



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

## **Internationalism, diplomacy and the revolutionary origins of the Middle East's 'Northern Tier'**

Yenen, A.A.

### **Citation**

Yenen, A. A. (2021). Internationalism, diplomacy and the revolutionary origins of the Middle East's 'Northern Tier'. *Contemporary European History*, 30(4), 497-512. doi:10.1017/S0960777321000308

Version: Publisher's Version  
License: [Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)  
Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3204057>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

ARTICLE

# Internationalism, Diplomacy and the Revolutionary Origins of the Middle East's 'Northern Tier'

Alp Yenen 

Leiden University Institute for Area Studies, Matthias de Vrieshof 4, 2311 BZ Leiden, the Netherlands  
[a.a.yenen@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:a.a.yenen@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

Through bilateral treaties between Moscow, Ankara, Tehran and Kabul, revolutionary diplomacy shaped the 'Northern Tier' of the Middle East in the early 1920s. This article argues that the infamous Young Turk leaders, though in exile after the First World War, remained at the centre of a significant moment in transnational revolutionary diplomacy in Eurasia. Based on a hitherto underutilised collection of published and unpublished private papers in juxtaposition with other archival sources, this article illustrates the working of a dual process of internationalism. While campaigning for Muslim internationalism, the Young Turk leaders were able to partake in international politics, but ironically reduced their own legitimacy and capacity as non-state actors by championing revolutionary bilateralism between Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Soviet Russia.

## Introduction

'We are undoubtedly entering upon a new phase of international relations', was the verdict of *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Russian Communist Party, after the signing of the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Friendship on 16 March 1921.<sup>1</sup> Within the first three months of 1921 Soviet Russia had signed bilateral treaties not only with Ankara but also with governments in Tehran and Kabul. These treaties of 'friendship' were meant to create an anti-colonial buffer zone between Soviet Russia and the British Mandate of Iraq and the British Raj in India, respectively. The geopolitical formation that connected Mustafa Kemal's Turkey, Reza Khan's Iran and Amanullah's Afghanistan in the interwar years would later overlap roughly with the anti-Soviet 'Northern Tier' of the Middle East during the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to the Cold War, however, the Northern Tier in its *avant la lettre* manifestation in the interwar years was the result of revolutionary internationalism against European hegemony in international politics.

Internationalism is commonly promoted by transnational actors.<sup>3</sup> Contemporary diplomatic sources of the Entente help us identify some of these actors that transgressed state borders and national boundaries in Eurasia on behalf of Soviet foreign policy. On the same day as the above-mentioned Soviet-Turkish Treaty, the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement was signed in London, which

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in 'Imperial and Foreign News Items', *The Times*, 22 Mar. 1921.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'Northern Tier' became popular in Cold War jargon in the 1950s. Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), xv.

<sup>3</sup> Jessica Reinisch, 'Introduction: Agents of Internationalism', *Contemporary European History*, 25, 2 (2016), 195–205; Patricia Clavin, 'Conceptualizing Internationalism between the World Wars', in Daniel Laqua, ed., *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 1–14; Patricia Clavin, 'Defining Transnationalism', *Contemporary European History*, 14, 4 (2005), 421–39.

curtailed Soviet propaganda activities in the East. A leading British diplomat identified Cemal Pasha and his 'mission to Afghanistan' as the most prominent among such activities.<sup>4</sup> As the former Ottoman Minister of Navy and war-time governor of Syria, Cemal Pasha was part of the infamous Young Turk triumvirate, alongside former Grand Vizier Talat Pasha and former Minister of War Enver Pasha. As influential members of the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*; CUP), they had established a dictatorial regime that ruled the Ottoman Empire from the Balkan Wars to the end of the First World War.<sup>5</sup> After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, these leading figures went into hiding in Germany, partly to escape court martial prosecutions due to their crimes against humanity in the Armenian genocide. During the crisis of the peace settlement, the Young Turk leaders came out of their hideout in Berlin and returned to international politics in a campaign of Muslim internationalism against the United Kingdom and France. They played important roles in the diplomatic relations at the Berlin–Moscow–Ankara–Kabul axis, championing revolutionary alliances with Soviet Russia. In doing so, they displayed an impressive scale and variety in networks while manoeuvring across a wide and diverse political geography. A number of the nodes in their network, such as the Bolsheviks, were co-opted in the chaos and contingency of the post-war period, but most of their collaborators were the same cast of conspirators, revolutionaries and agents of the Ottoman–German alliance that had previously troubled the British Empire in the East. By the summer of 1922, however, they were driven out of international politics and eventually killed.

Although the Young Turk leaders are commonly featured as mavericks and desperados in the histories of the aftermath of the First World War, there are only a few studies that provide critical insights into their transnational agency.<sup>6</sup> In addressing this gap in the literature, this study will offer a micro-history of international politics based on a collection of published and unpublished private papers of the Young Turk leaders – most of them located in hitherto underutilised and restrictive archives of Ankara – in juxtaposition with British, German and Russian archival sources.<sup>7</sup> Most studies that treat Soviet relations with Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan as a connected region in this period were written during the height of the Cold War in order to reaffirm the history of Russian influence and intervention in the Middle East's Northern Tier.<sup>8</sup> Other more recent studies underline the consolidation of

<sup>4</sup> Sir Robert Horne's letter to Leonid Krassin, quoted in full-length in 'Soviet Plots in the East: Overthrow of British Rule in India', *The Times*, 17 Mar. 1921.

<sup>5</sup> Erik Jan Zürcher, 'Young Turk Governance in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 55, 6 (2019), 897–913.

<sup>6</sup> On the Young Turks in this period see Alp Yenen, 'The Young Turk Aftermath: Making Sense of Transnational Contentious Politics at the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1918–1922', PhD thesis, University of Basel, 2016; published online in 2019 (<https://doi.org/10.5451/unibas-007110817>); Murat Bardakçı, *Enver* (Istanbul: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2015); Şuhnaz Yılmaz, 'An Ottoman Warrior Abroad. Enver Paşa as an Expatriate', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 35, 4 (1999), 47–69; Masayuki Yamauchi, ed., *The Green Crescent under the Red Star: Enver Pasha in Soviet Russia, 1919–1922* (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1991); Paul Dumont, 'La fascination du Bolchevisme: Enver Pacha et la Parti des soviets populaires 1919–1922', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 18, 2 (1975), 141–66.

<sup>7</sup> A major collection of private papers of the Young Turks, whose originals are lost, was published by Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın in a series from 15 Oct. 1944 to 1 Apr. 1945, in the newspaper *Tanin*. In the citations below, I used the edited version, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın and Osman Selim Kocahanoglu, eds., *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları: Bir Devri Aydınlatan Tarihi Mektuplar* (Istanbul: Temel Yayınları, 2002). Moreover, I had access to Cemal Pasha's and Enver Pasha's private papers which are located at the archive of the Turkish Historical Society (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*; TTK) as well as corresponding documents of the Ankara Government from the archive of the Turkish General Staff's Directorate for Military History and Strategic Studies (*Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı Arşivi*; ATASE). A relevant portion of Enver Pasha's papers from the TTK archives was published in Yamauchi, *The Green Crescent under the Red Star*, but I omitted cross-references in the citations below. A compilation of some of these published sources centring on the theme of the 'Asia mission' of the Young Turks can be found in Murat Çulcu, *Paşaların Asya Misyonu, 1914–1922: Talat, Enver, Cemal ve Mustafa Kemal* (Istanbul: E Yayınları, 2013).

<sup>8</sup> Rouhollah Ramazani, *The Northern Tier: Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1966); Harish Kapur, *Soviet Russia and Asia 1917–1927: A Study of Soviet Policy Towards Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan* (Geneva: Imprimerie Genevoise, 1965); Günther Nollau and Hans-Jürgen Wiehe, *Rote Spuren im Orient: Persien, Türkei, Afghanistan* (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1963).

Soviet foreign policy from Leninist internationalism to bilateral alliances with non-communist nation states in Asia as a result of historical contingencies.<sup>9</sup> In the growing body of literature on different forms of interwar internationalism, the existence of Muslim internationalism that supported anti-colonial alliances of independent Muslim states with Soviet Russia is largely missing.<sup>10</sup> When anti-colonial nationalism during the aftermath of the First World War is put into a global framing, it is generally assumed that national self-determination movements appealed mostly to Wilson's liberal internationalism, since the reach of Lenin's internationalism was limited.<sup>11</sup> However, anti-Westernism was a crucial feature of the internationalism of Muslims and other Asians in this period that championed strategic alliances with Soviet Russia.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Cemil Aydın rightly draws attention to the 'pan-Islamic moment' in the aftermath of the First World War, in which Muslim internationalism was in itself a major movement against colonialism and imperialism.<sup>13</sup> The question is how did the Muslim internationalism of the early interwar years accompany the international recognition of Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan as independent nation states through a set of bilateral treaties with Soviet Russia and what roles did transnational actors like the Young Turk leaders play in this process.

The fact that the Young Turk leaders were able to partake in international politics after the First World War, despite their status as fugitive war criminals and stateless statesmen, is nothing short of remarkable. I describe their agency in international politics as transnational revolutionary diplomacy.<sup>14</sup> Any approach to transnational relations relies on the asymmetric categories of state and non-state actors, assuming that states have supremacy in international politics.<sup>15</sup> The non-state status of the Young Turk leaders is admittedly ambiguous in the post-war period because they were stateless statesmen exploiting their reputations, networks and resources as former state actors, but still lacking the legitimacy and capacity of statehood. As such, the legitimacy and capacity of states (as well as non-state actors) are related to their position within the 'international society' (i.e. 'a society of states governed by its own distinct set of norms') and the 'international system' (i.e. 'chains and networks of interaction').<sup>16</sup> Though it is a given that revolutions are always international in their

<sup>9</sup> Jon Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 51–80; Richard K. Debo, *Survival and Consolidation: The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia 1918–1921* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 344–73.

<sup>10</sup> On interwar internationalisms see Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, eds., *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Daniel Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Daniel Laqua, ed., *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Arno Joseph Mayer, *Wilson vs. Lenin: Political Origins of the New Diplomacy, 1917–1918* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1969). In an influential intervention in global history, Erez Manela critiqued Mayer's Euro-centric 'Wilson vs. Lenin' narrative by arguing that 'Wilson's words carried far greater weight in the colonial world than Lenin's'. Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 6–7.

<sup>12</sup> Cemil Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007), 145–9.

<sup>13</sup> Cemil Aydın, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 122. See also Adeeb Khalid, 'Pan-Islamism in Practice: The Rhetoric of Muslim Unity and its Uses', in Elisabeth Özdalga, ed., *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 201–24.

<sup>14</sup> Alp Yenen, 'Approaching Transnational Political History: The Role of Non-State Actors in Post-Ottoman State-Formation', in Steffi Marung and Matthias Middell, eds., *Transnational Actors – Crossing Borders: Transnational History Studies* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2015), 261–70. See also Akira Iriye, 'The Transnational Turn', *Diplomatic History*, 31, 3 (2007), 373–6; Richard Langhorne, 'The Diplomacy of Non-State Actors', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 16, 2 (2005), 331–9.

<sup>15</sup> Fred Halliday, 'The Romance of Non-State Actors', in Daphne Josselin and William Wallace, eds., *Non-State Actors in World Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 21–37.

<sup>16</sup> Nicholas Lees, 'International Society is to International System as World Society is to...? Systemic and Societal Processes in English School Theory', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 19, 3 (2016), 285–311. For the historical development of the international society see Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society*, new edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). On the integration of the Middle East into the international society

dynamics,<sup>17</sup> ‘revolutionary diplomacy’, namely the foreign relations of revolutionary states, is a distinct phenomenon because revolutionary regimes continue to challenge the norms of international society and the status quo of the international system.<sup>18</sup> By pointing out the limited prospects of the transnational revolutionary diplomacy of the Young Turk leaders, I will argue that the diplomacy of revolutionary states and revolutionary non-state actors have very different trajectories due to the supremacy of statehood, which in turn shaped processes of state formation in international politics.

This study of transnational revolutionary diplomacy illustrates the working of ‘a contradictory process’ of internationalism.<sup>19</sup> As Fred Halliday pointed out, internationalism contributes to ‘internationalisation’ which enables ‘greater interaction and integration’ across and beyond states, but simultaneously enforces ‘the power of states and the sentiments of division and competition in the world’.<sup>20</sup> In tracing this dual process, first, I show how the Young Turk leaders were part of a significant campaign of transnational revolutionary diplomacy, as they displayed an impressive ability to network across the political spectrum and transgress political boundaries while campaigning for Muslim internationalism and revolutionary alliances with Soviet Russia against the West. As I argue, the second part of this dual process, during which Young Turk leaders were sidelined in international politics, was a result of the integration of revolutionary states in Eurasia into the international society – ironically, a policy which the Young Turk leaders had vociferously supported.<sup>21</sup>

### ‘United by the Common Enemy’: The Setting of Transnational Revolutionary Diplomacy against the Entente

Amid the Versailles crisis in the Summer of 1919, a so-called ‘political salon’ was established at the Moabit Prison in Berlin that created a unique venue for transnational revolutionary diplomacy. Karl Radek was the salon’s host. As the leading connoisseur of German affairs within the Bolshevik leadership, Radek had arrived undercover in Germany to meet with German socialists and labour leaders.<sup>22</sup> After clashes between the socialist Spartacists and the police in early 1919, Radek was arrested and imprisoned.<sup>23</sup> In order to protect him from prosecution, the Soviets declared Radek ambassador of the Soviet Republic of Ukraine.<sup>24</sup> This was, however, a revolutionary subversion of international diplomacy. After Radek voluntarily agreed to revoke his diplomatic status, German officials ended

---

after the end of the First World War see Fred Halliday, ‘The Middle East and Conceptions of “International Society”’, in Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez, eds., *International Society and the Middle East: English School Theory at the Regional Level* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1–23.

<sup>17</sup> George Lawson, ‘Revolutions and the International’, *Theory and Society*, 44, 4 (2015), 299–319; Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

<sup>18</sup> Stephen Chan and Andrew J. Williams, eds., *Renegade States: The Evolution of Revolutionary Foreign Policy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994); David Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

<sup>19</sup> For a similar approach, but with a different focus, on Turkey’s internationalisation in the 1920s, see Carolin Liebisch-Gümüß, ‘Intersecting Asymmetries: The Internationalization of Turkey in the 1920s and the Limits of the Postcolonial Approach’, *Acta Universitatis Carolinae Studia Territorialia*, 19, 1 (2019), 13–41.

<sup>20</sup> Fred Halliday, ‘Three Concepts of Internationalism’, *International Affairs*, 64, 2 (1988), 187–98.

<sup>21</sup> Armstrong argues that revolutionary states go through a process of ‘socialisation’ as they become part of the international society. In the case of revolutionary Russia see Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order*, 112–57. Fred Halliday argues that the international society is based on the homogeneity of ‘a set of norms shared by different societies and which are promoted by inter-state competition’. Fred Halliday, ‘International Society as Homogeneity’, *Rethinking International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1994), 94–123.

<sup>22</sup> Warren Lerner, *Karl Radek: The Last Internationalist* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1970), 78–9; Wolf-Dietrich Gutjahr, *Revolution muss sein: Karl Radek – die Biographie* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2012), 347.

<sup>23</sup> Gutjahr, *Revolution muss sein*, 365.

<sup>24</sup> Chicherin (Moscow) to Bela Kun (Budapest), 12 Jun. 1919, Political Archive of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, hereafter PA-AA), R 2043.

his solitary confinement. Since Soviet Russia was increasingly seen as a strategic ally in subverting the diplomatic and economic sanctions of the Versailles Treaty, Radek was even granted larger quarters with many privileges in the Moabit Prison.<sup>25</sup> Hence, Radek's political salon was frequented by various political entrepreneurs from left and right. Radek's Moabit cell marked the beginning of a moment of transnational revolutionary diplomacy against the Entente.

As some of the first guests at the Moabit salon, Talat and Enver found themselves in the midst of this moment of transnational revolutionary diplomacy and contributed to its opening towards the East.<sup>26</sup> After having escaped from the Ottoman Empire in November 1918, the Young Turk leaders had been hiding in sanatoriums and apartments in Berlin.<sup>27</sup> Since the beginning of the Paris Peace Conference in early 1919 they had regrouped with Muslim agents and activists in Germany and Switzerland, who were formerly associated with the activities of the secret intelligence and special operations branch of the Ottoman Army, commonly known as the Special Organisation (*Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*). They had reached an understanding that Soviet Russia was the only force that could support Muslim anti-colonialism. In their negotiations with Radek at the Moabit Prison, they agreed upon a preliminary collaboration against the Entente between Soviet Russia and Muslim revolutionary societies led by the Young Turk leaders.<sup>28</sup>

This encounter with Radek in Berlin promoted the Young Turk leaders to key players of transnational revolutionary diplomacy. Radek himself noted that Enver 'was the first to bring home to the German militarists that Soviet Russia was a new and growing world force with which they would have to count, if they in fact meant to struggle against the Entente'.<sup>29</sup> Regarding Talat, Radek was pleased that 'he understood the significance of Soviet power at the moment of its greatest impending danger' and 'entered negotiations with the Soviet representatives abroad and propagated the idea of the Russian-Turkish rapprochement'.<sup>30</sup> A German official who 'had detailed conversations' with Karl Radek reported that Radek and Talat 'are united by the common enemy' and that 'regarding the anti-English propaganda in these [Muslim] regions [the Bolsheviks] expect much from Enver Pasha'.<sup>31</sup> Despite these great expectations, Enver had multiple aeroplane crashes, emergency landings and two imprisonments in Lithuania and Latvia while trying to reach Moscow.<sup>32</sup> 'Our friend E. [a.k.a. Enver] is still in Berlin', complained a German friend helping Enver reach Soviet Russia. 'It is a great pity considering the situation in the Near and Russian East that none of these matadors is there'.<sup>33</sup> It took nearly a year for Enver to reach Moscow in August 1920. In the meantime, the international conjuncture had shifted. Socialist revolutions in Germany and Hungary and elsewhere were all defeated by counterrevolutions and the Polish-Soviet War had run into a dead end, while protests and uprisings against colonialism in the Muslim world had reached a critical point.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Jean-François Fayet, *Karl Radek (1885–1939): Biographie politique* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), 289–315; Gutjahr, *Revolution muss sein*, 378–419.

<sup>26</sup> Karl Radek, 'Nojambr: Iz vospominanij', *Krasnaja Nov*, 10 (1926), quoted in Edward Hallett Carr, 'Radek's "Political Salon" in Berlin 1919', *Soviet Studies*, 3, 4 (1952), 411–30.

<sup>27</sup> Sabine Mangold-Will, *Begrenzte Freundschaft: Deutschland und die Türkei, 1918–1933* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2013), 41–65.

<sup>28</sup> Enver (Berlin) to Cemal (Munich), [Dec. 1919], in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 34. Paul Dumont, 'La fascination du Bolchevisme', 145.

<sup>29</sup> Radek, 'Nojambr', 152, quoted in Carr, 'Radek's "Political Salon" in Berlin 1919', 419.

<sup>30</sup> Karl Radek, 'Die Ermordung Dschemal Paschas', *Internationale Pressekorrespondenz*, 2, 8 Aug. 1922, 995–6.

<sup>31</sup> Legation Council Hey, report on Radek's deportation, 23 Jan. 1920, PA-AA, R 2044, A1275.

<sup>32</sup> Azade-Ayşe Rorlich, 'Fellow Travellers: Enver Pasha and the Bolshevik Government 1918–1920', *Asian Affairs*, 13, 69 (1982), 288–96; Yenen, 'The Young Turk Aftermath', 196–251.

<sup>33</sup> Hans Humann (Neubabelsberg) to Otto von Lossow (Munich), 21 Feb. 1920, Bavarian Central State Archives (Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv), Abt. IV, HS 3158.

<sup>34</sup> Peter Gatrell, 'War after War: Conflicts, 1919–23', in John Horne, ed., *A Companion to the First World War* (London: Blackwell, 2010), 558–75.



### 'I Want to Prepare a Road and a Gateway for Indian Revolutionaries': Campaigning for Muslim Revolutions in Soviet Russia

'The route to Paris and London is through the cities of Afghanistan, the Punjab and Bengal', as Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky proclaimed in a memorandum at the end of the Third Anglo-Afghan War in August 1919.<sup>35</sup> In face of the failed revolutions in Europe, the Bolshevik leadership was increasingly looking eastward in search of a way out for the world revolution. When the Politburo decided to 'offer support for the liberation movements of the peoples of the East', it was directed primarily at Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan.<sup>36</sup>

On 18 June 1920 Karl Radek declared at an executive meeting of the Communist International that it was not enough to offer symbolic support for the liberation movements in the East. Instead, Moscow had to become the centre of incitement.<sup>37</sup> The Second Congress of the Comintern was the first manifestation of this turn towards the colonial world by means of supporting non-communist revolutionary movements.<sup>38</sup> After Baku was conquered by the Red Army on 28 April 1920, Soviet Russia had gained direct access to the Middle East via Turkey and Iran. Hence, the Comintern's First Congress of the Peoples of the East in September 1920 took place at Baku due to its geopolitical location.<sup>39</sup> The Baku Congress primarily addressed 'the enslaved popular masses of Persia, Armenia, and Turkey'.<sup>40</sup>

Soviet Russia already enjoyed a certain reputation in Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan. In Turkey, the armed resistance against the Entente's occupation was severe and resulted in the foundation of the Grand National Assembly in Ankara on 23 April 1920. There was a clear Bolshevik influence in Anatolia.<sup>41</sup> As early as May 1920 Mustafa Kemal Pasha as the President of the Grand National Assembly offered diplomatic relations to Soviet Russian Foreign Commissar Georgy Chicherin in order 'to unite both States in their struggle with international imperialism'. Chicherin responded with a promise for independence to Turkey.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, many Turkish nationalists had converted to communism and looked towards Soviet Russia.<sup>43</sup> Due to its proximity to the Russian Caucasus,

<sup>35</sup> Trotsky, memorandum to the Central Committee, Russian Communist Party, 5 Aug. 1919, in Jan Marinus Meijer, ed., *The Trotsky Papers, 1917–1922*, 2 vols. (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), I, 624; Peter Frankopan, *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 345.

<sup>36</sup> Politburo decision, 25 May 1920, quoted in Samuel J. Hirst, 'Transnational Anti-Imperialism and the National Forces. Soviet Diplomacy and Turkey, 1920–23', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 33, 2 (2013), 214–26.

<sup>37</sup> Yavuz Aslan, *Türkiye Komünist Fırkası'nın Kuruluşu ve Mustafa Suphi: Türkiye Komünistlerinin Rusya'da Teşkilatlanması, (1918–1921)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1997), 133.

<sup>38</sup> Stephen White, 'Colonial Revolution and the Communist International, 1919–1924', *Science and Society*, 40, 2 (1976), 173–93; S. A. Smith, 'The Russian Revolution, National Self-Determination, and Anti-Imperialism, 1917–1927', in Oleksa Drachewych and Ian McKay, eds., *Left Transnationalism: The Communist International and the National, Colonial, and Racial Questions* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020), 73–98. See especially Lenin's theses on the national and colonial questions in John Riddell, ed., *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!: Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress of the Communist International, 1920*, 2 vols. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1991), I, 283–90.

<sup>39</sup> Bülent Gökay, *A Clash of Empires: Turkey Between Russian Bolshevism and British Imperialism, 1918–1923* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997), 99; Rudolf Schlesinger, *Die Kolonialfrage in der Kommunistischen Internationale* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1970), 43–4.

<sup>40</sup> Call to Baku Congress, 29 Jun. 1920, in John Riddell, ed., *To See the Dawn: Baku 1920 – First Congress of the Peoples of the East* (New York: Pathfinder, 1993), 40–6.

<sup>41</sup> Regarding Bolshevik influence in the Turkish War of Independence see M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 86–128; Abdülhamit Kırmızı, 'After Empire, Before Nation: Competing Ideologies and the Bolshevik Moment of the Anatolian Revolution', in Stefan Rinke and Michael Wildt, eds., *Revolutions and Counter-Revolutions: 1917 and its Aftermath from a Global Perspective* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2017), 119–37.

<sup>42</sup> Admiral de Robeck (Istanbul) to Foreign Office (London), 12 Jun. 1920, FO 371/5178, 6346, 88; *La Cause Commune*, 'Tchicherine et Mustapha-Kemal pacha', 26 Jun. 1920. See also FO 371/5178, 7384, 94.

<sup>43</sup> Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımları I: (1908–1925)* (Istanbul: Berdan Yayınları, 2000); George S. Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1967).

the Bolshevik Revolution had a direct impact on Iranian political movements.<sup>44</sup> In Iran, Mirza Kuchik Khan's Jangali movement, an Ottoman-German sponsored Muslim-nationalist insurgency against the British influence, had founded the Soviet Republic of Gilan in May 1920 based on a complicated alliance with Soviet Russia.<sup>45</sup> In Afghanistan, there was no communist movement, but in May 1919, even before the Third Anglo-Afghan War, the new Emir Amanullah had exchanged friendly letters with Lenin.<sup>46</sup> Seeing these struggles as a united front, Chicherin promised to give support to both the Turkish and the Afghan national movements.<sup>47</sup>

Moscow was already the Mecca of revolutionaries of different colours who partaken a pilgrimage to seek the blessings and support of the Bolshevik leaders. Amongst them were also Muslim nationalists and pan-Islamists. 'I am neither Communist nor Socialist, but my political programme so far is the expulsion of the English from Asia', announced an Afghan emissary in Moscow.<sup>48</sup> 'Pan-Islamism was a revolutionary force', Indian communist leader M.N. Roy noted dismissively after the first delegation of Indian Muslims were 'welcomed and supported as an ally of the proletarian world revolution'.<sup>49</sup> Accordingly, the Young Turk leaders were received and honoured as state guests in Moscow.<sup>50</sup> Despite mutual distrust due to ideological differences, they quickly established a working relationship with the Bolshevik leadership.<sup>51</sup> 'Above all, they [Bolsheviks] are quite favourable to our Muslim Society of Revolution', announced Enver, although no such organisation was formally founded.<sup>52</sup> As a special guest of the Comintern, Enver participated in the Baku Congress in September 1920, where Bolsheviks declared a 'jihad' against colonialism and capitalism.<sup>53</sup> Back in Moscow on 15 October 1920, Enver and his colleagues officially founded the Union of Muslim Revolutionary Societies (*İslam İhtilal Cemiyetleri İttihadı*).<sup>54</sup> Resembling an Islamic International, the Union had a 'national colour', as it aimed to be a federation of Muslim revolutionary societies from different nations by championing slogans such as 'Iran belongs to Iranians!'.<sup>55</sup>

In negotiations with the Bolshevik leadership, the Young Turk leaders proposed the following revolutionary campaign: Cemal Pasha would lead the Afghan and Indian revolutionary movements; Enver's uncle Halil Pasha would lead the Iranian revolutionary movement; Mustafa Kemal Pasha would command from Ankara the resistance movements in Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Egypt; Talat

<sup>44</sup> Pezhmann Dailami, 'The Bolshevik Revolution and the Genesis of Communism in Iran, 1917–1920', *Central Asian Survey*, 12, 2 (1999), 63–82.

<sup>45</sup> Cosroe Chaqueri, *The Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran, 1920–1921: Birth of the Trauma* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1995).

<sup>46</sup> Michail I. Volodarsky, *The Soviet Union and its Southern Neighbours: Iran and Afghanistan 1917–1933* (Ilford: Cass, 1994), 122.

<sup>47</sup> Chief of General Staff İsmet (Ankara) to Deputy of Lazistan Osman (Rize), 30 Jun. 1920, ATASE, Independence War Collection (İstiklal Harbi Koleksiyonu, hereafter İSH) 613–114. For Chicherin's letter see also: Hirst, 'Transnational Anti-Imperialism and the National Forces', 216.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in T. Lothrop Stoddard, *The New World of Islam* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), 340.

<sup>49</sup> M.N. Roy, *Memoirs* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1964), 390; K.H. Ansari, 'Pan-Islam and the Making of the Early Indian Muslim Socialists', *Modern Asian Studies*, 20, 3 (1986), 509–37.

<sup>50</sup> Cemal (Moscow) to Talat (Berlin), 11 Jun. 1920, in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 237.

<sup>51</sup> Enver, memorandum on the cooperation of the Muslim Revolutionary Organisation with Soviet Russia [Summer 1920], TTK, Enver Pasha Papers (hereafter EP) 04–15.

<sup>52</sup> Enver (Moscow) to Cemal (Kabul), 25 Aug. 1920, in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 40. See also Chicherin to Lenin, 16 Aug. 1920, quoted in Arsen Avagyan, 'Kemalistler, İttihatçılar ve Bolşevikler I. Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Ankara-Sovyet İlişkileri', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 23, 159 (2007), 14–23.

<sup>53</sup> Alp Yenen, 'The Other Jihad: Enver Pasha, Bolsheviks, and Politics of Anticolonial Muslim Nationalism during the Baku Congress 1920', in T. G. Fraser, ed., *The First World War and its Aftermath: The Shaping of the Middle East* (London: Gingko Library Press, 2015), 273–93.

<sup>54</sup> Its foundational charter is translated by Ared Misirliyan in Martin S. Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congresses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 175–7.

<sup>55</sup> Cemal (Kabul) to Enver (Berlin), 1 Dec. 1920, TTK, EP 07–29.



Pasha would coordinate the exile networks in Europe and distribute propaganda; Enver Pasha would command all campaigns from the Moscow headquarters.<sup>56</sup> Enver assured his friends in Berlin and Moscow that there would be coordinated insurgencies in Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan in the spring of 1921.<sup>57</sup>

In order to work for the 'Indian revolution', Cemal left Moscow for Afghanistan.<sup>58</sup> At first sight conditions seemed welcoming in Central Asia. Reform thinkers in Turkestan and Afghanistan were shaped by Ottoman political thought and the Young Turk movement constituted a model for Young Bukharan and Young Afghan movements.<sup>59</sup> The Young Turk leaders indeed enjoyed considerable notoriety as revolutionary leaders of the Muslim world. Even the Afghan Emir Amanullah belonged to the 'Young Afghans' and signed his respectful letter to Enver with red ink, implying that he too was a 'revolutionary' (*revolüsyoner*) following the model of the Young Turks.<sup>60</sup> The Bolshevik leadership eye witnessed with awe how Muslim delegates from Central Asia kissed the hands and feet of Enver at the Baku Congress.<sup>61</sup> Cemal's timing seemed right as several thousand Indian Muslims had taken refuge (the so-called *hijret*) in Afghanistan out of protest against British rule in India.<sup>62</sup> The Communist International was supporting the establishment of an Indian exile government in Kabul and a revolutionary training camp in Tashkent.<sup>63</sup> Hence, Cemal was accompanied by Indian revolutionaries such as Maulana Barkatullah, who had previously worked with the Ottoman–German alliance against the British.<sup>64</sup>

The situation in Soviet Turkestan and Afghanistan was, however, more complex than previously assumed. The Red Army had brutally captured Bukhara in August 1920. The Emir of Bukhara had taken refuge in Afghanistan. From his exile in Afghanistan and with Afghan support, the Bukharan Emir was still leading the anti-Soviet insurgents in Turkestan. Siding with the Soviets, Cemal was openly criticising Bukharan Emir in his public speeches on his way to Kabul.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, the Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mahmud Khan Tarzi, had recently reassumed negotiations with British India. In the words of the Young Turk agents, the United Kingdom was attempting to establish an 'iron circle' (*demir çember*) around Batumi-Baku-Rasht-Anzali-Mashhad-Ashkhabad-Merv-Bukhara in order to use

<sup>56</sup> Cemal (Moscow) to Talat (Berlin), 11 Jun. 1920, in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 238–41; Cemal (Moscow) to Mustafa Kemal (Ankara), 3 Jun. 1920, in Kazım Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimizde Enver Paşa ve İttihat-Terakki Erkanı* (İstanbul: Yapı ve Kredi Yayınları, 2010), 12–4.

<sup>57</sup> Enver (Moscow) to Seeckt (Berlin), 25 Aug. 1920, BA-MA, N-247/195; Enver (Moscow) to Naciye (Berlin), 23 Aug. 1920, in Murat Bardakçı, ed., *Naciye, Ruhum, Efendim: Enver Paşa'nın, Eşi Naciye Sultan'a Rusya ve Orta Asya'dan Yazdığı Sürgün Mektupları* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2016), 41.

<sup>58</sup> Cemal (Moscow) to Talat (Berlin), 5 Jul. 1920, in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 250; Cemal (Tashkent) to Mustafa Kemal (Ankara), 29 Aug. 1920, ATASE, Atatürk Collection (hereafter ATAŞB) 38-17.

<sup>59</sup> Faiz Ahmed, *Afghanistan Rising: Islamic Law and Statecraft between the Ottoman and British Empires* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017); Mustafa Özgür Tuna, *Imperial Russia's Muslims: Islam, Empire and European Modernity, 1788–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 214–5; Adeeb Khalid, 'Central Asia between the Ottoman and the Soviet Worlds', *Kritika*, 12, 2 (2011), 451–76; Mansura Haidar, 'The Origin, Genesis and Regional Chain Reaction of the "Young" Movement', in Touraj Atabaki, ed., *Modernity and its Agencies: Young Movements in the History of the South* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2010), 31–53.

<sup>60</sup> Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (London: Routledge, 2013), 116–20. Regarding Amanullah's letter to Enver see Halil (Moscow) to Enver (Berlin), 10 Feb. 1921, TTK, EP 02-44.

<sup>61</sup> Grigory Zinoviev, *Die Weltrevolution und die III. Kommunistische Internationale: Rede auf dem Parteitag der USPD in Halle am 14. Oktober 1920* (Hamburg: Verlag der Kommunistischen Internationale, 1920), 33.

<sup>62</sup> M. Naem Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics: A Study of the Khilafat Movement 1918–1924* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 174–232.

<sup>63</sup> Juri Tichonov, 'Die Komintern und der 'afghanische Korridor' 1919–1943', in Michael Buckmiller and Klaus Meschkat, eds., *Biographisches Handbuch zur Geschichte der Kommunistischen Internationale: Ein deutsch-russisches Forschungsprojekt* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2007), 310–26.

<sup>64</sup> Humayun Ansari, 'Maulana Barkatullah Bhopali's Transnationalism: Pan-Islamism, Colonialism, and Radical Politics', in Götz Nordbruch and Umar Ryad, eds., *Transnational Islam in Interwar Europe: Muslim Activists and Thinkers* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 181–209.

<sup>65</sup> Abdullah Recep Baysun, *Türkistan İstiklal Mücadelesi ve Enver Paşa*, ed. Erol Cihangir (İstanbul: Turan Kültür Vakfı, 2001), 49.

Afghanistan as a buffer against Bolshevik advances to India.<sup>66</sup> In the face of these British overtures to the Afghan government, Cemal explained his plans as follows:

I want to reach Afghanistan as soon as possible in order to thoroughly explain to the Afghan Emir what murderous consequence such considerations would have. And I want to invite and persuade him to animosity against the English, which is the sole solution for the political salvation of the East. In so doing, I want to prepare a road and a gateway for Indian revolutionaries at the border of India. Let's see who will succeed.<sup>67</sup>

The shifts in Soviet policies that increasingly turned it toward Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan in 1920 accommodated the Young Turk leaders' experience in campaigning for Muslim anti-colonialism since the First World War.<sup>68</sup> In their minds, all the uprisings in the Muslim world were connected through their singular agency. 'It is about creating an Indian trouble to the English who only recently brought upon us the Greek trouble', wrote Cemal to Mustafa Kemal. 'In doing so, it is perhaps about being the instigator of a great incident that would grant the whole world a moment to take a breath!'<sup>69</sup> As former revolutionaries who became imperial rules, however, Young Turks had a very state-centric mindset – even as non-state actors. Consequently, while championing Muslim internationalism they opted for enhancing bilateralism between governments in Ankara, Tehran, Kabul and Moscow which eventually prepared their own political marginalisation.

#### 'The Benefit to Afghanistan and the Whole Muslim World Lies in Coming to Terms with the Russians': The Limits of Transnational Revolutionary Diplomacy

In early 1921 international relations were approaching a settlement. On the one hand, on-going negotiations in London resulted in the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement of 16 March 1921. Soviet Russia had to come to terms with British Empire in order to bring an end to the devastating effects of the trade embargo, famine and civil war in the Russian heartland. In return, the price which the Soviet government had to pay was the omission of any kind of anti-British revolutionary propaganda in the East.<sup>70</sup> The Soviet Foreign Commissariat felt obliged to reassure Ankara that in return for the propaganda clause Soviet Russia would demand that the United Kingdom respect 'the independence and integrity of the state territories of Iran, Afghanistan, and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey'.<sup>71</sup> As a consequence, the Soviet government signed the Soviet-Persian Treaty (26 February 1921), the Soviet-Afghan Treaty (28 February 1921) and the Soviet-Turkish Treaty (16 March 1921) in this period. It also fostered the Turkish-Afghan Treaty (14 March 1921), which was signed in Moscow, as well as the Persian-Afghan Treaty (22 June 1921). These treaties were explicitly based on the idea of strengthening national sovereignties in a shared anti-imperialist struggle.<sup>72</sup> The treaties became certificates of prestige and recognition.<sup>73</sup> The Young Turk leaders abroad had campaigned for these treaties

<sup>66</sup> Bedri (Moscow) to Celaleddin Arif (Erzurum), 30 Jan. 1921, TTK, EP 07-12. See also Yamauchi, *The Green Crescent under the Red Star*, 30. How far Batumi was considered as 'India's most distant domino' is discussed in John D. Rose, 'Batumi as Domino, 1919–1920: The Defence of India in Transcaucasia', *The International History Review*, 2, 2 (1980), 266–87.

<sup>67</sup> Cemal (Tashkent) to Mustafa Kemal (Ankara), 13 Aug. 1920, ATASE, İSH 570-58.

<sup>68</sup> Yamauchi, *The Green Crescent under the Red Star*, 15.

<sup>69</sup> Cemal (Kabul) to Mustafa Kemal (Ankara), 29 Jul. 1921, in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 368. See also Samuel J. Hirst, 'Comrades on Elephants: Economic Anti-Imperialism, Orientalism, and Soviet Diplomacy in Afghanistan, 1921–23', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 22, 1 (2021), 22–3.

<sup>70</sup> Richard H. Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917–1921, Volume III: The Anglo-Soviet Accord* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 474.

<sup>71</sup> Chicherin to Bekir Sami, 8 Feb. 1921, quoted from the translation in Stefanos Yerasimos, *Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri: 1917–1923*, second edition (İstanbul: Boyut Kitaplar, 2000), 290.

<sup>72</sup> Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics*, 116.

<sup>73</sup> Gökay, *A Clash of Empires*, 111.

themselves. 'I do not believe there can be any rational mind that would not accept and admit that Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan will constitute a great force by leaning against each other', stated an internal report of the Union of Muslim Revolutionary Societies.<sup>74</sup> The region constituted a connected unit in international politics. 'Our policies in Turkey and Persia', wrote Chicherin to Lenin, 'were decisive in Afghanistan'.<sup>75</sup>

Nevertheless, Young Turk leaders' space for autonomous action in transnational revolutionary diplomacy was shrinking. In Soviet–Turkish relations, the ambiguous status of the Young Turk leaders as transnational diplomats was a matter of confusion and contention. The Young Turk leaders' claim to represent Turkey was based on an ambiguous agreement with Mustafa Kemal in early 1920, to the effect that the Young Turk leaders were permitted to operate abroad to promote the interests of Turkey and the Muslim world, but not to act on behalf of Ankara without a mandate.<sup>76</sup> The national resistance movement in Turkey was initiated and conducted by former members of the CUP, including Mustafa Kemal, making the Turkish national movement in essence a Young Turk movement as well.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, Ankara's internal affairs were being formed by its international relations.<sup>78</sup> Mustafa Kemal's leadership resulted in the suppression and subordination of the usurping remnants of the CUP.<sup>79</sup> Once Ankara's official delegation reached Moscow, the Grand National Assembly released a decree disowning the fugitive Young Turk leaders and denying any association with their activities abroad.<sup>80</sup> However, Ankara did not let the Young Turk leaders fully off the leash either. When Cemal reported that he was going to Kabul to work for the Indian revolution, Mustafa Kemal urged him not to forget 'the special historic role held by Turkey in the formation and direction of Muslim Eastern revolution'.<sup>81</sup> The Ankara government was increasingly confident about the exclusive power that came along with its growing national sovereignty in Anatolia and from its international reputation as the champion of the anti-colonial cause in the Muslim world.<sup>82</sup>

Despite their formal disavowal, the Young Turk leaders tried to act as informal intermediaries in the Soviet–Kemalist negotiations in Moscow.<sup>83</sup> Busy promoting himself, Enver was more eager to please the Bolsheviks than the Kemalists, going as far as advising the Ankara delegation to give up the disputed province of Batumi in order to accommodate Soviet demands.<sup>84</sup> During negotiations, Chicherin would often play the Young Turk leaders against the Ankara delegation.<sup>85</sup> Chicherin even asked for Enver's help in coming to an agreement with the Turkish government regarding the border between Kemalist Turkey and Soviet Armenia.<sup>86</sup> For the Bolsheviks, factional strife between

<sup>74</sup> Azmi (Baku), report on Afghanistan and Bukhara, 31 Mar. 1921, TTK, EP 02–57.

<sup>75</sup> Chicherin to Lenin, 13 Oct. 1921, quoted in Hirst, 'Transnational Anti-Imperialism and the National Forces', 220.

<sup>76</sup> Mustafa Kemal (Ankara) to Talat (Berlin), 29 Feb. 1920, in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 217–8.

<sup>77</sup> Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement 1905–1926* (Leiden: Brill, 1984).

<sup>78</sup> Emel Akal, *İştirakiyuncular, Komünistler ve Paşa Hazretleri: Moskova-Ankara-Londra Üçgeninde* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2013).

<sup>79</sup> Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, 118–29; Emel Akal, *Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında Mustafa Kemal, İttihat Terakki ve Bolşevizm*, 2002, revised edition (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 310–7.

<sup>80</sup> Mustafa Kemal (Ankara) to Kazım Karabekir (Erzurum), 20 Jun. 1920, ATASE, İSH 613–80.

<sup>81</sup> Mustafa Kemal (Ankara) to Cemal (Kabul), 1 Oct. 1920, TTK, EP 03–29.

<sup>82</sup> On worldwide Muslim solidarity with the Turkish national struggle see Aydın, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, 124–7. On the international relations of the Ankara Government during the War of Independence see Amit Bein, *Kemalist Turkey and the Middle East: International Relations in the Interwar Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1–24; Salahi R. Sonyel, *Turkish Diplomacy, 1918–1923: Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish National Movement* (London: Sage Publications, 1975).

<sup>83</sup> Enver (Moscow) to Mustafa Kemal (Ankara), 26 Aug. 1920, in Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimizde Enver Paşa*, 21.

<sup>84</sup> Enver (Moscow) to Cemal (Kabul), 6 Mar. 1921, in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 63.

<sup>85</sup> Yusuf Kemal Tengirşenk, *Vatan Hizmetinde* (İstanbul: Bahar Matbaası, 1967), 167.

<sup>86</sup> Enver (Moscow) to Cemal (Kabul), 9 Mar. 1921, in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 64.

the two Turkish delegations in Moscow was useful. Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs Lev Karahan himself invited Enver to intervene in the Russian–Turkish negotiations.<sup>87</sup> Ankara officials in Moscow perceived the attention devoted to the Young Turk leaders at diplomatic banquets as a violation of their own sovereignty.<sup>88</sup> Despite the formal dismissal of Young Turk leaders by Ankara, Enver managed to remain relevant in negotiations between the Soviet government and the representatives of the Ankara government until the official treaty was signed.<sup>89</sup> Chicherin himself acknowledged that ‘Enver has already showed great sacrifice for the realisation of the Turkish–Soviet relations’.<sup>90</sup> However, with Ankara’s increasing sovereignty, the status of the Young Turk leaders became more ambiguous as well.

Although the Young Turks were not involved in diplomatic talks between Moscow and Tehran, Iran constituted a major field of action in their geopolitical imaginary.<sup>91</sup> Travelling from Tashkent to Baku on an inspection tour of Turkestan on behalf of Enver, one Young Turk emissary happened to be on the same train as the newly appointed Soviet ambassador to Tehran, Theodore A. Rothstein (Fjodor A. Rotstein). In confidence, Rothstein told the Young Turk that they were preparing a revolution in Iran.<sup>92</sup> Rothstein’s plans were, however, curtailed by a coup d’état. On 21 February 1921 General Reza Khan (Pahlavi) from the Iranian Cossack Brigade conducted a successful coup d’état in Tehran and the young intellectual Sayyed Ziya Tabataba’i was made prime minister.<sup>93</sup> The new regime had initially enjoyed British support but proved to be more eager to establish Iran’s national sovereignty by annulling the Anglo–Persian Treaty of 1919. Although British support for the coup was meant to stop the looming Bolshevik influence in Iran, the Soviet–Persian Treaty, which was signed only a few days after the coup on 26 February 1921, came as a *fait accompli*.<sup>94</sup> The Soviet–Persian Treaty enhanced the sovereignty of Iran with the withdrawal of Soviet forces from the Gilan region.<sup>95</sup> In the aftermath of the coup, Enver recommended to Karahan and Chicherin that they work together with the Iranian Democrat Party (*Hezb-e Demokrat-e Iran*, est. 1910) by supplying them with military and financial resources.<sup>96</sup>

Both Cemal in Kabul and Enver in Moscow were influential in pushing forward the Soviet–Afghan negotiations. After he arrived in Kabul, Cemal was appointed by Emir Amanullah as the military advisor and chief of staff of the Afghan armed forces.<sup>97</sup> On 28 February 1921 the Soviet–Afghan Treaty was signed in Moscow.<sup>98</sup> Karahan complimented Cemal’s achievements in reforming the

<sup>87</sup> Halil (Moscow) to Enver (Berlin), 12 Jan. 1921, TTK, EP 02-66. See also Sami Sabit Karaman, *İstiklal Mücadelesi ve Enver Paşa: Trabzon ve Kars Hatıraları, 1921–1922*, second edition (İstanbul: Arma Yayınları, 2002), 85.

<sup>88</sup> Rıza Nur, *Hayat ve Hatıratım*, 4 vols. (İstanbul: Altındağ Yayınları, 1967–1968), III, 783–5.

<sup>89</sup> Enver (Moscow) to Seeckt (Berlin), 26 Feb. 1921, BA-MA, N-247/195.

<sup>90</sup> Chicherin to the Central Committee, 18 Apr. 1921, quoted in Gökay, *A Clash of Empires*, 67.

<sup>91</sup> Memduh Şevket (Baku), report on Iranian affairs to Enver Pasha (Moscow), 1 Apr. 1921, TTK, EP 07-25.

<sup>92</sup> Azmi (Baku), report on Afghanistan and Bukhara, 31 Mar. 1921, TTK, EP 02-57. Within the Bolshevik leadership, it was Sergo Ordzhonikidze, Stalin’s handler in the Caucasus, who championed an adventurist revolutionary policy in Iran. Alfred J. Rieber, *Stalin and the Struggle for Supremacy in Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 61.

<sup>93</sup> Stephanie Cronin, *Soldiers, Shahs and Subalterns in Iran: Opposition, Protest and Revolt, 1921–1941* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 129.

<sup>94</sup> Oliver Bast, ‘Duping the British and Outwitting the Russians? Iran’s Foreign Policy, the ‘Bolshevik Threat’, and the Genesis of the Soviet–Iranian Treaty of 1921’, in Stephanie Cronin, ed., *Iranian–Russian Encounters: Empires and Revolutions since 1800* (London: Routledge, 2013), 261–91.

<sup>95</sup> Volodarsky, *The Soviet Union and its Southern Neighbours*, 53–5.

<sup>96</sup> Enver (Moscow) to Cemal (Kabul), 9 Mar. 1921, in Yalçın and Kocahanoglu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 64.

<sup>97</sup> Cemal undertook several modernising reforms in Afghanistan: he released new administrative laws, made fiscal reforms, commissioned foreign books for translation and initiated military reforms. Michael B. O’Sullivan, ‘“The Little Brother of the Ottoman State”: Ottoman Technocrats in Kabul and Afghanistan’s Development in the Ottoman Imagination, 1908–23’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 50, 6 (2016), 1846–87; Ahmed, *Afghanistan Rising*, 180–2; Hirst, ‘Comrades on Elephants’.

<sup>98</sup> Volodarsky, *The Soviet Union and its Southern Neighbours*, 127–30.

Afghan armed forces located at the Indian border.<sup>99</sup> Despite the signing of the treaty, the Afghan Emir was advised by his Minister of Foreign Affairs Tarzi to postpone the ratification of the treaty, since a potential rapprochement with British India was on the way. 'There cannot be any other way of working as a revolutionary at the Indian border in Afghanistan than the way I proposed', complained Cemal about the state of affairs in Kabul and insisted on the centrality of his person.<sup>100</sup> 'It is clear', as Cemal wrote Enver, 'that the only way for us to establish a secure and beneficial working area in Afghanistan is by way of Afghan-Russian friendship'.<sup>101</sup> Yet, Tarzi was more interested in safeguarding Afghan sovereignty, which would mean coming to terms with British India.<sup>102</sup> The Bukharan diaspora in Afghanistan and Emir Amanullah's clandestine support for the anti-Soviet Basmachi revolt could not be reconciled with Cemal's pro-Soviet policies, either.<sup>103</sup> Eventually, Cemal was successful in having the Soviet-Afghan Treaty ratified. He summarised his achievements as follows: 'after long talks with the Emir, I could convince him that the benefit to Afghanistan and the whole Muslim world lies in coming to terms with the Russians in order to . . . bring order and development to the Muslim world'.<sup>104</sup> Actually, Cemal's obsession with British India and his loyalty to Moscow limited his political prospects in Kabul.

### 'They Don't Want to Leave Room for Us in Foreign Politics': Return to Interstate Diplomacy

With the establishment of interstate relations in Eurasia, international politics were in a state of flux in the first half of 1921. Manifested in new bilateral treaties, the new international politics restricted revolutionary non-state actors' ability to conduct transnational revolutionary diplomacy. The more they prepared the ground for pro-Soviet and anti-British treaties that recognised the sovereignty of new Muslim countries, the more the Young Turk leaders, ironically, eroded their own legitimacy in campaigning for Muslim internationalism.

Soviet treaties in the East were accompanied by diplomatic settlement with the West. Ankara's diplomats had already been invited to the London Conference and signed the Ankara Treaty with France in October 1921. In Cemal's absence, Tarzi signed the Anglo-Afghan Treaty on 15 November 1921. This treaty established the sovereignty of Afghanistan as 'a fully entitled member of the international community'.<sup>105</sup> Although continuing to work on behalf of Afghanistan in Europe thereafter, Cemal never returned to Kabul.<sup>106</sup> Enver hoped that the Soviet-Afghan Treaty would alter the course of the ongoing Anglo-Soviet negotiations in London.<sup>107</sup> He was mistaken. The consequences of the propaganda clause were immediately felt by the Young Turk leaders.<sup>108</sup> 'After concluding the trade treaty with the English', reported Enver to Cemal, 'Russians do not want to engage so openly'.<sup>109</sup> Despite Chicherin's praise, Lenin found excuses not to meet with Cemal, when he returned to

<sup>99</sup> Karahan to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, 26 Apr. 1921, RCHIDNI, f. 5, list 2-208, in Rem Kazandzhian, *Bol'sheviki i mladoturki: Novye dokumenty o rossijsko-turetskikh otnosheniakh (1920-1922 gg.)* (Moscow: Institut vostokovedeniia RAN, 1996), 14.

<sup>100</sup> Cemal (Kabul) to Enver (Moscow), 17 May 1921, TTK, EP 01-02.

<sup>101</sup> Cemal (Kabul) to Enver (Moscow), 29 July 1921, in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 266.

<sup>102</sup> Cemal to Tarzi, 16 Jan. 1921, in *Ibid.*, 268-9.

<sup>103</sup> Ahmed Zeki Velidi Togan, *Memoirs: National Existence and Cultural Struggles of Turkistan and other Muslim Eastern Turks*, translated by H. B. Paksoy (North Charleston: CreateSpace, 2012), 296; Mustafa Chokay, 'Cemal Paşa'nın Öldürülüşü. Moskova Bolşeviklerinin Cinayeti', *Yaş Türkistan*, 17 (1931), 4-18.

<sup>104</sup> Cemal (Kabul) to Enver (Moscow), 29 July 1921, in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 368-9.

<sup>105</sup> Note on the Anglo-Afghan Treaty (Berlin), 6 Jan. 1922, PA-AA, R 77936.

<sup>106</sup> Hirst, 'Comrades on Elephants', 24.

<sup>107</sup> Enver (Moscow) to Cemal (Kabul), 9 Mar. 1921, in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 64.

<sup>108</sup> Some scholars argue that the propaganda clause was merely a 'dead letter', because the Soviets continued their anti-British policies simply by other means. M. V. Glenny, 'The Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement, March 1921', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5, 2 (1970), 63-82.

<sup>109</sup> Enver (Moscow) to Cemal (Kabul), 30 Mar. 1921, in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 66-7.



Moscow, in order to avoid further diplomatic complications.<sup>110</sup> Soviet support to the Young Turks was always cautious and it became increasingly unsustainable.

Bilateralism not only restricted transnational revolutionary diplomacy, it also curtailed revolutionary internationalism. As soon as the Soviet–Turkish Treaty was signed, Ankara ousted the Young Turk leaders from international politics. ‘For example, without any reason, they wasted some unnecessary words to the Russians claiming that Enver Pasha and Cemal Pasha have no authority to talk in the name of Anatolia in Moscow’, Enver complained.<sup>111</sup> Ankara even attempted to monopolise Muslim internationalism. Ankara’s ambassador in Moscow, Ali Fuat Pasha, noted that ‘pan-Islamist policies would no longer be an instrument of anybody and everybody’ – a reference to Enver’s Union of Muslim Revolutionary Societies.<sup>112</sup> Mustafa Kemal had made clear to Enver, ‘if you want to do anything in the Muslim world, do it with me’.<sup>113</sup> However, Enver bitterly concluded: ‘but now, as it was not enough for them to take over domestic politics, they don’t want to leave room for us in foreign politics either’.<sup>114</sup> In his ever shrinking space to manoeuvre in international politics, Enver became more aggressive. He attempted an usurpation in Anatolia in September 1921 that was never realised but forced him to cut ties with Turkey thereafter.<sup>115</sup> In his desperation Enver soon turned his back on the Bolsheviks by joining the Basmachi insurgency in Turkestan. Thereafter, Enver became the *persona non grata* of Soviet–Turkish friendship.

‘He ruined all our honour as revolutionaries’, Cemal complained after Enver went rogue.<sup>116</sup> Enver’s insurgency in Bukhara received some clandestine support from Afghanistan.<sup>117</sup> However, Kabul was performing a delicate balancing act. While secretly supporting anti-Soviet insurgents in Turkestan, Soviet–Afghan friendship was not to be abandoned as it was attracting rivalling British overtures to Afghanistan.<sup>118</sup> Isolated and encircled, Enver was killed by the Red Army near Dushanbe in August 1922. Although Cemal was able to win back the confidence of both Ankara and Moscow, he was killed by Armenians in Tbilisi in July 1922 on his way to Turkey.<sup>119</sup>

Soviet Russia’s revolutionary diplomacy turned towards supporting revolutionary states, and this had serious consequences throughout the region. The deal with Turkey meant the end of the Caucasus republics, establishing once again a Turkish–Russian border in the Caucasus.<sup>120</sup> There was no room for a socialist revolution in Turkey, as the tragic murder of the Turkish Communist Party leaders had already illustrated in early January 1921.<sup>121</sup> The deal with Iran finished the Soviet Republic in Gilan and its former leader Mirza Kuchik Khan died on the run.<sup>122</sup> By isolating the

<sup>110</sup> Chicherin to Lenin, 14 Oct. 1921; Lenin to Chicherin, 16 Oct. 1921, RCHIDNI, f. 2, list 2-950, in Kazandzhian, *Bol'sheviki i mlادتurki*, 15–6.

<sup>111</sup> Enver (Moscow) to Cemal (Kabul), 30 Mar. 1921, in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 67.

<sup>112</sup> Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları*, 290.

<sup>113</sup> Enver (Moscow) to Cemal (Kabul), [early Jun. 1921], in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 81.

<sup>114</sup> Enver (Moscow) to Cemal (Afghanistan), 29 Jun. 1921, in Yalçın and Kocahanoğlu, *İttihatçı Liderlerin Gizli Mektupları*, 83.

<sup>115</sup> It is somewhat disputed that Enver was encouraged by the Soviets to intervene in Anatolia, as suggested in Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey*, 103. Although the Bolsheviks indeed toyed with the idea of using Enver, if Mustafa Kemal would surrender to the Entente, Chicherin eventually forbid Enver to intervene into Anatolia. Enver (Batumi) to Naciye (Berlin), 27 Sep. 1921, in Bardakçı, *Naciye, Ruhum, Efendim*, 302.

<sup>116</sup> Muhittin Birgen, *İttihat ve Terakki'de On Sene: İttihat ve Terakki'nin Sonu*, edited by Zeki Arkan, 2 vols. (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006), II, 763.

<sup>117</sup> Enver (Eastern Bukhara) to Tarzi (Kabul), 23 Jan. 1922, TTK, EP 04-02.

<sup>118</sup> Letter from Afghanistan to Enver Pasha (Turkestan), 2 May 1922, TTK, EP 01-09.

<sup>119</sup> Cemal (on route to Tbilisi) to Mustafa Kemal (Ankara), 9 Jul. 1922, in Hülya Baykal, ‘Milli Mücadele Yıllarında Mustafa Kemal Paşa ile Cemal Paşa arasında Yazışmalar’, *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, 5, 14 (1989), 379–439.

<sup>120</sup> Richard G. Hovannisian, ‘Armenia and the Caucasus in the Genesis of the Soviet–Turkish Entente’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 4, 2 (1973), 129–47.

<sup>121</sup> Bülent Gökay, ‘The Turkish Communist Party: The Fate of the Founders’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 29, 2 (1993), 220–35.

<sup>122</sup> Stephen Blank, ‘Soviet Politics and the Iranian Revolution of 1919–1921’, *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 21, 2 (1980), 173–94.



Basmachi revolt, the deal with Afghanistan enabled the incorporation of the Central Asian republics into Soviet Russia.<sup>123</sup> For Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan bilateral relations with Soviet Russia enabled benevolent Soviet support without inviting subversive Bolshevik agitation. These countries had long been exposed to Russian threat during the Great Game so that they feared Russian influence.<sup>124</sup> It was convenient for all parties to form a safe buffer zone between Soviet Russia and British territories in India and Iraq – cleansed from rivals and usurpers.<sup>125</sup> After a moment of transnational revolutionary diplomacy, revolutionary non-state actors were marginalised by the process of internationalisation and the establishment of interstate diplomacy in Eurasia.

## Conclusion

The Soviet Union's momentous settlement with international society not only had an impact on Eastern Europe, where communist revolutions had mostly failed by the end of 1920, it also shaped the modern Middle East and beyond.<sup>126</sup> The Great Game, namely the Anglo–Russian rivalry over Turco–Persian lands in Asia, was in many ways reanimated in the aftermath of the First World War.<sup>127</sup> Yet, it was Muslim internationalism, revolutionary struggles on the ground and diplomatic alliances against great power interventions that shaped the Northern Tier of the Middle East as a distinct geopolitical region.<sup>128</sup> The absence of the ‘Arab South’ in these calculations demonstrates the limited reach of Bolshevik agitation and Soviet diplomacy.<sup>129</sup> The First World War resulted in the subordination of nearly all Muslim countries to colonial and foreign rule, while Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan could safeguard their sovereignty as independent nation states in this process. As a result, also other countries, such as post-Versailles Germany, perceived Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan as a political-economic region distinct from the colonial Arab Middle East.<sup>130</sup> While Turkey and Afghanistan institutionalised their diplomatic relations based on Muslim solidarity, Iran's tribal frontiers remained bilaterally contested in the early 1920s.<sup>131</sup> After long negotiations starting in 1933, Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan (as well as Iraq) signed the Sa‘dabad Pact in 1937, which ‘became a

<sup>123</sup> Stephen White, ‘Soviet Russia and the Asian Revolution, 1917–1924’, *Review of International Studies*, 10, 3 (1984), 219–32.

<sup>124</sup> Protocol of conversation with Bedri Bey, 17 May 1921, PA-AA, R 77922.

<sup>125</sup> Kapur, *Soviet Russia and Asia*, 48.

<sup>126</sup> Soviets later implemented the Soviet–Turkish model of bilateralism to China from mid-1920s onwards. Hirst, ‘Transnational Anti-Imperialism and the National Forces’, 215.

<sup>127</sup> David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, 20th year anniversary ed. (New York, NY: Henry Holt & Co., 2009), 484.

<sup>128</sup> Due to its strategic proximity, Soviet terminology referred to the Northern Tier as the ‘Central/Middle East’ in (*srednii vostok*), a region distinct from the Arab ‘Near East’ (*blizhnii vostok*). Fred Halliday, ‘The Middle East, Afghanistan and the Gulf in the Soviet Perception’, in James Sherr, ed., *Soviet Power: The Continuing Challenge*, second edition, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), 199. For the evolution of the concept of Near and Middle East in English see the contributions in Michael Bonine, Abbas Amanat and Michael Gasper, eds., *Is There a Middle East? The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2011).

<sup>129</sup> Tareq Y. Ismael, *The Communist Movement in the Arab World* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 8–12; Masha Kirasirova, ‘The “East” as a Category of Bolshevik Ideology and Comintern Administration: The Arab Section of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East’, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 18, 1 (2017), 7–34. The Soviet Union became a major player in the Arab Middle East only after 1950s when Arab nationalists – not much different than Mustafa Kemal and Reza Khan – came to power. Fred Halliday, ‘The Middle East, the Great Powers, and the Cold War’, in Yazid Sayigh and Avi Shlaim, eds., *The Cold War and the Middle East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 10.

<sup>130</sup> Not only Soviet Russia, but also Weimar and Nazi Germany regarded Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan as a distinct region in political and economic relations. Antoine Fleury, *La pénétration allemande au Moyen-Orient 1919–1939: Le cas de la Turquie, de l’Iran et de l’Afghanistan* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1977). For single studies see Francis R. Nicosia, ‘“Drang Nach Osten” Continued? Germany and Afghanistan During the Weimar Republic’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 32, 2 (1997), 235–57; Mangold-Will, *Begrenzte Freundschaft*; Jennifer Jenkins, ‘Iran in the Nazi New Order, 1933–1941’, *Iranian Studies*, 49, 5 (2016), 727–51.

<sup>131</sup> On Turkish–Afghan relations see Ahmed, *Afghanistan Rising*, 185–90. On Iran's frontiers in the 1920s see Pirouz Mojtahed-Zadeh, *Small Players of the Great Game: The Settlement of Iran's Eastern Borderlands and the Creation of*

precursor to the Northern Tier of the Cold War'.<sup>132</sup> However great their internal differences and border challenges, the path of state formation and modernisation in Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan was both comparable in the interwar years and distinct from that in the rest of the Middle East.<sup>133</sup>

The international society generally rejects the sovereignty of revolutionary and anti-colonial states that challenge Western hegemony.<sup>134</sup> Western disregard for revolutionary claims to statehood led in the spring of 1921 to a parallel system of alliances among revolutionary states in Eurasia to certificate each other's state sovereignty. Although the Soviet treaties with Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan were framed in terms of a revolutionary front of new nation states against Western hegemony, they eventually led to the normalisation of interstate relations with the West.<sup>135</sup> In an international society that subscribes to the Westphalian myth of state sovereignty, the legitimacy and capacity of statehood is crucial capital in the field of international politics.<sup>136</sup> Revolutionary politics, which ends up in a struggle to capture the state, also tends to feature statism as the norm, excluding other contenders to power. Cemal's access to the symbolic and material capital of statehood also explains why he was more successful as the Emir's chief-of-staff in Kabul than Enver as a professional revolutionary in Moscow. Nevertheless, they both were doomed to be outcasts in the post-war settlement of interstate relations. Their transnational activism, transgressive agendas and telltale reputations made them increasingly unbearable to the new political order that was being established.

In the making of international politics in the early 1920s, the trajectory of the Young Turk leaders illustrates the complex agency of revolutionary non-state actors as both the initiators and the outcasts of alternative channels of diplomacy. This bygone moment of Muslim internationalism in the aftermath of the First World War had manifold legacies.<sup>137</sup> Later interwar years featured a major rise of anti-colonial internationalism against the United Kingdom and France.<sup>138</sup> 'Scholarship on interwar anti-colonialism and the competition among mass movements', as Nathal Citio has noted, 'provides a useful prologue to the Cold War in the Middle East because it reveals the inadequacy of a bipolar

---

*Afghanistan* (London: Routledge, 2004), 209–18; Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation, 1804–1946* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 160–7.

<sup>132</sup> How the Sa'dabad Pact evolved out of 'Soviet security designs' but turned out to be a security concern for the Soviet Union is discussed in Onur Işçi, *Turkey and the Soviet Union During World War II: Diplomacy, Discord and International Relations* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2019), 45–8, quote from 47. See also Bein, *Kemalist Turkey and the Middle East*, 86–90.

<sup>133</sup> Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan in the interwar years still await a comparative study. For comparisons between Turkey and Iran see Touraj Atabaki and Erik Jan Zürcher, eds., *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004); Touraj Atabaki, ed., *The State and the Subaltern: Modernisation and the State in Turkey and Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007).

<sup>134</sup> On the double standards of sovereignty see Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). The disregard of other state's sovereignty is even more obvious towards the post-colonial world. Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>135</sup> Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order*, 7–11. As much as revolutionary states adapted to the norms of the international society, revolution and counterrevolution changed states and societies irreversibly. Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*, 298; Stephen Chan and Andrew J. Williams, 'Sympathy for the Devil', in Stephen Chan and Andrew J. Williams, eds., *Renegade States: The Evolution of Revolutionary Foreign Policy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 199–202.

<sup>136</sup> Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*, 311. On the Westphalian myth see Andreas Osiander, 'Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth', *International Organization*, 55, 2 (2001), 251–87; Benno Teschke, *The Myth of 1648: Class, Geopolitics, and the Making of Modern International Relations* (London: Verso, 2003).

<sup>137</sup> This legacy was first pointed out in Zafer Toprak, 'Bolşevik İttihatçılar ve İslam Kominterni. İslam İhtilal Cemiyetleri İttihadı (İttihad-ı Selamet-i İslam)', *Toplumsal Tarih*, 8, 8 (1997), 6–13.

<sup>138</sup> David Motadel, 'The Global Authoritarian Moment and the Revolt against Empire', *The American Historical Review*, 124, 3 (2019), 843–77; Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Raza Ali, Franziska Roy and Benjamin Zachariah, eds., *The Internationalist Moment: South Asia, Worlds, and World Views, 1917–1939* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2015).

narrative’.<sup>139</sup> Similar moments of transnational revolutionary diplomacy shaped also the decolonisation struggles during the Cold War.<sup>140</sup> The origins of the ‘diplomatic revolution’ of the decolonisation that created a post-colonial transnational system should be traced back to the early interwar years in Eurasia.<sup>141</sup>

**Acknowledgements.** A different version of this article has been published as “Bir Heyet-i Sefaret Değil, Bir İhtilal Heyeti.” İttihatçılar ve Asya’da Devrimci Diploması’, in Erol Ülker and Erden Akbulut, eds., *Yüzyılın Ardından Ekim Devrimi ve Türkiye* (Istanbul: Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı Yayınları, 2020), 132–67. I am grateful to comments by Samuel J. Hirst, Alexander E. Balistreri, Onur İşçi and S. Barış Gülmez on different versions of this article. I would like to thank the editors of this special issue, Cyrus Schayegh and Sandrine Kott, for their guidance in improving the paper’s argument and structure. The three anonymous reviewers of the *Contemporary European History* provided crucial suggestions for the final revisions.

<sup>139</sup> Nathal Citio, ‘Between Global and Regional Narratives’ (roundtable: ‘Relocating the Cold War’) *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 43, 2 (2011), 314.

<sup>140</sup> For such transnational encounters during the Cold War see Michael R. Fischbach, *Black Power and Palestine: Transnational Countries of Color* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018); Jeffrey J. Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Jeffrey Herf, *Undeclared Wars with Israel: East Germany and the West German Far Left, 1967–1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Paul T. Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>141</sup> Matthew Connelly traces the origins of the transnational system of the post-Cold War era back to the Algerian War of Independence his *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria’s Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).