

RUSSIAN POLICY IN THE EAST.

VII.

SHAM TURKISH COMMUNISTS FOR RUSSIA'S BENEFIT.

A REAL COMMUNIST'S FATE.

By Arthur Ransome.

"As long as the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles are in the hands of capitalist Europe, as long as English squadrons have free passage into the Black Sea, so long will the Ukraine and Soviet Caucasus bleed to death in a struggle with international counter-revolution and its hirelings. Only from the moment when the whole of the Black Sea passes into Soviet hands, and the red flag of Turkey or the flag of a Soviet Federation of Black Sea States is hoisted over Constantinople, shall we live in peace and be able to give ourselves to creative and constructive work." In this way Pavlovitch, the Communist, translates into Communistic language the Russian tendency towards Constantinople which Mr. Miliukov chose the wrong moment for proclaiming, at the beginning of the revolution, in the language of the Cadets. Pavlovitch is the mouthpiece of the Third International, just as Chicherin is the mouthpiece of the Soviet Government. And, if the Soviet Government is ready to encourage and help the Angora Assembly because it is engaged in a struggle the ultimate effect of which may be to weaken European capitalism, the Third International sets before itself the task of turning Turkey Communist in time to prevent the growing Moslem movement of which Angora is coming to be the centre from attacking in its strength the ambiguous ally it sought in its weakness.

In reply to Mustapha Kemal, who asked for precise information as to what they would be at, the Turkish Communists (affiliated to the Third International) replied, "Our revolutionary duty is to struggle with the enemies of social revolution, the Entente, both within and without Turkey. But, at the same time, you should know that our task so far as Turkey is concerned, is to create from ruined and dismembered Turkey a Socialist Republic of workers and peasants."

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as exists between bourgeois democracy and the Communist party. On the other hand we have declared that we shall support with all our might the struggle of the nations against world imperialism, and we have loyally kept our word. By undertaking this task and carrying it out we act in absolute conformity with our Communist convictions, for surely we need not mind if among those who are fighting imperialism, which must perish that we should live, there are men who do not profess to be Communists."

Precisely. Dr. Tewfik is the perfect Communist from the point of view of the Angora Assembly, ready to be satisfied with the Soviet forms (which Angora has already approached) but demanding nothing serious in the way of economic change, who heartily concentrated on the national struggle, and consequently unlikely to produce what the Angorans most fear, a split in the unity of the movement. Communist propaganda which should succeed in dividing the nation, especially the army, into "bourgeois" and "proletarian" parties would assuredly smash the Anatolian movement. The Angorans accordingly encourage Dr. Tewfik Rouschidy and expeditiously make away with the ingenuous Subkhi.

Bolshevik Propaganda Not Wanted.

And although in the beginning the Angoran Foreign Minister and Kemal himself, not to speak of the Governor of Trebizond and Kazim Karabekir, who commanded on the eastern front, produced in all their communications with Russia delightful exercises in the ambiguous use of revolutionary language, the Turks are already learning that they can speak to the Russian Government as man to man, and have no need to pretend to a Communism in which they do not believe. Dr. Fuad, for example (not to be confounded with the General Ali Fuad), expressly warns the Soviet Government against the use of popular propaganda, telling them politely that "in Turkey there is no economic base for the spread of Communism, there is no purely industrial proletariat, the agrarian question is by no means bitter, wherefore the Communist idea is not a natural deduction from the situation of the Turkish masses, but must be inoculated to a certain extent artificially, not on the grounds of historical materialism but on idealistic grounds. In view of this Communist ideas in Turkey will have to pass not from the masses to the intelligentsia but from the intelligentsia to the masses." He points out the uselessness of opposing Internationalist ideas to the Nationalist enthusiasm on which the Anatolian movement is based, and while delicately insisting that the Russian representative in Angora had better not be an Armenian or a Greek, suggests that he should run his propaganda "from the wider horizon of the struggle of oppressed classes and peoples with their oppressors." In other words, "Talk as you please to our intellectuals, but be so good as to leave our soldiers alone."

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There is no more curious passage in modern diplomacy than the efforts of the Turkish Nationalists to play to the gallery of the Moscow Communists. I have spoken already of the clever parroting of Communist language in the official notes of the Angora Assembly, of the innocuous adaptation of the Russian form of local government, of the way in which they called their Ministers "Temporary People's Commissars." The Turks went very much farther than that. Efforts were made to find a common ground between Mohammedanism and Communism. This was the more necessary lest the religious East should be scandalised at this new infidel alliance. The practical need of the alliance found a curious reflection in the teaching of a religious dogmatic movement, called after the Mullah Abu Zar, who preached that Communism was the real basis of Islam. The Abuzarists have become a considerable political sect, represented in the Angoran Assembly and issuing two newspapers of their own. It is noteworthy that certain of the Indian revolutionaries have been smoothing the way in the same manner by showing that there is at least no contradiction between Islam and Communism, and, comically enough, referring to Elphinstone's description of the quiet and serenity that existed during the reign of Ala-ud-din Khilji, who ruled in India six hundred years ago, limited farmers to a certain quantity of land and a certain number of servants, and introduced Government control of all kinds in-

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Covered with the deep wounds given it by hypocrisy, the East is longing for freedom. The movement which now embraces the whole of Anatolia is purely a movement of liberation. The successes of this movement are a guarantee of the enfranchisement of the East, of the last hour and final ruin of the English and French capitalist Governments. With the fall and ruin of the Governments of the Entente a new epoch will begin in the life of now oppressed humanity, an epoch of equality and brotherhood. The hitherto rightless masses of the West and of the East will enjoy a new and free life. The suppression of the revolution in Anatolia and the establishment there of the mastery of the English would inevitably bring with it a strengthening of the latter's authority and despotic rule throughout the whole East. For this reason the leaders of the Anatolian movement are also self-denying fighters for the liberation and happiness of all mankind. The decision of the Turkish Communist party to give us full and every-sided help is an effort towards the liberation of an oppressed people, and that is the fundamental principle of their programme.

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A "Special" Communist Party.

But while the Turks were playing up to Moscow they were at the same time trying to sterilise Communist propaganda at home. They put themselves right with Moscow by nominally legalising the Communist party in Turkey, but ingeniously manufactured a special Communist party to meet the needs of the case (I believe this piece of cunning originated with the Young Turks, who, while extremely anti-Communist, were before the Anatolians in realising the possible advantages for Turkey in a Russian alliance), and, judging from frenzied warnings from the real Turkish Communists, I fancy they succeeded in imposing the delegates of this tame domestic party on the exuberant conference of Eastern peoples at Baku in the autumn of last year.

It is not very easy to see why the Turkish Nationalists should have felt it necessary to parry Communist propaganda at all, since from the Communist point of view Turkey, like most of the East, seems the worst possible material. I have waded through a vast morass of reports on the subject, mostly by sanguine agitators who believe that Turkey is on the point of a Communist revolution.

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"The Fate of One Man."

Subkhi's sad end was, of course, reported to Moscow, but "the fate of one man cannot affect the policy of a revolution" and during the Russian-Turkish Conference

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sembly, of the innocuous adaptation of the Russian form of local government, of the way in which they called their Ministers "Temporary People's Commissars." The Turks went very much farther than that. Efforts were made to find a common ground between Mohammedanism and Communism. This was the more necessary lest the religious East should be scandalised at this new infidel alliance. The practical need of the alliance found a curious reflection in the teaching of a religious dogmatic movement, called after the Mullah Abu Zar, who preached that Communism was the real basis of Islam. The Abuzarists have become a considerable political sect, represented in the Angoran Assembly and issuing two newspapers of their own. It is noteworthy that certain of the Indian revolutionaries have been smoothing the way in the same manner by showing that there is at least no contradiction between Islam and Communism, and, comically enough, referring to Elphinstone's description of the quiet and serenity that existed during the reign of Ala-ud-din Khilji, who ruled in India six hundred years ago, limited farmers to a certain quantity of land and a certain number of servants, and introduced Government control of all kinds, including definite hours for work, uniform closing time for shops, and fixed prices for all necessities.

A "Special" Communist Party.

But while the Turks were playing up to Moscow they were at the same time trying to sterilise Communist propoganda at home. They put themselves right with Moscow by nominally legalising the Communist party in Turkey, but ingeniously manufactured a special Communist party to meet the needs of the case (I believe this piece of cunning originated with the Young Turks, who, while extremely anti-Communist, were before the Anatolians in realising the possible advantages for Turkey in a Russian alliance), and, judging from frenzied warnings from the real Turkish Communists, I fancy they succeeded in imposing the delegates of this tame domestic party on the exuberant conference of Eastern peoples at Baku in the autumn of last year.

It is not very easy to see why the Turkish Nationalists should have felt it necessary to parry Communist propoganda at all, since from the Communist point of view Turkey, like most of the East, seems the worst possible material. I have waded through a vast morass of reports on the subject, mostly by sanguine agitators who believe that Turkey is on the point of a Communist revolution. They bring small evidence to justify such a belief. With the exception of tramway and dock workers and a few others in Constantinople and Smyrna who have formed embryonic trade unions, the town population is made up of traders and small craftsmen, working in their own homes and quite unorganised. Some of the reports I have seen compare the Turkish towns with small European towns at the beginning of the industrial period. As for the peasants, the majority seem to be small landowners, and consequently not revolutionary. It is true that one report says: "As a result of the mistake of the Government [old Constantinople Government] in giving permission to foreign bankers to make advances on a guarantee of immovable property the peasants have lost their land and in part, getting tied up in their debts, have become the actual slaves of the bankers. As a result of their loss of land peasants had to give 80 per cent of their gains to bankers and bets, and, being unable to exist on the remaining 20 per cent, were being forced every year to emigrate to America and Russia."

But that account, which seems exaggerated, only strengthens the argument of those who assert that the Turkish Revolution cannot but be national and anti-foreign, and that there are no strong motives for a Turkish social

Governor wrote:—
Covered with the deep wounds given it by hypocrisy, the East is longing for freedom. The movement which now embraces the whole of Anatolia is purely a movement of liberation. The successes of this movement are a guarantee of the enfranchisement of the East, of the last hour and final ruin of the English and French capitalist Governments. With the fall and ruin of the Governments of the Entente a new epoch will begin in the life of now oppressed humanity, an epoch of equality and brotherhood. The hitherto rightless masses of the West and of the East will enjoy a new and free life. The suppression of the revolution in Anatolia and the establishment there of the mastery of the English would inevitably bring with it a strengthening of the latter's authority and despotic rule throughout the whole East. For this reason the leaders of the Anatolian movement are also self-denying fighters for the liberation and happiness of all mankind. The decision of the Turkish Communist party to give us full and every-sided help is an effort towards the liberation of an oppressed people, and that is the fundamental principle of their programme.

Subkli whole-heartedly took this view, and in September last year sent a passionate appeal to Moscow for help, not for the Turkish Communists, but for the Angoran Assembly. He wrote that "occupation by the enemy of Brussa, Adrianople, Balikeseri, and Ismid have contributed to bring about pro-English revolts inside the country." He was nervous of rumoured agreement between the Armenian and Georgian armies, and was excited about the rumour of a proposed landing of 100,000 Armenian volunteers from America. The Anatolian army was using its last cartridges. It placed all its hopes in the triumph of Bolshevism. Therefore would Moscow please do at least something of what was promised. Yet within a very short time after his writing this letter, when the position of the Turks had improved, when the desired treaty was already secure, in spite of his obvious services to them, the Anatolians felt they no longer needed him as intermediary for their diplomacy, and he became for them no longer a connection with beneficent Russia, but merely a Turkish Communist. In the very Trebizond the Governor of which had written him such flattering letters only a month or two before, the unfortunate Subkli ended his career, being first bayoneted and then, so it is said, sewn up in a sack and thrown into the sea.

"The Fate of One Man."

Subkli's sad end was, of course, reported to Moscow, but "the fate of one man cannot affect the policy of a revolution" and during the Russian-Turkish Conference which he had certainly done a good deal to bring about, not a word about the death of Subkli was allowed to interrupt the irreproachable revolutionary sentiments of the Turkish delegates. Not until the treaty was safely signed was he mentioned, and then not by a representative of the Soviet Government but by Pavlovitch of the Third International, who used him to point an attack on the sham Communist party. Pavlovitch this May wrote about the death of Subkli and some other Communists who were killed with him, and asked "What would be the attitude of the official Communist party of Ankara to these horrors?" On June 3 Dr. Tewfik Rouschidy replied in "Moscow" (a sheet issued in many languages in Moscow for delegates to the Third Congress of the Third International, which is now sitting). "Tewfik Rouschidy mentions Subkli only perfunctorily but denies at length that he is an official party treated for ulterior ends by the Angoran Government. "We think," he says, "that the Eastern countries, which as regards large industry are behind the times, will be able to adopt the Communist social system without having to pass through a capitalist phase. . . . There is the same difference between us and the other Turkish parties

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