TURKISH-ITALIAN RELATIONS IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

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Title: Turkish-Italian Relations in the Interwar Period

This thesis scrutinizes the relationship between Turkey and Italy in the interwar era on the basis of the bilateral diplomatic and economic contacts. In the light of the specific goals of both Turkish and Italian foreign policy of the time, the mutual positions of these two states are analyzed through comprehensive historical narration. In this sense, this study aims at displaying Rome's implementation of the *mare nostrum* policy, which was the fundamental element of interwar Italian foreign policy, on Turkey, through different methods depending on the conditions and the needs of the various epochs. In this way, it also shows the identifier nature of these aforementioned methods on the various periodizations for the Turkish-Italian relations. As a response to the Italian aims over Turkey, this thesis argues that Ankara, which regarded Italy as the foremost threat to Turkish territory, positioned Turkish foreign policy vis-à-vis Italy. Therefore, it is suggested that Italy was the major determinant of the Turkish foreign policy, in terms of its decisions, orientations, and the initiatives, especially in the 1930s.

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Başlık: İki Savaş Arası Dönemde Türk-İtalyan İlişkileri

Bu tez iki savaş arası dönemde Türkiye ve İtalya arasındaki ilişkileri iki yanlı diplomatik ve ekonomik temaslara dayanarak dikkatle incelemektedir. İki devletin birbirine karşı tutumları, dönemin Türk ve İtalyan dış politikalarının spesifik amaçları ışığında, geniş kapsamlı bir tarihsel anlatıyla analiz edilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma Roma'nın, iki savaş arası İtalyan dış politikasının temel unsuru olan *mare nostrum* politikasını çeşitli zaman dilimlerinin durum ve ihtiyaçlarına göre, Türkiye üzerinde, farklı yöntemler yoluyla uygulayışını göstermeyi hedeflemektedir. Böylece, bahsedilen bu yöntemlerin Türk-İtalyan ilişkilerinin çeşitli dönemlere ayrılmasındaki belirleyici niteliği de sunulmaktadır. Türkiye üzerindeki İtalyan emellerine cevaben, bu tez, Ankara'nın İtalya'yı Türkiye topraklarına en büyük tehlike olarak kabul ederek Türk dış politikasını İtalya'ya göre konumlandırdığını iddia etmektedir. Bundan hareketle, İtalya'nın özellikle 1930'lar Türk dış politikasının, karar, yönelim ve girişimlerinin başlıca belirleyicisi olduğu ileri sürülmektedir.

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PREFACE

This thesis aims to illuminate the relations between Turkey and Italy in the interwar period with respect to both Turkish and Italian foreign policy goals of the time. As emphasized throughout this study, Turkish-Italian relations between the wars were on the basis of the *Mare Nostrum* (our sea) policy, which depended on the expansionism in Eastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, of Italy and the response of Turkey to this policy through different means. Therefore, apart from being a detailed story of the specific relationship between these two countries, this study exemplifies the clash between one offensive and another defensive country in the interwar era that became the scene of this struggle under the name of revisionist-antirevisionist contention.

In this respect, after making a few remarks about the reasons for my interest in the topic in the first chapter as an introduction, defining the place of Turkish-Italian relations within the foreign policy of Turkey and Italy and on the history of the interwar period seemed appropriate to me, in order to place this relationship within a general framework. In order to achieve this, firstly, I tried to designate the general course of events in Europe between the wars on the basis of a revisionist-antirevisionist division. In this sense, not only the content of the expansionist Mare Nostrum policy of Italy and the methods that it implemented in order to realize this goal but also the place of Italy both in the mind of Turkey and in Turkish foreign policy vis-à-vis the expansionist agenda of Rome are discussed.

In this regard, when I tried to designate the historical narrative of this study hereafter, I obtained the opportunity for both showing this general framework of the Turkish and Italian bilateral relationship and presenting the details of the Turkish-

Italian contacts at the time, references to which are not common in the Turkish historiography.

In order to achieve these goals, a chapter on the Turkish-Italian contacts in the pre-1922 period provides background to the main target of this study. It is important to note that this brief history, which involves the Italo-Ottoman relationship on the basis of the Italian expansionism will show the continuity in the Italian foreign policy towards Turkey despite the fact that the change in the relationship occurred on the basis of the alternating methods that Italy used in order to achieve domination over Turkey between the wars.

After this short background, the fourth chapter about the diplomatic relations between 1922 and 1927 begins with the Lausanne Conference, because the stance of Italy, which had favored closer contacts with the Ankara government during the National Struggle period with the dream of gaining economic concessions, began to change in this time scale. Italy, which understood that Kemalists were against any kind of economic privileges, came closer to the Entente powers and behaved harshly to Turkey, parallel with her goals. Therefore, this period illustrates the aggressive stance of Rome towards Ankara beginning with the Lausanne process, and subsequently, especially around the Mosul issue linked to the British, and around the individual plans of Italy for gaining territory from Anatolia.

However, with 1927, the stance of Rome began to change in the sense that the attitude of Italy softened towards Turkey. Thus, the fifth chapter sheds light upon this new period, which lasted until 1932. For strategic reasons, Turkey and Italy came closer to each other diplomatically and economically in this period. What should be emphasized for this period with respect to the methods of Italy's Mare Nostrum policy is that Italy changed the strategy and Turkey accepted it as a "so-called" friend

country for various reasons, but in reality Italy's aim remained the same, only the methods had changed. Parallel to this, Turkey did not resist the friendship of Italy, but never trusted it.

The sixth chapter looks at the breakdown of this so-called friendship in the sense that Italy returned to its aggressive stance not just in terms of Turkey, but in terms of international politics. This chapter shows not only the increasing aggressive tone in the Italian foreign policy after 1932, but also the reactions of the Turkish foreign policy to the intimidating position of Italy in the area of Mare Nostrum. In this respect, the orientation of Turkey vis-à-vis Italy in international relations is designated through the different events that depended on the Italian aggressiveness of the time.

It is important to note that diplomatic relations are able to display only the general lines of the contacts. Without analyzing the economic relations separately, this study could not be complete. For this reason, I sought and analyzed the economic relations in the seventh chapter, which brings out the commercial relations and the economic cooperation between the two countries. From this excerpt, one can see that Italy tried to use economic tools in order to dominate Turkey especially through cooperation in economic matters on the one hand, and that the economic penetration strategy coincided with the period in which Turkey and Italy cooperated diplomatically, on the other hand. What all of these facts imply is that although the figures of commerce did not depend on the diplomatic relations especially in the conditions of open economy, like they had in the pre-depression period, economic cooperation was totally based on the political relations.

With these chapters, nearly all of the dimensions of these bilateral relations are displayed. However, amongst the all of these issues, the Dodecanese Islands

necessitated special attention, because Turkey felt all of the aggression of Italy through these islands near Anatolian territory. Therefore, the eighth chapter is devoted to the Italian presence on the Dodecanese Islands not only in terms of the strategic aspects in which the Turkish officials were interested mostly, but also in terms of the nature of the Italian administration in the Islands which was mainly composed of the Greeks but inhabited also the Turkish minority.

As can be seen from the division and the content of the chapters, this study necessitated intensive research of both primary and secondary sources. However, secondary sources specifically about Turkish-Italian relations are insufficient, both with the exception of the works of Dilek Barlas, from which I benefitted substantially, and with the exception of the some Turkish foreign policy books that had limited numbers of pages on the issue. I must underline additionally that very similar to the ignorance of the Turkish works, the Italian and the other foreign secondary sources focus not on specifically Turkey but on the general framework of the Italian expansionism in Eastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, which I used mainly for the general framework.

This lack of secondary sources orientated me to study primary sources essentially, for the historical data specifically on the bilateral Turkish-Italian contacts. However, due to the inability to access the archives of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I concentrated on the sources obtained from the General Directorate of the Prime Ministry State Archive Office of the Republican Archives. I tried to supplement these historical documents both with the written proceedings of the Turkish Assembly of the period and with articles and editorial columns from *Cumhuriyet* (Republic), one of the leading newspapers of the time. In addition, the published statistics of the State Statistics Institute about the Turkish commerce for the

economic relations chapter and the *Görüşlerim* (My Views) by Tevfik Rüştü Aras, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1925 and 1938 uninterruptedly, for the chapter on diplomatic relations between 1932 and 1939 were the important sources from which I benefitted intensely. As can be seen, in order to reach specific conclusions about the bilateral relations between Turkey and Italy in every aspect, I utilized both primary and secondary sources in the sense that I used the former for the historical narrative of bilateral contacts specifically, and the latter in order to complete the broader picture, which, in my view, led to a balanced situation in this work in terms of the methodology.

In conclusion, with the help of these various sources, following pages will show the content and the techniques of the Mare Nostrum policy of Italy, the place of Turkey within this policy, and the determinant role of Italy in Turkish foreign policy during the whole interwar period, but intensively in the 1930s.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Although the period from 1918 to1939 era constitutes one of the most important epochs of the history of mankind, there is still lack of historical and analytical studies on the era with the exception of some popular subjects, such as Nazi Germany. When one looks at the picture from a broader perspective rather than the historical experiences of the individual countries, like the revisionist and anti-revisionist division of Europe in the interwar era, it is seen that the works about the stronger overbalance the ones about the relatively weaker.

The implication of this statement is that the works about the international relations of the interwar era mainly and justifiably focus on the German aggression, the French resistance, and the British condonation to some extent. Related to the purpose of this thesis, for instance, despite the abundance of literature on the German concept of *Lebensraum* (living space) in Eastern Europe, "Mussolini's ambitions in this region are less well known and are usually taken less seriously than those of Adolf Hitler."[1] However, since there was the Mare Nostrum policy of Italy in these areas, which was analogous to the lebensraum of Germany, but less successful, discussing the aims and the methods of the Italian policy via this particular case is important.

Therefore, one reason that drove me to study this particular case is the ignorance of the academic literature about the details of the Italian expansionism with the exception of the Abyssinian War, because although it was overshadowed by

[1] Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), p.467.

the policies of the other powers, the imperialistic strategy of Italy posed a threat to Eastern Europe and to the Eastern Mediterranean of which Turkey was a part. In this way, through Turkey, the content of the Italian foreign policy on the basis of Mare Nostrum is exemplified. The behaviour of Italy towards Turkey, as will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapters, is capable of demonstrating every tool, from aggression to friendship, that fascist Rome used within this policy.

In addition to the desire to deal with the relatively untouched phenomenon of Italian expansionism in the Mare Nostrum area, with the exception of Abyssinia, the realization of the ignorance of the Turkish scholars about the issue on the basis of the Turkish foreign policy encouraged me to go into the details of the topic. In fact, the lack of any study on this subject is suprising especially if the importance of the Italian aggression in Turkey's security in the interwar era is kept in mind. To put it differently, an ill-balanced situation exists in the studies about the Turkish foreign policy in the sense that although one of the most important anxieties of the Turkish officials was the Italian expansionist aims especially throughout the 1930s, this determinant role of Rome over the foreign policy makers in Ankara was ignored in the Turkish historiography.

In this context, this thesis, apart from exemplifying the content of the Mare Nostrum policy of Italy, analyses the Turkish foreign policy decisions on the basis of the Italian threat, rather than listing them separately and unconnectedly from each other, as is done in many resources.

From this perspective, the major issues for Turkey in the interwar era, such as the ultimate decision of Turkey in terms of accepting the League's judgment over the Mosul problem, entrance into the League of Nations, taking initiative and participating in the Balkan Entente, efforts at forming a Mediterranean Pact, the

decision to draw closer to Britain and France towards the end of the period, and many other phenomena are examined vis-à-vis their relationship to Italy. This method was very necessary not only due to the subject matter, but also due to the need to interpret the Turkish foreign policy in this epoch on the basis of various dynamics in which Italy played a major role in the sense that most of Turkey's international issues between the wars could be connected to the Italian threat either directly or indirectly, as the subsequent chapters will show.

Therefore, I can summarize that in addition to the ignorance of the literature towards the two wings of the topic; namely towards the expansionist policy of Italy in the Eastern Mediterranean and its methods, and towards the determinant character of Italy in the interwar Turkish foreign policy, the desire for looking at the Turkish foreign policy, in which I specifically interested, on the basis of a connection of either events or characteristics, rather than small independent pieces became the main reasons for doing this study particularly in this way.

A thesis, written as a result of the aforementioned deficiencies and the necessities, will reflect the means that Italy used within the framework of Mare Nostrum on the basis of the Turkish case, in the sense that the subsequent chapters discuss the military plans, economic cooperation and penetration efforts, and political cooperation desires of Italy simultaneously or sequentially.

It also designates the determinant character of Italy, or in specific terms the Italian "threat" in the Turkish foreign policy. This study will answer the question of what the importance of fascist Italy was for Turkey between the wars in every aspect. When this is done through the designation of various examples and arguments, the general framework of the Turkish foreign policy will come into the scene.

In consequence, the analysis of this study, which tries to scrutinize these two problematic, is important in terms of reaching general points both about the nature of the Italian Mare Nostrum policy of which Turkish-Italian relationship is a part and about the nature of the Turkish foreign policy in the interwar era.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE MARE NOSTRUM POLICY OF ITALY AND ITS PROMINENCE IN TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY BETWEEN THE WARS

The interwar period had become a scene of imponderable developments within human history. The events in this era were so important and devastating that nearly twenty years after the end of the Great War, another world war came into existence. In this respect, for an expressive and consistent argument, it is essential to look at the course of events in Europe because of the fact that a preliminary framework of all Europe between the wars will shed light not only upon the Turkish and Italian foreign policy orientations separately, but also upon the nature of the bilateral Turkish-Italian relations in this period of time.

In this sense, the first thing that is necessary to state for the post-war shape of the European continent was that the long-lived empires of the pre-war Europe had disappeared during and after this four-year destructive period. The disappearance of the Ottoman Empire as well as the Austro-Hungarian Empire from the scene had led to the continued formation of various nation-states in these areas that had begun in the nineteenth century. The meaning of this situation for European politics was that specifically Eastern Europe began to include small-nation states with various features and problems hereafter, which would be determinant for the European political arena on the one hand and for the international arena on the other, due to the existence of more actors therein which would necessitate different kinds of policies and systemic analyses. Therefore, the existence of these smaller states especially in Eastern Europe constituted an atmosphere in which the bigger and more powerful states both influenced the fate of the less powerful states with their policies and ambitions and

also were influenced by the stance and the policies of these smaller states in return. Thus, in sum, European politics became more complicated than the pre-war period.

For this reason, with the end of the war, the states began to think about a formulation that could provide peace in the whole world. International relations before the Great War were dependent on the notion of the balance of power, which assumed that an unbalanced power was dangerous for other states.[2] Therefore, the states had formed alliances on the basis of keeping any one state from developing a preponderance of power,[3] however; the result had become a world war due to the increased rigidity in the alliance system.[4]

In fact, at the structural level, there were two determinants of the war; the aforementioned problematic alliance system and the rising German power.[5] Therefore, it becomes meaningful that the peacemakers of 1919 were specifically interested firstly in the German problem, and secondly in the future structure of world politics, because the powers worried about the possible reiteration of past experiences.

In this context, in terms of the latter, peace was established on the basis of the ideas of the U.S. President Wilson, who proposed the principle of collective security. According to him, since there was a necessity for the defense of peace under the international law rather than the security concept that depended on national interest,

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[2] Tayyar Arı, *Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Dış Politika* (Bursa: MKM Yayıncılık, 2008), p.293.

[3] Joseph S. Nye, *Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005), p.63.

[4] Ibid., p.69.

[5] Ibid.

there was a need for an international institution dedicated to maintaninig the peace.[6] It was this idea that laid the foundation of the League of Nations.

In terms of the German problem, the winners envisioned a peace settlement which should cripple Germany to the extent that this "guilty" nation would not pose a threat to any country in the future. Setting aside the concrete clauses of the peace treaty, it is necessary to state in general terms that the post-war settlement created an atmosphere in Europe, which would be regarded in subsequent decades as having led to the Second World War. That is to say, the Versailles Treaty created a Versailles System which became the most important element of the future clashes within European politics, on the way to another world war.

The common feature of these two components of the post-war settlement was their failure in the sense that the interwar years experienced a collapse both in the collective security and in the Versailles System, step by step. In this context, it could be suggested that although there were different phases in the interwar history, the determinant feature of this era was the continuous change for the worse. If the periodizations of the various scholars are analyzed, this feature of the interwar era is seen. For instance, while Sander classifies the interwar history as the period of the protection of peace (1919-1924), the period of Locarno (1925-1930), and the period of the collapse (1930-1939) respectively,[7] Crozier makes the same division as the period of the making of the inter-war world (1919-1923), the period of the failed peace (1919-1933), the period of the challenge to the international system (1933-1936), and the period of the deepening crisis (1936-1938).[8] As can be seen,

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[6] Henry Kissinger, *Diplomasi* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2002), p.216-217.

[7] Oral Sander, *Siyasi Tarih, 1918-1994* (Ankara, İmge Kitabevi, 2007), p.16-63.

regardless of the different authors' classifications on the basis of their own interpretations, what seems clear is a downward linearity in terms of the international relations in the interwar history.

Although some positive developments occurred in terms of international peace, like the temporary relief that the Dawes Plan about the German war reparations and the Locarno Agreement about the security issues of Western Europe brought, it was obvious that these were exceptional cases in the sense that with this kind of peace settlement there was no possibility for the preservation of peace, because apart from becoming one of the reasons for the return of crippled Germany to the European arena with an aggressive stance, the Paris Peace Treaties created a specific division within Europe. Thus, the division of Europe into revisionist and the pro-status quo camps with a major clash of interests between each camp became a determinant factor in terms of bringing Europe to a deadlock.[9] The picture seems much more completed when the impacts of the world economic crisis of 1929 are added to this politically divided atmosphere in the sense that the acceleration of the tension and the polarization of the international arena on the basis of the revisionist and the anti-revisionist division after 1930 were assisted also by the devastating effects of the Great Depression in one way or another.

In this general European framework between the wars, the determinant factor for the position of a country in terms of revisionism and anti-revisionism was the result that it took from the Great War. Specifically, the general trend in this respect was the revisionism of the losers and the anti-revisionism of the winners. For

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[8] Andrew J. Crozier, *The Causes of the Second World War* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p.37–146.

[9] Baskın Oran, "Göreli Özerklik-I, Dönemin Bilançosu" in *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar*, ed. Baskın Oran (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), vol.1, p.242.

instance, on the one hand, France on the basis of controlling Germany, and Romania on the basis of protecting its excessive territorial gains after the Great War were both anti-revisionist. On the other hand, Germany in terms of getting rid of the chains of Versailles and Bulgaria in terms of regaining lost territories, reflected revisionism substantively.

Therefore, the main issue in terms of the subject of this study becomes the position of Turkey and Italy separately in this environment on the one hand, and the position of one of these countries vis-à-vis the other, on the other hand. In this respect, it is important to note that when the stances of these two countries are analyzed, their unique conditions are displayed, in the sense that neither Italy nor Turkey reflected the general proposition that defeated countries became revisionist while the victorious ones followed pro-status quo policies. On the contrary, Turkey did not follow an anti-status quo policy although she was one of the defeated powers of the First World War.[10] The importance of the success of Ankara in the National Struggle, which led to the Lausanne Treaty with better circumstances than the Sevres Treaty, was apparent in this orientation.[11] In this respect, it could be stated that since Turkey had already revised the system in terms of Sevres Treaty, it was not surprising that the future policies of Ankara would depend on the protection of the existing system; in other words, on anti-revisionism.

By the same token, Italy, which had territorial ambitions over the Eastern Mediterranean and Eastern Europe, failed to achieve its goals although it had been victorious. Since it could get neither Anatolian lands nor the Dalmatian shores, but just South Tyrol after the Great War, "the Italian reaction to the peace settlements

[10] Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü, *Atatürk Türkiye'sinde (1923–1983) Dış Politika Sempozyumu (24 Ekim 1983): Bildiriler* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1984), p.54.

[11] Ibid.

that followed the First World War may be described as one of well-nigh unanimous disillusion."[12] Therefore, Italy developed a revisionist foreign policy that would be based on expansionism throughout the interwar years, different from other victorious countries.

In this atmosphere, Turkey and Italy became the representatives of diametrically opposite groups. In addition to the profound impact of this situation on the two countries' individual foreign policy choices, the bilateral relationship between Rome and Ankara proceeded also in accordance with this division. Therefore, at this point, it is important to draw the general framework of these two countries' foreign policies because this elaboration will also show the general theorization of the bilateral relations between the countries.

In terms of Italy, it is not erroneous to suggest that the foremost guide of the Italian foreign policy was the aforementioned disappointment which was felt by all of the segments of the Italian society. Italy had participated in the First World War, because the Entente powers had made various appealing promises to it. However, Italy made only minor territorial gains but suffered major political, social, and economic problems from the war. Therefore, the disappointment of the war and the social disorder led to a Fascist takeover led by Benito Mussolini in October 1922. In fact, the fascist takeover showed that the existent institutional structures of the Italian state, which had been functioning ever since the Italian unification, could no longer govern the country.[13] Therefore, as a response to the need to bring a new governing style to Italian society, the fascist regime tried to change every aspect of the Italian life. Apart from the restructuring of Italian society on the basis of Fascist ideology,

[12] Rene Albrecht-Carrie, "Italian Foreign Policy, 1914–1922," *The Journal of Modern History* 20, no.4 (December 1948), p.338.

[13] Ibid.

Mussolini brought a new style also to Italian foreign policy even if this did not bring necessarily a change in the foreign policy goals. That is to say, as Bosworth writes, "what was different about the foreign policy of Liberal and Fascist Italy was not the aim, but the method,"[14] and these method changes were very closely linked to the aforementioned argument about the need for a new governing style.

At this point, the important issue becomes the foreign policy objectives of Italy between the wars regardless of their periodic origin in terms of liberal and fascist in the sense that these objectives also designate the place of Turkey within the framework. In this sense, the key term for Italy, was Mare Nostrum in the sense that it either explained or implied the regions in which the Italian foreign policy was interested throughout the interwar years. This area was so fundamental for Rome that the Italian foreign policy between the wars can be summarized as a mere Mare Nostrum policy on the basis of dominating this region.

Therefore, although the boundaries of Mare Nostrum cannot be portrayed in definite terms, it was obvious that the reference of the term was to the areas that ancient Roman Empire had dominated. Actually, the attachment to ancient Rome was an ideal of national force and regeneration;[15] it, in other words, was an issue that concerned every aspect of the Italian life rather than just a foreign policy. This broad meaning of ancient Rome for Fascist Italy can also be seen in the speeches of Benito Mussolini:

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[14] Richard Bosworth, "Italian Foreign Policy and Its Historiography," in *Altro Polo: Intellectuals and Their Ideas in Contemporary Italy* ed. Richard Bosworth and Gino Rizzo (Sydney: May Foundation, University of Sydney, I983), p.73, quoted by Stephen Corrado Azzi, "The Historiography of Fascist Foreign Policy," *The Historical Journal* 36, no.1 (March 1993), p.196.

[15] Jan Nelis, "Constructing Fascist Identity, Benito Mussolini and Myth of Romanita," *Classical World* 100, no.4 (2007), p.400.

> Rome is our point of departure and reference; it is our symbol or, if you wish, our myth. We dream of a Roman Italy that is wise and strong, disciplined and imperial. Much of what was the immortal spirit of Rome, resurges in Fascism: Roman is the Lictor, Roman is our organization of combat, Roman is our pride and courage: *Civis Romanus sum*.[16]

As can be seen, this effort for the definition of the self through *Romanness* had consequences in foreign policy in the sense that the attribution that Mussolini made directly emphasized the imperial character of the Roman Empire, which in return brought an expansionist and imperialist character to the foreign policy. It is important to underline that the expansionist character of the Fascist regime stemmed not from Fascism in itself but from the Italian historical conception of ideal fatherland which perceived the "task of acquiring specific territories as fundamental to the objective of national regeneration."[17] In this sense, it was not surprising to see that the territories of the ancient Roman Empire were brought onto the agenda under the name of the Mare Nostrum policy by the Fascist administration as a precondition of being a great power.

Thus, it could be suggested that Fascist Italy, which would pursue revisionist policies throughout the interwar years in order to become a real great power that had been so fundamental due to the insulation of the mutilated victory in the Great War, had determined its areas of interests as the Eastern Mediterranean and the Adriatic Sea. That is to say, the Mare Nostrum policy actually rested on two mare nostrum*s*; the Mediterranean and the Adriatic.[18]

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[16] Quoted by Nelis, p.403.

[17] Aristotle A. Kallis, "To Expand or Not to Expand? Territory, Generic Fascism and the Quest for an 'Ideal Fatherland," *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no.2 (April 2003), p.239.

[18] H. James Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period, 1918-1940* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997), p.18.

However, Italy was not the only power that was interested in these areas. On the contrary, other big powers also paid great attention to these parts of the world either at the same time as each other, or in different phases. In the Adriatic, or in general terms, on the Balkan side of the Mare Nostrum policy, the most serious rival to Italy was France in the 1920s, which had risen as the most powerful state in Continental Europe after the end of the war.[19] Therefore, from the beginning of the interwar era to the period in which Germany gained ascendancy, France took the lead in the reorganization of these areas and sought to constitute alliances with the states that had benefitted from the peace treaties against those who could be expected to seek the revision of these settlements.[20] As a result of the combination of the natural pro-status quo stance of specific Eastern European countries with the efforts of France, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania as the Little Entente countries plus Poland became the bulwarks of the status quo in Eastern Europe.

Therefore, Italy as a revisionist country had to tend towards the other revisionist countries in the region in order to compete with or at least to balance the French power. To this end, Italy, which had imperial designs in Albania, Dalmatia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Greece and Asia Minor, on the one hand tried to constitute a patron-client relationship with the rulers of Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria throughout the period and with Greece and Turkey in the late 1920s, and on the other hand, aided and abetted authoritarian-corporatist tendencies as well as Macedonian nationalist and Croatian Fascist terrorism.[21] Italy hoped not only that it could fill the power vacuum in the Balkans and Eastern Europe after the demise of

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[19] Leften S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453* (London: Hurst, 2000), p.733.

[20] P. Kissoudi, "Balkan Politics: Relations between Greece and the Balkan States in the Inter-war Years and the Role of the Great Powers in the Region," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 25, no.13 (2008), p.1720.

[21] Bideleux and Jeffries, p.467.

the major Empires, but also that it could replicate the Roman dominance in the Balkans by turning the Adriatic and the Aegean Seas into Italian lakes again.[22] The aim of Italy for the realization of Mare Nostrum policy necessitated an approach similar to the French one, but on the revisionist side. In fact, parallel moves with Bulgaria, Albania, and Hungary were achieved easily especially if the stances of these three countries were kept in mind. However, Italy had another and more difficult aim, which could be explained as making a triangle in the Balkans with possible collaboration among Rome, Athens and Ankara in order to compress Yugoslavia.[23] According to Italian formulations, the next step would be conjoining these two blocks, in other words, forming an alliance in the Balkans that would be composed of Hungary, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Greece. Although there were problems among each of these powers, Italy believed that, on the one hand "Turkey inclined more toward the Italian–Bulgarian camp than to that of Romania and Yugoslavia; members of the Little Entente,"[24] and on the other hand, the problems between Yugoslavia and Greece could not be solved in the near future.

However, the diplomatic developments in the Balkans ensured that neither of these visions of Italy would be achieved. In addition to the fact that Yugoslavia and Greece reached an agreement in 1929, the Greco-Turkish rapprochement, for which Mussolini especially made great effort for the sake of the further goals of Rome, once achieved, became the one of the most important bulwarks of the status quo in the Balkans.[25] The Balkan Entente is an example of this situation in the sense that

[22] Ibid.

[23] Burgwyn, p.42.

[24] Dilek Barlas, "Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. Opportunities and Limits for Middle-power Activism in the 1930s," *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no.3 (2005), p.446.

Greece and Turkey, as the so-called allies of Italy during the last years of the 1920s and Romania and Yugoslavia as members of the Little Entente formed a pact which was strongly against revisionism.

Therefore, it could be suggested that in the Balkans, Italy achieved nothing beyond a strong collaboration with Bulgaria and Hungary and dominance over Albania. The situation did not change after the rise of Nazi Germany in the sense that the competition between Italy and France over Eastern Europe turned into a competition between Italy and Germany. However, Italy with some exceptions such as Albania, could not handle this rivalry with Germany, firstly due to the fact Germany had become its ally in the second half of the 1930s, secondly due to the fact Italy did not have the economic capacity for this job. That is to say, in the Balkans, the Lebensraum of Germany overbalanced the *spazio vitale* (vital space) of Italy. In consequence, in terms of the Eastern European Mare Nostrum, Italy had not carried out its defined agenda on the eve of the Second World War.

By the same token, in terms of the Mediterranean section of Mare Nostrum policy, Italy was confronted by Britain and to some extent by France. In the Mediterranean, Abyssinia had become an issue of national self-esteem for the Italians, for whom the revenge of the Adowa defeat of Italian troops in 1897, with the conquest of Abyssinia was much more important than anything else. However, since the conquest of Abyssinia would change the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean in terms of Egypt and the Red Sea, Italy had to clash with Britain over it.[26] Although for various reasons, Italy achieved conquering Abyssinia, Britain

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[25] Stavrianos, p.736.

[26] Robert Mallett, "The Italian Naval High Command and the Mediterranean Crisis, January-October 1935," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22, no.4 (1999), p.77.

remained both as the leader of the area and as the major obstacle that stood against the large scale plans of Italy in the Eastern Mediterranean.

As could be seen from this historical and strategic analysis of the Mare Nostrum policy of Italy, the desire of Rome was dominance both in the Eastern Europe and in the Eastern Mediterranean, through expansionism. At this point, the question to ask is what methods Italy implemented to reach its foreign policy goals. As emphasized above, Italy chose to make alliances among the revisionist powers in Eastern Europe in order to establish a patron-client relationship, in other words, to establish hegemony in these areas. With this way, Rome would command these societies in terms of their closely linked foreign policy choices. However, gaining hegemony through constituting alliances was not the only way that Italy had used in the target area, between the wars.

The second means that Italy used was the military methods, as in the case of the Corfu incident and of the occupation of Abyssinia. In fact, war as a means, especially in the European Mare Nostrum was not the first option for Italy in the sense that a war in Eastern Europe could not be a limited one between only Italy and the other country at issue. Therefore, it should be underlined that Italy preferred war only if it would be in periphery and in a limited way, as in Abyssinia.[27]

Apart from war, Italy also used economic penetration as a means of dominating a country. Although it lacked the tools necessary to dominate a state economically due to its inadequate economic power especially when compared to Germany's economic penetration in the Balkans in the1930s, it struggled to achieve a similar kind of hegemony in these areas. For instance, in the case of Albania, Italian

[27] G. Rochat, "Il Ruolo delle Forze Armate nel Regime Fascista: Conclusioni Provvisorie e Ipotesi di Lavoro," *Rivista di Storia Contemporanea* 1, no.2 (April 1972), p.194.

economic penetration in the form of commercial agreements, an immense amount of trade, loans, and the institutions for the administration of these had key roles in the dominance of Italy on the country.[28] By the same token, Rome tried to utilize trade in other Balkan countries in order to establish economic hegemony in the target society.

In this sense, the trade of arms constituted a fundamental part of commercial relations. Arms trade with Turkey,[29] especially in the period between 1927 and 1932, during which the two countries came close to each other, and with Hungary were important examples of the fact that Italy was using military issues for economic purposes and economic issues for political purposes. Although especially after 1934, with the German economic penetration in the area, Italy lost its importance, economy should be regarded as the strategic tool for Italian expansionism between the wars.

Apart from armed clashes, strategic alliances, and economic penetration, Italy benefitted from another tool, which was Fascist groups abroad, in her imperialist policy. In fact, Fascist groups abroad under the name of *Fasci all'Estero* (Fascists at Abroad), had many tasks, but all of these tasks could be summarized as "exporting fascism."[30] To this end, these groups "sought to regiment Italian emigrants and, ultimately, hoped to disseminate fascist ideology beyond Italy's borders,"[31] and worked with the idea of backing the Italian expansion in these regions.[32] It becomes necessary not only to underline that these groups existed also in Izmir and Salonika

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[28] Besnik Pula, "Becoming Citizens of Empire: Albanian Nationalism and Fascist Empire, 1939–1943," *Theor Soc* 37, (2008), p.575.

[29] For more information about the arms trade between Turkey and Italy see, Dilek Barlas and Serhat Güvenç, "To Build a Navy with the Help of an Adversary: Italian-Turkish Naval Arms Trade, 1929-1932," *Middle Eastern Studies* 38, no.4 (October 2002), p.143-168.

[30] Luca de Caprariis, "Fascism for Export? The Rise and Eclipse of the Fasci Italiani all'Estero," *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, no.2 (April 2000), p.151-183.

[31] Ibid., p.151.

[32] Ibid., p.156.

in terms of the Balkans, but also to emphasize that they developed roots especially in Turkey in terms of the Middle East[33] when the mission of these groups and the aims of Italy to control Turkey are kept in mind. To sum up, the ideological aspect of the expansion in Fascist Italy was so fundamental that Fascist groups were supported by the Italian state both in order to create an environment in target societies suitable for expansion and in order to deploy Fascism as an international phenomenon.

Obviously, Rome benefitted from all of these four tools in order to realize its expansionist agenda on the basis of Mare Nostrum. For instance, when Rome decided that it could handle military takeovers without disrupting the balances that could cause problems with the other Great Powers; she was showing her aggression through military means. However, if the conditions for the military takeover were not mature, Italy resorted to economic penetration, strategic alliances, and ideological dominance either one by one or jointly.

Therefore, when I analyse this content of the Italian mare nostrum or expansionist policy and when I see the processes both in the Eastern Europe and in the Eastern Mediterranean, for the topic of this study, I reach a conclusion that the Italian attitude towards Turkey was not unique; rather it constituted a part of a grand formulation. It means that Turkish-Italian relations cannot be analyzed as just Turkish-Italian relations in themselves, but as a division of Italy's overall Mare Nostrum policy. Thus, with this character, the relationship between Rome and Ankara is also capable of giving some hints about the policies of the former in the Balkans and in the Mediterranean.

Obviously, the diplomatic developments and the economic relations which will be discussed below will show the necessity of looking at Italian-Turkish

[33] Ibid., p.154-158.

relations within the framework of the broader Mare Nostrum policy Italy used, because almost all of the methods of this policy, as explained above, were tried to be implemented upon Turkey.

Exemplifying some cross-sections of the contacts can be illustrative in terms of concretizing these methods over Turkey. In this sense, first of all, in terms of the aggressive stance of Italy, the events after the Great War are highly explanatory. As will be demonstrated in detail in the following chapters, although some parts of the southwestern Anatolia had been occupied by Italy, during and after the National Struggle, Italian forces left Turkish territory. However, the ambitions of Fascist Italy continued to have plans involving Asia Minor specifically around the issue of Mosul and linked to the collaboration with the British. In this period, Italy did not undertake a military operation towards Turkey; however, it constantly fortified the Dodecanese Islands.

When the conditions of this war-like situation came to an end in 1927, Italy tried to come closer to Turkey and also to Greece, both in order to counterbalance the power of France in the region and in order to dominate these countries not by force but by finesse. This method of being closer to Turkey in this era specifies the political rapprochement option of Italy.

It should be underlined that while Rome was trying to form friendly relations instead of posing a threat to Turkey in this era, it also utilized a method of economic collaboration. Therefore, economic cooperation between Turkey and Italy developed parallel to the political cooperation to an extent that Ankara asked for professional help about some economic issues and for credits from Rome.

Apart from political and economical cooperation, the tools for ideological penetration were also active in Turkey in the sense that in addition to the presence of

the aforementioned *Fasci all'Estero* organizations in Turkey, there were other efforts for disseminating Fascist ideology in Turkey. For instance, a document sent to the Turkish Prime Ministry by the Turkish General Staff stated that Italy was sending some periodicals to Turkey under different titles, yet they were actually making propaganda of Italian Fascism.[34]

The use of political, economic and ideological means for obtaining domination in Turkey became so widespread in this period that foreign newspapers like the *New York Times* stated their hesitations about the possible future "Italianization" of Turkey.[35] Although this period of Italy's economic, political and ideological penetration efforts over Turkey did not last very long due to the intensified aggression of Italian foreign policy that led to a deterioration of the relations beginning with 1932, it was obvious that Italy tried various ways to implement Mare Nostrum policy within a specific time period.

In this regard, the consistency of the above-mentioned means with some cross-sections of the historical development of bilateral relations shows that the relationship with Turkey was carried out on the basis of the wide-range Mare Nostrum policy. Actually, Turkey's place in this broad area of ambition and the wide-scale methods that were implemented in order to dominate Asia Minor were not very surprising because Turkey both before and during the Great War had had an importance for the Italian objectives, apart from being part of the ancient Roman territory. These interests continued in the interwar era also, within the framework of Mare Nostrum policy despite periodic fluctuations in the Italian priorities.

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[34] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/86.568..2.

[35] *New York Times,* 7 June 1929, translated and quoted by PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/236.597..12.

Apart from the place of Turkey and the Turkish-Italian relationship within the Mare Nostrum, another issue that should be particularly underlined is the place of Italy and Italian-Turkish relationship in Turkish foreign policy between the wars because as a response to the specific Italian formulation of Turkey within the framework of the aforementioned policy, the Turkish formulation of Italy in terms of Turkish foreign policy constituted the complementary determinative of this relationship.

In this respect, it could be suggested that the apprehension of Italy in the Turkish mind depended on various factors, but the most important one was its expansionist and the aggressive behaviour. Apart from the Italian territorial designs on the different parts of the Ottoman Empire in the past, the belligerent and the intimidating attitude of Italy also in the 1920s created a perception in Turkey that Fascist Italy was an enemy of Turkish sovereignty and independency. Actually Turkey was not unjustified in its viewpoint due to the above-mentioned plans of Italy.

There were other reasons that intensified the Turkish fear and the distrust of Rome, one being the geographic position of Turkey. That is to say, when Turkey was founded after its War of Liberation in 1923, it had become a neigbour to all of major powers in the sense that it was encircled by Britain through Cyprus and the Iraq mandate, by the French through the Syrian mandate, by Italy through the Dodecanese Islands, and by the Soviet Union on the eastern borders.[36] In this territorial position, Turkey, as a newly founded country which had come through a series of wars, was already uncomfortable with this feeling of being surrounded by major powers. In this sense, when the intimidating behaviour of Italy towards Turkey through the

[36] Mehmet Gönlübol and Cem Sar, *Atatürk ve Türkiyenin Dış Politikası (1919–1938)* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 1990), p.52.

Dodecanese Islands, which were very close to the Anatolian mainland, was combined with the neighbourhood of these states, the Italian threat became concrete in the minds of the Turkish political circles.

It should also be added that the "the historical experiences of being reduced from a vast empire to extinction, and then of having to struggle back to save the national homeland and its independence,"[37] had made Turkey more sensitive especially in terms of the threat that the major powers could have pose to it. Therefore, these unique conditions of Turkey, in addition to the Italian aggression on the basis of the Mare Nostrum policy turned the belligerent Italians into an enemy in the eyes of the Turks.

This image of Italy as a potential threat to the Turkish territory would survive throughout the interwar years either openly or inwardly. It had become so effectual in the first years of the republic that the distrust of Ankara, even in the period between 1927 and 1932, when both political and economic contacts had reached at peak, persisted. Likewise, it was this image that led to the Turkish misinterpretations of Italian actions like the military fortifications in the Dodecanese in 1935, which was actually a preparation for the Abyssinian campaign.

In this context, since idea that the utmost threat to Turkish territory could come from Italy according to the Turkish officials persisted, I suggest that Italy throughout the interwar years, but especially in the 1930s, became one of the determinants of Turkish foreign policy. That is to say, the threat that Turkey perceived from Italy played a major role on almost all of the foreign policy decisions and initiatives of Ankara in the period between the wars. In this sense, while this study looks at the content of the Mare Nostrum policy of Italy vis-à-vis Turkey, it

[37] Mustafa Aydın, "Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Historical Framework and Traditional Inputs," *Middle Eastern Studies* 35, no.4 (Oct 1999), p.156.

also designates this determinant role of Italy in the orientation, decisions, and initiatives of Turkish foreign policy.

Many major and minor cases in which Italy played roles either decisive or subsidiary will be examined in the following pages. However, in terms of showing the important role of Italy in interwar Turkish foreign policy, it is necessary to touch upon some of them. In this respect, the settling of the Mosul problem is a fundamental example in the sense that although it seemed irrelevant to the Italians, there was an Italian element in the whole process through the Islands. During this one of the most complicated problem of the young Turkey, both the intelligence reports that were stating that the preparation of Italy on the Islands signified the possible landing of Italians in southwestern Anatolia,[38] and the meetings between the Austen Chamberlain and Mussolini[39] implied an Italian intervention in the issue acting in cooperation with the British in order to compel Turkey to accept the League's decision. So indeed, in the decision of Turkey in terms of the acceptance of the League's decision, the Italian stance played a role in the sense that a possibility of war on various fronts was a very real danger due to the collaboration between the British and the Italians. Although the British factor alone and the Turkish desire to focus on its domestic modernization project without international problems played the major role in Turkey's decision, the Italian factor still shows the capacity of Rome in terms of intervening in a Turkish foreign policy issue.

Another instance that shows the importance of Italy in Turkish foreign policy was the Montreux Conference. Although attempts for a new Straits regime had been made before, they had not been accepted by the other powers that were interested in

[38] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/101.653..13.

[39] Peter Edwards, "The Austen Chamberlain-Mussolini Meetings,"*The Historical Journal* 14, no.1 (1971), p.153-159.

the arrangement. However, when Italy attacked Abyssinia, especially Britain, as the biggest powers in the Mediterranean, began to support a new Straits arrangement in order to gain the support of Turkey against the Italian threat in this area.[40] Therefore, surprisingly, Italy made a decisive yet positive impact on one of the most fundamental issues of Turkish foreign policy, on the contrary of the Mosul question's consequence.

In addition to these cases on which Italy played one positive and one negative role especially if the goals of the Turkish foreign policy over these issues were kept in mind, Italy played another role in terms of the orientation of Turkey. One of the most important impacts of Italy in this respect was the orientation of Turkey towards the Britain and France in the late 1930s. Although this rapprochement stemmed also from the distinctive characteristic of Turkish foreign policy, namely the balance of power notion, which drove Turkey to become closer politically to the British-French camp due to its economic dependence on the German-Italian camp in these years,[41] the explanation in 1936 of Ismet Inonu who stated that the most important issue of Turkey in these days was Italy and its position in the Mediterranean, according to which Turkey needed to position itself in European politics,[42] was able to display the determinant role of Rome in this rapprochement.

As will be emphasized, just as in the above-mentioned cases and the facts, in the rapprochement between Greece and Turkey, in the participation of Turkey at the Nyon Conference and the signing of the Nyon Agreement, in the formulation of an

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[40] Kudret Özersay, "Montreux Boğazlar Sözleşmesi," in *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar,* ed. Baskın Oran, vol.1, p.372.

[41] Oran, "Göreli Özerklik-I, Dönemin Bilançosu," p.256.

[42] Quoted by T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, Araştırma ve Siyaset Plânlama Genel Müdürlüğü, *Cumhuriyetin İlk On Yılı ve Balkan Paktı*, vol.3 of *Türk Dış Politikasında 50 Yıl*, (Ankara: Genel Müdürlük. 1973), p.54.

anti-revisionist block in the Balkans, the foremost concern of Turkey was either the Italian threat or the revisionist powers that Italy supported. Therefore, when the progress of Turkish foreign policy between the wars is examined, the existence of the Italian threat can be seen in almost every aspect.

As can be seen, there are two components of the Turkish-Italian relationship in the interwar era in terms of this study's framework. On the one hand, in terms of Italian foreign policy, there is a necessity to analyze the historical narrative on the basis of Italy's Mare Nostrum policy, because the attitude of Italy towards Turkey did not reflect an individual set of policies, but the more common implementations of a general policy which were experienced by the other states in the Balkans and in the Eastern Mediterranean, to some extent. In this sense, when the factual history is read with this awareness, it is possible to see clues about the general framework of the Mare Nostrum policy, in other words a major part of the interwar Italian foreign policy. On the other hand, in terms of Turkish foreign policy, although this relationship is ignored by the relevant works, it is suggested that Italy had a determinant place on the international decisions, initiatives, and the orientations of Ankara to an extent that the history of interwar Turkish foreign policy is full of this kind of instances which could be linked to the Italian threat, one way of another. Therefore, these two components conjointly display the Italian threat on the basis of the Mare Nostrum policy and the responses of the Turkish foreign policy to this threat in different times and in various ways.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TURKISH-ITALIAN RELATIONS

The events of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in terms of Turco-Italo relations were consequential due to the fact that they became the mirror of the forthcoming relationship between these two states within the interwar era, in the sense that the stance of Italy towards the Turkish lands throughout the late Ottoman period would become the nature of the contacts within the Republican era also.

In the late nineteenth century, Italy failed to create a colonial empire, not because of a lack of imperial ambition, but because of its inherent weakness after the achievement of a late unity,[43] which had been achieved in 1871. Conversely, the Ottoman Empire had been repeatedly partitioned due to the collaboration of Great Power politics with the nationalism of different ethnic groups within the Empire. In this atmosphere, it was not very surprising that Italy, like the other European powers, had some territorial ambitions regarding Ottoman lands, in order to satisfy itself in terms of gaining colonies, which was being regarded as a belated necessity in this period.

In this respect, since the Mediterranean Sea held a key strategic importance for the Italians due to their fear of being surrounded in this sea either by the British or by the French through their colonies, and additionally due to specific position of Italy that was a border between great and small powers[44] in continental Europe; Italy had to look for colonies within the Mediterranean in order to balance the situation.

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[43] William C. Askew, *Europe and Italy's Acquisition of Libya, 1911-1912* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University press, 1942), p.3.

[44] Albrecht-Carrie, p.326.

With this imperialist agenda, in addition to the strategic necessities of holding colonies, the increasing population problem of Italy would be settled and economic gains would be handled.

Compatibly with its goals, Italy focused on a North African territory of the Ottoman Empire, namely Tunis, as a target, because firstly Tunis was geographically close to Italy; secondly it had been a principality of the Roman Empire; and thirdly it could be a suitable emigration destination with which Italy had intense economic linkages.[45] However, contrary to the Italian dreams, Tunis became a French protectorate in 1881, which disappointed Rome very much.

It should be underlined that these partitions were being made either through tacit agreements or through declared collaborations among the Great Powers. In this respect, while Britain and Germany supported the French takeover of Tunis,[46] they also tried to direct the displeased Italians towards Libya in order not to alienate them. Accordingly, Italy began to pay attention to Tripoli, which was obviously less appealing economically and was harder to conquer than Tunis, in order not to retain the last part of the North Africa.[47] Actually, the participation of Italy in the Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria in 1882 was also closely related to the enmity of the French due to Tunis and the fear of possible future French ambitions regarding Tripoli.[48]

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[45] Hale Şıvgın, *Trablusgarp Savaşı ve 1911–1912 Türk-İtalyan İlişkileri: Trablusgarp Savaşı'nda Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'le İlgili Bazı Belgeler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1989), p.2.

[46] Germany was trying to make France to forget Alsace-Lorraine by giving consent to colonization of Tunis.

[47] İsrafil Kurtcephe, *Türk-İtalyan İlişkileri, 1911–1916* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1995), p.13.

[48] Ibid., p.11.

To this end, Italy, on the one hand, sought to provide the necessary conditions for the annexation in terms of European diplomacy and assent; on the other hand it consolidated itself in Libya through economic tools. Actually, the initial intent of the Italians was not a war with the Ottomans, but peaceful economic penetration. Since the Ottoman officials knew what the peaceful economic penetration meant, they tried to impede every initiative realted to Italian economic enterprises in Tripoli, which led to the Italian threats of an armed conflict rather than a peaceful takeover.[49] Turkey tried to contest the economic penetration of the Italians but it could not succeed in the sense that in the 1900s Italy increased its volume of trade with Tripoli and more importantly it founded various enterprises in Tripoli, specifically the Bank of Rome (*Banco di Roma*), which became one of the most important assistants of Rome in the economic penetration of Libya through the excessive purchase of landed property and the takeover of the trade.[50]

Obviously, in the first decades of the 1900s, while Italy was becoming one of the great powers of Europe with its rapid economic progress,[51] the Ottoman Empire was struggling with various difficulties. Although the constitutional monarchy had been re-declared as a result of the 1908 Revolution and had given a hope over the course of events, the problems continued with increasing frequency both within and outside the Empire. For instance, in 1908, Bosnia-Herzegovina was annexed by Austria, Bulgaria gained autonomy, and the Crete parliament declared its decision about the unification with Greece. In short, the empire was falling apart.

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[49] Orhan Koloğlu, *Osmanlı-İtalya Libya Savaşında İttihatçılar, Masonlar ve Sosyalist Enternasyonal* (Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, 1999), p.14.

[50] Kurtcephe, p.15-17.

[51] Askew, p.23.

In this atmosphere, Italy, which adjudged that the economic penetration could not reach the desired end, declared war against the Ottoman Empire on the grounds that the Ottoman authorities had prevented Italian economic initiatives with bad intentions although Italy had stated various times that Tripoli and Benghazi, which were important for Italy due to their proximity to its territory, deserved developed and "civilized" living conditions.[52] That is to say, the main reason for the war was Italian colonialism rather than the obstruction of the Italian economic initiatives in the area.

The war began on 29 September 1911. Although the Italian army seized some of the coastal towns easily, the collaboration of the Ottoman voluntary army corps that had come from different parts of the Empire with the locals, which were *Senussi* resistant fighters, in the interior regions not only prolonged the war, but also frayed the Italians both militarily and psychologically. Therefore, Italy, which had given the guarantee to the Western European powers that the war would not endanger Europe, in other words, the Balkans,[53] decided that if it attacked other parts of the Ottoman Empire, both the Ottomans and the Western powers would try to ensure a peace in favour of the Italians. In that respect, Italy bombarded Beirut and the Dardanelles and invaded the Dodecanese Islands. However, the peace that the Italians were willing to sign did not come until October 1912, when the first episode of the Balkan Wars began.

According to the Ouchy Treaty, while Turkey would surrender Libya to Italy, Italy would give back the Dodecanese Islands to Turkey. However, in 1913 Italy refused to evacuate the Islands under the pretext that the Ottoman Empire had not

[52] Kurtcephe, p.64.

[53] Şıvgın, p.48.

withdrawn its troops from Benghazi.[54] In this way, as a result of the Tripolitan War, Turkey lost not only Libya but also the Dodecanese Islands. Apart from the territorial loss of the Ottoman Empire, the balance of power in the Mediterranean shifted in favour of the Triple Alliance in the sense that Tripoli and also the Aegean Islands had strategic importance that could be used by these countries.[55]

Although Italy was unable to occupy Tripoli completely due to the *Senussi* resistance until 1925 and although there were disagreements between the Great Powers about the future of the Dodecanese Islands due to the aforementioned strategic apprehensions, Italy succeeded to acquire territories from the Ottoman Empire one way or another. It should be underlined that these territories would not be the once for all, thus, Italy, which had defended the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire in the last half of the nineteenth century vis-à-vis France specifically in terms of North Africa, would set its sights on new areas within the Empire in order to satisfy its colonial appetite.

In accordance with this desire, after a brief period of rapprochement between 1913 and1914 during which Italy and the Ottoman Empire cooperated in the commercial and financial issues,[56] with the outbreak of the Great War they came up against each other again. In fact, Italy was a member of the Triple Alliance. However, it was obvious that cooperation between Italy and Austria could not be sustained because Italy was willing to obtain territory from Austria. Therefore, Italy

[54] Timothy W. Childs, *Trablusgarp Savaşı: Türk-İtalyan Diplomatik İlişkileri (1911–1912)* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008), p.257.

[55] Askew, p.187-188.

[56] Kurtcephe, p.234.

declared neutrality as opposed to the agreements concerning the Triple Alliance, on the grounds that the war had begun beyond its control.[57]

After this point, Italy underwent negotiations both with the Alliance and with the Entente. However, due to the aforementioned Austrian factor, Italy was apparently closer to the Entente. In this context, the secret Treaty of London, which was signed between the Entente powers and Italy in April 1915, secured "an advantageous strategic frontier from Switzerland to the Adriatic"[58] as well as "a clear title to the Dodecanese and the promise of some undefined colonial compensation, especially in Asia Minor, in the event of corresponding acquisitions by its Allies."[59] Therefore, Italy, which declared war against Austria on May 1915, became the enemy of the Ottoman Empire, again with ambitions over the Turkish lands.

Related to these territorial ambitions, Italy and the Allies made another secret treaty during the war. Italian desires were addressed in the agreement of St. Jean de Maurienne in 1917, through which Rome obtained further concessions in Adalia and Izmir region although it could not receive privileges regarding the Adana-Mersin zone due to the opposition of the French, despite the intense efforts in this direction.[60]

During the Great War, Turkey and Italy did not fight against each other directly for the territories at issue in the sense that Italy imposed blockade to the Mediterranean and Aegean shores,[61] but it did not attack the region. When the

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[57] Ibid., p.234.

[58] Albrecht-Carrie, p.332.

[59] Ibid., p.332.

[60] Harry N. Howard, *The Partition of Turkey: A Diplomatic History, 1913–1923* (Norman: University of Oklahoma press, 1931), p.186.

[61] Kurtcephe, p.248.

Mudros Armistice was signed in September 1918, Italy, as one of the Entente powers, was declared a victorious country vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire. The meaning of this victory was that the provisions of the secret agreements that were signed during the war could be finally realized. Accordingly, firstly, Italy became one of the parties that occupied Istanbul in November 1918. Secondly, she landed soldiers in 1919 to Antalya, Selçuk, Muğla in accordance with the agreements.

However, Italy was not comfortable with its situation in Turkey as a victorious power, because it was experiencing difficulties with the other Entente powers. First of all, in Istanbul, the Italian officials found themselves in the backseat vis-à-vis Britain and France. Italy was disappointed by the fact that the number of its troops remained at the minimum as a result of the attitudes of Britain and France which sought to prevent Italian authority and the Italian army's cooperation with their troops.[62] The behaviour of the British and the French was understandable regarding Istanbul to some extent due to the fact that the secret agreements with Italy had not included provisions about the Ottoman capital or the Straits and Italy was a "lesser" great power in comparison to Britain and France. However, what was more disappointing to the Italians was this attitude was also prevalent in terms of the territories that had been given to Italy before and during the war according to the agreements.

In this respect, the most important point of clash among the allies became Izmir, Aydın province (*vilayet*) in general, which had been formulated as an Italian sphere of influence. However, in May 1919, Greek troops landed in Izmir which became a major turning point not only for the Turkish resistance, but also for Turkish-Italian relations. After this point, Italians came closer to Turkey and began

[62] Fabio L. Grassi, *İtalya ve Türk Sorunu (1919–1923) Kamuoyu ve Dış Politika* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi, 2003), p.35.

to follow policies that were sometimes different from those of its allies in Anatolia. For instance, Italians tried to gain sympathy from the Turkish population with benign conduct, because they thought that they could secure economic initiatives and privileges more easily that way.[63]

In addition, Italy regarded the National Struggle of Turkey as a legitimate defence and the Italians stated that they appreciated Turkish National Forces (*Kuvayi Milliye*) and Mustafa Kemal.[64] Obviously, if the intensity of the Italian national disappointment about the Greek occupation of Izmir is kept in mind, it is not surprising that Italy sympathised with a war that was fought directly against the Greeks. The recognition of the National Struggle's legitimacy by the Italians detached the policies of the Entente powers day by day in the sense that while the British was the main supporter of the Greece in Anatolia, Italy, on the contrary, helped the Turkish Nationalists in the Italian occupational zone. This attitude of Italy towards the Ankara government and the National Struggle would last until 1922 after which a rapprochement was achieved among Britain, France, and Italy, due to various reasons.

To sum up, the relationship between the unified Italy and the Ottoman Empire before the period between 1922 and 1939 was shaped by the territorial ambitions of Italy and the other European powers, which was not very different from the subsequent periods. Obviously, the Ottoman period was much sharper than the Republican era in nature, due to the existence of direct wars between the parties before the interwar years. Additionally, it should be underlined that the fluctuating nature of the Turkish-Italian relationship in the interwar era had been a characteristic

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[63] Mevlüt Çelebi*, Milli Mücadele Döneminde Türk-İtalyan İlişkileri* (Ankara: Dışişleri Bakanlığı Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi, 1999), p.120-121.

[64] Ibid., p.156.

of their relationship in the last half of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century. While after the Libyan War a nearly three-year détente period occurred, after the enmity of the First World War, Italy, by aiding the nationalists ironically, gave a start to a new period. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that the Turkish-Italian relationship in the interwar era, which had similarities to the previous period, would have some legacies from this epoch, like the lands promised in the Treaty of Saint Jean de Maurienne and the rapprochement period within the National Struggle that would be used in order to provide a basis for the relations in the era at issue.

CHAPTER 4

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND ITALY, 1922-1927: THE TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS OF ROME

The term "interwar"[65] is generally used to qualify the period between 1918, the end of the Great War, and 1939, the beginning of the Second World War. However, as is known, from 1918 to the 1923, Turkey did not experience a period that could be regarded as "between the wars." In other words, these years saw the National Struggle, or War of Independence, period of Turkey rather than interwar period. Therefore, it would not be erroneous to suggest that Turkey entered the interwar years, after the Lausanne Treaty.

This understanding has some logic in itself in the sense that on the one hand, Turkey terminated the Great War not with one of the Paris Peace Treaties, but with the Lausanne Treaty in July 1923. On the other hand, Turkey changed its system of regime in 1923. In other words, it began to live the interwar period under a new national republican state, undergoing a fundamental rupture with the old system. However, for the topic of this thesis, this conception has some problems. First of all, after a brief period of mutual understanding between Rome and Ankara government due to the mutual needs of the parties during the first years of the War of Independence in Anatolia, beginning with 1922 and to some extent the second half of 1921, the relations began to become tense due to the dominance of different points of views in Rome, other than Sforza's thinking, and to the more nationalistic stance of the Kemalists, as will be seen. In that respect, beginning with the year 1923 would mean missing the starting point of the stated parties' antagonistic attitudes to each

[65] It can be used also as "interbellum."

other which would continue throughout the period. Secondly, in 1922, a major turning point for Italy occurred in the sense that Mussolini's famous March on Rome initiated a new phase in Italian history. Therefore, in my view, the proclamation of the Republic as a starting point would cut the Fascist period's integrity needlessly, for the sake of perpetuating the general tendency of Turkish historiography.

For these reasons, it is appropriate to begin with 1922. In this way, the attitudes of different Italian governments towards Ankara can be compared in terms of consecutive liberal and fascist regimes and the position of Italy after the Turkish victory, during the negotiations of the Armistice of Mudanya and the Lausanne Peace Conference can be analyzed without being separated from the continuum. To put it differently, this conception provides the ability to present the unchanged Italian position, which either depended on hostility on the basis of imperialism or on collaboration with the "allies" on the basis of obtaining benefits which would persist until 1927, undividedly.

In that respect, before coming to 1922, it should be mentioned that the three major developments that determined the destiny of the relations between Rome and Ankara dated back to 1921. As is known, Carlo Sforza, who had guaranteed a democratic and benign program in terms of Italian foreign policy,[66] had been the major figure behind the indulgent position of Rome towards Turkey after the Great War. This attitude stemmed from the fact that Rome had become alienated from its allies due to the fact that the obligations of the Treaty of Saint Jean de Maurienne had been broken depending on the pretexts of the Allies about the absence of Russia's signature.[67] Thus, the Italian government, and mainly Sforza, had believed

[66] Burgwyn, p.15.

[67] Francesco Coppola, "Italy in the Mediterranean," *Foreign Affairs an American Quarterly Review* 1, no.4 (1922/1923), p.110.

that forging a friendship with Turkey would give influence to Italy in the Eastern Mediterranean,[68] because increased confidence on the part of Turkey would lead to the grants of economic and political privileges to the Italians.

However, these hopes did not materialize. For example, the treaties signed by Bekir Sami (Kunduh), a representative of the Ankara government, with the Italians, British, and French separately, in 1921, were not approved by the Ankara parliament on the grounds that they were against the independence of Turkey. This upset the Italians, because the treaty would have granted them economic privileges in southwestern Anatolia and the devolution of the Ereğli coal mines to a Turkish-Italian company.[69] The refusal of this treaty had meant the "bankruptcy of the Sforza policy"[70] for the Italians and constituted the first step for the cooling off of relations.

Second development involved Italian domestic policy. The Giovanni Giolitti government was succeeded that of Ivanoe Bonomi due to the escalating economic and social turmoil in the country. The new Minister of Foreign Affairs Tomasi della Torretta "did not implement opposite policies but seemed less willing to sacrifice the Italian-British relations than his predecessors at the expense of Turkey,"[71] contrary to the attitude of Carlo Sforza. Therefore, the explanations of Sforza about the unchanging friendship between Rome and Ankara that arose from the Italian conviction which had recognized the legitimacy of Turkish claims[72] obviously did

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[68] Burgwyn, p.115.

[69] M. Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk* (İstanbul: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1997), vol.1, p.392.

[70] Grassi, p.146.

[71] Ibid., p.165.

[72] Çelebi, p.246.

not seemed to reflect the truth. After that point, the new Italian governments would display rapprochement with its allies, especially with Britain, again.

However, it would be erroneous to suggest that after that point the friendship between the parties came to an end, or that they became adversaries again. Adducing a harsh transformation within the contacts could neither reflect the reality nor explain the recession of the Italian occupation forces from Antalya region in the same year. The situation, on the contrary, could be qualified only as the first steps in a change both in the Italy's method of approaching the Ankara government and in Turkish behaviour towards Rome. While the former was convinced that it could gain more benefits with the help of Britain rather than with the sympathy of the Turks; the latter, by being aware of the mentality change in Italians in terms of behaving with the Allies, sought to negotiate the issues, especially with Britain and France. For instance, when Mustafa Kemal sent Ali Fethi (Okyar) to Paris and London in 1922 for the last diplomatic undertakings before the Great Offensive, he did not need to send him to Rome; so, to some extent, he showed that Italy was of secondary importance for Turkey.[73]

Since the Kemalists gained a victory in 30 August 1922, a new phase began in which the each state played its cards against the each other, or cooperated, for its own interest. Because the issues at stake were political and economic in nature; and because Italy tried to obtain these benefits with different methods throughout the War of Independence period but had failed, Italian political and public circles reacted with different points of view to the victory of the Turks.

The common opinion persisted about their beliefs on the high probability of future economic privileges, due to the Italian sympathy in Turkey, which had come

[73] Grassi, p.176.

into being during the War of Independence. According to the Italian mind, since the Turkish people knew that Italy had desired complete justice for them, the Italians would have a conjoint future with the Turks in the moral, industrial and economic spheres.[74] Therefore, the Turkish victory should have been regarded a positive development for Rome. However, it should be underlined that opposite considerations were also existent in the sense that the victory of the Turks was interpreted as the end of the Italian dream of economic privileges, mines and petroleum.[75] In fact, the second interpretation was closer to the reality especially if the purposes of the Kemalists and the course of events are kept in mind. However, although the goals of the Kemalists were very clear, the official cadres tried not to alienate Italy and behaved accommodatingly on the threshold of the peace intercourses. Thus, why general public opinion in Italy greeted the Turkish victory positively can be understood easily within this condition.

In this atmosphere, where there was utmost uncertainty in terms of being allies, friends or rivals, Turkish troops were moving along the Dardanelles. In the period of the Dardanelles crisis, when Britain risked a war with the Ankara government in order to impede the Turks from entering the Dardanelles, Italy behaved in an unstable way. On the one hand, they became closer to the British due to their fears about the possible impact of the Turkish attitude that could damage the economic privileges not only in terms of future benefits but also in terms of existing capitulations; on the other hand, they declared that if the stance of Britain led to a

[74] Ibid., p.182.

[75] Çelebi, p.337.

war in Asia which could spread to Europe, Italy could not collaborate in such a war alongside the British.[76]

The *Chanak* crisis ended without a war and the Allies delivered a note, which was an invitation for the armistice meeting in Mudanya, to the Ankara government on 23 September 1922, which was accepted by Ankara on 29 September. In the conference at Mudanya, which dealt with ceasing fire between the parties, with determining a line in Thrace in order to retract the Greek troops, and with paving a way for future peace negotiations, the parties experienced some clashes. In this atmosphere, the stance of the Italian delegate, General Monbelli, who preferred to made pressure to Ismet Pasha for the impositions of Britain in cooperation with his French colleague, is very meaningful. Ismet Pasha reported that the Italian and French representatives were exerting pressures upon him in "friendly special meetings" in order to make him sign the armistice as soon as possible.[77] The same reports also indicated the threats, which underlined that the conditions of the Allies would become more severe in the case of non-signing.[78] This position of the Italian delegate can be interpreted in two ways; firstly, Italy knew that it could find itself in a state of war one way or another reluctantly if the armistice was not signed, and secondly, it was indicating the signs of its position on the Turkish issue, which could be become a clue about the Italian stance in future meetings.

A few days after the signing of the Mudanya Armistice, a turning point in Italian history occurred. With the famous "March on Rome," with which Benito Mussolini came to power on 29 October 1922, Italy turned into a Fascist state. In

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[76] Salahi R. Sonyel, *Gizli Belgelerle Lozan Konferansının Perde Arkası* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2006), p.5-6.

[77] A. Öner Pehlivanoğlu, *Barış Yolunda Mudanya Mütarekesi* (İstanbul: Kastaş Yayınevi, 2002), p.164-65.

[78] Ibid.

fact, Italy, after Great War could not be rallied by the various governments, in other words it had "suffered from what may be called 'post-war neurasthenia.'"[79] The masses that had fought in or supported the war had not received what had been promised before and during the war, and they had to deal with post-war economic and social difficulties. For instance, 1921 and 1922 had been the darkest periods of the post-war economic crisis that had deteriorated also by an exceptional drougt.[80] When the economic ruin and financial bankruptcy combined with the parliamentary instability and several national strikes are kept in mind, it is not hard to anticipate that the cities were on the verge of a civil war situation. In this environment, Mussolini formulated the March on Rome in order to handle the administration that should be based on nationalism, conservatism and anti-bolshevism. After a day of the general mobilization of the militant Fascists, on 29 October, Rome became surrounded by Black Shirts. Therefore, the King chose to invite Mussolini to Rome to create a cabinet rather than choosing to declare marital law to enable the government to defend itself.[81]

The importance of the Black Shirt Revolution in terms of Turkey was that Fascism also would have impacts on Italian foreign policy. Violence and the desire to be feared were strong characteristics of Benito Mussolini and he tried to establish these not only in the domestic but also in foreign affairs.[82] However, although Mussolini liked portraying Fascist Italy as a new, dynamic and great power, he did

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[79] Gaetano Salvemini, *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928), p.15.

[80] Ibid., p.139.

[81] Ibid., p.151-52.

[82] Dennis Mack Smith, *Mussolini's Roman Empire* (New York: Viking Press, 1976), p.1.

not have the raw materials and industrial base that being a great power necessitated.[83] Additionally, Italy was experiencing a problem of overpopulation, which was supposed to be solved through expansionism. Therefore, it could be stated that the colonial and expansionist agenda of Italy in the interwar period depended on this being a great power phenomenon as well as on finding new areas of immigration for the increasing Italian population and of raw materials.

In this respect, the change of dynamics in Italian foreign policy was important for Turkey, which was on the eve of peace negotiations. From the signing of the Mudros Armistice to the recent day, Italian governments' policies towards Turkey had usually been accommodating. Even if they had begun to sour within the complex situations in both Ankara and Rome as was seen above, the developments had not led to rupture, but to instability within the relations.

How Mussolini would conduct the affairs between Ankara and Rome was an important question, because Italy could change its routes about its foreign policy implementation due to the fact that for Mussolini "national grandeur rested on two mare nostrum; the Adriatic and the Mediterranean."[84] In this context, Turkish political circles were evidently worrying such a degree that a deputy in the Grand National Assembly felt to be obliged to ask about the Italian stance towards Turkey. Although Rauf Bey (Orbay) said that "we have not received any information about negative change in the latest political course of events due to the change of government in Italy, on the contrary, the political circles inform us that the government will conduct a propitious policy towards Turkey;"[85] the developments

[83] Burgwyn, p.18.

[84] Ibid.

[85] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, 13 November 1922, Devre:I, Cilt:24, İçtima senesi:3, 13 November 1922, p.497. *"Italya'da hükümetin tebdili dolayısıyla şimdiye kadar mevcut*

did not confirm the assembly discussions and explanations. For instance, due to the chaotic environment in Istanbul, just before the peace negotiations, in which the French and British were fleeing despite the assurances from the Turkish officials and in which the different ethnicities were colliding, the new Italian Prime Minister Mussolini was thundering in Rome, warning Mustafa Kemal, and advising the postponement of the Lausanne Conference if the events continued.[86] He was barely calmed by the French, who stated that possible delay could cause a new war with the Kemalists.[87] Additionally, according to the British Ambassador in Rome, Mussolini was sharply criticizing the Kemalists on the Italian press.[88]

Obviously, the stance of Italy at least for the Lausanne Conference, even if not in the whole period, began to appear also with the statements of Mussolini who was evidently willing to cooperate with the British. Indeed, Mussolini quickly reached this aim, because also the British, before coming to the Conference, desired a unity among the Allies.[89] The unending exchange of views among the Allies in order to constitute unity had led to the postponement of the conference which was supposed to begin on 13 November.[90] It could be stated that these meetings seemed to yield the desired results in the sense that Ismet Pasha reported that a visit of an Italian ambassador who underlined the possible difficulties in the negotiation process

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bulunan siyasi cereyanların tebeddül ettiğine dair bize bir haber yoktur. Bilakis bize ricali siyasiyei hükümetin Türkiye'ye karşı hayırhah bir siyaset takibedeceklerini ifham ediyorlar."

[86] Sonyel, p.31.

[87] Romani Damiani, *Türkiye'de Yabancı Bir Gazetecinin Araştırmaları: İtalya'nın Antalya'yı İşgal Kararı, Rodos'u İlhakı ve Mersine Çıkarma Planı* (Ankara: Demircioğlu Matbaacılık, 1998) p.67.

[88] Ibid. p.33.

[89] Bilal N. Şimşir, *Lozan Telgrafları: Türk Diplomatik Belgelerinde Lozan Barış Konferansı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1990), vol.1, p.104.

[90] Ali Naci Karacan, *Lozan* (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1971), p.77.

in which the Italians could not detach themselves from their Allies.[91] Apart from the unity of the attitudes, the Allies had made a separate agreement through which the states admitted not to make separate treaties.[92]

Therefore, to the conference, which began on 21 November 1922, Italy attended with Marki Camillo Garroni and Giulio Cesare Montagna. The fact that Italy displayed a pro-British stance compatible with the agreement among the Allies can be seen within the negotiation process. In other words, throughout the Conference, nothing beyond the expectations occurred. Apart from the position of Italy within the common attitude of the Allies, what was more important at that point was the conduct of specific issues that specifically concerned Italy. It seems that two noteworthy issues were contentions between Turkey and Italy bilaterally: the economic and judicial capitulations and Meis Island.

To begin with Meis Island, it should be recalled that when the Dodecanese Islands had been lost as a result of the Italo-Ottoman war over Libya, Meis also had accepted the sovereignty of Rome. The importance of the island for Turkey stemmed from the fact that the island was inside Turkish territorial waters, so the sovereignty of another country on the island was desperately diminishing the security of western Anatolia. Therefore, the stance of Ankara on the issue of Meis for the Lausanne Conference was in the direction of taking the island under Turkish sovereignty.

Ismet Pasha also had considered the possibilities of this goal even before the Conference. For instance, when he asked about the future of the island issue in a meeting with Mussolini in Paris, Mussolini had taken a conclusive attitude in the

[91] Şimşir, p.107.

[92] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:I, Cilt:25, İçtima Senesi:3, 29 November 1922, p.119.

sense that he stated that the issue was a settled one and that settled issues could not be negotiated again.[93]

However, the issue was reopened to the negotiations in the conference by the Turkish delegates. Turkish representatives reiterated their positions on the basis of Turkish security. However, Italy also did not abdicate from her position; the island had become a fundamental issue for the Italians.[94] Sure enough, the Meis issue became a prestige matter for Rome, like the Dodecanese Islands. According to the Italian representative, Montagna, Italy had experienced a continuous disappointment since the Great War due to the non-fulfillment of the promised territories and privileges, thus, for the new fascist government which had thrown out the old incapacitated administration, the Meis issue was one of the symbols of the fascism's self-respect although in the normal conditions it was just a small bit of rock.[95]

Obviously, the security of Anatolia was much more important to the Kemalists than the Fascist government's self-esteem, which was plainly a diplomatic play. However, the Lausanne Conference depended on a very fragile basis in the sense that at the end of January, it had experienced a rupture. Since the peace of Turkey was indeterminate and all of the parties were willing to reach a conclusion as soon as possible; Turkey became obliged to make a sacrifice on the issue of Meis. In return, on the one hand she gained the *Tavşan* Islands; on the other hand she imposed a military guarantee upon Italy, which assured Turkey that the island could never be used against Anatolia. Thereby, one of the two issues between Ankara and Rome reached a conclusion. It should be added that Italy also gained sovereignty of the

[93] İsmet İnönü, *Hatıralar,* edited by Sabahattin Selek (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2006), p.328.

[94] Ibid., p.118.

[95] Karacan, p.482-483.

whole Dodecanese Islands, whose definitive status could not be decided for many years, with the Lausanne Treaty. The conclusion of the islands issue was so disappointing for the Turks that in the Assembly some of the deputies, like Şükrü Kaya, declared that they could not accept the treaty with these provisions both because "the islands in the hands of the Italians would be the re-beginning of a policy of exploiting Anatolia"[96] and because Italy "would disturb Turkey again"[97] through the Dodecanese.

For all of the Aegean Islands issue, it should be stressed that although Italy had promised not to use the islands against Turkey, it always thought that "the value of the islands were arising from geographic military position, which enabled to make of them the base of the future expansion."[98] Thus, by constantly making military build-ups therein, Rome created an "Italian fear" within the Turkish foreign policy.

The second issue, which was economic and legal privileges, namely the capitulations, was much more important than Meis both for Italy and Turkey. Actually, it was the most important topic of the whole Lausanne process. Obviously, the economic and legal capitulations were fundamental for all of the great powers involved; however, if the efforts of Italy in terms of its economic interests throughout the War of Liberation are kept in mind, it is not erroneous to state that the crucial point of Lausanne for the Italians was specifically this issue rather than the Straits or the Ottoman debts. The leadership of the Italian delegate Mark Garroni over the commission for the capitulations also can be regarded as a reflection of the importance that the country attributed to the privileges.

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[96] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:II, Cilt:1, İçtima Senesi:1, 21 August 1923, p.238.

[97] Ibid.

[98] C.D. Booth and Isabelle Bridge Booth, *Italy's Aegean Possesions* (London: Arrowsmith, 1928), p.286.

In this context, it is not surprising that the suggestions and the explanations of the Italians began to be laid out even before the conference. For instance, Mussolini stated in his first speech on the Italian parliament that the word of "capitulations" was archaic and making the Turks furious, thus there was a need for new and efficient system without using this word.[99] That is to say, Italy would insist on the continuation of the capitulatory system with a new arrangement if necessary, at any price.

Accordingly, the Italian delegate either asked for economic cooperation separately or became the ardent supporter of the permanent capitulation regime in general throughout the conference. In terms of economic privileges, Garroni proposed economic collaboration with Turkey. Although Turkey did not accept any economic privileges that could violate its independence, obstinacy on the economic capitulations by Italians as well as the French would last until the end of the conference.

In terms of legal capitulations, on the other hand, the negotiations were much more austere. Garroni in the private meetings stressed the requirement of a judicial capitulation settlement, "at least,"[100] ever so often. The stance of the Italians about the judicial assurances led to the harsh criticisms in the parliament. The deputies in the Turkish assembly objected to the demands on the issue very strongly. A deputy reminded his colleagues of the old incidents in which Italian criminals had been set free by the Italian officials, by underlining the misuses of implementations of the judicial capitulations.[101]

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[99] Sonyel, p.38.

[100] Şimşir, p.338.

[101] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:I, Cilt:26, İçtima Senesi:3, 3 January 1923, p.168.

When the conference came to a deadlock, the Italian delegate Montagna offered a new solution which would be termed thereafter as the "Montagna formula." Although it was not accepted by the Turkish delegation in the first period of the Lausanne Conference, efforts were made to have it in the second period due to the fact that other formulations had much more cumbersome provisions.

The problem seemed almost unsolvable within the process until the very end. In this stalemate situation, the Italians played a major role. The roles were exchanged during the second period of the conference in the sense that "no problem remained between the British and the Turks now, but Italy and France, which had previously declared that they were the friends of the Turks, began to follow a threatening and possessive attitude against Turkey.[102] While the Turkish press was blaming the Italians for the futile negotiations, Garroni was still reiterating that Italians were considering the capitulation issue as the sole matter of the conference.[103] Actually, it was surprising that the Italians, who had become nearly friends with the Turks throughout the National Struggle, stood as the last power at the end of Lausanne that resisted the Turkish disposition. Since the territorial plans of Italy over Anatolia during and after the Great War had failed, only economic aims were left for the Italian appetite, so the fluctuations in the Italian stance before and during the conference were closely related to the Italian calculations about the success of certain policies. The insistence of Italy in terms of the capitulations should be looked upon from this perspective.

However, it should be also added that since Turkey had determined its stance much earlier as "not concluding a peace as long as they wanted 'assurances' and

[102] *Vakit*, 6 February 1923, quoted by Sonyel, p.140.

[103] Şimşir, p.369.

strove for the words like the 'assurance;'"[104] the Italians, as the other great powers, had to give up their insistence about the capitulations. The matter ended up with a Turkish victory in the Lausanne Conference, being a second blow to the Italian goals involving Turkey.

After the peace agreement was signed on 24 July 1923, Ismet Pasha sent some letters to the Italian delegate in order to clarify some uncertain issues regarding the Italian companies in Turkey, in the light of the orders from Ankara. With one of these letters, Ismet Pasha stated that Turkey, which had decided to take the cabotage rights under the national sovereignty, invited the parties to negotiate about the conditions on the continuation of Italian maritime companies' transportation activities.[105] Otherwise, these countries would have a two-year-right of coast trading.

Another letter enunciated that the agreements on the railways between Anatolia-Bagdad, Mersin-Adana, as well as the Oriental railways, and Haydarpaşa station, which had been subscribed before 29 October 1914 on the basis of economic privileges but compatible with the procedures, would be protected.[106] However, these agreements would be accommodated under the new economic conditions, which meant that Turkey with the new arrangement in Lausanne would change the conditions in favor of itself.

Although these letters were responded with diplomatic courtesy by Montagna, it was obvious that the abolition of the capitulations was a disaster for the countries which had benefitted from these assurances. Italy, which had gained the

[104] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:I, Cilt:26, İçtima Senesi:3, 3 January 1923, p.170.

[105] These companies were: Societa Italiana Servici Maritimi, Societa Italiana di Navigazione, Lloyd Triestino Società, quoted by TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:II, Cilt:1, İçtima Senesi:1, 21 August 1923, p.199-200.

[106] Ibid., p.203.

Dodecanese Islands including Meis, had lost the "sole issue" with its own statements. However, after the signing of the treaty, Italian official circles did not declare anything negative about the Lausanne Treaty. On the contrary, Montagna, who became now the Italian ambassador in Turkey, stated they were happy with the treaty, including Mussolini.[107]

The declarations of the Italian officials reflected diplomatic courtesy again. In fact, according to the Italians, the "Eastern Question" had entered a new phase.[108] That is to say, it had not been solved yet; it had just changed shape. Obviously, both Turkey and Italy were changing shape in the sense that the republic had been proclaimed on 29 October 1923 in Turkey, after being recognized by the world with the Lausanne Treaty. Hereafter, while Turkey was trying to cure the traumas as a result of the unending wars and also trying to formulate the "Turkish nation" on the contrary of the notions of the "Ottoman Empire" under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, Italy was being administrated by the Fascists and was also being theorized on the basis of the Fascist style under the leadership of Benito Mussolini.

In this context, it was not surprising that Mussolini, who accused the old politicians, specifically Sforza, with appeasement both over Adriatic and Anatolia, formulated his foreign policy on the basis of an aggressive style that was directed to Mare Nostrum. In this sense, a new period was beginning between Turkey and Italy on the basis of Italy's aggressive stance and of Turkey's fear, suspicion of and vigilance of Rome even though this new period had begun with the declaration of

[107] *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 23 August 1923, quoted by Sonyel, p.211.

[108] Ibid., quoted by Sonyel, p.212.

"Mussolini's desire for founding a friendship with Ankara"[109] to the Turkish officials.

The Fascist tone in the Italian foreign policy asserted itself first in the port city of Fiume and Greek controlled Corfu Island in the Adriatic, successively. In terms of the former, it should be reminded that Fiume had previously been declared the "free state of Fiume" in 1920 compatibly with the foreign policy mind of Carlo Sforza, who was thinking that "Italy should extend her influence in the Balkans by means of a policy of cooperation rather than of coercion or pressure,"[110] after the incident of invasion of the city. However, in 1923, in accordance with the ambitions in the region, Mussolini began to pressure Yugoslavia about the cession of Fiume to Italy to such an extent that on 8 August of that year he threatened Belgrade with military act if no agreement was reached before September.[111]

At the same time as this continuous tension over Fiume, a conflict with Greece emerged. There were problems between Italy and Greece over the problem of Albanian border and over the harsh public opinion in Greece against Italy due to the Italian sovereignty of the Dodecanese Islands as well as armament in the Aegean Sea. On 25 August, the Italian officers who had been assigned to the commission for a solution to the aforementioned border problems were assassinated in Greece. When Athens refused to take the necessary measures that were sent through an ultimatum by Rome, Italy invaded the island. What is important here is that when the British asked that the issue be brought to the League of Nations, Mussolini did not recognize the League's jurisdiction and threatened to withdraw Italy from this institution.

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[109] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/236.594..7.

[110] Albrecht-Carrie, p.334.

[111] Joel Blatt, "France and the Corfu-Fiume Crisis of 1923," *Historian* 50, no.2 (February 1988), p.235.

However, "after considering the possibility of an Italian war against Greece, with the collaboration of Yugoslavia and Great Britain, it was reported on September 13 that Italy would be vulnerable if the British navy took action against it."[112] Therefore, Mussolini, who could not risk a war with the British, decided to evacuate the island in September.

While the Corfu crisis was solved in this way, the problem with Yugoslavia over Fiume was still enduring. The negotiations between the parties were concluded in the following months in the sense that "intimidated by Italy's aggressive behavior during the Corfu incident, Belgrade eventually conceded and recognized Italy's full sovereignty over Fiume,"[113] in January 1924. It is important to note that the policies of France on the basis of preventing a possible Italian-Yugoslav war that could disturb its situation in the area played an important role in this settlement.

There was a noticeable reflection of these two developments on Turkey. More dominantly than the realization of the motives of Rome towards the Balkans[114] and the Mediterranean Sea, in other words, perception of the fascist foreign policy's meaning, Turkish parliament inferred from this incident the weakness of the League of Nations in finding an effective solutions to international problems, because at the same time as these incidents, Turkish deputies seemed very anxious about the Turks in Western Thrace. Allegedly, the Turkish population under the Greek sovereignty was being ill-treated. How the Corfu issue was related to the Turks in Western Thrace was closely related to the position of Italy vis-à-vis the League of Nations in the sense that one section of the Turkish deputies, rather than being worried about the

[112] Ibid., p.236.

[113] Dilek Barlas, "Friend or Foes: Diplomatic Relations between Italy and Turkey, 1923-1936," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36, no.2 (May 2004), p.234.

[114] Ibid.

aggressive behaviour of Rome, was trying to persuade the others about to take similar measures, like Vasıf Bey:

> The League of Nations…Which League of Nations, my friends! We understood how the League of Nations is so far from being effective and how it is ridiculous, from the Corfu issue of the Italians. In the face of force, in the face of determination of Mussolini, all of the initiatives and decisions of the League have become ridiculous and we understand that even the League of Nations, which is the symbol of nations, even of civilization, obeys the power. Its decision when it sees the power becomes different from the one when it does not see the power. Therefore, we must resort to the necessary measures rather than working in order to make the League take civilized and important decisions from this platform. I am sure with my soul that we should accept the style of Italian Prime Minister Mussolini and be sure that that time the decision that the members of the League will give will become very different…Just that time, the miserable circumstances of the Turks will be ended.[115]

As can be seen from the statement, the disquiet towards the Fascist foreign policy seems to take little place, at least in the speeches of the deputies. Ironically, the Turkish deputies, who would describe Italy as one of the fiercest enemies both in this period and after the 1930s, chose to highlight the effectiveness of the aggression and the ineffectiveness of the League of Nations. It should be underlined that the inspiration of the Italian style at this time did not stem from being supportive of Fascist foreign policy, but from the isolation of Turkey in international relations and the fear of suffering from the injustices in this international arena, due to the

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[115] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:II, Cilt:3, İçtima Senesi:1, 10 November 1923, p.323. "*Cemiyeti Akvam… Hangi Cemiyeti Akvam arkadaşlar! İtalyanların Korfu meselesinde Cemiyeti Akvamın ne gülünç olduğunu ve müessir olmaktan ne kadar çok uzakta bulunduğunu yakinen anladık. Kuvvetin karasında, Başvekil Musolini'nin azmi karşısında Cemiyeti Akvamın bütün hareketleri, kararları, gülünç bir şekle girmiştir ve anlıyoruz ki değil akvamın hatta medeniyetin timsali olan Cemiyeti Akvam bile kuvvet önünde daima serfürû etmektedir. Kuvveti gördüğü gün kararı başkadır, kuvveti görmediği gün kararı yine pek başkadır. O halde bu kürsüden Cemiyeti Akvama medeni ve mühim kararlar verdirmek için çalışacağımıza icabeden tedbirlere tevessül etmeliyiz. Bütün ruhumla kaniim ki İtalyan Başvekili Musolini'nin tarzı siyasetini kabul edelim ve emin olunuz ki, arkadaşlar! O zaman Cemiyeti Akvamın ve onun mümessillerinin vereceği karar büsbütün başka olacaktır… Ve ancak o zaman Türklerin bu bedbaht vaziyetlerine nihayet verilecektir*."

memories of the Ottoman past. Although at this time the expansionist aims of Italy in the Adriatic Sea seemed to be ignored at the expense of a pragmatic approach for Turks in Thrace, the same kind of aims of Italy in the Mediterranean would encounter the strong reactions from Turkey in the future.

As has been stated above, that there were two mare nostrums in the mind of Mussolini. While in the Adriatic, Mussolini displayed some part of his geographical intention, in the Eastern Mediterranean "there was a growing feeling that Mussolini's policy of Italian expansion was aimed more or less directly at Asiatic Turkey."[116] The reasons behind the Italian desire of expansion were also two-tiered in the sense that Italy, on the one hand, sought to form a strong and secure empire compatibly with the motives of the day; on the other hand, it was bounded to expand due to the "growth of population."[117] Therefore, Italy had to find a place for its growing population and additionally this place had to be rich in terms of raw materials for the needs of the people who were living in their home-countries. Therefore, according to Rome, Western Anatolia was a rich target in order to solve the overpopulation and underproduction problem in Italy.

Mussolini brought up these aims in his speeches in which he stated the Fascist administration's motto, "Italy's glance is in the East" clearly or by implication. This made Turkey anxious. After a speech again by Mussolini on the same line, Turkish officials began to discuss the issue with relation to the Caliphate, because the Caliphate had been recently abandoned in March 1924 in Turkey.

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[116] E. W. Polson Newman, *Mediterranean and Its Problems* (London: A. M. Philpot Ltd. 1927), p.162.

[117] Accoring to Francesco Coppola, in 1881 Italy's population was a little over twenty eight millions, in 1921 it had risen to fourty millions in Italy itself and about 8 millions abroad. Thus, in fourty years it had increased more than seventy percent. (Coppola, p.105).

Mussolini's speech coincided with the rumours that Italy had invited the last Caliph. Considering this coincidence, Ankara felt that the two occasions were related to each other. However, although an explanation was asked from the government by the deputies whether Italy had a complex plan over Turkey, Prime Minister Ismet Pasha preferred to answer these issues individually, in order to calm down the indisposed crowd. On the one hand, he stated that there was not an official invitation by Italy to the former caliph and Turkey was no longer interested in matters involving the former caliph.[118] On the other hand, after different topics, he declared that the Turkish Republic had enough strength to protect the country, and that Mussolini had given a guarantee about the peace policy towards Turkey.[119]

The government members and even the president made these kinds of calming explanations in the National Assembly throughout 1924. For instance, while Mustafa Kemal was declaring that the political and economic relationship was improving between Turkey and Italy,[120] the prime minister was saying that there was nothing threatening in the relationship between the two countries.[121] However, these declarations did not reach a point beyond attempts to relieve the public in general. In reality, Turkish foreign policy was entering a dangerous phase in the sense that Italy and Britain, in private meetings, had already begun to discuss the "future" of Turkey on the basis of the Mosul question, which had become a milestone in interwar Turkish history.

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[118] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:II, Cilt:7, İçtima Senesi:2, 22 March 1924, p.838.

[119] Ibid.

[120] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:II, Cilt:10, İçtima Senesi:II, 1 November 1340, p.4.

[121] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:II, Cilt:10, İçtima Senesi:II, 27 November 1340, p.399.

In this context, it is necessary to summarize the basis of the Mosul question briefly before analyzing the Italian link to the problem. Mosul had been invaded by the British through the 1918 Mudros Armistice on the basis of Article 7.[122] After the War of Independence, the Turkish delegate had tried to defend the acceptance of Mosul, which was also included in the National Pact, under Turkish sovereignty. During the Lausanne Conference, Britain had rejected the Turkish thesis sharply and tried to send the issue to the League of Nations, contrary of Turkey's will. In fact, "throughout the entire history of the Mosul question the Turks showed their preference for bilateral negotiations and objected to appealing to a third party for a decision,"[123] because Turkey was not a member of the League in which Britain had a dominant role. However, it could be stated that Turkey's space for manoeuvring over the Mosul issue was very limited.[124]

Therefore, the issue was not discussed at the Conference but it was decided that the parties would negotiate within nine months. In this sense, since the Golden Horn Conference, which was started in May 1924, could not solve the issue, the parties appealed to the League. Throughout the negotiation process in the League in 1925, uprisings and rebellions were observed in various towns and cities in Turkey. For instance, a Nestorian uprising in Hakkari and famous Sheikh Said rebellion occurred within this period. While for the former, the documents indicate the British

[122] Article 7 foresaw that the Allies could occupy anywhere in which they felt themselves in danger. This article enabled the occupation of many towns and cities in different part of the Ottoman Empire by the Allies.

[123] Stephen F. Evans, *The Slow Rapprochement: Britain and Turkey in the Age of Kemal Atatürk, 1919-38* (Beverley, N. Humber: Eothen Press, 1982), p.81.

[124] Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, *Türk-İngiliz İlişkileri, 1919–1926* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 1978), p.287.

intervention[125] for the latter the provocation by the British cannot be documented. Whatever the factual situation, there was a reality that the Turkish government stranded with these developments during the process of the Mosul issue.

The British perceived the efforts at suppression by the Turkish government as against themselves; therefore, they even made a war plan that aerial attack would be the first reaction against Turkish aggression, followed by a possible blockade of Istanbul by Royal Navy through occupation of the Turkish islands at the South of the Dardanelles.[126]

In this epoch in which the two sides were on the verge of war, the League of Nations decided in favor of the British in December. Turkey, which was an isolated country externally and which desired a peaceful environment domestically in order to succeed at modern reforms at the same time,[127] decided to accept the situation in June 1926.

After this brief background of the problem, the question that should be asked is to what extent Italy played a role both during the process and in Turkey's acceptance of the League's decision. Perhaps due to the lack of archival documents on the issue, studies pass over the Italian intervention into the Mosul issue with little mention or do not even touch upon this role. However, the findings, even if they are not plenty, show that Italy throughout the period, behind the British, played a major role in the Mosul issue, in accordance with the Fascist foreign policy's ambitions of expansion.

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[125] Mim Kemal Öke, *Belgelerle Türk İngiliz İlişkilerinde Musul ve Kürdistan Sorunu 1918–1926* (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1992) p.139.

[126] Evans, p.94.

[127] Kürkçüoğlu regards these two features for the acceptance of the situation by Turkey as the major reasons. Kürkçüoğlu, p.301-314.

In fact, the relationship between Mosul and Italy dated back to the end of the Great War. During the post-war settlement, Italy had sought a fair share of the Near Eastern oil. In 1922, Lord Curzon promised that Italy would be given a share of oil when the question of Mosul had been definitely settled.[128] Although Italy's oil claim would be forgotten even before the date that the issue was settled,[129] Britain tried to spark Italian claims in Anatolia during the negotiation process in order to pressure Turkey with the Italian occupation threat, for making it understand that "a Turkish invasion of Iraq would be signal for an Italian landing in Anatolia."[130]

To this end, first of all, British Foreign Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain and Mussolini met in various places privately many times. In the first of these meetings, which took place in December 1924, it is commonly thought that Mussolini and Chamberlain agreed on diplomatic and economic cooperation in Turkey, although there is no written evidence about this plan.[131] However, in a document, the Italian War Minister "stated that he had been asked by Mussolini to study the means and requirements of a possible war against Turkey."[132] It should be underlined that before the Mussolini-Chamberlain meeting, the British Foreign Secretary also had met with French Prime Minister Edouard Herriot. Therefore these relations led to hesitations both in Turkish press and in political circles.

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[128] Marian Kent, *Moguls and Mandarins: Oil, Imperialism, and the Middle East in British Foreign Policy, 1900-1940* (London: Frank Cass, 1993), p.139.

[129] Ibid., p.140-141.

[130] Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Survey of International Affairs* (London; New York: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1926), vol.1925, part.1, p.526.

[131] Edwards, p.153-154.

[132] Ibid., p.154.

For this reason, a deputy in the National Assembly felt obliged to ask what the basis of these meetings was because it was being claimed that Chamberlain had stated that the Turkish Republic was weak during the contacts.[133] In fact, the government had already asked the grounds for these points of view through its diplomatic representatives and had received assurances that none of the powers had accepted that the topic of the meetings was Turkey specifically. Therefore, vice-minister Şükrü Kaya commented on this situation in the assembly with direct statements from the politicians of other countries in order to reassure the group. However, Italy's statement, "Turkey was not the topic either as an enemy or as a friend and Italy did not have a 'Turkey business' to discuss with Britain,"[134] did not reflect the truth. Turkey knew this fact in the sense that after these explanations, another deputy declared passionately that "Italy was dreaming of Anatolia and there is a possibility of a new war."[135]

Nearly in the same period, a speech in the Italian parliament set forth the situation precisely. This time Minister of Foreign Affairs Tevfik Rüştü (Aras) chose to pass over the question of Yakup Kadri (Karaosmanoğlu) in April 1925, because the affair and the intent behind it were clear. The topic of the Italian deputy's speech mainly was about the situation in Anatolia. The Italian deputy, Pedarci, stated that the new customs regime in the Turkish Republic had made a mess of the economic links between Asia and Europe by closing the doors of Anatolia to European countries, and additionally that since Turkey had applied a new economic regime, it

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[133] TBMM Zabıt Cerideleri, Devre:II, Cilt:11, İçtima Senesi:II, 3 January 1925, C:1, p.360.

[134] Ibid., "*İtalya Hükümeti dahi Büyük Elçimize, ne dost ve ne düşman Türkiye'nin hiçbir suretle mevzuubahis olmadığını ve İtalya'nın İngiltere ile görüşecek bir Türkiye işi olmadığını bildirdi.*"

[135] TBMM Zabıt Cerideleri, Devre:II, Cilt:13, İçtima Senesi:2, 3 February 1935, p.131.

had only five or six million people although these vast areas could feed nearly fifty million people.[136] Since geographically Turkey belonged to the Mediterranean rather than to Anatolia, Italy as a Mediterranean country was so uneasy with the situation that it had to show how Turkey needed its help.[137]

This statement could be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, Italy, which had made a great effort within the National Struggle and ever after in order to obtain economic concessions, was perpetuating its position, within an aggressive mode this time. On the other hand, and more importantly, the reference of the Italian deputy to the population figures had an inner meaning, other than the new customs regime of Turkey, because of the fact that one of the motivations of the Italian expansionism was the overpopulation, as was stated above. Therefore, this speech can be viewed as an expression of the appropriateness of Anatolia for the Italian population and initiatives not being in contradiction with the previous period. In fact, Italy had been interested with this population issue before in the sense that Italian authorities had given importance to the 1923 population census result in Turkey.[138]

Needless to say that, the timing of Pedarci's speech and the British backing of Italy over the Anatolian territory due to the Mosul issue were not a coincidence. Italy was trying to benefit from the heightened tension between Britain and Turkey. Obviously, the aims of Italy were becoming more worrysome day after day for Turkey in the sense that the occurrence of menacing speeches and actions was increasing constantly. For instance, just after the speech of Pedarci, military

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[136] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/7.42..39.

[137] Ibid.

[138] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/94.134..11.

fortifications even in Sicily had become alarming for Turkey although the Italian representatives in Ankara tried to tranquilize the Turks.[139]

In a period in which Turkey had major problems with Britain and with Italy under the patronage of Britain, new dangers seemed to emerge for Turkey as various information indicated that Italy was not alone in this issue also. While on the one hand, there were rumours about a possible Soviet-Italian cooperation against Turkey in an event of war between Ankara and London;[140] on the other hand, there was a possibility of collaboration between Greece and Italy through which the former would attack to Eastern Thrace and the latter would make an attempt on southwestern Anatolia[141] at the same time, in the case of a war.

Actually, although whether the former reflected the truth or not was not certain, the latter was close to the reality in the sense that in addition to the claims about the presence of a secret treaty between Athens and Rome, there was an immense amount of intelligence reports that proved cooperation between Greece and Italy. For instance, one of these reports, which had come from the administrative district of *Ayvalık* in August 1925, told that twelve warships under the Greek and Italian flags had come to the island of *Midilli*, which was very near *Ayvalık*, in the Aegean Sea.[142] The head of the region stated in the report that while some of the warships had gone towards the north, the others before the Midilli Island had made

[139] Kürkçüoğlu, p.302

[140] Ibid.

[141] Newman, p.174.

[142] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/101.654..10.

fifteen cannon shots.[143] As can be inferred, this joint display of power was important evidence of cooperation between Greeks and the Italians at that time.

Apart from the possible coalition between different powers against Turkey, Italy, which was constantly increasing its fortifications on the islands, posed a major threat to Turkish territory even if it was alone. It seems that military fortifications were a two-tiered strategy of the Italians because, on the one hand, with this military presence Italy would irritate Turkey with or without the realization of war, and on the other, in the case of a war it would use the islands. In other words, the presence of military fortifications on the islands was an effective way to threaten Turkey both morally and materially.

In that respect, Turkey began to follow the military developments on the islands closely and interpreted every change on the islands as a proof of the Italian aim to land in western Anatolia. Although this careful monitoring of the islands would last throughout the interwar years and republican history due to their strategic location in terms of Turkish security, it was done with particular vigilance between 1924 and 1927. For instance, an archival document from 1924 underlines the escalation of military build-ups on Samos Island, and says with "within twenty four hours,"[144] which shows that Turkey was following every development on the islands with an intelligence network. Additionally, the number of soldiers, ships, and the airplanes on the islands were constantly being followed in order to anticipate the future acts of the Italians.[145] The final result that the Turkish political authorities

[143] Ibid.

[144] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/101.653..19.

[145] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/101.653..13.

derived from these intelligence reports was that Italy was preparing for a war against Turks in the southwestern Anatolia.[146]

Considering the information from the islands, the aggressive speeches of Italian officials, and political rumours, Italy genuinely was preparing for war against Turkey in order to obtain what they could not get a couple of years ago. Actually, Italy, which was in a close collaboration with Britain, was obviously benefitting from other agreements and concessions, which could be seen from the other meetings between Mussolini and Chamberlain, within general terms between the Italians and the British.

In that respect, the second meeting between Mussolini and Chamberlain took place within the period of an official conference in Locarno in October, as opposed to the secret and private one in December 1924. Actually, the Treaty of Locarno was concluded between Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and Italy in order to fix the western borders of Germany while leaving out the eastern territory of it. Although Italy was much more interested in the eastern borders of Germany; "Chamberlain hoped to win Mussolini's adherence to the Rhineland negotiations by offering Italy 'a special authority' in the Balkans."[147] Therefore, although this second meeting between Chamberlain and Mussolini did not target Turkey specifically, it gave a free-hand to Mussolini in the Balkans. In this context, it was also a potential danger to Turkey.

According to Barlas, Locarno gave two important advantages to Italy. While on the one hand, it gave Rome the right to interfere in the politics of Western Europe as a great power, on the other hand, it paved the way for Mussolini to focus on the

[146] Ibid.

[147] Burgwyn, p.30.

Balkans due to the fact that Locarno did not guarantee the frontiers in the East.[148] If the permission of Chamberlain about the free hand in the Balkans is added to this interpretation, it was very natural that Rome would play a dominant role in Eastern matters thereafter.

In terms of the freehand of Italy, it could be stated that two countries were under the threat of Italian aggression in this period, Albania and Turkey. For the former, Italy first made economic aids, with consequential demands that were submitted to the Albanian government in return.[149] Since Albania was on the eve of revolution and financial bankruptcy, Ahmed Bey Zogu was forced to sign the Tirana Treaty finally in November 1926. This treaty, which actually made Albania a disguised protectorate, changed the equilibrium not only in the Adriatic region, but also in the Balkans in general.[150]

In terms of Turkey, after Locarno, Italy both continued to prepare militarily on the islands and increased its cooperation with the British. In that respect, the third meeting between Chamberlain and Mussolini occurred in December 1925, in Rapallo, three months after Locarno. Although the Locarno meetings had not led to speculations specifically about Turkey despite the fact it had given free hand to Italy in terms of the Balkans, the third meeting between the parties was regarded as a meeting that "Italy and Britain agreed over the policy in the Balkans and Iraq respectively in Rapallo."[151] The aforementioned "Balkans" here probably implied Turkey, because the point at issue was Mosul.

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[148] Barlas, "Friends or Foes?" p.234.

[149] Kissoudi, p.1716.

[150] "Eastern Europe," *Current History (New York)* 26, no.2 (May 1927), p.320.

[151] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 30..10/12.71..38.

Whether Britain really agreed to permit Italian expansionism by getting Fascist support against Turkey on the Mosul issue or not cannot be proved on the basis of written documents. However, there was a reality that this cooperation played a major role on Turkey's acceptance of the League's decision over Mosul. Although the intelligence claimed that Italy decided not to land in Izmir in the last months before the acceptance of the terms over Mosul, contrary to their clear decision to land beforehand,[152] Turkey was constantly alarmed by Italian aggression. In this sense, the Turkish government called the young men aged 21 and 22 years and the reserves of 23 to 26 to the arms with this fear,[153] and conducted military exercises in Izmir as a show of force, and finally accepted the decision of the League of Nations, because it thought that it could not cope with both the British and the Italians, and maybe with the Greeks as well, on different fronts at the same time. This orientation of Turkey reflected a logical attitude in the sense that despite the intelligence reports of some officials, the Italians had not ended their plans about Turkey, yet, even if they had done this for Izmir. Therefore, it can be suggested that Italy was one of the major determinants in terms of Turkey's acceptance of the Mosul decision of the League, under the classification of external reasons.[154]

Since the Italian ambitions towards Turkish lands were revived with British backing, it could be expected that Italian plans would come to an end after the problems between Turkey and Britain were resolved. However, the plans of Rome to land in Anatolia had not expired. Although some data claim that Italians had given up the idea of landing on Turkey, specifically at Izmir, as seen above, other

[152] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/236.595..37.

[153] Lybyer Albert Howe, "Turkey Alarmed by Rumored Italian Agression," *Current History* 24, no.3 (June 1926), p.477.

[154] Kürkçüoğlu, p.302.

documents suggest that the considerations of the Italians had not totally ended, but that they changed the zone in the sense that even after the British support ceased to exist, these documents show that Italians began to search for ways to enter the Adana-Mersin region throughout 1926 and in some parts of 1927.

In this period, correspondences passed between the Italian Consulate of Adana, Mersin, Istanbul, and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs over the geographic, economic, and military conditions of the area in order to reach a final conclusion about the probability of success of a possible occupation. For instance, a letter from the Italian Consulate in Adana to the Ministry in Rome describes the obstacles, in general, in the region for an invading army.[155] According to this letter, the Adana region was not suitable for transportation in the rainy seasons; additionally it lacked of plant cover, clean water, and housing facilities.[156] Therefore, it could be claimed that Italy, even after the Mosul issue was concluded, continued to dream about Turkish lands. However, not due to the above-mentioned reasons but due to various causes like changing international political and economic conditions both for Italy and Turkey, and the withdrawal of British support for the Italians who could not have the power to pursue this kind of ambitious program alone, beginning with 1927 Turkey and Italy laid the foundations of a détente period which would evidently become the exact opposite of this era, as can be seen in the subsequent part.

In conclusion, in 1922, the relationship between Turkey and Italy began to take its shape, and continued throughout this period. As opposed to the first years of the National Struggle in which the resentful Italians who had not been able to take what had been offered with the Treaty of Saint Jean de Maurienne, had acted in

[155] Quoted by Damiani, p.143-144.

[156] Ibid., p.143-44.

favour of the Kemalists, because they were alienated from the Allies. This strategy was formulated by Carlo Sforza, who thought that Italy could obtain economic concessions even if it could not make any territorial advances. However, due to the government changes in Italy and the increasing nationalist stance of the Kemalists, Italy began to rethink that the Allies could provide many more advantages to Italy than Ankara could propose. In this respect, a close cooperation among the Allies was seen during the Lausanne conference. Although Italy took a tough position at Lausanne both over Meis Island and over the capitulations, it succeeded only in the former while it lost the negotiations together with its Allies over the capitulations.

After 1923, the relationship between fascist Italy and the Turkish Republic proceeded on the same axis, in other words, in the vein of expansionism, combined with the Fascist tone in the Italian foreign policy. In this period, Italy chose the Balkans as its targets in the sense that it began to show its intent beginning with the Fiume and Corfu incidents. However, the overpopulation and underproduction problems of Italy led Rome to seek areas that could solve these issues. Therefore, Rome began to deal with Turkey, which was an internationally isolated country with some major international problems, and with Albania, which was dependent on Italy.

In terms of Turkey, Italy chose to act behind the British in the sense that Britain was playing the Italian card in order to force Turkey to accept the British position. Obviously, this strategy of the British proved to be useful, because Italy became one the most important reasons behind the enforced obedience of Turkey to the League's decision over the Mosul issue. But, interestingly enough, although the Mosul problem came to an end, the ambitious plans of Italy did not expire. That is to say, between 1926 and 1927, Italy continued to plan landing on that Anatolian lands, mainly in the Adana region. However, within 1927, Rome decided to abandon this

territorial strategy, thus, to turn down the page within the Turkish-Italian relationship through different strategies.

CHAPTER 5

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND ITALY, 1927-1932: SO-CALLED FRIENDSHIP

Throughout this study, Turkish-Italian diplomatic relations are shown as a curve which fluctuated ever so often. In that respect, if the previous chapter designated the lower part of the curve beginning with Lausanne negotiations, conversely to the War of Independence but compatibly with aforementioned characteristic of fluctuation, this chapter is going to mark the upper part of it. To put it another way, between 1927 and 1932, the contacts between Turkey and Italy depended on cooperation in various issues, as opposed to the antagonism of the former period.

In this respect, before displaying the specific events of the period, two common but substantially mistaken orientation of the Turkish historiography about this time scale should be mentioned. First of all, numerous sources that deal with Turkish foreign policy in the interwar era are prone to regard Turco-Italo relations as a continuum.[157] These studies usually underline that although 1928 Treaty became a turning point in terms of détente between the parties, the relations did not follow a peaceful path hereafter. However, archival materials show that after 1928 Treaty, in addition to the political rapprochement, positive economic and social linkages had been formed between Turkey and Italy and these four years could be handled as a period different from the other two ones.

Secondly, while some writers ignore the détente in the relations, the others who made these distinctions prefer defining the starting point as 1928. For instance,

[157] For instance, Mehmet Gönlübol and Cem Sar, *Atatürk ve Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası (1919-1939)*; Fahir Armaoğlu, *Siyasi Tarih 1789–1960* (Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası, 1964); Mehmet Gönlübol and Cem Sar ed., *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası; (1919-1965)* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 1969).

Barlas, refers to the 1928-1932 time interval when she mentions a "warmth" in the relations.[158] It is true that 1928 was very important due to the signing of the Treaty of Neutrality, Conciliation and Judicial Solution (*Türkiye-İtalya Tarafsızlık, Uzlaştırma ve Yargısal Çözüm Andlaşması*) between the parties on May of that year, which became evidently a major turning point in the relations. However, as can be anticipated, this treaty did not stem from an overnight agreement. On the contrary, 1927 had a very special role in the conclusion of this Convention due to the developments both specifically in Turkish and Italian domestic and foreign contexts in that year, and also in the European arena in general. Thus, it is suitable to initiate the period with 1927 that paved the way for the Neutrality and Friendship Treaty rather than to begin with the date of the treaty itself.

In this context, first of all, one of the most noteworthy reasons for the détente between Turkey and Italy was the existing competition between France and Italy both in the Mediterranean and in the Balkans. Compatibly with the displays of the previous chapter about the background and the conduct of this competition, Italy pursued a policy of pinpricks in this time interval also, directed at Paris, which was scarcely surprising in the sense that, France remained "public enemy number two" in an environment where, at least in the short term, there was no longer "public enemy number one" because on the one hand Austria-Hungary had ceased to exist and on the other hand Germany, within the chains of the Versailles System, could not pose a threat to Austria, therefore, to Italy, yet.[159] It should be noted that only after Hitler became a threat to whole Europe, France and Italy would soften to each other but in a very limited way.

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[158] Barlas, "Friends or Foes?" p.231-32.

[159] R. J. Bosworth, *Italy and the Wider World, 1860-1960* (London, UK: Routledge, 1995), p.44.

Therefore, the effort of Italy to become closer to Turkey was meaningful in this context where France had dominated the Little Entente by 1927. Although the formation of the Entente had been undertaken by the Central-Eastern European countries, which had been born from the ashes of the Austria-Hungary Empire independently from France in the first half of 1920s, Paris signed alliance treaties with those Central-Eastern European powers in order to dominate this alliance system step by step. The final point within that relationship occurred when France and Yugoslavia concluded the last alliance treaty within the framework of the Little Entente on 11 November 1927. This treaty particularly irritated Italy because Italy was considering Yugoslavia as an enemy due to its broad territories in an area in which Italy was chiefly interested and this alliance was the last one of "the series of treaties that marked the high point of French ascendancy in the Balkans and Eastern Europe."[160] Therefore, by 1927, an anti-revisionist bloc had been formed near Italy's territory, and worse, this anti-revisionist bloc was headed by an adversary, France.

In this context, Italy, which had already good relations with revisionist Bulgaria and Hungary and dominated Albania with the 1926 treaty, began to pay attention to Turkey and Greece interdependently, in the area because, according to Rome, the French Entente system could be counter-balanced by forming an Aegean bloc between Ankara, Athens, and Rome.[161] Although Italy failed to achieve that kind of bloc at that time because of the problems between Turkey and Greece it would never give up the idea of forming a bloc including these two countries and mainly Bulgaria, perhaps also with Hungary, as the following pages will show. What is important here, is that the desire to balance the dominance of France brought Italy

[160] Stavrianos, p.734.

[161] Barlas and Güvenç, p.146.

alongside Turkey, which was experiencing problems with France at that time due to the Syrian border issue and the Ottoman debts.

Secondly, a problem which seriously affected Turkish-Italian relations in the previous years had been eliminated in 1926. That was the Mosul problem which had brought Turkey and Britain nearly to the brink of war. Italy's position on the issue, and relatedly on the Dodecanese Islands had formed the basis of the fear that Turkey had felt towards Italy. However, by 1927, this obstacle had been completely removed. Therefore, while Italy was no longer backed by Britain anymore in order to startle Turkey, in return, Turkey obtained a chance to ameliorate its foreign relations with other powers, including Italy. For that issue, Barlas argues that Rome, which was waiting for the break down of the Turkish Republic, saw that the Mosul issue did not lead to the collapse of the new republic, therefore, Mussolini began to regard Turkey more as a regional actor rather than as a potential colony.[162] This interpretation reflects the truth in the sense that in these years the republican regime was consolidated both internally with the elimination of all opposition and externally with the efforts to solve the existing problems with the Great Powers. It should be underlined that since Rome tried to achieve its foreign policy goals regarding the southwestern Anatolia in collaboration with the British around the Mosul issue at that time, it was very meaningful that Italy tried to be closer with Turkey after the British-Turkish problems came to an end. Although after the end of the Mosul problem Italy had made individual invasion plans about Anatolia, in the context of 1927, it decided to implement peaceful means through which it could both counterbalance France in the Balkans and form domination in Turkey.

[162] Barlas, "Friends or Foes?" p.232-238.

Apart from the political factors that depended on the strategic orientation of Italy and Turkey, economic conditions played a fundamental role in the rapprochement of Italy to Turkey. Firstly, the global economy, in general, was one the verge of a big financial collapse which materialized in 1929. Additionally, together with the global financial difficulties, the Italian economy was experiencing economic hardships. In that respect, Rome adapted autarchic policies in 1927 in order to cope with the economic problems.[163] This meant that while Rome imposed high tariffs on imports, it wanted to make exports with products from the traditional sectors in order to ease the balance of payments pressure.[164] Therefore, what Italy sought to achieve with the peace in the relationship had an additional economic dimension through which it would broaden its influence in the Turkish economic market. In this context, both the uppermost position of Italy in the import levels of Turkey at the end of the period and the naval trade between the parties in the meantime should be considered also from an economic point of view.

All of these reasons led to the desire of Italy to become closer to Turkey. In return, Turkey had also important considerations in favor of this rapprochement. First of that was the loneliness of Turkey "in which a sense of insecurity was more accentuated than in most Balkan countries because of its international isolation, marked by its outcast status vis-à-vis the League of Nations."[165] Therefore, rapprochement with Rome would constitute the first step in the normalization of relations with other European powers. In addition, friendship with Italy was important also in terms of securing Turkish territory in the sense that Italy as a

[163] Jon S. Cohen and Giovanni Federico, *The Growth of the Italian Economy, 1820-1960* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.22.

[164] Ibid., p.22.

[165] Barlas, "Friends or Foes?" p.239.

country which had ambitions towards Turkish territory would accept the integrity of this territory by defining itself as a friend of Turkey, according to viewpoint of Ankara.[166]

Therefore, both sides found rapprochement advantageous for their interests although Ankara became suspicious about the sincerity of Rome due to the fact that Turkish leaders knew that Rome would not suddenly become an ally of Ankara.[167] In fact, this mistrust about Italy regarding the "real" intent of the Fascist state towards Turkey always persisted at least in the minds of the Turkish officials and influenced the course of events in the subsequent periods. However, for now, despite all of the deficiencies, like confidence within the contacts that should exist in a friendship, it could not be denied that Turkey and Italy were opening a new phase in terms of their relationship.

In that respect, the meeting which took place between Tevfik Rüştü Aras and Mussolini in Milan, in 1927 could be regarded as the first instance in which efforts were made in order to come closer. About the meeting, Tevfik Rüştü Aras, in his book *Görüşlerim*, conveys that, first of all, Mussolini complained about Turkey's attitude, which was regarded as an insult to Italy by the Fascist state.[168] The reason behind this feeling of Rome was that Italy was on notice about the efforts of Turkey in order to solve the problems with Greece, and it had interpreted some issues in the contacts against itself. After Aras assured Mussolini that the contacts were just about the solution of existing problems and the mutual restriction of naval arms on the Aegean Sea, without being against any power, Mussolini seemed to be satisfied and

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[166] Gönlübol and Sar, *Atatürk ve Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası*, p.77.

[167] Barlas, "Friends or Foes?" p.238.

[168] Tevfik Rüştü Aras, *Görüşlerim* (İstanbul: Semih Lütfi Kitabevi 1945), p.52.

mentioned his desire for a tripartite alliance in which Bulgaria also could take part in the near future.[169]

As this chapter will show, Italy would insist on a possible collaboration among these Balkan powers during the subsequent meetings, but the existing problems among those states would not allow such an accompanying alliance. However, although Mussolini's plan did not seem achievable at the time of this meeting, it should be underlined that the success of the meeting laid in the fact that it paved the way for further diplomatic contacts and negotiations as well as for the 1928 Turkish-Italian Friendship and Neutrality Treaty.

Accordingly, after the Milan meeting, a series of other meetings were held between Turkish and Italian officials. Every one of them contributed to making these two countries closer, but specifically the one held again in Milan on April 1928 was very influential on the signing of the treaty in May 1928. At that meeting, the Italian officials tried to achieve two goals. First, they struggled to convince Turkey of their good will, second, they tried to constitute a basis for a tripartite alliance in the Mediterranean, which above all else required a peaceful settlement of problematic issues between Ankara and Athens.

In order to achieve the latter, Mussolini provided an atmosphere in Milan where the Turkish and Greek officials could meet and exchange views about the possibility of an arbitration treaty and additionally he accentuated Italy's presumptive role as a guarantor in a future Turkish-Greek compromise.[170] What Mussolini wanted to achieve at that point was to be able to take a grip on both Turkey and Greece by dominating the forthcoming peace between these two

[169] Ibid.

[170] M. Murat Hatipoğlu, *Yakın Tarihte Türkiye ve Yunanistan 1923-1954* (Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1997), p.110.

countries. In other words, Mussolini thought that if Italy endeavored for a solution to the Greek-Turkish problems, these two countries would feel indebted themselves to Italy, therefore Italy, as the founder of the peace, would impose its will upon them more easily.

Obviously, the points under consideration between Turkey and Greece were not so plain that the invitation of the two countries' foreign ministers to direct the negotiations was not adequate for the solution. The different interpretations about the population exchange settlement of the Lausanne Treaty, the property problems on the basis of the exchange of populations, minority rights, and the status of the ecumenical patriarchate were problems which were constantly provoking disputes between the Turks and the Greeks since 1923.[171] Additionally, the different occasions on which the sides tried to find peaceful settlement to these problems had never yielded any results. Italy was aware of this fact and did not insist on an expeditious agreement at that time. Rather, it continued to push for further negotiations between the parties.

What this meeting achieved, instead was the defrosting of Turkish-Italian relations. Actually, all of the meetings and the negotiations which were held from the year 1927 to April 1928 was influential in yielding the desired results in terms of the normalization of this relationship. However, the 1928 Milan meeting had the utmost importance in the sense that it became a threshold in the rapprochement between Rome and Ankara. This characteristic of the meeting was also underlined on 22 April 1928, right after the Milan meeting, in one of the sessions of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Tevfik Rüştü Aras, who said: "Our intercourse with Italy, which is one of our Western neighbors, is very amicable.

[171] For further information, see H. J. Psomiades, Greek-Turkish Relations, 1923-1930: A Study in the Politics of Rapprochement (Ph.D diss., Columbia University, 1962).

The meeting, which occurred in Milan recently with the neighbor and friend country's head of government, who is also an important personality of our epoch, became an admirable milestone in the way of these friendly relations"[172] about the negotiations.

Apart from the statement of Aras, the importance of the meeting was also evident in its concrete result, the Treaty of Neutrality, Conciliation and Judicial Solution, was signed in Rome on 30 May 1928. According to this treaty, the parties would remain neutral in an event of aggression that was directed against one of them, would consult for reconciliation method or judicial processes if a problem arose between them, and would resort to the Hague Tribunal if a disagreement arose about the interpretation and the implementation of the treaty.[173] Although the general framework of the text was peculiar to the atmosphere of this era, in other words, although there was no striking point within the treaty, it was important in the sense that on the one hand it was made between Turkey and Italy, the relations of which were malignant for years, on the other hand, it opened a new phase in which these countries began to manage their affairs within the sphere of diplomatic courtesy rather than coercion and deterrence.

The importance that was attributed to the treaty can be seen also from the speeches of the prime ministers of both countries. As Mussolini, in a speech in the Senate on 5 June 1928, said:

> During the last two years, since the intrigues of elements, alien to Turkey but hostile to Italy, had ceased, Italo-Turkish relations have greatly improved…The importance of this Protocol, which seals the agreement

[172] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:III, Cilt:3, İçtima Senesi:1, 22 April 1928, C:1, p.197. "*Garb komşularımızdan İtalya ile münasebatımız çok dostanedir. Devrimizin çok mühim şahsiyetlerinden komşu ve dost devletin reisi hükümeti ile Milano'da ahiren vuku bulan mülakat bu dostane münasebat yolunda şayanı kayıt bir merhale olmuştur.*"

[173] İsmail Soysal, *Tarihçeleri ve Açıklamaları ile Birlikte Türkiye'nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları (1920-1945)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2000), vol.1, p.333-339.

> between Italy and Turkey, is obvious. The horizon of the Eastern Mediterranean is now clear and free of all clouds. Italy meets Turkey in a sincere and friendly spirit…[174]

İsmet İnönü also emphasized the disappearance of the obstacles to peace in the Mediterranean and the improvement of the friendship between the countries by stating:

> …both countries have suffered greatly from the currents of suspicion and lack of confidence which have been stirred up artificially by one or another side with the object of creating a storm of misunderstanding between the two countries. The signature of the treaty of arbitration and non-aggression with that country has happily put an end to the lies of international speculators of all kinds, which fact has probably exasperated them; the treaty has been a blessing for the two countries as well as for the real friends of peace…I can assure you that since the signature of the treaty, this confidence has steadily increased on both sides.[175]

Parallel to the speeches of the prime ministers, Aras, who was one of the most notable promoters of the Treaty, stated that the friendship with Italy was compatible with Turkey's real interests, in a speech on the occasion of ratification. He also underlined the importance of this treaty for the Mediterranean, which was on the intersection point of three continents.[176]

As can be seen from the speeches, both sides attributed great importance to the treaty, and therefore, to their strategic friendship. In that respect, after that point, both sides would try to benefit from this relationship on the basis of their interests. While Turkey tried to utilize the coadjutant role of Rome towards Ankara in the political, economic, military realms, Rome enjoyed from the privileges, in terms of being

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[174] Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Documents on International Affairs* (London: New York: Oxford University Press, 1929), v.1928, p.143.

[175] Ibid., p.220

[176] T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:III, Cilt:V, İçtima Senesi:I, 29 November 1928, p.73-74.

considerably influential in Turkish politics and economy that evidently stemmed from this cooperation.

If 1927 became the preparation year and 1928 became the turning point in terms of Turkish-Italian relations, 1929 could be qualified as the consolidation year of this partnership. Accordingly, the areas from which the two countries tried to benefit as underlined above were undertaken through the diplomatic visits from different levels throughout the year.

In this context, in February 1929, Dino Grandi, Undersecretary of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, travelled to Ankara in order to discuss several political and economic issues between Rome and Ankara. However, his visit was reduced by several European newspapers, especially the French ones, to the efforts of the Italian officials to form a tripartite alliance among Ankara, Athens and Rome.[177] Although these claims were not authenticated, the visit of Grandi to Greece right before the one to Turkey, and his explanations after these two meetings about the goodwill of both two sides for the solution of the problems, denominated that Rome was intervening in the negotiation process between those two countries even if it did not push for a tripartite alliance at this immature level.

Obviously, Italy's real intent within the issue was to form an alternative bloc which would revisionist above all in the Balkans to which actually neither Greece not Turkey was a volunteer. However, there was an undeniable reality that Italy was trying to solve the issue whatever its intent was. Thus, at that point, both Turkey and Greece accepted this helping hand, because Ankara tried not only to adjudicate population exchange problem but also to find a place for itself in the European arena through the cooperation with Italy while Greece used this friendship both "to press

[177] *Cumhuriyet*, 16 February 1928.

Yugoslavia in settling the long-standing dispute over the free zone in Salonika,"[178] and to obtain the most successful result from the negotiations with Turkey. To put it differently, the domination of Italy was profitable for both of them in the meantime even if their foreign policy perspectives were not revisionist.

However, since Italy was regarded as a Fascist state with ambitions in Anatolia and, in contrast, Turkey was qualified as a middle power with limited opportunities, the exponential friendship led to different interpretations. For instance, rumors about a secret mutual aid treaty between the parties were so outspreaded that Aras felt bound to make an explanation in which he stated that Turkey was ready to sign neutrality treaties with any country, but would never conclude a mutual aid pact.[179]

While Turkey displayed conduct which emphasized the independent nature of Turkish foreign policy due to its disquiet about this kind of rumor, Italy was trying to placate Ankara about the disposition of Rome. In that respect, Mussolini made speeches through which he explained the general conduct of the Italian foreign policy by denoting that Italy did not want to be harmful to the peace, which had been obtained by forming friendships and signing treaties with its neighbors.[180] To what extent Turkey was relieved with these explanations was ambiguous; however, whatever the real situation was, Turkey and Italy began to take steps within their contacts at a rapid pace.

Accordingly, in the same month with information which designated that the Turkish-Greek negotiations were full of disputes due to the different goals of the parties, news indicated that Turkey called upon Italian assistance. In other words, it could not be a coincidence that just after Turkey felt indisposed about news on the

[178] Stavrianos, p.736.

[179] *Cumhuriyet*, 26 February 1929.

[180] Quoted by *Cumhuriyet*, 12 March 1929.

sale of Turkish real estates in Greece before a compromise and about the reports which indicated that the negotiations would be suspended;[181] the Italian press wrote information about an upcoming visit by Aras to Rome.[182] Although there were other important political and economic issues that should have been discussed between two countries, it was evident that Italy also would try to provide options for a peaceful solution with its precursor role in the issue. The press of the other countries also linked the desire of Turkey for the conciliatory role of Italy in the negotiations with the visit of the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs to Rome.[183]

Although Turkish official circles did not pronounce this nature of the visit explicitly, Aras, before his trip to Rome, stated that although this was a return visit, people were free to interpret the occasion as they liked.[184] Therefore, it would not be erroneous to claim that, with this explanation, Turkish officials confessed the appraisals, yet in a tacit way.

On 11 April 1929, Aras departed from Turkey, firstly, to Geneva, with the aim of participation in the preparation committee for the Conference on the Limitation of Armaments. It should be reminded that throughout the interwar years, the limitation of armaments issue was negotiated within different realms, either in the meeting between the Great Powers or within the framework of the League of Nations. Since disarmament had been qualified as a *sine qua non* requirement for sustainable peace,[185] interwar international relations, especially in the period between the end of

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[181] *Cumhuriyet*, 10 March 1929.

[182] *Giornale D'Italia*, 27 March 1929, quoted by *Cumhuriyet,*28 March 1929.

[183] *Le Petit Parisien*, 15 April 1929, quoted by *Cumhuriyet*, 16 April 1929.

[184] *Cumhuriyet,* 11 April 1929.

[185] Fahir Armaoğlu, *Siyasi Tarih 1789–1960,* (Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası, 1964), p. 533.

the First World War and the year 1933, tried repeatedly to come to agreement on the disarmament issue. In this context, the commission meeting in 1929 in Geneva, too, in which Aras participated and defended that "the will to put limits to the armament was the requirement for the peace and composure of the humanity,"[186] remained an unimportant move in world history.

Although the conference became an inconclusive and unimportant example of peace efforts, as many others in the whole interwar era, the post-conference period became very important for specifically the Turkish Republic in terms of the visit to Rome just after Geneva, because in this meeting many issues, both political and economic, were discussed and some of them were concluded.

First of all, the solution to the contentious issue of the problem of the territorial waters between Italy-owned Meis Island and the western Anatolian coast, and the problem of the proprietorship of Karaada, were laid down in this meeting. In fact, the Karaada issue had been decided in favor of Turkey in the Lausanne Treaty.[187] However, Italy had insisted on its sovereignty on the island near to Bodrum Coast. In response to the continuous claims of Italy, Turkey had delivered several notes to the Italian government with an emphasis on its rights that stemmed from the Lausanne Treaty.[188] Despite the efforts of Ankara to persuade Rome on the basis of its position, the problem persisted up until this meeting. However, after the meeting, with the help of improving friendship and the promise of solving the issues through the legal means set in the 1928 Treaty, the two states decided to solve the issue within the

[186] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: III, Cilt:12, İçtima Senesi:2, 19 May 1929, p.64-66.

[187] Article 12 of the Lausanne Treaty says that "except where a provision to the contrary is contained in the present Treaty, the islands situated at less than three miles from the Asiatic coast remain under Turkish sovereignty."

[188] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/236.596..28.

framework of the Hague Tribunal. In that respect, the parties signed a contract on 30 May 1929 about their agreement to arbitration in which Turkey declared that it would accept the final decision of the court.[189]

This decision shows that, on the one hand, the meeting between Aras and Grandi as well as Mussolini became the base for the solution of a long-standing problem; on the other hand, it showed that the relationship between Turkey and Italy had reached at a level at which the two states were not thinking of any method other than peaceful ones, as opposed to the previous period. Additionally, it should also be noted that this issue would not be solved in the Court, because after a decision of the parties to negotiate the issue between themselves again,[190] it would be solved through the diplomatic channels in 1932. The result would be qualified as the success of the Turkish-Italian friendship, as will be shown in the subsequent chapter.

Apart from the Karaada issue, economic matters were taken into consideration at the meeting. At that point, it should be claimed that both the Turkish and Italian governments were satisfied in the sense that after Aras returned to Turkey, he declared that a trade agreement would be signed in the near future after the negotiations were completed between the officials.[191] The declaration of Aras displays that economic matters were given as much attention in these meetings as political ones.

What should be underlined at this point is that although important steps in terms of politics and economy were taken as a result of the meeting, there was neither any declaration nor any concrete results regarding the Turkish-Greek issue, which had raised the rumors that had been confirmed implicitly before the visit. It

[189] Ibid., 030..10/237.598..1.

[190] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: IV, Cilt:3, İçtima Senesi:1, 15.07.1931, p.129-130.

[191] *Cumhuriyet*, 1 May 1929.

was evident that the issue had been handled during the visit within the framework of the increasing intervention of Rome; however, it was impossible to reach a conclusion at that point in the sense that there was a long road to the peace which would be concluded in 1930.

To conclude the remarks about the meeting, one can assess that both sides were so satisfied with the results that when Tevfik Rüştü Aras explained the contacts both to the Grand National Assembly and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he highlighted the "positive and fruitful results and the hospitality of the official circles to the Turkish delegate"[192] and the "respect of Italy to the Ghazi and to the open politics of the Turkish Government."[193]

The developments after May are especially worth to mentioning. Mutual gestures were made in order to make the warm contacts warmer. For instance, while Turkey declared that in the summer holiday one thousand scout students would visit Italy in order to make contacts with Italian scouts, Italy declared their desire to hold football matches with Turkish teams.[194] Thus, improvements in diplomatic relations was tried to be spilled over into the social spheres.

Additionally, a development in the same month which could be qualified not only as economic but also as military one occurred. After the Turkish government had declared its ten-year naval armament program in 1928 and different tenders had been made for naval construction contracts, on 24 May 1929 the decision of Turkish officials in favor of the Italians was made public.[195] When the visit of the Air Minister, General Italo Balbo, the air fleet with some torpedo boats, and nearly 20

[192] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/236.597..1.

[193] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: III, Cilt:12, İçtima Senesi:2, 19 May 1929, p.65.

[194] *Cumhuriyet*, 9 May 1929.

[195] Barlas and Güvenç, p.149-153.

journalists showed simultaneity with the victory of the Italian companies in the bids of the Turkish navy's renewal, world public opinion began to worry about the nature of the relationship. In that respect, an article that was published in *New York Times* made noteworthy interpretations about the developments between those two states.

According to that article, the contract with the Italians for the naval construction, which had been signed although the French and British companies offered much more favorable conditions, and right after the visit of the Italian air fleet to Istanbul with the Air Minister was nothing beyond a policy of Turkey's "Italianization."[196] The article stated that, this visit, on the one hand, was one of the steps that was taken by the Italian government to "Italianize" Turkey, in other words, to dominate the country; on the other hand, was the initial move of Italy in terms of its ambitions towards the Eastern Mediterranean.[197] The same source also indicated that Italy, which also aimed at obtaining territory for its growing population in the Antalya region, was turned a blind eye by the British, because Britain at the time seemed pleased at the appearance of Italy as a counterbalance to the Soviet Union in the region.[198]

It was obvious that Turkey shared these concerns about Fascist Rome, due to its legacy and the consciousness of Turkish officials about the nature of the Fascist foreign policy. However, as the reasons were explained, both countries needed to come closer continuously in this period and Turkey could not resist what the Italians offered.

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[196] *New York Times,* 7 June 1929, quoted by PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/236.597..12.

[197] Ibid.

[198] Ibid.

In this context, what the Italian support meant for Turkey at this time scale will be easier to understand if, for instance, the initiative of the "United States of Europe" is analyzed. In September 1929, the French Prime Minister Aristide Briand broached the idea of a European Federation for which he adapted the principle that each nation, while mindful of its own interest, should not feel obliged to oppose the interest of any other.[199] Actually, the European Federation idea had been proposed and discussed several times before the initiative of Briand. The importance of Briand's proposal stemmed from the fact that firstly, the European scene needed this kind of a project, because "Briand had accepted that the Europe would not be saved either by the Statute of the League of Nations or the Locarno Treaties;"[200] and secondly, that the proposals before this had not gone beyond academic debates.

However, although the European Federation idea became a tangible issue with Briand's proposal,[201] the problem for Turkey with the idea was that it was not invited to the meetings in Geneva, as the Soviet Union and the Republic of Ireland were not. The ignorance of Turkey and the Soviet Union by the other European states largely stemmed from the fact that these states were not members of the League of Nations rather than from an ideologically driven debate about the Europeanness of Turkey or Russia.

At that point, what is important in order to understand the importance of Italy for Turkey at that time was the fact that Italy displayed its stance during the first session of the relevant meeting in favor of Turkey. In this context, firstly Italian and German officials contributed to the formation of a commission that discussed the

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[199] Jules-Bois, "Aristide Briand, Member of Twenty-One French Cabinets," *Current History (New York)* 31, no.3 (December 1929), p535.

[200] Tevfik Rüştü Aras, *Atatürk'ün Dış Politikası* (İstanbul: Kaynak, 2003), p.74.

[201] Ibid.

participation of Turkey and the Soviet Union in the negotiation process, and secondly Dino Grandi, who became the Minister of Foreign Affairs in September 1929, repeated his stance throughout the discussion by stating that the "a European Union without Turkey would never become a complete Europe."[202] As a result of the efforts of Italy and Germany, Turkey, in conclusion, participated in the negotiations in Geneva.

Thus, what this story points out is that Italy during this period, worked to alleviate Turkey's isolation. Therefore, even if Ankara was not very comfortable with the nature of the Italian foreign policy, as stated above, and was aware of the real intent of Rome, it was in a need of friends in the international arena. It should also be underlined that Rome also behaved in a careful, at least non-aggressive, manner towards Turkey, in order not to alienate it, because Italy had comprehended that this kind of policy, rather than a colonialist one that was hard to achieve due to the consolidation of the Republic, had the chance of success in terms of benefitting from Turkey politically, economically, and militarily.[203] In other words, in a suitable environment, Italy and Turkey cohabited in the meantime.

Turning to the 1929 developments, while Turkish-Italian relations were increasingly improving, the world and the European scene began to darken. First of all, the disarmament and the war reparations issues were subjects of tension within Europe. For the former, despite negotiation process that was going on in Geneva, no concrete result was yielded. On every occasion related to the disarmament issue, the relations among the big powers deteriorated as a result of the speculative speeches of the leaders. For the war reparations, on the other hand, the Dawes plan which had

[202] *Cunhuriyet*, 23 January 1931.

[203] Barlas and Güvenç, p.149.

been formulated in 1924 seemed to work until 1927, after which problems started to appear in the system. When Germany requested a revision of the Dawes Plan, the Allies and American bankers responded in early 1929 with the Young Plan which reduced German obligations and set up new collection machinery;[204] however, this Plan had not been adapted easily. For instance, while France had resisted the Young Plan for a long period of time, Mussolini also had criticized the Plan stating that "the states, which seems peace-loving, are playing with the fire."[205]

The Young Plan could not be implemented due to the most important development of the 1929, which affected the whole world, including the concerned parties of this study. This was the Great Depression, which began with the New York stock exchange crisis on 24 October 1929. Although the crisis originated in the U.S., the impacts became worldwide and enduring.

How Turkey and Italy responded to the financial difficulties and to what extent Turkish-Italian economic relations were affected by the world economic crisis will be analyzed in another section. However, it should be underlined that, at a time when Turkey wanted to found a national central bank in order to cope with the crisis more efficiently and was unable to obtain the necessary reports that it expected from the German financial experts,[206] the former Italian Minister of Finance, Cont Volpi accepted Turkey's request to make investigations about the conditions for a central bank and travelled to Turkey.[207] Just after the visit of Volpi, who expressed positive

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[204] Peter H. Buckingham, *International Normalcy: The Open Door Peace with the Former Central Powers,1921-29* (Wilmington: Del. Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1983), p.155.

[205] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/236.597..15.

[206] Dilek Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy in Turkey: Economic and Foreign Policy Strategies in an Uncertain World, 1929–1939* (New York: Brill, 1998), p.86.

[207] Central Bank of Republic of Turkey, n.d., "Tarihçe," available [online]: http://www.tcmb.gov.tr/yeni/banka/tarihce.html, [15 January 2009].

views about the issue, Turkey declared that it would found the central bank. The importance of that fact was that Turkey tried to benefit from Italian backing, which was ready at that time as well as in the time of the Great Depression. In other words, this instance showed that in that period Turkey used its smooth diplomatic relations with Italy for its ends repeatedly.

However, another issue with which Ankara had already preferred the involvement of Italy, namely relations with Greece, was progressing slowly. The negotiation process was sometimes getting tense in the sense that the parties were delivering notes to each other. Apart from the slow process of negotiations, Greece misinterpreted Turkey's efforts to invigorate the navy. The Greek press wrote that Turkey would assault to the Greek Islands.[208] It was no coincidence that nearly at the same time Greece also decided on the renovation of its navy. However, Italy still believed and anticipated that the problem would be settled in the near future.[209]

Actually, Rome was pressingly in a need of an agreement between Ankara and Athens, because apart from the overall desire to counterbalance the Little Entente, it wanted to settle issues that could be harmful to the Eastern Mediterranean security due to the fact that in the first half of 1930, the western Mediterranean was becoming increasingly tense because of the endless debates about disarmament. The negotiations among the Great Powers had become complicated and Italy had positioned itself vis-à-vis France. Therefore, on every occasion that the parties could not agree, Mussolini made extremely sharp speeches.[210] In that context, Mussolini, who thought that Italy would make a war with France sooner or later, in the

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[208] *Cumhuriyet,* 11 September 1929.

[209] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/236.597..14.

[210] For instance, "Bize Ancak Mahvolmak İsteyenler Çatabilir" trans. "Merely The Ones That Want To Perish Can Be Against Us" quoted by *Cumhuriyet,* 19 May 1930.

meantime desired a secure eastern Mediterranean with the same mentality. The considerations of Italy about France were so serious that in May 1930, Rome declared that new ships would be constructed for the Italian navy.

Turkey and Greece shook hands with each other about the exchange of populations in this atmosphere on 10 June 1930. This was a positive development for all the powers including Italy, which had tried very hard in order to realize this goal. Thus, when the agreement was presented to the other powers through the embassies, the Turkish ambassador in Rome rendered thanks to the Italian government and specifically to Mussolini, for their continuous efforts. Additionally, Aras, in a speech in the Grand National Assembly, highlighted the Italian help which had enabled the result through the exhibition of friendly feelings towards both powers.[211] By the same token, after the signing of the Treaty of Neutrality, Friendship and Arbitrage Treaty between Greece and Turkey[212] (*Türk-Yunan Dostluk Tarafsızlık, Uzlaştırma ve Hakemlik Andlaşması*) on 30 October 1930, Ankara presented its gratitude to Mussolini and Grandi again for their help in the conclusion of the treaty.[213]

However, Italy, which had finally acquired the desired situation in the area, became worried about another development therein. That was the idea of a Balkan Conference in order to discuss the problems of the area, to provide solutions to them insofar as it could, and to form a federation among the states if possible. The need for the Balkan integration had stemmed from the impressions about the Locarno Agreement and Briand's United States of Europe idea, as well as the economic

[211] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: III, Cilt:2, İçtima Senesi: 3, 17 June 1930, p.265.

[212] Soysal, p.393-396.

[213] A. Suat Bilge, *Büyük Düş, Türk Yunan Siyasi İlişkileri* (Ankara: 21.Yüzyıl Yayınları, 2000), p.164.

difficulties of the Great Depression.[214] However, the motto "the Balkans for the Balkan people," was certainly incompatible with the vision of Rome. In that respect, it was no coincidence that around the time of the First Balkan Conference, Princess Giovanna of Rome married King Boris of the revisionist Bulgaria. The timing of the wedding showed that Italy would not contemplate losing its revisionist allies, Bulgaria in this case and the formation of a pro status quo block near to its territory. The attitude of Italy would last throughout the process, so both Bulgaria and Albania would not sign the treaty adducing the minority issues as a reason.

It was obvious that the efforts of Italy in both agreements began to estrange it from Turkey and Greece in terms of their stances, ironically, because, contrary to the desires and expectations of Italy, the "Greco-Turkish tie, once achieved, proved to be one of the strongest bulwarks of the status quo in the Balkans."[215] In this sense, while İsmet İnönü stated that "the sameness of the cardinal interests and mutual needs is the only basis for the continuation and endurance of the friendship that ties nations to each other. Therefore, it should be acknowledged that the Turks and Greeks are bounded by cooperation in the Balkans as well as in the Mediterranean basin on which they had the same major joint interests,"[216] he probably was not indicating a revisionist alliance in accordance with the wishes of Italy, but a stable environment in the Balkans for the sake of their territories.

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[214] R. Joseph Kerner and Harry N. Howard, *The Balkan Conferences and the Balkan Entente, 1930-1935: A Study in Recent History of the Balkan and Near Eastern Peoples* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1936), p.21-23.

[215] Stavrianos, p.736.

[216] Bilge, p.162. "*Tarafların belli başlı menfaatlerinin ve karşılıklı ihtiyaçlarının tıpkılığı, milletleri bağlayan dostlukların devamına ve dayanıklılığına yegane zemindir. Bu böyle olunca, Türkler ve Yunanlıların her hususta Balkanlarda ve aynı büyük menfaatlere malik bulundukları Akdeniz havzasında anlaşmaya ve birlikte çalışmaya mecbur oldukları teslim edilmelidir.*"

However, it should be underlined that this estrangement would occur gradually in the sense that Italy did not take the backseat in the foreign policies of Turkey and Greece overnight. On the contrary, while the status-quo stance of Greece and Turkey was progressing, specifically in terms of the Balkan Union, both countries continued to stand near to Rome at the same time, because, firstly they did not want to alienate or annoy Italy due to the fact that both feared from Rome, and secondly, they could still benefit from the friendship of Fascist Italy.

Another visit of Aras to Rome and Venice during which he met with Grandi and Mussolini, respectively, which took place in November 1930, could be seen from this perspective. That is to say, although both countries were uneasy about their foreign policy directions, their relationship seemed to develop in the short run. The press, also saw this side of the story. Rather than writing about the specific issues that were under discussion, they emphasized the "pleased progress of the intercourse between the two countries."[217]

However, it was very meaningful that during this meeting Mussolini, who had probably anticipated the change in the direction of Turkey on the basis of the distrust of Italy, needed to give assurance to Turkey with his speech:

> You can be sure of Italy's friendship. I am not a disingenuous man. I am a man of his word. If I say 'I am your friend', I remain your friend. In fact, no point of controversy that separates Turkey and Italy remains. On the contrary, there are interests that unite the two nations. In the future there are many things that the two countries will realize together in the political and economic realms.[218]

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[217] *Cumhuriyet*, 29 November 1930.

[218] *Cumhuriyet,* 30 November 1930. "*Italya'nın dostluğundan emin olabilirsiniz, ben ikiyüzlü adam değilim. Sözünde duran adamım. Dostunuzum deyince, daima dost kalırım. Esasen Türkiye ve İtalya'yı ayıran hiçbir ihtilaf noktası kalmamıştır. Bilakis, iki milleti birleştiren menfaatler vardır. İstikbalde iki memleketin siyasi ve iktisadi sahada birlikte yapacağı şeyler vardır.*"

Sure enough, Rome was behaving compatibly with the expressions that the official circles reiterated. For instance, the Federation of Europe issue, was concluded in favor of Turkey, at this time. In addition, in nearly every week, both the Turkish and Italian press wrote about the remarks through which the Italians glorified new Turkey and its genius leader, Ghazi. For example, while on one day the Italian ambassador in Turkey, Baron Aloisi, declared that "Turkey belongs to Turks,"[219] on another day a tourist group that shouted "Long Live Turkish-Italian Relations! Long Live Mustafa Kemal!"[220] were reported in the headlines.

Moreover, both social and economic relations were on the rise parallel to the political developments. The exchange of students and mutual visits of scouts took place with great excitement. Likewise, the completion and delivery of two torpedo boats the *Kocatepe* and the *Adatepe* in October; of the assault boats the *Martı*, the *Denizkuşu*, and the *Doğan* in September; and of the submarines the *Dumlupınar* and the *Sakarya* in November 1931[221] highlighted, each time, the unshakable ties between Rome and Ankara.

Thus, in the last months of the period under discussion, the Turkish and Italian friendship seemed to reach at peak. Although there were hesitations in the minds of both two sides, they seemed to be making efforts towards the same diplomatic goals. In that respect, during a conference in Geneva in September, Aras took the initiative to obtain rapprochement between Bulgaria and Greece in collaboration with Rome which "hoped that Turkey having reconciled with Greece, would contribute to a

[219] *Cumhuriyet,* 28 Mayıs 1931.

[220] *Cumhuriyet,* 23 June 1931.

[221] Afif Büyüktuğrul, *Cumhuriyet Donanması (1923–1960)* (İstanbul: T.C. Deniz Kuvvetleri Komutanlığı, 1967) p.59-60.

similar political reconciliation between Athens and Sofia."[222] Bulgaria, which for previous twenty years had resented the fact that it had been thrown out of the Aegean,[223] had problems also with Greece, as well as with Yugoslavia. Therefore, when the aims of Italy are taken into the consideration especially in terms of this multipartite alliance, the efforts of Rome in a relation to Ankara appear reasonable. However, although the efforts of Italy can be explained by its aims, the efforts of Turkey seemed complicated, especially if the "real" stance of Ankara towards revisionism and revisionist countries is considered.

In this context, it could be pointed out that Ankara's move was double-sided. On the one hand, even if Turkey did not envision a revisionist alliance, it could not dispense with the friendship of Italy, because Rome had provided support to Ankara in every aspect, beginning in 1927, and because the alienation of Rome could turn the clocks back five years ago. Therefore, it was lucrative for Turkey to cooperate with Italy in the strict sense of the word.

On the other hand, Turkey's attitude was not a mere obligation in the sense that a détente between Greece and Bulgaria would constitute a peaceful environment in Thrace that Turkey desired regardless of Italy. Additionally, with this rapprochement at least one problem would be decreased in favor of the Balkan Union idea. In other words, apart from the Yugoslavian-Bulgarian issues, a positive step would have been taken for the Balkan Entente movement, with which Italy was obviously uncomfortable. Thus, while Turkey appeared as if it was behaving under the direction of Rome in this case, it was actually serving its own interests regardless of Italy.

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[222] Barlas, "Friends or Foes?" p.243.

[223] Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Eastern Europe Between the Wars, 1918-1941* (Cambridge: University Press, 1946), p.355.

In fact, Rome was also aware that Ankara favored the Balkan Pact over a tripartite alliance. The recommendations of Grandi that Italy should take precautions against the independent diplomacy of Turkey in the Balkans[224] can also be seen from this perspective. However, although Turkey and Greece were advancing in terms of the Balkan Pact step by step, as can be seen from the Second Balkan Conference that took place in Istanbul, they had not alienated Italy yet by 1931. In other words, in 1932, which was qualified as the year that the course of events began to change, the Turkish-Italian friendship seemed flawless.

To conclude this section, it can be stated that throughout the period between 1927 and 1932, the relations between Turkey and Italy proceeded very different from the previous stage. The mutual interests of the parties brought them together. Turkey needed support in the international arena as an isolated country to some extent and Italy inquired the ways, if possible with Turkey and Greece, to counter-balance the France-sponsored Little Entente. To this end, Italy made the best, in terms of political, economic, and military support, in order to attract Turkey. However, although Turkey responded positively to these efforts, in reality, Italy, as a more powerful country than Turkey, had ambitious foreign policy objectives and also had an intimidating past towards Anatolia. Therefore, although Turkey benefitted from the friendship of Italy, she always carried a hidden mistrust and always sought alternative alliances, like the Balkan Entente. Since the relationship depended on hesitation, it was impossible for it to last long, so a new period was about to begin.

[224] Barlas, "Friends or Foes?" p.244.

CHAPTER 6

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND ITALY, 1932-1939: THE RETURN OF BELLIGERENCE

In the previous chapter, Turkish-Italian relations between 1927 and 1932 were explained. The détente period in the bilateral relations that began in late 1927 and continued until 1932 was described. However, after 1932, due to the reappearance of the aggression in the foreign policy of Mussolini, Turkey's distrust in Italy resurfaced. Therefore, a new period, in which the bilateral relations deteriorated constantly until the outbreak of the Second World War, began.

In that respect, it is appropriate to look at the whole period beginning from the events of 1932, during which diplomatic relations between the parties began to change in a way that the pretended positive relations of the previous period could never be reinstated. However, it must be underlined that although this year marked the end of a specific period, the new epoch did not begin full of enmities as a result of sudden changes in the foreign policy of the two states. On the contrary, good relations appeared to continue until 1934 although a gradual deterioration began in 1932 that would last until the outbreak of the Second World War. In other words, 1932 cannot be regarded as a rupture point for the contacts, but as a starting point of a setback.

Accordingly, in January 1932, Turkish and Italian politicians made a diplomatic decision that could be considered as a positive development both for Ankara and Rome. That was a new treaty[225] signed in order to solve the problem of

[225]Convention on the Delimitation of Territorial Waters between the Anatolian Coast and the Island of Castellorizo (Anadolu Kıyısı ile Meis Adası Arasında Karasularının Sınırlandırılması ve Bodrum Karşısındaki Kara Ada'nın Egemenliği Konusunda Sözleşme).

sovereignty on the islands and islets between Turkish territory and Meis Island under the control of Italy, as well as to determine the limits of the territorial waters between the two countries. According to that convention, while Italy recognized the sovereignty of Turkey on some of the islands including Karaada, Turkey accepted the sovereignty of Italy on the islands that would stand within the area between Castellorizo church and San Stephano point.[226] Although Güçlü argues that the Convention in 1932 remained an isolated instance of mutual trust[227] especially if the orientation of the contacts in the late 1930s is kept in mind, in the meantime, it was regarded as the presentation of *bona fides.* Therefore, it was not very surprising that due to the ratification of the treaty, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Dino Grandi made a speech on the close friendship that had solved the single remaining problem between the two countries without a need for an international arbitration decision,[228] for which the parties had applied to the Court of Justice in the previous period.

Another development that demonstrated the warmth in the relations was a visit of İnönü with Aras in Rome in May 1932. The reason behind the visit was to discuss pending economic and political issues.[229] Both before and during the visit, the Turkish and Italian press highlighted the fraternity between these countries. The importance of these countries for the Mediterranean security and peace was emphasized and additionally the assistance of Rome to Ankara government during the War of Independence was referred in order to show the continuum in the

[226] Soysal, p.340-343.

[227] Yücel Güçlü, "Fascist Italy's Mare Nostrum Policy and Turkey," *Belleten* LXIII, no.238 (December 1998) p.814.

[228] *Cumhuriyet*, 6 May 1932.

[229] Barlas, "Friend or Foes," p.245.

relationship.[230] Apart from the press, the prime ministers of both countries also reiterated the everlasting trust between them. The foreign press also gave importance to this visit in the sense that the Rome meeting just after the Moscow visit of the Turkish officials, was even regarded as the harbinger of a new era of political and/or economic cooperation among the Soviet Union, Turkey and Italy.[231]

However, the facts were very different from what the officials were presenting. In the political sphere, no obstacle had caused any deterioration yet. On the contrary, at this meeting, officials had decided on a five-year prolongation of the Neutrality Treaty which had started a new phase in Turkish-Italian relations in 1928.[232] In the economic sphere, however, bilateral trade had been already in decline as a result of the adverse effects of the Great Depression. According to the officials of the two states, trade should have been at a greater level.[233] Additionally, there was the issue of credit that Turkey tried to obtain from Italy. Since the Soviet Union was ready to give a loan without interest as opposed to the 6.5% that the Italians demanded, Turkey decided to get loan from Moscow rather than Rome, which, as a result, accused Ankara of being suspicious of the Western countries.[234] Therefore, the vision of İnönü, who had stated in Rome that Turkish-Italian relations would improve, began to show the signs of disproof.

Two months after the Turkish officials visited Rome, in July 1932, an important event, which was regarded by many, dubiously, as a turning point in

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[230] *Cumhuriyet*, 22 May 1932.

[231] *El Ehram,* 18 May 1932, quoted by PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/13.74..6.

[232] *Cumhuriyet*, 27 May 1932.

[233] *Cumhuriyet*, 26 May 1932.

[234] Barlas,"Friend or Foes," p.245.

Italian foreign policy, occurred. Mussolini, known as *Il Duce* (The Leader), took over the foreign office, and made Fulvio Suvich his undersecretary. Italian historiography sometimes designates the takeover of the foreign ministry by Mussolini as a step in the implementation of an expansionist and imperialist agenda which was specifically directed to constitute social togetherness.[235] Obviously, this kind of explanation for the Fascist foreign policy implies that before the 1930s there had not been an imperialist agenda within the Italian thinking. However, "more recently the balance of 'historiographical opinion[236] has tended to tilt towards a belief in the underlying consistency of Mussolini's foreign policy, the intent of which was always expansionist even when it was conducted in a moderate manner."[237] For example, even before the takeover of the foreign ministry by Mussolini, the existence of the expansionist policy in Italy had also been reflected by the foreign press, which had been already writing about the intent of expansionism especially into the Africa and Eastern Europe,[238] apart from the implementations. Additionally, a speech of Mussolini about Grandi also proves the revisionist and uninterrupted imperialist agenda of Italian foreign policy in the sense that Grandi's passivism was not regarded as suitable for the goals of the Great Italy: "Grandi had made a mess of everything in the last three years; he had made himself a prisoner of the League of

[235] Martin Blinkhorn, *Mussolini and Fasicst Italy* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), p.56.

[236] There are different point of views about the nature of fascist foreign policy. While one group defends that the fascist foreign policy was formulated on the basis of the needs for a coherent domestic environments, in other words on the basis of propaganda purposes, like the historians *Gaetano Salvemini*, *Dennis Mack Smith*, *A.J.P. Taylor*, and to some extent *Ennio di Nolfo;* the other group of historians such as *Giorgio Rumi, Giampiero Carocci, Alan Cassels, Esmonde Robertson, MacGregor Knox and Renzo De Felice* claims that a coherent imperialistic agenda was existent in fascist foreign policy and colonialist expansionism was an end in itself. For more information, see Azzi, p.187-203.

[237] Blinkhorn, p.56.

[238] For instance, *The Times,* 20 May 1932, "Ambitions of Italy," quoted by PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 30..10/237.600..2.

Nations…had gone to bed with the pacifists and made Italy pregnant with disarmament…and had taken Italy out of the groove of egoism and realism."[239] As can be seen, the foreign policy aims of Italy did not alter after Mussolini's seizure of the foreign ministry. Only the method that could realize the expansionist agenda changed on the basis of the conditions of the time.

Accordingly, when the content of the Mare Nostrum policy in terms of its geographical area is kept in mind, the appointment of Suvich and the Aloisi, officials with expertise in these areas, as high authorities indicated that the more dynamic and the militant style of Mussolini would aim at the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean.[240]

Not surprisingly, this fascist tone (*tono fascista*) in the Italian foreign policy would influence the relations between Turkey and Italy. However, since there was no problem with Italy at specifically that time, the changes in the cabinet were not perceived as a negative affair in Turkey. The Turkish press sent off Baron Aloisi, the Italian ambassador in Ankara, with the wishes of success while the Italian fleet that visited Turkey took the headlines as the admirers of the Kemalist regime.[241]

In the same month in 1932, Turkey became a member of the League of Nations. Ankara, was aware of the run of events in the world, like war reparations and disarmament issues which were leading big clashes of interests among the big powers constantly, and defended seeking solutions to these problems in a collective body. Therefore, on 6 July 1932, the League of Nations decided for the invitation of Turkey with the proposal of Spain, and in return, the Turkish Grand National

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[239] Quoted by C.J. Lowe and F.Marzari, *Italian Foreign Policy 1870-1940* (London: Routledge, 2001), p.220.

[240] Burgwyn, p.71.

[241] *Cumhuriyet,* 22 July 1932.

Assembly decided for accession in 9 July. Barlas argues that Italy firmly opposed the membership of Turkey and this situation led to the deterioration of relations between two countries.[242] However, whatever the real stand of Italy was, diplomatic relations occurred in diplomatic ways. For instance, an Italian delegate said:

> …Today Italy is chiefly happy for making an address to Turkey. As a matter of fact absence of Turkey, with her feature of being an essential component of Europe, was a deficiency in our midst…Through backing this proposal; I not only announce the friendship and sincerity again about Turkey, but also affirm in from of General Commission that my country greets with a trust and follows the development of the birth of a Mediterranean country under the enlightened leadership of *Gazi*…[243]

In response to this speech, Aras rendered his thanks to the Italian delegate for their friendship and warm-hearted feelings for Turkey and specified his happiness at Turkey's having been given the chance to cooperate with Italy under the umbrella of the League of Nations.[244] Thus, when Turkey became a member of the League, the linkage between countries did not seem damaged, at least in the speeches of their leaders. However, it seems clear that Turkey was no longer an isolated country anymore, so it was not in desperate need of Italy, it had been as in the previous period.

Obviously, the tono fascista ever so often revealed its nebulous intent: withdrawal from the League of Nations. Whether it was a threat or not, Italy felt that

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[242] Barlas, "Friend or Foes," p.246.

[243] T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, Araştırma ve Siyaset Planlama Genel Müdürlüğü, *, Cumhuriyetin İlk On Yılı ve Balkan Paktı,* vol.3 of *Türkiye Dış Politikasında 50 Yıl*, (Ankara: Genel Müdürlük, 1973) p.296. "*…Bugün Türkiye'ye hitap edilmesinden dolayı İtalya bilhassa bahtiyardır. Filhakika Türkiye Avrupa menfainin esaslı bir unsuru sıfatiyle aramızda eksik duruyordu…Heyeti umumiyenize yapılan teklife muzaheret etmekle yalnız Türkiye hakkında tekrar dostluk ve samimiyet beyanatında bulunmuş olmuyorum. Aynı zamanda Gazi'nin münevver idaresi altında genç Akdeniz Devleti'nin doğuşunu memleketimin nasıl bir itimat hisleriyle karşıladığını ve inkışafını da takip ettiğini Heyeti umumiyeniz önünde teyit ediyorum…*"

[244] Ibid., p.303.

none of the issues of the day, like the delimitation of arms or war reparations, could be solved within a collective body. In that respect, Mussolini began to think about a pact within which Germany, France, Britain and Italy could discuss the problematic issues. In fact, this idea had existed since 1928, but it had remained futile because only personal efforts had been made, especially by Grandi, without the necessary support from the leaders.[245] When the pact was being discussed again in 1932 with the effort of Mussolini this time, as Mallett writes it was "little more than a veiled attempt by Mussolini to prevent the French preemptive war he feared, while encouraging Berlin to slow the pace of German rearmament, thereby reducing the likelihood of an *Anschluss*"[246] the mention of which was a nightmare for Italy at that time, because if it was achieved, Germany would pose a threat to the Italian territory through South Tyrol, similar to the danger that the old Austria-Hungary Empire had posed before. Obviously, Italy was willing to play a diplomatic game among the big powers in the sense that Rome thought that France was ready to give more concessions to Italy for the support about the issues over Germany in return. Sure enough, the expressions on the desire of Italy about the repartition of the mandates during the negotiations of the Pact in Geneva in March 1933 and the reports of the press which stated the possibility of it for the French side[247] showed that a pressing bargaining process was going on. Since the Four-Power Pact was signed within the framework of the League of Nations as a result of French insistence, the withdrawal

[245] Lowe and Marzari, p.224.

[246]Robert Mallett, *Mussolini and the Origins of the Second World War, 1933-1940* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), p.21.

[247] *Cumhuriyet,* ,23 March 1933.

of Germany from the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations following month terminated the Pact.[248]

Turkey was concerned much more with the goals and possible results of the Four-Power Pact idea, rather than the disengagement of the pact, because it had been a pact among the biggest powers that probably would determine the fate of the other ones. When the negotiations for the pact were progressing, even the postponement of the disarmament conference in order to wait for the result of the Four-Power Pact process illustrated how the League of Nation was trivialized by this initiative.

Turkey thought that this Pact was against the collective security understanding and against the small states which had become anxious by the idea that their futures could be shaped by the great ones.[249]Ankara interpreted the issue as the move of Italy which was trying to establish an arena other than the League of Nations which was dominated generally by France and the Great Britain in order to discuss the international issues that were supposed to have been concluded in the peace treaties after the Great War, such as the problematic boundaries, reparations and rearmament in a new environment that it could balance the domination of Britain and France.[250] As a new but a dedicated member of the League of Nations, Turkey manifested its stance also with Kemal Atatürk's declaration, in which he stated that he could not understand the necessity of this Pact to the representatives of the foreign states in Ankara.[251]

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[248] Lowe and Marzari, p.227.

[249] *Cumhuriyet,* 24 March 1933.

[250] Aras, *Görüşlerim*, p.58-59.

[251]Aras, *Görüşlerim,* p.59.

In terms of Turco-Italo relations, it is obvious that the Pact was a negative development. Even if Turkey did not target Italy in its criticisms directly, the principal ascribing but hidden point was Rome as the foremost proponent of the pact, apart from the essence of it. However, it must be underlined that after the Four-Power Pact, Turkish-Italian relations did not take a blow rapidly; on the contrary, the statements from both sides continued to express friendship and sincerity which would last until 1934. That Pact, rather, became one of the steps that played a role in the deterioration of relations.

When the relations began to tense, news published in the French press led to some hesitations in the Turkish mind. Before the Four-Power Pact affair, it had been claimed that the French had thought of giving some concessions to Italy in terms of land, in order to cope with the ambitions of the Fascist regime. Apart from Syria, as has been discussed above, Africa and the south Anatolia were denominated as the targets that could be suitable for the Italian appetite. At that time, Turkey had perceived these statements as products of the vulgarity of France and mainly the French press,[252] which wanted to drive a wedge between Turkey and Italy. In that respect, on 9 June 1932, Yunus Nadi, editorial writer of *Cumhuriyet,* put the issue on the front page with the headline of "Turkey Is Not an Easy Nutshell to Crack" by highlighting the evil aspirations of France, Italy's greatest rival in the Mediterranean.[253] However, the second incident, again by the French press, on the same issues, in 1933 this time, blurred the mind of Ankara to the extent that Italy felt obliged to answer these arguments through its official paper, *Popolo D'italia*. Italian officials specified that Italy was tied to Turkey not only through legal

[252] Mentioned newspaper was *"Temps.*"

[253] *Cumhuriyet*, 9 June 1932, "Türkiye Kolay Yenilir Yumuşak Bir Ceviz Değildir."

documents, but also through their constructive sentiments, so the aforementioned information was a maneuver of France.[254] It is unknown to what extent Turkey calmed down with the Italian counterarguments; however, there was a reality that Ankara became increasingly displeased with those kinds of remarks, because after 1932 Italy "laid claim to an ideological conception of foreign policy: this was to be the era of Fascism, in which Italy's imperial destiny would be fulfilled at last."[255] Obviously, throughout the interwar era Turkey did not trust Italy; however, it should be admitted that a kind of cooperation had been created in the previous period between these two states which had left Turkey in uncertainity about its stance towards Italy especially in 1932 and 1933.

The audience that took place between Mussolini and Aras in Rome in July 1933 should be seen from this perspective, because it was declared after the meeting that the parties had discussed the dynamics that had formed their friendship.[256] That is to say, they were still underlining their friendship. However, it should also be underlined that this meeting had another purpose; that was the explanation over the Convention on the Definition of Aggression (*Mütecavizin Tarifi Muahedesi*) by Turkey.

The Convention on the Definition of Aggression had been signed 4 July 1933 after negotiation processes that had occurred during some of the sessions of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments. In addition to Turkey, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia had signed the treaty. Under which circumstances a state could be labeled the "aggressor" was denoted in Article 2 of the Convention, and the signatory states declared that neither

[254] *Cumhuriyet,* 19 April 1933.

[255] Blinkhorn, p.61.

[256] *Cumhuriyet*, 12 July 1933.

political, military, economic, nor other considerations could serve as an excuse or justification for aggression, in Article 3.[257]

Two notable interpretations about this treaty can be made on the Turco-Italo relations. On the one hand, it is worth mentioning that this convention was prepared and signed after the Four-Power Pact. Therefore, Italy understood this move as an answer through which those countries were trying to overcome the possible negative results that the Four-Power Pact might impose upon them. On the other hand, it was a pact which was defended also by France,[258] and signed by Romania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, in other words, by the Little Entente countries. If one takes the competition and the enmity between France and Italy or between status quo and revisionism into account, it is easy to understand why Aras chose to visit Rome just after the Convention. Aras wrote that since it was expectable that the Mussolini might feel offended, this visit was an appropriate move to pamper the pride of the Duce.[259] To sum up, all of the 1933 events showed that the paths of Italy and Turkey were growing more and more apart, but they were still trying not to startle each other.

In that respect, 1934 became a major turning point for Turco-Italo relations. Although deterioration had already begun in late 1932, the statements continued to emphasize the friendship scale of the contacts, as can be seen above. However, after this year, Turkey began to feel the Italian threat keenly as a result of the events that occurred during this period, as will be explained below. Therefore, also the political language took on a caustic tone, especially by the Turkish side, in the sense that, for

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[257] Soysal, p.429-432.

[258] Tevfik Rüştü Aras, *Lozan'ın İzlerinde On Yıl* (İstanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1935), p.204.

[259] Aras, *Görüşlerim*, p.63.

instance, the Turkish press no longer referred to Italy as the "friend Italy" over again even though Italy persisted in its goodwill and appeasing attitude towards Turkey despite being in direct contradiction with its sarcastic behaviour towards Ankara.

To begin with 1934, the signing of the Balkan Entente by Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Romania in February, obviously annihilated the contacts. Actually, the impacts of the Pact were so broad that the balance in both intra-Balkan and intra-European relations was influenced. Therefore, before looking at the effects of the Balkan Entente on Turkish-Italian relations specifically, it is necessary to look at the process of preparation and its impacts between 1932 and 1934 on the general European picture. In this respect, the reasons behind the idea, the developmental process such as the First and the Second Balkan conferences in Athens and Istanbul respectively, and the stance of the major European powers towards a possible Balkan Confederation has been designated in the previous chapter. A declaration, with which Alexandros Papanastassiou, Greek Prime Minister of the period, stated that "certainly many obstacles still exist, and national egoisms, narrow conceptions, prejudices, and unilateral interests are still influential, but more powerful is the necessity for union, more dominant the desire of the peoples to guarantee peace and better conditions of existence,"[260] summarizes the situation of a Balkan Union in 1932.

When the Bucharest Conference in 1932 began in October, the state of events were not so hopeful in the sense that Bulgaria was insisting on a pre-condition, which was being refused definitely by Yugoslavia, about the rights of the Bulgarian minority living outside its territory, for the further advancement of the negotiation

[260] Quoted by Kerner and Howard, p.68.

process.[261] Although there were some improvements in terms of the social, judicial and cultural spheres, withdrawal of the Bulgarian delegate and the threatening Albanian position in the same manner designated that the "spillover effect" in terms of political union that the other Balkan states' politicians had previously envisaged was not very likely to occur in the near future.

A telegram from the Turkish Ambassador in Athens to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs interpreted all of these issues on the basis of the Great Powers. In that respect, the Ambassador related the Bulgarian and Albanian stance to the preventive efforts of Italy, which feared not only a stronger Yugoslavia but also an Albania that could have a potential to resist Italian incursion if the Balkan Federation came into being.[262] So, it was not surprising that both Bulgaria and Albania argued about the minority issues, especially if the Italian support for revisionism in the area is born in mind.[263]

In terms of Turkish-Italian relations, while Turkey's eagerness for a pro-status quo pact upset Italy, Italy's destructive attitude did so Turkey. In fact, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, Italy had sought to construct a tripartite alliance among Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey in 1929 and 1930 because she was thinking that Turkey, which was supposed to have closer ties with revisionist Bulgaria and Italy rather than the anti-revisionist Little Entente countries, would have a leading role in the Balkans that would not ruin Italian influence.[264] In addition, although the first half of the 1930s had shown that Turkey was much more inclined to Yugoslavia and Romania, Italy still was trying to form a Balkan alliance

[261] Ibid., p.72.

[262] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/226.523..30.

[263] Ibid.

[264] Barlas, "Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean," p.446-447.

in which Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, even Hungary and Austria would involve in 1933.[265] Since a revisionist Balkan block was a necessity for Italy in order to balance the anti-revisionist Little Entente and to achieve domination in the area through a kind of patron-client relationship, every move towards the Balkan Entente formed an important component of the relations that got stretched day by day after 1932, as this chapter suggests.

When 1933 came,the four Balkan countries tried to speed up the process of political collaboration because obviously the world scene was necessitating alliances especially in an environment in which the League of Nations was ineffective at solving international problems. In this context, for instance, the rise of Hitler to the power in 1933, the attempts at the Four-Power Pact and the other hopeless course of events in Europe had led to the institutionalization of the Little Entente in the same year.[266]

Parallel to this development, the Balkan states met in Salonika at the Fourth Balkan Conference in order to reach a consolidation. Actually, there had been some achievements among the Balkan countries before the Conference. Firstly, a Turkish-Greek treaty, which showed the magnificent collaboration and trust between the former enemies by giving each other the responsibility of mutual representation in the international conferences,[267] had been signed in September 1933. Secondly, as one of the visits among Balkan political leaders, that of the Yugoslavian King to Ankara had been regarded, especially by the Yugoslavian press, as an important

[265] *Daily Herald*, 4 May 1933, quoted by PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/226.525..13.

[266] Kerner and Howard, p.97.

[267] Soysal, p.435-436.

event that paved the way for the Entente.[268] Contrary to the Yugoslavian and Turkish statements underlining that there was not a target on the basis of the contacts, Italy ascribed the relations between those two states as being the desire to isolate Bulgaria.[269] Although there were various claims regarding whether the Balkan countries were intending to isolate Bulgaria, there was the reality that these countries had begun to believe in the necessity of a political pact with or without Bulgaria day by day due to the developments in Europe. Even Turkey, which had tried to bridge the gap between Bulgaria and other countries, as opposed to the viewpoint of Italy, finally accepted a Balkan Pact without Bulgaria.[270] In that context, although all of the six countries worked together for many resolutions at the Salonika Conference differently from the previous one, only four of them would sign the Balkan Pact on 9 February 1934.

The dominant view on the Turkish foreign policy studies emphasizes that the Balkan Entente was the result of the Italian threat.[271] That is partially true; however, although there was a perception of an Italian threat within the Turkish mind, the conclusion of the Balkan Entente was not the result of Italy's dangerous foreign policy only, but of the revisionism and the revisionist countries in general; because all these four countries were against any border changes within the Balkan Peninsula. It should be also noted that the Balkan Conferences before the pact was signed had

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[268] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/200.366..22.

[269] Ibid.

[270] Wolfgang Höpken, "National Self-Interest and Multilateral Cooperation: Balkan Cooperation between the Two World Wars" in *İki Dünya Savaşı Arasında Avrupa ve Balkanlar: İdeolojiler ve Uluslararası Politika* edited by Murat Sarıca Anısına Sempozyum, (İstanbul: Friedrich Ebert Vakfı: Aybay Hukuk Araştırmaları Vakfı, 1994), p.106.

[271] For instance, Edward Reginald Vere-Hodge states that "The fear of the Italian designs upon Turkish territory was a real factor." in *Turkish Foreign Policy: 1918-1948*, (Ambilly-Annemasse: Impr. Franco-Suisse, 1950) p.81

had many other objectives in terms of economy and culture. In other words, although the Balkan Entente finally turned into a military alliance rather than a real entente,[272] it had many other purposes that cannot be reduced to the Italian threat alone.

Another problematic interpretation in the Turkish foreign policy, a natural result of the former problem, states that the Balkan Entente was signed against a possible Italian attack,[273] especially in order to ensure the unity of the Balkans. If the elements of the text are analyzed carefully, it became obvious that the Entente aimed at a possible Bulgarian attack.[274] According to the second article of the additional protocol, the pact guaranteed the security of the Balkan territories against the aggression of any Balkan state rather than protecting the parties against any power, therefore, as a non-signatory of the Pact, Bulgaria was the intention of the Balkan states rather than Italy.[275] The reservation by Greece, which specified that it would never come up against Italy under any circumstances that could require collaboration within a specific combination, shows that the states sought not to alienate Italy rather than to target it. In consequence, it is important to note that the dominance of the Italian threat perception in the interwar foreign policy literature causes not to errors totally, but to deficiencies, at least.

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[272] Oral Sander, "The Balkan Cooperation in Perspective," *Turkish Yearbook of International Relaitons*, no.7 (1966), p.108.

[273] This interpretation exists in many resources. Some specific examples; Yücel Güçlü "Fascist Italy's Mare Nostrum Policy and Turkey," Brock Millman, "Turkish Foreign and Strategic Policy 1934-42," *Middle Eastern Studies* 31, no.3 (July 1995), p.483-502.

[274] Melek Fırat, "Göreli Özerklik-I, Yunanistan'la İlişkiler," in *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Buıgüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar,* Baskın Oran (ed.) (İstanbul: İletişim, 2006), vol.1, p.351.

[275] Gareth M. Winrow, "The Balkans in International Politics: An Examination of the Interwar Period," in *İki Dünya Savaşı Arasında Avrupa ve Balkanlar: İdeolojiler ve Uluslararası Politika* edited by Murat Sarıca Anısına Sempozyum, (İstanbul: Friedrich Ebert Vakfı: Aybay Hukuk Araştırmaları Vakfı, 1994), p.89.

However, even if the direct target within the protocols was not Italy, the general adversary throughout the pact was revisionism, which defended ardently by the Fascist Rome. Therefore, Italy took a negative attitude towards the Balkan Union from the beginning to the end that in return had influenced the relations between Turkey and Italy. First of all, the Italian efforts to balance the pro-status quo Little Entente both in the Balkans and the Central Europe had not yielded the desired results in the sense that Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece could not be reconciled within a revisionist bloc. On the contrary, both Greece and Turkey had tended towards anti-revisionism beginning with the Balkan Conferences. In this context, Italy defined her negative attitude unequivocally even for the conferences through *Popolo D'italia*:

> If the Balkan Conference met in order to remove the unfair results that emerged after the end of the First World War, it could be beneficial; however, it seems that it is not anything beyond the aim of protecting the status quo…The Conference…by regarding the general condition of the recent day as if it would continue eternally, appears as if it tries to perpetuate the present hegemony.[276]

Also, as can be seen in the previous pages, the Bulgarian and Albanian behaviour had been attributed to Italian influence over these countries. In that respect, it can be argued that Italy was thinking that, on the one hand, it should have prevented this initiative, on the other hand, if the conclusion was inevitable, she should have injured it by influencing Bulgaria at least. Actually, the aim was not only to divide Balkans into the camps, but also to counteract a possible Slavic alliance, which also

[276]*Popolo D'italia*, 17 October 1930. Quoted by T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, Araştırma ve Siyaset Planlama Genel Müdürlüğü, *Cumhuriyetin İlk On Yılı ve Balkan Paktı,* p.310. "*Balkan Konferansı 1. Dünya Harbi sonunda ortaya çıkan haksızlıkları izale gayesiyle toplansaydı müfid olabilirdi, fakat bu konferansın hedefinin statüko'yu muhafaza etmekten başka bir şey olmadığı görülüyor…Konferans…bugünkü vaziyeti umumiyeyi ebediyen devam edecekmiş gibi telakki etmekle, şimdiki hegemonyaların idamesini temine çalışıyor gibi görünmektedir*."

would make other countries in the area uncomfortable, such as Greece and Turkey.[277]

In that respect, Italy reiterated its uneasiness about the conferences on all occasions and Rome both warned and criticized Turkey in terms of the conferences and also of the Pact. For instance, in a meeting between Turkish and Italian politicians and officials, Mussolini stated that Turkey had put itself into the problematic Balkan issues by regarding itself as a Balkan country, which was an incorrect decision for Turkish foreign policy, which had gone in the accurate direction until this period.[278] In addition to this kind of warnings, Italy tried to delay the signature of the Pact in 1933 through some requests from Turkish officials with the blind excuse of the Bulgarian decision about non-participating.

The warnings turned into the harsh criticisms when the signatories decided to proceed regardless of the participation of Bulgaria. Italy both declared that Turkey's opposition to revisionism was meaningless due to the fact that it was the first country which changed the Versailles System, and criticized the skeptical attitude of Turkey, pointing out the vascillating nature of the Turkish foreign policy towards the Italian friendship.[279]

It was true that Turkey was not trusting Italy's friendship, but Ankara was still worrying about the Italian position on the Balkan Pact and the future implications of this position, and especially about the impact of the Pact on Turkish-Italian diplomacy. The meeting of Atatürk and Venizelos shows this point clearly in the sense that Atatürk told Venizelos that the Italy's sensitivity should be taken into

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[277] Sander, "The Balkan Cooperation in Perspective," p.107.

[278] T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, Araştırma ve Siyaset Planlama Genel Müdürlüğü, *Cumhuriyetin İlk On Yılı*, p.313.

[279] Ibid. p.349-355.

consideration due to the location of Turkey and Greece in the Mediterranean where Italy was a great power.[280]

In this context, Ankara tried to calm Italy's fear about the Pact. Firstly, Turkey charged its ambassador Vasıf Çınar, in Rome with the task of making the necessary explanations emphasizing that the Pact would not be against any power. This point, later on, was underlined also in a speech by Aras within the Turkish Grand National Assembly on the occasion of the Pact's affirmation.[281] Secondly, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, D. Maximos, went to Rome in order to assure Mussolini that the Pact would be a collaboration among the Balkan states that would not formulate any design outside the territory, and therefore would never be against Rome.

To what extent Rome concurred with Turkey and Greece is hard to answer, because it was conspicuous that "Fascist Rome could not abide any concordance in the Balkans leaving aside a union."[282] However, both the Greek and Italian press had the opposite impressions or they had to do so. The daily *Messager D'Athenes* stated that the visit of Maximos to Rome had removed the concerns of Italy[283] while *Giornale D'italia*, after displaying the Rome's support for Bulgaria, finally wrote that the visit of Maximos had yielded the desired results anyway, in the sense that

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[280] Ibid. p.321.

[281] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:IV, Cilt:2, İçtima Senesi:3, 6 March 1934, p.15. "*Bu sulh vesikasının mahiyeti itibariyle ve onu yapanların zihniyetine hakim olan maksat itibarile de hiçbir devletin aleyhine müteveccih olmasına imkan yoktu ve mevcut ve meri olan karşılıklı taahhütlerimizin hududu dahilinde yapılabilirdi ve böyle olmuştur*."

[282] Aras, *Görüşlerim*, p.54.

[283] *Messager D'Athenes*, 12 January 1934, quoted by PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/226.525..20.

Rome had accepted that the Pact would not be against the Italian politics.[284] Therefore, it would not be erroneous to claim that even if Italy did not consent to the Balkan Pact in this form, it understood that the Pact would not be averted. Therefore, Mussolini thought that dealing with the Balkan issues after the signing of the Pact within a new atmosphere would be a much more suitable option than giving a bitter reaction to it. In other words, Rome was not persuaded,[285] but decided to deal with the Balkans after the signing of the treaty which had already become sentential by January 1934. The unchanged viewpoint of Italy about the Balkan Entente could also be seen firstly in the fact that Italy warned Bulgaria at different times about a possible Bulgarian-Yugoslav détente in order to prevent such a predicament,[286] and secondly in the fact that when Aras proposed a friendship treaty between Italy and the Entente in 1935, Mussolini refused it by putting forward groundless excuses.[287]

Evidently, the process of the Balkan Entente constituted an additional component of the deteriorating relations between Turkey and Italy. After the pact was signed, the relations had deteriorated to a degree that the Turkish press, which had always referred to Italy as "friend" despite everything, accused Italy for trying to keep Bulgaria from signing the pact.[288] By the same token, the Italian press, which had underlined the unshakeable ties between two countries many times,

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[284] *Giornale D'Italia*, 12 January 1934, quoted by PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/226.525..20.

[285] T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, Araştırma ve Siyaset Planlama Genel Müdürlüğü, *Cumhuriyetin İlk On Yılı*, p.321.

[286] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/226.525..20.

[287] Aras, *Görüşlerim*, p.52-53.

[288] *Cumhuriyet,* 2 March 1934.

claimed that Yugoslavia and Turkey seemed to be united in terms of their attitudes vis-à-vis Italy.[289]

The Balkan Entente injured the relations between Turkey and Italy seriously, but the final blow came on 18 March 1934, as a result of a speech by Mussolini. However, related to this speech, what occurred in the same month is especially important for a rational analysis of Italian foreign policy and Turkish-Italian relations.

In this context, it is fundamental to note that in March 1934, Mussolini took an initiative by meeting with the Hungarian Prime Minister, Gyula Gömbös, and the Austrian dictator, Engelbert Dolfuss, in Rome. After a series of negotiations, the three states concluded several protocols in 17 March 1934 that have been called the "Rome Protocols." These agreements drew the three countries together in the form of increased commercial ties, future consultation and coordination concerning their respective foreign policies.[290] Therefore, this led to different interpretations on the European scene. For instance while the French saw the issue as a move against the Little Entente, the Bulgarians did so as a balance against the Balkan Entente. Although the former was more accurate than the latter, it was also deficient in the sense that the actual goal behind the move of Rome was to dominate Austria, which was under the threat of *Anschluss*, because at that time Italy was on the intent that the Austria should be independent at any price. The idea of that "Prussians on the 'Brenner'[291] would mean war"[292] stemmed from the fact that *Anschluss* could pose a

[289] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/227.527..15.

[290] Endre B. Gastony, "Hungarian Foreign Minister Kalman Kanya's Grand Design,1933-1936," *East European Quarterly* 19, no.2 (Summer 1985), p.179.

[291] Brenner Pass ties Italy to Austria within the Alps. In Italian, it is *Il Passo del Brennero.*

threat also to Italian territory, which had to be secured before the invasion of Abyssinia, the imperial dream for the Italians.[293] Therefore, although Gömbös was actually hoping for cooperation between Austria, Hungary, Italy and Germany,[294] Italy had obviously signed the Protocols with anti-German sentiments.

Turkey interpreted the Rome Protocols as an expression of Italy's domination of the Danube region.[295] It was a problem for Turkey because Italy, with this move, had formed an openly revisionist bloc in the area regardless of whether it was directed against the Little Entente or against the Balkan Entente. However, the problem and the final rupture within the relations did not stem from the fact that Italy had made some efforts to form an alternative bloc in Eastern or Central Europe, but stemmed from a speech on the following day on the prompting of Second Five-Year Fascist Congress. Mussolini, on the one hand, declared that Hungary was justified in all its demands for the revision of the Triannon treaty, in accordance with the subsequent rumors which claimed the Italian assistance to Hungarian remilitarization, on the other hand set the Italian imperialistic agenda in his speech:

> I could give you the details of a plan up to 1945 but I prefer to point out to you the historic objectives towards which our generation and the generations to follow should be directed during the present century… The historic objectives of Italy have two names: Africa and Asia. South and the East are the cardinal points that should excite the interest and the will of Italians. There is little or nothing to do towards the North and the same towards the West, neither in Europe not beyond the Ocean. These two objectives of ours are justified by geography and history. Of all the large Western Powers of Europe, Italy is nearest to

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[292] Lowe and Marzari, p.231.

[293] Ibid., p.223.

[294]Betty Jo Winchester, "Hungary and the Austrian Anschluss," *East European Quarterly* 10, no.4 (Winter 1976), p.410.

[295] Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy in Turkey,* p.155.

> Africa and Asia. A few hours by sea and much less by air are enough to link up Italy with Africa and Asia.[296]

This part of the discourse became a breaking point within Turco-Italo relations. Ankara not only was shocked but also felt that Italy had predicated its actual disposition towards Turkey which had apprehended this beforehand. In other words, Turkey was no longer unjustified in terms of its impressions about the threat that Italy was supposed to pose. Therefore, both the Turkish press and the government reacted for a long time, sometimes in a harsh manner.

Yunus Nadi, for instance, gave the title "The Words of the Duce Will Sting to the Whole World Like a Thorn"[297] to his editorial column in *Cumhuriyet* in 21 March. In this column he stated that:

> Benito Mussolini…has recreated an aggressive and bellicose manner, for some reason or other, which had been heard for a long time, in his speech that mainly dealt with the foreign policy issues…Since we are, Turks, friends with Italy, we do not take affront at the words of Mussolini that touch Asia, the Far East, the Near East and the Cape of Good Hope…It is not only Italy, which knows that the claims of Germany oriented towards originally German Austria are much stronger facts than the claims of Italy over Asia and Africa…Whatever the war circumstances are, we are absolutely sure that we can discomfit not only one country but also the whole world if the question is the defense of the country due to the integrity of the fatherland and the independence of the nation. Therefore, we do not have any concern.[298]

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[296] Quoted by Güçlü, "Fascist Italy's Mare Nostrum Policy," p.816.

[297] *Cumhuriyet* 21 March 1934. "*Duçe'nin Sözleri Tüm Dünyaya Şüphesiz Bir Diken Gibi Batacaktır*."

[298] Ibid. "*Mussolini…bilhassa harici meselelere temas eden konuşmasında bütün dünyanın uzun zamandan beri işitmemeye alıştığı ve nihayet unutmaya meylettiği harpçı ve mütecaviz bir eda tarzını her nedense tekrar ihya eylemiştir…Biz Türkler İtalya ile dost olduğumuz için Mussolini'nin Ümit Burnu'na kadar, Afrika'ya ve Uzak Şark'a varıncaya kadar sözlerinden alınmaklığımıza tabii mahal yoktur. Almanya'nın aslen Alman olan Avusturya'yla beraber Tirol aksamına müteveccih iddiaları İtalya'nın Afrika'ya ve Asya'ya müteveccih emellerinden daha kuvvetli hakikatler olduğunu belki yalnız İtalya bilmiyor…Zamanın harp şeraiti ne olursa olsun iş vatan yekpareliğinin tamamiyeti ve millet istiklalinin en ufak halelden masuniyeti kaygusile memleketin mukaddes müdafaasına taalluk edince biz bu müdafaayı karşımıza tek bir devlet değil bir husumet cihanı çıkacak da olsa*

As can be seen from the quotations, although Yunus Nadi used a diplomatic style, by underlining the friendship of Italy towards Turkey to some extent, he also tried to disprove the historical foundation of Mussolini's speech, by using the example of *Anschluss*, which could annoy Italy most, at the time. The end of the column obviously designates the real position of Turkey towards the speech and shows that Turkey actually took offense at this speech despite the statements to the contrary.

Additionally, *Tan* made an interpretation that showed the contradiction in which Italy had become entangled in its foreign policy. According to the article, while Rome supported the revisionism for itself and Hungary, it sought to protect the status-quo in terms of Austria. Therefore, it was insincerity to support both Fascist imperialism and the cooperation with the Rome Protocols, at the same time.[299]

After the harsh critiques by Turkey, Mussolini offered an explanation about his speech. He specified that he had meant Africa and Asia in his discourse. His country accepted Turkey as a European power, and more importantly, as a friend with whom it had accords. Despite his explanation, the Turkish Grand National Assembly held a session in which specifically this issue was discussed heatedly on 5 April 1934. In this session, while Aras tried to underline the Mussolini's reference to the European identity of Turkey in order to appease the frustrated group, Izmir deputy and the holder of the query, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt emphasized the historical

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bütün müteaarızları hezimete uğratacak veçhile muvaffakiyetle intaç edeceğimizden en kat'i surette eminiz. O yüzden hiçbir endişemiz yoktur."

[299] *Tan*, 20 March 1934, quoted by *Cumhuriyet,* 22 March 1934.

rights of Turkey within the discussed areas on the contrary of Italy, and highlighted the need to be on alert even against the allies.[300]

As can be seen both from the newspaper columns and from the discussions within the political circles, Turkey could not be persuaded by the explanations of Mussolini, despite his insistence on Turkey's Europeanness. This speech thus marked a rupture in the relations which were deteriorating day by day. What should be analyzed at this point, in my view, are that the reasons behind Turkey's fear despite the assurances and Mussolini's reassuring attitude towards Turkey.

In terms of Turkey's fear, first of all, it should be stated that although Turkey highlighted all the time its "Europeanness" in accordance with the role of the new Republic, the administration was aware of the fact Turkey would not rescue itself from the events that would occur near its territory whether this region was Africa or Asia.

Furthermore, in his speech, Mussolini had frequently referred to historical claims. Even if these claims were shown as Africa and Asia, the theoretical background of the Italian expansionism depended on the Mare Nostrum idea, which actually extended from the Adriatic to the Africa, as historically belonged to Roman Empire.[301] As emphasized in the previous chapters, it was the aggressive behavior of Rome towards Turkey before 1927 on the basis of this geographical plan that had constituted the grounds for the Turkish distrust towards Fascist Italy. In fact, Italian threat was so effectual for Turkey that even in the period between 1927 and 1932, in which Mussolini implemented a method of political and economic cooperation rather than one of aggression, the distrust of Turkey had persisted, yet in a hidden

[300] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: IV, Cilt:21 İçtima Senesi: 2, 5 April 1934, p.15-17.

[301] Aristotle Kallis, *Fascist Ideology: Expansionism in Italy and Germany, 1922–1945* (London New York : Routledge, 2000), p.50.

way. For this reason, after Fascism's imperial ambitions were declared in a speech by Mussolini in a belligerent tone, it was natural that Ankara was not relieved with the assurances given by Rome, due to the fact that Turkish political circles believed that this declaration marked a return to the aggressive means in Italian foreign policy. Therefore, it is not erroneous to argue that the speech of Mussolini transformed the hidden distrust of Turkey towards Italy into an explicit one, in terms of being on constant alert. Accordingly, this fear of Italy became one of the most important determinants of Turkish foreign policy.

If Italy's ambitions really included Turkish territory, why Italy tried to assure Turkey after the speech is an important question. It could be answered that it was a necessity of the diplomatic contact between so-called friend states; however, in my view there was a more important reason for it. The friendship of Turkey, or neutrality at least, was noteworthy for Italy in the sense that the probable Italian expansion into Africa, specifically into Abyssinia, would certainly lead to clashes in the Mediterranean with other powers. In that respect, the enmity of the neighbor near the Dodecanese Islands would not be favorable position for Italy within a possible clash with other powers.

In addition to the desire to not alienate Turkey, due to the above-mentioned reason, it could be suggested that Mussolini tried to assure Turkey, because the short-term aim of Italy was colonial expansion into Africa, specifically Abyssinia, not Turkey. It was true that Turkish-Italian relations were in decay between 1932 and 1934 and had experienced a rupture after 1934; however, many events, to which Ankara took affront during this period actually had targets other than Turkey, as the following pages will show. Therefore, it can be argued that while for Turkey the main foe became Italy especially after 1934, Italy had other priorities, like Germany

in Europe, Britain in the Mediterranean, and Abyssinia in Africa. It is necessary to reverse Turkish historiography, which places Turkey at the centre, in these accounts.

Setting aside these assumptions, there was a reality that the relations had been damaged severely and the balances within Europe had begun to change more quickly and bitterly, so it could not be expected, after this point, that attempts at cooperation to be successful, not only between Turkey and Italy specifically, but also among the other countries due to the uneasy European atmosphere. The stillborn idea of the Mediterranean Pact[302] project can be seen from this perspective.

In terms of the Mediterranean Pact, it could be stated that although the architect of this initiative was the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Louis Barthou; Turkey, which had always underlined the importance of cooperation and collective security, enthusiastically supported the idea,[303] and throughout the second half the 1930s tried to search ways to realize the project.

However, there were some problems that would affect the progress of the idea. The first problem about the pact was the ambiguity about the possible participatory countries. This entanglement, which was conspicuous also in the press,[304] continued as long as the idea survived. Italy's participation in that kind of pact was very important both especially for the countries that feared the Italian ambitions and for its rival, France, which also had to deal with Germany in Europe. This was the origin of the second problem in the sense that Mussolini was not

[302] Sometimes it is called " the Mediterranean Locarno."

[303] Barlas, "Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean," p.452.

[304] *Cumhuriyet,* 24 Haziran 1934: "*Misaka bir rivayete göre sekiz devlet bir rivayete göre de Türkiye, Fransa, Yugoslavya, Yunanistan ve Bulgaristan Girecekler" trans "According to one rumour eight states and to the another Turkey, France, Yugoslavia, Greece and Bulgaria will join the pact.*"

accepting the certain frontiers in which Italy is interested[305] and the Mediterranean project evidently reflected anti-revisionist features. L. Barthou's death and the ignorance of Pierre Laval, the new French Foreign Minister, slowed the undertakings in terms of the French side. For instance, during a Laval-Mussolini meeting in January 1935, Laval did not find any reason to insist on this Pact when Mussolini said that he was not quite sure about the meaning of the Mediterranean Pact, which should have involved, besides France, Italy, and England, all the lesser states such as Turkey, Greece, Albania, Yugoslavia, and perhaps even Romania and Bulgaria, which depended on their links through the Turkish straits to the Mediterranean.[306] In addition to Italy, Britain was also reluctant to form this kind of pact.[307]

Therefore, the Mediterranean Pact contacts illustrated successfully how the selfishness of the big powers and the clash of interests among them could limit and hinder such undertakings.[308] After that period, although Aras made many personal efforts to reach a successful conclusion, the idea could not be realized, as a result of especially Mussolini's negative rigid attitude. At that point, it is appropriate to underline that Turkey could not realize its will in contravention of the Great Power politics as opposed to its success upon the lesser countries within the framework of

[305]Allan Nevinsi, "Eastern Locarno Project," *Current History (New York)* 41 no.1 (October 1934), p.75.

[306] G. Bruce Strang, "Imperial Dreams: The Mussolini-Laval Accords of January 1935," *The Historical Journal* 44, no.3 (2001), p.805.

[307]Brock Millman, *Ill-Made Alliance, Anglo-Turkish Relations 1939-1940* (Montreal&Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), p. 62.

[308] Nevinsi, p.75.

the Balkan Pact.[309] Like the Mediterranean Pact, the unaccomplished Eastern Locarno project also contributed to the separation of Europe into opposite blocs.

While Turkey was making efforts to form alliances on the basis of the status quo, on the revisionist side, Italy was sharpening its rhetoric day by day. Throughout 1934 Mussolini refused Locarno-like formations and kept on making declarations especially about war and peace, disarmament, and the League of Nations that did not please many countries, including Turkey. For instance, in May 1934, Mussolini stated that peace was not suitable for the character of humanity and war was inevitable. To the every speech from Rome, Turkey reacted with both declarations from the higher echelons and with efforts for international cooperation.

The speeches of Mussolini were natural in the sense that the occupation of Abyssinia had became a haunting idea beginning in 1932 and turned into a acute one especially in 1934. It could be argued that after 1934, every move, alliance and cooperation of Italy can be attributed to the plans for Abyssinia, which had become an honour issue for the Italians due to the great defeat of in Adowa in 1896.[310] Obviously, support for this expansionist mission could have been gotten from Germany, another revisionist great power in Europe; however, the Austrian problem was a major obstacle between Rome and Berlin at that time. Although in June Mussolini and Hitler met in Venice in order to discuss European issues and to some extent to reach an agreement about the problems between them, the Austrian Nazis' attempted coup in Vienna and the assassination of Dolffuss on 24 June resulted in a hostile reaction by Mussolini, who announced his support for independent Austria and mobilized the Italian troops in the Alps against a possible *Anschluss*.[311] What

[309] Barlas, "Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean," p.464.

[310] Mallett, *Mussolini and the Origins of the Second World War*, p.19.

these events meant was that Italy had to come closer with other powers, namely Britain and France, both to achieve its goals in Africa and to appease Germany.

In this context, Laval and Mussolini met in Rome in January 1935. This meeting, which has come down in history as the Mussolini-Laval Accords, has been debated for a long time in terms of its content. Whether France gave a "free hand" Italy in Ethiopia or not became a vital point of academic and political discussions. In the context of French attempts to secure Italian support against Germany, the Italian documentation seems clear: Laval gave Mussolini a free hand to invade Abyssinia.[312] It is also important to note that all of those agreements were handled with the support of Britain. In other words, even if the collaboration of these three powers would not last very long due to the implementation of Italy's Fascist expansionism, at that time they joined their efforts against the problem of Nazi Germany.

What attracted the curiosity of Turkey about the accords was that with these agreements Italy seemed willing to be closer to the Little Entente countries with which it had always had problematic relations due to the competition with France and to its stand towards anti-revisionism. Ankara interpreted the issue of one of the aims of Italy as being against the Balkan Entente, because according to Turkish Foreign Ministry, Rome had tried to alienate Yugoslavia and Romania from the Pact by procuring the interests of those states for a certain time, especially in order to isolate Greece and Turkey in the area.[313] Obviously, this understanding was highly concordant with the news which argued that Italy was very worried and angry about

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[311] Crozier, p.104.

[312] Strang, p.809.

[313] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/219.476..4.

the growing Turkish-Yugoslav attachment.[314] Therefore, it is not erroneous to argue that Italy with the Laval accords both set up the atmosphere for the future invasion of Abyssinia and additionally tried to remove the some alliances which had disquieted it.

In fact, there was another issue that disturbed Turkey more than the aims and the results of the Laval-Mussolini Accords: The military concentration that Italy began to intensify on the Dodecanese Islands throughout 1934. Although Rome denied the military build-up on the islands continuously, the intelligence about the issue disproved the claims of the Fascist state. Since Italy denoted its future in Asia and Africa through the speeches of Mussolini, the armament program on the Dodecanese in the same year led to suspicions about the probability of an Italian invasion of Anatolia among the Turkish public.

This fear of territorial invasion was not novel to Turks. The Turkish Republic had been founded nearly ten years ago after the War of Liberation that had been fought against the invasion of the former Ottoman territory by the European powers, among them Italy. Additionally, the fear of Italian invasion had not come to an end after Lausanne and persisted especially around the Mosul issue. Therefore, the threat that was felt by many circles in Turkey in 1934 was not fully unjustifiable.

However, while on the one hand Turkey feared an aggression or invasion of its territory, due to the legacy of the late Ottoman period; on the other hand, it displayed reactionary stance by underlining the War of Liberation phase in order to show the power of the "Turk" in terms of fatherland defense. In this context, at the beginning, the answer that Turkey tried to give to the Italian military build-up was much more psychological. Although the foreign press made some news about the

[314] *Cumhuriyet*, 12 December 1934.

urgent military build-up in Izmir in order to defend western Anatolia,[315] these were confuted, as Italy did the same. Whether these counter-concentrations were true or not, what Turkey tried to do was actually deter Italy if it had such a plan. For this reason, articles that explicated the tragic end of Greece in terms of the Anatolian journey after the Great War were published. By the same token, carrying a statement by a former Greek general on the front page, which was "The Occupation of the Dodecanese Islands for Military Purposes is Useless,"[316] was especially important in order to influence not only the Italian mind but also the Turkish one.

The issue of build-ups of the Dodecanese islands continued to produce tension, debates and controversy in the Mediterranean Sea. However, at this point, it is necessary to discuss to what extent Turkey's fear about the probable Italian invasion of the Anatolian lands reflected the truth. The disdain about the vigilant position of Turkey would be an erroneous attitude if the Mare Nostrum policy of Italy is kept in mind. However, the designation of Turkey as the foremost aim of Rome in 1934 obviously does not reflect the truth. In that respect, one should conclude that Turkey was included within the final plan that the Fascists would try to achieve, because the utmost aim of Mussolini and his cadre was to rule the whole Mediterranean. However, in 1934 Italy was so obsessed with Ethiopia that Mussolini ventured a war even against Britain, which was definitely against

[315] These newspapers were *Daily Herald* and *Temps*, quoted by *Cumhuriyet*, 23 December 1934.

[316] *Cumhuriyet*, 15 December 1934 "*Oniki Ada'nın Askeri Gayeler için İşgali Faydasızdır*" In the same column, the retired general emphasized repeatedly: "*Eğer Yunanistan yahut herhangi başka bir devlet, bizim 1919-1922'de yaptığımız hatayı tekrar ederse er geç bizim düştüğümüz akıbete uğrayacaktır*," trans. "If Greece or any other state repeats the mistake that we have done in 1919-1922, she will come to a bad end like us."

aggression over Ethiopia due to concerns about its own colonial security, and ordered the necessary preparation for a probable clash with the Royal Navy.[317]

Therefore, when Mussolini was explaining that the target of the concentration on Dodecanese islands was not Turkey but Britain, he was stating the real intent, because Mussolini knew that he would be faced with a war with Britain if he insisted on a war with Ethiopia. However, Ankara's alarm at the situation was still understandable due to the fact that one of its neighbors was making military concentration next to the Turkish mainland as well as was making warlike declarations.

1934 passed with the famous speech of Mussolini and the military concentration in the Dodecanese islands. 1935 began with the Laval-Mussolini Accords, which disrupted Turkey again, as was shown. In fact, the concerns that Turkey felt were not unique in the sense that the political scene was moving towards a large scale aggression in general. Although the former enemies France and Italy had joined their hands against Nazi Germany, they did not have the deterrent power on many issues like the German reincorporation with the Saar in March and reintroduction of the military service in violation of the Versailles Treaty, in the same month.

In this atmosphere, Britain, Italy, and France reacted to the growing German "threat" with the Stresa meeting. Even if they emphasized the independence of Austria, and in general stated that "three powers…find themselves in complete agreement in opposing…any unilateral repudiation of treaties which may endanger the peace of Europe"[318] in the final declaration, the Stresa front did not last long.

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[317] Mallett, "The Italian Naval High Command and the Mediterranean Crisis," p.80–84.

[318] Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Survey of International Affairs* (London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1936), v.1935, part.1, p.159-161.

First of all, France at that time was trying to form a Franco-Soviet Mutual Assistance Treaty which disturbed Italy in the sense that France would strive less for a collaboration with Italy with this alliance. Secondly, the treaty that Britain and Germany bilaterally concluded about the naval arms rates between the two countries in June shocked France. Apparently, Britain had begun its long debated appeasement policy with this agreement[319] by slighting France, the main enemy of Germany. More importantly, although the two powers, Italy and Britain, collaborated against the dangerous German revisionism, they would come to the brink of war on the Abyssinian issue. In other words, although the Italian-British declaration at Stresa underlined the validity of the Locarno settlements,[320] the two countries would be tough enemies in the Eastern Mediterranean after a short period of time. In consequence, the complex relations and different strategies for different aims among these three powers hindered the success of the Stresa Front.

Although the persistence of the Stresa Front was evidently artificial in the 1930s environment, Turkey's attitude towards the presence of this initiative was negative. Turkey's discomfort arose not only from the fact that two powers to which Ankara was trying to become closer had cooperated with the major enemy Italy, but also associated with the historical experiences, which indicated that it could be a dangerous development for the small powers in terms of the likelihood of the imposition of the great power interest on the smaller states.[321] It should be stressed that the Stresa Front coincided with the efforts of Turkey for a wide-range Mediterranean Pact. Therefore, Stresa was regarded as a different kind of

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[319] Armaoğlu,p.562.

[320] Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Survey of Intenrational Affiars* v.1935, part.1, p.161.

[321] Millman, *Ill-Made Alliance,* p.39.

Mediterranean Pact which excluded the smaller powers.[322] However, the aforementioned danger about the Stresa Front did not materialize, because Italy attacked Ethiopia in October 1935. Therefore, apart from Africa, the European scene began to experience a crisis in which not only for the whole world, but also for Turkey specifically, new dangers and threats appeared.

Obviously, these threats were apparent beforehand, because Italy had already made declarations about Ethiopia, or Africa in general terms, and it had begun small-scale operations especially in border zones. For instance, after that kind of a clash in Abyssinia in January 1935, the Abyssinian government had resorted to the League of Nations. Especially the first half of 1935 passed with explanations as well as intimidations. In fact, the atmosphere in which armed attacks by Italy and the responses of the Addis Ababa government had become mundane activities, had already proved that the war between Abyssinia and Italy was inevitable in the near future. The declarations of Mussolini about the function of the League of Nations on this occasion strengthened the pessimistic views of the likelihood of a large scale war; because Mussolini stated repeatedly that he did not want a negotiation process in Geneva but bilateral relations between the two states;[323] in other words, freedom of action on the matter.

In fact, the position of Rome was not as easy as many thought. Although Britain ignored the Laval-Mussolini Accords in January and tried not to mention Abyssinia during Stresa meetings due to the threat of Germany, Italy would become the ferocious enemy when the attack became unavoidable. Even if Britain had never thought of Italy as a threat like Germany, it understood the seriousness of Rome's ambitions. After that point, Abyssinia became a fundamental problem because it

[322] Ibid.

[323] *Cumhuriyet*, 20 May 1935.

could change the balance of power in the Mediterranean, which was as Monroe writes "a main arterial road… a vital interest in the full sense of the word to the British Commonwealth of Nations."[324] The British concerns were not fully groundless because it was clear that Abyssinia constituted the first step of the Italian imperial dreams, which meant that in the future British colonies would come under the Italian threat. As a result, Britain made a considerable effort in order to solve Abyssinian problem within the framework of diplomacy. However, Mussolini did not have a diplomatic solution, but a military one in mind. Therefore, tension between Rome and London worsened over the course of that summer, as the crisis metamorphosed from an Italo-Ethiopian tension into a full-scale international one.[325]

What was the situation of Turkey throughout the pre-Abyssinian war process is an important question to ask both in order to show the conduct of the Turkish-Italian relations and to comprehend the impacts of the tense world politics upon Turkish foreign policy. In that respect, first of all, Turkey displayed a negative attitude towards Italy because first, the issue was the independence of a country, put it another way, was imperialism. Second, that imperialism was being made by Fascist Italy, which posed the utmost threat to Turkey at that time. Therefore, in the pre-war days, Turkish press published columns that gave voice to the Ethiopia, and the "friend" Mussolini of three years ago turned into a "dictator."[326] Italy felt indisposed about the Turkish stance and counter-acted through the press, in accordance with the nature of the Turkish-Italian relations in those years. For instance, *Il Giornale D'Italia*, on 27 August 1935 stated that Italy could not construe the reasons for the

[324] Elizabeth Monroe, *Mediterranean in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), p.11.

[325] Mallett, *Mussolini and The Origins of the Second World War,* p.40.

[326] *Cumhuriyet*, 24 May 1935.

attitude of Turkey and the Turkish press, which had become pejorative and hostile to Italy, because Turkey neither was representing the Islamic world anymore nor had any material interests in Abyssinia.[327] The article continued with a menacing style which warned that Turkey could not forget the Italian help and friendship in the hard times and also reminded that security and independency within the Mediterranean (without clashing with Italy) would be to advantage of Turkey itself.[328] It could be concluded that Abyssinian crisis turned into another point of tension between two countries whose friendship had already been ruined.

In addition to the position of Turkey towards Abyssinia, news that stated that Abyssinia was recruiting Turkish, Greek, and American volunteers,[329] made the bad atmosphere between two states worse. However, when these artificial news and to some extent some real developments began to disquiet also Ankara, the officials felt responsibility for making an explanation to Italy, because the issue transcended the recruits in the sense that the reports were indicating that a former 'Ottoman Pasha'[330] had gone to Abyssinia as the supreme commander of the army. Ankara immediately issued a statement, which was published in *Ottobre*, an Italian daily, stating that this figure did not have any connection with the Kemalist regime; he was actually an opponent of it.[331]

Therefore, it can be argued that even if Turkey was apparently against Italy on this occasion, it made efforts to abstain from misunderstandings and direct

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[327] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/238.606..7.

[328] Ibid.

[329] *Cumhuriyet,* 14 July 1935.

[330] Vehip Pasha.

[331] PMRA, Catalogue of Directorate General of Transactions, 030..10/106.693..28.

challenges against Italy, with this explanation. However, these kinds of reports continued to be embarrassing for Turkey vis-à-vis Rome, because new ones were added such as the news about Kazım Karabekir Pasha[332] about whom publications claimed that he would go to Abyssinia with a group of army officers.[333]

Apart from these specific issues that pertained to Turkish-Italian relations with respect to the Abyssinian War, there was another impact of this period on Turkish foreign policy, the Straits. Although Ankara raised Turkey's concerns about the existing legal system and its deficiencies, almost on every occasion throughout the 1930s, the pre-Abyssinian war period alone became a good opportunity for vocalizing the desire for a new arrangement. As will be shown below, these efforts would yield result after the Abyssinian campaign, and would lead to the conclusion of the Montreux Convention.

Turning to the Abyssinian War, in an environment where the public was arguing whether Italy would assault or not, the war began in 3 October 1935. Obviously, after Mussolini decided to withdraw his delegate from Geneva in September, the war had become an anticipated reality. Hereafter, while Britain and Italy came to the verge of a war in the Mediterranean, the League of Nations began to discuss sanctions as a response to the aggression.

Although Italy and France had already agreed over Abyssinia in the Mussolini-Laval accords, that did not constitute a basis for the same kind of an agreement between London and Rome. On the contrary, Abyssinia became not only a rupture in the relatively stable British-Italian relations, but also an inconsistency in French-British relations because of the tacit acceptance of the occupation by the

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[333] This news was made in *Yenigün* in Antakya, quoted by PMRA, Catalogue of Directorate General of Transactions, 030..10/101.656..27.

French. However, as can be expected, within a possible clash between Britain and Italy, France would support its traditional ally, Britain. However, Mussolini was so obsessed with a Mediterranean Empire that, according to him, Italy would able to defeat British Royal Navy in the Mediterranean in a potential war, contrary to the Italian naval leadership that "were far from prepared to risk war with Britain in order to achieve the colonial objectives."[334] In addition to the Italian naval leadership, British officials also did not desire a war, because a war with Italy would irreparably damage the power of Britain especially in the Far East[335] and, more importantly, the Reich was getting stronger militarily every day and would take advantage of any discord between France, Britain, and Italy.[336] Therefore, London, which thought inaccurately that the Stresa Front could be repaired if this process culminated without war, tried to evade the imposition of petroleum embargo, which would plainly galvanize Mussolini, in the League of Nations sessions about the matter. However, it was self-evident by December 1935[337] that Italy had come closer to Germany and British-Italian-French relations were on the decline.

In this atmosphere where Europe began to be divided into the blocks which would become the basis of the Second World War, Turkey sought to rescue itself

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[334] Mallett, "The Italian Naval High Command and the Mediterranean Crisis," p.78.

[335] Michael L. Roi, "A Completely Immoral and Cowardly Attitude: The British Foreign Office, American Neurality and the Hoare Laval Plan," *Canadian Journal of History* 29, no.2 (August 1994), p.342.

[336] Aaron L. Goldman, "Sir Robert Vansittart's Search for Italian Cooperation Against Hitler, 1933-1936," *Journal of Contemporary History* 9, no.3 (July 1974), p.119.

[337] See Hoare-Laval Plan. It was the last attempt by France and Britain in order to reach an agreement with Italy in terms of Abyssinia that resulted in a fiasco. It is usually said that Hoare-Laval Plan buried the Stresa Front which was already asleep. It is also claimed that it constituted the basis for the Axis.

from the impacts of the strained relations while trying to benefit from the some opportunities that stemmed from this dangerous environment.

First of all, in terms of sanctions, Turkey had to make a decision between its economic and political relations with Italy and a cooperative action for world peace. In that respect, while the sanctions issue was being debated without a result yet, the higher echelons of the Turkish political circles were inclined to the participation in the sanctions. Despite the existence of this predisposition, the ambivalence of the political scene in Ankara was self-evident because of the fact that the imposition of sanctions would be a move against the major threat, Rome, which was intimidating Ankara by warning that participation in the coercive measures would also influence the diplomatic relations, besides the economic ones, even after the sanctions ended.[338] The debates in the assembly for the voting of the sanctions mirrored this confusion explicitly. For instance, Berç Türker, a deputy, stated:

> Italy is buying goods from Turkey and if we participate in the sanctions at a time that the trade between two countries can improve, Italy can possibly cut its commercial relations with us and decide not to buy any goods from us in the future. Besides, the duration of the commercial treaty between Italy and Turkey has expired. Our participation will surely constitute an impediment for its renewal. If we paralyze our commercial ties with Italy by participating in the decision of the League of Nations, how will the League of Nations provide compensation for us in return for this sacrifice?...Unfortunately the League of Nations could not prevent the war, now can it stop the war with coercive measures?[339]

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[338] T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, Araştırma ve Siyaset Planlama Genel Müdürlüğü*, , Montreux ve Savaş Öncesi Yılları, 1935-1939*, vol.4 of *Türk Dış Politikasında 50 Yıl* (Ankara: Genel Müdürlük, 1973), p.12.

[339] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: V, Cilt:6, İçtima Senesi:1, 13 November 1935, p.51-52. "*Şimdi İtalya bizden mal alıyor ve bu memleketle olan ticaretimizin inkışaf edebileceği bir zamanda, zecri tedbirlere iştirak edersek, olabilir ki İtalya, aramızdaki ticari münasebatını kessin ve atide bizden mal almamağa karar versin. Bundan maada İtalya ile akdettiğimiz ticaret muhadesinin vadesi hulul etmiştir. Zecri tedbirlere iştirakımız bittabi bu muahedenin tecdidine bir mani teşkil edecektir. Biz Uluslar Kurumunun kararına iştirak etmek suretiyle, İtalya ile cari olan ticari münabetimizi felce uğratsak, acaba Uluslar Kurumu bu fedakarlığa karşı bize ne gibi maddi ve ameni 'compensation' temin*

Although after that deputy, the Minister of Foreign Affairs made a speech in favor of the sanctions, there was no doubt that Turkish politicians remained suspicious, firstly about the necessity of a sacrifice that would certainly damage the economic interests of the country and would create more tension in the already tense diplomatic relations between the two countries, and secondly about the reliability of the cooperation between the countries within the sphere of the League of Nations instead of bilateral relations. It must be underlined that these kinds of question marks within the minds of the officials were not unique to Turkey; dissatisfaction with the League of Nations was the general thinking of the interwar era.

As can be anticipated, Turkey, despite the risks, accepted and the implemented coercive measures against Italy by delivering a note that stated, "despite the friendly feelings towards Italy, Turkey complies with the commitments."[340] Obviously, these measures reflected also on the Turkish-Italian trade rates in the sense the figures dropped dramatically after the embargo. It has been always emphasized in the Turkish historiography that the sacrifice of Ankara is direct evidence that the international institution the task of which was to protect the global peace outweighed the national interests, for Turkey.[341] Although this was proved many times by the initiatives of Turkey and by the speech of the officials, it should be underlined that Turkey did not support the League of Nations blindly. The issue was beyond the realm of just bilateral economic relations, it was about Fascist Rome, which made Turkey to feel threatened at a time when it desired to feel secure

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edecektir?...Malesef Uluslar Kurumu harbin önüne geçemedi, şimdi zecri tedbirlerle harbi durdurabilecek mi?"

[340] Quoted by T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, Araştırma ve Siyaset Planlama Genel Müdürlüğü, *Montreux ve Savaş Öncesi Yılları*, p.13.

[341] Mehmet Gönlübol and Cem Sar, ed., *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası; 1919-1965* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi 1969), p.121.

within its new boundaries. That is to say, Turkey always highlighted international cooperation; however, the cost-benefit analysis logic in this instance is highly marked. The answer that Turkey sent to Geneva, which stated that Turkey was obliged to implement economic sanctions but would not participate in the possible military measures automatically,[342] is also a good example illustrating this cost-benefit analysis rationale.

In addition to the embargo issue which aggravated already broken off relations between the two countries, this time both politically and economically, there was another impact of this process on Turkey with respect to Italy. It was the issue of the military build-up on the Dodecanese islands. The real intent of Rome for the military bases and the misinterpretation of Ankara at the time and the Turkish historiography in general, were designated above.

However, as opposed to the diplomatic studies, Turkey began to understand that the military build-up in the Dodecanese islands was against specifically Britain. It could be concluded that although Turkey did not put an end to its suspicions about the fortifications on the islands,[343] it felt at ease after Italy attacked Ethiopia and broke ties with Britain. For example, newspapers began to inquire into the reasons for the military fortifications depending on strategic realities, rather than feelings of threat.[344] In consequence, the Abyssinian campaign brought relief to Turkey from a different point of view.

Furthermore, one of the most important results of the Abyssinian assault was the warmth in the relations between Turkey and Britain, because the same enemy

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[342] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/234.580..13.

[343] *Cumhuriyet,* 16 October 1935.

[344] *Cumhuriyet*, 13 October 1935, "What is the reason for the preparation of war in the Dodecanese Islands?"

posed threat to both in the Mediterranean region. Therefore, it can be suggested that the direction of the foreign policy of Ankara began to incline towards London at a time when the world began to divide into just two camps. This argument can be proved with the formal guarantees that Britain, France, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey gave each other, in January 1936. These assurances, which were known as the Mediterranean Accords, envisaged essentially the help of Britain, which had the utmost power in the Mediterranean, to those states which were under the threat of Italy due to their participation in the sanctions.[345] In reaction to these assurances, Rome asked Ankara about the consistency of 1928 Turkish-Italian Friendship Treaty with these Mediterranean Accords. In other words, Italy pointed out the inconsistency between these two treaties in a critical way.

Whatever the criticisms of Italy were, Turkey attached great importance to these agreements because it had finally gained the help of a Great Power in the Mediterranean although these agreements were not the Mediterranean Pact that Ankara had previously desired to realize. However, it was still important for Turkey in the sense that even after the sanctions against Italy came to an end, the Turkish government desired to hold the mutual responsibilities and later, wanted to form a kind of bilateral agreement which was refused by Britain in order not to expedite the Axis by alienating Rome. The disappointment of Ankara due to the refusal of Britain can be seen in the speech of Atatürk to the British Ambassador in Ankara: "Dear Ambassador, I am sorry about this answer, there is danger and this danger is growing. The European skies are getting cloudier. According to my assessment, up

[345] Soysal, p.489–492.

until four-five years, Italy and Germany will unite and will lead us into the catastrophe of the Second World War."[346]

However, even if Turkey was disappointed in terms of the desired agreement in 1936, it can be concluded that the Abyssinian crisis and the Mediterranean Agreements became turning points both in British-Turkish relations vis-à-vis Italy and in the Turkish foreign policy in general. The Mediterranean scene had become so problematic that Turkey needed to be closer to a Great Power on the other side, in order to protect itself from possible Italian aggression. However, the versatility of the relations should also be highlighted that it was the same Italian threat from which Ankara had benefitted mostly in terms of Montreux Arrangement.

Actually, throughout the 1930s, the Turkish government tried to change the regime of the Turkish Straits, because the Lausanne Treaty was not capable of ensuring the security of Turkish territory. Therefore, in every incident that pertained to Europe, the Balkans, and the Mediterranean Sea, Turkish officials brought the issue into the international arena. As stated many time above, in the interwar period Turkey feared an attack from the Mediterranean, and specifically from the Dodecanese islands. The deterioration of the relations with Italy led Turkey to search for support.

The necessary conditions matured when Italy attacked Abyssinia because the interests of the Great Powers were at stake.[347] Since Britain and Turkey united their hands vis-à-vis Italy in the Ethiopian case, Britain, which was satisfied with the

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[346] Quoted by Feridun Cemal Erkin, *Dışişlerinde 34 Yıl*, (Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları: Ankara, 1987), vol.1, p. 84. "*Sayın Büyükelçi, bu cevaptan teesür duydum, tehlike vardır, büyümektedir. Avrupa semaları üzerine kara bulutlar her gün daha ziyade yoğunlaşmaktadır. Benim değerlendirmelerime göre dört beş seneye varmayacak, İtalya ile Almanya birleşip başımıza İkinci Dünya Harbi felaketini çıkaracaktır*."

[347] Within the same months, the invasion of Rhinland and termination of Locarno by Germany should be also kept in mind.

existing status-quo in the Straits, changed its mind and began to support Turkey.[348] In this atmosphere, Turkey delivered a note on the necessity of change in the Straits regime on 11 April 1936 to the concerned states.

Italy's new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Ciano, declared that Italy had been exposed to an international injustice with the sanctions and would participate in the conference only if the sanctions were lifted.[349] Therefore, Italy's stance about the attendance in the Montreux Conference, which depended on the support in Geneva, was manifested. In addition to the thoughts of Rome that considered the conference as against specifically Italy, "the truth of the matter was that Italy did not want to participate in a lawful conference for the revision of the peace treaties."[350]Actually, if the stance that Italy could have taken in the conference is taken into the consideration, the absence of the dissident Rome in the proceedings seems to have been much more advantageous for Turkey.

The Conference began on 22 June 1936 without Italy. Despite its absence, it continued to influence the progress of the negotiations with polemical declarations. For instance, on the same day as the opening of the conference, Rome denoted that it was unusual to negotiate about an important Mediterranean issue without a Mediterranean country which could not participate due to existing ambiguities on international circumstances.[351] Aras' response, which expressed that "unfortunately,

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[348] The British support for the change in the Straits regime can also be interpreted as a desire of being a balance to the Soviet Union in the region. At the time, Britain feared from colloboration between the Soviet Union and Italy despite the fact that it was a weak probability.

[349] T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, Araştırma ve Siyaset Planlama Genel Müdürlüğü, *Montreux ve Savaş Öncesi Yılları*, p.53.

[350] Ludmila Zhivkova, *Anglo-Turkish Relations 1933–1939* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1976), p.38.

[351] *Cumhuriyet*, 23 June 1935.

it was impossible to have the vital interests of a nation coincide with the moments judged opportune by Italy,"[352] in one of the sessions of the Conference is important in terms of showing the outraged status of the bilateral relations.

In the end, the Montreux Convention, which permitted the remilitarization of the Straits and established the full sovereignty of Turkey in the area on the contrary of the Lausanne arrangement, was accepted on 20 July 1936. However, as could be expected, Italy did not sign the treaty. Turkey was aware of the fact that the absence of Italy could have many problematic consequences for the Montreux Convention although Turkey denominated the issue as if it was a detail in the Assembly sessions. In other words, despite statements from the Foreign Minister and some deputies which expressed their belief about Italy's signature to the Convention in near future,[353] the acceptance by Italy was a great concern for Turkey.

The foremost concern for Turkey about the absence of Italy in the conference and at the Convention, first of all, stemmed from the fact that Italy had been one of the concerned authorities of the Straits regimes in the Lausanne Treaty. Therefore, the absence and non-acceptance of Italy led to question marks about the new arrangement in terms of international law in the sense that whether this convention was valid for Italy or not was debated intensely. While some of the parties supported the idea that the old Convention remained in force for Italy because of its absence at the conference, Turkey, as a response, stated that Montreux was valid for Italy because Rome had failed to fulfill its responsibilities in terms of participating.[354] It

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[352] Ibid.

[353] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre:V, Cilt:12, İçtima Senesi:1,31 July 1936, p.314-315.

[354] Süleyman Seydi, *The Turkish Straits and the Great Powers: From the Montreux Convention to the Early Cold War,1936-1947* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2003) p.56.

could be presumed that these debates disturbed the Turkish official and public circles in terms of the acceptability of the Straits regime. Thus, the Italian signature on the Montreux Convention became very important for Turkey.

Actually, all of the states knew that the stability in the Mediterranean could not be achieved without Italy. Therefore, especially Britain, which wanted to both achieve stability in the Mediterranean and to forestall a Rome-Berlin Axis due to the major threat that this collaboration could pose to the Mediterranean balance of power, aimed at the acceptance of Montreux by Italy. However, Rome stated that it would not sign the treaty unless Turkey recognized the sovereignty of Italy in Ethiopia. However, in the conditions of 1936, Turkey did not accept this precondition.

After 1936, Britain continued to make efforts for the acceptance of the Convention by Italy. In this sense, in addition to the fact that the sanctions were lifted, the termination of the Mediterranean Accords, which had been made under the conditions of the Abyssinian crisis, had aimed at softening Italy. By the same token, Italy and Britain had signed the Gentleman's Agreement in January 1937 through which both countries promised to respect the status quo in the Mediterranean.[355] In fact, this agreement led to some kind of détente both within the British-Italian relations and within Turkish-Italian relations.[356]

In this context, Aras made a visit to Milan in order to discuss the Convention issue, but not surprisingly Italy persisted in its stance towards the treaty. Actually, Italy would not sign the Montreux Convention until the recognition of the Italian

[355] Ibid., p.68.

[356] Ibid.

Empire in April 1938 by Turkey. After Turkey transformed what had previously been de facto recognition into de jure one,[357] Italy signed the treaty in May 1938.

To conclude the Montreux issue, it must be underlined that the Straits regime became a battlefield among the many countries, including Turkey and Italy. Although Italy did take the revenge for the sanctions, in a sense, with this issue, it could not be regarded as a mood directed against only Turkey. On the contrary, if the Montreux process was a war among the powers, Italy assaulted every front, not just one. The signature of Italy in 1938 was a late but satisfactory development for Turkey because Ankara foresaw this arrangement as lifelong, not special to the interwar era, so Italy's accession put an end to the debates and ambiguity. However, as will be seen below, this process did not influence the conduct of Turkish-Italian relations until the end of the Second World War. On the contrary, by 1936, it was evident that Turkey and Italy had diverged into the different blocks although the pro-status quo group tried hard to estrange Germany and Italy from each other.

This divergence of Europe would be observed best within the period of the Spanish Civil War. In this sense, although Spain was a distant area which seemed as if it could not directly affect Turkey, the interference of Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and the communist Soviet Union in the war had direct impacts on both European politics in general and on Turkish diplomacy specifically. Since it had also influences on Turkish-Italian relations, it is necessary to look at the course of events in the Spanish Civil War.

After the war broke out between the forces of the nationalist General Franco and the republican government forces in July 1936, Italy decided to interfere in the

[357]Anthony Rocco De Luca, The Montreux Conference of 1936: A Diplomatic Study of Anglo-Soviet Rivalry at the Turkish Straits (Master's thesis, Stanford University, 1974), p.249.

war, by supporting the forces of Franco. The reason behind the armed support of Italy can be explained by the fact that "virtually from the first day of the war, the conflict was considered throughout the world not as merely Spanish affair but as the first round in the struggle of fascism."[358] With this explanation, the interference of Italy and Germany as well as of the Soviet Union can be understood clearly. The interference of these countries influenced European politics, because the Rome-Berlin Axis,[359] which came into being in November, was consolidated during this ongoing process, so the European scene was thoroughly clustering.

In addition to the impacts of the Spanish Civil War on European diplomacy, the course of events resulted in a certain issue in which Turkey was interested specifically: the piracy in the Mediterranean Sea that had begun after the outbreak of war. Torpedo and airplane attacks on shipping in the Mediterranean were growing in frequency, thus a new crisis which shifted attention to the maritime traffic occurred.[360]

When two merchant ships were sunk by submarines near the Dardanelles, Turkey felt particularly indisposed, because these attacks showed that there were unknown submarines within the Straits. This highlighted the issue of Turkish preparedness and military capability in the defense of the Straits, posing some dangerous complications in the international arena, for Turkey, which had recently

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[358] John F. Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in Spanish Civil War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), p.13.

[359] Actually, in July 1936, Austria and Germany had signed "Austrian-German Gentleman's Agreement" (Abkommen) through which Germany came closer to *Anschluss*. Then, isolated Rome due to the Ethiopian assault, accepted the position of Germany on Austria in order to improve the relations with Berlin. Therefore, only problem between two countries disappeared. After that point, in November, in other words, during the Spanish Civil War, in Milan, Mussolini made an announcement that stated "this Berlin-Rome Line is not a Diaphragm but rather than an Axis." With this statement the Axis had been founded. (Burgwyn, p.152)

[360] Coverdale, p.13

gained sovereignty of the region.[361] Therefore, after the incidents, Ankara declared that the existence of a submarine in the Straits meant the violation of the Montreux Convention, so Turkey would take the necessary actions provided that the Turkish authorities could detect an unknown submarine within its waters.

However, since these incidents were not unique to Turkey in the sense that the piracy events were breaking down the order of the whole Mediterranean, the Mediterranean countries, with the initiative of Britain and France, decided to meet in Nyon in September 1937. Because Italy put forward the recognition of the Italian Empire as a precondition for participation again, the suspicions about Italy even before the conference turned into a tacit blame at Nyon which was held in the absence of Italy and Germany, without delay. As a result of the achievement of the Conference, Aras described the conference "as a success from status quo powers and a defeat for Italy."[362] The reactions against Italy continued with the Turkish and Greek decision to close their port facilities to Italy. This move demonstrated that Turkey, as in other international cooperation examples, felt more comfortable towards Italy provided that it was backed by one or more powers. In other words, with the backing of Britain, both Turkey and Greece, as lesser powers of Europe, began to act confidently against Italy.

Furthermore, what is astonishing about this conference, in terms of Turkish politics, is that it brought the divergence of ideas between Atatürk and İnönü in terms of Italy to the surface. According to Atatürk, Turkey needed to become closer to Britain. For instance, in this case, Turkey should have given Britain permission to patrol in Turkish waters. For İnönü, that meant provoking Italy, which had military

[361] Yücel Güçlü, "Nyon Agreement of 1937 and Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies,*38 no.1 (January 2002), p.56.

[362] Ibid., p.62.

fortifications in the nearby Dodecanese Islands. İnönü insisted even before the conference that Turkey should wait for the position of Italy and warned that any agreement in which Italy did not partake could lead to clashes with Rome.[363] However, Atatürk insisted on the collaboration with the British against the Italians and conducted the conference directly through Aras regardless of İnönü. In Turkish political history, the Nyon conference is considered as one of the reasons for the resignation of İnönü that September. In terms of foreign policy, Atatürk's domination on this issue symbolized a new direction, being completely against Italy. Aras later interpreted the Nyon Conference, too, as "if nothing else, it drove the Turks and Britain closer together by associating them in what was, in effect, an informal alliance against Italy."[364] As could be anticipated, a new era, in which diplomacy did not play a major role, began in Turkish-Italian relations. In this new era, Turkey usually took action with the support of Britain, which would formalize the informal alliance that Aras stated; after it comprehended that Italy could not be rescued from the hands of Germany.

However, before the final blow, in other words before the Turkish-British-French Tripartite Alliance, another initiative, namely the Saadabad Pact,[365]should be touched upon, because it is usually regarded as an alliance against Italy, which had territorial ambitions in the region.[366] In this sense, it could be stated that although the Pact was signed in July 1937 by Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan, the efforts for cooperation in the Middle East dated back to 1935. Since this year especially symbolized the invasion of Abyssinia, it is normal to think that the pact was against

[363] İsmet İnönü, *Konuşma, Demeç, Makale, Mesaj ve Söyleşileri,* comp. İlhan Turan, (Ankara: TBMM, 2003), vol.1 p.337.

[364] Güçlü, "Nyon Agreement of 1937," p.67.

[365] Soysal, p.584-587.

Italy. The Turkish political history books also point out this aspect of the alliance.[367] This is not totally inaccurate, but a simplified interpretation. It is true that the aims of Italy in Asia and Africa, as Mussolini had stated, brought the countries closer, not only in the Middle East, but also in the Balkans as was explained. However, like the Balkan Entente again, the Pact was not against specifically Italy. Actually, it was a friendship and good neighborhood treaty that was compatible with the aims of Turkey, which was trying to constitute a stable and peaceful area around its territory.[368] The most important reason behind the pact was not Italy, but the desire to find peaceful solutions to the boundary problems among the states as well as the desire for collaboration in terms of the Kurdish tribes that were leading problems with various rebellions between the states.[369] Therefore, considering the Saadabad Pact rather as a notification of respect for each other's boundaries and as the efforts to diminish the influence of the Kurdish tribes within the bilateral relations will be the correct way of approaching the history.

After this brief but necessary comment on the Sadaabad Pact, it is appropriate to turn to something which was really against Italy; British-French-Turkish Tripartite Alliance, which was concluded in 1939, the war year. Before the analysis of the Alliance, the conditions that played roles in its birth must be examined. In that respect, the events of 1938 and especially of the first half of 1939, which had utmost importance, should be explained first.

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[367] See, Armaoğlu, *Siyasi Tarih*; Sar and Gönlübol, *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası (1919-1965).*

[368] Soysal, p. 582.

[369] Atay Akdevelioğlu and Ömer Kürküçüoğlu, "Göreli Özerklik-I/Ortadoğuyla İlişkiler," in *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler Yorumlar,* ed. Baskın Oran (İstanbul: İletişim, 2006), p.365-366.

While the Spanish Civil War, which tied Germany and Italy to each other more and more, continued throughout 1938, one of the most important incidents of the year was the German annexation of Austria in March. Italy already had accepted this inevitable culmination for the sake of the relations with the Germans, so no resistance or reaction came on the part of the Italians. Besides, especially after Sudetenland was evacuated by Czechoslovakian government in the same year, the Danubian area fell under the dominance of Germany. Actually, with those developments, Italy began to feel inferior to Germany, because step by step Berlin gained ascendancy over Rome, the sphere of conduct of which was evidently put under restraint.

Although the two were allies, the hegemony of Germany on Italy led to more active stance in the Mediterranean by Mussolini because, according to the partition of Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Adriatic Sea belonged to the Italians while East-Central Europe did to the Germans. However, when Germany began to influence Yugoslavia, Italy felt upset. Therefore, some steps were taken, especially in the Balkans, which influenced Turkish foreign policy also.

First of all, Italy became closer to Yugoslavia, which had already positive contacts with Bulgaria. Therefore, the balance in the Mediterranean began to change at the expense of Turkey and Greece because Yugoslavia was a member of the Balkan Entente. Therefore, Turkey and Greece, which both feared Italian dominance, made another Friendship Treaty designed to promote security in the Mediterranean.[370]

Secondly and more importantly, Italy invaded Albania in 1939, just a month after that Germany attacked Czechoslovakia. After that point, the British and the

[370] Soysal, p.588-590.

French gave assurances to Greece and Romania and proposed the same assurance to Turkey. However, Ankara refused this offer by stating that this kind of assurance would attract the enmity of Italy and Germany, which in return could lead to an assault on the Straits when the war broke out.[371] After giving this reason, Turkey underlined the necessity of an alliance on which these issues could be discussed. It should be underlined that the stance of Turkey, which depended on abstaining from provoking the Axis, does not show that Turkey wanted to cower down against Italy. On the contrary, Turkey used this blind-excuse in order to obtain more effective guarantees from Britain.

This device of Turkey gave birth to the "British-French-Turkish Tripartite Alliance"[372] through which Ankara gained support from its allies against a presumptive Mediterranean attack after which the Dodecanese islands would be made secure for Turkey. As can be seen, Turkey was reflecting its feeling of insecurity about the Dodecanese Islands, again. Another important aspect of the Alliance was that France participated in the Alliance later, because Turkey and France had being experienced problematic relations due to the Sanjak issue, which was solved in 1939. After that date, with the participation of France, the Alliance, which tied Turkey to the Western bloc was completed. Not surprisingly, Italy reacted to this Alliance, which was mainly against itself. Actually, it is not erroneous to argue that even if the Tripartite Alliance was not directly against Italy, it would probably be against it anyway, because the relations between Turkey and Italy had became so strained by 1939 that revisionist Italy reacted and criticized even the

[371] T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, Araştırma ve Siyaset Planlama Genel Müdürlüğü, *Montreux ve Savaş Öncesi Yılları*, p.193.

[372] Soysal, p.600-607.

annexation of Hatay with Turkey, which had led to a war between the presses of two countries.[373]

In consequence, when the Second World War began, Turkey had already determined its position. This position was totally formed definitely on the basis of the perception of Italian threat. Rome and its expansionist foreign policy played the utmost role in Turkey's choice, which was made despite the efforts of Germany to include Ankara in the Axis, which could not be possible due to the presence of Italy. Even after determining its stance, Turkey waited hopefully for the position of Italy which was neutral at the beginning of the war, because for Turkey, Italy was the key actor that would dictate the situation of war in the Mediterranean and also was the enemy in respect to which Turkey should have positioned itself.[374] In other words a statement by İnönü made in 1936, remained true even after the war: "The most fundamental matter, perhaps the only matter of Turkey for today is the security of the Mediterranean and the ambitions of Italy…If Italy remains neutral, we should be neutral by all means. If Italy enters into the war, being neutral again in order to preserve our power is the most beneficial way."[375]

All in all, the aim of this chapter was to designate the diplomatic relations between Turkey and Italy within the period of 1932-1939, taking the other powers' conditions and the general events in Europe into account. What can be argued at that point is that the relations in the previous period, which had been conducted in a

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[373] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/85.558..22.

[374] Selim Deringil, *Denge Oyunu: İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası* (İstanbul: Türkiye Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları,1994), p.96-97.

[375] Quoted by T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, Araştırma ve Siyaset Planlama Genel Müdürlüğü, *Montreux ve Savaş Öncesi Yılları*, p.54. "*Türkiye'nin en mühim meselesi ve belki bugün için yegane meselesi Akdeniz Emniyeti ve İtalya ihtirasatı meselesidir…İtalya bitaraf kaldığı takdirde mutlaka bitaraf kalmalıyız. İtalya harbe girdiği halde yine bitaraf kalıp kuvvetimizi muhafaza etmek en faydalı yoldur.*"

polite and friendly manner, were reversed in this new era. In other words, a return to the pre-1927 period, in which Turkey feared Italian ambitions in Anatolia eventuated. However, there were differences between the two periods, because one the one hand, the pre-1927 period was entirely hostile in terms of the attitude of Italy towards Turkey, except for the War of Liberation period; on the other hand, the plans for the southwestern Anatolian territory had the utmost importance on the Mare Nostrum agenda. However, in this period, Italy's Mare Nostrum policy was obsessed with Abyssinia specifically; in other words, the priority was not Anatolia.

But, as suggested throughout the chapter, this does not mean that Turkey's feelings were groundless. What is suggested rather is that many developments in the Mediterranean that alarmed Turkey in this period were not directly about Anatolia. However, the location of the territorial aims of Mussolini after Abyssinia, Albania, Yugoslavia, was another question, especially if the content of the Mare Nostrum policy is kept in mind. In other words, whether the next turn would be Turkey or not is beyond the ability of this chapter to answer, on the basis of the historical material.

Another aim of this chapter was to show that how this perception of threat affected Turkish foreign policy. The alliances and the initiatives in which Turkey participated were looked upon from this perspective with the effort of not falling into the traps of the general misinterpretations in Turkish historiography, as in the case of Saadabad Pact and the Balkan Entente. The most fundamental impact of the Italian threat on Turkish foreign policy was that it drove Turkey to the side of Britain and France. Its importance, fist of all, stemmed from the fact that it signaled the change in the interwar foreign policy tradition, which had depended on neutrality. It should be kept in mind that after 1935, the world scene became so complicated that it was

impossible for a middle power to conduct an independent foreign policy. Therefore, the impact of Italy was not on choosing a side but choosing the British side.

Secondly, it changed the conduct of Turkish-Italian relations. Turkey and Italy conducted their diplomatic relations much more bilaterally before Turkey and Britain became closer. However, after 1935, which symbolized the Abyssinian campaign and closer Turkish-British relations thereafter, Britain also became a part of this relationship. The period of the Montreux Convention is a good example of this suggestion, in terms of their collaboration.

Thirdly, Italy, while influencing the foreign policy choice of Turkey at the end of the interwar era, also determined the future of Turkish foreign policy indirectly because the choice of Turkey before the Second World War continued also long decades after the war.

Apart from the nature of the Italian foreign policy towards Turkey and its impacts on Turkish foreign policy in this era, there is another point that needs to be made before concluding the diplomatic relations part. In this sense, attention should be drawn to the determinant character of the foreign policy in terms of the bilateral relations between these two states. It was shown in the previous three chapters, the contacts depended on the attitude of Italy towards Turkey on the basis of the foreign policy goals of Rome and Ankara. This identifier character of foreign policy could be seen from this period best, because although "the way in which Mussolini seemed to forge national unity and to energize Italian society impressed many in Turkey,"[376] this appreciation did not have any impact on the bilateral relations in terms of rapprochement.

[376] Eric J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (New York: I.B Tauris, St. Martin's Press, 1997), p.181.

In this sense, it should be underlined that there were political and cultural interactions between these two states, even if they were limited, throughout the 1930s in which the Turkish stance towards Italy depended on adversity, on the contrary. For example, the Turkish criminal code, which was adapted by Turkey in 1926 from the 1889 Italian code, was changed many times in order to conform to Turkish values throughout the 1930s, yet the changes that were adapted to the text also came from Mussolini's newly promulgated 1930 Fascist code of criminal law.[377] By the same token, the People's Houses, which were opened in 1932, had been formulated on the basis of Italian *dopolavoro* (afterwork) institutions. Therefore, a detailed analysis of similar institutions in other countries, but especially of *dopolavoro* before and during the foundation process of the People's Houses,[378] was not a surprising but an inevitable procedure, especially if the aforementioned positive view of the Kemalist cadre about the ability of Fascism to shape the society is kept in mind.

However, the existence of these cultural and political interactions between the two regimes throughout the interwar years, but specifically in the 1930s, due to the increasing authoritarian tendencies also in the Turkish regime to some extent, did not have any impact in terms of the bilateral relations. Thus, rather than sympathy, the relationship depended on an animosity, which stemmed from the Italian threat to Turkish territory and the Turkish fear of the Mare Nostrum policy, rather than existent social linkages.

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[377] Ruth A. Miller, *Legislating Authority: Sin and Crime in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p.108.

[378] Sefa Şimşek, *Bir İdeolojik Seferberlik Deneyimi: Halkevleri 1932–1951* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2002), p.25–26

CHAPTER 7

ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND ITALY

The importance of the economic relations between Turkey and Italy in the interwar period stems from the fact that bilateral economic relations shed light upon some specific features both of countries and of the era, apart from being a mere evaluation of the historical information. In this sense, firstly and most importantly, the Italian-Turkish economic relations in the interwar era show to what extent the content of the economic links depended on diplomatic affairs and vice versa. Secondly, the nature of this commerce also shows the characteristics of an economic relationship between a rural country and an industrial one in the sense that the division of the major commodities that two countries bought and sold reflected the division of a quasi-periphery economy and a core one to a certain extent. Last but not least, this relationship also reflects the conditions of the era regardless of the countries in question, because the period, which could be divided into two in terms of economic policies due to the Great Depression, displayed some specific characteristics that can be understood through the single case of Turkish-Italian economic intercourse. In short, apart from handling the economic relations simply in terms of the exchange of commodities, statistical data, and financial matters, it is much more important to focus on the implications that the contacts conveyed.

With these concerns, at this point, it is important to look at the conditions both in Turkey and Italy before the First World War. In terms of the Ottoman Empire, which had been experiencing a disintegration process, was economically dependent upon foreign capital. Turkey displayed the features of a semi-colony

despite never having been declared a colony officially, in the sense that on the one hand it exported raw materials while importing industrial goods; on the other hand it dealt with the capitulation regime and the rapidly growing foreign debts which had already led to the formation of a Public Debt Administration ineffectually.[379] In an environment in which political and economic independence were regarded as absolute necessities that supports each other, the Ottoman Empire both economically and politically was under the pressure of the European powers.

In terms of the latter, the unification of Italy, which had consisted of independent city states, had been completed just in the second half of the nineteenth century. At this time, Italy was a backward and rural country in which the per capita income was nearly 50% of that of Britain and about 60% of that of France.[380] However, beginning with the *Risorgimento* (Revival),[381] this backward and poor society began to undergo an economic development with which it became a relatively prosperous, modern industrial economy.[382] In accordance with the industrialization of the economy and also with the trends of the time, Italy aimed at colonization in order to find the areas necessary not only for the raw materials that it lacked but also for places as destinations for the emigration of its increasing population. It should be kept in mind that the late industrialization and unification features of Italy as well as that of Germany are always portrayed as the reasons for their active imperialistic agenda which, in the end, became one of the causes of the wars in Europe and in the world.

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[379] Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi, 1908–1985* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1990), p.10-13.

[380] Cohen and Federico, p.1.

[381] The word qualifies the political and social movement that aimed at a single unified Italy.

[382] Cohen and Federico, p.17.

Accordingly, in terms of economic gains, Italy, which had already benefitted from the capitulation regime in the Ottoman Empire through the direct initiatives of the Italian citizens and companies therein, began to pursue also colonial ends for the parts of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire. The war between Italy and the Ottoman Empire over Libya in 1911-1912 was a consequence of this policy. Gaining a colony from North Africa had been both an economic, demographic, and a prestige matter for Italy.

What had been much more valuable to the Italians was the southwestern Anatolia, which was economically one of the most important parts of the Ottoman Empire. To this end, Italy, in the intra-European negotiations before and during the Great War, had always tried to obtain these areas as a sphere of influence for the post-war settlement. In addition to the secret Treaty of London, with which the Entente powers promised unspecified lands in Asia Minor to the Italians,[383] the Treaty of Saint Jean de Maurienne in 1917, through which Rome obtained further concessions in Adalia and Izmir regions,[384] had led to the Italian participation in the Great War on the part of the Entente. In fact, the Adana-Mersin region also had a fundamental importance with its cotton production, which was very important for the textile industry of Italy. However, due to the French rejection, Italy failed to secure this region as a sphere of influence in these two secret treaties.[385]

These areas were genuine requirements for the Italian mind in the sense that being the "least of the great powers" had always caused "national inferiority complex" which stemmed from a fundamental weakness in terms of not possessing

[383] Albrecht-Carrie, p.332.

[384] Howard, p.186.

[385] Ibid., p.186.

the economic resources to compete with other great powers.[386] It was for this reason that the Greek occupation of western Anatolia on the contrary to the promises which had been made in the secret treaties turned the victory in the Great War into a "mutilated" one for Italy and remained one of the national humiliation occasions in the Italian history.

Therefore, if the necessity of the Anatolian lands for the Italians is kept in mind, the attitude of Italy both politically and economically towards Turkey becomes meaningful after this point of rupture. In this context, throughout the National Struggle, despite being an occupation force in some part of Anatolia, Italy did not take a harsh stance towards the Kemalist movement. On the contrary, the Italians tried to gain sympathy from the Turkish population with benign conduct, because they thought that they could obtain economic initiatives and privileges more easily in that way.[387]

Actually, after the point of the Greek landing in western Anatolia, all of the Italian behaviour took a shape that depended on gaining economic privileges. For instance, Italy, with the agreement that Bekir Sami (Kunduh) signed with the Italians in London in 1921, had accepted the surrender of Thrace and Izmir to the Turks in return for priority for Italian economic initiatives in various southern and western Anatolian cities, and most importantly, for the transfer of Eregli mines to a collective Italian-Turkish company.[388] It is important to note that the orientation of Rome in terms of Turkey had depended on the deficiencies of the Italian economy. In other words, it was not a coincidence that Italy, which was very poorly endowed with

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[386] John F. Pollard, *The Fascist Experience in Italy* (London; New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 1998), p.88.

[387] Çelebi, p.120-121.

[388] Atatürk, p.392.

minerals,[389] had been interested in the Eregli mines. In fact, the connection of Italy with the Eregli mines was not unfamiliar to the Turkish political circles. In other words, in addition to the Bekir Sami's agreement, which was not approved in the Turkish parliament, there had been another case which had led to enormous tension among the deputies. In this case, a deputy, Celaleddin Arif, who possessed ten percent shares of the Eregli mines and who transferred these rights to an Italian company, was harshly accused of selling the "lands of the fatherland" despite knowing well the dreams of Italy over Turkish territory in terms of natural resources.[390] What these cases display is that Italy was repeatedly searching for ways to obtain the natural resources of Anatolia that it lacked and therefore obtained economic dominance in Turkey, which in the end would lead to a political one.

Actually, the impossibility of the dreams about economic privileges of Rome is explicit when the stance of Kemalists about the economic independency is kept in mind. The position of the government in terms of the economy is comprehensible within the statement of Mahmut Esat (Bozkurt), the Minister of Economy, an the Izmir Economy Congress in 1923:

> …we will not hand over Turkey, or the Turkish economy, as a country of slaves to foreign capital. However, we are prepared to recognize every kind of facility, even more than shown by other nations, to foreign capital willing to live and earn in a legitimate manner, on the condition that it conforms to our laws and regulations and is not granted more privileges than Turks.[391]

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[389] Cohen and Federico, p.54.

[390] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: I, Cilt:8, İçtima: 1, 26 February 1921, p.431-433.

[391] Quoted by A. Afetinan, *İzmir İktisat Kongresi, 17 Şubat–4 Mart 1923* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989), p.77. "*...biz Türkiye'yi, iktisadiyatını bir esirler ülkesi halinde ecnebi sermayesinin eline terk ve tevdi edemeyiz. Fakat memleketimizde meşru bir surette kazanmak ve yaşamak isteyen yabancı sermayesine kanun ve nizamlarımıza koşmamak şartiyle memleketimizde her türlü teshilatı hatta diğer milletlerin gösterdiği teshilattan fazla kolaylıkları irade etmeğe her zaman hazırız*."

While the leaders were formulating the Turkish economy on the basis of the equality of Turks with other nationalities as well as on the basis of prospective Turkish sovereign rules and regulations, Italy continued to insist on economic privileges, this time at the Lausanne Conference, in terms of capitulations. In fact, it could be suggested that the capitulations issue was the most important topic of the conference for the Italians at Lausanne. From the beginning of the conference to the end, Italy ardently supported the continuation of the capitulation system, as can be seen in the speech of Italian representative:

> It should be acknowledged that the capitulation system is regarded as a form of reducing the sovereignty of an independent and free state and the will of Turkey in terms of abolishing this old capitulation regime can be easily understood…however, it should be acknowledged also that the foreigners in Turkey, who have settled and created important establishments therein, have taken the initiatives by relying on the guarantees that have been given by various agreements…therefore, even Turkey should doubtlessly desire a legal system and an organization of a justice that would give guarantee everybody in lieu of the capitulation system that it wants to abolish.[392]

As can be seen, the perpetuation of economic and legal privileges, whether under the name of capitulations or of something different, had a vital importance for Rome. However, Italy, after the territorial disappointment in Turkey, experienced another one in the arena of the economy due to the results of the Lausanne Conference through which "each of the High Contracting Parties accepts, in so far as it is

[392] Quoted by, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, Araştırma ve Siyaset Plânlama Genel Müdürlüğü, *Lozan, 1922-1923,* vol.2 of *Türkiye Dış Politikasında 50 Yıl,* (Ankara: Genel Müdürlük, 1973), p.69. "*Şunu tasdik etmek lazımdır ki, kapitülasyon usulü müstakil ve serbest bir devletin hâkimiyet kudretini tenzil edecek bir şekilde görülmekte ve Türkiye hükümetinin artık eskimiş olan bu kapitülasyonları ilga etmek hususundaki arzusu kolaylıkla anlaşılabilmektedir… yalnız şunu da teslim etmek gerekir ki Türkiye'ye yerleşmiş ve orada ehemmiyetli müesseseler vücuda getirmiş ecnebiler bu teşebbüslere bir takım muahedelerin bahşettiği teminata itimat ederek girişmişlerdi…bu cihetten izalesinin görmek arzusunda bulunduğu kapitülasyon usulü yerine, herkese emniyet vermek için bir kanunlar manzumesi ve bir adalet teşkilatı ikamesini hiç şüphesiz Türk hükümeti dahi arzu etmelidir*."

concerned, the complete abolition of the Capitulations in Turkey in every respect,"[393] although the existing tariffs would not be raised until 1929.

Therefore, by 1923, the Turkish Republic had been founded as an independent but a ruined country in every aspect, due to more than a decade of war. At the time that the republic was founded, both the total population and agricultural production numbers had regressed vis-à-vis the figures of 1913.[394] For instance, while the population of Turkey was 16.3 million in 1913, it was 13.6 million even in 1927.[395] Related to this post-war situation of an economically and socially battered country as well as the decision of the Lausanne Treaty in terms of the continuation of the 1913 tariffs until 1929 led to an economic policy which could be defined as "reconstruction on the conditions of open economy."[396] In this respect, Boratav argues that the Republican era was unable to bring a rupture with the Ottoman past in terms of economy as it did in terms of political arena, due to the tariff imposition of the Lausanne Treaty until 1929.[397] Therefore, when Turkish foreign economic relations, or in general terms, the Turkish economy is analyzed, it is necessary to take into consideration that Turkish economic policies in the interwar era can be divided into two, as being before and after 1929.

On the other hand, Italy, as a so-called victorious country of the Great War, did not differ from Turkey very much in terms of the well-being of the overall

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[393] Lausanne Treaty, Article 28, "*Tarafeyni Âliyeyni Âkıdeyn Türkiye'de kapitülâsyonların kâffei nıkatı nazardan tamamen ilgasını her biri kendisine taallûku cihetinden kabul ettiklerini beyan ederler.*" Quoted by, TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: II, Cilt:1, İçtima Senesi:1, 21 August 1923, p.117.

[394] Yahya S. Tezel, *Cumhuriyet Döneminin İktisadi Tarihi, 1923-1950* (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1994), p.97-102.

[395] Ibid., p.97.

[396] Boratav, p.37.

[397] Boratav, p.28.

economy, in the sense that it "was afflicted by a succession of overlapping crises: food and raw material shortages during 1918-19; acute inflation, beginning during the war and continuing down to 1921; and as 2.5 million demobilized ex-servicemen returned home from early in 1920, rapidly rising unemployment."[398] As a matter of fact, these kinds of social and economic disorders in the post-war Italy were some of the most fundamental reasons for the Fascist takeover in 1922.

Considering this background of the economic relations, generally on the basis of the capitulation insistence and economic aims of Italy involving Turkish territory, it is important to note that these two ruined and metamorphosing country began to play major roles in each other's commerce in the 1920s. The commerce between the states in this era was so intensive that Italy became the main trade partner of Turkey throughout the decade. Actually, this first-rank position of Italy in Turkish commerce was surprising, because except Italy, the countries that Turkey carried on commerce were same with the ones of the Ottoman Empire.[399] Between 1911 and 1913, Britain, France, Austria-Hungary and the United States received the 60% of the aggregate Ottoman exports while 55% of the imports were made from Britain, Austria-Hungary, Germany and France, respectively.[400] It should also be added that the role of Germany in Turkish trade had displayed pattern of increase in the war years.

If the foreign trade figures are studied, it is seen that Italy had a minor role in Ottoman trade in the sense that total proportion of Italy in the Ottoman import-export

[398] Blinkhorn, p.17-18.

[399] Çağlar Keyder, *Dünya Ekonomisi İçinde Türkiye: 1923–1929* (Ankara: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1993), p.100.

[400] Celal Aybar, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Ticaret Muvazenesi* (Ankara: DİE, 1939), quoted by Tezel, p.165.

did not go beyond three of four percent.[401] However, Italy became the main trade partner of Turkey after 1923. Two changes can be cited as reasons for the intensification of Turco-Italo trade. First of all, the port city of Trieste, which had a key strategic location not only for Eastern European but also German and Austrian commerce,[402] was surrendered to the Italians as a result of the Austrian defeat in the Great War. Trieste had an importance in Turkish commerce in the sense that while the goods that Turkey imported came from Trieste, by the same token the first arrival point of the Turkish export goods was again that place through which these items were resold to the Central-Eastern European countries by the Italian merchants.[403]

In addition to the strategic location of Trieste, another reason for the increase in the foreign trade rates between Turkey and Italy was that the many Greek merchants who had left Turkey after the foundation of the Republic and had settled in Trieste, maintained their commercial activities, which had been done between Turkey and the other countries before, using the Trieste as a way port this time.[404] In short, the insignificant levels of Ottoman-Italo trade increased so rapidly that Italy could became the main trade partner of the Turkish Republic. The numbers could be seen also from the numbers in Tables 1 and 2:

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[401] Ibid., quoted by Alptekin Müderrisoğlu, *Cumhuriyetin Kurulduğu Yıl Türkiye Ekonomisi* (Ankara: n.p., 1998), p.228.

[402] Keyder, p.101.

[403] Ibid.

[404] Tezel, p.166.

Table 1. The Proportion of Italy in Turkish Exports and Imports

Years	Exports (%)	Imports (%)
1924	22	21
1925	26	18
1926	28	16
1927	23	12
1928	18	12
1929	22	13
1930	21	14
1931	24	5

Source: Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, *Dış Ticaret İstatistikleri* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü), vol.1924-1931.

Table 2. Turkish-Italian Trade (Million Liras)

Years	Turkish Imports	Turkish Exports
1925	43.5	50.3
1926	37.1	57.1
1927	26.0	37.0
1928	26.4	31.6
1929	32.0	33.8
1930	20.4	32.0
1931	18.4	30.7
Total	267.1	203.8

Source: *Cumhuriyet*, 28 May 1932.

Another point that made Turco-Italo trade exceptional was that although the Turkish balance of trade showed a continuous deficit in general and vis-à-vis the concerned

countries, its exports to Italy exceeded its imports. The reason behind that Italy was buying more Turkish goods due to the fact that Rome was benefitting from a trilateral trade because it profitted from reselling Turkish goods to other countries.[405]

Table 3. The Balance of Trade between Turkey and Italy (Millions of Lira)

Years	Excess
1926	14.7
1927	11.0
1928	5.2
1929	1.8
1930	11.6

Source: *Dış Ticaret İstatistikleri*, v.1926-1930.

However, at this point, where the statistics show that both countries had utilized the intense commercial relations, the content of this trade should be considered. This analysis will show the true picture that was different from the statistical data in relation to the diplomatic relations. To put it differently, the nature of Turco-Italo economic relations can be understood clearly only if the political considerations of the sides towards each other are kept in mind.

In the previous chapters, the course of events in terms of Turco-Italo diplomatic relations was depicted. What determined this relationship between 1922 and 1927, and even in the Ottoman times, had been the ambitions of Italy regarding territorial and economic expansion in Turkey. In this respect, Italy had collaborated with the British over the Mosul issue in the sense that in return for intimidating

[405] Keyder, p.106.

Turkey connected with the Western coasts in order to make that country abandon its claims over this region, Rome was being encouraged about southwestern Anatolia by Britain. Rome continued its plans about southern Anatolia, namely, the Adana and Mersin region, even after a solution was reached on the Mosul issue. In short, Turkey felt continuously threatened by the Italian aggression about the territories in the southern Anatolia until 1927.

In this context, it is necessary to ask about the primary reason behind the obsession of Italy with this region, which dated back to the Ottoman period. Although a couple of answers can be given to this question and although every explanation reflects the truth partially, thinking through the economy indicates that agricultural products that were necessary to the Italian industry could be raised in these areas played major roles on the intentions of Rome. Therefore, with this type consideration, the reasons behind the efforts of Italy to obtain the Mersin-Adana region as a sphere of influence during the Great War with the secret treaties firstly, and then after the foundation of the republic with plans of seizure, become meaningful, because the cotton of the region had a fundamental importance for the Italian textile industry as a raw material.

Turkey exported unrefined cotton to Italy, but it bought finished cotton products frm Italy. Therefore, the advantageous side in cotton trade was that of Italy, because the finished materials were much more expensive than the raw materials. For instance, in 1930, Turkey sold 8.9 kilos of unrefined cotton in exchange for 4.4 million liras; however it bought 4.3 million units of cotton products in exchange for 9.1 million liras.[406]

[406] Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, *Dış Ticaret İstatistikleri*, v.1926-1930.

Table 4. Cotton Trade with Italy

Years	Export (Million Lira)	Import (Million Lira)
1926	3.9	24.1
1927	2.4	16
1928	2.1	17.2
1929	3.5	21.8
1930	4.4	11.1

Source: *Dış Ticaret İstatistikleri*, v.1926-1930.

Although Turkey was in a disadvantageous position in terms of balance of trade in this item, like other quasi-periphery countries that experienced similar problems vis-à-vis the industrialized core ones, it is not erroneous to state that Italy was in a need of this raw material in order to sustain production in the textile industry. In this sense, it was this need of the raw material that directed Rome's occupation plans towards the Adana region in 1926 and in the first half of 1927. In fact, before this economically driven landing plan of Italy to Adana and Mersin, different means had been used in the region in order to dominate the economy of the area. In this sense, Italian business circles had made enormous efforts in order to gain the control of the cotton production in the area as well as to fix the Turkish imports in terms of cotton textiles to Italy.[407] One of the means of dominating Cukurova was the Italian textile company SITMAC. SITMAC, which would become the main cotton purchaser of the region, opened a branch in 1924 in Adana.[408] The success of the company also led the Italian bank, Banco di Roma, to open a branch therein in order to give credits to

[407] Tezel, p.166.

[408] Keyder, p.164.

the producers.[409] Therefore, the Italian business in the region became a multidimensional matter because SITMAC, Banco di Roma, and the Italian state were all cooperating for the control of the area.

Obviously, in a country, where foreign capital was not forbidden, the involvement of an Italian company and bank should not have seemed problematic. However, the documents from the Mersin Consulate of Italy show that Italian imperial aims were so obsessed with this region that even military plans were designed on the basis of the consulate officials' intelligence reports.[410] In this context, what the collaboration among SITMAC, Banco di Roma, and the Fascist government qualified in this case was a very familiar strategy towards Turkey in the sense that Italy had implemented the same "peaceful economic penetration" policy in the Libyan case that operated under the same conditions, like increasing the volume of trade with the target region and the foundation of Italian enterprises and the branches of Italian banks.

In consequence, it can be suggested that although the trade between Turkey and Italy seemed intense statistically, on the one hand, as in the cotton issue, it implied quite often a political matter on the basis of the imperial aims of Italy regarding Turkish territory as being parallel to the atmosphere of the era in which Turkish-Italian diplomatic relations were at odds; on the other hand it was disadvantageous for Turkey in the major items.

In fact, there was another problematic issue on the Turkish-Italian commerce that seemed to the advantage of Turkey, but actually was disadvantageous. It was stated that above that Italy through Trieste benefitted from multidimensional trade.

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[409] Ibid., p.142.

[410] For these reports, see Damiani, p.101-130.

The Turkish products that were sold to merchants of Trieste were being resold to other countries. Therefore, since both Turkey and Italy were Mediterranean countries with similar agricultural products to some extent, there was competition both in terms of the production and exports of some agricultural items like tobacco and the nuts. In this sense, for instance, before Italy re-exported Turkish tobacco, which was quite often re-sold to America, Austria, Germany and Czechoslovakia, the high-quality Turkish crops was mixed with the lower-quality Italian crops.[411] By the same token, in terms of nuts, Italians could supply only the deficiency of their crops through blending the high-quality Turkish nuts with their crops.[412] In addition, as competitors with the same items, the Italian and the Spanish merchants propagandized against the Turkish nuts, stating that these nuts rotted in a short period of time.[413]

Considering these facts, it is not erroneous to state that the content of Turco-Italo trade contacts had rather different features from those that the statistics showed. Apart from disadvantageous situation of Turkey vis-à-vis Italy despite the excess of trade due to the raw material exportation of the former and the multidimensional trade of the latter, the enduring efforts of Italy in terms of imperialism both geographically and of economically towards Turkey displayed similar disquieting features also in economic relations as in the diplomatic ones. However, although the former problem was much more about the structure of the Turkish economy, the latter one was dependent on the politics. In this sense, compatible with the changes in

[411] Ziraat Kongresi, *1931 Ziraat Kongresi* (Ankara: Milli İktisat ve Tasarruf Cemiyeti, 1931), p.7-8.

[412] Ibid., p.513.

[413] Ibid., p.572.

the diplomatic relations between Turkey and Italy beginning with 1927, also economic relations entered into a new phase.

In this respect, the friendship between Turkey and Italy, which in general terms stemmed from Turkey's need of allies in the international arena in which it was isolated and the desire of Italy to counterbalance the effectiveness of France in Eastern Europe through the Little Entente by using Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece. Therefore, beginning with 1927 the problematic issues between two states were tried to be settled and friendship ties were established, at least in appearance. In consequence, although between 1927 and 1932, the economic statistics did not differ from those of 1923-1927 excessively, the nature of the economic relations changed in accordance with the political developments.

In this sense, friendship between the states so predominated the contacts that, for instance, the newspapers were inclined to interpret even the gains of Italy from the multilateral trade in terms of reselling Turkish agricultural products like nuts and tobacco from a positive point of view. Accordingly, one of the columns of *Cumhuriyet* on the front page stated in 1932 that despite the transit trade that the Italian merchants carried out, commerce with Italy was useful for Turkey because Italy was giving a chance to the Turkish products in terms of circulation of them in the international markets in spite of the ascending protectionism,[414] and Turkey could benefit from the further opportunities through close economic and political cooperation in the sense that Italy, which obtained 95% of its coal from the foreign countries, could provide its coal needs from Turkey, which was experiencing exporting problems in this area.[415] These expressions about Turco-Italo trade imply

[414] *Cumhuriyet*, 28 May 1932.

[415] Ibid.

that even if the transit trade of Italy was disadvantageous for Turkey, it could be tolerated or be approved for the sake of the further benefits in terms of the Turkish economy or politics.

However, it should be underlined that this stance displays a direct contradiction with the former position which criticized both the mixing of high-quality Turkish crops with the lesser quality ones and the reselling of Turkish products by the Italians to the other states rather than constituting the necessary environment that could lead Turkish merchants to be able to sell the products directly to these destination countries. It was apparent that this change in the interpretations about Turco-Italo trade stemmed from the developing political relations.

In addition to the change in the interpretation of the existing commercial relations, what should be emphasized in this period is the new extensions within the scope of the economic relations. One of the most important developments in this period was the naval arms trade between Turkey and Italy. In this respect, it is important to note that Ankara, which had declared a naval renewal program in 1928 in order to counterbalance the Greek navy in the Aegean, announced in 1929 that it had chosen the Italians for this business although the offers of the British, for instance, were much more profitable.[416] This was a definite example of a situation in which economy and the politics advanced hand in hand; in other words, politics had profound impacts on the economy. With this decision, Turkey, while underlining the "so-called" friendship between Ankara and Rome, gained the chance to reconstruct its navy. On the other hand, Italy, while earning money from this trade, sought to

[416] Barlas and Güvenç, p.149-153.

transform Turkey "into a pro-Italian actor in the Eastern Mediterranean naval balance."[417]

Actually, these kinds of economic links aroused the suspicions of the whole world. For instance, the *New York Times* wrote that the contract with the Italians for the naval construction, which had been signed although the French and British companies offered much more favourable charges, and right after the occurrence of the visit of the Italian air fleet to Istanbul with the air minister was nothing beyond a policy of Turkey's "Italianization."[418] In other words, the arms trade between the two countries was construed as politically driven, which actually did reflect the truth.

Before analyzing the role of the Italians on the foundation of the Turkish Central Bank in order to understand the level that the economic cooperation between the two states had reached by 1930, it should be touched upon the one of the most important incidents of the interwar era, in fact of the twentieth century: Great Depression. The crash of the New York Stock Exchange in 24 October 1929, which was named as Black Thursday, had become a turning point not only in the United States, but also in the whole world. Every state and the society entered into economic difficulties, so new policies were adapted in order to deal with the economic crisis. The tendencies of the states to cure their economic bottleneck brought certain changes in the international economic arena. A fall in the volume of the international trade, uncoordinated exchange rates, an increase in the protectionist measures, and the settlement of trade on a bilateral basis occurred.[419]

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[417] Ibid., p.143.

[418] *New York Times,* 7 June 1929, quoted by PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/236.597..12.

[419] Michael Kitson and Solomos Solomou, "Bilateralism in the Interwar World Economy," *Bulletin of Economic Research* 47, no.3 (1995), p.198.

Apart from the general world economy, for specifically Turkey, 1929 would have been a turning point even if the Great Depression had not occurred, because this year meant the removal of the obstacles that the Lausanne Treaty had introduced involving higher tariff rates on external trade. In fact, when 1929 came, optimism was dominant in Turkey because on the one hand there was an expectation of a good harvest which would increase the export incomes that year, on the other hand the opportunity for the higher tariffs would become additional income for the state.[420] However, Turkey had to deal with the conditions of the world economic crisis, as opposed to the expectancies about the shining future of the Turkish economy. The crisis brought a depreciation in the Turkish Lira[421] and huge deficit in the balance of payments firstly due to the huge import storages from 1928 because of the knowledge of the future high tariffs and secondly due to the fall of agricultural product prices in the international arena more than those of industrial products, which became more disadvantageous for the countries that exported the former while importing the latter.

Therefore, Turkey, in addition to some specific and small-scale measures that were taken in order to cope with the situation, launched a wide-range change in terms of its economic policy in the sense that the liberal trade policies of 1923-1929 came to an end. The two distinctive features of the Turkish economy after 1930 became protectionism and etatism.[422] Therefore, the Turkish economy entered a phase which

[420] İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *1929 Dünya Buhranında Türkiye'nin İktisadi Politika Arayışları* (Ankara: Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, 1977), p.75.

[421] Ibid., p.78–80.

[422] Boratav, p.59.

could be termed "protectionist etatist industrialization,"[423] as opposed to the previous period which had depended on a rather open economy.

Another measure that Turkey wanted to take in the crisis environment was the creation of a Central Bank. Although the severe economic conditions of 1929 directed the Turkish government to the foundation of a central bank, the efforts for this initiative dated back to 1927. Since the need for a state institution which would regulate the money markets and would formulate the economic policies of the country had intensified with the atmosphere of 1929, the government began to search for ways to found it.

The worth of the cooperation between Turkey and Italy was proved also in this issue. In fact, Turkey had invited a German consultant named Schacht to analyze the necessity of a central bank. His assistant, Müller, who had come to Turkey for this job because of the inability of Schacht due to his excessive works, prepared a report in which both he and Schacht stressed that the conditions of both the Turkish economy and the finance were insufficient for the foundation of a central bank.[424]

After this unsuccessful attempt at cooperation with the German specialists, Turkey decided to collaborate with the Italians, who had become one of the allies of Turkey at that time.[425] Therefore, Count Volpi, who was the former minister of finance of Italy, came to Turkey in order to assess the appropriateness of the economic situation for the foundation of a central bank. After some investigations both in Ankara and in Istanbul, he signalled his positive point of view about the issue

[423] Ibid., p.59–60.

[424] İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *Para ve Kredi Sisteminin Oluşumunda Bir Aşama. Türkiye Cumhuriyet Merkez Bankası* (Ankara: T.C. Merkez Bankası, 1981), p.270–272.

[425] Ibid., p.274.

in his departure by stating, "although Turkey has some difficulties, she will ensure her economical and financial development."[426]

Indeed, the opinion of Volpi that was issued in 1930 from Rome was compatible with his preceding explanation. According to this explanation, Volpi recommended that the government should found state central bank immediately if it wanted to show its intention in the face of the financial and monetary problems.[427] Although there was no any mention about the "Italian banks' interests in the shares"[428] as had been stated in the Turkish newspapers during the visit of Volpi, this positive point of view about the necessity of a central bank was an achievement for Turkey, because especially if the reports of the German specialists were kept in mind, the views of Volpi paved the way for the foundation of the state bank and became prestigious for Turkey in the international arena.[429] Therefore, as can be seen, the political cooperation between Turkey and Italy played an important role in one of the most important developments of the Turkish economy.

Cooperation between the states in the sphere of the economy continued until the relations began to deteriorate again. For instance, in addition to the initiative of the Italian companies to construct fibre and paper factories in Anatolia,[430] the participation of the Turkish products at the international Milano exhibition for the

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[426] *Cumhuriyet*, 11 November 1929.

[427] Tekeli and İlkin, *Para ve Kredi Sisteminin Oluşumunda Bir Aşama*, p.275.

[428] *Cumhuriyet*, 9 November 1929.

[429] Tekeli and İlkin, *Para ve Kredi Sisteminin Oluşumunda Bir Aşama,* p.275-276.

[430] *Cumhuriyet*, 2 January 1932.

first time[431] excited the Turkish public and were regarded as one of the signs of the close contacts between Rome and Ankara.

By the same token, the visit of İsmet İnönü to Rome in May 1932 was predominantly evaluated in terms of its results in the economic sphere. For example, newspapers underlined this notion of the meeting by stating that both Turkish and Italian businessmen were following the positive results of the visit,[432] compatibly with the desires of two sides to increase the volume of bilateral trade. Apart from the expectations of the businessmen, this visit became an environment in which the credit requisition of Ankara from Rome was discussed. Although this credit issue would become a point of disappointment for the Italians, who "claimed that the Turks always suspected that the foreign states would ask concessions from Ankara in return for economic aid,"[433] due to the Ankara's preference of Moscow in terms of loans, the discussion over a loan issue solely had the capacity to depict the level of economic cooperation that was reached between 1927 and 1932, on the basis of political attachment.

However, 1932 became a year not of a rupture but of a point at which both political and also economic relations began to change. In terms of politics, the rising fascist tone in the Italian foreign policy, which reminded Turkey that Italy had imperial ambitions, increasingly affected Turco-Italo diplomatic relations. Ankara, which supposed that the inner target of all Italian menacing declarations was Anatolia, somewhat erroneously felt threatened by Italian aggression, as in the pre-

[431] *Cumhuriyet*, 22 April 1932.

[432] *Cumhuriyet*, 28 May 1932.

[433] Barlas, "Friends or Foes?"p.245.

1927 period. Needless to say that all of the economic cooperation that had developed hand in hand with the diplomatic rapprochement came to an end.

Apart from the diplomatic cooling that led to the disappearance of the existing cooperation in economic issues, figures about the trade between Turkey and Italy also declined. In fact, the decline in the bilateral trade figures was not very unnatural in the sense that the Great Depression, after which the states tried to implement protectionism, had reduced the volume of trade all around the world. However, what is remarkable is that Italy was no longer the primary partner even within these lower rates of trade, because Nazi Germany had seized the first-rank position in Turkish commerce.

It is fundamental to underline that bilateral trade between the states under the protectionist measures was being done through clearing agreements through which the states bartered specific items within the limits of quotas. Although Turkey and Italy also signed this kind clearing treaty in 1934,[434] the agreements with Nazi Germany were much more appealling for Turkey. Therefore, not Italy but Germany became the dominant actor in the commerce of Turkey.

In fact, the rise of Germany was not unique to Turkey in the sense that Germany was rapidly extending her economic influence throughout South-Eastern Europe.[435] After the Nazi seizure of power, Germany "began to develop toward a German *Grossraumwirtschaft* (large area economy) to build a large, self-sufficient economic area in concert with several South-Eastern European countries in

[434] For the full text of the agreement see, Republic of Turkey, *Düstur*, 3rd Tertip, Cilt:15, p.1094-1117.

[435] Stavrianos, p.740.

Germany's backyard."[436] In order to achieve this, Germany began to take raw materials from these countries while exchanging industrial commodities. This type of exchange seemed advantageous for the rural countries for a while because they could find a customer for their agricultural products above the market prices. However, the more they traded with Germany, the more they found themselves tied to Germany.[437] In this way, Germany turned its "generous aid" into a tool of pressure intended to force these countries to meet German demands.[438]

Similar to other Eastern European countries, Turkey's trade with Germany after 1934 made up almost half of its total volume of trade.[439] In addition, since Germany had become nearly the only purchaser of some specific items, it also became the determinant of the price of these items, which in the end led to some problems in commercial relations.[440] The disquiet in Turkey in terms of the relations with Nazi Germany grew to an extent that, for instance, Ankara began to choose British companies in the bids despite the better offers of the German ones.[441]

As can be seen, Germany had become the main trade partner of Turkey on a level that bothered Turkey itself. Since this situation was not unique to Turkey but included all of the Eastern European countries, Italy, just before the World War II, had been deprived of its goal to dominate the Balkans and the Eastern European

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[436] T. Ivan Berend, *Decades of Crisis: Central and Eastern Europe before World War II*, (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, c1998), p.273.

[437] Stavrianos, p.740.

[438] Berend, p.276.

[439] Boratav, p.69.

[440] İlhan Uzgel, "Göreli Özerklik-I, Almanya'yla İlişkiler," *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar,* ed. Baskın Oran, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, c2006), vol.1, p.305.

[441] Ibid.

countries, politically and economically, apart from Turkey. Although the contacts between Germany and Italy were developing towards the Axis by 1934, the political and economic competition over the Balkans had become a source of potential friction between them[442] because of the fact both two powers had had aims to create a self-sufficient empire which involved the Balkans as a backyard. In fact, both Italy and Germany were aware of the competition between them despite their intimate relationship. For this reason, for instance, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had even made a plan with which Rome and Berlin would "arrive at a special agreement that would enable both to penetrate the region to mutual benefit."[443] However, when the interwar period came to the end, it would be seen that the joint penetration idea of Italy was not realized, so Italy had been "left with only marginal interests."[444]

Therefore, Turco-Italo economic relations, from this perspective, remained an important case in terms of illustrating the loss of Italy in the Balkan Peninsula. In other words, German dominance in Turkey, as a country that had frequently cooperated in economic matters with Rome in the period between 1927 and 1932 and as a country that had traded chiefly with Italy whether unintentionally or not in pre-1932 period, presents the deprivation of Italy as well, in terms of waking up from the Balkan dreams due to the rise of her ally, Nazi Germany.

However, it is important note that German penetration did not mean that Turco-Italo trade came to an end. Rather, it continued on the basis of the Turkish-Italian clearing settlement, yet on a very small scale. The actual blow came upon the economic cooperation due to the deterioration of diplomatic relations. After the explanation of Mussolini, who declared that the interests of Italy were in the East,

[442] Mallett, *Mussolini and the Origins of the Second World War*, p. 84.

[443] Ibid.

[444] Ibid.

Turkish-Italian diplomatic relations experienced a rupture in the sense that laying aside the economic cooperation, Turkey began to define Italy as its foremost enemy.

Additionally, as in the realm of political and economic dialogue, commercial relations, which had already been crippled by the German economic dominance, experienced a rupture as a result of the Abyssinian campaign of Italy. Turkey, as a member of the League of Nations, abided by the decision of this institution in terms of implementing an embargo on Italy. In this respect, on November 1935, Turkey accepted the League's sanctions that put a ban on trade of certain commodities that curtailed Turco-Italo trade further,[445] despite the existence of counterviews which underlined the importance of the Turco-Italo commercial relations.[446]

It is possible to state that the fear of Turkey of the Italian expansionism overbalanced the economic ties on this issue. Actually, the point of views which thought that nobody could repair the damage to the trade figures even after the sanctions were lifted, were accurate in the sense that after this point of rupture, nothing would be as before, not only in the diplomatic but also in the economic arena. To put it differently, when the war began to pound at the door, Ankara lost all of its ties with Italy.

To conclude this chapter, it is appropriate to suggest that the economic relations between these two states were similar to the diplomatic relations in the sense that economic contacts also did not follow a unilinear course. In this sense, while in the pre-1927 era the commercial figures were quite high regardless of the nature of the diplomatic relations of the period, although these high figures did not always mean that the content of the commerce was always advantageous to Turkey,

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[445] For the enactment see, Republic of Turkey, *Düstur*, 3rd Tertip, Cilt 17, p.5-6.

[446] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: V, Cilt:6, İçtima Senesi:1, 13 November 1935, p.51-52.

the period between 1927 and 1932 depicted both high trade figures and economic cooperation on the basis of friendly diplomatic relations. Therefore, it is important to note that the statistics of Turco-Italo commerce depended on various dynamics not to one, yet the economic cooperation, as in the example of the foundation of the Central Bank, paralleled the diplomatic relations, naturally. Additionally, as an important detail, the commerce between Turkey and Italy throughout the period that Rome held the first-rank position in the statistics reflected the general features of trade between an industrialized country with an agricultural one.

Again, after 1932, the economic cooperation between the states came to an end due to the deterioration of the diplomatic contacts. Similarly, the position of Italy within the trade statistics declined, but as in the previous period, being dependent on various conditions. In addition to the adverse effects of the Great Depression on trade volumes, the system that came after the economic crisis, namely the clearing system, which paved the way to the rising German economic dominance not only in Turkey but also in other Eastern European states, played a role in this fall. When these reasons unified with the diplomatic preference of Turkey in terms of participating in the economic sanctions as a result of the Abyssinian campaign of Italy, the economic relations between the sides bottomed out. That means, by 1939, before the war broke out, both the economic and the diplomatic relations were at the worst conditions of all the interwar era alike, even if the correlation of these two different spheres was not one hundred percent, as explained above.

CHAPTER 8

THE ROLE OF THE DODECANESE ISLANDS IN TURKISH-ITALIAN RELATIONS

The Aegean Islands had always carried importance for different states and civilizations throughout the world history. After being captured by the Cretans firstly and by other civilizations like Macedonia, Rome, and Byzantium subsequently,[447] the seizure of the Aegean Islands in general, and the Dodecanese Islands specifically, by the Ottoman Turks had been completed in the sixteenth century. The sovereignty of Turks over the islands lasted until 1912, when Italy occupied the islands within the conditions of the Ottoman-Libyan War. Therefore, throughout the interwar years, these islands were under the supremacy of Italy.

Although the term Dodecanese is originated from the Greek word *dodeka*, which means twelve, the Dodecanese, actually, includes more then twelve islands, yet, the major ones, apart from the minor islets, reflect the meaning of the Dodecanese. The importance of these islands and islets stems from the fact that gaining this region provides a strategic advantage to the power at issue, not only vis-à-vis Asia Minor, but also within the Mediterranean Sea. Therefore, the Dodecanese, which was mainly Greek in terms of population, but, indeed, "was home to all three peoples of 'The Book', each of whom had different leaders, judicial systems and laws"[448] in the Ottoman times, played a major role in Turkish-Italian relations in the interwar era. In this respect, the absence of an analysis of the Dodecanese Islands in terms of the impacts on the Turkish-Italian relationship, not only on the basis of the

[447] Ronald John Lagoe, Greece and the Great Powers: The Question of the Aegean Islands, 1912-1914 (Ph.d diss., Ohio State University, 1976), p.3-4.

[448] Nicholas Doumanis, *Myth and Memory in the Mediterranean: Remembering Fascism's Empire* (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1997), p.26.

aforementioned strategic importance of the islands for the Anatolia and the Mediterranean Sea but also on the basis of the Turkish minority within the area under the supremacy of Italians, would be an enormous deficiency for this study.

In this context, it will be useful to begin with the Ottoman loss of the Dodecanese in the Libyan War. As was stated in this study, Italy, which had developed colonial ambitions over North Africa, in 1911 had attacked to Libya, which was the last Ottoman territory in the region. However, due to the resistance of the local population on the one hand, and the resistance of the Ottoman voluntary corps in the area on the other, Italy failed to seize the interior regions easily. Therefore, Italy, which had begun to be influenced by the difficulties of the war both in terms of war itself and in terms of the Italian psychology at home, bombarded certain points of Turkey in the Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea, including the Dardanelles, and occupied the Dodecanese Islands in 1912. The reasons that drove the Italians to occupy the islands were firstly "to have a strong guarantee for any prospective peace negotiations"[449] vis-à-vis the other European powers which feared from the spread of war into the other parts of Europe, especially to the Balkans, and secondly "to give prestige and stability to the Italian government by impressing on the people of Italy the good results of military glory."[450]

It is important to note that the Treaty of Ouchy, which was signed between Turkey and Italy in 1912 necessitated the evacuation of the Dodecanese Islands in return for the concession of Turkish rights in Libya to Italy.[451] However, Italy did not

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[449] Michael D. Volonakis, *The Island of Roses and Her Eleven Sisters: or The Dodecanese from the Earliest Time Down to the Present Day* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1922), p.323.

[450] Ibid, p.323.

[451] *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Italo-Turkish War," Available [online]: "http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9043030" [15 January 2009].

evacuate the Islands on the pretext that the Ottoman Empire had not withdrawn its troops from Benghazi by 1913.[452] In fact, the Ottoman corps had already left Libya because of the Balkan Wars, but the Italians were still dealing with the local *Senussi* resistance.

Since the Dodecanese islands had strategic importance, Italy refused to abandon the area. Thus, until the Lausanne Treaty in 1923, at which the destiny of the islands was determined definitely, Italy made great efforts in order to maintain its hold on this region. In this context, it is not surprising that the Dodecanese issue was one of the negotiation topics of the secret treaties of London and of Saint Jean de Maurienne during the Great War.

Obviously, the Ottoman Empire was no longer a party in the discussions about the Dodecanese Islands, because not Turkey, but Italy and Greece claimed rights to these territories. In this sense, for instance, while in 1920 an agreement which stated the cession of the Dodecanese to the Greeks between Athens and Rome was concluded despite the fact that the subsequent Italian government declared the agreement void.[453] At the Treaty of Sevres, these islands were again ceded to Greece with the exception of Rhodes, for which a broad local autonomy was foreseen.[454] Thus, within the historical context of the day, the negotiators became the Italians, as "temporary occupiers," and the Greeks as the major ethnic group on the islands.

Actually, this situation did not change within the Lausanne Conference. There were two issues in which Rome was mostly interested, the capitulations and the Dodecanese Islands. Since the Dodecanese issue seemed as if it had been settled through various agreements before, it could not be discussed at the Lausanne

[452] Childs, p.257.

[453] Volonakis, p.338.

[454] Ibid., p.339.

Conference because the rules and regulations of the conference necessitated that a previously finalized issue could not be negotiated on the basis of the will of Turkey, which would bring essential alteration in the existing status-quo, as Italian representative Mr. Montagna reminded everyone during the discussions.[455] Therefore, the Turkish aim focused on the Meis specifically, not on the Dodecanese in general, due to the fact that this small island was inside Turkish territorial waters, thus, the sovereignty of another power over this island posed a threat to western Anatolia excessively. Before anything else, the existence of another power in Turkish territory complicated the situation in terms of the principles of international law. Despite the negotiations and the efforts of Turkey, however, Meis remained under the Italian sovereignty. In consequence, apart from specifically Meis Island, the temporary situation of Italy over the Dodecanese had gained a clear title through Article 15 of the Lausanne Treaty, which stated that:

> Turkey renounces her all of the rights and their justifications about the following islands in favour of Italy: Stampalia (Astrapalia), Rhodes (Rhodos), Calki (Kharki), Scarpanto, Casos (Casso), Piscopis (Tilos), Misiros (Nisyros), Calimnos (Kalymnos), Leros, Patmos, Lipsos (Lipso), Simi (Symi), and Cos (Kos), which are now occupied by Italy, and the islets dependent thereon, and also over the island of Castellorizo.[456]

Therefore, with this statement, the de facto sovereignty of Italy in the islands turned into a de jure one. This meant that although the results of the Great War had become a disappointment for Italy mainly due to the Greek invasion of Anatolia, with the

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[455] Muhammed M. Arpacı, Lausanne Barış Konferansı'nda Ege Adaları (master's thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkilap Tarihi Enstitüsü, 1993), p.96.

[456] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: II, Cilt:1,İçtima Senesi:1, 21 August 1923, p.115. "*Madde 15: Türkiye Türkiye zirde tadadohman adalar üzerindeki bilcümle hukuk ve müstenidatından İtalya lehine feragat eder: Elyevm İtalya'nın tahtı işgalinde bulunan Astropalya (Astropalia), Rodos (Rhodes), Halki (Calki), Skarpaseto Kazos (Casso), Piskopis,v (Tiles), Misiros (Misyros), Kalimnos, Leros, Patnos, Lipsos, Sombeki, (Synıi) ve î'stanköy (Kos) adaleliyle bunların tevabiinden olan adacıklar ve Meis (Kastellorizo), adası*."

acquisition of the Dodecanese Islands it was compensated in some sense, because "the value of the islands arose from geographic military position, which enabled to make of them the base of the future expansion,"[457] in accordance with the territorial ambitions of the Fascist Rome. The threat that stemmed from the combination of the expansionist ambitions of Italy with the sovereignty in the islands that were in the immediate vicinity of Anatolia, had disquieted Turkey from the beginning in the sense that within the discussions about the approval of the treaty in the parliament, the deputies emphasized the risks of a this kind of settlement for Turkey. In this sense, the explanation of Şükrü Kaya in the assembly was important in terms of being a correct vision for the future:

> …are the three documents that divided Anatolia into the interest zones among the three powers destroyed? If it is looked upon the declarations of the official and unofficial circles here and there, in the programs of the formal and informal parties, the traces of these policies in Italy are seen, and the connection of the islands to Italy cannot be accepted…The islands, in my view, in the hands of Italy, are the preamble of a policy of exploitation that would awake towards Anatolia…Gentlemen! I fear from these traps. Gentlemen! They will not leave us in peace and ease again.[458]

Genuinely, to with this statement, with the exception of the period between 1927 and 1932 in which Turkey and Italy were so-called friends, the Dodecanese Islands persisted to be the most problematic issue between the sides in the sense that the Islands turned into a trump card with which Italy threatened Turkey. In this respect, beginning with the first years of the Turkish Republic, Italy used these islands as a

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[457] Booth and Booth, p.286.

[458] TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: II, Cilt:1,İçtima Senesi:1, 21 August 1923, p.238. "*...üç devlet arasında Anadolu'yu nüfuz mıntıkalarına taksim eden üç vesika da imha edilmiş midir? Şurada, burada resmî ve gayri resmi adamların beyanatına, resmî ve gayri resmi fırkaların programlarına bakılacak olursa İtalya'da hâlâ bu siyasetin izlerine tesadüf olunur ve adaların İtalya'ya münasebeti kabul edilemez…Adalar, bence İtalyanların elinde Anadolu'ya doğru uyanacak bir isti'mar ve istismar siyasetinin bir mukaddemesidir…Efendiler! Ben bu tuzaklardan korkuyorum. Efendiler! Yine bize sulh ve sükûn vermeyeceklerdir."*

military base from time to time, thus leading to the perception of a threat in Turkey, whether accurate or not. The importance of the Dodecanese in the relationship between the parties can be seen from the major cases of the three time periods that this study divides the relationship into the chapters.

In this respect, the first example that showed how the Dodecanese Islands could be used against Turkey was the Mosul problem for the period between 1922 and 1927. Rome played a fundamental role in this issue, which was one of the most crucial problems of interwar Turkey's foreign policy. Firstly, in accordance with the close collaboration between Britain and Italy, which were holding secret negotiations about the Turkish territory, Rome was constantly fortifying the islands. In this respect, Turkish press of the time underlined the possibility of Italy's use of Rhodes as a military base in a possible war.[459] The military build-ups in the Dodecanese had two points of logic for Italy. While Rome was intimidating Turkey through the military bases on the islands, thus making Turkey accept British sovereignty over Mosul due to the danger of war on various fronts, it was supposed to gain privileges from the British regarding southwestern Anatolia for which it had had long-lived imperial dreams.

In this atmosphere, Turkey felt so threatened that apart from monitoring every development on the islands through various intelligence networks,[460] it called young men aged 21 and 22 years and the reserves of 23 to 26 to the arms,[461] and additionally chose Izmir as a place for military manoeuvres due to its proximity to the islands. Therefore, it cannot be denied that the sovereignty of Italy over the

[459] Barlas, "Friends or Foes?" p.236.

[460] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/101.653..19.

[461] Howe, p.477.

Dodecanese became one of the determinants of the Mosul question's result. What this situation meant was that the fear of an Italian landing in Anatolia through the use of the islands played a role both in certain foreign policy choices of Ankara as in the case of Mosul, and on the nature of the relationship between Turkey and Italy in the sense that Ankara usually perceived Italy as an enemy to its territorial integrity despite the existence of some exceptional friendship years within the interwar era.

This exceptional period between 1927 and 1932, in which there was not any case of uneasiness, brought attempts for a peaceful solution to the problem of the territorial waters between Meis and the Anatolian coast. As a good example of the impact of the détente between the parties, the Convention on Delimitation of Territorial Waters between Anatolia and Castellorizo and on the Sovereignty of Karaada (*Anadolu Kıyısı ile Meis Adası Arasında Karasularının Sınırlandırılması ve Bodrum Karşısındaki Kara Ada'nın Egemenliği Konusunda Sözleşme*) was signed in 1932."[462] This agreement settled the territorial waters issue that had been tried to be solved before specifically through the means of international arbitration. At that time, since the treaty had come to be as a result of the fraternity between the parties, the press also made the emphasis on the unshakeable friendship between Rome and Ankara.[463] Just as the designation of the treaty as a result of the fraternity between the parties, this treaty was regarded as an improvement in the cordial intercourse between Turkey and Italy. Therefore, it could be suggested that while the Dodecanese played a major role in the deterioration of the contacts, likewise it constituted one of the aspects of the rapprochement.

[462] Soysal, p.340-343.

[463] *Cumhuriyet*, 6 May 1932.

However, after this brief period, the increasing fascist tone in the Italian foreign policy turned the Dodecanese into a problem for Turkey again. In fact, after 1933, the atmosphere of Europe began to deteriorate in the sense that countries either began to formulate aggressive policy choices and aims or began to solve their problems with each other through aggressive methods. Apart from the rise of the Nazi Germany and its escalating belligerent position within Europe, Italy, which had already an expansionist agenda on the basis of the Mare Nostrum, had re-adapted aggressive means in order to achieve these ambitious aims. Contrary to the previous periods, the aims of Italy, this time, were not primarily related to Turkey specifically. That is to say, the primary target of Rome was not directed to southwestern Anatolia but to Abyssinia, at that time.

In this respect, the fascist tone in the Italian foreign policy, especially after the seizure of the Italian Foreign Ministry by Benito Mussolini in 1932, necessitated resorting to force. Since the Fascist expansionism in the Mediterranean would threaten the flow of the Nile, vital to the Egyptian economy, and traffic through the Red Sea,[464] in other words, would threaten the British hegemony therein the events brought two powers opposite to each other. Thus, if Mussolini's directives about the military preparations for a possible war with the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean[465] for his dream of conquering Abyssinia are kept in mind, it is not very surprising to see that Italy was constantly building up its military forces in Libya and the Dodecanese."[466]

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[464] Mallett, "The Italian Naval High Command and the Mediterranean Crisis," p.77.

[465] Ibid., p.80-84.

[466] Güçlü, "Fascist Italy's Mare Nostrum Policy," p. 818.

Therefore, even if the primary target of Rome was not Anatolia in this case, the military fortifications disquieted Ankara, inherently, because of the proximity of these islands to Turkey; in other words, because of the possible shift in the target of the Italian aggression. Thus, every development in the Dodecanese Islands during the Abyssinian crisis was followed and analyzed by Turkish political circles and by the Turkish press cautiously.

In this sense, both the military build-ups and the initiatives for landing soldiers on the Dodecanese Islands, especially Leros and Rhodes, appeared in the headlines in the newspapers ever so often, beginning with 1934. For instance, news on the front page of *Cumhuriyet* under the headline "Fearsome Fortifications in the Dodecanese" described the military developments on the islands in a detailed manner.[467] The elaboration under this title, which stated that there were twelve battleships, seventeen destroyers, twelve submarines, 250 airplanes, 900 pilots for these planes, three wireless stations, and many artillery positions within and around the Dodecanese,[468] shows the importance that Turkey gave to the every development on the islands. Although the first paragraph of the text emphasized that Italians were struggling to constitute an environment in the Dodecanese that would be "the equivalent of the Britain's garrison in Egypt;"[469] that is to say although Italy was competing with Britain in the Mediterranean, Turkey was concerned with the situation in the islands as if it would be assaulted by Italian forces.

Actually, it is not surprising to see that after 1934 the newspapers and intelligent reports were closely interested in the Italian attitude on the Dodecanese

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[467] *Cumhuriyet*, 2 January 1936. "Oniki Adada Dehşetli Tahkimat"

[468] Ibid.

[469] Ibid.

Islands in an atmosphere in which the Turkish-Italian relations were dependent on Turkey's fear of the Italian Mare Nostrum policy and the possible use of the Dodecanese for this goal. Thus, especially between 1934 and 1936, the fear of Italian assault in Turkey through the Dodecanese became acute. In this sense, although there were also many logical analyses about the intent of the Italian fortification and landing of soldiers on the islands, as it was achieved in the column under the headline "What Are the Reasons for the Italian Military Preparations in the Dodecanese Islands?"[470] that explained the targets of Italy from a realist point of view, in other words, on the basis of the British-Italian adversity of the day,[471] the increase in the numbers of soldiers specifically in Rhodes and Leros continued to be written about with fear and irritation. Headlines such as "Italians Landed Soldiers to Rhodes and to Solidified Leros!"[472] and "Italians Landed Soldiers to Dodecanese Islands Again"[473] became ordinary articles for the reader due to their frequency in the newspapers.

Apart from the newspapers and their various official and unofficial sources, the Turkish state was also gathering information about the situation on the islands through its institutions. Just as in the period of the Mosul issue during which Ankara received frequent intelligence reports, after 1934 the rate of the reports intensified. For instance, one report from the Turkish Consulate on Rhodes in 1938 discussed the

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[470] *Cumhuriyet,* 13 October 1935. "İtalyanların Oniki Adadaki Harb Hazırlıklarının Sebebi Nedir?"

[471] Ibid.

[472] *Cumhuriyet,* 11 August 1935. "İtalyanlar Rodos'la Tahkim Ettikleri Leros'a Asker Çıkarmışlar!"

[473] *Cumhuriyet*, 17 February 1935. "İtalyanlar Oniki Ada'ya Tekrar Asker Çıkarmışlar."

importance of Rhodes for the Italians and gave the numbers of even cartridges.[474] Another one from the Turkish national security stated the ratio of artillerymen to infantrymen on the islands.[475] Considering these facts, it could be suggested quite easily that developments in the Dodecanese Islands were kept under the surveillance by the Turkish state and public, because Turkey was so convinced that the most important danger for Turkish territory could stem from Italy, most probably, through the Dodecanese Islands.

Therefore, the result that can be derived from these developments on the basis of the Dodecanese is that the Islands, which were very close to Turkish territory but were under Italian sovereignty, played a major role in Turkish-Italian relations in the interwar era. Since throughout the interwar years Turkey defined its major threat as Italy because of the aggressive stance of the latter, every development on the Islands not only led to fear and irritation in Turkey, but also to the positioning of Turkey vis-à-vis Italy, therefore vis-à-vis other powers. That is to say, the Dodecanese Islands also led to certain foreign policy choices by Turkey on the basis of the Italian threat. In this context, it was not a coincidence that in an atmosphere where Greece and Turkey were close friends and Italy was a potential threat, the articles, which said that the Greek sovereignty in the Dodecanese Islands "would provide and strengthen the political stability in Archipelago,"[476] reflected the foreign policy direction of Turkey to some extent. By the same token, the Turkish desire of being closer to British in the late 1930s was related to the Italian threat which was also closely related to the Italian position on the Dodecanese Islands. As can be seen, the Italian

[474] Cemalettin Taşkıran, *Oniki Adanın Dünü ve Bu Günü* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1996), p.86.

[475] Ibid., p.86-87.

[476] *Cumhuriyet*, 22 November 1931.

presence in the Dodecanese occupied a key role in Turkey's political position throughout the interwar era.

However, actually, it was not the military presence alone that should have concerned Turkey. There was also a Turkish minority, even if it was a small community, under the Fascist regime that could affect the Turkish-Italian relations and Turkey's stance. However, it seems that the Turkish minority living on the Dodecanese Islands was not as influential as the military fortifications issue in the Turco-Italo relations. There are three reasons for my judgment in this direction. Firstly, while the documents about the Dodecanese in terms of its strategic aspects are plenty in the Turkish archives, there is a lack of material in terms of the conditions of the Turkish islanders for the period at issue. Secondly, as compared to the Turkish materials, Greek literature is full of records of the Italian colonial administration regardless of their reflection of the reality. It could be stated that the multitude of Greek literature for the issue was natural because the Greek population constituted the majority on the Islands. Nevertheless, the lack of documents in the Turkish archives shows the different roles of the Dodecanese between Turkish-Italian relations and Greek-Italian relations. Thirdly, it can be observed that the Turkish press also tended to skip the issues about the Turkish minority although it tended to highlight the military fortifications in the islands and analyzed the conditions of the Greeks rather than the Turks.

Therefore, apart from the minor role of the Turkish islanders in Turkish-Italian diplomatic relations, these three facts imply that either Turkish minority was satisfied with the Fascist administration or Turkey did not want to intervene in the domestic affairs of another sovereign country. Indeed, one can state that both suggestions reflect the truth to some extent. However, in order to show these partially

truths, it is necessary to benefit from the colonial record of Italy in the Dodecanese both for the Turkish and Greek islanders. To this end, looking at the relatively plentiful amounts of literature of the Greeks both could shed light upon the general situation in the islands in terms of the rights and liberties and could enable us to make a comparison between the conditions of the different ethnic and religious groups therein.

In this sense, it could be suggested that the Greek "historians and other patriotically-minded Greeks have always regarded the Italian occupation as a moral injustice, and have insisted that the occupation was an oppressive experience for which nothing redeemable could be said."[477] Actually, because the Ottoman period had always been seen as "yoke" by the natives, the Italian occupation of the Dodecanese had been welcomed by the Greeks to an extent that the Greek population met the Italians with the bunch of flowers.[478] when the Italians ran up their flags to the islands during the Libyan War. However, since the Italians were welcomed on the basis of their promises about the future local autonomy through which the Greeks could be unified with motherland Greece in the end, the failure of the Italian administration in terms of keeping these promises led to discontent among the Greek population.[479]

After that point, Greek national discourse states that the patriotic Greeks resisted the Italian rule, which was quite repressive and malignant. However, according to Nicholas Doumanis, who used oral history techniques in his studies,

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[477] Doumanis, *Myth and Memory,* p.2.

[478] Ali Kurumahmut and İdris Bostan, *Trablusgarb ve Balkan Harplerinde İşgal Edilen Ege Adaları ve İşgal Telgrafları* (Ankara: Stratejik Araştırma ve Etüdler Milli Komitesi, 2003), p.88-89.

[479] Doumanis, *Myth and Memory,* p.31

"many locals described the occupation as a time of progress and development, when there was plenty of work and the cost of living was low, while others characterized the period as an uneventful and quiet time in their lives, a much welcomed respite"[480] as opposed to the nationalist Greek discourse. In other words, despite the existence of the problems with the colonial rule, the Italians also were appreciated indeed due to their successes in handling the administration, especially in creating a modern economic structure.[481]

The credit that was given to the Italian administration was so high that the local people defined the colonial administration as "fascist" only after Mario Lago was succeeded in 1936 by De Vecchi, who adapted harsh policies, as a "true fascist" in the Dodecanese.[482] However, these facts, in other words, the satisfaction with the Italian administration on a large scale, do not mean that the official discourse was completely wrong and the actual situation of the people was splendid. Instead, the local people also felt indisposed by some of the rules and regulations of the Italian administration. For instance, compulsory Italian language classes in schools primarily and the ban of Greek in the schools thereafter led to discontent in local population.

However, in my view, what should be underlined is that the official discourse evaluated all incidents on the basis of "blacks and whites" or of Greek nationalism in the sense that every sign of discontent was regarded as a patriotic and nationalist uprising, without analyzing the real intent of it. Obviously, it is true that the Greeks became the most oppressed ethnic group under Italian sovereignty. It is also true that several uprisings occurred on the basis of the popular discontent about the

[480] Ibid., p.3.

[481] Ibid., p.48.

[482] Ibid., p.55.

restrictions on cultural rights, as on Rhodes on which, for instance, in 1934 the people rebelled because of the "Italian regulations about the Greek Church and the religious organizations which disturbed both the inhabitants and the public in Greece."[483] However, there were also some examples of demonstrations and uprisings which were interpreted as nationalist resistance movements but indeed were manifestations of different developments. For instance, factual evidence suggested that the uprisings in Castellorizo in 1934 did not stem from nationalistic feelings but from the rising duties on food and fuel.[484] In consequence, it could be suggested that although there were disturbing elements in the Italian administration, firstly every uprising was not related to nationalistic feelings and there was popular sympathy for the Italians among the locals to some extent as opposed to the nationalist discourses, which denigrate every aspect of the Fascist presence.

In fact, the situation of the Greek islanders gives some minor clues about the condition of the Turkish community despite the existence of noticeable differences. First of all, growing fascist oppression within the Dodecanese, especially in the late 1930s, was strongly felt by the Turkish community, too. For instance, a Turkish interviewee of Nicholas Doumanis, parallel to the expressions of the Greek ones, classified only the Cesare De Vecchi's period as a Fascist era by stating that before the Fascists, in other words, during the period of Mario Lago, the conditions of the Turkish community were better; however, when the fascists came, even the Turkish schools were closed down, sharing a similar fate with the Greek schools.[485] This

[483] *Cumhuriyet*, 18 April 1934.

[484] Nicholas Doumanis and Nicholas G. Pappas, "Grand History in Small Places: Social Protest on Castellorizo (1934)," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 15, (1997), p.103-104.

[485] Nicholas Doumanis, "Dodecanese Nostalgia for Mussolini's Rule," *History Today* 48, no.2 (February 1998), p.18.

narrative means that not only the Greek but also the Turkish islanders experienced oppression under the rules and regulations of the fascists. However, it should be underlined that every incident that showed the discomfort of the Turkish islanders was not on the basis of cultural oppression. Despite the existence of a limited number of documents about the cultural issues that will be shown below, it could be suggested that the main problem of the Turkish islanders was economic in nature.[486]

In this sense, one of the documents which was written by the Minister of Interior to the Prime Ministry in 1934 stated that the Turkish Islanders living on Kos and Rhodes during the Lausanne Treaty and had taken Italian citizenship in this way, were escaping from these islands to Turkish coasts either by leaving their property behind or by selling it at low price.[487] In response to these developments, the Turkish government had taken some measures in terms of sending them back and in terms of propagandizing on the islands in order to hinder these kinds of events.[488]

Considering this document, it could be suggested that the Turkish community passed through hard times on the islands. However, it could be stated that this example of the will to live in Turkey stemmed from financial hardships, rather than repression. The problem of the migration of the Dodecanese Turks to southwestern Anatolia on the basis of economic difficulties was experienced throughout the 1930s in the sense that other measures were taken by the Ankara government in accordance with the will of Turkish community. In this context, it is important to note that the Minister of Interior, in another letter, informed the Prime Ministry about the will of the islanders, who were working at temporary jobs in Turkey, about the permission

[486] Elçin Macar, "Lozan'dan Günümüze Oniki Ada Türklerinin Sorunları," İ.Ü. Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi, no.34 (Mart 2006), p.51.

[487] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/237.602..2.

[488] Ibid.

for residence for six months in a year after which they would turn to the Dodecanese with their earned money.[489] As could be seen from the documents, efforts were made to solve the problems stemming from economic difficulties by Turkey through different measures, yet with an effort not to irritate Italy.

However, as was emphasized above, there were also other incidents that were related directly to cultural issues. One of the archival documents about the educational matters of the Turkish islanders reflects this dimension of the Italian administration, parallel to the statements of Doumanis' Turkish interviewee. In this case, in 1934, the governor visited a Turkish association on Rhodes in order to express his uneasiness about the children that were being sent to Turkey for educational matters rather than choosing the Italian schools in the island.[490] The governor stressed that the schools on Rhodes were adequate and high-quality for the islanders, but if there was a need for higher education, the Rhodes administration would not hesitate to send these people to Italy.[491] In addition to the emphasis on the favour of the Italian government towards the Muslims in the Dodecanese, the governor underlined the necessity of a warning for the Italian citizens who were Turkish in origin and received education in Turkey, for their intemperate and aggressive behaviour towards the administration.[492]

Obviously, the content of this meeting between the governor and the Turkish association in Rhodes indicates that the rules and regulations, especially the limitations on languages within the schools, were not appreciated by certain Turkish

[489] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/116.811..12, quoted by Macar, p.37.

[490] PMRA, Catalogue of General Directorate of Transactions, 030..10/237.604..23.

[491] Ibid.

[492] Ibid.

families, who had chosen sending their children to Turkey for education, and formed a good example of cultural oppression.

However, although there were some examples of the Fascist administration's oppression in cultural matters as well as some destruction on the Turkish cultural heritage like "*Sümbüllü* Bath"[493] during the Italian era, one could claim that Turkish minority was not exposed to massive ill-treatment, as compared to Greeks. In other words, the incidents discussed above were exceptional cases. Since the majority in the Dodecanese was Greeks, Italy did not regard the Turks as a threat to the Fascist administration, due to their relatively outnumbered position.[494] As in Mario Lago's statement above, the Fascist administration favoured the Turks vis-à-vis the Greek community, perhaps because of their potential counter-balancing ability on the islands.

Therefore, why the Dodecanese and the Turkish community did not cause to big clashes between Turkey and Italy throughout the interwar era, becomes understandable. On the one hand, compared to the Greeks, they lived in a more stable environment in terms of oppression. Thus, Turkey did not have to take measures ever so often for the Turkish islanders, as was done in the minor cases that were mentioned above. At this point, it should be reminded that while it is said that the conditions of the Turkish islanders were relatively easy, the connotation implies that it was easier than the lives of the Greeks at this time; on the one hand, on the other hand it was easier compared to the subsequent periods. To put it another way, when the Turkish interviewee of Doumanis stated that "we had it good here, under the

[493] Macar, p.43.

[494] Ibid., p.51.

Italians,"[495] he was probably expressing his ideas by making comparison with the Greek period during which more serious oppression was implemented by the Greek authorities against the Muslims of the Dodecanese, on the basis of the Turkish culture and Turkish identity.[496] Therefore, in a relatively stable period, Turkey and Italy did not come up against each other on the subject of the Turkish community in the Dodecanese too much, and as a result, the public mind in Turkey did not upsurge for the conditions of their fellows, as opposed to the frustrated Greek public in the motherland Greece.

Another reason for the ineffectiveness of the Turkish islanders in Turkish-Italian relations in the interwar era was that minorities and the minority rights in this period were under the dominance of the sovereign country in the sense that intervening in the domestic affairs of another country was not as common as it is today. If the threat that Italy posed to Turkey in the interwar era is also added, the efforts that Turkey made for the above cases, like sending back the Dodecanese migrants to the islands, become more meaningful, in the sense that Turkey obviously did not desire other dynamics that could sharpen the existing tension between the parties.

To sum up, it is seen that although there were two components of the Dodecanese Islands in terms of the impacts on Turkish-Italian relations in the interwar period, the strategic position of the Dodecanese became a much more important determinant than the Turkish population. However, this situation was not surprising in the sense that in an atmosphere in which the relationship between Turkey and Italy depended on the fear of the former in terms of a possible Italian

[495] Doumanis, "Dodecanese Nostalgia," p.18.

[496] Macar, p.51.

assault on Turkish territory as well as on the aggressive expansionist policies of the latter, the military fortifications on the islands played a major role in the relations. It could be suggested that the increasing military build-ups in the islands in certain periods were perceived as proof of the aggressive plans of Italy towards Turkey. Therefore, the islands both influenced the diplomatic relations as in the whole interwar period and were influenced by the developments.

However, the other component of the relations, in other words, Italian rule for the Turks in Dodecanese, was not as influential as the strategic concerns. In this respect, the relatively comfortable conditions of the Turkish minority as compared to the Greek majority, and the reluctance of the Turkish government in terms of intervening in the domestic affairs of another country with which it experienced problems, played a major role on this character of the bilateral relations.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, the Turkish-Italian relations in the interwar period were examined comprehensively. Although diplomatic relations constituted the principle part of this study, as can be seen from the division of chapters, the contacts also in terms of economy or in terms of social linkages were either designated in a separate chapter or touched upon inside the sections under different titles. In this respect, both the degree that the every aspect of these contacts reached and the phases that the bilateral relationship underwent, from the end of the Great War until the beginning of the Second World War, were revealed.

In fact, in this thesis, setting out the historical narrative was a consequential purpose due to the deficiency of the resources about the issue despite the multiplicity of narratives about other diplomatic relations of Turkey in the era under consideration. This narrative, which was generally made in a chronological order with some divisions, revealed some consequences that should be presented apart from being an end itself.

The first finding of this thesis was the determination of the place of Turkey in Italian foreign policy. All of the diplomatic and the economic relations designated that Turkey became a part of Italy's Mare Nostrum policy, which aimed at dominating Eastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean in the interwar era. From the beginning of the period to the end, various methods related to this policy were implemented on Turkey.

In this sense, all of the methods that Italy used towards Turkey, such as aggression, finesse, and economic cooperation in order to dominate the Anatolian territory were seen in the course of the historical narrative. For instance, while the Italian occupation schemes for southwestern Anatolia until 1927 display the intimidating strategy of Italy, the political cooperation period between 1927 and 1932 shows the finesse strategy of Rome, which tried to form an alliance with various states in the Balkans both in order to counterbalance French power in the region and in order to form a hegemony over the states through peaceful penetration.

Likewise, economic cooperation in the aforementioned period between 1927 and 1932 points out another strategy of Rome in terms of its efforts to support the finesse strategy with economic means. After 1932, the return of aggression to Italian foreign policy in general implies that Italy was using different strategies on the basis of the needs and conditions of the specific time frame. Therefore, the implementation of almost all strategy on Turkey shows the place of Turkey in the general framework of the Italian Mare Nostrum policy. Thus, the historical story signifies that the Turkish-Italian relationship between the wars was a case that should be analyzed from a broader perspective rather than from a narrow one that looks at specifically bilateral relations full of factual data.

Obviously, the inclusion of Turkey within the Mare Nostrum policy and its situation of being exposed to the various methods of this policy show a particular characteristic of this relationship, which is the second finding of this study. It is normal to think that if there is an adversity in a relationship on the basis of intimidation and fear reciprocally, the course of events proceeds in the same direction. However, as seen from the division of the periods, the different methods that were implemented against Turkey led to different periodizations that indicate

fluctuations within the relationship, like the transition from the aggression policy to the one of finesse in 1927. However, since the aim of the Mare Nostrum policy of Italy remained same, it could be suggested that the Turkish-Italian relationship in the whole period fluctuated in terms of the methods and periods that depended on these methods but was linear in terms of the mentality. That is to say, even in the period between 1927 and 1932, during which the relationship reached peak, neither Italy changed its ambitions towards Turkey in terms of dominating country nor Turkey could give up its distrust of Italy.

The third fundamental finding of this thesis is the determinant character of Italy in Turkish foreign policy throughout the interwar history. As was explained in the above pages, the perception of the Italian threat by Ankara made Italy one of the most important determinants of interwar Turkish foreign policy due to the consideration of it as an enemy to Turkish survival. In this respect, this study claims that this perception of the Italian threat influenced nearly all the decisions, initiatives and orientations of Turkey in its international relations, especially in the 1930s. The Italian impact on the Mosul question, the efforts to form an antirevisionist alliance in the Balkans, the Montreux Convention, the Nyon Agreement, the initiative for a Mediterranean Pact, and the rapprochement with Britain and France in the last years of the 1930s constitute only some of the major issues to which the Italian fear contributed despite the existence of many other major and minor instances. The Italian fear was so influential for Turkey that despite the existence of some political and cultural interactions that could contribute to some kind of closeness, this relationship depended on antagonism in a sense that Turkey specifically positioned itself exactly opposite of Italy particularly in the late 1930s.

In conclusion, the historical data in this thesis showed that the Turkish-Italian relations in the interwar period both depended on the Mare Nostrum policy of Italy on the basis of the expansionist goals of this country on the one hand, and on the response of the Turkish foreign policy with various actions on the basis of the desire for the survival, on the other hand. These two components of the contacts determined both the nature and the course of events throughout the period, which led to the fluctuations ostensibly but linearity in the animosity.

APPENDIX

Documents of the Quotes



Cumhuriyet

Onuncu sene: No. 3547 — İSTANBUL — CAĞALOĞLU — Çarşamba 21 Mart 1934

YEDİGÜN 28 sayfa — 100 fotoğraf, canlı röportajlar, bol yazılar — Bugün YEDİGÜN gene kapışılacak

SÜMER BANK — Beykoz Kunduraları Giyiniz — Yerli Mallar Pazarı

M. Musolininin son nutku

Duçenin sözleri bütün dünyaya şüphesiz bir diken gibi batacaktır

«İtalya Başvekili son nutkunda şüphesiz Türkiyeyi düşünmüş olmıyacaktır. Biz aradaki dostlukla beraber her hal ve ihtimale karşı, yeni Türkiyenin son kuvvetile millî hudut ve hukukunu müdafaaya olan iktidarına istinat ederek dahi asla ihtimal vermeyiz.»

Sinyor Musolini faşist kıyafetinde nutuk irat ederken

YUNUS NADİ

Türkiye - Sovyet Rusya hudut mukavelenamesi

Türkiye-İtalya ticari münasebatı

Sofyada bir karar

Trakyayı istirdat komitası!

Bulgar hükûmeti komitayı feshe karar verdi

M. Heryonun yeni konferansı

«Türkiyeyi anlayınca sevmemek kabil değildir»

M. Heryo

(Mabadi üçüncü sahifede)

15 sene sonra hiçbir orman kalmıyacak

Ziraat Vekâleti müsteşarı Atıf Beyin beyanatı

Ziraat Vekâleti Müsteşarı Atıf Bey

İlkbahar

(Mabadi üçüncü sahifede)

Başvekilin İnkılâp dersi

İsmet Paşa, Türk İnkılâbını derin, yüksek bir görüşle, cidden pek güzel bir şekilde anlattı

«Millî savaş mutlaka zaferle neticelenir, düşman ne kadar çok ve kuvvetli olsa imanımız, vatanın ve milletin tabii şartları, zaferi bize verecektir. Bu, böyle olmuştur ve böyle olacaktır.»

«Konferansımda, mücadelenin her safhası içinde inkılâbı sevkeden ve tedbir alan yüksek şahsiyeti görüyorsunuz. Bu şahsiyet en büyük inkılâpçı Mustafa Kemaldir.

Türk inkılâbını anlamak ve sevmek, Türk inkılâbının muvaffakiyetine hizmet etmek Büyük Reis Mustafa Kemali anlamak ve sevmek ve onun ülkülerini tatbik etmeğe can - dan çalışmakla bir ve beraberdir.»

- İsmet Paşanın nutkundan -

İnkılâbın baş yapıcılarından biri olan Başvekil İsmet Pş. Hz.

(Mabadi beşinci sahifede)

Moskovaya gidecek tayyarelerimiz

Filo avdette Varşova, Bükreş ve Sofyaya da uğrıyacak

Serbest meslek erbabı ve kazanç vergisi

Dün Mecliste gene doktorların, eczacıların, avukatların kazancı hakkında münakaşalar oldu

Dr. Suat Bey — Mükerrem Bey — Reşit Bey — Refik Şevket Bey

(Mabadi beşinci sahifede)

İş Bankası 933 senesinde 616,754 lira kâr temin etti

Banka, devletin nezaret ve murakabesi altında, memleketin iktısadî kalkınma savaşında mühim vazifeler almıştır

İş Bankasının Ankaradaki merkezi

(Mabadi üçüncü sahifede)

M. Musolininin son nutku

Duçenin sözleri bütün dünyaya şüphesiz bir diken gibi batacaktır

«İtalya Başvekili son nutkunda şüphesiz Türkiyeyi düşünmüş olmıyacaktır. Biz aradaki dostlukla beraber her hal ve ihtimale karşı, yani Türkiyenin mevcudiyetine milli hudut ve hukukuna müdafaaya olan dahi asla ihtimal vermeyiz.»

Ankara: 20 mart (Başmuharririmizden)—İtalyan Başvekili M. Musolini ikinci beş senelik umumî faşist meclisi münasebetile Opera binasında bir nutuk irat ederek bunun bilhassa hariç meselelere temas eden kısmında bütün dünyanın epey bir zamandanberi işitmeğe alıştığı ve nihayet unutmağa meylettiği harpcu ve müteca viz bir eda tarzını hiddetle tekrar ihya eylemiştir. Bir hastalığın nüksetmesini andıran bu emperyalist politika, canla başla sulhun istikrarını temine çalışan diğer dünya memleketlerini muhakkak büyük bir hayrete düşürecektir. Şimdiki İtalyan nesli için bir nasihate ve yarınki İtalyan nesli içinse bir vasiyete benziyen bu sözlerin bütün dünyaya bir diken gibi batacağını görmeğe hacet yoktur.

M. Musolinîye göre, İtalya yarımadadan ziyade bir adadır. Üç tarafı deniz olan ve bir tarafı (şimali) büyük ve aşılmaz dağlarla kapalı bulunan bir ada.

Şimalde İtalyaya pek az veya hiç iş yoktur. Garpte de böyledir. Yalnız cenupta ve şarkta; Afrikada ve Asya'da İtalyaya iş vardır. Tarih ve coğrafyanın İtalyaya tayin ettiği istikametler bunlardır, ve Musolini şimdiki ve yarınki nesle bu istikametleri açık işaret ediyor. İktisadî ve fikrî bakımdan [illegible] gibi, askerî bakımdan da [illegible] İtalyanın [illegible] hesabına yürüyen tecavüzkâr, açık ve ağır emperyalist mukaddemesi [illegible] yecağı kadar hafif ve mesnetsiz görülürse bunun kabahati muhakkak ve ziyadesi böyle görenlerde olmıyacaktır.

Biz Türkler İtalya ile dost olduğumuz için M. Musolininin Ümitkırmasına kadar Afrikaya ve Uzaklarına varıncıya kadar Asyaya bakan sözlerinden alınmakhğımıza tabiî mahal yoktur. Yalnız, Duçenin tarihten ve coğrafyadan çıkardığı ahkâm ile vazettiği düsturlar, içinde yaşadığımız zamanın sulh endişelerile tam ve kat'î bir tezat teşkil ediyor da onun için bunlar üzerinde bir parça tevakkuf etmek lüzum ve zaruretini hissetmiş bulunuyoruz.

Kaldı ki, tarihe ve coğrafyaya istinat ettiği iddia olunan bu sözlerin tarihe ve coğrafyaya tetabuk ettirmek te olmasına da elbette umumen dikkat olunacaktır.

M. Musolininin İtalya şimalinde aşılmaz dediği dağların tarihte birçok ordular tarafından mükerreren aşılmış olduğu malûmdur. Anşulus daiyesi de, bugün yandan, kenardan İtalyanın şimal hudutlarını sörfiyan bir zaruret değil midir? Almanyanın aslen Alman olan Avusturya ile beraber Tirol aksamına müteveccih iddiaları İtalyanın Afrikaya ve Asyaya müteveccih emellerinden daha kuvvetli hakikatler olduğunu belki yalnız İtalya bilmiyor. Avusturya ile Almanya Tirol'ünü en tabiî hakkı olarak almış olacak büyük Cermen kütlesine Triyestedeki gedeceği serbest limanı kullanmak hakkını mı, yoksa, Triyestenin kendisini mi vermek istiyecektir?

İtalya nazarında bu meseleler hiç bir şek ve şüphesiz hal ve faslı mı edilmiştir ki M. Musolini en sakin bir emniyetle o cihetleri Allaha havale ederek gemisini papayalkın Afrika ve Asyaya sürmek kaydında bulunuyor, diyoruz, olursa acaba ne cevap verir?

İtalya Avrupa cihetinden tamamen emin bile olsa Afrika ve Asyanın, bu iki mesaî sahası altında cebir ve şevkle İtalyan tahakkümüne tevdiinin, yalnız bir arzu ve niyetle tahakkuk edivereceği işlerden olmıyacağı olsun, hesaba katılmak ve iki koca kıt'ada sakin bunca insanın serbest vicdanı üzerinde çizme ile gezinmeğe çıkılmamakiyki diye düşünüyoruz. Afrikada arzumuza mesele Habeşistana mı hâkim kılacağız? Ya bu memleket kalkınca dış âlemin dünyaya yaymak istediği medeniyeti varın evvelâ Trablusgarp ve Bingazide hâlâ idarenizden en feci suretlerde şikâyet eden mazlum bir halk üzerinde götürün, dersek cevap vermek hususunda müşkülâta maruz kalmaz mıyız?



Sinyor Musolini faşist kıyafetinde nutuk irat ederken

Kendisile memleketimiz arasında bir dostluk mevcudiyeti ile beraber hattâ bütün dostane münasebetlerde bulunan İtalyanın Başvekili, son nutkunda Akdeniz ve Avrupa [illegible] mühim [illegible] mevzuu [illegible] olmıyacaktır. Biz düşüncemiz ve bu sebepteki dostluğa beraber hattâ ve ihtimale karşı yeni Türkiyenin varkuvvetiles milli hudut ve hukukunu müdafaaya olan iktidarına istinat ederek dahi asla ihtimal vermeyiz. Zamanın harp şeraiti ne olursa olsun, iş vatan yekpareliğimiz tamamiyeti ve millet istiklâlinin en ufak halelden masuniyeti kaygusile memleketin mukaddeş müdafaasına taallûk edince biz bu müdafaayı karşımıza tek bir devlet değil, bir hususiyet cihanı çıkacak ta olsa bütün müteaarrızları bezimete uğratacak veçhile muvaffakiyetle intaç edeceğimizden en kat'î surette eminiz. O yüzden hiçbir endişemiz yoktur.

M. Musolininin sözleri, işaret ettiği iki kıt'adan aşarak bütün dünyayı azçok düşündürecek şeyler olduğu için dir ki onların bütün dünyada uğrıyacağı telâkkilere kendimizce bir nebze terciman olmak istedik. İnkâr olunamaz ki bu sözler, bütün dünya memleketlerinin ya doğrudan doğruya veya dolayısile kendilerine taallûku ihtimalini düşünerek kulak kabartacakları sözlerdir. Sulh hazırlıkları içinde bunalan milletlere harp hazırlıklarından haber vermek azçok soğuk bir duş tesiri yapmaktan hâli kalmıya caktır.

Bir nevi faşizm terbiyesinin azçok demagojik olmasında beis görülmiyecek mübalâğaları cümlesinden olsa dahi, bugünlerde bu türlü yüksek ve ileri iddialara cevaz verilmemeliydi diye düşünüyor ve bunda azamî samimî bulunuyoruz.

YUNUS NADİ

Türkiye - Sovyet Rusya hudut muahedenamesi

Ankara 20 (Telefonla) — Hudutlarda zuhur edecek ihtilâfların tetkik ve halline mütealliik olmak üzere Türkiye ile Sovyetler İttihadı arasında aktolunan mukavelenin yeniden 5 ay uzatılması hakkındaki protokolun tasdikine ait lâyiha Millî Müdafaa Encümeninde kabul edilerek ruznameye alınmıştır.

Türkiye-İtalya ticarî münasebatı

Ankara 20 (Telefonla) — İtalyanlarla ticaret muahedesi müzakeratına, ufak bir nokta üzerinde çıkan ihtilâfa Romadan cevap geldikten sonra burada devam edilecektir. Müzakeratın kısa bir zamanda neticelenmesi muhtemeldir.

Yeni muahede de Klering esaslarına istinat etmektedir.

YEDINCI SENE — N° 2389

Sahibi ve Başmuharriri
YUNUS NADİ

İDARE

İDAREHANESİ: Beyazıtta Cumhuriyet matbaası
Telgraf: İstanbul Cumhuriyet
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Cumhuriyet

PAZAR 30 TEŞRİNİSANI 1930

ABONE ŞERAİTİ

MÜDDET:	TÜRKİYE İÇİN	HARİÇ İÇİN
Senelik	1400 Kr.	2700 Kr.
6 Aylık	750 Kr.	1450 Kr.
3 Aylık	400 Kr.	800 Kr.

Nüshası her yerde 5 Kuruştur

Türkiye'nin ilk Ses Kraliçesi Bu sabah saat "10„ da intihap ediliyor- Kraliçe 2 kânunuevelde "Paris„ ve "Nis„ e hareket edecektir

Harici borçlar Mes'elesinde Mugalâta !..

13 haziran 1928 mukavelenamesinin tatbikına başlanmasını takiben Türkiye maliyesinde mühiş bir sarsıntı vukua geldi. Millî para eğer en ciddî tedbirlerle önüne geçilmese yuvarlanıp gitmek tehlikesini gösterdi. Bu buhranın bilgilerinden ve devletçi sözcüklerle çalışan günler henüz da[illegible] veti eldeki millî para ile ifade olunmaktadır. Herkesin hayatına kadar olan millî para yok sayılacak veçhile kıymetten düşmesi netice olarak or[illegible]tada yalnız mahperi bir şeklen başka bir şey kalmamış olur. Binden alacaklı olanların menfaati bunda değildir. Millî parası bu derekelere düşmüş bir millet yaşamakta müşkülât çeker. Nerede kaldı ki borcunu ödemeği düşünmüş. Nihayet bizim kara-dize kabul ettiğimiz şey de vaktile buraya böyle bir para şeklinde gelmişti.

Afacanlı zadecez

— Efendim, bana ne? Paran düşüyorsa tut. Fakat bana borcunu ver.

Diyemez. Biz borcumuza sadakatten inhiraf etmek niyetinde olmadık, ve kâlâ da değiliz. Fakat her gün takrar olunan pek basit bir kaideye göre ödemek, ödemeğe muktedir olmakla kalsın bir kıymet yaratır. Garbin adalet düsturlarında ölmek pahasına olsa dahi borç behemehal ödenecektir diye[illegible]cek kadar ileri gitmiş salim kaide görmedik.

[illegible] ödemeleri ihtimal geldiğini memurane iddia ettiler. Bir [illegible] Lozan konferansı bu ihtilâfın [illegible] delayı değildi.

Bunu Lozan konferansında bu ihtilâfın halli için bulunan çare Türkiye'nin alacaklılarla doğrudan doğruya anlaşmaları şeklinde oldu ve borçların bu suretle halli atiye talik olunarak müsabede aktedildi.

Biz, gaye'eyi bütün bir hüsnü niyetle halletmek için müzakereleri kabul ettik, ve makul, emsalsiz kabil-[illegible]lumsuz bir tasfiye suretini bize [illegible]ik. Bu peticeyi Meclis te tasdik etti. Bunların hepsi doğrudur, ve bizim [illegible]ek açık hüsnü niyetimizin aşikâr alâmetleridir. Fakat arkadan birkaç yıl [illegible]arında söylediğimiz mahiyet sarsıntı[illegible]eldi. Bu altımızı üstümüze getirecek [illegible]ir zelzeleye benziyordu. Onu durdurmak için alacaklıların rızasını bekl[illegible]meğe vaktimiz yoktu. Millî parayı akıbetten kurtaracak tedbirleri almamüsaraat ettik. Bu meyanda bittatahsilât dahi mukavelenamede [illegible]arih olunan şekillerde ödenemezdi. Mes'eleyi alacaklılarımız da hüsnüverek hükümetimizle görüşmeğe ve [illegible]demeğe lüzum gördüler. Buna nadden evvelki hükümetin sefaretî için tüttüğü tedbirler zarurî olduğu kadar makul da sayıldı. Sanayi borçların edası şekillerinde belki [illegible]pılmasına lüzum görülecek tadilâtı [illegible]lamağa medar olmak üzere Türk [illegible]ıl vaziyetinin Avrupa'lı bir müte[illegible]sasa tetkik ettirilmesine karar ve[illegible]di. Salimen bu işler olup bitinciye kadar Türk hükümetinin sebatı zaafa[illegible]

[illegible]unu geçen eylülün 15 inde verdi. [illegible]dî artık alacaklıların delegeleri [illegible]

[illegible]arih yerine Paris'ten kulaklarımıza [illegible]hlâf tanımıyan bir ihtilâfın [illegible]

— Biz, bizim memurlarımız yanılmış bir iddia [illegible]ormuyoruz. Türkiye [illegible]ükmet sonuna kadar aktir. Verdiğimiz [illegible]ediğini söziyoruz.

(Mabadi 5 inci sahifede)

Gazi Hazretleri geliyorlar Reisicumhur Hz. dün öğleden sonra Trabzon'dan hareket ettiler

Gazi Hz. Trabzon'luların coşgun tezahüratı arasında Ege vapuruna geçerek 15,30 da İstanbula hareket etmişlerdir



Yukarıda Gazi Hz. ler Samsunda ikametgâhları önünde biriken halk arasında coşkun tezahüratla karşılanırken, aşağıda Gazi Hz. Dramboz'da Taşlırmak köprüsünden geçerlerken

Trabzon 29 (A.A.) — Reisicumhur Hz. dün akşam Trabzon'a gelen Ordu Müfettişi İsmetten Pş. Hz. ni kabul buyurmuşlardır. Müşavirleyh şahıslarının ve mıntakasında-ki kıtaatın tazimatını Reisicumhur Hazretlerine arzetmiştir.

Evvelki gece tiyatroyu teşrif etmedikleri halde halk arasında bir operet temsilini tensiye buyuran Gazi Hz. dün gece Necmisati kütübü gençleri tarafından Türk Ocağında verilen konseri dinlemişlerdir.

Trabzon 29 (A.A.) — Reisicum-

(Mabadi 4 üncü sahifede)

Musolini diyor ki:

«İstikbalde iki memleketin iktisadi ve siyasî sahada birlikte yapacağı şeyler vardır»

«Ben iki yüzlü bir adam değilim. Sözünde duran adamım. «Dostunuzum» diyince dost kalırım.»

«Sözlerimin yakında filiyata inkılâp edeceğini göreceksiniz!»



Roma'da Türk gazetecilerini kabul ederek mühim beyanatta bulunan M. Musolini Cenaplarî

Roma 28 (Hususî) — Müsyö Musolini bugün Venedik sarayında Türk meb'us gazetecileri Necmettin Sadık, Mahmut, Asım Beyleri kabul ederek görüşmüş ve demiştir ki:

« — Türk milletini büyük dahası ile terakki ve refah yoluna sevkeden büyük reisiniz Gazi Hz. ne hürmetlerimin ibtişamı rica ederim. Lozan'da tahsiliğim ve Türk milletinin müdafaasındaki kudretini ve ince zekâsını hayretle takdir etmişimdir. Yakın bir atide Türkiye'yi çok parlak bir istikbal bekliyor. Bunu size kat'iyetle söylüyorum. Muntazam mesaisi memleketinizi mütemadiyen inkişafa doğru götürecektir. Yakın bir atide Türkiye'yi çok parlak bir istikbal bekliyor. Bunu size kat'iyetle söylüyorum. Muntazam mesaisi memleketinizi mütemadiyen inkişafa doğru götürecektir. Yakın bir atide Türkiye'yi çok parlak bir istikbal bekliyor. Bunu size kat'iyetle söylüyorum. Muntazam mesaisi memleketinizi mütemadiyen inkişafa doğru götürecektir.

İtalya'nın dostluğundan emin olabilirsiniz. Ben iki yüzlü adam değilim. Sözünde duran adamım. « Dostunuzum » diyince daima [illegible]. Evvelâ Türkiye [illegible]ası kalmamıştır. Bilâkis iki memleketi birleştiren menfaatler vardır. İstikbalde iki memleketin iktisadî ve siyasî sahada birlikte yapacağı şeyler vardır. Bu [illegible] göreceksiniz.»

(Mabadi 5 inci sahifede)

Türkiye Ses Kraliçesi bugün intihap ediliyor

Hakem heyetine meşhur viyolonist M. Jak Fibo da iştiraki kabul etti

Müsabaka sabahleyin saat onda Beyoğlu'nda Glorya sinemasında yapılacaktır



Hakem heyetinden bir grup evvelki gün Kraliçeliğe tebrik edilen namzetler üzerinde müsabaka yaparken

[illegible] bugün saat [illegible] ve [illegible] başlıyacaktır. Müsabaka, cuma günkü seçimde en çok rey alan sekiz kızın isimleri ve numaraları yazılı hasaat, saat 9,30 da Beyoğlu'nda Glorya sinemasının büyük salonunda icra edilecektir.

(Mabadi 3 üncü sahifede)

Güzellik 931 Müsabakasına iştirak eden güzeller



Foto Temina

22 — Mel. M.

Bugün güzellik müsabakamıza iştirak edenlerden Mel. M. in resmini dercediyoruz.

Harici borçlar

Dayinler yeni bir tebliğ neşrettiler

Enformasyon gazetesi şu haberi veriyor:

«Bundan evvel haber verdiğimiz veçhile Türkiye hükümeti hazirandenberi başlamış olan tediyatı için, 25 teşrinisanide vadesi hulûl etmiş olan taksit tediyatı itinam etmemeğe karar vermiştir. Düyunumumiye meclisi bu noktayı resmen ilân etmeğe karar vermiştir. Türkiye'den vaki olacak tediyatın 794,018 İngiliz lirasına baliğ olması ihtimam gelirdi. Fakat şimdiye kadar 172 bin 545 İngiliz lirası yani 1,666,782 Türk

[illegible] müdürleri arasında gayri kâfidir. [illegible] bu işe ait kıstayı tetkik etmiştir. Bu [illegible]

Nuri Beyin şakası!

Halk Fırkasının gûya üç muhtelif grupa ayrılacağı haberi nasıl çıkmış!

H. Fırkasının sağ, merkez, sol olmak üzere üç grupa ayrılacağı tarzındaki bir akşam refikimizin verdiği haberi kaydetmiştik. H. Fırkasının müttehit bir cephe ile faaliyete devam etmekte ve bu sistem dahilinde kâyi teşkilât tesisine çalışmakta olduğu şu sırada ayrı rejim içinde de olsa hiçbir şekilde bir ayrılığa imkân verileceği zannedilmiyordu.

Ankara muhabirimizin şu tahkikat neticesi de bunu teyit etmiştir:

Ankara 29 (Telefonla) — H. Fırkasında 3 grupun teşekkül edeceği haberi asılsızdır. Bunu bizzat Meclis Reisi Kâzım Paşadan sordum ve:

— Böyle bir şeyin aslı yoktur, cevabını aldım.

Anlaşıldığına göre havadis Tayyare kongresinde cereyan eden ihtilafi bir münasebeden çıkmıştır. Kongernin iki celsesi arasında koridorda meb'uslar konuşurken eski S. Fırka umumî katibi Nuri Beye ittihadde nasıl çalıştığını sorulmuş, Nuri Bey de:

(Mabadi 3 üncü sahifede)



Tayyare kongresinde yaptığı bir şakadan grupçular haberi çıkarılan Nuri B. (Kütahya)

Paylaşılan para ile bir mektep yapılırdı

Defterdarlık memurları arasında taksim edilen mektep parası ne olacak?



Bu para paylaşılmasaydı..... Şu mektep yapılabilirdi

Musolini diyor ki:

«İstikbalde iki memleketin iktisadî ve siyasî sahada birlikte yapacağı şeyler vardır»

«Ben iki yüzlü bir adam değilim. Sözünde duran adamım. «Dostunuzum» diyince dost kalırım.»

«Sözlerimin yakında fiiliyata inkılâp edeceğini göreceksiniz!»

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« — Türk milletini büyük dahası ile terakki ve teali yoluna sevkeden büyük reisiniz Gazi Hz. ne hürmetlerimin iblâğını rica ederim. Lozan'da tanıştığım ve Türk [illegible] müdafaasındaki kudretini ve ince zekâsını hayretle takdir ettiğim İsmet Paşaya ve bütün [illegible] selâmlarımı yazmanızı da rica ederim.

Türk milletinin maddi ve manevi sahalardaki terakkiyatını çok büyük alâka ile takip ediyorum. Muktedir idare adamlarının devamlı ve muntazam mesaisi memleketinizi mütemadiyen inkişafa doğru götürmektedir. Yakın bir atide Türkiye'yi çok parlak bir istikbal bekliyor. Bunu size kat'iyetle söylüyorum.

İtalya'nın dostluğundan emin olabilirsiniz. Ben iki yüzlü adam değilim. Sözünde duran adamım. « Dostunuzum » diyince daima dost kalırım. Fransa, Türkiye ve [illegible] tası kalmamıştır. Bilâkis iki memleketi birleştiren menfaatler vardır.

İstikbalde iki memleketin iktisadî ve siyasî sahada birlikte yapacakları şeyler vardır. Sözlerimin yakında fiiliyata inkılâp edeceğini göreceksiniz.»



Roma'da Türk gazetecilerini kabul ederek mühim beyanatta bulunan M. Musolini Cenapları

bu kadar hakikatleri görmiyeceklerine kail değilim, bunun için gıyaplarında olsa da af buyursunlar, bunu hüsnüniyetlerine hamledemiyeceğim. Malûmuâlileridir ki Garbi - Trakya'da Müslümanlar mübadeleden istisna edilmiştir. Fakat Yunanistan'ın başka yerlerde muvaffakıyetle tatbik ettiği imha siyaseti yarım maatteessüf orada da tek bir Türk'ü barındıramıyacaktır. Gazetelerde sütunlarla dolu facialar, bugün elimizde gezen istimdatnameler, hususî mektuplarla alabildiğimiz feci haberler, Türk'ün yüksek göğsünden yükselen ve yalnız semalarda mâkes bulan hıçkırıklarla gizli matem ve gizli emellerinin binde biri derecesinde bile değildir. Ben Türk ve Yunanlıların Şarki - Bahrisefid havzasında bir âmili sulh ve sükûn olacağını çok ümidediyordum. Bu ümidimin boş bir hayal olduğunu görmek benim için ve benim gibi sulh ve terakki âşıkları Türkler için hepimizi dilhûn edecek bir hareket olacaktır.

Fakat efendiler; unutmamalıdır ki, Garbi - Trakya'daki Müslümanlar İstanbul'daki Rumlara mukabil bırakılmıştır. Oradaki ırkdaşlarımızı yeniden muhaceret tehlikesinden kurtarmak endişesi, İstanbul'daki Rumları bırakmak gibi tehlikeli bir fedakârlığı intacetmiştir. Garbi - Trakya'dan çıkacak bir aileye karşı İstanbul'dan da beş, on aile çıkarmamız en muvafık ve en müessir bir çare olacaktır. (Tabiî sesleri) Ve şimdilik en müessir silâh da budur. Hukuku düvelde mukabelebilmisil gibi bir tedbir vardır. Bu tedbirin ve daha münasibolanlarının şiddetle tatbikini Hükümetimizden rica etmek Meclisi Âliniz için ve benim için bir vazifedir ve bir haktır. Efendiler, Lozan Muahedesinin hudutlar safhasında Türklere gösterdiği insafsızlık bundan ibaret değildir. Boğazlara hâkim olan yerlerde bâzı adalar vardır. Meselâ, bunlardan bir kısmı İmroz ve Bozcaada'dır. Bunlar bize bâzı kuyut ve şurutla iade olunuyor. Fakat aynı derecede Boğazlara hâkim Semendirek, Limni vardır. Bunlar unutuluyor. Herkesin malûmudur ki, Boğazlara karşı olan tasallutlar, taarruzlar Limni, Mondros limanında ihzar olunur. Niçin bu memleketler, bu adalar Türkiye'ye iade olunmuyor? Benim fikrimce bu itibarla ve daha birçok itibarlarla Lozan Konferansının doğurduğu bu Muahedename nâkıstır, nâtamamdır ve pek çok tehlikeli mevaddı havidir. Boğazlardan sonra Midilli, Sakız ve Sisam adaları vardır. Rica ederim benimle beraber tekrar haritayı göz önüne getiriniz. Bu adalar Anadolu'dan kopmuş güzel birer parçadır. Ben bu adaların güzelliğinden, servetinden, oradaki Türk hayatının yaşattığı âbidattan bahsetmiyeceğim. Rica ederim bir kere daha haritaya bakınız. Bu adalar yabancı ellerde bulundukça bizim sahillerde yaşamak imkânı var mıdır? (Yok sesleri) Sahillerimizin temini asayişi için edeceğimiz mütevali fedakârlıklar bu adaların zabıt ve raptından daha ziyade güç olacaktır. Bugün bile Boğazlardan tutunuz da İçel sahiline kadar İzmir, Menteşe, Çeşme, Kuşadası, Antalya sahilleri orada ihzar olunan çetelerle izacedilmektedir ve bugün sahildeki çiftlikler muattal bir halde kalmaktadır. Evet, görüyorsunuz ki, Muahedede bu adaların şöyle böyle gayriaskerî bir şekle konacağına dair bir kayıt vardır. Fakat efendiler! Bu kayıtlar haddizatında adaların ne maksatla Yunanistan'a verildiğini bize ihbar eden bir işarettir. Adalar Anadolu'ya denizden gelecek istilâ kuvvetlerini durduracak birer kale idi, tâbirimi mâzur görünüz, ben bunlara birer sabit donanma diyeceğim. Bu adalar sırf Anadolu'nun müdafaası için yaratılmıştır. Halbuki müdafaa ise en haklı, en meşru bir haktır. Halbuki Yunanistan'ın elindeki bu adalar, Anadolu'ya vâkı olacak taarruzun, tasallutun, hücumun ilk karakollarıdır. Bu Muahede tarruz hakkını tesbit eden, meşru göstermek istiyen bir vesikadır. Muahedeye mâkuldür, münsiftir diyebilmek için bu adaları muhtar bir şekle sokmak icabederdi. O bile yapılmamıştır. Efendiler! Yunanistan'a bahşedilen Sisam adasından aşağıya doğru gidecek olursak daha birtakım adalara tesadüf ederiz. Bunlar bizim vaktiyle Cezairi Bahrisefid vilâyetimizin birer cüzü ferdi idi. İtalya Muharebesinden sonra diplomasi lisanında bunlara 12 adalar diyorlar. Bunlar içerisinde Rodos gibi, İstanköy, Meyis gibi Anadolu'ya bitişik ve Türklerle meskûn kıymetli adalar vardır.

Efendiler! Malûmu ihsanınız Trablusgarb'da ve Bingazi'de kahramanların hareketini durduramıyan İtalya, Balkan Harbinin hudusü üzerine (Ouchy) de bizim ile bir Muahede akdetmişti. Bu Muahede ile bu adaları bize iade edecekti. Bilâhara Balkan Harbi çıktı. Onu Cihan Harbi takibetti. Bu adalar bize verilemedi. Kendi elinde emanet olarak kaldı. İtal-

ya'nın bu adalarla hiçbir rabıta ve alâkası yoktur. İtalya bu adaları o zamanlar bize verdiği gibi bu defa da «Sevr» Muahedesi akabinde Yunanlılara vermek teşebbüsünde bulundu ve hatırımda kaldığına göre Yunanlılarla mukavelemsi bir şey de akdetti. Türk zaferi bu mukaveleyi feshettirebilir. Fakat acaba yine o gün; 4 Ağustos'ta üç Devlet arasında Anadolu'yu nüfuz mıntakalarına taksim eden üç vesika da imha edilmiş midir? Şurada, burada resmî ve gayriresmî adamların beyanatına, resmî ve gayriresmî fırkaların programlarına bakılacak olursa İtalya'da hâlâ bu siyasetin izlerine tesadüf olunur ve adaların İtalya'ya münasebeti kabul edilemez.

Efendiler! Adaların Anadolu'ya olan münasebetini diğer adalarda söylemiştim. Bu adalarda da o münasebat ve alâka maaziyadetin vardır. Bugün Kuşada'dan tutunuz da ta Mersin'e kadar bütün sahillerimiz bu adalarda toplanan iktisadî çetelerin mâruzu i'tisafı olmaktadır. Harb senelerindeki gümrük varidatımızla sulh senelerimizdeki gümrük varidatımızı mukayese edecek olursak o hudutlarımızı beklemek için vücuda getirdiğimiz teşkilâtın bize neye mal olduğu tezahür eder. Adalar, bence İtalyanların elinde Anadolu'ya doğru uyanacak bir isti'mar ve istismar siyasetinin bir mukaddemesidir. Evet Anadolu'ya yan bakan gözlerin, uzatılan kolların ve Anadolu'yu şu veya bu suretle istismar etmek istiyen dimağların nasıl parçalandığını gördük ve bunu Yunanistan acı bir tecrübe ile anladı ve âleme ispat ettik ki Türkiye'ye atılacak ayak kırılır ve en salâhiyettar sesimizin İzmir'den bağırdığı gibi topraklarımıza uzanacak düşmanlar için gösterilecek yer; yerlerin altı, Cehennemin dibidir. (Bravo sesleri)

Fakat efendiler! Niçin biz asırlardan beri kalbimizi ihata eden bu vatan kaygısiyle alâkadar olalım? Niçin bugün çekiç ve saban kullanacak olan kollarımız yine silâh taşımıya mecbur olsun? Terakki düşünecek dimağlarımız neye memleket müdafaası plânlarını düşünsün? Biz sulha pürüzsüz, endişesiz bir surette girmek istiyorduk. Efendiler! Ben bu tuzaklardan korkuyorum. Efendiler! Yine bize sulh ve sükûn vermiyeceklerdir.

ESAD Ef. (Menteşe) — Kül altındaki ateş gibidir.

ŞÜKRÜ KAYA B. (Devamla) — Sulh ve sükûna teşne milletler arasında ihtilâf vesileleri bulunmamalıdır. Fakat efendiler! Bendeniz bu kürsüden bütün cihana ilân ederim ki bu tehlikeli hatanın mesulleri ne biz, ne Heyeti Murahhasamız, ne de kumandanımızdır. Bunun mesulü Yakın - Şark'ta emperyalizm heveslerini hâlâ terk edemiyen Garp hükümetleridir.

ESAD Ef. (Menteşe) — Kahrolsun hainler, zalimler!

ŞÜKRÜ KAYA B. (Devamla) — Binaenaleyh, bu tehlikeleri ben göz önünde tutarak bu Muahedeyi reddetmek mecburiyetindeyim.

ESAD Ef. (Menteşe) — Antakya, Garbi - Trakya ilâahirihi,... hakkındaki dâvamız hak, yardımcımız Cenabı Hak, muvaffakiyetimiz muhakkaktır, arkadaşlar. (Alkışlar)

FAİK B. (Tekirdağ) — Efendiler; milletimizin bu kadar yüksek kahramanlıklarla dört senedir idame ettiği mücahedenin neticesinde tertibedilen Muahede buraya gelip mevzuubahs olduğu zamanda çok arzu ederdim ki, bu kürsüden yapacağım iş takdir ve tebrik ve kabulünden ibaret olsun. Fakat, çok, pek çok teessüf ederim ki, bu anda ben bu vazifeyi yapmak imkân ve iktidarını haiz değilim. Çünkü, efendiler! Muahedenin ihtiva ettiği mevad arasında hukuku esasiyemizi, hakkı bakâmızı, hukuku meşruamızı, bir kısım ırkdaşlarımızın hayat ve huzurunu tehdit ve ihlâl eden birçok mevad vardır. Çok arzu ederdim ki, her türlü vesaitten mahrum olarak, her şeyi yoktan var ederek, âzim ve himmetle işe başlıyarak büyüklü küçüklü, erkekli kadınlı, heyeti mecmuası ile bütün milletin kuvasını sarf ederek dört seneden beri devam eden mücadele bize yalnız Mondros Mütarekesinde vâdedilen şeyleri hattâ kısmen getirmiş olmakla iktifa etmiş olmasın. Çok isterdim ki, Mondros Mütarekenamesiyle ve o meşhur beyannamelerle, meşhur notuklarla vâdedilen milliyet istiklâl, bâkâ ve muhtariyet gibi hukuku esasiye ve mukaddeseyi tanımaktan ibaret olan vaitlerden başka ayrıca bu kıymetli mücahedatının hissesini de beraber getirsin. Fakat çok şayanı teessüftür ki, bizim elimizde bulunan Muahede bunlardan mahrumdur. Bendeniz Muahedede gördüğüm gayrimüsait, muzır, muhilli hukuk mevaddın kâffesinden bahsede-

BAŞKAN — Madde hakkında bir mütalea var mı? Maddeyi kabul edenler ... Etmeyenler ... Madde kabul edilmiştir.

MADDE 3 — Bu kanun neşri tarihinden muteberdir.

BAŞKAN — Maddeyi kabul edenler ... Etmeyenler ... Madde kabul edilmiştir.

MADDE 4 — Bu kanunun hükümlerini icraya İcra Vekilleri Heyeti memurdur.

BAŞKAN — Maddeyi kabul edenler ... Etmeyenler ... Kabul edilmiştir.

Kanunun ikinci müzakeresini bilâhare yapacağız.

2 — Akvam Cemiyeti tarafından ittihaz olunan tedbirlerin tatbiki hakkında kanun lâyihası ve Hariciye ve İktısad encümenleri mazbataları (1/305) [1]

DIŞ İŞLERİ BAKANI TEVFİK RÜŞTÜ ARAS (İzmir) — Cemiyeti Akvama aid vazifelerimizin Hükûmet tarafından tatbiki salâhiyetine dair tasvibinize arzettiğimiz kanunun bu gün ve müstaceliyetle müzakeresine müsaade buyurmanızı istirham edeceğim. Hariciye encümeni de müstaceliyet teklifi yapmıştır.

BAŞKAN — Hariciye encümeni ve Hükûmet lâyihanm bu gün ve müstacelen müzakeresini istemektedirler. Bunu reyinize arzediyorum. Kabul edenler ... Etmeyenler ... Müstaceliyetle müzakeresi kabul edilmiştir.

Heyeti umumiyesi hakkında mütalea var mı?

BERÇ TURKER (Afyon Karahisar) — Saym arkadaşlar, İtalyaya karşı alınacak zecrî tedbirlere Türkiye Cümhuriyetinin dahi iştirak etmesi için bu gün Yüksek Kamutay ittifakı âra ile bir karar verecektir (Gürültüler ve handeler).

RASIH KAPLAN (Antalya) — Daha reyler toplanmadı.

BERÇ TÜRKER (Devamla) — Müsaade buyurulursa, bu meseleye dair bendeniz de iki söz söylemek isterim. Maksadım sizi vereceğiniz karardan geri çevirmek değildir. Ben sırf yurdumuzu alâkadar eden bir meselede, şahsî mülâhazatımı huzuru âlinizde söylemekle, vazifemi ifa etmiş olacağımı düşünerek kürsüye çıktım.

Saym arkadaşlar, bu gün, Türkiye Cümhuriyetinin yüksek siyaseti şudur:

Yurdumuzun müdafaasını yenilmez, yılmaz, kahraman askerlerimize tevdi ettikten sonra, dünyanın her ulusu ile dost yaşamak, ve sulh ve barış içinde yurdumuzun ticarî, iktısadî, imar, kültür ve sair işlere kuvvet vermektir. Bir de, yurdumuzu asla alâkadar etmeyen kavgalardan uzak durmak siyaseti vardır ki, buna da bitaraflık derler, ve bitaraflık sulhle beraber yürür.

Bu gün, İtalya - Habeşistan harbi dolayısile ve bizim de Uluslar Kurumunun üyesi olmak hasebile bu kurumun konseyi, İtalyaya karşı alınacak zecrî tedbirlere bizim de iştirak etmemizi istiyor.

Şimdi, İtalya bizden mal alıyor ve bu memleketle olan ticaretimizin inkişaf edebileceği bir zamanda, zecrî tedbirlere iştirak edersek, olabilir ki, İtalya, aramızdaki ticarî münasebatını kessin, ve âtide bizden mal almamağa karar versin. Bundan maada İtalya ile akdettiğimiz ticaret muahedesinin vadesi hulûl etmiştir. Zecrî tedbirlere iştirakimiz bittabi bu muahedenin tecddine bir mâni teşkil edecektir.

Biz, Uluslar Kurumunun kararma iştirak etmek suretile, İtalya ile cari olan ticarî münasebetimizi felce uğratsak, acaba Uluslar Kurumu, bu fedakârlığa, karşı bize, ne gibi maddî ve amelî « Compensation » temin edecektir?

«Compensation» meselesini «Küçük Antand» üyeleri ve Romanya murahhası Bay Titulesko en evvel Uluslar Kurumu konseyinde mevzubahs etmişlerdir ve alkışlanmışlardır. İrtibat komitesi bir takım vaidlerde bulunmuştur. İtalyaya ihracat yapan bir Devletin zararmı telâfi etmek için ciddî ve amelî bir tedbir alınmamıştır. Şimdilik « İnşaallah ileride bir çare buluruz » misillû yaldızlı vaidlerden başka bir ciddî tedbir sureti göremiyorum.

Benim bildiğim bir şey varsa o da, zecrî tedbirlere iştirak ederken, ticaretimizi sektedar etmek ihtimali vardır.

Avrupa diplomasisi esrarengiz bir muammadır. Olabilir ki, yarm, İngiltere ve Fransa Devletleri, İtalya ile anlaşsmlar ve bizim, alelâcele zecrî tedbirlere iştirakimiz, bizim ticarî ve belki de siyasî menafiimize dokunsun. 7 kânunusanide Fransa ile İtalya arasmda aktedilen dostluk muahedesini unutmayalım.

Acaba zecrî tedbirler işinde bitaraf kalmak mümkün değil mi idi? Bitaraf kalmanm mahzuru nedir?

Ben, İtalyaya tarafgirlik etmeli idik demiyorum. İtalya, sulhu ihlâl etti, Arsulusal duruma karşı büyük bir mesuliyet altma girdi ve bence pek çok ağır bir hata işlemiş oldu. Fakat bu sırf kendisine aid esefli bir iştir. Her halde başkasmm malma göz dikmek menfaat için başkasmm yurdunu istilâ etmek, hukuku düvele, hukuku milele muhalif hareketlerdir.

Maalesef, Uluslar kurumu herbin önüne geçemedi, şimdi zecrî tedbirlerle harbi durdurabilecek mi? Zecrî tedbirlerle umumî bir harp doğurabilir diyen diplomatlar vardır.

Bazı Devletlerin hususî menfaati icabmdan olan zecrî tedbirler, bizi ne derece alâkadar eder acaba?

Başka Devletler zecrî tedbirler almmasma iştirak ediyorlarmış. Ben buna karşı itiraz edelim demiyorum.

[1] *7 sayılı basmayazı zaptın sonundadır.*

Ben, « ticaretimize ve belki de siyasetimize, dokunacak bu işe girişmesek olmazmı idi? » diyorum.

Eğer yanılmıyorsam Uluslar kurumu üyesi olmalarına rağmen zecrî tedbirlere iştirak etmek istemiyen ve bitaraflığı tercih eden bir iki ulus vardır. Bunlar, «Eger hâhi selâmet, derkenarest» (Gülüşmeler) düsturunu kabul etmişlerdir.

Hulâsa, incelenmesi lâzım gelen noktalar şunlardır:

a) Zecrî tedbirlere iştirakimiz, ticaretimizi atide ne derece mutazarrır edecektir?

b) İştirakimize binaen muhtemel zararlarımıza karşı «Compensation» vesilesi sağlam surette temin edilebilecek mi?

c) Ademi iştirakimiz halinde mahzuru ne olacak idi?

d) «Covenant» i imzalayan, fakat zecrî tedbirlere iştirak etmiyen Devletlerin Uluslar kurumuna karşı vaziyetleri ne olacaktır?

e) Zecrî tedbirlere iştirak etmek Uluslar kurumu üyeleri için cebrî mi, yoksa ihtiyarî bir vazifemi teşkil ediyor?

Sayın arkadaşlar, ben sırf yurdumuzun alâkası noktai nazarımdan sahsî mütalealarımı arzettim. Verilecek karar Yüksek Kamutaya aittir. Ancak, mesele oldukça önemlidir. Binaenaleyh, meseleyi etraflı surette tamik ve tetkik etmiş olduğunuza ve yüksek kararınızı ona göre vereceğinize eminim. (Bravo sesleri).

HARİCİYE V. Dr. TEVFİK RÜŞTÜ ARAS (İzmir) — Arkadaşlar, arsulusal durumun ne kadar önemli bir zamanında bulunduğumuzu daha bir kaç gün evvel, Büyük şefin salâhiyettar ağzından işittiniz. Atatürk, bu söylevinde Türkive dış siyasasmm, ana hattını, bir kaç kelimede en toplu ve en açık olarak çiziverdi.

Uraylar kongresinde, birincimiz : «Memleketimiz için, sulh içinde, intizam içinde yaşamanın en güzel bir nümunesidir» dedi, İnönü bu sözüne şöyle devam etti : «Enternasyonal hayat huzur içinde değildir, büyük vakalar milletleri çok meşgul etmektedir. Biz bu hâdiseler içinde memleketimizi çailelere kaptırmamak için, ciddî bir surette itina ediyoruz. Sulh içinde yaşamak, ciddî bir sulh politikası vapmak, siyasetimizin esasıdır; bu sulh hayatını temin etmek için Türkiyenin bağlandığı muahedelere dikkatli bir surette riayet etmek şiarmızdır».

Sayın arkadaşlarım;

Bu gün sizden tasvibini dilediğim kanun lâyihası, işte bizim bu tradisionel şiarmızdan doğmuştur.

Azasından olduğumuz Uluslar sosyetesi, yakın malûmunuzdur ki son aylarda, İtalya - Habeş ihtilâfı ile uğraştı. Biz bu mesele ile ancak Milletler Cemiyeti kararlarmm, bizi mecbur ettiği ölçüde iştigal ediyoruz, bunun dışında tam bir bitaraflığa riayet ederek işe karışmak istemiyoruz. İtalya ile münasebetimiz evvelki yıl, on sene uzatılan, bitaraflık ve dostluk muahedesi çerçevesi içindedir ve son zamanlarda daha iyilesmiştir.

Habeşistanla münasebetimiz normal bir haldedir. Hükûmetiniz, kendisini ağır mesuliyetlerle karşı karşıya bulunduran bugünün vakalarını bir taraftan İtalya ile iyi münasebetlerimizi, diğer taraftan Uluslar sosyetesine karşı olan vazifelerimizi göz önünde tutarak dikkatle takib etmek mecburiyetindedir. Arsulusal âlemde bir intizam unsuru olan Türkiye genel sulhun, kollektif emniyet tedbirlerile; Milletler Cemiyeti ve Kellog Misakı çerçeveleri içinde yapılan mıntakavî misaklarla; zihniyetlerde sulha karşı mütemadiyen beslenilecek muhabbetlerle; milletlerin her hangi bir tecavüz önünde kuvvetle karşı koyabilmek kabiliyet ve vasıtalarını ihmal etmemelerile; ve bundan silâhlanma müsabakası çıkmaması için silâhlarm adilâne tahdidine çare aramakla en iyi korunacağına kaildir. Türkiye, Uluslar Cemiyetinde, Balkanlar Anlaşmasında ve umumiyetle komşularile ve diğer bütün devletlerle karşılıklı koruduğu münasebetlerinde bu kanaatle çalışmaktadır. Memleketimizin müdafaası eksik veya zayif şeraite tâbi olan yerleri üzerinde hepimizin dikkat ve hassasiyetinin böyle huzursuz zamanlarda daha artmış olacağına şübhe yoktur.

Bu sözlerimle boğazların vaziyetine işaret ettiğim derhal yüksek dikkatinizden kaçmamıştır.

Müdafaa kudretimizi tamamlamak ihtiyacını her münasebetle ve her yerde anlatmağa çalışmaktan bir an geri kalmıyoruz (Alkışlar). Bu samimî dileğimizin dost ve alâkadar devletler tarafmdan iyi anlaşılacağını ve memleket müdafaasma aid bu eksiğin tamamlanacağı günün çok uzak olmayacağını ümid etmek isteriz (İnşaallah sesleri, alkışlar). Her halde her hangi bir tehlike müşahedesi önünde bu hususta icab eden tedbirleri almakta Hükûmetimiz tereddüd etmeyecektir (Bravo sesleri,, şiddetli alkışlar).

BAŞKAN — Heyeti umumiyesi hakkında başka mütalea var mı? Maddelere geçilmesini reyinize arzediyorum. Maddelere geçilmesini kabul edenler ... Etmeyenler ... Kabul edilmiştir.

Akvam Cemiyeti tarafmdan ittihaz olunan tedbirlerin tatbikı hakkında kanun

MADDE 1 — Akvam Cemiyeti heyeti umumiyesince teşkil olunan irtibat (Coordination) komitesinin misakın 16 ncı maddesi mucibince Akvam Cemiyeti azalarma terettüb eden vecibelere aid olarak kabul eylediği iktısadî ve malî tedbirlerin Cemiyet azasmdan bulunan Türkiye Cümhuriyeti tarafmdan tatbikı hususunda icab eden mukarreratın ittihazına Kamutay tarafmdan İcra Vekilleri Heyetine salâhiyet verilmiştir.

mek ve şunu ilân etmek ıztırarındayız ki o akan Türk kanlarının manzarai ihmirarı kalblerimize zehirler akıttıkça nihayet yarınki adaletimizde ne fazilet, ne medeniyet yer bulamaz. Biz ağuşumuzda asırlardan beri yılanlar beslemiştik; bu yılarınların zulümlerini, ihanetlerini görmüş idik. Buna rağmen bugün muzaffer ve galip çıktığımız halde bu yılanları hâlâ koynumuzda mesut yaşatıyoruz. Bu yılanları yine koynumuzda müreffeh ve mesut besliyoruz. Yine bugün Türkiye'de Türk kanı akarken Beyoğlu'nun sefahet yerlerinde Rumlar, ferîh ve fahur, mesut yaşamaktadırlar.

RÂSİH Ef. (Antalya) — Anadolu'da yaşamıyorlar mı?

VÂSIF B. (Devamla) Ve yine mübadeleye rağmen her hangi esbab tahtında olursa olsun el'an memleketimizde mübadeleye tâbi olmadan yaşıyan yüzyirmibin Rumu Anadolu'nun yalnız âdil sînesinde hayatları, ırzları müemmen olarak yaşamaktadırlar. O halde efendiler! İstanbul Rumları müreffeh ve mesut yaşar, Anadolu içerisindeki Rumlar mesut ve müreffeh yaşarsa ve gözümüzün önünde Türkler doğranırsa bunun karşısında medeniyet iddiasını yapmak Türklere karşı cinayet işlemek demektir. Lord Gürzon'un Lozan Muahedesinde imzası vardır, Puankara'nın muahedede imzası vardır, İtalya Başvekili Musolini'nin imzası vardır ve bütün bu muahede Avrupa düveli mütemeddinesinin kefaleti ile taahhüt ve tevsik edilmiştir. Halbuki arkadaşlar! Bu imzalara rağmen ve bu imzaların delâlet ettiği ehemmiyet ve kudrete rağmen bütün Rumeli'nde yüzbinlerce Türk en elîm, en feci' bir cinayetin kurbanı olmaktadırlar. Cemiyeti Akvam . . . Hangi Cemiyeti Akvam arkadaşlar! İtalyanların Korfo meselesinde Cemiyeti Akvamın ne gülünç olduğunu ve müessir olmaktan ne kadar çok uzakta bulunduğunu yakînen anladık. Kuvvetin karşısında, Başvekil Musolini'nin azmi karşısında Cemiyeti Akvamın bütün hareketleri, kararları, gülünç bir şekle girmiştir ve anlıyoruz ki değil akvamın hattâ medeniyetin timsali olan Cemiyeti Akvam bile kuvvet önünde daima serfürû etmektedir. Kuvveti gördüğü gün kararı başkadır, kuvveti görmediği gün kararı yine pek başkadır.

O halde bu kürsüden Cemiyeti Akvama medeni ve mühim kararlar verdirmek için çalışacağımıza icabeden tedbirlere tevessül etmeliyiz. Efendiler! Bütün ruhumla kaaniim ki İtalyan Başvekili Musolini'nin tarzı siyasetini kabul edelim ve emin olunuz ki, arkadaşlar! O zaman Cemiyeti Akvamın ve onun mümessillerinin verecceği karar büsbütün başka olacaktır. O zaman cihan harekete gelecek, o zaman cihanı medeniyetten âvazeler yükselecek, o vakit cihandan medeniyet, fazilet sesleri yükselecek ve ancak o zaman Türklerin bu bedbaht vaziyetlerine nihayet verilecektir. Biz burada medeniyet çehresinden medet bekledikçe husule gelecek olan netice biz Türklere yapılan zulüm ve işkencenin devamı, bizim mesuliyeti mâneviyemiz altında Türklerin dağılmasını idamedir. Ben Meclisi Âlinizden rica ediyorum, bugün eğer Hükümet izahat verecekse dinledikten sonra artık bu tereddüt siyasetine nihayet verelim. Artık bu medeniyetin umumi çehresinden istimdadetmek çaresine nihayet verelim ve Meclisi Âliye yakışacak bir surette bundan dört sene evvel yaptığı hamleler gibi yine aynı mukaddes hamlelerle oradaki kardeşlerimizi kurtaralım. (Bravo sesleri, alkışlar)

MAZHAR MÜFİD B. (Denizli) — Efendim! Garbi - Trakya ve Makedonya'daki dindaşlarımıza reva görülen mezalim hakkında Esad Efendi arkadaşımızın beyanatı bendeniz gibi hiç şüphesiz diğer rüfekayı muhteremenin de kalblerini sızlandırmıştır. Efendiler! Bendeniz zannediyorum ki, beyanatımla bu madde hakkında katî ve amelî bir teklifte bulunacağım. Diğer rüfekanın buyurduğu gibi sulhtan evvel Yunan'ın icra ettiği mazalimden bahse lüzum görmem. Çünkü o zaman hali harbdi. Onu kabul edebilirim. Fakat şurasını kaydetmeden geçemiyeceğim. Yunanistan'ın yalnız edirne vilâyetinden - bigünah olarak - sevk ettiği İslâmlardan altıyüzü köylerde katledilmiştir ve memleketin eşraf ve hanedanı, fâzıl ve kemaliyle mâruf Salih Bey gibi zevat da vardır. Bunlar tüfek altında, süngü altında daha yolda iken öldürülmüşlerdir. Bugün efendiler! İskeçe'de kaymakamlığım ve Gümülcine'de mutasarrıflığım olmak hasebiyle çoğunu tanırım. Dıramalı Mehmed Bey gibi - belki burada arkadaşları vardır - mebusulk etmiş adamlar vardır. Bu zat mebus idi. Bu muhterem zatın da nasıl bir adam olduğunu kendisini bilen arkadaşlara sorarım. Bu zavallı adam da hapisanelerde inliyor ve idama mahkûm edilmiştir. Efendiler! Yine demin Hoca Esad Efendinin beyan

İtalya'nın o tarihlerde Türkiye için ne denli bir endişe kaynağı olduğunu İsmet İnönü tarafından Bakanlar Kurulu Kararı ile 12 Temmuz 1936 tarihinde T. Rüştü Aras'a çekilen talimattaki şu ifadeler açıkça göstermektedir.

"Türkiye'nin en mühim ve belki bu gün için yegâne meselesi Akdeniz emniyeti ve İtalya ihtirasatı meselesidir. Mustakbel belki yakın harbi umumile İtalya'nın hangi grupta bulunacağı yeni bir harpte nihayete kadar bitaraf kalması da ciddî bir ihtimal dahilindedir. Bizim alaka ve menfaatimiz olmadan sürükleneceğimiz yeni bir harp sonunda, ister galip ister mağlup taraftan çıkalım, İtalya'ya karşı yıpranmış bir vaziyette bulunmamızı kendi elimizle hazırlayamayız. İtalya bitaraf kaldığı halde, mutlaka bitaraf kalmalıyız. İtalya harbe girdiği halde yine bitaraf kalıp kuvvetimizi muhafaza etmek en faydalı yoldur. Eğer İngilizler veya Ruslarla şimdiden uzun müddetli, İtalya'ya karşı emniyet için bir taahhüdümüz olsaydı, bu hazır ve esaslı faydaya mukabil müttefiklerimizin müstakbel büyük harpteki risque'lerine iştirak edebilirdik. Halbuki Rusya ve Fransa İtalya'yı gücendirmemek için, en basit muahedelerden içtinap ettiler. İngiltere kendi istediği zaman için bu imkânı kendine mahsus olarak muhafaza etmek istiyor. Türk noktai nazarından bir taahhüde girmekten dikkatle içtinap ediyor."

F) FRANSA: Montreux görüşmelerinden evvel ve görüşmeler sırasında Fransa'nın genellikle pasif bir davranış içinde bulunduğu söylenebilir. Bu davranışında İtalya ile ilişkilerin ve özellikle bütün dikkatini Almanya'ya çevirmiş olmasının, bir de yine bu nedenle küçük Antant'ın lideri durumunda olmasının büyük payı vardır. Fransa'nın bu ilişkileri onu bütünüyle İngiltere'nin yanında yer almaktan alakoymuştu. Görüşmelerin incelenmesi sırasında da görüleceği üzere Montreux'de esas uğraşı İngiltere ile Sovyetler Birliği arasında olmuş, Fransa, diğer devletler ikinci planda kalmışlardır.

Hernekadar Fransa Türkiye'yi tümüyle destekler durumda gözükmemekteyse de aksi bir tutum takınmaktan da kaçınmıştır.

Fransa'nın, Türkiye'nin notasına 25 Nisan 1936 tarihinde verdiği cevapta;

"Beynelmilel muahedatın bir taraflı hareketle tadil edilemiyeceğini takdir hususunda Fransa Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti bir kere daha Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti ile birlikte bulunmaktan bahtiyardır. Fransa Hükümeti Türkiye Hükümetinin talebi vakıını saik olan esbabı mucibeyi kıymeti hakikiyesile takdir etmekle beraber, notaya

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