

THE PLACE OF ANGLO-TURKISH RELATIONS IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC (1923 - 1939)

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Turkish foreign policy during 1923 to 1939 experienced a change as revolutionary as the domestic transformation from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century. The First World war had enormously altered the political equilibrium of Europe and the world at large. It had created discontented states, altered the role of the former European powers, brought new states into being, and contributed to the formation of new groupings tending towards a fresh balance of power. In this transitory state of post-war European politics, very few of the newly-created small states were able to pursue a clearly defined and independent foreign policy without becoming a satellite of any of the powers. Turkey was a notable exception among these newly-created states.

There were two phases in the foreign relations of the Turkish Republic. In the period 1923 to 1930, Turkish foreign policy attempted to establish political relations on terms of equality and independence. In the second phase, from 1930 to 1939, policy became more active and constructive in the pursuit of world peace. Twentieth century foreign policy was formulated around the idea of strict preservation of political independence, which meant a consistently non-aggressive foreign policy and avoidance of binding political commitments which might place Turkey under the influence of any of the big powers.

In the period 1923 to 1930, some of the unresolved and thorny issues of the Lausanne Conference were settled. These were, the question of the location of foreign embassies in Turkey, the legal status of foreign schools established, the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey, and the settlement of the Mosul dis-

pute. In the process of the settlement of these issues, it became once more clear that the West remained reluctant to adjust its policies towards Turkey, and this contributed to a delay in the establishment of cordial relations.

On the question of the place of residence of foreign ambassadors, in spite of the declaration of the Turkish Government indicating that the new capital was Ankara, France and Britain maintained that they would send their ambassadors only to Istanbul. To this end, both governments took unilateral decisions and put them into effect. This was received by the Turkish Government as an act of disrespect to the independent Turkish state. In 1925, the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ronald McNeil, stated in the British Parliament that:

It has been decided that His Majesty's representative in Constantinople shall hold the rank of Ambassador... He will visit Angora as occasion may arise, and will be represented there permanently by a member of his staff.¹

The diplomatic conflict over the place of residence of ambassadors continued until it was stated in the 1928 Constitution that the capital of Turkey was Ankara. Even after this date, Britain and France showed reluctance to change their decision, whilst, by that time, with the exception of the United States, most of the powers were represented by their ambassadors in Ankara. This Anglo-Turkish conflict was followed by the settlement of the Mosul dispute and only after the settlement of these two questions, was the path cleared for Anglo-Turkish diplomatic rapprochement in 1929.

The United States of America was another power which showed extreme unwillingness to recognise the Turkish Republic. In 1927, The American Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Amity and Commerce negotiated with the Turkish Government at Lausanne. It was stated that:

The opposition to the Lausanne Treaty was largely based on a natural indignation over Turkish at-

¹ Parliamentary Debates (Commons), vol. 181, 9 March and 17 March 1925, 921, 2091.

rocities in the past and on the belief that the Turkish character has not changed.²

This opposition was based on the fact that America did not want to betray the Armenians and now assumed the role of protector of the Christian ethnic minorities in Turkey. To this end, a tremendous campaign, very similar to the nineteenth century British agitations, was conducted in the United States in the year 1927 when Turkey was demonstrating to the world its strong desire for westernisation. Thus American Government preferred not to have any diplomatic representation in Turkey for the sake of her openly-avowed purpose of carrying on an agitation at home. American policy failed to take into consideration the evidence of Americans living in Turkey, who favoured diplomatic representation. America maintained that capitulations should be retained when the European powers had already agreed upon their abolition at Lausanne. According to James Barton:

It is an interesting fact that now, at the close of 1925, not only has no untoward event arisen, but American missionaries and educators living wholly under Turkish law... have been practically undisturbed.. Only kindly treatment has been received.³

Without any consideration of Turkish domestic developments, the western powers, during 1923 to 1930, adopted what could be described as a 'hostile' political attitude whilst Soviet Russia became her close ally. Nevertheless, the basis of friendly relations with the Balkan and Middle Eastern countries was laid during this period.

The last barrier to an Anglo-Turkish diplomatic rapprochement was the Mosul dispute which was primarily territorial. It contributed, however, to the prolongation of the tension in Anglo-Turkish political relations down to 1926, and also tested the League of Nations severely in its international role in solving disputes satisfactorily, whilst affecting, at least in the short-run, the attitude of the small states towards the League.

2 "Why the Democrats Defeated the Turkish Treaty", *The Literary Digest*, 29 January 1927, 10-11.

3 J. L. Barton, "A Chapter in the History of Mission Work in Turkey", *The Chinese Recorder*, March 1926, 193-4

The main reason for the failure of the attempts to find a satisfactory solution of the Mosul issue at Lausanne was the conflict between Anglo-French and American interests. By the 1920 San Remo agreement, France and Britain had decided to collaborate in exploiting the mineral resources of the world. This decision had been opposed by the United States which insisted on the 'open door' principle for American economic participation in all parts of the world. Turkey took advantage of this oil conflict between the powers. The Turkish Petroleum Company, which was mainly a British venture founded in 1900 by the concession of the late Ottoman Government, had the right of exploitation of oil sources in the Middle East. After the defeat of Germany in the First World War, The Deutsche Bank's counter claim in this venture diminished. An American, Admiral Chester, became the third claimant to the Mosul concession. The Turkish Government backed the American interest, thereby contributing to the intensification of the conflict between the powers. Thus the Mosul issue could not be solved at Lausanne. It was decided that the Mosul dispute would be settled later between Britain and Turkey with the provision that, in case of disagreement between the two countries, the issue would be put to the League of Nations.⁴

Between 19 May and 5 June 1924, negotiations took place between Britain and Turkey in İstanbul which ended in deadlock because Turkey insisted on a plebiscite in the area whilst Britain firmly opposed this and insisted that Turkey should simply cede the territory. Hence the Mosul dispute was referred to the League of Nations.⁵ The League Commission found a plebiscite impracticable and partition undesirable.

They ruled that legally the disputed territory belongs to Turkey and not to Iraq. They recommended union with Iraq on the condition that the British mandate should be extended from four years of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty to a period of twenty-five years...⁶

If these conditions were not carried out, the territory was to revert to Turkey. Only two days before the League's decision on

⁴ Vere-Hodge, E. R., *Turkish Foreign Policy 1918-1948* (Ambilly-Annemasse, 1950) 41-2

⁵ *The Statist*, CIII, 31 May, 14 June 1925, 990, 1085.

⁶ "Great Britain and Mosul", *The Statist*, CVI, 5 September, 1925, 341.

Mosul, Britain declared that she was ready to take over Iraq for twenty-five years. The Turks' natural reaction was to view the League of Nations as an instrument of the Great Powers to impose their will on the smaller states.

According to *The Statist*, firstly, there was no practical evidence to justify the increase in expenditure of Britain in Mesopotamia, secondly, the possibility of friction with the Moslems in the area might have repercussions in India, and finally, the fact that the Turkish attitude would be hostile to Britain should be considered because Mosul was of vital importance to Turkey. The journal concluded that:

... all things considered, Great Britain will not be a loser if the League Council decides in favour of Turkey.⁷

Meanwhile border incidents over Mosul became serious. In November 1925 British forces attacked Hakkari, on the grounds that Turkish troops had violated the Iraq border. This caused the Turkish Government to declare that, in case of any further aggression, Turkey would retaliate.⁸

As regards the oil interests of Britain, Turkey had already announced that the British pipe-line could run along the Bağdat railway to the sea, rather than through French Syria. At this stage of the Anglo-Turkish conflict a section of the British press felt that:

..... the Mosul issue means for Great Britain either friendly relations with the new Turkey, together with a prudent curtailment of a useless commitment, or unremitting Turkish hostility, besides unknown perils in other directions.⁹

Turkey showed extreme distrust towards the League Commission and indicated that she would not accept any League decision adverse to her. Britain claimed that Turkey, by this action, harmed League prestige. Anglo-Turkish tension was such as to lead to speculation in Britain as to the possibility of Turkey's resorting to arms, backed by U. S. S. R. This fear was expressed as:

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Y. H. Bayur, *Yeni Türkiye Devletinin Harici Siyaseti* (İstanbul, 1935) 152-3.

⁹ "The Mosul Problem", *The Statist*, CVI, 19 September, 1925, 415.

After Lausanne it was clear enough that Turkey was sufficiently anti-communistic and sufficiently in need of foreign aid in economic reconstruction to turn to Great Britain rather than the Soviet Union. But British diplomacy, by haggling over an unimportant territory in Mesopotamia, now appears to have lost the chance of making a valuable friend in the Near East and establishing a powerful bulwark against communism.¹⁰

On 14 December 1925, the League announced its final decision according to which the Brussels Line fixed by the League in October 1924 became the permanent frontier between Iraq and Turkey. Mosul was left to Iraq and the latter became a British mandate for twenty-five years.

Turkey did not recognise this decision until June 1926. In the face of a united western front and pressure from international commissions, this decision of the League was accepted by Turkey on condition that she received 10 % of the royalties on the oil of the region. Britain, however, persuaded Turkey to agree to a lump sum payment of £ 500,000. This solution was far from satisfactory from the point of view of Turkey because she considered Mosul also of vital strategic importance. The settlement had indeed the important side-effect of bringing Britain and Turkey into the close physical relationship of territorial neighbours.

Turkey, during 1923 to 1930, on the one hand attempted to pierce the wall that western diplomacy had built against her, and, on the other hand, began actively working for the formation of security zones in her immediate vicinity. In the latter aim, Turkey's efforts proved to be more fruitful than in the former. In the formation of the Balkan Entente and the Middle Eastern alliances, Turkey played a constructive role. The main reason for Turkish participation of these regional pacts was that, unlike Britain, Turkey early foresaw the European upheaval of 1939, on the grounds that the Versailles Treaty had not established durable peace in Europe and had produced discontented states. Rapprochement by Turkey with the Balkan states was favoured

10 "The Mosul Crisis", *The Statist*, CVI, 26 September 1925, 443

28 November 1925, 968.

both by the Greek and Turkish press against the common danger of Italy. The Turkish Foreign Affairs Minister, Tevfik Rüşti Bey, expressed the official view regarding the new Balkan Federation as:

Only such agreement between Balkan peoples from which Turkey might be excluded would be considered as hostile to us... what we understand by the formation of a Balkan Locarno, is an agreement on the basis of the existing status. However, in order to secure Turkish participation this Locarno should be based on the following conditions: it should not be an instrument of opposition against any great power, it should not be an instrument in the hands of any power, it should not serve any single Balkan count to secure domination over any of its neighbours.¹¹

During 1923 to 1938 Turco-Soviet rapprochement continued unhampered. As is known, U. S. S. R. was the first country to recognise the Turkish Republic. In 1926 she became the first country to sign a trade agreement with Turkey. The close Turco-Soviet understanding contributed to wide speculation in the west where it was felt that, since Soviet Union and Turkey were excluded from international councils, they were attempting to form a Pan-Asiatic League against western Europe. These speculations were also based on the facts that in November 1926 representatives of Asiatic countries held an 'anti-Geneva' asiatic conference and that Soviet Union supported Ankara-Peking friendship.¹² These speculations on the part of Turkey were unfounded. Unlike Sun Yat Sen, the symbol of nationalist movement in China, Turkish leadership was vainly striving for an understanding with Europe. Sun Yat Sen had preached Pan-Asiatic unity and the freeing of the oppressed people of Asia from European tynanny, while the explanation given for Turco-Soviet-Asiatic rapprochement by the Turkish press was:

... the nations in the west have concluded among themselves a system of 'ententes', alliances and unders-

¹¹ "Turkey Facing Toward Europe", *The Literary Digest*, XCIV, September, 1927, 17.

¹² "Pan Asia and the 'Two Orphans'", *The Literary Digest*, XCII, 12 March 1927, 13-4.

tanding, in which Turkey is systematically ignored... In the face of such a policy, Turkey took the only road open to her.¹³

The Turkish Government's eagerness to confirm to the west that Turkey was not in pursuit of any grandiose schemes in the East, found expression in the statement of Mahmut Bey, the government spokesman of Foreign Affairs, which said:

It is necessary to point out that the fact that Turkey maintains the friendliest relations with Soviet Union, Persia and Afghanistan does not signify that she is pursuing a special and independent policy in the Orient. The treaty which has been concluded with Italy should serve to dispel any such idea. Further, with the probable early conclusion of a Turco-Greek pact, the Turkish-Greek-Italian rapprochement will greatly contribute to security in the Mediterranean.¹⁴

The fact this statement was made at the time of Greco-Turkish political tension over the issues arising out of the exchange of populations, indicated clearly the trend of Turkish foreign policy which was to become a force in European politics by playing a significant role in the Balkan Entente. The foreign policy of the Turkish Republic was described by one author as:

He (Atatürk) has not bound Turkey to any foreign power, as he believes in the doctrine of independence... The Ghazi's policy has been to steer a middle course between Soviet Russia and Great Britain... The press backs him up in this policy, and if a pro-Soviet article appears on a Wednesday, there is almost certain to be a pro-British article on the following day.¹⁵

Whereas positive support of the Turkish Republic had been given by the Soviet Union, experience with Britain had, on the whole, been negative. Despite this divergence, Atatürk and the Turkish press remained at great pains to maintain an internal balance of favourable opinion between these two powers. This balance was all the more remarkable since the Turkish Govern-

13 *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 10 March 1927.

14 "Turkey and Her Neighbours", *The Times*, 23 June 1928.

15 J. W. Collins, "The Turkish Census and What it Means", *The Contemporary Review*, CXXXIII, February 1928, 198.

ment was aware of British backing of the Kurds in the Mosul crisis, and of the danger of future British support for Greek as opposed to Turkish interests in international diplomacy.

The first commercial agreement with Britain after the formation of the Turkish Republic was signed in 1929 and this proved to be the harbinger of the future Anglo-Turkish rapprochement. This year can also be considered a turning point in Turkish foreign policy because, after 1929, both politically and commercially, Turkish relations with the west were much improved, a change accompanied by the more active attitude adopted by the British press after 1930 towards Turkey. This changed attitude of the British press coincided with the period in which German economic dominance in Turkish trade began to be significant.

In 1930 the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between the United Kingdom and Turkey was signed, to be followed in subsequent years by clearing arrangements. In 1932, the year in which Turkey became a member of the League of Nations, *The Times* praised Turkish foreign policy highly for its consistent pursuit of peaceful foreign relations with all countries, an attitude which eventually evoked a response in the west as first Italy and then Britain entered into friendly formal relations with her.¹⁶ *The Economist* drew attention to Turkey's pacific foreign policy, commenting that:

It is noteworthy that a movement born out of a national struggle for existence has not been tempted by its success into passing over to the offensive... Turkey has renounced all ambition in the Balkan, and likewise her former Arab provinces. This moderation is a sign of strength, and encourages hopes for the future progress of Turkey.¹⁷

In May 1933, Turkey signed a commercial agreement with Greece to promote an increased volume of trade and she removed a prohibitive law under which certain classes of Greek nationals were prohibited from working in Turkey. Turco-Greek friendship was very favourably received in Britain and viewed as a great step in the promotion of stability in the Balkans.

¹⁶ "The Changes in Turkey", *The Times*, 29 October 1932.

¹⁷ "A Turkish Decennium", *The Economist*, CXV, 10 December, 1932, 1073.

Indeed the history of Turco-Greek relations since 1930 ought to be read, marked and inwardly digested by all nations of Europe. For, if the hatchet can be buried by two peoples who have been burdened by the terrible Greco-Turkish heritage of mutual injury and mutual hatred, there is no excuse left for any of the rest of us to confess ourselves morally incapable of preforming the same feat.¹⁸

In 1934, with Greece, Yugoslavia and Roumania, Turkey became a member of the Balkan Entente.

In the face of European rearmament, Turkey made a formal request for negotiations in April 1936 to the co-signatories of the 1923 Straits Convention and also to the League of Nations for removal of the clauses of demilitarisation in the Straits region. This demand was met favourably by the British press, which claimed that:

Assuredly the League signatories - other than Italy - of the Straits Convention, cannot ask the Turks to continue to expose themselves to the risk of being treated like Abyssinia.¹⁹

The Turkish Government sought British backing in her demand for remilitarisation of the Straits for Turkey believed that her foreign policy was parallel to that of Britain. In the Italo-Abyssinian dispute, the Turkish Government had whole-heartedly backed British policy and shouldered its obligations under the League Covenant against Italy, a posture damaging to her economy because of the large Italian share in Turkish overseas trade. A month before the Montreux Conference the prospects of British support to Turkey were encouraging. *The Times* claimed that if Britain backed Turkey at Montreux, Anglo-Turkish friendship would be sealed and a great contribution made towards peace in the Near East. It further added that:

A distinguished member of the diplomatic corps in Angora has described the recent improvement in relations between Great Britain and Turkey as a 'second Anglo-Turkish honeymoon'.²⁰

18 "Sound Sense in The Near East", *The Economist*, CXVI, 20 May 1933, 67.

19 "Turkey Asks for Revision", *The Economist*, CXXIII, 18 April 1936, 122.

20 "A Friendship Reviewed", *The Times*, 23 April, 1936.

In June 1936, Turkey, Britain, France, Soviet Union, Japan, Greece, Bulgaria, Roumania and Yugoslavia met at Montreux. All parties seemed to favour the Turkish demands of re-militarisation of the Straits. Whilst the Conference was in progress, the majority of the British press claimed that: "The Turkish Republic is a powerful balancing force", and that she had established a firm friendship with the Soviet Union which did not, however, commit her to cultural or intellectual subservience, and that Turkey strongly wished to be allies with Britain in the face of recent developments in the Mediterranean.

The conclusion emerges that unless Britain is prepared to show leadership in the Eastern Mediterranean-including an interest in Turkish integrity-the leadership or the initiative, will pass in one form or the other to Italy, Germany or Soviet Russia.²¹

It is significant that though the official Turkish foreign affairs pronouncements habitually opened with a statement of cordiality towards the Soviet Union, as early as 1934 the Turkish Premier was distinguishing between relations with Britain and the rest of the west. Thus in July 1934 he made the straightforward assertion that:

With Britain we are pursuing a policy of honest friendship devoid of conflict.²²

In July 1936 the Montreux Convention was signed. According to this, the Straits Commission was abolished and Turkey resumed full control of the militarisation of the Straits. In case of any war in which Turkey remained neutral, warships could freely pass through the Straits provided that these ships were acting under the orders of the League of Nations. Due to Turkey's alliances in the Balkans, and her membership in the Franco-Soviet camp, *The Economist* commented that:

The Straits were going to be, and are now, in the hands of that East European Block of non-aggressive minded countries; the Balkan Entente, the Little Entente and the Soviet Union.²³

21 "Improvements in Turkey", *The Times*, 9 July 1936.

22 TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Vol, 23, 5 July 1934, 457.

23 "Signature at Montreux", *The Economist*, CXXIV, 25 July 1936, 162.

In relation to the Montreux Treaty, the Turkish Prime Minister, İsmet İnönü, said that:

A further cause of our pleasure in the Straits Convention is the display of widespread international confidence in Turkey. The fact that Turkish foreign policy had acquired the nature of a corner stone of international security enhances the responsibility upon us for carrying it out.²⁴

Italy and Germany disapproved of the Montreux Convention and sought to strengthen their partnership. Montreux Treaty was viewed as:

... the first formal revision of a post-war treaty by peaceful means. It is also a clear victory for Turkey, for her friends in the Balkan Entente and for the policy of regional pacts.²⁵

However, the same source indicated that by this convention Great Britain's position in the Middle East was weakened unless she could assist the formation of a Near East Entente in the same way that France and the Soviet Union had fostered the Balkan Entente. The main fear seemed to be Soviet naval supremacy in the Mediterranean against Britain as a result of Montreux Treaty.

During this time, a minority of the British press began to urge the government to take a more active interest in the regional pacts in the East of the Mediterranean in the face of the Berlin Vienna-Budapest-Rome alignment. It seemed that:

The Foreign Office apparently does not wish to encourage hopes on the part of the Eastern Mediterranean powers of the materialisation of a Mediterranean pact, however, much the Admiralty may have looked with favour upon such a prospect.²⁶

After the Montreux Treaty, the Turkish leaders constantly stressed the value of British friendship. For example, six months after the new Straits agreement the Turkish Prime Minister,

24 TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Vol. 12, 31 July 1936, 334.

25 H. N. Howard, "The Straits after the Montreux Conference", *Foreign Affairs*, XV, October, 1936, 199.

26 C. F. Melville, "Germany and the Balkans", *The Nineteenth Century*, CXX, 1936, 738.

speaking in the Parliament, stressed the attitude of the British Foreign Affairs Minister during the Montreux Conference, in the following terms:

The English Foreign Affairs Minister displayed so much energy and good-will that Turkish public opinion was favourably impressed and belief in British diplomacy restored.²⁷

In his foreign affairs report to the Parliament of June 1937, Ismet Paşa stressed the importance of maintaining peace in the Mediterranean. His opinion was that disruption of peace, even in the farthest corner of the world, would be inimical to Turkey's interests, and therefore Turkish foreign policy would at no time be involved in conflicts between states. He once again stressed the importance of Soviet friendship and stated that in the very near future the Middle Eastern alliance between Iraq, Persia, Afghanistan and Turkey would be realised. The support of both Britain and the Soviet Union for the formation of the Middle Eastern Entente was also welcomed by him. The Prime Minister concluded that:

English foreign policy resembles our own in being directed towards peaceful ends²⁸

In the period 1933-1938 one can detect a significant dichotomy in Turkish external relations. On the one hand German economic dominance in Turkey grew rapidly whilst economic relations with Britain remained insignificant. On the other hand, in the political sphere, this period witnessed an increasing emphasis on Turco-British understanding whilst Turco-German political relations were barely mentioned in Parliament or were, at best, treated with extreme caution. The west responded to the Turkish eagerness to cultivate friendship from 1936 on, and 1938 was very significant because:

The economic bargaining among the great powers for the favour of Turks was the dominant political factor of the year, (1938) it representing the fullest realisation among the powers, of Turkey's vital role to be played in the gathering storm.²⁹

27 TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Vol. 15, 29 January 1937, 161.

28 TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Vol. 19, 14 June 1937, 311.

29 E. R. Vere-Godge, *op. cit.* 122

The explanation given by *The Economist* for the awakened interest of the western powers in Turkey, was:

Turkey has ceased to be a nobody since she became, first, the most prominent state in the Balkan Pact, then the acknowledged leader of the Middle Eastern quartet, and, last but not least, the rearming power who controls the passage of all warships, as well as the bulk of European oil exports, through the Black Sea Straits. Great Britain and France, moreover, have an added motive for cultivating her friendship, and that is.. she is a status quo power.³⁰

On the eve of the Second world war, though most of the British press stressed the value of Turkish friendship they were yet not so sure of the role that could be played by Turkey in a future European conflict in the face of grandiose German ambitions. This anxiety was expressed as:

... for the present Germany will be successful. Her play upon the class war and upon social issues of the Balkans promises to give her a South Eastern Empire the like of which both in extent and in internal strength neither the Turks nor the Habsburgs ever enjoyed.³¹

In April 1939, in a debate on European situation, in the British Parliament, Hugh Dalton urged on the government 'the importance of bringing Turkey as soon as possible into a wider scheme of guarantees and undertakings'. He added that:

I hope that the Turks will soon be given their rightful and proper place in an organised scheme for the defence of the Mediterranean area.³²

One month later the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, told Parliament that:

His Majesty's Government... and the Turkish Government have entered into close consultation, and the discussions which have taken place between them and which are still continuing have revealed their

30 "Turkey and Her Suitors", *The Economist*, CXXXIII, Nov. 19, 1938, 361.

31 P. F. Drucker, "Can Germany, win the Balkans", *Harper's Magazine*, CLXXVIII, January 1939, 156.

32 Parliamentary Debates (Commons) Vol. 346, 13, April, 1939, 124.

customary identity of view. It is agreed that the two countries will conclude a definite long-term agreement of a reciprocal character in the interests of national security. Pending the completion of the definitive agreement, His Majesty's Government and the Turkish Government declare that in the event of an act of aggression leading to war in the Mediterranean area they would be prepared to cooperate effectively and to lend each other all aid and assistance in their power.. The two governments recognise that it is also necessary to ensure the establishment of security in the Balkans...³³

This statement was received with great enthusiasm in the British Parliament, and the government was unanimously congratulated by all sides for achieving Turkish cooperation. For example Lloyd George, the great anti-Turkish agitator of the early 1920's, said:

Unreservedly and unequivocally I congratulate them upon the Turkish Treaty. It is of great value... They are a very brave people which in itself is a very considerable help. They hold a very important strategic position in the Mediterranean in reference to the possibilities in Palestine and Egypt.³⁴

Thus in the latter part of 1939, for the first time in the long history of Anglo-Turkish relations, Turkey was seen in a new light. After the failure of the German Ambassador, Von Papen, to induce Turkey to break away from her allies in August 1939, The Economist commented that:

... Turkey is fast becoming a small power with a great power reputation. While most of the small states have hastened to re-affirm their neutrality in all circumstances except a direct attack on their independence, Turkey has not hesitated to let it be known that the German-Soviet pact in no way weakens her allegiance to the Peace Front. For this the Turkish government deserves our sincere thanks, all the more

33 Parliamentary Debates (Commons) Vol. 347, 12 May 1939, 952.

34 *Ibid.*, 19 May 1939, 1814.

when it is realised in what a difficult position the Pact placed them...³⁵

The signing of the Tripartite Agreement between Turkey, Britain and France constitutes the high-water mark in Anglo-Turkish relations between the wars.

In conclusion: in the decade following the First World War, Britain was, in the main, hostile, partly because her leaders, legislators, and press had inherited some of the attitudes to Turkey which belonged to the nineteenth century. Thus the image of the new Turkey with its constructive and pacific policies, filtered only slowly into British consciousness. Exacerbating this tendency were the specific points of issue between the countries, often involving serious economic differences, as in the case of the Mosul dispute. With the settlement of outstanding problems and a widespread recognition in Britain of the new factors operative in Turkey, the way was open for the development of Anglo-Turkish relations in the final decade before the outbreak of the Second World War. Political issues, which in the 1920's had tended to foster mutual hostility, now tended to bring the two states into progressively closer amity. Turkey's support of sanctions policy against Mussolini found its counterpart in British agreement at the Montreux Conference to the remilitarisation of the Straits.

Hence on the eve of the Second World War, Turkey ceased to be a country which Europe wished to see excluded from the western hemisphere. The European outlook was reflected by The Times as:

From a state which had since been regarded as an intruder in Europe, Turkey has become... valuable and progressive member of the European body politic.³⁶

35 "Turkey Stands Firm", *The Economist*, CXXXVI, 2 September 1939, 444.

36 *The Times*, 11 November 1938.