

## TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY : 1923 - 1938

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Turkish foreign policy between 1923, the year of the declaration of the Republic, and 1938, which marks the death of Kemâl Atatürk, Turkey's able National Liberation War hero and later her President, was based on the principles of inviolable independence and territorial integrity, absolute priority of national interests, amicable relations with all the powers great and small, mutual respect among nations and peace abroad. Having won the War of National Liberation, Turkey pursued a policy most vigilant of her interests, cautious to protect them against any threat.

### I. TURKEY AND BRITAIN

Although the Treaty of Lausanne, signed on July 24, 1923,<sup>1</sup> brought about «new possibilities»<sup>2</sup> in Anglo-Turkish relations, the British were disappointed at the failure of the former policy, and still had a strongly anti-Turkish bias. On the Turkish side, the devastation of large areas of Western Anatolia by the Greek troops in 1919 - 1922, British support of the sweeping minority claims, the humiliating and long occupation of İstanbul following the end of the First World War, deportation by the British of many Turkish leaders, and the existence of the unsolved Mosul question even after the

<sup>1</sup> T. C., Başvekâlet Neşriyat ve Müdevvenat Umum Müdürlüğü, Düstur. Üçüncü Tertip, Vol. V, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Nihat Erim, «The Development of the Anglo-Turkish Alliance,» Asiatic Review. Vol. XLII (October 1946), p. 348.

Lausanne Convention had left wounds which healed slowly. After the Mosul dispute was solved, Anglo-Turkish relations became first normal and then, by slow degrees, friendly. As Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, Britain's able Second World War Ambassador to Turkey observed,<sup>3</sup> it was a process of careful deliberation which led to the decision to return to friendship with Britain in the face of the Fascist threat.

**The Mosul Controversy:** While İsmet Pasha and Lord Curzon, Turkey's and Britain's chief representatives at Lausanne, expected eventual pacific solution of the Mosul question,<sup>4</sup> the events on the disputed frontier did not justify their good-will and optimism. On May 19, 1924, a British and a Turkish delegation met at Kasımpaşa, İstanbul, with a strong desire for conciliation. When the rival theses were read, the wide gulf became apparent and the conference broke up inconclusively. The British representative, who had demanded a new frontier between Turkey and Iraq which ran considerably to the north of the former northern boundary of Mosul, declined to discuss the Turkish demand to restore the *vilâyet* to Turkey. Referring to the area as a «no man's land,» he hinted that no Turkish authority had survived there. Although both sides labored to maintain an atmosphere of official cordiality the failure of the Kasımpaşa talks inevitably brought about a worsening in Anglo-Turkish relations. Nine months later, the question was referred to the League of Nations on British initiative. At Geneva, the Turks proposed a plebiscite and the British an inquiry by a League Commission. The President of the Council appointed to the commission Count Paul Teleki, a distinguished geographer and a former Hungarian Premier, M. de Wirsén, a Swedish diplomat, and Colonel Paulis, a Belgian retired Army officer.<sup>5</sup> The Turks felt that Britain had an unfair pull over the commission by her presence as military conqueror in Mosul no less than her over-all influence in the League.

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<sup>3</sup> Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat in Peace and War*. London, John Murray, 1949, p. 145.

<sup>4</sup> Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Survey of International Affairs: 1925* (hereafter referred to as *Survey*). Vol. I, London, Oxford University Press, 1927, pp. 471-507.

<sup>5</sup> C. J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*. London, Oxford University Press, 1957, pp. 386-436.

Between July 1923 and July 1924, the British authorities in Iraq asserted their control in various parts of the Mosul **vilâyet**. While the Turkish Government protested each step of occupation, the British Government replied that the operations were local administrative measures and not violations of the **status quo**. Ankara repeatedly protested against flights of British airplanes on the Turkish side of the **status quo** line and the bombing of the Turkish columns, killing and wounding of Turkish soldiers.<sup>6</sup> The first inquiry of the commission showed that there was «no national Iraqi feeling»<sup>7</sup> in the disputed area except among a section of the educated Arabs. Among the Kurds the commission found «a growing national consciousness.» National consciousness was also strong among the Turks of the **vilâyet**. The report added that the most strongly nationalist Arabs «prefer Turkey to an Iraq under foreign control» while a number of Christians felt «less suspicious» of a Turkish Government than of an Iraqi Government. The same views were found among the Yazidi minority. Subject to these reservations, the report declared that the population preferred Iraq to Turkey.

While the League of Nations Commission was conducting its inquiry, a Kurdish revolt against the Turkish Government broke out in districts where Turkish sovereignty was not contested. The possible motives for the revolt were Kurdish nationalism and resentment against the Westernization, and especially secularization, measures of the Kemâlists. Although British encouragement was also possible, the reactionary impetus behind the revolt seemed to be strong. During the dispute, rumours were spread that Italy was preparing to land in Anatolia. Some asserted that these rumours, encouraged by Britain, aimed to urge the Turks to concentrate mobilized army corps on the Western coast and thus make them more amenable to pressure elsewhere.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Türk Devrim Yayınları, *İnönü'nün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, İstanbul Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1946, pp. 97-125.

<sup>7</sup> League of Nations Document, C 400, M. 147, 1925, VII. Report submitted to the Council by the Commission instituted by the Council Resolution of September 30th 1924, p. 77.

<sup>8</sup> Luigi Villari, *The Expansion of Italy*. London, Faber and Faber, 1930, p. 231; *Survey*: 1925, pp. 526-527.

On December 16, 1925, the Council decided to award Mosul to Iraq (Britain).<sup>9</sup> At the same time, it exhorted Turkey and England «to reach a friendly agreement in order to put an end to the regrettable state of tension existing between them.» Anti-British feeling having reached a new mark, the Turkish Foreign Minister Tevfik Rüştü Bey signed a new treaty with Chicherin, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, the day after the League Council awarded Mosul to Iraq. However, Turkey was in no mood to challenge the decision of the League by force of arms. On the contrary, by a treaty, she signed with Britain and Iraq on June 5, 1926,<sup>10</sup> which laid down definitely the frontier between Turkey and Iraq, along the lines suggested by the League but with one minor modification the Ankara Government settled amicably a controversy which had dragged on since the 1918 Armistice posing a threat to the precariously established peace in the Middle East. Although the press of both countries was still cool and England had yet failed to grasp the significance of Atatürk's revolution, the termination of the Mosul dispute removed a bone of contention between Ankara and London and a «slow progress towards friendliness» began.<sup>11</sup>

**A New Straits Régime :** Realizing the advantages of Turkey's geographical position, Atatürk aimed at establishing an equilibrium between the Turkish interest in remaining on good terms with the Soviet Union and the value to Turkey of amicable relations with Britain. Although he appreciated the value of the business association with Russia, he sought a compensatory understanding with Britain to fill the need for a Western friend. When asked whether a really sincere entente could be established between Turkey and Britain, M. Kemal had answered as early as 1922: «I do not think, I am **certain**, that we shall eventually return to the old traditional

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<sup>9</sup> League of Nations, Council, Decision Relating to the Turco-Iraq Frontier Adopted by the Council of the League of Nations, Geneva, December 16, 1925. London. H. M. S. O., 1925.

<sup>10</sup> *Düstur, Üçüncü Tertip*, Vol. VII, pp. 1512-1520.

<sup>11</sup> P. A. Reynold, *British Foreign Policy in the Inter-War Years*. London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1954, p. 53.

friendship.»<sup>12</sup> Certainly, Britain appreciated the friendship of a Mediterranean power.

The year of 1929 saw the beginning of a diplomatic **rapprochement**. A British naval squadron paid an official visit to İstanbul under the eyes of the Soviets. The British admiral and the ambassador went to Ankara and were received by Atatürk. In spite of Russia's strenuous efforts to prevent Turkey from joining the League, M. Kemâl, as master of his own house, felt strong enough to launch a policy of positive relations with the League which Turkey joined on July 18, 1932.<sup>13</sup> Addressing the National Assembly on July 5, 1934, Premier İnönü characterized Turkey's relations with Britain by «conflictlessness, honesty and friendship.»<sup>14</sup> The trade relations, however, did not assume any great measure of importance. Turkey showed her pro-British leanings in 1935 by opening her harbours to England's Mediterranean Fleet.<sup>15</sup>

The Italian threat in the Mediterranean made England and Turkey turn more positively towards each other.<sup>16</sup> The general situation of Europe having changed politically and militarily, Turkey felt the need to remilitarize the Straits and thereby revise the Lausanne Treaty. The motives behind this feeling were that the League had declined in consequence of German rearmament and Italian aggression in Ethiopia, Germany had remilitarized the Rhineland and there was no adequate provisions in the Lausanne Treaty guaranteeing Turkish security in case of war. It contained no provision which would permit Turkey to take effective measures in the Straits in the face of an immediate threat. The emergence of ambitious Germany and Italy had led to an armaments race which upset the **status quo** to which the out-dated Lausanne Treaty was

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<sup>12</sup> Grace Ellison, *An Englishwoman in Angora*. London, Hutchinson, 1923, p. 174.

<sup>13</sup> Tefik Rüştü Aras, *Görüşlerim*. İstanbul, Semih Lütfü Kitabevi, n. d., pp. 128 - 130.

<sup>14</sup> İnönü'nün *Söylev ve Demeçleri*, p. 287 .

<sup>15</sup> Edward G. Vere-Hodge, *Turkish Foreign Policy : 1918 - 1948*. Ambilly - Annemasse, Université de Geneve, 1950, p. 120.

<sup>16</sup> Rifki Salim Burçak, *Türk - Rus - İngiliz Münasebetleri : 1791 - 1941*. İstanbul, Aydınlık Matbaası, 1946, pp. 63 - 64.

applicable. Italy had already begun to fortify the island of Leros which was so near the Turkish coast.

In view of the urgency to remilitarize the Straits, Turkey could have resorted to unilateral action, but she preferred an agreement through an international conference. Turkish leadership expected a more favorable reply to a request made in a lawful way, without undermining the League system.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Turkey would score a moral success of being the first state to use legal methods for the revision of a post-war treaty. Turkey, which had advocated collective security and consistently practised peaceful change for the settlement of disputes, was now a League member. On April 10, 1936, the Turkish Foreign Minister, while addressing a meeting of the Republican People's Party, referred to the government's decision to request the Lausanne signatories to meet to discuss the remilitarization of the Straits. The Turkish note,<sup>18</sup> addressed to the signatories of the Straits Convention, the Secretary-General of the League and Yugoslavia, pointed at the uncertainty which had gradually arisen in the Mediterranean, the tendency towards rearmament and the lack of guarantee for the security of the Straits.

With Italy's exception, the reactions to the Turkish note were favorable. Britain had not only found the Turkish claim fully justified but was also in need to find new allies in the Eastern Mediterranean, where Italy was challenging her interests. This also offered her an opportunity to pull Turkey away from the Soviet Union. Moreover, the Rhineland already militarized, the remilitarization of the Straits could not serve as a precedent for Germany. The British support would also eliminate the remote possibility of a dissatisfied Turkey being driven into the political sphere of Germany once again. Britain feared that Turkey's unilateral militarization of the Straits would push her into common cause with Germany, Italy and Japan, all outside the orbit of Covenant defenders. When the Turks' revisionist drive found supporters in the Western

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<sup>17</sup> Survey : 1936, p. 606; Aras, *op. cit.*, pp. 121 - 127.

<sup>18</sup> Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Documents on International Affairs* : 1936, London, Oxford University Press, 1937, pp. 645 - 648.

world, the result was a split between Turkey on the one hand, and the two important non-participants at Montreux, Italy and Germany on the other. Looking at a future conference as an opportunity to revise the Straits régime in Russia's favor, Moscow welcomed the proposal. France showed eagerness to consider the Straits question in the hope of adding the Russian influence in the Mediterranean and thus increasing the value of the Franco-Soviet Pact of May 2, 1935.<sup>19</sup> Italy's attitude was embarrassing because, being a Lausanne signatory, no agreement could be final without her participation. Besides, Italy headed the commercial tonnage list in the Straits. Her attitude, however, could be explained. Almost all of the Lausanne signatories had favored sanctions against her A. Mediterranean naval arrangement<sup>20</sup> arrived at by Britain, France, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Greece was indirectly aimed at her. What is more, the Straits question was brought to the political scene mainly due to Turkish fears of Italian aggrandisement policy. Germany, a non-signatory, was interested in the matter, firstly, because she was a naval power and, secondly, she was using the Danube as a commercial route. Greece was interested in the revision proposal not only because she had a large proportion of commercial ships passing through the Straits, but also she considered that the strengthening of the Turkish position would strengthen Greece too on grounds of her agreements with Turkey and her partnership in the Balkan Entente.

The Turkish draft presented at the Montreux Convention, June 23 - July 20, 1936, aimed at enhancing Turkish security. It would strengthen the Turkish position because, first, it suggested the remilitarization of the Straits; secondly, it eliminated the International Commission; and, thirdly, it limited seriously the tonnage of warships passing simultaneously through the Straits, which would not be more than one half of the Turkish fleet.

Although Lord Stanhope, the British representative, had come to Montreux with the belief that Turkey was principally

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<sup>19</sup> Survey : 1931, pp. 381 ff.

<sup>20</sup> Survey : 1935. Vol. II, pp. 249 - 271.

concerned with the remilitarization of the Straits, heated discussions between him and Litvinov, the chief Soviet delegate, the latter supported by France, proved that the crucial problem was naval strategy. Lord Stanhope maintained that the rights given to the Black Sea Powers should be balanced.<sup>21</sup> He maintained this view not only because the Turkish draft seemed indirectly to favor Russia, but also because of the future repercussions of such an agreement on the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935.

In challenging the British policy, Soviet thesis<sup>22</sup> rested on three arguments: the increased industrial and military strength of the Soviet Union; the Russian view that she had a peculiar position *vis-à-vis* the Black Sea; and the importance of Russian membership in the League and of her obligations under the Franco-Soviet Agreement. The British draft proposed a compromise solution providing an increase in the limit of the warships of the non-Black Sea Powers parallel to the increase of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet.

The final draft<sup>23</sup> approved unanimously, was a «clear victory for Turkey, for her friends in the Balkan Entente, and for the policy of regional pact.»<sup>24</sup> Complete Turkish control over the Straits was finally re-established. The functions of the International Commission set up by the Lausanne Convention were transferred to the Turkish Government. In time of peace, all merchant vessels were to have complete freedom of passage through the Straits. In time of war, Turkey not being belligerent, merchant vessels would have the same privilege. In peace time, all light surface vessels, minor and auxiliary war vessels could enjoy freedom of navigation. The Black Sea Powers could send through the Straits capital ships of more than 15,000 tons. The maximum aggregate tonnage of all foreign naval forces which might be in the course of

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<sup>21</sup> Great Britain, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, CCXIII. (June 18, 1936), Col. 1205.

<sup>22</sup> Maria Papoukhtchieva, *La Politique de la Russie à l'Égard des Détroits*. Genève, Grivet, 1944, pp. 170-179.

<sup>23</sup> *Resmî Gazete*, August 5, 1936, p. 3374.

<sup>24</sup> Harry N. Howard, «The Straits After the Montreux Convention», *Foreign Affairs*, October 1936, p. 202.

transit through the Straits was not to exceed 15,000 tons. War vessels paying visits to Turkey in the Straits were excluded from this tonnage. In time of war, Turkey not being belligerent, warships belonging to belligerent Powers were not to pass «except in cases arising out of the application of Article XXV<sup>25</sup> of the present Convention, and in cases of assistance rendered to a victim of aggression in virtue of a treaty of mutual assistance binding Turkey.» In time of war, Turkey being belligerent, the passage of warships was «left entirely to the discretion of the Turkish Government.»

Article XXVII stated that the Convention was open to accession by any of the Lausanne Treaty signatory. This article indirectly referred to Italy, which was absent at Montreux. A Turkish source describes this convention, still in force, as a «political victory» for Turkey since it «permitted the remilitarization of the Straits, thereby strengthening our position in the Mediterranean, improved our voice in international affairs, and made our friendship with other powers more valuable.»<sup>26</sup>

**Turkey Turns Anglophile :** The tone of the Turkish press became more Anglophile after the Montreux Conference. A visible effect of the improved relations was the giving of several rearmament and industrialisation projects to British firms.<sup>27</sup> Results of a deliberate Anglo-Turkish drive were reflected in the rise of the British share in Turkish trade and the fall-off of the German share.

An important stimulus was given to the growing Anglo-Turkish understanding by the visit of King Edward VIII to İstanbul in 1936.<sup>28</sup> Most cordial personal relations were established in the short course of his stay in Turkey. Premier İnönü's

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<sup>25</sup> Article XXV states that nothing in this convention shall prejudice the rights and obligations of Turkey, or of any of the other signatories arising out of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

<sup>26</sup> Mükerrer Kâmil Su and Kâmil Su, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi*. İstanbul, Kanaat Yayınları, n. d., p. 136.

<sup>27</sup> Sir Osborne Mance, «The Future of British Trade with Turkey,» *Royal Central Asian Society Journal*, January 1943, pp. 8-9; Elizabeth Munroe, *The Mediterranean in Politics*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1938, p. 215.

<sup>28</sup> *The Duke of Windsor. A King's Story*. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1951, pp. 306-307 and 310.

visit to London for the coronation of George VI further advanced this friendship. In an address to the National Assembly on June 14, 1937<sup>29</sup> after his return, the Turkish statesman referred in glowing terms to the «utmost cordiality» he had observed in the public as well as the official circles. He added: «We find the British policy in the service of peace in conformity with ours.»

Britain warmly approved the Middle Eastern Pact signed at Saadabad by Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Afganistan on July 8, 1937.<sup>30</sup> The pact was a valuable regional agreement pledging the signatories to respect the inviolability of their common frontiers, to consult on all international disputes affecting their interests, and not to resort to any act of aggression directed against anyone of the parties.

At the Nyon Conference of September 14, 1937,<sup>31</sup> Turkey gave loyal support to Britain and France in their defence of international shipping against attacks by Italian submarines. The signatories, which were Britain, Bulgaria, Egypt, France, Greece, Rumania, Turkey, U. S. S. R. and Yugoslavia, agreed that any submarine which attacked a ship in a manner contrary to the rules of international law referred to in the International Treaty for the Limitation and Reduction of Naval Armaments signed in London on March 25, 1936, should be counter-attacked and, if possible, destroyed. In order to facilitate the putting into force of the above arrangements, the British and the French fleets were to operate in the western Mediterranean and in the Malta Channel with the exception of the Tyrrhenean Sea, in the eastern Mediterranean, and on the high seas, with the exception of the Adriatic Sea, up to the entrance of the Dardanelles. Churchill wrote that under the «almost effusively friendly lead of Turkey»<sup>32</sup> the attitude of the small Mediterranean Powers had been satisfactory.

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<sup>29</sup> İnönü'nün Söylev ve Demeçleri, p. 322.

<sup>30</sup> Resmî Gazete, January 27, 1938, p. 3819.

<sup>31</sup> League of Nations, Treaty Series, 1937-1938, pp. 137.

<sup>32</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948, p. 246.

The Three Credit Agreements signed on May 27, 1938,<sup>33</sup> further strengthened the growing friendship between Britain and Turkey. The Export Credits Guarantees Department agreed to give guarantees in connection with the export to Turkey of goods manufactured in the United Kingdom up to a total of 10,000,000 pounds. Although Germany offset these agreements by a loan of 150 million Rm.,<sup>34</sup> the Turkish Foreign Minister could declare: «No matter what happens, Turkey will never be in a camp hostile to Britain.»<sup>35</sup> The British press started devoting larger space to Turkish affairs.<sup>36</sup> After Munich, British policy aimed at cooperation with states favoring the **status quo** in the Mediterranean and backed a firm Turkish alliance although Chamberlain had turned down in 1937 a Turkish offer of alliance as politely as possible but anxious not to repel Turkish overtures.<sup>37</sup> About the Turkish Government's desire to strengthen relations with Britain, the British Ambassador in Ankara wrote that it was «surprising to find how anxious the Turkish Government were to move quickly towards the goal which they had set for themselves, and how ready to deal with me in terms of the most complete frankness and confidence.»<sup>38</sup> The appointment of Dr. Tevfik Rüşti Aras, the former Turkish Foreign Minister, as the Ambassador to England showed the importance that the Turks now attached to their relations with Britain.

## H. TURKEY AND FRANCE

The prestige of France in Turkey had been high during the Turkish War of Independence. The Kemâlists had broken up the Entente coalition by a treaty with the French. However, during 1923 - 1938, it has been a long and painful process to eliminate conflicts between the two nations.

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<sup>33</sup> Great Britain, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), Vol. CCCXXXVI, Cols. 1565 - 1566; Mance, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>34</sup> see *infra*, p. 25.

<sup>35</sup> Ulus, Ankara, June 22, 1938.

<sup>36</sup> The Times, *The New Turkey*, London, The Times Publishing Co., 1938; F. Seymour Cole, *England Should Know Turkey; A Short History of the Renovation of Turkey*, Istanbul, Hachette's Library, 1940.

<sup>37</sup> Vere-Hodge, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>38</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

While France had ardently wished to come to terms with the Kemâlists as early as 1921, she had met with great difficulties over the question of the abolition of capitulation in the preliminary discussions prior to the Franklin-Bouillon accord and during the Lausanne Conference. The Turks had felt that France was contravening the spirit of the 1921 agreement and was swinging again towards Allied solidarity at the expense of full Turkish sovereignty. Following the Lausanne Conference, French cooperation with Ankara did not go beyond matters of secondary importance.

From 1923 to 1938, Turkey's relations with France were focused on the question of the **Sancak** of Alexandretta (Hatay). As early as August 1921, the French High Commissioner in Syria proclaimed a special régime for Alexandretta. Its Turkish **mutasarrif** was to have the full powers of a governor, in charge of administration and an independent budget. Turkish, in addition to Arabic and French, became an official language throughout the **Sancak**. Its laws, however, were to be identical with those of the State of Aleppo and the **Sancak** was to be represented on the Aleppo Representative Council.

While a convention of friendship, signed on February 15, 1930,<sup>39</sup> pledged Turkey and France to settle all disputes by arbitration, the Blum Government in May 1939 promised a treaty to Syria on the Iraqi model and when this treaty was published on September 9, 1939, it was found to include no specific provisions regarding the rights of the **Sancak** Turks. The Syrian nationalists deduced from this that they had secured the political union of the **Sancak** with Syria. Some people liked to know whether France omitted the **Sancak** accidentally or purposely.<sup>40</sup> Turkey saw her moment and seized it. The Turkish press showed serious concern over the future of the Turkish community, whose interests had been explained already in a note of October 9, 1936,<sup>41</sup> delivered to France. President Atatürk referred to the issue on November 1, 1936:<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Resmi Gazete, June 8, 1930, p. 1512.

<sup>40</sup> Munroe, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

<sup>41</sup> Permanent Delegation of Turkey, *Second White Book on the Question of Alexandretta and Antioch*, Geneva, 1936.

<sup>42</sup> *Ulus*, Ankara, November 2, 1936.

«The important topic of today, which absorbs the individual attention of the Turks, is the future of the district of Alexandretta, Antioch and its dependencies which actually belongs to the purest Turkish element. We are resolved to consider this matter most seriously and firmly.»

Turkey claimed that the Turkish - speaking Sunni Moslems constituted a majority of the population.<sup>43</sup> The French note of December 7, 1936, hinted that certain elements penetrating into the **Sancak** from the Turkish side of the frontier were engaged in stirring the Turks living in that area. The Turkish reply announced that Ankara was prepared to submit immediately to an international inquiry for the purpose of establishing on which side of the frontier the armed bands were formed, in what districts military preparations were made and in what manner sanguinary repressive measures were taken against unarmed and inoffensive populations.<sup>44</sup>

The dispute was duly considered by the League Council which on May 29, 1937, modified the Syrian Mandate, in so far as it applied to the **Sancak**, by adopting a Statute and Fundamental Law providing for a new legislative assembly representing not only geographical constituencies but also communities. As the first step the electores were registered, a procedure which an international commission of five members supervised. The commission submitted a report, together with the text of its electoral rules to the League President, who approved the Commission's proposal to hold the elections. The Turkish Government intervened, protesting that the rules of elections had not been submitted for approval to Ankara or the League Council. The Turkish protest led to a discussion in the League Council which urged the Commission to change the articles dealing with the procedure of registration. The people of the **Sancak** were no longer required to produce evidence as to their language or religion. One would be assumed to be a member of the community to which one declared himself to belong. The commission undertook the execution of the revised elec-

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<sup>43</sup> Nurettin Ardıç, *Antakya - İskenderun Etrafında*. İstanbul, A. Halit Kitabevi, 1937.

<sup>44</sup> Survey : 1936. p. 775.

toral regulations. The Turkish Foreign Minister alleged that the mandatory authorities were interfering with the registration of voters in order to produce a result unfavorable to the Turkish community. The permanent delegate of Turkey to the League requested that activities of the Electoral Commission be suspended. France supported this request.<sup>45</sup> The Commission abandoned its tasks. The Hatay dispute was solved only prior to Turkey's pact with France and England in late 1939.

### III. TURKEY AND THE SOVIET UNION

The Turkish representative at the Lausanne Convention had not supported the Soviet Union on all points. Although this attitude could have ended the Turkish - Soviet friendship rooted in the Turkish War of National Liberation, other circumstances urged the two countries to continue friendly relations. Neither of them was a League member. Since the Mosul question with Britain was still at hand, Turkey refrained from antagonizing the Soviet Union. Turkish diplomacy certainly appreciated the advantages of a would - be Russian support in the event of a new change in the Straits régime, the Lausanne solution being not totally acceptable to Turkey either. The Soviets were also cautious not to push Turkey toward the Western powers. These interests were expressed by the signature of the Turkish - Soviet Treaty of Neutrality and Non - Aggression on December 17, 1925, almost immediately after the decision of the League Council giving Mosul to Iraq (Britain).<sup>46</sup> On December 21, Chicherin stated that the signature of the agreement «should put an end to those alarmist rumours and dispel any fears or doubts about the firmness of Soviet - Turkish friendship.»<sup>47</sup> The treaty was, in fact, a «useful business partnership based upon common sense.»<sup>48</sup> Alarmed at the possibility of even better relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union, Britain introduced a tripartite

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<sup>45</sup> Documents : 1937, p. 514.

<sup>46</sup> Resmî Gazete, February 24, 1926, p. 306.

<sup>47</sup> Pravda, December 24, 1925 (from Jane Degras, ed., *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, London, Oxford University Press, 1952, s. p. 80.)

<sup>48</sup> Philip, P. Graves, *Briton and Turk*, London, Hutchinson, 1941, p. 224.

treaty signed by Turkey, Britain and Iraq in 1926. This step not only brought Turkey and Britain closer through the liquidation of the Mosul dispute, but also gave move freedom to Turkey in her foreign policy, as she did not want to lean exclusively on Russia. However, when the Turkish Foreign Minister and Soviet Commissar met in Odessa in November 1926, Chicherin referred warmly to the «seven years of unbroken and close relations» between the two governments.<sup>49</sup> Turkey and the Soviet Union concluded trade and navigation treaty on March 11, 1926.<sup>50</sup> However, there were some economic frictions between the two countries although Rykov, the Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars, in an address to the Soviet of the Union in the Spring of 1927, said that the relations with Turkey left «scarcely anything better to be desired.»<sup>51</sup>

In 1928, an agreement was signed between Turkey and the Soviet Union on the investigation and settlement of the frontier disputes.<sup>52</sup> On April 1, 1929, Turkey adhered to the Litvinov protocol,<sup>53</sup> and on December 17, 1929, a protocol to the 1925 treaty prolonged the validity of this agreement until 1945. This protocol, which forbade the signatories to sign treaties with neighbours without prior consultation among themselves, aimed at preventing too intimate relations between Turkey and Russia's neighbours, Rumania and Poland.<sup>54</sup> Litvinov, the Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs, said in December 4, 1929: «I must first of all record the maintenance, unsullied and undiminished, of friendly relations with the Turkish Republic... We know that our friendship is valued in Turkey just as we value theirs for the same

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<sup>49</sup> *Izvestia*, November 24, 1926 (from *Soviet Documents*, II, pp. 143-144).

<sup>50</sup> *Resmî Gazete*, May 31, 1927, p. 598.

<sup>51</sup> R. Page Arnot, *Soviet Russia and Her Neighbors*. New York, Vanguard Press, 1927, p. 128.

<sup>52</sup> *Resmî Gazete*, March 5, 1928, p. 1135.

<sup>53</sup> The Soviet Union, being the first government to ratify the Kellogg Pact, suspected that the other governments, who had not yet ratified it, might legally attack her. Therefore, the Soviets wanted to make an arrangement with Poland whereby the Kellogg Pact could become valid between the Soviet Union and her neighbors. Poland, after discussing the subject with the other Baltic states, signed the protocol on February 9, 1929, together with Estonia, Latvia and also Rumania.

<sup>54</sup> Max Beloff, *The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia: 1936-1941*. London. Oxford University Press, 1955, p. 40.

reason.»<sup>55</sup> The visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister to Moscow in September 1930 coincided with the first meeting of the League inquiry commission for the Briand Plan on European union, to which Turkey and the Soviet Union were not invited. Litvinov, who visited Ankara on October 27, 1931, referred to the «firmness and durability of Soviet-Turkish relations» amidst the «fluidity and indefiniteness of international relations.»<sup>56</sup> In 1933, a Turkish economic mission visited the U. S. S. R. to inspect Soviet factories and to purchase machinery for the new Turkish textile combine. The Soviet textile experts went to Turkey with that mission.<sup>57</sup>

On October 29, 1933, at the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Turkish Republic, Voroshilov was present. Speaking at these celebrations, he said :

«The friendship of our peoples may be called a tried friendship; that seems to me the most suitable word. It began in the years when both our countries were facing great historical trials.

«It was tried and tested in the years of armed struggles, in the years of peaceful reconstruction that followed, and in the efforts of both of our peoples and Governments to guard the peace from all threatening dangers. That is a friendship that fears no tests...

«The deep community of interests continued into the years of tempestuous construction, when our efforts were directed to strengthening and developing our states. This was reflected in the political and economic relations between the peoples of the U. S. S. R. and Turkey...

«We have no desire to conquer foreign lands...

«We are glad the way has been opened for mutual collaboration in the sphere of industry...»<sup>58</sup>

On January 21, 1934, Turkey and the Soviet Union agreed on a Soviet grant of \$ 8 million credit for the purchase of in-

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<sup>55</sup> Documents : 1929. pp. 212-213.

<sup>56</sup> Izvestia. October 28, 1931 (from Soviet Documents. II, pp. 510-512.)

<sup>57</sup> Violet Connolly, «The Soviet Union and the Industrialization of Asia,» Foreign Affairs. October 1936, p.188.

<sup>58</sup> Izvestia. October 29, 1933 (from Soviet Documents. III, pp. 32-33.)

dustrial equipment.<sup>59</sup> In the same year, the first factory equipped with Soviet machinery was erected at Kayseri in Central Anatolia.

When Turkey wanted to revise the Lausanne Treaty to meet the Fascist threat, the Soviets endorsed the Turkish claim looking at a future conference as an opportunity to revise the Straits régime in their favor. Litvinov's reply was as follows :

«The Soviet Government considers that there is good reason for the Turkish Government's fears regarding the insecurity of peace at the present time, and the grave danger of the outbreak of war, and it therefore regards as natural in the present situation the Turkish Government's anxiety to ensure the security of its territory by means of appropriate changes in the Straits régime.»<sup>60</sup>

At Montreux the Soviet representative defended the view that, being a Black Sea power, she had special interests in the Straits. Furthermore, the Soviet Union had coasts in the Baltic and the Far East. She might have to send a fleet to either one of these areas. This necessitated the free navigation of the Black Sea fleet. A third reason for trying to keep the non-riverain powers out of the Black Sea and to open the Straits to Soviet ships of any size was the desire to use her Black Sea naval dockyards for the construction of warships to be used in the other seas. The Soviet Baltic yards could be easily bombed by the Germans and the yards in Vladivostok by the Japanese. The safest place was the Black Sea if a way could be found to send the Soviet Black Sea warships everywhere and to keep the foreign fleets away.

The Soviet Union needed collective guarantees and allies. She did not want to face a hostile coalition as during and after the civil war. She was obliged, then, to support such a treaty that would not undermine either the League or the French - Soviet Agreement of May 2, 1935.

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<sup>59</sup> Resmî Gazete, May 24, 1934, p. 2709.

<sup>60</sup> Mirovoe Khoziaistvo, 1936, V, p. 163 (from Soviet Documents, III, p. 189.)

Many provisions of the Montreux Convention were highly favorable from the point of view of the Soviet interests. Article X stated that only light surface vessels, minor war vessels and auxiliary vessels of the non-Black Sea powers could pass through the Straits. This clause eliminated the heavy battleships of naval powers such as Germany, Britain and Italy. According to Article XI, the Soviet warships of any size could pass into the Mediterranean without special permission from Turkey while a large fleet of the non-Black Sea powers could come only at the invitation of Turkey. This would give the U. S. S. R. the chance to accumulate a large Soviet force in the Mediterranean. In the interest of Soviet security, Article XVIII imposed new limits on the type and tonnage which the non-Black Sea powers could send into the Black Sea. The aggregate tonnage which the non-Black Sea powers might have in that sea in time of peace was limited to 30,000 tons. However, «if at any time the tonnage of the strongest fleet in the Black Sea would exceed by at least 10,000 tons the tonnage of the strongest fleet in that sea the date of signature of the present Convention, the aggregate tonnage of 30,000 tons would be increased by the same amount up to a maximum of 45,000 tons.» The tonnage which any one of the Black Sea power might have in the Black Sea was limited to the two-thirds of the strongest Black Sea fleet instead of three quarters as proposed in the British draft. The maximum additional tonnage of the foreign fleets to be sent to the Black Sea for «humanitarian purposes» was limited to 8,000 tons. Speaking at the closing session of the conference, Litvinov referred to the «close friendship with Turkey» and summarized the Soviet evaluation of the convention in the following terms :

«The conference has recognized, although inadequately, the special rights of the Black Sea riverain countries in that sea and in regard to the passage of the Straits, as well as the special geographic situation of the Black Sea, to which the general conceptions of the complete freedom of the seas cannot be applied in full.»<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, III, p. 200.

Although the Soviet Union was still a great friend, the size of the partner and the emergence of new dangers in Central Europe and the Mediterranean brought Turkey closer to Britain.

#### IV. TURKEY AND THE BALKANS

**From Chaos to Order:** A number of Balkan politicians thought that the Balkan countries could energetically pursue, in accordance with their own will, aspirations and needs, a truly Balkan policy - profitable above all to the Balkan peoples - and set an example of productive collaboration. M. Kemâl, who showed readiness to forget the old grievances, said, just after the end of the Turco - Greek War: «I could never myself keep on hating a nation for the mistakes of the government... and towards the Greeks I feel the same. I am confident that we shall soon be great friends.»<sup>62</sup> The Turco - Greek **rapprochement** temporarily suffered during the execution of an agreement concerning the exchange of Greek and Turkish populations of January 30, 1923.<sup>63</sup> The agreement said that as from May 1, 1923, there would take place «a compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory, and of Greek nationals of the Moslem religion established in Greek territory.» These persons were not to migrate to Turkey or Greece without authorization of the Turkish or of the Greek governments respectively. The Moslems of Western Thrace and the Greeks of İstanbul were not to be included in the exchange. No obstacle was to be placed in the way of the departure of a person belonging to the population which were to be exchanged. The exchange was not to prejudice the rights of property, including monetary assets of the exchanged people. They were to be free to take away or arrange for the transport of their movable property. They could also have such property behind, in which case the local authorities were to evaluate

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<sup>62</sup> Ellison, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

<sup>63</sup> League of Nations, Treaty Series, pp. 76 - 87. For a discussion of the compulsory exchange of Turkish and Greek minorities, see Stephan P. Lakes, *The Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*. New York, MacMillan, 1932, pp. 335 - 591

such property. A Mixed Commission was set up to liquidate immovable and movable property of the exchanged populations.

Before the end of 1929, a spirit of conciliation was felt in relations between Turkey and Greece. In a speech delivered at the Chamber in Athens in 1930 the veteran Greek statesman Venizelos declared that Greece, having accepted, in good faith, all the treaties that had followed the First World War, was attached to peace with the world at large and particularly with Turkey. He prophesied that the exchange of population negotiations would be brought to a final and successful conclusion; that this would be followed by a treaty of friendship between Turkey and Greece; and that a naval understanding regarding the balance of power in the Aegean would be possible. On June 10, 1930,<sup>64</sup> a convention was signed on the liquidation of questions arising from the application of the Lausanne Treaty and of the agreement on the exchange of populations. The very day on which the new convention was signed Premier İnönü invited Venizelos to visit Ankara with a view to liquidate the question of the exchange of populations and also lay the cornerstone for a general understanding. Venizelos was given a warm welcome not only by the Turkish authorities, but also by the Turkish public. A treaty of neutrality, conciliation and arbitration, a protocol on parity of naval armaments and a commercial convention were signed.<sup>65</sup>

Apart from the Turco - Greek **rapprochement**, a movement for Balkan cooperation received certain impetus when in October 1925 the Rhineland Pact at the Locarno Conference was concluded. This was an example that the countries of South-East Europe could follow. Greece and Yugoslavia reached a final settlement on the Yugoslav Free Zone in Salonica on March 17, 1929, to be followed by a pact of friendship, conciliation and judicial settlement.<sup>66</sup> The tensions between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria were also relaxed. A Mixed Bulgaro -

<sup>64</sup> Resmi Gazete. July 1, 1930, p. 1534.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., February 28, 1931, p. 1735.

<sup>66</sup> Survey: 1928, pp. 183-188.

Yugoslav Commission reached in 1929 an agreement regarding their common frontier. An alliance united Rumania and Yugoslavia, already members of the Little Entente. Relations between Rumania and Greece were also friendly. Between Turkey and Yugoslavia there was a treaty of peace and friendship dating from 1925, while Turkey and Rumania entered into friendly relations with a commercial treaty in 1929. Turkey signed a treaty of neutrality, conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement with Bulgaria in 1929.

**The Balkan Union :** Some basis to create a Balkan unity seemed to be established. Most of the credit for the initiative which resulted in the Balkan Conference of 1930 was due to Alexandros Papanastasiou, a former Greek premier, who advocated a Balkan Union at <sup>67</sup> the Twenty - Seventh Universal Peace Congress held in Athens. As the President of the Organizing Committee for the Congress, he pointed out the difficulties in the formation of either a world federation or a United States of Europe. The difficulties involved the weaknesses of the League of Nations because of the lack of security, the failure to achieve disarmament and the position of the United States and Russia. He pursued a union of a «more limited region» among the peoples of the Balkans, including Turkey. The union was to have the character of a grouping of independent nationalities, bearing no reflection on the sovereignty of the participating states, but only consolidating peace among them, and by a more direct relationship aimed at achieving a closer entente for the good of all. The Congress appointed a Commission to study the general question of federation. A sub - commission of this Commission recommended the organization of annual Balkan Conferences. The Bureau International de la Paix was requested to take the initiative in summoning the first conference. The project of Balkan Conferences aroused interest in all the Balkan states. The first conference which assembled in Athens in 1930, <sup>68</sup> was a semi - official gathering of delegates and observers. A new Balkan flag symbolized

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<sup>67</sup> Robert J. Kerner and Harry N. Howard, *The Balkan Conferences and the Balkan Entente : 1930 - 1935*. California, University of California Press, 1936, pp. 25 - 30.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30 - 41.

the hoped - for union. However, sceptical spirit was noticeable in Bulgaria, whose press openly expressed doubts regarding the usefulness of the meeting. A week preceding the conference, the Bulgarian delegation created a sensation by refusing to attend the sessions because the minorities problem was not on the agenda. The conference called upon the people and their governments «to forget old differences» and work «systematically toward union.» The First Balkan Conference proposed a permanent organisation with a Council, an Assembly and a Secretariat. The Second Balkan Conference met in İstanbul in 1931.<sup>69</sup> At the first meeting the Turkish Government had taken a helpful part in encouraging the conference. The participation of the Turkish Government was even more striking because not only President Atatürk and Premier İnönü had addressed the sessions, but also the Foreign Minister Tevfik Rüstü often appeared in the meetings to conciliate conflicting interests and opinions. The Albanian and the Bulgarian delegates raised the question of minorities at once during the plenary session.

The Third Balkan Conference which met in Bucharest in 1932<sup>70</sup> had a very stormy career. It suffered from the intransigence of Bulgaria, which withdrew from the conference because the problems of minorities and juridical equality of states had not been solved in the interval since the last meeting. But the conference, having adopted a Balkan Pact which opened a way to settle peacefully all questions, achieved some progress.

The Balkan Conferences threw light upon the key position occupied by Bulgaria. Resenting the conditions imposed upon her by the Treaty of Neuilly, Bulgaria refused to be associated with the Balkan Entente which involved the recognition of the **status quo**. Although the comparative strength of her neighbours ruled out any serious menace from Bulgaria, her non - participation in the pact would offer a stepping - stone for an expansionist power like Germany or Italy to interfere

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 45 - 64; Survey : 1931, pp. 324 - - 340.

<sup>70</sup> Kerner and Howard, op .cit., pp. 68 - 90.

in Balkan affairs. There were signs of an increasingly close association between Berlin and Sofia while Italy accelerated her efforts to retain Bulgaria's friendship. Among those Balkan countries who competed for Bulgaria's favor, Yugoslavia was the most successful. Those Serbs who dreamt of a South Slav bloc stretching from the Black Sea to the Italian frontiers and who were strongly represented in the Second Balkan Conference had been successful in establishing friendly relations with the Bulgarians. This movement for reconciliation was symbolized in 1933 by the meeting of King Alexander and King Boris during the latter's way back from his tour of the Western capitals. Another meeting took place between the two when the King and Queen of Yugoslavia were on their way to Turkey.

One should expect that the growing friendliness between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia would please Greece and Turkey. In fact, it created alarm rather than satisfaction in Ankara and Athens because a great South Slav bloc would dominate the Balkans. Turkey and Greece, consequently, urged Bulgaria to enter into close relations with them. The questions regarding payments due from Bulgaria to Greece being solved, and Bulgaria having agreed to work for the establishment of closer relations with Turkey, Ankara and Athens suggested that the Bulgarian government become a party to an agreement guaranteeing the inviolability of their frontiers. However, Bulgaria's desire to secure a revision of the terms of the peace treaties was stronger than her desire to establish friendly relations with her neighbours. Bulgaria's refusal to adhere to the proposed Entente did not stop Turkey and Greece from concluding a treaty on September 14, 1933,<sup>71</sup> by which both mutually guaranteed «the inviolability of their common frontiers» and undertook to consult each other on international questions of common interest in order to secure a line of action «in conformity with their policy of friendship, understanding and collaboration.» The official announcement of the signature of the treaty expressed the hope that other countries would adhere to it. The Turkish - Greek treaty

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<sup>71</sup> Resmî Gazete, March 12, 1934, p. 2651.

received unfavorable comment in the Bulgarian press. Turkey's guarantee of Greek frontiers was another obstacle on the way of Bulgarian ambition to obtain an outlet to the Aegean Sea. The Turkish Premier and Foreign Minister visited Sofia to clear Bulgarian apprehensions regarding the implications of the new pact and to make another effort to persuade Bulgaria to join it.

Bulgaria was alarmed not only on account of the Turkish-Greek treaty, but also on account of certain other agreements which had been concluded in 1933. She regarded the Little Entente which was signed on February 16, 1933,<sup>72</sup> as a group of forces opposed to treaty revision. The movement towards closer union between Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania was a response to the change for the worse in international affairs brought about by Hitler's triumph in Germany, the successful Japanese defiance of the League of Nations and the failure of the World Disarmament Conference in Geneva. The aims of the contracting parties were described in the preamble as being «the complete unification of their general policy.» Likewise, the series of pacts of non-aggression, concluded on Soviet initiative and involving Turkey, Rumania and Yugoslavia, interested Bulgaria in so far as they contained a definition of aggression covering the case of a state that supported armed bands invading the territory of another state. Bulgaria's failure to curb the Macedonian Organisation<sup>73</sup> brought her within the scope of this definition. Rumania looked on the Bulgarian-Yugoslav **rapprochement** with apprehension although she was not as alarmed as Bulgaria's southern neighbours of the possibility of greater Serbia because of her partnership with Yugoslavia in the Little Entente. Czechoslovakia, the third member of the Little Entente, who neither had the same reasons to establish friendly relations nor the same difficulties to overcome, offered favorable conditions to Bulgarian trade.

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<sup>72</sup> Documents : 1933. pp. 415 - 418.

<sup>73</sup> J. Swire, **Bulgarian Conspiracy**. London, Robert Hale, 1939, pp. 273 - 300.

The Fourth Balkan Conference,<sup>74</sup> scheduled to meet September 1933 at Salonica, was postponed because the participating nations were unable to reach acceptable conclusions on some problems. However, the achievements of the Salonica meeting of November 5, 1933, compensated the failure of the previous conference. The questions asked at the end of the fourth session was whether or not all the Balkan governments would follow the lead of the Balkan conferences. By 1934, a chain of bilateral treaties were signed between Turkey, Greece, Rumania and Yugoslavia. However, Bulgaria made it once more clear that she was not prepared to enter any system which maintained the **status quo**. Under these circumstances, the other four states were obliged to decide whether to proceed with the negotiations hoping that Bulgaria might change her mind or to abandon the idea of a Balkan Pact. They agreed to make every effort to persuade Bulgaria to join the pact and in case of failure to explain to Bulgaria that it was not aimed at her. Turkey, Greece, and Rumania, joined by a somewhat reluctant Yugoslavia, decided that it was useless to postpone the final signature of the pact. The Greek Foreign Minister Maximos explained the project to the governments of the Great Powers and the pact was signed in Athens on February 4, 1934.<sup>75</sup> The preamble declared the wish of the four signatories «to contribute to the consolidation of peace in the Balkans» in the spirit of the Briand - Kellogg Pact. They guaranteed mutually «the security of their Balkan frontiers» and undertook «to consult with each other on the measures to be taken in the face of eventualities capable of affecting their interests.» The agreement was open to signature by the other Balkan countries (Bulgaria and Albania) whose adherence would be «the object of favorable examination.»

During negotiations which preceded the signature of the pact, the Soviet Government raised a question drawing attention to the possibility that in case of hostilities between Russia and Rumania, Bulgaria might be drawn into the conflict on the Russian side, in which case Turkey, by the provisions

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<sup>74</sup> Kerner and Howard, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-113.

<sup>75</sup> *Resmî Gazete*, March 12, 1934, p. 2651.

of the new pact, would be obliged to support Rumania against Bulgaria and therefore against Russia. Such action on the part of Turkey would contradict the Turco - Soviet Treaty of Neutrality of 1925. Rumania issued a written declaration to the effect that she would not expect aid from Turkey in case of hostilities with Russia. Greece took similar precautions to ensure that she would not be involved in war with Italy as a result of her obligations to Yugoslavia under the pact terms.

**Old Pacts and New Facts :** The Balkan Pact was a regional arrangement like the Little Entente and the Baltic Pact between Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.<sup>76</sup> They all intended to counteract the pressure to revise the 1919 - 1921 settlement. It aroused a great deal of resentment in Bulgaria, who found it difficult to interpret the pact as not being directed against her. The Turkish Premier referred to the possibility of Bulgaria's participation in the pact as a «valuable hope for us.»<sup>77</sup> In 1936, Germany's increasing pressure on the European states undermined the solidarity of the Balkan and the Little Ententes. This was not surprising since the member nations which made up these two arrangements had failed to coordinate their policies towards the Great Powers. The ultimate goal of the Balkan states should have been, as Ernst Jäckh observed,<sup>78</sup> a union with a common foreign policy and a common defence of the living spaces of the Balkan countries, based on collective force and security. None of the two were regional groupings of the Locarno type. First of all, they had no guarantors. Secondly, they had been two local coalitions of states representing only one of the two sides which would be arrayed against one another in a future conflict. The *causae causantes* of the two ententes had been the Bulgarian and Hungarian grievances resulting from the peace treaties of Neuilly and Trianon. The Balkan Entente would be put to the test if Bulgaria found a Great Power to come forward as her champion exerting pressure in the Balkans on her behalf. Mussolini had already gained some foothold in South - Eastern Europe by supporting the discontented Balkan countries. The Balkan Entente, and

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<sup>76</sup> Survey : 1934, p. 404 - 415.

<sup>77</sup> İnönü'nün Söylev ve Demeçleri, p. 287.

<sup>78</sup> Ernst Jäckh, «The German Drive in the Balkans.» *International Affairs*, London, Vol. XVIII, (November - December, 1939), p. 775.

the Little Entente as well, was subjected to a more difficult test than the Italian policy by the harder pressure of Nazi Germany. Hitler's rise to power had opened up the hungry jaws of the German armament industry. Balkan raw materials found a welcome outlet in Germany. The policy of sanctions against Italy, to which the Balkan countries adhered more scrupulously than the Great Powers, proved advantageous to Germany. German imports rose and by 1936 Germany became a debtor to the Balkans. Germany froze these credits, which could not be redeemed except by purchase from the German market. The German economic penetration, following Dr. Schacht's visit to the Balkan capitals, undermined the economic pretences of the Balkan Entente. Germany's successful political penetration will be outlined in the next section.

## V. TURKEY AND GERMANY

**Germany's Economic Drive :** Turkey's need of machinery and installation for her newly - launched first Five - Year Plan gave Nazi Germany a chance to attempt to infiltrate into Turkish economy and increase the trade between the two countries which was declining appreciably. The political implications of the German economic move were by no means evident at the outset. The great German banks re - established their branches in İstanbul and firms and contractors got energetically to work. Relations with Germany developed smoothly as there had been «no question of any suspicion with regard to the political aspirations of that country.»<sup>79</sup> In 1934 a German Mission representing the Krupp establishments visited Turkey with the outcome of a 20 million Turkish Lira credit as well as an agreement enabling Turkey to purchase railway materials from Germany. The exchange of goods between Germany and Turkey increased considerably, as evident from the following tables :<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Karl Kruger, *Kemalist Turkey and the Middle East*. London, Allen and Unwin, 1932, p. 112.

<sup>80</sup> From the memorandum of the Deputy Director of the Economic Policy Department of the German Foreign Ministry. *Documents on German Policy : 1918 - 1945* (hereafter referred to as *German Documents*) Series D, Vol. V, p. 724.

|            | Imports<br>from Germany | Exports<br>from Turkey |
|------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
|            | (in millions of RM)     |                        |
| 1932 ..... | 40.1 .....              | 30.0                   |
| 1933 ..... | 37.9 .....              | 36.3                   |
| 1934 ..... | 67.5 .....              | 50.9                   |
| 1935 ..... | 93.5 .....              | 67.3                   |
| 1936 ..... | 118.5 .....             | 79.4                   |
| 1937 ..... | 97.8 .....              | 111.1                  |

During the first few years of economic cooperation Germany began to threaten Turkey «with a degree of dominance which approached a stranglehold.»<sup>81</sup> Profiting from the exchange restrictions, Germany bought local products from the foreign countries at prices above the normal level. In case Germany did not need those goods, she resold them to the other countries. For example, Germany reexported Balkan tobacco for Swedish copper. However, Germany said that she could make payment only in blocked marks, offered at extremely high prices. Turkey had no other alternative than to buy them. Schacht had the German economic hegemony in mind when he said to a German expert who was «helping» with the industrialization of Turkey: «The Führer... regards your brilliant work for the Turkish five year plan as the most distinguished contribution to the German cause in the entire Near East.»<sup>82</sup>

Although the economic results of trading with Germany had been fortunate for the Turks, the Turkish Government realized that the large proportion of her foreign trade with Germany represented a political danger making possible the conversion of economic preponderance into one of political control. As a step to counteract German economic monopoly, Ankara awarded the right to construct a new iron and steel works at Karabük to a British firm instead of the Krupp.

Negotiations during and after the Montreux settlement further cooled Turco-German relations. However, cordial

<sup>81</sup> Munroe, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-215.

<sup>82</sup> Ahmet İzzet Feridun, «Ankara Thwarts Hitler's Economic Invasion,» *Free Europe*, May 8, 1942, p. 154.

relations on a less important level continued. The **Emden's** visit to Istanbul on November 1, 1936, occasioned friendly manifestations. This was followed by Schachts's visit to Turkey which alarmed certain sections of the British public opinion. British fears however, were exaggerated since Germany was overplaying her diplomatic hand. After the conclusion of the Anglo - German naval conversations which resulted on July 17<sup>83</sup> in the signing of a supplementary agreement of June 18, 1935, Germany thought that the moment had come to open negotiations with the Turkish Government on the Montreux Convention. Not being a signatory of the Lausanne Treaty of July 24, 1923, Germany had not participated in the Montreux Convention. The provisions which aroused the German opposition to the Convention were articles 19 and 25 which stated that in case of a war Turkey not being belligerent, warships of belligerent powers were not to pass through the Turkish Straits in either direction except in fulfillment of obligations under the League Covenant or to render assistance to a victim of aggression in virtue of a treaty of mutual assistance binding Turkey. When Germany informed Turkey that Berlin disapproved strongly of some of the Montreux clauses,<sup>84</sup> she was told that the Straits question was not a German problem, that country being neither a Montreux signatory nor a Mediterranean or a Black Sea Power, and that Turkey would tolerate no interference in matters vital to her security.

**Turco - German Relations Cool :** In 1937 there was full evidence of a Turco - German cooling. The blatant criticism by the Turkish press of German diplomacy in the Balkans, the energetic diplomatic activity of Turkey's Aras in the various European capitals, the genuine attempts of Ankara to create unity in the Balkans, the implications of the Saadabad Pact and Turkey's increased interest in more friendly relations with England showed that Turkey recognized Germany as a growing menace in the heart of Europe with dreams touching the Turkish frontiers. The Turkish Government viewed German

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<sup>83</sup> British Treaty Series No. 2, 1938, cmd. 5637.

<sup>84</sup> German Documents, Vol. V, pp. 706 - 709.

policies with growing alarm, firstly, because of the former's close relations with Italy and secondly, on their own account.

Although Turkish alarm was largely one of possible Italian aggression, Germany too represented a trend essentially against Turkish interests. Germany intended to tear down the existing structure of Central Europe. This meant menacing peace, held so dear by Turkey. Here Germany and Turkey were inevitably opposed to each other. Germany wanted to play off the various Balkan aspirations. Turkey desired such a union since she welcomed every move towards regionalism contributing to the stabilization of Europe.

When a country uses its economic position to exert political pressure on another country, it is the duty of the other countries to provide alternative markets until the threatened country regains its freedom of action. £ 10,000,000 of British credit to Turkey looked like such a policy. However, Funk, the German Minister of Economy who visited İstanbul in 1938, counterbalanced this by announcing a 150 million Reichsmarks German commercial credit to Turkey.<sup>85</sup>

In an attempt to further curb German economic and political influence, the Turkish Government took some important decisions.<sup>86</sup> First, it no longer wished to purchase major armaments from Germany. Secondly, it intended to model the Turkish Air Force on the R. A. F., with the consequence of buying aircraft material from Britain. Numan Menemencioğlu, the Under-Secretary of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, told Ribbentrop that Turkey, desirous to accomplish her internal reconstruction in peace, wished to follow a neutralist policy.<sup>87</sup> He turned down, however, a request for a neutrality treaty.<sup>88</sup> Woermann of the German Foreign Office remarked that Turkey hesitated to «give German-Turkish relations a new and a more intimate form.»<sup>89</sup> The year 1939 saw a heavy decline in Turco-German trade.<sup>90</sup> The construction of the port and

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<sup>85</sup> German Documents, Vol. V, pp. 742-743.

<sup>86</sup> Mance, *op. cit.*, p. 15;

<sup>87</sup> Survey: 1938, Vol. III, pp. 445-447.

<sup>88</sup> German Documents, Vol. V, pp. 731-732.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 736.

<sup>90</sup> «Germany and the Balkans,» *Economist*, March 23, 1940, p. 508.

arsenal at Gölcük by German and Dutch personnel remained an isolated case of economic and technical cooperation. A somewhat firm tone about the totalitarian states was becoming noticeable in the Turkish press. The fate of Czechoslovakia and the annexation of Albania made it clear, some newspapers noted, that Germany and Italy had embarked on a deliberate policy of expansion and hegemony which was inevitably leading to the destruction of the smaller countries. Turkey was in a mood removed from that of 1914.

## VI. TURKEY AND ITALY

**Italy Scares a Friend :** Italy had reached an understanding with the Ankara Government as early as 1921 when she realized that the Allies did not support her claims in Asia Minor. The Italians could not forget the rich spoil that had escaped their grasp. Instead of trying to reap the reward of the initial friendliness for Italy, Rome mourned for her «lost provinces.» The Italians complained that when the Turkish provinces were partitioned between England and France, Italy, «which needed a breathing space more than any country, got nothing;»<sup>91</sup> Mussolini did not invent a new Mediterranean policy for Italy; in foreign affairs Fascism meant a reversion to the imperialist program of Baron Sonnino, who had been the watch-dog of Italian interests at St. Jean de Maurienne and the Paris Peace Conference. The Turks' anxiety came to the fore in 1926 when during the Mosul dispute it was rumored that if Turkey resorted to use of arms, Italy would attempt to land in Asia Minor. Moreover, when Mussolini visited the Italian colonies in the Mediterranean, rumors started again that Rome was preparing for an adventure in the eastern Mediterranean. The Italian Ambassador in Ankara denied all rumors in person.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Luigi Villari, *Italian Foreign Policy*. New York, Devin-Adair, 1956, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> Muriel Currey, *Italian Foreign Policy : 1918-1932*. London, Nicholson and Watson, 1932, p. 176.

The Turks feared Italian land - hunger; the Greeks were embittered by the thoughts of the Italian - held Dodecanese. In the Straits and the Aegean, Italy traded in an atmosphere of suspicion, uncertainty and hate until Mussolini decided in 1928 to improve relations. Italy's objective to have an understanding with the eastern Mediterranean naval powers lead to the Turco - Italian treaty of friendship, neutrality and conciliation on May 30, 1928.<sup>93</sup> Italy was aiming at a tripartite agreement to bring in Greece which insisted on a separate settlement with Turkey, in view of the differences between herself and Turkey regarding the problems of the exchange of populations. Simultaneously, Italy offered a treaty on similar lines to Greece. Mussolini's speech on December 5, 1928, paid glowing tribute to the new treaty with Turkey, the latter's «gigantic efforts to create a western type of civilization» and to commercial and economic cooperation.<sup>94</sup> Addressing the National Assembly on September 14, 1928, Premier İnönü of Turkey said<sup>95</sup> that although Turkey and Italy had «suffered greatly from the currents of suspicion and lack of confidence,» the treaty of arbitration and non - aggression had been «a blessing for the two countries as well as for the real friends of peace.»

The Turco - Italian collaboration, climaxed by the 1928 treaty, could not develop mainly due to two reasons. First, cooperation with Rome was only one aspect of Turkey's foreign relations. Ankara's interest in a strong Balkan unity clashed with Italy's imperialistic designs which could benefit from disunity in that peninsula. Secondly, the Turks realized that dynamic Fascism in Italy would inevitably influence Italian foreign relations. Germany and Italy wanted to play off the various individual states, one against the other, because a Balkan Union would handicap the political aspirations of their expansionist demands for their living spaces whilst Britain and Turkey welcomed all moves towards sound regionalism contributing to the stabilization of Europe. Italy

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<sup>93</sup> Resmî Gazete. December, 13, 1928, p. 1065.

<sup>94</sup> Currey, *op. cit.*, pp. 265 - 266.

<sup>95</sup> Cumhuriyet. September, 15, 1928.

began to develop in the Balkans a policy of driving in wedges to upset order in the Balkans. The tactic of exploiting fears, enmities and grievances led Italy to back Albania and Bulgaria against the other Balkan states. Albania, a small country having a grievance against Yugoslavia and a fear of Greece, leaned on Italy for diplomatic support. Bulgaria saw in Italy the champion of treaty - revision. Italy was popularly credited with having a hand in the refusal of Bulgaria to join the Balkan Entente and in the attitude of Albania.<sup>96</sup> Ciano wrote that Italy sought to «put fear into the Greeks and Yugoslavs, both of whom still remember the stench of the Turks.» He added : «... It is always worthwhile to revive certain old hatreds that are not entirely dead.»<sup>97</sup> If Italy had genuinely wished to cooperate peacefully with the Balkan States on a footing of equality and mutual trust, «she would not find a readier supporter than Turkey.»<sup>98</sup>

**The Italian Cloud :** In the words of İnönü, «the expansionist policy and the clamorous speeches of the Fascist régime kept the Turks in a state of considerable uneasiness.»<sup>99</sup> Atatürk regarded Mussolini as a bold but only a temporarily successful adventurer. The Duce's threats amused and sometimes annoyed him. He did not think that the Italian army had a high fighting quality. However, he recognized the growing influence of Italy, especially at sea. He was also disturbed by the ideas of imperialism planted in the minds of the young Fascists. Mussolini's speech to the Second Fascist Quinquennial Congress on March 19, 1935, shook the foundations of **rapprochement** with Turkey and Greece. The Italian leader said :

«The historical objectives of Italy have two names : Asia and Africa... These objectives are justified by geography and history. 'Of all the great Western Powers of Europe, the nearest to Africa and Asia is Italy. A few hours of sea

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<sup>96</sup> M. H. Macartney and P. Cremona, *Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy*. London, Oxford University Press, 1938, pp. 208-214.

<sup>97</sup> Hugh Gibson, ed., *The Ciano Diaries : 1939-1943*, New York : Garden City Publishing Co., 1947, p. 114.

<sup>98</sup> *The Times*, London, October 27, 1939.

<sup>99</sup> İsmet İnönü, *Turkey : Ten Eventful Years : 1938-1947*. New York, Turkish Information Office, (1948), p. 3.

voyage, even less of air voyage, are sufficient to join Italy to Africa and Asia. Let there be no misunderstanding as to the scope of this centuries-old task which I assign to this and to future generations of Italians. There is no question of territorial conquests... but of a natural expansion which will lead to a close cooperation between Italy and the nations of the Near and Middle East... Italy can do this: her position on the Mediterranean, a sea which is resuming its historic function of link between East and West, gives her this right and imposes on her this duty.»<sup>100</sup>

When the Turkish Ambassador inquired about the exact meaning of this speech, he was told that Italy regarded Turkey a European nation and that Signor Mussolini had the Asiatic countries in mind. With only five-percent of her lands situated in Europe, Turkey refused to be flattered. Even after the Turkish Foreign Minister submitted Italy's clarifications to the National Assembly,<sup>101</sup> the Turkish press reaction to Mussolini's speech continued to be violent.<sup>102</sup> Premier İnönü frankly admitted in 1934 that the essential question in respect to the relations between the two countries was «the problem of security.»<sup>103</sup> Ankara's suspicions being aroused, the Turks held military manoeuvres on the Aegean and the Mediterranean coasts.

However, as the future of trade relations would have severe consequences on the economic interests of both Turkey and Italy, a trade agreement was signed in April 4, 1934,<sup>104</sup> In 1935, 30 % of the vessels entering Turkish ports were Italian as against 18% of Britain.<sup>105</sup> Since for the Italians the only guarantee of prosperity rested upon domination in the Mediterranean, **mare nostrum** was not an empty phrase for Turkish ears. During September-October 1935 there was real danger of serious complications in the eastern Mediterranean. Talk

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<sup>100</sup> Scritti e Discorsi di Benito Mussolini, Edizione Definitiva, Vol. IV, Milan, Ulrico Roeppli Editore, 1935, pp. 41-42.

<sup>101</sup> Cumhuriyet, İstanbul, April 6, 1934.

<sup>102</sup> Milliyet, İstanbul, April 7, 1934; Akşam, İstanbul, March 21, 1934; Vakit, İstanbul, March 25, 1934.

<sup>103</sup> İnönü'nün Söylev ve Demeçleri, pp. 287-288.

<sup>104</sup> Resmî Gazete, June 12, 1934, p. 2725.

<sup>105</sup> Munroe, op. cit., p. 109.

of attack on England by Italy urged the former to take precautionary measures, including a large concentration of the British naval forces in the eastern Mediterranean. In reply Italy reinforced her garrisons in Libya and her air and naval bases in the Dodecanese near the Turkish coast.<sup>106</sup> Italy was installed in the Dodecanese Islands, some of which were very close to the Turkish soil. A Turkish statesman described the Dodecanese Islands, in Italian possession since 1912, as «a loaded pistol levelled at the heart of Turkey.»<sup>107</sup> There were unnecessarily large Italian forces on the island of Rhodes.<sup>108</sup> The Italians had fortified as a naval base the Island of Leros, one of the more northerly of the Dodecanese group.<sup>109</sup> Ciano believed that Rhodes and Leros could defend themselves for years.<sup>110</sup> Referring to the fortification of the Dodecanese, Ciano had told<sup>111</sup> the Turkish Foreign Minister that these islands were «one link of the communications of the (Italian) Empire» whose security Rome intended to provide for «in the most efficacious, and complete manner.» Of Italian ambitions in eastern Mediterranean, Churchill said that «the Turks could never be sure which way the Italian dictator would turn his would-be conquering sword.»<sup>112</sup>

**The «Most - Feared» Power :** Naturally, the Italian attack on Ethiopia did nothing to clear the air between Turkey and Italy. On the contrary, it made Italy the «most feared»<sup>113</sup> power in the Turkish eyes. Showing lively interest in the Ethiopian cause, Turkey sent a diplomatic representative to Addis Ababa.<sup>114</sup> During the Ethiopian war, Turkey had been one

<sup>106</sup> Macartney and Cremona, *op. cit.*, p. 317; Malcolm Muggeridge, ed., *Ciano's Diplomatic Papers.*, London, Odhams Press, 1948, p. 190.

<sup>107</sup> Geoffrey Lewis, *Turkey*, London, Ernst Benn, 1955, p. 76.

<sup>108</sup> W. N. Medlicott, *British Foreign Policy Since Versailles : 1919 - 1939.* London, Methuen, 1940, p. 194.

<sup>109</sup> Hudson, *op. cit.*, page 25.

<sup>110</sup> Office of the U. S. Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression.* Vol. IV, p. 514.

<sup>111</sup> Muggeridge, *op. cit.*, 94.

<sup>112</sup> Great Britain, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates : (Commons) Vol 400.* Vol. 766.

<sup>113</sup> Arnold Toynbee and Veronica M. Toynbee, *The War and the Neutrals.* London, Oxford University Press, 1956, p. 346.

<sup>114</sup> Vere-Hodge, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

of the pillars of the Mediterranean system of mutual assistance promoted by Britain as a precaution against possible Italian reactions to the application of sanctions. Turkey was a member of the Committee of Five, which also included England, France, Poland and Spain, set up in September 1935 to draw up a plan of reform and assistance for Ethiopia.<sup>115</sup> The anti-Italian sentiment in Turkey went far enough to send a Turkish general to train the Abyssinian army.<sup>116</sup> The Turkish **Kızılay** (Red Crescent) did relief work in stricken Ethiopia. On October 7, 1935, Turkey approved, together with forty-nine other states, the findings of the League Council which expressed the opinion that Italy had resorted to war in disregard of her obligations under Article XII of the Covenant. Turkey voted with the majority of the League Assembly when the latter accepted as from November 18, 1935, an arms embargo, prohibition of financial transactions, an embargo on the importation of goods coming from Italy, an embargo on a restricted list of key raw materials for war and the provision for the mutual support in the application of the economic and financial sanctions.<sup>117</sup> Since Turkey attached more importance to her relations with the international community than the rupture of the Italo-Turkish relations, trade between the two countries suffered an inevitable decline.<sup>118</sup>

When first Japan and Nazi Germany had left the League and Italy had attacked a member of that body and gotten away with it, Ankara realized that the Straits were not secure. The result was the Montreux Conference which was discussed above. Italy reacted unfavorably to Turkey's suggestion that the Straits régime be changed to guarantee the latter's security in case of war. When the Turkish Ambassador asked Ciano on June 15, 1936, to call the Duce's attention once again to the extreme importance which the Turkish Government attached to Italy's presence at Montreux, Ciano gave

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115 Macartney and Cremona, *op. cit.*, pp. 311-312.

116 E. S. Furniss, Jr., *A New State Faces a Difficult World*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1940, p. 18.

117 Macartney and Cremona, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-316.

118 Vere-Hodge, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

him «no ground for hope.»<sup>119</sup> As recorded above, the conference accepted a régime whose provisions were satisfactory to Turkey. Resentful of the recent Turco - British **rapprochement** and the strengthened position of Russia, Italy was seriously critical that the Lausanne Convention was revised in spite of the absence of Italy, which claimed a stronger voice in international diplomacy.<sup>120</sup> Later, however, Rome prepared to give her support to the Montreux Convention on two conditions:<sup>121</sup> a status identical with the original signatory states and the same reserves as Japan concerning the links between the Covenant and the Montreux Convention. She adhered to the Montreux Convention finally on May 2, 1938.

At this point, Italy seemed prepared to do her best to quieten Turkish apprehensions. After her assurances to Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia that she had pacific intention in the Mediterranean, Ciano and Aras met in Milan in February 1937 to review Italo - Turkish relations. The Turkish Premier<sup>122</sup> declared the intention of his government to make relations with Rome «as perfect as possible.» He aimed at «eliminating all misunderstandings,» together with their causes, among the Mediterranean Powers. Individual instances, however, kept Turkish suspicions alive. On August 10, 1937, the British steamship **British Corporal** had been attacked by aircraft, some of which were identified as Italian planes based on Palma. On August 17, **Ciudad da Cadiz**, a Spanish Republican steamer, had been sunk by a submarine of unknown nationality. On August 19, **Armuro**, another Spanish Republican vessel, was hit by a torpedo off the Turkish coast. Although the Spanish Civil War temporarily diverted Italy's attention away from the Eastern Mediterranean, the submarine attacks on Mediterranean shipping in August 10, 1937, reached the Turkish shores and Turkey, believing that these submarines had come from the Italian naval bases in the Dodecanese, announced that, in the future, any submarines spotted

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<sup>119</sup> Muggeridge, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>120</sup> Macartney and Cremona, *op. cit.*, pp. 188 - 189.

<sup>121</sup> Muggeridge, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>122</sup> İnönü'nün Söylev ve Demeçleri, p. 322.

without leave in the Turkish territorial waters would be sunk. This Turkish initiative paved the way for the Nyon Conference where Turkey supported the British and French Governments in their defence of international shipping against the piratical attacks of Italian submarines. Mussolini was willing to give a further guarantee and renew the declaration that Italy had no anti-Turkish aims.<sup>123</sup> On June 23, 1938, the Turkish Ambassador in Rome told<sup>124</sup> Ciano that the Turkish Foreign Minister, «with the aim of intensifying political relations between Italy and his country,» had been considering proposing the formation of a pact for the eastern Mediterranean, a pact to which, in addition to Italy and Turkey, the other interested Powers would also adhere. Ciano answered that he would report the suggestion to the Duce, but in a personal and preliminary manner, he pointed out to him that, as far as its contents were concerned, such a pact seemed superfluous, and contrary to Italy's diplomatic policy owing to its collective nature. Apart from that, Ciano did not see why Turkey and Italy should require a new instrument for closer association as relations between the two states were «correct» (**sic**). At the beginning of 1939 the Turkish Government invited Ciano to visit Ankara; the latter remained non-committal.<sup>125</sup> The visit never materialized as Ciano got wind of the fact that the Turks had changed their minds and were not so anxious for him to visit their capital. This preference of the Turks was not without reason for not only the Italian broadcasts in Turkish from the Bari station were openly threatening, but also Mussolini, while commenting on the German-Italian alliance of May 30, 1939, had stressed the necessity of over-running the whole of the Balkans and had added: «By the lightning-like operation which is to be carried out decisively, not only the guaranteed states, like Greece, Rumania and Turkey, would be out of the fight, but one would also protect one's back.»<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Muggeridge, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-146.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>125</sup> Gibson, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>126</sup> *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*. Vol. V, pp. 453-455.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the years that followed the Lausanne Convention, Turkey's relations with the West steadily improved. In spite of a number of agreements between the Soviet Union and Turkey, the fundamental reason for solidarity of Moscow and Ankara, namely, joint enmity towards Western imperialism, gave way to a more cautious Turkish policy establishing friendly relations with the West and at the same time maintaining correct ties with the U. S. S. R. as befitting a powerful neighbour. Turkey needed a strong structure of protection in the form of bilateral agreements with the Great Powers and schemes for regional security in the Balkans and the Middle East. From 1923 to 1939, the «vacuum» between the southeastern frontiers of Germany, the eastern borders of Italy, the southern rims of Russia and the northern outskirts of India were covered by four interlocking regional pacts. The Balkan Entente, in which Turkey had been the leading spirit, and Little Entente were knit together by the common membership of Yugoslavia and Rumania; the Balkan and the Saadabad Pacts by the common membership of Turkey, and the Arab and the Saadabad Ententes by the common membership of Iraq.

The Turks sought correct relations with Russia, collaboration with Britain, a close understanding with the Balkan and the Asiatic neighbours, and respect towards the rest. They also pursued a policy of friendship towards Italy up to the time that Italian aggression began to take the shape of serious threat to peace in the Balkans and the Aegean.

With Mussolini in power the Turks suspected a shift in Italy's foreign policy to the spirit of the Saint-Jean de Maurienne Agreement. Similarly, Germany's actions in Central Europe failed to find supporters in Turkey. Moreover, the Nazi Government was unwilling to enter into relations with Turkey on a footing of equality. The historical precedent of 1914 fresh in the Turkish minds, Ankara realized that Germany was trying to incorporate Turkey in her own economic system and be a step closer to political subjugation in the perfect spirit of Erbkönig's admonition: **«Und bist du nicht willig, so brauch ich Gewalt.»**

On November 10, 1938, Turkey mourned the death of President Kemâl Atatürk, to whom his grateful people had given the title of **Ebedî Şef** (the Eternal Chief). His old opponents in Europe, now turned admiring friends, deeply regretted the loss that Turkey and the world had sustained in the death of so great a soldier, statesman and reformer. The Turkish people saw in İsmet İnönü a natural successor to the great Atatürk. Addressing the Grand National Assembly, Prime Minister Celâl Bayar said that the government would faithfully follow the Kemâlist régime in every domain and that the foreign policy would remain unchanged.<sup>127</sup>

Turkey regarded any possibility of the domination of the Eastern Mediterranean by Italy or of the Balkans by Germany, Italy or a South-Slav bloc under German influence and dangerously prejudicing her independence and territorial integrity. Forced by a new turn of events dangerous for herself, Turkey decided to enter into full commitments with England and France with the Treaty of October 19, 1939.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Cumhuriyet. November 17, 1938.

<sup>128</sup> Resmî Gazete. November 9, 1939, p. 4357.