

“The North Caucasian Diaspora Factor” in the Soviet-Turkish Relations (1919-1921)

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Abstract

The article examines the importance of the North Caucasian diaspora as a factor in the Soviet-Turkish relations within the period 1919-1921. It presents part of the activities of the diaspora members, who occupied high-ranked positions in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Ankara Government or were serious factors in the Turkish War of Independence. Therefore, their value both for Turkey and for Soviet Russia made them a part of the political games for supremacy in the Soviet-Turkish cooperation, which experienced moments of setback and mutual mistrust. The utilisation of the North Caucasian diaspora sentiments and aspirations towards the original motherland was well used to exert political pressure and to open possibilities for realisation of the political aims of Ankara or Moscow. The current article considers two main directions of activities of the diaspora, which had an impact on the Soviet-Turkish relations: 1. Diplomatic activities, supporting the independence of the newly established Mountainous Republic in North Caucasus; 2. Activities, related to participation in the communist movement in Anatolia. To what extent these activities were a self-initiative or a well-prepared political plan is to be discussed as well.

Keywords: North Caucasian diaspora, Turkey, Soviet Russia, diplomacy, communism

Sovyet-Türkiye İlişkilerinde “Kuzey Kafkasya Diasporası Faktörü”

Özet

Bu makale, 1919-1921 döneminde Sovyet-Türk ilişkilerinde bir faktör olarak Kuzey Kafkas diasporasının önemini incelemektedir. Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi'nde, Ankara Hükümeti'nde üst düzey görevlerde bulunan veya Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda önemli bir rol oynayan diaspora

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(Received/Gönderim: 15.04.2021; Accepted/Kabul: 23.05.2021)

üyelerinin faaliyetlerinin bir bölümünü sunmaktadır. Dolayısıyla hem Türkiye hem de Sovyet Rusya için değerleri, onları aksilikler ve karşılıklı güvensizlik yaşanmakta olan Sovyet-Türk işbirliğinde siyasi üstünlük oyunlarının bir parçası haline getirdi. Kuzey Kafkasya diasporasının orijinal anavatana yönelik duygu ve istekleri, siyasi baskı uygulamak ve Ankara ya da Moskova'nın siyasi amaçlarının gerçekleştirilmesi için olanaklar yaratmak için iyi bir şekilde kullanıldı. Bu makale, diasporanın Sovyet-Türkiye ilişkileri üzerinde etkisini iki ana faaliyet yönünden ele almaktadır: 1. Kuzey Kafkasya'da yeni kurulan Dağlık Cumhuriyet'in bağımsızlığını destekleyen diplomatik faaliyetler; 2. Anadolu'daki komünist harekete katılımı ilgili faaliyetler. Bu faaliyetlerin ne ölçüde kendi kendine inisiyatif veya iyi hazırlanmış birer siyasi plan olduğu da tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kuzey Kafkas diasporası, Türkiye, Sovyet Rusya, diplomasi, komünizm

The “fragile” balance that the Ankara government and the Bolsheviks tried to keep in their relations in Caucasus during the period of 1919-1921, while solving such serious issues as the political influence in the region, the border line and the transportation corridor for the Soviet material support, was also put to the test by another “Caucasian factor”. This time it developed on “local ground”, bearing the historical scars of Russian-Ottoman relations through the Caucasian diaspora that appeared in the Ottoman Empire at the end of 50`s of XIX c., after forced migration from the Russian Empire. The current article aims to examine the role of North Caucasian diaspora in the Soviet-Turkish relations, based on the methodology of the historical science, namely by using several concrete methods. The historical and narrative methods present the processes of formation of the “North Caucasian Diaspora factor” and its significance in the dynamic period of Soviet-Turkish cooperation – 1919-1921. The narration of past events, including adduced historical facts supports the theoretical construct of a sequence that displays the logical connection between concrete occurrences, linking Moscow and Ankara, and the political and diplomatic activities of the diaspora representatives. The analysis provides the possibility to identify the components and

characteristics of the North Caucasian migrants` engagement in internal and external politics of Turkey* as well as the point where it intersects with the interests of the newly-established Soviet and Turkish governments. The additional use of the method of classification of the diaspora activities, on the base of their sources, characteristics and directions, facilitates the systematic approach to the topic. The analysis also reveals the reasons for readiness to collaborate with or oppose to some of the two main political players. The focus on several leading diaspora representatives seeks to display their potential to influence or to be influenced while actively participating in the political processes. The document analysis of primary and secondary sources is highly contributory to the investigation of important details in the already mentioned aspects. Moreover, the article contains a critical approach to the primary sources and takes into consideration some already published works dealing with topics close to the current one, trying to propound a different and original perspective. Summarizing the information determines the specifics of the North Caucasian diaspora as a factor in the Soviet-Turkish relations in various stages of their development within the observed chronological framework.

The North Caucasian migrants were mainly Circassians – the last rebellious people against the Russians, but different groups also included Ossetians, Chechens, Dagestani people, etc. even though often the general term “Circassians” was used for all of them regardless of their origin (Gingeras, *The Sons ...*, 4). They were settled in different parts of the Ottoman Empire and through many hardships, started to integrate in the new realities. With the time passing, nobles with Circassian and in general Caucasian origin, had a leading role in the Ottoman government, Ottoman army, local and state administration, later in the Turkish National Movement and in the newly-formed structures in Ankara.

* In the present article the term “Turkey” has a particular role as synonym of the new formation, established with the beginning of the Turkish National Movement in Ankara and represented by the Grand National Assembly and the government there.

During the period of the Turkish War of Independence in Western Anatolia, where the role of the Circassian people would be leading for the confrontation with the Ankara government and would influence in some aspects the relations with Soviet Russia, there were 400 Circassian and Abkhazian settlements (Besleney, 61). Based on a survey made under the Greek occupation in 1922, Ryan Gingeras states in his book that the number of North Caucasians, who lived in the *sancak* of Hüdavendigâr alone was in total 108,000 (Gingeras, *Sorrowful ...*, 28). With respect to this the author assumed that “in the four provinces of İzmit, Hüdavendigâr, Karesi, and Kale-i Sultaniye (they – a.n.) could have numbered in the tens of thousands. Villages outside the towns of Bursa, Bandırma, Gönen, İzmit, Balıkesir, Manyas, Karacabey, Kirmasti, Biga, and Susurluk were settled with Adige and Ubih refugees. Large numbers of Abkhazians, Laz, Dagestani, and Muslim Georgians came to reside in the counties of Adapazarı, Sabanca (Sapanca – a.n.), Yalova, İzmit, and Bilecik” (Gingeras, *Sorrowful ...*, 28). Not only the number but also the division within the Caucasian groups, based on origin and political grounds, had important role in the activities of the minority members as they were reinforced by the presence of armed bands that were at the disposal of the confronting factions and by the external influence of the confronting international powers. In this regard, we can conditionally distinguish two main directions in which, through their engagement, the North Caucasian immigrant groups became a factor in the Soviet-Turkish relations:

1. Diplomatic activities (delegations in Europe, North Caucasus, negotiations with the Bolsheviks), supporting the independence of the newly established Mountainous Republic in North Caucasus and eventual return to some of the diaspora population to the motherland. The North Caucasian factor was more or less at the hands of the Ankara government, which could use it in order to bargain with Soviet Russia on crucial issues like the borders in the Caucasian region.

2. Activities, related to participation in the communist movement in Anatolia. The utilization of Bolshevism by Soviet Russia for achieving political aims in Anatolia by spreading

communism there, found grounds at the highest governmental level. Some representatives of the diaspora would contribute and become transmitters of the Soviet purposes, whilst others would follow Mustafa Kemal. Of no less importance is the role of Çerkez Ethem as he attracted the attention of the Bolsheviks, who made an attempt to involve him in internal affairs that would lead to strengthening of the Soviet orientation of Ankara.

1. Diplomatic activities in support of the Mountainous Republic in North Caucasus

The beginning of the First World War stimulated the activities of the diaspora in the Ottoman Empire, establishing committees and associations (Çelikpala, 427), which were developing ideas and plans for North Caucasus, using the confrontation between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires. They sent missions and delegations not only to the allies of the Sublime Port but to the neutral European countries, lobbying for the independent future of North Caucasus. The Ottoman government also saw good opportunity to take advantage of the aspirations of the Caucasian diaspora in strengthening its political influence, eventually reconquering parts of Caucasus and expanding its territories towards the Muslim and Turkic regions of Russia. The organisations of the Caucasian diaspora in Istanbul saw the future of North Caucasus in the form of independent confederation under the protectorate of the Ottoman Empire (Chochiev, 206).

After the October Revolution the situation in North Caucasus was very dynamic due to the appearance of several political formations searching for official recognition. They were all struggling to resist the Bolsheviks and the Whites, but at the same time the confrontation for power was escalating in the North Caucasian societies themselves. Anton Denikin described the situation in 1918, which the Voluntary Army had to deal with in North Caucasus in his memoirs by the sentence: “The North Caucasus was as before a boiling cauldron.” (192). In May 1918 the Republic of the United Mountaineers of North Caucasus and Dagestan (Mountainous Republic) was proclaimed by the Mountainous Government, established a year earlier (Göyüşov,

209; Kakagasanov et al., 15-16; 19-20). The North Caucasian diaspora in the Ottoman Empire strongly supported the Mountainous Republic and was mediator for its official recognition by the Ottoman government in June, 1918, as well as for sending Ottoman regiments in Dagestan, which was in line with the "Treaty of Friendship" they had signed (Koç, 128).

By the capitulation of the Ottoman Empire the Ottoman forces were withdrawn and the political situation made the Caucasian diaspora's elite turn to the "old supporter" – Great Britain. In the 20's of XIX c. it was the Russian Empire's expansion that threatened the British interests in Central Asia and India, which made Britain establish contacts with the Circassians. The plan was to use them as a tool in the intensifying Russian-British confrontation, which led to London's intervention in the Caucasian War through providing moral and material support for the Circassians. In the 30's of XIX c. this almost brought the two powers to the edge of a military conflict (Tsvetkova, *Diplomaticheskoe ...*, 406). Still, in the new post-war realities Britain was more or less sceptic about the future of a North-Caucasian Republic. A delegation of the North Caucasus Association (Avagyan, *Osmanlı İmp. ...*, 134-135), led by the Fuat Pasha (Thugo) submitted a petition to the British High Commission in Istanbul on 24 November, 1918. Their main requests were in 3 directions: 1. Recognition of the North-Caucasian Republic from Abhazia to Dagestan under British protectorate; 2. Organisation of a military operation for liberation of the taken by the Bolsheviks parts of North Caucasus; 3. Providing assistance for the return of a half a million Caucasians to their homeland and restitution of their lands. The petition was examined in London but the prepared in April 1919 response was the inadmissibility of the resettlement of the Circassians in Caucasus, offering solution within the Entente's interests in the Near East (Chochiev, 206). Not only the British scepticism, but two more aspects should be considered: First, it was the support for the Whites against the Bolsheviks and the support of the British command for the occupation of North Caucasus by the Denikin's Voluntary Army, which, in May the same year, put an

end to the de facto existence of the North-Caucasian Republic. The second aspect, directly related to the first one, was the destiny of Russia itself and the refusal to solve any other issue, related to its former territories, before clarification was received for this one. If the Whites won against the Bolsheviks, the respective territories would be considered an inseparable part of Russia.

After the Armistice of Mudros (30 October 1918), contacts between Caucasians in Istanbul and representatives of the North-Caucasian Republic were resumed. The official delegation of the North-Caucasian Republic to the Paris Peace Conference, which had to wait for its permission to continue its travel to Paris in Istanbul (Vachagaev, 174-175), was actively communicating with Caucasian activists and others close to the Nationalists. Short accounts of impressions from several meetings with Circassians in Istanbul were given by Hasan Hadzarat (one of the delegates) in a letter to Pşemaho Kotsev in 28 February, 1919 (Kakagasanov and Kajmarazova, 150-153). The representatives of the delegation were asked to present their point of view about the future of Caucasus and the republic itself, as Hadzarat emphasized on the fact that the northern border was of a serious interest to their hosts, who imagined it up to Eisk. It might be considered strange but the Circassians did not refer to Russia negatively and believed that “in no case should we quarrel with it” (Kakagasanov and Kajmarazova, 153). The Circassians shared with the delegates the wish of half a million mountaineers to return to their motherland and asked for any assistance that could be provided in this regard. They also showed the respective memorandum to “the civilized world” with all their claims, including the necessity of creating conditions for securing the return to the motherland. In order to defend their claims, “the Circassian Club” as H. Hadzarat called it, had its delegation for the peace conference, led by Bekir Sami Bey as the delegation would work in full conformation with the one of the Mountainous Republic. H. Hadzarat noted the fact that with the return of the expelled 60 years ago Caucasians, the fear of the Russian majority in North Caucasus would vanish.

The activation of the highly ranked officers of Caucasian origin in the Ankara government was another aspect of the diaspora activities, related to the North-Caucasian Republic. They tried to establish parallel and unofficial politics with Soviet Russia, which in concrete moments could be even considered as contradictory to the Ankara government's interests. From alternative perspective, the relations between the mountaineers and the diaspora could be utilised for the purposes of the Kemalists, who aimed to reach maximum benefit from their cooperation with the Soviets in relation to political and territorial issues, thus possessing the means to exert pressure over Moscow. As A. Avgyan states: "Especially the turning of North Caucasus into a tool for negotiation with the Bolsheviks in return for some privileges beyond the Caucasus caused the Kemalists to choose to use the Circassians in their relations with the Bolsheviks." (Avagyan, *Osmanlı İmp. ...*, 233)

The official politics of Mustafa Kemal's government saw the Caucasian region as a vital connection between the Ankara and Moscow governments for transportation of material support for the National Movement and the struggle against the invaders. The self-proclaimed republics in Transcaucasia were accepted as a tool for the Entente to establish a barrier between Soviet Russia and Turkey. Still, Mustafa Kemal accepted that the interests of Azerbaijan and North Caucasus had to be considered in the relations with the Soviet government (Chochiev, 206). Regarded as a lack of clear approach of the Ankara government to the North Caucasian issues, the diaspora was eager to stimulate more interest and support for the independent movement of the mountaineers. The last were also sending different representatives in Istanbul to search for support and according to the memories of Mustafa Butbay, namely one of these representatives, whose name was Ebubekir Pilyef, managed not only to meet with Mustafa Kemal in Sivas, but also to convince him to send an official delegation to North Caucasus. As a result, in the beginning of 1920 a special delegation, part of which was the Abkhazian activist and public figure Mustafa Butbay, left for North Caucasus in order to "create unity and togetherness", as

this initiative was with Mustafa Kemal’s consent (Butbay, 1; 7). M. Batbay, who accompanied İsmail Hakkı Berkok and Aziz Meker, revealed in his memoirs the complicated situation in the region due to the existence of different factions of supporters for the local leaders, the Bolsheviks, or the Whites. “The heroic Highlanders, who fought with Tsarism for nearly a century to defend their independence and their land, cannot take advantage of the opportunity they have today” (Butbay, 21). In the following 3 months the delegates organised meetings with leaders from Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia, in order to orientate themselves in the local political views and thoughts about the independence and unity of North Caucasus. The main aim was to unite the mountaineers and to raise their morale for fighting for their freedom, which meant not only against the Whites, but in fact against the Bolsheviks, whose propaganda already had supporters in the still not occupied by them territories. Officially, the delegates were not entering into conflict with the Bolsheviks, even relying on their support during the travel - “But we considered it our duty to help the Bolsheviks as long as they stayed true to their promises, saying that every nation, demanding its right would be free.” (Butbay, 34) This situation changed on 6 May, 1920, when the efforts of the delegates resulted in the convocation of a “National Assembly” close to Vedeno (it was already occupied by the Bolsheviks – a.n.) where the delegates of the mountaineers voted to fight for their independence, opposing the Bolshevik representatives. The “National Assembly” gathered again on 11 May, 1920 and among the decisions, related to sending official representatives to foreign countries with the mission to announce the newly established temporary government, it elected the son of Imam Shamil – Muhammed Kamil Pasha, who lived in the Ottoman Empire, to take the lead of the movement (Göyüşov, 340; Butbay, 51). According to Sultan Murad, after the fall of the Ottoman and Russian Empires a conference was held in Istanbul, where the Caucasian immigrants “discussed the future of the Fatherland, with respect to the principles of self-determination of nations, which President Wilson had appealed for. It was recommended

that Kamil Pasha go to the Caucasus, with two aides from Chechnya, and two from Circassia, to prepare for total uprising, leading to a general revolution” (184). In fact, it was not important whose initiative it was to invite him or appoint him as the leader of the movement for independence of the North Caucasians. What was important was the symbolic relation with Imam Shamil, who continued to be an inspiration for the mountaineers. Arriving in Istanbul, Muhammed Kamil sent his son, Mehmet Said Shamil, to Caucasus where he had to fight with the Soviets. The young grandson of Imam Shamil arrived first in Tiflis (Tbilisi) at the end of June, 1920. As Georgia itself was threatened by the Bolshevik occupation following Azerbaijan, it supported the North Caucasian resistance against the Soviets. Moreover, the government in exile of the Mountainous Republic was hosted in Tiflis, from where it continued its international diplomatic activities. There Butbay managed to meet Mehmet Said Shamil, however, even after explaining the complicated situation in Dagestan and Chechnya due to the Bolshevik occupation, he could not convince Said Shamil not to leave for North Caucasus (Butbay, 101). After meeting with the French mission and representatives of the Georgian government, which provided him with financial support, Said Shamil left for Dagestan. There he met with the Imam of North Caucasus Najmuddin Gotsinsky (Donogo)¹, with whom an agreement was reached, following which the active operations against the Bolsheviks started (Smyslov, 8). Said Shamil made an attempt to unify the religious leaders in North Caucasus against the Bolsheviks and to convince them to continue the struggle under

¹ Najmuddin Gotsinsky (1859? - 1925) - political and spiritual leader. His father was one of the *naiibs* of Imam Shamil. In May, 1917 he was elected Chairman of the Spiritual Council (mufti) of the Union of the United Mountaineers of the North Caucasus and Dagestan. Gotsinsky was elected imam of the North Caucasian mountaineers in August same year. He was one of the leaders of the counter-revolutionary movement in Dagestan in 1917-1921. After suppressing the rebellion in Dagestan, Gotsinsky fled to Chechnya. From 1921 until his arrest, he was hiding in Chechnya and the Khasavyurt district, trying to continue the resistance.

his leadership (Alieva and Asker, 105). On 4 January, 1921 in Andi he gathered a Council where a decision to spread the resistance from Dagestan to Chechnya was taken. Still, the occupation of Georgia by the Red Army stultified the resistance of the mountaineers as they became surrounded from all sides by the Bolsheviks, who cut their connection with the rest of Caucasus. Soon after, the Bolsheviks managed to suffocate the resistance and to deal with its leaders. Said Shamil and his compatriot Sultan Murad returned to Turkey, where they “were greeted with a lavish ceremony, presided over by Kâzım Karabekir” (Murad, 187). After this “adventure”, Said Shamil was a guest of Kâzım Karabekir in Kars, where they discussed a possible organisation of a revolt in North Caucasus. Additionally, by the initiative of the latter, the formation of a detachment of Circassians in Samsun to serve in Kars commenced (Avagyan, Osmanlı İmp. ..., 241). The meetings between Said Shamil and the commander of the Eastern Front did not escape the Bolsheviks’ attention and the Soviet Consulate in Trabzon received intelligence information about these. This made Karabekir send Said Shamil to Erzurum, waiting there for additional instructions. Two months later, there was no news, and Said Shamil sent a letter to Kâzım Karabekir. In response, Kâzım Karabekir recommended Said Shamil to leave for Istanbul where to support the established “mountainous committee” and meet with Bekir Sami Bey to discuss how an eventual revolt in North Caucasus could be supported (Avagyan, Osmanlı İmp. ..., 241-242). All these developments happened in a period when there was already a Turkish-Soviet agreement for friendship, the Turkish army withdrew from Tiflis, but the negotiations with the South-Caucasian Soviet Republics were still ongoing. Having in mind this background and the tension for the Soviet-Turkish relations at that moment, it is not surprising that the diaspora representatives were again “utilised” in order to exercise pressure on the Soviet government for concessions, especially regarding the solution of the border issue. Due to this we cannot consider the diaspora initiatives only as unauthorized, even if some were such. In fact they were in a broad aspect contributing to the general line of Ankara government.

In this direction, attention is to be paid especially to Bekir Sami Bey – the son of Musa Kudukhov (Degoev)², a diaspora representative and the first Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Ankara government, whose diplomatic moves are of peculiar interest for the purpose of observing some internal interdependencies. Simultaneously, with his diplomatic mission in Soviet Russia in August 1920, he followed another unofficial one – to negotiate with the Soviets the existence of a Caucasian state at the expense of the interests of the Ankara government (or at least it seemed so – a.n.). Bekir Sami, in light of the difficulties in the negotiations, related to territories, which the Soviets required to be left for Armenia, was ready to make concessions – Ossetia for Van, i.e. if Ossetia received independence, he would convince the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNA) to give Van to Armenia (Nur, Hayat ..., 679). Rıza Nur, who was part of Ankara's official mission in Moscow, was indignant of how Bekir Sami could turn his back to Turkey from which he benefited so much, and start to work for his own ethnical interests – the independence of Ossetia. He even accused Bekir Sami of aiming to become a Prince (Nur, Hayat ..., 680). The step undertaken by Bekir Sami definitely was not only against the National Pact, but against the efforts of the Ankara government to keep the country inseparable. However, if seen from another perspective, it could

² Musa Kundukhov was general of an Ossetian origin, serving in the Russian Army. He had a stable and fast advance in his career, participating in Russian military expeditions in Dagetsan and North-Western Caucasus, the Kraków Uprising (1846) and the Hungarian Revolution (1849), fighting against the Ottoman Empire in the Crimean War. By governing the Military-Ossetian and later the Chechenian okrug, he was engaged in civic and agricultural constitution of Ossetia and Chechnya, fulfilled peacekeeping and mediation missions on behalf of Russia among the mountaineers. In two years he was awarded with the rank of major-general, the Order of Anna and Stanislav of the 1st degree, a rent of 12 thousand rubles. Two more districts, Shatoevskiy and Ichkeriyskiy, were transferred to his command. After many years of service in the Russian army, he emigrated in the Ottoman Empire where he continued his military engagement this time in the Ottoman army against the Russian Empire.

be a “clever move” to play the “Caucasian card” in front of the Soviets in order to make them more concessive. They, themselves, had the grounds to be disturbed by the activities of the diaspora, as “The issues disturbing the Bolsheviks were, especially, the influence of the Turks in North Caucasus and the fact that some riots and discontent were concocted by Turkey” (Avagyan, *Türk Dış ...*, 40). In this aspect, Rıza Nur had no right to place blame on Bekir Sami for agreeing to cooperate with the Bolsheviks, having in mind that later Bekir Sami offered the British support against the Soviets. In fact, all these look like an attempt to implement flexible diplomacy, from which both Turkey and his fatherland would benefit (if the last was among his aims at all). There was one more nuance. According to Semen Aralov, the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) in Turkey in 1922–1923, Bekir Sami Bey was a big “Russo-hater” (CDA, 157), which would not contribute to proving his willingness for “cooperation” with the Soviets.

During his diplomatic mission Bekir Sami Bey was secretly meeting with North Caucasian people living in Moscow and with specially sent representatives from the region. Later, after he finalised the official negotiations with the Soviets, he undertook a long journey in North Caucasus – Ossetia, Ingushetia and Chechnya, where he was in contact with the local representatives of the mountainous rebellious movement and dealing with anti-Soviet agitation (Chochiev, 207). His travels were finalized in 1921, but based on his experiences Bekir Sami sent a letter to G. Chicherin in which he was defending the necessity and benefit of establishing a North Caucasian state for the successful cooperation of Soviet Russia and Turkey. He openly accused the Soviet power in North Caucasus of installing an atmosphere of terror and stated that if the Mountaineers did not receive political independence their contra-revolutionary movement would be taken as an advantage by the Entente (Avagyan, *Osmanlı İmp. ...*, 235). In Turkey, İsmail Hakkı and Aziz Bey were also defending the necessity of independent North Caucasian state and Azerbaijan in their response to Kâzım Karabekir’s

questions based on the presented earlier report for their mission. This response was sent to the GNA and just as Bekir Sami, İsmail Hakkı and Aziz Bey expressed the opinion that the existence of the mentioned above countries would facilitate the Soviet-Turkish relations (Karabekir, 1748-1749).

Bekir Sami Bey continued the work in this direction during the negotiations with Lloyd George in March 1921 at the London Conference, presenting arguments for the advantages of an independent state in North Caucasus that could be used also as a *place d'armes* against the Bolsheviks. This suggestion cost him his career as a Foreign Affairs Minister (Öztoprak, 102).

The systematic use of diaspora representatives in the Soviet-Turkish relations was even visible in the fact that when Ali Fuat Cebesoy was appointed an ambassador in Moscow he took as civil servants other Circassians, for example, Consul Fuad Carım, Aziz Meker, second secretary Zeki Bey, Tahsin Rüştü Bey (Avagyan, Osmanlı İmp. ..., 234). They were keeping the contacts and connection with North Caucasus, even though some members of the Turkish mission were causing serious concerns about the political direction. In his memoirs Rıza Nur complained that the Turkish legation in Moscow became a place for gathering of the "Circassian clique". Moreover, the visitors were Christian tsarists, which was harmful for the Turkish politics (Nur, Milli ..., 90).

The politics of Kemalists and Mustafa Kemal toward the struggle of the Caucasian nations was hesitant from the very beginning. The struggle of the Muslim Caucasian nations against the Bolsheviks could not but meet the support of the Turks. Meanwhile, with the development of the strategy for survival of the new government, and the provision of the Soviet support for it, not much choice for manoeuvring was left. Territories, situated between Soviet Russia and Turkey, had to be controlled by the first in order to secure the stable communications and logistics between the cooperating governments. In fact, this situation reflected the "drama" of the diaspora leaders – they had to choose whether to be on the side of the Nationalists and defend the political interests of the Ankara government, or to fight for

their motherland but be threatened by arrest or elimination in their “second home”. In this sense, the words of Ryan Gingeras stating that “their fealty to their adopted home came at the expense of realizing their dreams of independence for the lands their fathers had forfeited” (Gingeras, *The Sons ...*, 6) are very applicable to this complex situation.

2. Activities related to participation in the communist movement in Anatolia.

As an external factor to the Turkish National Movement, the connections of Soviet Russia with former subjects of the Russian Empire were of serious importance in the course of development of the Soviet-Turkish relations. Here the main focus would be on the role of North Caucasian diaspora representatives for reinforcing the communist movement in Anatolia and complicating the political moves of Mustafa Kemal, who was trying to balance between the need of cooperation with the Bolsheviks and the prevention of the spread of communism.

The communist movement and its activation in Anatolia were related to one of the primary aims of Soviet Russia. The creation of an independent Turkish state was of strategic importance for the security of Moscow and a “buffer” to limit the British expansion. The possibility of this state to be Bolshevik “would be a good example for the Islamic world” (Bilgin, 41) and would turn Ankara into a “*vorpost*” for spreading communist idea to the East against the British aspirations. Even though during the establishment of the relations with the GNA the Soviets accepted that a communist system would not be introduced in Turkey and that the revolution was not Bolshevik, unofficially Moscow was still supporting the activity of the Turkish communists by sending emissaries and by active participation of Turkish representatives in the Communist International (Comintern). Especially beneficial period in this respect was 1920, when the first Turkish mission reached Moscow, starting the work on the mutual agreement and the first Soviet material support for the Ankara government arrived. Based on the propagated Soviet-Turkish friendship, the

leftist tendencies in Anatolia were provided with favourable grounds to bloom.

The people, who Moscow would rely on to spread the communist idea, were close to Mustafa Kemal, part of the Parliament or famous leaders, some of them being of North Caucasian origin. As we would elaborate further, it was not only the belief in the communist idea itself or a kind of “Bolshevik trend”, but the popularity and high positions of these people that made them suitable for facilitation of Soviet aims and exercising a political influence at the highest possible level in the new Turkish administration. In this case Bolshevism was just a tool and a pretext for Moscow to undertake steps to ensure its leading role in the Turkish internal and external affairs.

In this regard, it is of a distinct interest to investigate the “Bolshevik trace” in the Green Army Community (*Yeşil Ordu Cemiyeti*), being one of the earliest seemingly leftist formations, and created with the knowledge and consent of Mustafa Kemal. Established in May, 1920, the Green Army Community (GAC) aimed at bringing all the Muslims together against the imperialists under the banner of socialism (Yelbaşı, 78). In the historiography different statements could be found about the selection of the word “green” in the name. It could be presumed, with a high level of certainty that any reference to the “Green Army” in Soviet Russia would not be very proper (except the name – a.n.) (Aydemir, 325). The “Green Army” was formed at the end of the First World War by villagers and Cossacks (Christians), who fought against the Reds and the Whites in the Civil War. It was protecting the interests of the villagers, who bore the hardships of all military conflicts, being a permanent source of recruitment as well as taxation. In fact, the “Green Army” was a collective term for this specific movement (Posadskij, 7-14). The other explanations for the origin of the idea for the name shared in the historiography refer to the remaining part of the Nuri Pasha’s Caucasian Islamic Army (Arbaç, 42); or a regiment led by Enver Pasha in 1919 (Akbulut and Tunçay, 9-10); or from the regiment that Kâzım Karabekir created in Erzurum in 1920, which he called “Green Army”. In the summer of 1920

news from different newspapers spread the belief that a Green Army, consistent of Muslims, was coming from Soviet Russia, to join the struggle of the Turkish nation (Akal, Milli ..., 334). This is not to direct the reader`s focus toward the colour, but rather toward the broader concept that all these could be seen in the light of preparation of the ground for Soviet-Turkish cooperation and respectively promoting the Islamic-Soviet struggle against the enemy – the Entente. In addition, it has to be highlighted, that for the period of the Civil War in Soviet Russia cooperation between Muslims in Caucasus and Bolsheviks at some places was possible due to the common enemy – the Whites. Under this cooperation the Reds managed to enter into local governing institutions and regiments, and after the main enemy was destroyed, to establish their power in the region. Of course, the propaganda was not to be underestimated, leading to the appearance of slogans like “Long live the Soviet power and sharia!” (Tsvetkova, Turkish ..., 85-90). The framework and approach of spreading the Bolshevik power in Caucasus and not only there, should be taken into account as similarities could be observed in the work of the Soviet emissaries in Anatolia in the period under consideration.

The GAC remained a secret and unofficial organization with the following establishers: Hakkı Behiç, Dr. Adnan Adıvar, Yusuf Kemal Tengirşek, Nâzım Bey (general secretary), Şeyh Servet, Hüsrev Sami, Yunus Nadi, Hacı Şükrü, Çerkez Reşit, Celâl Bayar, İbrahim Süreyya (Yiğit), Sırrı Bellioğlu, Dr. Mustafa Cantekin, Muhittin Baha, Hamdi Namık, Eyüp Sabri (Akal, Moskova ..., 62). All of them well known historical personages and some of them with North Caucasian origin - Hakkı Behiç, Şeyh Servet, Çerkez Reşit (the brother of Cerkez Ethem), İbrahim Süreyya (Yiğit). Not all of the members of GAC were staunch supporters of the communist idea, but those who were, would have an important role in the communist movement in Turkey for the period under consideration. Furthermore, shortly thereafter the members of GAC formed the People`s Group (*Halk Zümresi*) in the Parliament, which was more or less leftist and was used to implement concrete politics. The value of these people for the Soviets was first, their closeness to Mustafa Kemal; second, their positions in

the ruling institution; third, influenced by the October Revolution and communist ideas, they became easily approachable for the Bolshevik emissaries in Anatolia. Those of them, who established and sustained connections with Moscow, would be to some extent contributors to the latter's attempts to have impact on the internal affairs. The ultimate need was to keep Ankara on Soviet's side in the confrontation with Britain and to protect Moscow's interests in the region. If we return to the first part of the current article, we could even contrast that the effect the Soviets were looking for, was more or less the same the Turks tried to achieve with the diaspora representatives' activities in North Caucasus, just "opposite in sign". How did that work in practise and what were the outcomes?

Sharif Manatov was an important figure for the communist movement in Anatolia and for attracting key people from the abovementioned groupings to the communist idea. He was actively participating in the Bashkirian movement for autonomy and was a chairman of the Bashkir Regional Council in 1917. In 1918 he met with Lenin, who offered him to establish a central Muslim institution in cooperation with Stalin, which was done in January 1918. The Central Commissariat of Muslim Affairs in Inner Russia and Siberia (MUSKOM) was part of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities and Manatov was not only a member, but also a deputy-chairman of this institution. In general, MUSKOM had to deal with the life of the Muslims in RSFSR in all aspects; including organisation of Muslim troops to fight on the Reds' side. Besides, as written by R. Pipes: "Its mission was to organize party cells, spread communist propaganda, and help the Soviet regime destroy independent parties and organisations among Russian Moslems" (158). In March 1918 Manatov became acquainted with Mustafa Suphi, who most probably recommended him for a mission in Anatolia. Sharif Manatov became a member of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in May 1918. In January 1919 he was already in Turkey (Vasilkov and Elzon), obviously well-prepared to work for Moscow's aspirations in Anatolia.

Sharif Manatov established contacts with some of the members of GAC in Eskişehir which was the centre of the leftist movements at that time, and supposedly had a relation to the release of its official newspaper “*Seyyare-i Yeni Dünya*” (July 1920), whose editor-in-chief was Arif Oruç³. In May 1920 Manatov moved to Ankara, where he gave several speeches in popular public places about Bolshevism and the need of a communist revolution for the salvation of the Turkish nation. He attracted Salih Hacıoğlu, Mustafa Nuri (director of the editorial board of *Yeni Dünya*) and Vakkas Ferit for the cause, who decided to establish a Bolshevik communist party together, including Ziynettullah Nushirevan, who appeared at a later stage. In June 1920 the Turkish Bolshevik Communist Party (TBCP) was secretly established with a chairman Salih Hacıoğlu. To strengthen the new structure in Ankara in August 1920 the Bolshevik Verbov (Abramov, 35)⁴ arrived and stayed for approximately a month. Part of his duties was making close relations with Ankara political elites to attract them for the communist cause (Akal, Moskova..., 101).

³ A relation between Sharif Manatov and the name of the newspaper was presumed due to the fact that it was the same as the one the communist party of Mustafa Suphi was publishing. Still, the money for the publishing of “*Seyyare-i Yeni Dünya*” was given by Cerkes Ethem. Moreover, according to a report by the Soviet Counsellor Y. Y. Upmal-Angarsky, Mustafa Kemal himself gave money to Ethem for establishing the newspaper. See: Akbulut and Tunçay, 151.

⁴ Most probably this is Abram Aronovich Verbov. He was active participant in revolutionary movements since 1903. He worked also in emigration in the Balkans and Austria in the period 1909-1917. A. Verbov was a member of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). At the beginning of 1919, he was an instructor of the Yekaterinoslav Province Party Committee. From June 1919 he was the head of the investigative unit of the RO of the 14th Army, from September the same year he became a military commissar of the 2nd brigade of the 41st rifle division. From January 1920 again a head of the investigative unit of the RO (apparently in the same division). A. Verbov was working abroad at the Balkans between March and August 1920.

After the establishment of the party the first connections with GAC were made – Sharif Manatov and Salih Hacıoğlu entered into communication with Nâzım Bey who was the secretary of GAC. In fact, Nâzım Bey met Manatov in June and saw the latter as the easiest way to achieve an old idea for a union between Soviet Russia and Turkey, thus facilitating the work of the Soviet Bolshevik. Nâzım Bey made Salih Hacıoğlu a member of GAC, giving him the duty to establish the branch in Ankara and “opening” the door to the People’s Group (GP), i.e. the Parliament through infiltration of communists in GAC. We should take into consideration that whilst all these processes were ongoing, the cooperation with Soviet Russia had the official support of the Ankara government and also the fact there was an official Turkish mission sent to Moscow in order to sign a treaty for friendship and support. Due to this, Bolshevism/communism was not considered as a threat that could influence the state affairs. In addition, it was clearly stated by Mustafa Kemal that communism and the communist revolution were not applicable to the Turkish nation due to specific characteristics in social and economic sense (Ciddi, 19). Still, communist rhetoric was in use and a specific “red tendency” even when it came to clothing was observed.

Sharif Manatov and his comrades made two attempts to subdue GAC to TBCP. The first one related to directly introducing the statute of TBCP for usage when new members of GAC were accepted. The GAC members in Eskişehir were not pleased by this intervention and stopped the activities of the Ankara branch, due to which Manatov and his comrades decided to open a separate general center of TBCP. In July 1920, after the lack of understanding, Sharif Manatov and Ziynettullah Nushirevan decided to go directly to Eskişehir and meet with Çerkez Ethem and Arif Oruç, trying to win them over to their side. At that time Çerkez Ethem was already not only a member of GAC but also at the peak of his fame. The comrades from Soviet Russia would not be the only ones to try to use his power in order to achieve their political aims as will be explained further. Unfortunately for

Manatov and Nushirevan, the meeting was not successful (Akal, Moskova..., 120-121).

In August Mustafa Suphi sent his courier, Süleyman Sami, to Ankara. The latter had to bring Suphi's letter to Mustafa Kemal, to establish an organisation in Anatolia, and to build relations with the socialists in Anatolia. Moreover, Mustafa Suphi, respectively the Comintern, wanted to learn about any future plans for the establishment of a legal communist party and the opinion of the GNA about an eventual Bolshevik program (Cebesoy, 82).

After meeting Mustafa Kemal and handing him the letter, Süleyman Sami started very actively to work for establishment of a network of communist/Bolshevik committees. He met with Manatov and organised a meeting with TBCP members in Ankara on 21 August. The party started to use the name Turkish Communist Party (TCP) (Süleyman Sami became a member of it), accepted the principles of the Third International and the superiority of the existing in Baku Turkish Communist Party. This means indirectly that Moscow was establishing more control over the communist movement in Anatolia. Süleyman Sami had meetings also with GAC members Nâzım Bey and Şayh Servet. The latter, famous for his peculiar understanding of Bolshevism and Islam, stated that “If there is another name for the Bolshevism, it is Islam”. What was more interesting was the fact that that he called Mustafa Kemal “dictator”, while criticizing him (Akal, Moskova..., 128).

The aforementioned, in a very schematic way, activities and relations developed between key Turkish personages (some of which with North Caucasian origin – a.n.), and Bolshevik emissaries, prepared the ground and the “Bolshevik wind” tried to finally reach more serious outcomes in the Parliament and outside it, deepening the involvement of its representatives in the communist movement. At the end of the summer of 1920, the already mentioned People's Group (PG) in the GNA was formed. In September (a crucial month) its existence was revealed during the election of the new Minister of Internal Affairs (Akbulut ve Tunçay, 24). The Group consisted of 85

representatives and included real leftists; deputies related to Talat and Enver Pasha; opposing to Mustafa Kemal; conservatives (Akal, Moskova..., 223). Still, according to its program, it foresaw the introduction of a Soviet system and was defending the "Islamic Socialism" (Avcıoğlu, 474, footnote). On 4 September, when the election for Minister of the Interior took place, the candidate of Mustafa Kemal, Refet Bey lost against Nâzım Bey – candidate of GAC/PG. As it is known, Mustafa Kemal, having suspicions about Nâzım Bey's contacts with foreigners, did not accept this result and insisted on his resignation (Avcıoğlu, 585). On recommendation by Sami Bey and Hacı Şükrü Bey, Nâzım Bey resigned. Supposedly, Çerkez Ethem was also a strong factor for the resignation (Gürkan, 100-103). It could be assumed that the election of Nâzım Bey and his eventual stay at the post of Minister of the Interior would have been a big success for the Soviet lobby and would have really provided an instrument for Moscow to influence the internal political processes. Even though the general secretary of GAC was not part of the secret communist party, his relations with Manatov and his comrades, and his support for the establishment of a union with Soviet Russia, made him vulnerable but at the same time a suitable "transmitter" of Moscow's aims. On account of this, Mustafa Kemal's concerns were not without of reason and what happened later is just one more confirmation in the same direction.

September 1920 was a very tense month for the Turks. The August campaign of the Greco-Turkish War resulted in an advance for the Greeks and the possibility for the Ankara government to move to Sivas. In the second half of the month the war with Armenia started, which in perspective would increase the tension between Ankara and Moscow regarding the border issue. In fact, it was the first obstruction in the negotiations between the governments. After the return of the mission from Moscow, the government experienced disappointment with the Soviets in relation to their insistence of delivering Bitlis and Van territories to Armenia. It caused not only a serious instability for

the Soviet-Turkish relations, but also changed the attitude toward the communist movement in Anatolia.

The time for Mustafa Kemal to take control of the situation came. He neutralised GAC/PG in the Parliament, by the acceptance of the “Populist Program” (13 September 1920). Arrests of communists started in Anatolia, including Sharif Manatov, who was extradited from the country. A sign of the change of the political direction was the approval of Refet Bey, who was anti-communist, anti-Bolshevik and Anglophile, as a Minister of Interior. GAC was dissolved and a new official Communist Party of Turkey (CPT) was established by Mustafa Kemal on 18 October. Except the latter, İsmet Bey, Fevzi Çakmak, Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Kâzım Karabekir, Refet Bey, among the other members were ex-GACs such as Hakkı Behiç, Yunus Nadi, Celâl Bayar, İbrahim Süreyya (Yiğit), Muhittin Baha, Eyüp Sabri, Dr. Adnan Adıvar. With the creation of the short-lived official CPT, Mustafa Kemal aimed at “killing two birds with one stone” – to control and prevent the spread of the communist movement, influenced by Moscow emissaries, while still trying to keep the trust and material support of the Soviets (Gökay, 148-149).

The pressure over the communists made the leaders of TCP turn for help to the Soviet representatives in Ankara: “...We hope that thanks to the intervention and influence of the Russian comrades the party will be officially recognised, the comrades will be released and the prosecutions will end. ... All kinds of material and moral support are expected from the Russian comrades” (Akbulut and Tunçay, 133). The support was not delayed, provided by the first accredited diplomatic mission of RSFSR headed by Counsellor Y. Y. Upmal-Angarsky. After the meeting with Kâzım Karabekir in September on his way to Ankara and requiring the legalisation of the TCP (Karabekir, 1854), he undertook very actively steps in strengthening the communist movement in Anatolia. On arrival in Ankara in October he participated in the first official convention, where he was elected honourable chairman by the Central Committee. The party started to have regular meetings, taking place in the Consulate, which became the real headquarters of TCP. Furthermore, many

people – ex-GACs, ex-PGs, and governmental representatives started to visit the Consulate and to participate in the organised meetings. “Contact was established with Nâzım and his unrepentant wing of the Green Army, who were apparently given a considerable sum of money for their activities. Among those in the Green Army with whom the Soviets forged an underground relationship were Ethem and Arif Oruç. Moreover, despite the objections of the Ankara government, the Soviet mission’s contact with Oruç continued.” (Harris, 79) Maybe the impact of perceived protection gave the confidence of TCP members to reject the unification with the official CPT. In addition, Nâzım Bey and Şeyh Servet as ex-GAC, did not join the official party, but were among the establishers of a new formation with the Soviet Counsellor, uniting TCP and ex-GAC/PG. A uniting assembly was arranged with the following participants: From TCP – Ahmet Hilmi, Salih Hacıoğlu, Ziynettullah Nushirevan, Fatma Salih; GAC – Nâzım Bey and Şeyh Servet; radical populists – Şükrü ve Hulusi Bey; from the Soviet embassy – Upmal-Angarsky, Hüseyin Hüsnü and Polyakov. 20-21 November the unification protocol was signed and on 7 December the People’s Communist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Halk İştirakiyun Fırkası*) received permission from the Ministry of the Interior to operate officially. The chairman of the party was Nâzım Bey, the secretary Salih Hacıoğlu and other members were Şeyh Servet, Mehmet Şükrü, Ziynettullah Nevshirvanov (Akbulut ve Tunçay, 96, 154). Even though on the surface the party was not radical in its views and was not pushing for a revolution against Mustafa Kemal, it still could be used as a proxy for Moscow’s interests through the activities of its Moscow-oriented members. It is then not illogical, that the party existed until February 1921 and its end was part of the final blow against the Soviet supported communist movement in Anatolia.

Special attention is to be paid to Çerkez Ethem in the following paragraphs, not only because he was one of the most prominent personages of the North Caucasian diaspora, but also because his influential figure was actively involved in political combinations and attempts of the Bolsheviks to attract him as an alternative to Mustafa Kemal through Moscow oriented people in

GAC, then in the unofficial TCP and People`s Party. At the same time, Mustafa Kemal, realising the threat for the Ankara government`s power, tried to bring Çerkez Ethem and his forces under control. In fact, the Soviets endeavoured to use the conflict between Çerkez Ethem and Mustafa Kemal for their purposes in order to have the power for counter-balance of the latter and a force that could be used if Ankara leaned to the West.

There is enough information in the historiography about Çerkez Ethem. He organised partisan forces, when the Greek occupation started, fought against the Greeks and managed to suppress the unrest in the South Marmara region, namely the uprisings of Anzavur Ahmed, Adapazarı-Düzce and Yozgat, which were against the Ankara government. All these happened in a complicated time when the government and its forces were in a formative period. His methods of punishment, recruitment of people for his forces *Kuva-yı Seyyare*, and taxation of locals are also aspects which were well researched. Due to this the focus would be on a less discussed topic – his relations with representatives of the Soviets as well as with deputies from the Parliament involved in the realisation of Moscow`s plans for a Red Revolution in Anatolia.

In the period when the Red movement was making its first steps in Anatolia within the framework of politics promoting the cooperation with the Soviets, Çerkez Ethem was already becoming famous on the frontline with his contribution to the Turkish National Movement. In June 1920 he was invited in Ankara and welcomed as a hero there. Supposedly, during that period he became a member of the GAC together with his brother Tevfik Bey. Hereby, the gaining strength and later political influence in the Parliament through the PG, GAC came into possession of a significant military force – a minimum of 3000 irregular cavalries (Yelbaşı, 80). While accommodated in Ankara by Hacı Sükrü, Çerkez Ethem met with a lot of deputies of the GNA. Some of them he already knew and other he met for the first time amongst whom he stated to have found many “friends by ideals” (Gürkan, 62). In fact, later it would turn out that among the “friends” of Çerkez Ethem there were two type of

people – those, who were close to Mustafa Kemal but also supporters of Çerkez Ethem, trying to find a solution of the conflict between them; and a second group of leftist oppositional deputies in the Parliament, who were in contact with the Bolshevik emissaries, trying to entangle Çerkez Ethem in their political plans and use him as a counter-leader and an alternative to Mustafa Kemal.

With his acceptance in the GAC, Çerkez Ethem also came under the influence of the “red trend” in Anatolia, which found its place in his forces of *Kuva-yı Seyyare* – a tendency that was observed in the rest of the military formations, especially those on the eastern front, which had contact with the Soviet Red Army. D. Avcioglu wrote about a Cerkez Ethem`s detachment walking around in Ankara with red hooded hats and waving a green flag (447). One of his military units called the “Bolshevik Battalion”, consisted of 261 soldiers and 5 lieutenants (Uzun, 96). This is what Ethem said about the commander of the battalion: “The commander of the battalion, lieutenant İsmail Hakkı Efendi, being truly with a Bolshevik spirit rather than a warrior, was someone who was capable to encourage the army of the enemy becoming against the war. Lately, he encouraged the war-weary soldiers to revolt against their governments. Therefore I gave him extraordinary allocations. The name of the battalion was given because of this commander.” (Gürkan, 157). The battalion was situated in Eskişehir, the headquarters of Cerkez Ethem and GAC`s *Yeni Dünya* newspaper. We could see the purpose of naming a battalion as Bolshevik as a way to keep abreast of the time and symbolize the inclination toward Soviet Russia. In addition, the statement about its commander really meant to highlight his Bolshevik spirits as it was typical for those times within the current understanding of what was appraisable. However, to relate this to some strong Bolshevik ideas of Çerkez Ethem`s would be a kind of an exaggeration. The multiple citations of his interview for the *Açıksöz* newspaper from September, 1920 (Akal, Milli ..., 383-389), showed this very well. It should be noticed that Çerkez Ethem was definitely not a communist or a Bolshevik in a political aspect, neither was he

ideologically prepared to be such. On these grounds, the statements he made about Bolshevism being the only cure for the salvation of the nation and the Bolshevik system being more beneficial for the nation's future, sound more as modern clichés and *ad hoc* conjuncture talk. Moreover, from the reader's point of view he gave quite short and unsatisfactory answers to the primary political questions. He did not go to the Assembly building to listen to the sessions as he felt uneasy there, being more relaxed when he returned close to the frontline. Of course that does not mean that Çerkez Ethem was totally apolitical or did not sympathize with Bolshevism or the communist idea. Still, the fact that he might want to stay away from the political process, did not prevent him from being a figure, who attracted the attention of the powers, struggling for supremacy in Turkey.

One of these powers, related to Soviet Russia, was leading the spread of the communist movement in Anatolia. The above mentioned meeting between Sharif Manatov- Ziynettullah Nushirevan, and Çerkez Ethem-Arif Oruç in Eskişehir, which happened in July, 1920, was aiming first of all to gain the support for establishing control over the GAC by TCP (i.e. by Moscow as probably expected at a later stage). They took advantage of the already involved in their plans members of the community to reach to the military leader. Second, he and his military power could be a stable back for the movement on the one hand, and in the other hand a real threat for Mustafa Kemal's authority, which could be used in a suitable for Moscow situation.

The battle at Demirci (30 July – 18 August, 1920), where Çerkez Ethem defeated and warded off the Greeks, made his popularity in the Parliament hit its highest point. This was definitely an incentive for some deputy circles, related to opposing groups to Mustafa Kemal, to search for Ethem's collaboration. It was even supposed that "...Founders of the Green Army such as Hacı Şükrü and Reşit were dreaming to seize the government with the power of Ethem." (Avcioglu, 570).

The third group of powers that tried to attract Çerkez Ethem was represented by Mustafa Kemal and his closest commanders. In military aspect it was definitely proved that the created as a

group of partisan Circassian bands *Kuvâ-yi Seyyâre* was able to fight against a real army. In this regard it was more than natural these forces to become one with *Kuvâ-yi Milliye*. It is logical, its leader who was actively contributing to the Turkish National Movement and was part of the GAC, to be expected to cooperate with the government. Mustafa Kemal searched for this cooperation many times, including the case with the election of Nâzım Bey for Minister of the Interior. However, when it comes to Çerkez Ethem the line between being a co-operator and a rival was very thin due to circumstances turning him into a threat at a later stage.

Naturally, being an object of so much attention and realising the power possessed, Çerkez Ethem became more confident. Another consequence of this was his and his brothers' unwillingness to obey other commanders, such as İsmet Pasha. Çerkez Ethem wanted his opinion about military issues to be considered when decisions were taken. The statement, in his memoir, that Moscow trusted him more for the establishment of the relations between both countries (Gürkan, 106) came just as an additional result to mark the culmination of the political attention already received and probably the methods used to convince him for one plan or another.

There is one more source of this outcome that has to be mentioned. The former members of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), especially Enver Pasha, were not strangers to the opportunities that Çerkez Ethem could provide them on the one hand and on the other, the "Islamic Bolshevism" in Anatolia. Enver Pasha was actively involved in establishing relations between Germany and RSFSR and at the same time ensuring support of Moscow for the Turkish National Movement. He, as well as the other CUP leaders, was still influential in the Muslim world, which was of great significance for the Bolsheviks for the purpose of spreading their ideology and organising the "oppressed" peoples of the East against the imperialistic colonial states. This is why for a certain period of time Enver received their support as to achieve his aim he started to develop a peculiar "Islamic socialism" (Masayuki, 19). His activities were

focused on the unification of the Islamic countries of the East against the Entente and the provision of weapons for Ankara as part of the help against Great Britain. Enver was working on having regiments from Dagestan and Caucasus sent as reinforcement for Mustafa Kemal in the spring (of the next year, i.e. 1921 – a.n.) (Cebesoy, 96-99). In fact, Enver Pasha was planning his own return and did not give up on the idea of being part of the ruling factors in Ankara. He sustained active contacts with his supporters in Anatolia – around 40 deputies from the assembly were close to him (Yelbaşı, 73). Other channel of his influence was coming through the Islamic Unity in Istanbul and through the relations with the left-wing opposition in Ankara. Among his contacts were also the three brothers – Ethem, Reşit and Tevfik (Masayuki, 136-137; Bardakçı, 550). Having them on his side, Enver Pasha could definitely rely on military force when the time for his return was planned. The popularity of Enver, his relations with Ethem and other important figures in Anatolia, were a source of serious concern for Mustafa Kemal and an additional prerequisite for sharpening the conflict with the commander of *Kuvâ-yi Seyyâre*. In an interview from 1926, Çerkez Ethem even stated that he was actively working for the return of Enver and the disposal of Mustafa Kemal (Yelbaşı, 209, note 28). It should be taken into account that the planned return of Enver was supposed to be with the active engagement of the Soviet side. Moscow would first, benefit from the conflict between ex-CUPs, bringing both sides under its control, and second, it would have a strong transmitter of the Revolution to the East.

Due to the deterioration of the relations between Ethem and Mustafa Kemal there were thoughts about sending the former to Moscow within the mission of Ali Fuat Cebesoy. This was a serious sign of the beginning of the end, as it was a diplomatic way to dispose of the rival. Not only did Ethem refuse, but also his supporters in the GNA protested against the possibility of such an appointment (Avcıoğlu, 589; Carr, 301). The last attempt for a peaceful solution was made by the deputies, entrusted by the three brothers, who also did not want drastic measures to be undertaken against Çerkez Ethem. These were Eyüp Sabri, Celâl

Bayar, Hacı Şükrü, Kazın (Özalp), Hakkı Behiç, Kılıç Ali, who formed a deputation for negotiation and reconciliation. Still, the disobedience of the brothers and their threatening influence led to the start of a military operation against them that ended with their escape to the Greeks and the defeat of their units in Gediz on 5 January, 1921.

There was no intervention from the Soviet mission in Ankara, which is not unnatural. Who was to win in the confrontation remained to be seen and action was to be taken accordingly. Moscow's local political aims were supplementary to the more global ones. In addition, it never openly supported the rival of Mustafa Kemal. The often cited statement of Mihail Frunze about Çerkez Ethem as indicative of Moscow's opinion, referred to the period, when the latter had already escaped to the Greek side, hence it was quite normal for Frunze to be critical when it came to a person who had discredited himself in society and declared a traitor. However, this does not mean that the Bolsheviks did not consider using him politically earlier. More serious attention has to be paid to one detail. Frunze's opinion about the character of Çerkez Ethem being "the character of a person who emerged on the waves of the national revolutionary movement, who created popularity by exploiting the class instincts and demands of the peasant masses, but essentially being a demagogue and a pure adventurer", in fact leads to the general conclusion that "...although in not fully formed, but completely clear class struggle, it is obvious that real conditions for a revolution of a social type did not exist in Turkey." (Frunze, 339). The case with Çerkez Ethem was indicative for the Bolsheviks and a base for assessment of how realistic was the possibility of spreading the revolution in Anatolia.

A similar situation in broader political aspect – a lack of harsh reaction, was related to the "sacrifice" of Mustafa Suphi. The "incident" with him and his comrades on 28 January 1921 and the arrested communists and adherents of Çerkez Ethem did not incite a protest from Moscow. At that particular moment Moscow could not risk the escalation of a conflict that would deteriorate the negotiations process and possibly compromise

the cooperation with the leader, Mustafa Kemal, against the Entente powers thus, “pushing him into the arms” of the enemy. Regardless of Comintern’s protest, being the veiled way of Moscow to express discontent, RSFSR never did it openly. As E. H. Carr states, “But this unfortunate affair (i.e. the case with Mustafa Suphi and his comrades – a.n.) was not allowed to affect the broader considerations on which the growing amity between Kemal and Moscow was founded. For the first, though not for the last, time it was demonstrated that governments could deal drastically with their national communist parties without forfeiting the goodwill of the Soviet Government, if that were earned on other grounds.” (301).

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The North Caucasian diaspora should not be underestimated as a factor in the Soviet-Turkish relations. Especially, when people occupying leading positions in the government and society, were concerned. There were Circassians at a top diplomatic level, whom the solution of controversial issues between Turkey and RSFSR was directly depending on. There were others that were engaged actively in the defence of the independency of the North Caucasian Republic. Some were working for the spread of the October Revolution and the communist ideas. Thus, all of them did actually have a direct impact on the Soviet-Turkish relations and the potential, if not limited, to cause deviations in the process of cooperation. Being part of the circles closest to figures like Mustafa Kemal, Enver Pasha and Çerkez Ethem made them either a threat or a strong supportive element in a period turbulent for both Ankara and Moscow.

Another factor was the indirect impact of the North Caucasian diaspora in the person of all other leaders that organised the revolts against the Ankara government, involving significant groups of the diaspora representatives in the South Marmara region. Their cooperation and support for the Istanbul government indirectly created difficulties for the Ankara government, respectively for the aims of Moscow in the East. The

British backing for the Istanbul government activities, which provoked in fact a civil war, not only hardened the situation of Mustafa Kemal during the Greco-Turkish War, but also limited the spread of the national movement. Here, the role of the diaspora for Great Britain resembles a lot the one their ancestors played in the Russian Empire against the Russians. In addition, the confrontation between the Ankara government and the rebels could potentially discredit Mustafa Kemal in the eyes of the Bolsheviks, which might provoke them to consider him as not strong enough leader able to keep the situation under control and respectively to attempt his removal. Consequently, his removal could be seen as a victory for the British and Istanbul government circles.

The participants in all mentioned activities had also an additional challenge in front of them related to their identity and faithfulness to the country that became their second homeland. We should consider whether some of the undertaken steps were in fact a result of self-initiative or a well-prepared plan for pressure over the Soviet government in the period of active negotiations with Ankara, which had to solve many territorial and political issues. The situation was the same when it came to the upper-hand that Moscow wanted to have in Turkey's political orientation, which was an intended purpose when supporting the communist movement in Anatolia. Engagement of representatives of the diaspora in the establishment of communist/leftist formations in fact had the potential to make them an instrument for pressure over Ankara, in parallel with the already ongoing confrontation between the Circassians from the South Marmara and the forces of Mustafa Kemal.

Beyond any doubt, the historical background played a key role for the North Caucasian migrants on high level positions in Turkey and put to the test the stability of Soviet-Turkish relations. Despite making them vulnerable to the main players' political schemes, the ideas for return to the homeland and the lively interest in the political processes in North Caucasus could not let the diaspora stand aside from the developments in the Soviet-Turkish cooperation.

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