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Osman Okyar, *Mustafa Kemal in Turkish – Soviet Relations in the War of Independence, (1920-1921)*, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2017, ISBN: 978-975-458-102-7

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In the introduction part of the work written by Osman Okyar, the relations of Mustafa Kemal and the founding staff of the Republic with the USSR were discussed in order to finance the National Struggle. Turkey received the help of the USSR in order to make the National Struggle movement successful. The National Struggle cadre succeeded in not being under the control of the USSR, thanks to the rational policies it carried out in return for the financial aid. The policies of Mustafa Kemal, the leader of the National Struggle, towards the USSR between 1920 and 1921 constitute the main axis of this book. Thanks to the rational strategic initiatives of Mustafa Kemal towards the USSR, the necessary resources were provided from the USSR to the National Struggle and also saved Turkey from being one of the satellite states of the USSR.

In the book, the ups and downs of the Turkish-Soviet relations between the years 1920-1921 were examined. Thanks to the agreements signed by Mustafa Kemal and the National Struggle staff with the SCCB and Western states, possible threats from both the West and the USSR were blocked. Osman Okyar also mentioned the books written on the history of the USSR, including the sources he used while writing this work.

In the first part, the main reasons behind the application of the Turkish Government to the USSR for aid in April 1920 are examined in detail. In addition, the financial aid of the USSR, which was very effective in the Turkish Government's success in the National Struggle, was especially emphasized. The principle of self-determination promised by the Bolsheviks to the non-Russian nations in order to find support was also emphasized. The Bolsheviks did not keep the self-determination principle they promised after overthrowing the Tsarist regime. It is known that England, which gave up on ensuring the territorial integrity of Turkey at the end of the First World War, became the common enemy of both Russia and Turkey in the future, and the two countries cooperated together in the face of this situation. It is a proven fact with documents that the first step in the USSR-Turkey rapprochement came from the Russian side. Soviet Russia planned to help Turkey, but on the other hand, it always kept the idea of making a revolution among the peasants and working class in Turkey. In the book, the conditions of the aid provided by the Soviet Russia and the analyzes made by Mustafa Kemal and the National Struggle staff on this issue are mentioned in detail.

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In the second part, we see that Mustafa Kemal's thoughts on the future of Turkey from the very beginning of the Turkish War of Independence are given wide coverage. At that time, there is no doubt that Soviet Russia had a great importance in the thought of Mustafa Kemal Pasha to save the Turkish homeland from occupation. Mustafa Kemal did not make the mistake of being very wise and declaring the Republic right away. He waited for conditions to mature. In his own words, he kept this thought in his conscience as a national secret. In the book, analyzes were made between the Western and Eastern policies of Turkey between the years 1920-1921. It was also mentioned that those who follow a pro-Western policy are the Istanbul Government and that it is impossible to sit at the same table with them. Mustafa Kemal defended Kazım Karabekir in the Parliament in response to his "Communist" accusations and paid great attention to using a moderate language on this issue. He also took care to use a balancing element when talking about Turkey's Western and Eastern policies and he acted very skillfully by paying attention to his actions. Another reason that pushed Turkey to establish closeness with Soviet Russia was the hostile attitude of England towards Turkey. At the end of the First World War, the discourses of Soviet Russia promising freedom and independence to the peoples that were colonized by the imperialist states were also emphasized. Thanks to the rational policies they carried out, Mustafa Kemal and the National Struggle staff both succeeded in the War of Independence and laid the foundation of the new Turkish State. Mustafa Kemal did not put forward the idea of the Republic, which had been in his mind since the beginning before the National Struggle was successful, never mentioned it, and in fact avoided criticizing Communism, which he did not view positively. Later in this section, Mustafa Kemal Pasha's ideas about ensuring the territorial integrity of Turkey while he was in Istanbul before he moved to Anatolia are given in detail. In addition, the military-military and political relations during the period when the Committee of Union and Progress was in power were also covered. It is discussed.

In the third chapter, Soviet Russia's view of the world and Turkey's position in their eyes are given. The general situation in Russia and the activities of Lenin were mentioned and determinations were made about it. The political events that took place in Europe in 1920 were mentioned and analyzes were made about the deteriorating economy of Russia in this period. Lenin's struggle with capitalism and his activities to recover the deteriorated Russian economy were examined. Also, the activities of Lenin, who wanted a revolution in Asian countries, were discussed. The Comintern Congress was also mentioned. In this congress, it was seen that not every country was ready for the Asian Revolution. Undoubtedly, England was the most disturbed by these activities of Russia. It was emphasized that Turkey was the most suitable country to start the Asian Revolution. Mustafa Kemal's knocking on the door of the Soviets for help gave Russia the opportunity it had been waiting for. At the end of the section, information was given about the policies of the Soviets towards Turkey since 1921.



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In the fourth chapter, Turkey's political situation in 1920 is discussed. The reasons for the communist expansionism that started in Turkey during these periods were examined. An analysis of the measures taken by Mustafa Kemal against the expansionism of communism was made. We see that communism has begun to flourish in Turkish society after the Armistice. Despite England's desire to seize Turkish lands, which changed policy at the end of the First World War, Soviet Russia gave up its rights over Turkey and started a fierce struggle with imperialism caused their conversion. Together with the Communism movements that started to mobilize in Turkey as of September 1919, the Workers and Socialist Party of Turkey was established this year and even published a magazine called "Kurtuluş". Communism expansionism, which started in Turkey in 1919, expanded like a neural network when we came to 1920. It even extended to the interior of Anatolia. The Soviet leaders were naturally pleased with these developments. We see that Soviet Russia left Ankara's request for help unanswered for a long time. Although there are many reasons for this, the most important is that Soviet Russia is waiting for the right time to act. Soviet Russia sent representatives and agents to Turkey before diplomatic relations were established. Attention was drawn to the spread of the Communist structures they established in Turkey through the representatives they sent. One of these sent people is Şerif Manatov and he had the opportunity to meet with Mustafa Kemal one-on-one. Another issue mentioned in this part of the book is Russia's efforts to lay the groundwork for Communism to work legally in Turkey. Towards the end of this chapter, political developments in Azerbaijan in 1920 were also mentioned. Discussions on Communism and Bolshevism took place in these meetings. It was decided to send a congratulatory message to this government established in Azerbaijan. In addition, Yeşilordu and its activities are also included and Mustafa Kemal's thoughts about this structure are also discussed. It is emphasized that this structure is a structure that harms the state. Apart from this, the trial processes of the founders of the Turkish People's Participation in Independence Courts are mentioned. Another point mentioned is that the Communism movements in Turkey were suppressed in the late 1920s. At the end of this section, the telegrams of Ali Fuat Pasha and Mustafa Kemal in Moscow were mentioned and Mustafa Kemal mentioned the invisible main aims of Soviet Russia in these telegrams.

In the fifth chapter, the delegation sent by Turkey to Russia for negotiations and the correspondence between Mustafa Kemal and Çiçerin are mentioned. The correspondence between the two took place before the Moscow negotiations. In the letter that Çiçer sent to Mustafa Kemal on 3 June 1920, he stated that the Soviets were in favor of establishing diplomatic relations with Turkey. The Turkish delegation, which arrived in Moscow on July 19, 1920, was kept in Moscow for a long time. After the negotiations started, the Russian side used a top-notch style in response to the soft attitude of the Turkish delegation. The Turkish delegation did not get the expected result from the First Moscow Meetings.



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In the sixth chapter, the Congress of Eastern Nations held in Baku in 1920 is discussed. The owner of the idea of convening this congress is Lenin. Extensive explanations were given about the people who were invited to the congress. Enver Pasha was also invited to the congress. Congress President Zinoviev emphasized that Mustafa Kemal was not pro-Communist and that the main purpose of the Turkish Government, which was struggling for existence in Ankara, was to protect the sanctity of the caliphate. In addition, the discourses of the leaders of the countries who expressed their views on Turkey were also included in this congress. Another subject emphasized in this section is Mustafa Suphi and the first Turkish Communist Party he founded in Soviet Russia. In the exchange of letters with Mustafa Kemal, Mustafa Suphi mentioned his desire to legally carry out Communist activities in Turkey. At the end of the episode, the Soviet leaders who were blindly attached to their ideological thoughts were criticized.

In the seventh chapter, the military operation carried out by the Eastern Front Commander Kazım Karabekir against Armenia in September-December 1920 is given in detail. The historical background of this military operation against Armenia is mentioned. The analysis of Mustafa Kemal's moves against the policies of Soviet Russia was made. Mustafa Kemal accepted the arbitration of Soviet Russia in the determination of Turkey's borders with Armenia, but in return he asked the Soviets to intervene in Armenia, which raided Turkish villages and massacred there. Kazım Karabekir, who was on our eastern border, sent a telegram to Mustafa Kemal that He stated that his persecution, had become unbearable and he asked permission to take action. Mustafa Kemal ordered Kazım Karabekir to start an operation against Armenia in September 1920. Mustafa Kemal asked the army to wait for a while with an order he sent to Kazım Karabekir after the operation started. Mustafa Kemal cited the negative activities of Celalettin Arif as the reason for this situation. The author of the book, Osman Okyar, dwells on the possibility that there may be other reasons that Mustafa Kemal did not mention in this section. Soviet Russia did not react very strongly to this military operation of Turkey against Armenia at first. The military operation, which was suspended for a month, started again on October 28, 1920, with the order of Mustafa Kemal. Armenia, who could not resist against the advance of the Turkish army, wanted peace. The war ended with the Gyumri Treaty signed on December 3, 1920. At the end of the chapter, the analysis of the reasons why Lenin did not show resistance against Turkey and the consequences of this military operation for Soviet Russia and Turkey are emphasized.

In the eighth chapter, the aim of TKP and Mustafa Suphi to spread communism in Anatolia is mentioned. Biography of Mustafa Suphi is included and the reasons for his going to Russia are also emphasized. Mustafa Suphi, who gained the trust of Stalin while he was in Russia, was appointed to the head of the newspaper "Yeni Dünya", on the other hand, he pioneered the rapid spread of communism with his activities. We can see that there is no such help, but that he wants to spread communism in Turkey in return for this help. In the



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exchange of letters with Mustafa Kemal, Mustafa Suphi stated that Soviet Russia was ready to respond to the help Turkey demanded, on the other hand, he tried to find out what Mustafa Kemal thought about the legal functioning of Communism in Anatolia. Mustafa Kemal and the Ankara Government, who turned their route to Soviet Russia due to the threat of necessity, and the Ankara Government, in this very sensitive and very critical period, the Soviet Russia looked positively on some demands, but in some cases showed a definite and uncompromising attitude. Towards the end of this section, Mustafa Kemal We see the process of Suphi and some of his friends moving to Anatolia. This process has been explained in a plain and fluent language. Mustafa Suphi and his friends who came to Anatolia were killed and thrown into the sea by Yahya Kaptan and his friends, who are known to be former Unionists in Trabzon. Another important issue here is that the news of the death of Mustafa Suphi and his friends was reported in the Soviet press three months later.

In the ninth chapter, the change in Soviet Russia's view towards Turkey is discussed. In the first meeting, Soviet Russia did not take kindly to the request for help and even demanded some land from Turkey, so the expected positive result could not be obtained from these negotiations. Budu Midvani, the Ambassador of Soviet Russia, met with the Eastern Front Commander Kazım Karabekir on 5 December 1920 and decided to revisit Moscow. He stated that they were waiting for a delegation from Turkey to hold negotiations. The determined Turkish delegation set off on January 15, 1921 and arrived in Moscow on February 19, 1921. As of 1921, we see that the Soviets did not express their demands in 1920. In this period, the most important person in the change of Soviet attitude towards Turkey was Lenin. We also see that the strict attitude of Soviet Russia towards Turkey has changed in the territorial division in the Caucasus. The most important reason for the change in Soviet Russia's attitude towards Turkey was the collapsed Russian economy day by day. Lenin developed an economic model called "NEP" to fix the deteriorated Russian economy. As a leader who knew how to get rid of his ideological fixations, Lenin acted more realistically and followed an underhanded attitude in Soviet Russia's relations with the West.

During this period, Soviet Russia put aside its fight with Turkey and decided to stand by Turkey. Soviet Russia extended an olive branch to the West and first tried to establish commercial relations with England, and as a result of the negotiations, a Trade Agreement was signed in 1921. By putting a clause in this treaty, England prevented Soviet Russia from taking a hostile attitude towards England. As a result of Soviet Russia's approach to the West, anti-imperialism lost its power day by day. In addition to Soviet Russia's changing attitude towards Turkey, Turkey's changing attitude is also important in this period. We see that there is strictness in his attitude towards Turkey. However, Turkey has not made an effort to completely distance itself from Soviet Russia. Two other important reasons for the Soviet Russia's change of attitude towards Turkey are also emphasized. The first is Turkey's military operation against Armenia. The second is the prevention of Mustafa Suphi's arrival in



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Anatolia. “NEP”, which is the economic model he developed to recover the deteriorating Russian economy, has been examined in detail. With this economy model, it is aimed to revitalize the agricultural production of Russia. The functioning of the Russian economy before the Bolshevik Revolution is examined in the book. With the NEP, the strict control of the state over agriculture, industry and other branches of economy was tried to be reduced. It is aimed to open the Russian economy to the market. The possibility that Lenin used the NEP as a ladder to return to Communism after correcting the Russian economy was also emphasized. There was a change in Soviet Russia during this period. It is true, but it is not possible to say that they abandoned communism completely. Lenin frequently emphasized the importance of establishing bonds with the Russian peasants with the NEP. In a speech he made in, he said that NEP was a “forced trouble”. These contradictions of it were emphasized.

Stalin, who succeeded Lenin after his death, applied a different economic model. Stalin was a very tough leader who believed that he could solve anything with brute force. It took the entire Russian economy under the control of the state. It shelved some of the capitalist practices implemented with the NEP. He took the free peasants, whom he saw as the biggest obstacle to fully implement Marxism, under the strict control of the state. He confiscated their lands, animals, agricultural implements. In the book, Stalin and Marxism were criticized and it was emphasized that the Soviet administrators at that time were very utopian people. In the last chapter of this section, the Moscow Treaty signed between Soviet Russia and Turkey in 1921 was discussed. Soviet Russia gave Turkey 10 million gold rubles every year. Hasan Saka, Minister of Finance of the period, made necessary explanations about the financial aid given. Information about weapon aid was also given. As far as we learned from this section, Soviet Russia did not give all of the financial aid it promised to give to Turkey. At the end of this section, the importance of the Moscow Treaty for Türkiye was also emphasized.

In the tenth chapter, from the beginning of 1921 until the Battle of Sakarya, the attitudes of Soviet Russia and Turkey were examined in detail. Firstly, Turkey's attitude towards Soviet Russia was discussed in detail. While giving an example of a great struggle for the recognition of its existence, the Western states invited both the Ankara Government and the Istanbul Government to a conference to be held in London in February 1921. Mustafa Kemal, in his correspondence with the Istanbul Government, stated that the only force that could represent the nation was the National Assembly. He stated that the Sultanate and the caliphate would not be touched, and he wanted this offer to be accepted by the sultan. The Sultan did not accept this offer. In order for Turkey to participate in the London Conference, various proposals and opinions presented by the deputies in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey were examined. Mustafa Kemal, in his reply to some of the deputies who said that Turkey's participation in the London Conference would disrupt our relations with Soviet Russia, said, "Turkey is an independent country, an independent country can make a treaty with any country it wants, so we should be at peace with Soviet Russia and end up with Western



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states." He stated that it will not require us to enter into hostility that will not come. In this section, he also emphasized that Soviet Russia held talks with Britain.

Osman Okyar states that Turkey played a key role in the foreign policy of the Soviets. On the other hand, the contacts of Bekir Sami Bey, which Turkey sent to the London Conference, were mentioned. Bekir Sami Bey stated that he asked Lloyd George for help in order to ensure the independence of the Caucasus, and he sent the recording of his conversation with Bekir Sami Bey in George to Georgi Çiçerin. This behavior of Lloyd was undoubtedly to disturb the relations between Soviet Russia and Turkey. After this incident in Soviet Russia, he sent a note to the Ankara Government to protest this behavior of Bekir Sami Bey. This event took place during the period when the Turkish delegation was in Moscow. In this section, the Kütahya-Eskişehir wars were also mentioned and the fact that the Greek army was able to reach Polatlı is related to the delayed Russian aid.

Our Moscow Ambassador Ali Fuat Pasha stated that Soviet Russia was a threat to the existence of Turkey in the reports he sent to Ankara. He stated that Turkey should make an agreement with England. Kamuran Gurun interpreted this proposal in line with the fact that if Greece wins the Battle of Sakarya, there may be a weak Ankara or they may disappear completely, in the face of this situation, the only way out is to make an agreement with England. It is also very significant that the Russian aid was delayed during this period when the Turkish-Greek war was raging. Soviet Russia's thinking was that Turkey was getting closer to the West and its suspicions on this issue are another reason for the delay in this aid.

Mustafa Kemal turned his back neither to the West nor to the East with his enormous policy of balance between Soviet Russia and Western countries. Because he knew that the Turkish War of Independence would not be successful if the necessary help could not be obtained. Mustafa Kemal was more concrete in his relations with Soviet Russia. He asked Çiçerin, through our Ambassador Ali Fuat Pasha, that the grain collected from the Black Sea coasts would be gifted to the Russians, who were at risk of starvation, to be informed. Both Turkey and Soviet Russia have not completely separated from each other despite all their negative thoughts towards each other.

In the last chapter of this section, the attitude of Soviet Russia has been examined. After the Bolsheviks made a revolution in October 1917, they had to deal with the uprisings in the country and the Western states that supported these rebellions. Soviet Russia considered it very important to get the support of Muslim Turks in order to cope with all these. Therefore, Lenin gave the right of self-determination to the Muslim Turks in Russia. Until the beginning of 1920, Muslim Turks were treated with tolerance. They understood the importance of the importance of Turkey's support to realize this revolution was an indisputable issue. Soviet Russia carried out the project of seizing the Muslim Turks by proceeding from three branches. First, they supported the nationalist and socialist movements in the disintegrating Ottoman



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Empire. Soviet Russia, in a way, took into account the possibility that the National Struggle movement that started in Anatolia could turn into a socialist revolution. But it is useful to explain here. 's expectations from Soviet Russia were different. Turkey's aim was to get help from Soviet Russia. The Soviets, on the other hand, aimed to get Turkey's support for the European Revolutions they wanted to realize in Asia and Europe. Second, Lenin saw the Turks as the most important support element for the Asian Revolution. He planned to attract the Turks, who had been the standard bearers of Islam for centuries, to his side and influence other Asian societies. Thirdly, we can say that Soviet Russia established close relations with Enver Pasha in order to dominate the Anatolian geography. In the summer of 1921, when Soviet Russia, Turkish-Greek conflicts continued, if any of the critical battles led by Mustafa Kemal was lost, Enver Pasha would be sent to Turkey and lead the National Struggle movement, and Soviet Russia's plans would have worked. Another point that catches our attention in this part of the book is that Soviet Russia thought that the socialist revolution planned to realize in Turkey could be realized through socialist organizations to be established within the borders of Turkey.

Soviet Russia abandoned its previous policies since the winter of 1920-1921. They got rid of their ideological thoughts and acted more realistically. In this section, the practical difficulties of the Asian Revolution, which Soviet Russia wanted to realize, were discussed. We see that the idea of the Asian Revolution was more than a plan, but more of a propaganda tool. One of them is Stalin. Stalin opposed Soviet Russia's aid to Turkey. Because he did not trust Mustafa Kemal and Kemalists and said that they would betray Russia's cause. There were as many supporters as there were opponents. One of the supporters, Leon Trotsky, did not object to aiding Turkey. Soviet Russia had undergone a radical policy change since from December 1920.

In the eleventh chapter of the book, the situation of Soviet Russia after the Sakarya victory is discussed. Before the Sakarya victory, Soviet Russia delayed the aid it promised to give despite the Moscow Agreement it signed with Turkey and gave it little by little. But after the victory, he took a different stance. He even sent General Frunze and his delegation to Turkey for this. Another subject discussed in this section is the Sakarya Pitched Battle. According to British Historian Arnold Toynbee, there were two reasons why Lloyd George backed the Greeks who were at war with the Turks. The first was to support a Christian community against a Muslim community. The second was to find a subcontractor to implement the Treaty of Sevres against Turkey and Mustafa Kemal. Because Britain did not want to keep its soldiers in the Middle East for a long time. In the following parts of this section, Turkey's preparations before the Sakarya Pitched Battle are given extensively. After the Sakarya victory, the Ankara Agreement was signed with France on 20 October 1921. With this treaty, France withdrew its troops from all regions except Syria and Iskenderun. He recognized and accepted the borders of the National Pact. He took care to improve his



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relations with Turkey. On the other hand, Soviet Russia reacted to Turkey's signing of the Ankara Agreement with France and their development of relations. The fact that Turkey has signed a treaty with France and improved its relations does not mean that it has turned its back on Soviet Russia. From the very beginning, Mustafa Kemal Pasha followed a balancing policy between the Soviets and the Western World.

Mustafa Kemal Pasha sent the recordings of his conversations with the French to Soviet Russia, which was not on good terms with France at that time, to the Soviet Embassy in Ankara. Another issue discussed in this section is that Soviet Russia sent General Frunze and his delegation to Turkey. The purpose of sending this delegation to Turkey was to determine the details of the aid that Soviet Russia would send to Turkey. But this was reflected not as aid to the public, but as a Treaty of Friendship. Frunze and his delegation came to Ankara on 19 December 1921. The Turkish-Ukrainian Treaty was accepted in 1922. An important point here is that the situation of Soviet Russia looking down on Turkey disappeared after the Sakarya victory.

In the conclusion part of the book, the balancing strategy that Mustafa Kemal applied in the Turkish-Soviet relations at that time is included. Mustafa Kemal never gave up on the idea of ensuring the independence of Turkey and democracy based on the will of the nation from the very beginning. Despite all the pressures, he never made any concessions on these two issues. The reason why he was flexible sometimes was that he wanted to get help from the Soviets and establish bilateral relations with them on solid ground. In this section, an analysis of the policies that Mustafa Kemal followed towards Soviet Russia was made. Although Mustafa Kemal acted harshly against the socialist structures in the country, he managed to be moderate in his attitude towards Soviet Russia. Although Mustafa Kemal had points that he did not compromise, he often managed to give sherbet according to the pulse very well. He sent friendship messages to Soviet Russia from time to time in order to reduce the shock effect of the military operation on Armenia. There is no doubt that the secret underlying the success of Mustafa Kemal and the National Struggle staff was that they acted decisively for a goal. But they certainly knew very well the importance of being flexible for this cause.

The last three pages of the book are devoted to footnotes, one page to the bibliography, and three pages to the index. This book is a very important book in terms of learning the strategies and policies implemented by Mustafa Kemal in Turkish-Soviet relations during the critical days of the National Struggle.