

After Russia seized the region in the early nineteenth century, Karabakh was repopulated by Armenians, becoming an Armenian enclave in the Azeri-populated czarist district of Baku.

Jurisdiction over the enclave had become a heated emotional issue for both Azeris and Armenians. General Thomson deliberately intensified the problem.

While Thomson dished out military aid to Armenia and Georgia, but *not* Azerbaijan, he decreed that Karabakh remain under Azeri administration, and appointed an Azeri governor general for Karabakh, who was notorious for his massacring of Armenians. Thomson gave the nod to Azeri repression of Karabakh Armenians.

Thomson armed the Armenians, albeit inadequately. In August 1919, the outgunned Armenians of Karabakh finally accepted Azeri jurisdiction.

The same month, the British began their withdrawal from the Transcaucasus, deliberately paving the way for chaos. "I am fully aware that the withdrawal of the British troops would probably lead to anarchy," wrote General Milne, commander in chief of the Army of the Black Sea, "but I cannot see that the world would lose much if the whole of the inhabitants of the country cut each others' throats."

### Stalin in charge

The return of Russian rule to the region, in 1920-21, however, did not bring peace. Joseph V. Stalin was Soviet Commissioner for Nationalities Affairs (an organization he headed

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Claude Stokes, the British High Commissioner in Transcaucasia, with the quiet support of Lord Curzon, then British foreign minister. This state, he asserted, "would lean upon Great Britain and provide a buffer between Russia and the British Asiatic possessions."

The additional geopolitical purpose of this plan was to instigate Russian-Turkish and Turkic conflict.

**D:** The Mountaineer Republic. The idea of creating a Caucasian mountain state separating Russia from the Transcaucasus and Mideast, was first advanced by David Urquhart, an agent of British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, in the 1830s. After World War I, it was revived as policy by Lord Curzon.

The geopolitical purpose of this republic was to foment Russian-Turkish conflict.

**E:** The Russian Empire. In 1919, Britain proposed two conflicting schemes to preserve the territory of the collapsed Russian Empire. One was the creation of a new Bolshevik form of the old empire, based on the doctrine of Karl Marx, a political dependent of David Urquhart. The second was the restoration of monarchist or anti-Bolshevik "White" forces led by General Denikin, among others. The case of British intelligence agent Alexander Helphand Parvus, who patronized both sides, exemplifies British operations in this theater.

from its inception in 1917 through its dissolution in 1924). A son of neighboring Georgia, Stalin had served the Bolshevik underground in Baku, Azerbaijan, where, in the words of one Azeri historian, "he witnessed the outbreaks of violence between Azeri Turks and Armenians as well as the methods used by czarist agents and police to ensure rivalry which could deflect deep-seated anti-Russian resentment." Stalin employed the same methods.

Under his direction, the Azerbaijan presidium formed a Central Commission on Nagorno-Karabakh affairs, which decreed that an autonomous Armenian enclave, only a dozen miles from Armenia itself, be created within Azerbaijan. The decision satisfied none of the parties.

Thus, Stalin continued the same geopolitical machinations in the region, played by the czar and British General Thomson, before him. But as the events of the 1990s have shown, once a region is locked into a geopolitical chessboard, anyone can play.

## David Urquhart's Ottoman legions

by Joseph Brewda

After fomenting the Caucasian Mountain Peoples' uprising, David Urquhart returned to England in the 1830s, intent on rallying public feeling for a war with Russia. His "Foreign Affairs Committees," and their organ *Portfolio*, were dedicated to raising public awareness of the "Eastern Question." Urquhart's answer to this question was to take the Ottoman Empire under London's protection, and arrange the collision, and mutual destruction, of the Ottoman and Russian empires.

Hurling Turkey at Russia required urgent reform of the Ottoman State bureaucracy and modernization of its army. It also required the creation of a new imperial, anti-Russian ideology. Lord Palmerston himself supervised the reforms of the Ottoman Empire in the 1840s, and the expansion of a civil service bureaucracy educated and indoctrinated in Paris and London. In 1864, Giuseppe Mazzini, one of Palmerston's agents, provided the cadre for the new ideology by forming the Young Ottomans in Paris, largely administered by his Young Poland organization, and dedicated to forming a Turkish-Eastern European-Transcaucasian alliance against Russia.

Urquhart was the chief British case officer of the Young Ottoman movement, having from the 1830s worked for Turkish-Polish collaboration against Russia. Until 1876, when the Young Ottomans succeeded in seizing power in Istanbul for one year, Urquhart served as their adviser. Among other duties, he was paymaster for Young Ottoman

FIGURE 9

**Central Asia in 1855**



FIGURE 10

**Central Asia in 1885**



**Key to Figures 9-10**

Russia gained control over the northern region of what became Kazakhstan by 1855. The area was then inhabited by Kazak and Kyrgyz nomads. It completed the conquest of what became Russian Central Asia in 1885.

As a result, the Russian Empire came into direct contact and conflict with the khanates of Khiva, Bukhara, and Kokand, for the first time. The khanates were based on a string of oasis cities on the Silk Route to China, in present day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Because much of the area was desert wasteland, it

was necessary for Russia to establish forward-bases, before attempting to conquer the three states. Tashkent, the capital of Kokand, was finally seized in 1865. Russia conquered Bukhara in 1868, and Khiva in 1873. It did not completely conquer all of the region, however, until 1885.

Russia's advance led to negotiations with British India on turning Afghanistan into a buffer state between the two empires. An 1884 agreement between Russia and Britain secured a Russian-Afghan border, which has remained essentially the same since.

leader Ali Sauvi, a dominant figure in their Paris-based exile publication, *Hurriyet*.

**Orchestrating a showdown**

There were two ideological movements the British created in the mid-nineteenth century to motivate Ottoman imperial wars with Russia. One was the Pan-Islamic movement. The other was the Pan-Turkic movement. The Young Ottomans proselytized both.

Pan-Turkism, the mission to unite all Turkic peoples based on their common ethnic origin, and antipathy to Russia, was concocted by Urquhart's crony Arminius Vambery, a Hungarian Jewish emigré also in the pay of Lord Palmerston.

Disguised as a Turkish dervish, Vambery traveled throughout Central Asia in the 1860s to investigate possibilities for creating a Pan-Turkic, anti-Russian, identity, unified around the sultan of the Ottoman Empire. His conclusion was optimistic, even though Central Asia had never been under Ottoman rule.

Vambery's Ottoman imperial vision was proclaimed in his 1865 *Travels in Central Asia*: "In its character of Turkish dynasty, the house of Osman might, out of the different kindred elements with which it is connected by the bond of a common language, religion, and history, have founded an empire extending from the shore of the Adriatic far into China, an empire mightier than that which the great Romanoff was

FIGURE 11

**The Caucasus and Central Asia in 1923**



**Key to Figure 11**

The end of World War I resulted in a dramatic expansion of the British Empire, through its takeover of almost all of the Mideast, serving as a flank to British India, from which Britain controlled

the entire subcontinent and also Burma. The British-sponsored Russian revolution and civil war savagely reduced Russian military power. The Ottoman Empire was also finished, but the unexpected creation of the Turkish Republic by Mustapha Kemal Ataturk upset some of Britain's plans.

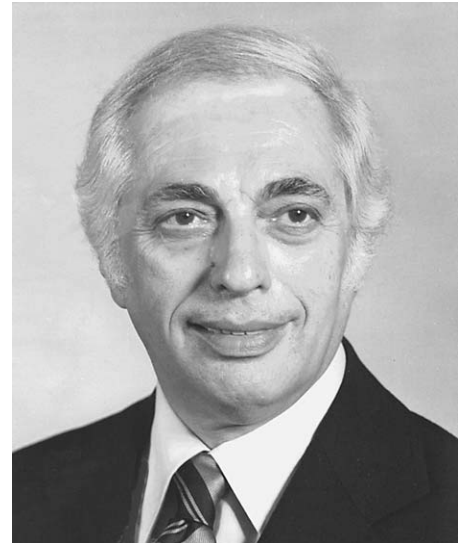
obliged to employ not only force, but cunning, to put together, out of the most discordant and heterogeneous materials. Anatolians, Azerbaydjanes, Turkomans, Özbegs, Kirghis, and Tartars are the respective members, out of which a mighty Turkish Colossus might have arisen, certainly better capable of measuring itself with its great northern competitor than Turkey such as we see it in the present day."

In its more extravagant form, Vambery's doctrine was known as "Pan-Turanianism," and sought to ally the Turkic peoples with the Hungarians, Finns, and Mongols.

The man who emerged as the leader of the Pan-Turkic movement was Urquhart's protégé Ali Suavi, who had trav-

eled to Britain under Urquhart's sponsorship. In his writings in *Hurriyet* and other locations, Suavi argued that the movement was necessary to mobilize the Ottomans in defense of the Central Asian Khans, then under military threat by the expanding Russian Empire. Suavi was the first to use the term "Turk" to describe the "Ottomans," which in previous usage had been an Ottoman pejorative term for their backward Central Asian cousins. Suavi was killed in an aborted effort to depose the sultan in 1876, sponsored by British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli.

Pan-Islamism, which advanced the idea that Istanbul was the natural center of the entire Islamic world, and not just the



*British intelligence officer Bernard Lewis (above) is determined to bury the legacy of Turkish nationalist leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (left), who blocked British plans to completely destroy the Mideast after World War I.*

Turkic peoples, was a brother-doctrine of the same British mother. It, too, sought to turn the Ottoman sultan into the rallying point for a struggle against Russia, this time robed in religious garb. The British myth-spinners of pan-Islamism were the family of cult novelist Edmund Bulwer-Lytton, and Wilfred Scawen Blunt, the 1870s founder of the British Arab Bureau.

The birth announcement of the pan-Islamic movement appeared first in 1869, in the pages of the Young Ottomans' Paris-based *Hurriyet*. It castigated the Ottoman Empire for its non-committal attitude toward the Central Asian Khanates under Russian attack. But rather than appealing to ethnic solidarity, it avowed that the sultan, as caliph—the defender of the faith—was responsible for defending Central Asia. The pan-Islamic proselytizer for the Young Ottomans was Tahsin Efendi, who, after studying in Paris in the 1850s, returned to form the Sufi “Society for the Study of Geography in Islamic Lands,” a geographical pan-Islamic organizing society.

### **The Young Ottomans' revival**

For one brief year, 1876, the Young Ottomans ruled in Istanbul, with their leader, Midhat Pasha, replacing the grand vizier. But in 1877, they were ousted, driven underground, and forced into exile. With succor offered by London, however, the movement did not die. By 1896, the Young Ottomans were resuscitated as the “Young Turks,” who seized power over the Ottoman Empire in a British-sponsored coup in 1908. Evidently lacking self-confidence, the Young Turks appointed a British general as chief of staff of the Turkish Army.

The Young Turks' ideology, Pan-Turkism, put Turkey on a collision course with its Slavic neighbors. By 1912, the Young Turks had instigated the first Balkan war, unleashing the events that led to World War I.

The mastermind of the Young Turk regime was Emmanuel Carasso, an Italian Jew and grand master of the “Macedonia Resurrected” freemasonic Lodge of Salonika, which had plotted the 1908 coup. Carasso had supervised the procurement of Turkey's food supplies, in league with the international arms trafficker, grain speculator, Bolshevik financial patron, and British super-agent, Alexander Helphand Parvus.

Just as Urquhart had been the mentor for Karl Marx's crusade against Russia, so Parvus had spent a lifetime logistically facilitating the Marxist movement that would ultimately bring down the Russian Empire. Taking advantage of the shattering effects of the 1902 Russo-Japanese War, Parvus funded and oversaw the 1905 Russian Revolution. His agent had been Leon Trotsky, whom he had drilled in the doctrine of “permanent revolution,” leading to Trotsky's book on the theme.

From Russia, Parvus arrived in Turkey soon after the 1908 Young Turk revolution. To grease the wheels of his various political operations, he joined with Carasso to become the top grain speculator in Turkey. He also became financial editor of the Young Turk newspaper, *Türk Yurdu*.

Later, Parvus took some of the money he had acquired in Turkey, and gold from the German General Staff, to finance the 1917 Russian Revolution and arrange for Vladimir Lenin's triumphant return to Russia.

Another foreign mentor of the Young Turk regime was

the Polish Jew Vladimir Jabotinsky, who became editor of the newspaper, *Young Turk*. Jabotinsky would later become the founder of the branch of the Zionist movement that spawned the Likud Party of Israel and its offshoots, those Zionists attempting to block the Middle East peace process today.

The Young Turk regime did not last. The tables were turned with the rise of Turkish nationalist leader Mustapha Kemal Ataturk and the founding of the Turkish Republic, in the aftermath of World War I. The Young Turk leadership fled Turkey again, this time to Azerbaijan and Central Asia. Today, in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, it has been called into action — again.

## London's 'Afghansi' in the nineteenth century

by Joseph Brewda

In June 1877, two months into the Russo-Turkish war, Turkish Sultan Abdul Hamid sent a mission to the Emir of Afghanistan seeking to enlist the Emir's support against Russia.

Between 1869 and 1876, Russia had been steadily encroaching on Central Asia, annexing or reducing to dependency Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand, and advancing toward Afghanistan, and British India. In 1876, London devised its counterstrategy. Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli appointed Lord Lytton viceroy of India, to inaugurate a "forward policy" of seizing southern Afghanistan. The same year, Disraeli sent Austen Henry Layard to Istanbul, to induce the Sultan to join with Britain against the Russian advance. Layard took credit for the Sultan's mission to Kabul, reporting to Disraeli that he had "induced the Sultan to send an envoy to Afghanistan to counteract the Russian policy of the Ameer and to promote that of England. . . . The Turkish Govt, is, no doubt, trying to get up a kind of Mohammedan league or confederation of states in defence of Islam and against Russia."

In a follow-up communiqué, Layard emphasized that "the Sultan still exercises a very great influence over the Mohammedan world and it is greatly to the interest of a government that has some 40 or 50 million of Mussulman subjects to be well with him. We should have no difficulty in making him understand that we have common interests in C. Asia and we have in him a very useful and valuable ally."

Although the Turkish mission failed to win concrete results, it was enough to cause concern in the Russian Foreign Ministry, which complained to the British Ambassador to St. Petersburg, Lord Loftus, that Britain seemed intent on organizing a religious crusade of the Muslim population of Central Asia against Russia. As one Russian strategist voiced his worry, "If, for instance it were possible for any individual

to stand at the head of a Mahomedan confederation, such an individual is to be found in the person of the Sultan of Turkey alone, and the existing alliance and cordial agreement over which indissolubly bind Turkey and England, render a protectorate of these powers a serious menace to Russia."

In 1877, simultaneous with the Sultan's mission to Afghanistan, an Ottoman official received a letter from a Persian adventurer named Jamal ad-Deen al-Afghani proposing that he go to Central Asia to incite revolt against Russia.

Al-Afghani promised his Ottoman addressee that he would "emphasize Russia's aims and convey with an eloquent tongue, that if, God forbid, a calamity befalls the Ottoman government, neither will permanence remain to Mecca, nor majesty to Medina, and not even the name of Islam or a rite of the faith will survive. . . . I will call them to revenge and incite the pride of their Turkish race and carry the banner of the Unity of Islam on my shoulder into those regions also and call to religious war, and as usual not overlook any strategem or ruse, and plant the seed of ardor and zeal within them, always working with the wisest ulama. I have no doubt that all the Muslims will attack the Russians enthusiastically."

Al-Afghani may have been taking dictation, however. At the time he sent this letter, he was living in Egypt, where he was on extremely close terms with the British vice-consul in Cairo, Raphael Borg, who inducted him into the Eastern Star lodge in Cairo, a branch of the United Grand Lodge of England. Only a year after his attempt to put himself at the services of the Ottoman Empire, Al-Afghani was made Grandmaster of the Eastern Star lodge. In 1883, Al-Afghani went on the personal payroll of Wilfred Scawen Blunt, a descendant of a founder of the Bank of England, a political crony of "forward strategist" Lord Lytton, Viceroy of India, and the first chief of the "Arab Bureau," created in 1882 for the purpose of dismantling the Ottoman Empire.

In 1885, Blunt dispatched al-Afghani on a six-month tour of Britain. The purpose of al-Afghani's tour, the Arab Bureau chief wrote, was "to organize an Islamic revolutionary alliance with the British Empire." Al-Afghani's first meeting was with Randolph Churchill, then secretary of state for India and father of the future Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Blunt reports in his diaries that al-Afghani proposed to the elder Churchill: "You must make an alliance with Islam, with the Afghans, the Persians, the Turks, the Egyptians, the Arabs; you must drive Russia back out of Merv to the Caspian sea. . . . You should attack them [Russians] not through Afghanistan but by the other side [i.e., Persia]; then the Mollahs would preach a jihad to join you against the Russians."

Churchill agreed, and al-Afghani was detailed to accompany Sir Henry Drummond Wolff on a special mission to Turkey "with a view," Blunt wrote, "to his exercising his influence with the Pan-Islamic entourage of [Sultan] Abdul Hamid in favour of a settlement which should include the evacuation of Egypt, and an English alliance against Russia with Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan."