reality a Roumeliote of the pure Slav type, but others insist that there is Circassian blood in him...*

<sup>99</sup> *The Times*, February 22, 1921.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, February 21, 1921.

<sup>101</sup> *Soviet documents on Foreign Policy*, op. cit., pp. 237-242; *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, op. cit., pp. 95-96.

The melancholic moods of this "oriental genius" were attributed to his "galloping consumption."<sup>102</sup>

On the political side, in April, a telegram to Washington from the U.S. Embassy in Rome read :

*Angora government telegraphed Kemalist legation (to) purchase 200 carloads of arms and munitions from Germany, presumably shipped via Italy. Large Bolshevized Kemalist army under Enver Pasha being massed at Erzerum for service in (the) Middle East against Britain<sup>103</sup>.*

Later in April, the same source reported that Count Sforza and Cami Bey (Minister of Economics) had negotiated a secret and informal agreement for Italy to send 50,000,000 lire worth of ammunition in exchange for the ratification of Italo-Kemalist commercial treaty<sup>104</sup>. This agreement did not materialize because the Italians had asked for economic concessions which Mustafa Kemal was not about to give.

By June, **The New York Times** reported that the British were preparing to act in the Near East. All along the Greco-Turkish war, Britain had maintained its neutrality (?), but Kemal was hostile to the British. Not only had he executed an Indian Muslim (and a British subject at that), Mustafa Şakir, who had been a spy, but he had several mines in Anatolia belonging to British subjects closed. Moreover, he had closed Anatolian ports to British ships.<sup>105</sup> **The New York Times** also reported that the planned Greek offensive disturbed the French. According to **The New York Times**, **Le Temps** had indicated :

*The French government applied to the Turkish Nationalists a policy which England must understand, for she has applied the same to the Russian Bolsheviki. How many times Lloyd George said that the Russians would disarm and behave if the Allies stopped helping those fighting them? France has had the same policy towards the Turks and a policy better justified: for while the Turks are fighting only to establish their national claims, the Bolsheviki are fighting for a world re-*

<sup>102</sup> "Turkey's Latest Hero: Mustapha Kemal pasha," *Current Opinion* 70 (Mar, 1921), pp. 331-333.

<sup>103</sup> U.S. Records, *op. cit.*, April 21, 1921.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, April 30, 1921.

<sup>105</sup> *The New York Times*, June 10, 1921.

*volution. Britain only cares about the Straits strategy, the key to middle Russia; economically the key to the great oil fields of the Caucasus. France will not send troops to (aid) the ex-Kaiser's brother-in-law (Constantine) whom she dethroned.*<sup>106</sup>.

This was followed by a **Times** editorial calling for Allied unity, claiming that the Kemalists were counting on playing England and France against each other. France was not to alienate England out of regard for Kemal and his Bolshevik supporters<sup>107</sup>.

In late June, Admiral Bristol informed Washington that the British, French and Italian governments had sent a note to Greek government suggesting that they consent to the Allies arranging peace with the Turkish nationalists<sup>108</sup>. The Greeks, however, were not in an agreeable mood. Another American official telegraphed from Izmir :

*Arrival of Constantine in Smyrna not of such popular rejoicing as reported in Greek papers. British, French and two Italian (?) left harbor before entrance to avoid saluting*<sup>109</sup>.

In September, when some favorable sentiments towards a peace with Ankara appeared in the European press, the Bolsheviks accused Mustafa Kemal of "being in bed with Lloyd George and Briand"<sup>110</sup>.

On October 13, 1921, the Treaty of Kars between the Armenian, Azerbaidjani and Georgian SSR's was signed by the Nationalists, thereby securing the eastern border<sup>111</sup>. This was followed by the signing of the Treaty of Ankara with the French on October 20, 1921, determining the southeast border<sup>112</sup>. Thus, forces were consolidated against the Greeks in the west at the close of 1921, marking the end of "alliance" for the West.

From the focus of this paper, that is, of British, U.S., and Russian views towards the Nationalist movement, the following contrasts emerge :

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, June 11, 1921.

<sup>107</sup> *The Times*, June 13, 1921.

<sup>108</sup> U.S. Records, *op. cit.*, June 20, 1921.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, June 21, 1921.

<sup>110</sup> "Angora i antanta," *Biulleten*, *op. cit.*, 92 (20 sep, 1921), pp. 87-88.

<sup>111</sup> *Soviet Documents On Foreign Policy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-256.

<sup>112</sup> *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, *op. cit.*, p. 97-100.

The outlook for the British politicians, military officers, particularly as reflected or blatantly stated in **The Times**, was consistent at nearly all times. The only report which came close to correctly evaluating the true nature of the Nationalists was that of the British Military Attaché, Lt. Colonel Ian Smith, in 1919 (See footnote 10). His recommendation to take the Nationalist movement seriously and to stop trying to suppress it, lest that create an anti-British feeling, appeared realistic. Yet, his suggestions were not taken into consideration. The difference of his opinion from those of the other British officials may be explained by virtue of his lower rank; his rank removed him from policy-making circles. Officers of the High Commission seem to have waited for the British government to make decisions and then acted to carry out those orders. Their attitude was almost dogmatic in the sense of their unwillingness to acknowledge or even listen to the opposing view.

In contrast to almost all British officials, the U.S. High Commissioner, Mark Bristol, was the one who correctly advised his government and seemed to have risen above mere political intrigue. Of course, American and British interests in Turkey were quite different in nature, but this, by itself, does not account for the differences of opinion. Admiral Bristol, being a military man, understood the Nationalists for what they were. His reports give credibility to the motives of the Nationalists and at no time was his language polemical. In **The New York Times**, there had been references to Mustafa Kemal as a CUP-man, a Young Turk, a rebel leader, and at times it was suggested that he was a potential sultan-caliph. But the tone of the paper was even-handed when compared with **The Times** of London. Between 1919 and 1921, almost everyone was confused about the political credo of the Nationalists, and with good reason. The Nationalists did not hasten to adopt a political system. This ambivalence was partly due to not wanting to alienate any faction and partly due to being in the process of searching for political identity.

Russian views, on one hand, adhered to the party line, and, on the other, to political reality. Even when criticism was directed at Mustafa Kemal for his rapprochement with the West, treaties were concluded nonetheless.

The French and Italian attitude and their national interests were the main cause of cleavage between the Allies.

The Kemalists were singlemindedly after independence which immunized them against adopting someoneelse's political philosophy. In the end it was Mustafa Kemal who benefitted from the contradictory interests of the Allies. The adverse propaganda on Mustafa Kemal made by certain informants and correspondents only helped the Allies to underestimate him during 1919-1921. By the time Mustafa Kemal was taken seriously, Turkey was on its way to independence.

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