

Turkish Foreign and Domestic Policy: The Balkan Pact, The Saadabad
Pact, and Nationalism in the 1930s

by

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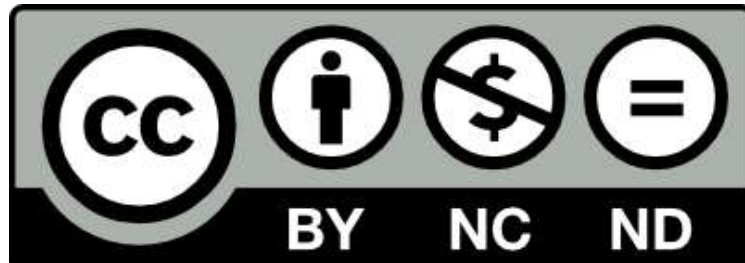
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Abstract

By examining the foreign policy dynamics of the Balkan and Saadabad Pacts, the thesis demonstrates the agency of signatory nation-states against a historiography that posits the Great Powers as causal in interwar regional foreign policy. There is more specific emphasis on the links between Turkish foreign and domestic policy that connects to regional diplomacy. This includes a new perspective on etatism as a pillar of Republican legitimacy, the state aimed to entrench itself over the territory by promoting the interests of the core nation, identified as Sunni-Muslim Turkish speakers. This included consolidating Ankara as the infrastructural centre of the new Republican order. There is a continuity and change narrative based on Erik Zürcher's continuity of the state elite and Rogers Brubaker's concept of the nationalising state. Turkish nationalism revealed itself in dynamic processes that demonstrated a gulf between the civic discursive inclusivity of all citizens and exclusionary practices of the state. CUP-RPP understandings of Ottoman collapse informed Ankara's practices of active foreign policy to isolate the domestic sphere from external influence. I use the term capitulationphobia as a conceptual shorthand for this practice. Turkey in the 1930s consolidated the state which had been established in the 1920s.

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List of Abbreviations

CUP	Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti)
FO	Foreign Office (London)
FRP	Free Republican Party (Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası)
GCCS	Government Code and Cypher School
IMRO	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation
RPP	Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)
SMT	Sunni-Muslim Turkish-speaking population

INTRODUCTION

From the end of the First World War (WWI) to 1923 a series of violent renegotiations of the political space in what became the Turkish Republic ended with a new state elite in Ankara. Keith David Watenpaugh describes this as a combined anticolonial and civil war for Anatolia, that pitted the Turkish nationalists against Armenian, French colonial, and Greek armies.¹ Watenpaugh's designation of the conflict as a civil war is analytically neutral relative to the historiographical tendency to see it as a Turkish war of liberation. Considering the Kurdish contribution, which supported Turkish nationalists to save the Sultan from Western, read Christian, domination in Istanbul, the civil war takes on a more Muslim against Christian characteristic that has been marginalised. The move from a holy war to save the Sultan to nationalist triumphalism can be traced in the first two decades of the Republic. The 1920s were about establishing the political space for the state that was left over from the Ottoman Empire. Westernising reforms of the early Republic, abolishing the Caliphate, secularism, universal education, dress reform, latinising the alphabet, and adoption of new law codes to name only a few, were part of a positivist aim of transforming society from above.²

Some of these changes had their precursors in the Ottoman Empire, however the new state elite had relatively tighter control over a smaller territory after 1922.³

¹ Keith David Watenpaugh, *Bread from Stones: The Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 164. As opposed to War for National Salvation, or Kurtuluş Savaşı, in Turkish.

² Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964); Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

³ For the weakness of nationalist claims of a clean break with the Ottoman past see for example, Benjamin Fortna, *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic*

Central tutelage by a paternalistic state aimed to eventually produce a contemporary civilisation, taken to mean Western civilisation.⁴ Notwithstanding the problematic discourse around the issue of civilisational development, the new Republican system faced a double crisis by the turn of the 1930s.⁵ First the external shock of the Great Depression from 1929, then a domestic crisis of legitimacy which coalesced around the short experience of the Free Republican Party in 1930 (FRP).⁶

Following agricultural recovery and a failure to start significant industrialisation in the 1920s, state efforts towards both economic sovereignty and economic nationalism intensified in the 1930s. Release from the last financial capitulatory binds at a time of economic contraction internationally, first, loosened inhibitory factors on interventions on the domestic economy. Second, it afforded opportunity for more direct diplomacy with the international community, through the prevalence of the state-mediated clearing system of exchange. These combined, allowed international and domestic space for Turkey to consolidate in the 1930s, the sovereignty it gained in the 1920s. Domestically, this permitted an operational space for nation-building that took on increasingly authoritarian characteristics. Externally, Ankara at once protected, projected, and expanded its sovereignty through the new League of Nations system of international association.

This thesis argues that Balkan and Middle Eastern nation-states in the 1930s had agency in regional alliance diplomacy. This agency manifested in international

(Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Christine Philliou, 'The Paradox of Perceptions: Interpreting the Ottoman Past through the National Present', *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 5 (2008): 661–75.

⁴ Muasır medeniyet.

⁵ For an analysis of civilisational dynamics see, Ayşe Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁶ Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası.

relations that aimed to protect, and minimally adjust, the territorial status quo in the Balkans against Bulgaria, and to inhibit cross-border Kurdish connections in the Middle East. On the more specific Turkish case, the thesis demonstrates the links between foreign and domestic policy, and how continuity in the state elite between Empire and Republic shaped these. This continuity informed the foreign and domestic dynamics that produced the overall economic policy of etatism. Further, etatism as economic nationalism was closely connected to how the Republic operated as a nationalising state by its exclusionary policies in dynamic processes of nation-building.

The state elite's self-regard in crafting a relatively homogenous population into a respected nation-state through internal reform, tutelage, and repression was punctured in 1930. Ankara thought internal opposition was sufficiently crushed in the east after defeat of the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925, and the army having chased the remnants beyond the borders by 1930. It was thought social developments in line with Eurocentric norms were proceeding satisfactorily enough in the western towns and cities to pursue a second attempt at parliamentary opposition to the Republican People's Party (RPP).⁷ The FRP formed both as a safety valve for political discontent, and as an avenue for generating policy ideas in a parliament stifled by the RPP. However, the scale of popular opposition that quickly coalesced around the FRP shook the RPP into realising social change had not progressed to their liking. The state thereafter increased efforts to inculcate identification of the nation with

⁷ The first having been the Progressive Republican Party (1924-25), closed in the political maelstrom of the Sheikh Said Rebellion, Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası.

itself. Ziya Gökalp's treatise on Turkism, aided this by making the case for the state to promote the interests of *the* nation, or rather *a* nation within the territorial whole.⁸

Ankara had staked its legitimacy on westernising secular nationalism since wresting control from the house of Osman in Istanbul. Command, control, and moulding the population into a nation accelerated after the dual crises. The 1930s became a time of more forceful nation-building policies that intensified around ethno-linguistic Turkification on one hand and confessional exclusion on the other. What Erik Jan Zürcher has called the socially totalitarian direction in Turkish politics in the 1930s, I extend to include deliberate efforts at creating social and economic bases for what the state elite construed as the Sunni-Muslim Turkish-speaking (SMT) core-nation through etatism and the nationalising state.⁹

The crises also revealed a need for the state to project its sovereignty more forcefully abroad to make space for domestic reform and repression. The increased economic independence after the end of Lausanne tariffs in 1929 was closely related to the recognition of Turkey as a sovereign nation-state by the same treaty in 1923. Hereafter the Republic jealously guarded its domestic and territorial sovereignty from outside interference, real or imagined. Turkey went through a period of internal orientation in the 1920s for social reform and recovery. It was not, however, severed

⁸ Ziya Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları* (Istanbul: Kadro Yayınları, 1976). My emphasis.

⁹ Erik Jan Zürcher, 'Institution Building in the Kemalist Republic: The Role of the People's Party', in *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 106. The first explicit articulation of the Sunni-Muslim Turkish speaker designation I have found is attributed to MP Celal Nuri (İleri). Who in discussion of the 1924 citizenship law defined real citizens as those who were Muslim of Hanafi sect and Turkish-speaking, see Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, 'Republic of Paradox: The League of Nations Minority Protection Regime and the New Turkey's Step-Citizens', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46, no. 4 (2014): 670; Kemal Kirişçi, 'Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship and Immigration Practices', *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 3 (2000): 18; Esra Özyürek, 'Christian and Turkish: Secularist Fears of a Converted Nation', in *Secular State and Religious Society: Two Forces in Play in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 115.

from the international system, but direct interaction in bilateral or multilateral diplomacy was low compared to both the last two Ottoman decades and the Republic in the 1930s.

Increased foreign policy action was an end for protecting territory, but also a means in securing the domestic sphere for unilateral state action. The Balkan and Saadabad Pacts were the fruits of this activism. And while they are outside the scope of this study for reasons of analytical framing and space, the Montreux Straits Convention (1936) and incorporation of Alexandretta (1937-39) into the Republic are broadly part of the same narrative of foreign policy results of the 1930s.¹⁰ Turkey's foreign policy activism of the 1930s was prompted by a combination of domestic limitations reached by 1930, the context of the international renegotiations of economic relationships after the Great Depression, and a search for enhanced territorial security.

The theme of state action working to isolate the domestic space from foreign interference punctuates the thesis. The goal itself is uncontroversial for a sovereign nation-state. Its importance lies in the reconstruction of this ability by Ankara that Constantinople had lost. The Ottoman system had lost the ability to dominate its territory by increasing weakness relative to capitulatory Great Powers.

Capitulationphobia reflected the state's desire to build its strength and act with impunity inside its borders.¹¹ It was a quest to regain a historically imagined power to

¹⁰ For more on Montreux and Alexandretta see, Mustafa Çoban, 'A Re-Evaluation of the Revisionist - Status Quo Dichotomy in Interwar Turkish Foreign Policy, 1936-1939', *New Middle Eastern Studies* 8, no. 1 (2018): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.29311/nmes.v8i1.2787>; Süleyman Seydi, 'The Turkish Straits and the Great Powers: From the Montreux Convention to the Early Cold War' (PhD, Birmingham, University of Birmingham, 2001); Sarah Shields D., *Fezzes in the River: Identity Politics and European Diplomacy in the Middle East on the Eve of World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹¹ Capitulationphobia is further defined and explained below.

act without question within sovereign territory.¹² The reorganising state, newly based in Anatolia, projected its limited power externally through regional alliances and rapprochements with Great Powers without falling under capitulatory domination. The Turkish state simultaneously projected and variably exercised strength internally; consolidating and extending a level of control in Anatolia that had escaped the Ottoman state by deploying modern tools of control.

I set up the 1930s as an analytical space in Turkish history. A space where policies of establishing the state internally, and its sovereignty externally, that were met in the 1920s, were reoriented and consolidated in the decade before the outbreak of the Second World War (WWII). Ankara asserted its sovereign claims internationally for long-term security and bought political space for nation-building. This establishment had its foundational moment in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne.

Lausanne was the foundational moment of the Turkish Republic as an internationally recognised sovereign entity. It was a significant bridge in the story of Turkey's history between Empire and Republic. A group of representatives left Ankara to return as *the* representatives of Turkey. The Treaty turned the civil war into the War of Liberation by legitimating its results. It retrospectively legitimated ethnic cleansing as well as its post-war facilitation. It therefore foreshadowed Ankara's later exclusionary practice domestically and its shuttering of domestic action to external scrutiny.

Success at Lausanne legitimated Turkey's exercise of territorial hegemony and was foundational in how the state understood its ontological security. As Manu Goswami

¹² Imagined in the sense that even at the height of its strength, the Ottoman state was challenged internally and externally. Some general examples were janissary revolts, Jalali rebellions, Ottoman-Safavid Wars, and Russo-Ottoman wars.

put it, the modern vision of the world as ontologically distinct spheres was territorialised, a social process that was at once naturalised and nationalised.¹³ Ayşe Zarakol applies this general theme to Turkey, arguing that Turkey's ontological security was continuously threatened by not having a prestigious position in the international system, Ottoman defeat and collapse made this worse.¹⁴ Lausanne addressed this prestige problem and set Turkey on the road to League of Nations membership as the formal forum for it. Further, Lisel Hintz argues that etatism was a process of generating identity hegemony, by which the state gained ontological security that was projected externally in foreign policy practice.¹⁵ I attempt to give empirical depth to the state's ontological security practice by drawing links between etatism and nationalism domestically and foreign policy practice in the Balkans and the Middle East.

This leads then to historical context and analytical framing. First, Ottoman to Republican continuities show a tendency to bureaucratic centralisation and the crystallisation of an ethno-religious-linguistic group as a core to be nationalised around the state. Second, capitulationphobia formed out of the direct experience of the state apex in the Ottoman Empire. It was informed by the existential crisis of the Balkan Wars (1912-13), the political success in overturning the capitulatory system, characterised by the active prevention of its reintroduction, and the exercise of new systems of legitimacy. The way the Ankara elite understood itself disposed it to give depth to the legitimacy of its presence in the territory, it attempted to construct a

¹³ Manu Goswami, 'Rethinking the Modular Nation Form: Toward a Sociohistorical Conception of Nationalism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44, no. 4 (2002): 793–94.

¹⁴ Zarakol, *After Defeat*, 149.

¹⁵ Lisel Hintz, *Identity Politics Inside Out: National Identity Contestation and Foreign Policy in Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 5.

nation in the state's image. This would provide protection to the state should it be existentially threatened again and led to policies of Turkification through the nationalising state.

The *sacredness* of the state that needed to be saved was closely related to the existential trauma of the Balkan Wars.¹⁶ Imperial collapse after WWI had realised the fears of 1912, gave them substance as experienced reality instead of mere threat. Monarchy could be left behind, delegitimised as a failure, but the state could not. It could, however, be reconstituted around the remaining bureaucratic and institutional frameworks. Imperial collapse and territorial shrinkage further sharpened the remaining state elite's missionary zeal around the remaining territory. The remainder was now, like them, more homogeneously Turkish or Turkifiable.

Ottoman to Republican Continuities: The CUP, Tanzimat, and Abdülhamid II

As a matter of framing, I take for granted a political continuity between the party of the Young Turks in the late Ottoman Empire, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), and the Republican Peoples Party (RPP) of the Turkish Republic.¹⁷ The political continuity and similarities as well as differences have been studied by Feroz Ahmad, Bernard Lewis, Niyazi Berkes and more recently by Benjamin Fortna and Ryan Gingeras for example.¹⁸ The point of departure here is, the similarities in

¹⁶ See, Eyal Ginio, *The Ottoman Culture of Defeat: The Balkan Wars and Their Aftermath* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). My emphasis.

¹⁷ İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti & Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi.

¹⁸ Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993); Berkes, *Secularism*; Lewis, *Emergence*; Fortna, *Learning to Read*, 2010; Ryan Gingeras, *Eternal Dawn: Turkey in the Age of Atatürk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

personnel and the periodisation of their political trajectory elucidated by Zürcher.¹⁹ This provides the general contours of politics leading to the period under analysis. The periodisation gives a sweep of the state elite's historical composition with bearing on their political thinking under which the detail of Turkish state policy operated. The CUP-RPP reconstructed the state as the sacred institution in need of saving and strengthening.

Zürcher outlined the social similarities of the people staffing the CUP and RPP. They were drawn from the same broad social backgrounds, sons of Muslim Turkish town dwellers mostly from the Ottoman Balkans and Istanbul, landowners, pashas, minor civil servants, and traders.²⁰ They were products of the new educational establishments formed to reform the Empire, not unified as a social class as such, but by education and profession they formed part of the Ottoman civil service intelligentsia. As doctors, bureaucrats, schoolteachers, and most importantly, army officers, they existed through and for the state.²¹ Their professional status as the cream of the Empire's personnel was instrumental in capturing and retaining political legitimacy in Ankara after WWI.

Almost all the important personalities of the time were of the same generation who formed networks, friendships, and enmities in the classrooms of military and civil service schools in the Abdülhamid II period (1876-1909). They were active underground before they deposed the Sultan and served together in the wars of 1911-22.²² Zürcher describes their naïve faith in the state as agent, and positivism

¹⁹ Erik Jan Zürcher, 'The Ottoman Legacy of the Turkish Republic: An Attempt at a New Periodization', *Die Welt Des Islams* 32, no. 2 (1992): 237–53.

²⁰ Zürcher, 241.

²¹ *ibid*, 242.

²² *ibid*, 243.

through education as the driver of change, modernisation, and progress.²³ This confidence in the role of education derived from their own experience as relatively humble men sharpened for duty to the state through education.²⁴

Zürcher gives the periodisation in three phases, first resistance, then pluralism, finally dictatorship.²⁵ The CUP's first phase began in 1906, they emerged as a secret organisation infiltrating the state bureaucracy with the goal of restoring the abrogated 1876 Constitution. The second phase started in 1908 when they came to power after a coup. There was lively debate, and they were not yet the dominant group in the Istanbul parliament. Phase three occurred with the crisis of the defeat and limited recovery in the Balkan Wars. A further coup, in 1913, brought the three strong men of the CUP, Enver, Talat, and Cemal Pashas to the head of single party dictatorial rule until the end of WWI.²⁶

The end of the War was the end of Ottoman nationalism that had never really taken hold. What later became known as the RPP formed as the Turkish nationalist response to the Entente's occupation. It was initially known as the *Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*, or Association for the Defence of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia, the umbrella organisation of resistance movements against foreign occupation. Similar to the CUP's phase one, it was an illegal armed resistance group with a programme demanding recognition of their sovereignty within armistice lines. Phase two came with their victory in 1922, the resistance movement was recast

²³ *ibid*, 246.

²⁴ For a critique of educational continuity as construed by Republican nationalism see, Fortna, *Learning to Read*, 2010.

²⁵ Details of the periodisation have since been critiqued; however, the overall aspect is still consistent. See, Gingeras, *Eternal Dawn*.

²⁶ Zürcher, 'Ottoman Legacy', 248–49.

as the RPP. There was an active, relatively free press and some debate in the Ankara parliament. The final phase began in 1925 with the Sheikh Said rebellion. The Law on the Maintenance of Order, *Tahrir-i Sükun*, gave Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) dictatorial powers to suppress any and all opposition. The government pushed a reformist agenda through a monopoly on power.²⁷ Thereby completing Zürcher's loop of resistance, pluralism, and dictatorship.

For Zürcher, the motivating and mobilising dogma of the Young Turks and Turkish nationalists was, first and foremost, the question of how to save and strengthen the state. In this formulation democracy, in its 1922-25 incarnation, was a means rather than end. The military-bureaucratic elite could not hope to gain acquiescence to its reformism from a largely pre-capitalist, culturally conservative, and religious society, which resented the centre's secularism and imitation of the West.²⁸ Education of the masses, and by implication forging a nation from the masses to serve the state, was the ideological justification of Kemalism. As such, the Kemalist revolution was the extension of the Young Turk movement.²⁹ This type of overall state-centric continuity with the Young Turks, with differences in detail and emphasis, is prevalent in the literature on the early Republic.³⁰ In sum, the *sacredness* of the state to which the CUP-RPP elite appointed themselves as guardians provides the analytical centre of

²⁷ *ibid*, 249–50.

²⁸ *ibid*, 251.

²⁹ *ibid*, 252.

³⁰ In addition to Ahmad, Berkes, Lewis, and Zürcher, see for example, Touraj Atabaki and Erik Jan Zürcher, eds., *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004); Günay Göksu Özdoğan, 'Turkish Nationalism Reconsidered: The "Heaviness" of Statist Patriotism in Nation-Building', in *Nationalism in the Troubled Triangle: Cyprus, Greece and Turkey* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 47–60; Başak Kuş, 'Weak States, Unruly Capitalists and the Rise of Etatism in Late Developers: The Case of Turkey', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 3 (2015): 358–74; İlder Turan, 'Continuity and Change in Turkish Bureaucracy: The Kemalist Period and After', in *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 99–121.

central decisions made in the 1930s. Its major manifestations were paternalism, nationalism, and centralisation towards nation-building. Zürcher's periodisation then, still has explanatory utility. As shall be seen, the dictatorial practices of the third phase are helpful in explaining the processes of nationalism and authoritarianism of 1930s Turkey.

Zürcher's periodisation necessitates an establishment of the pertinent themes of continuity between the Ottoman and Republican periods. The state elite of the Turkish Republic was formed during the Tanzimat reform movement of the mid to late 19th century. It crystallised during the reign of Abdülhamid II, whose rule can be described as attempting to manage forces of change to stabilise an Empire that was becoming increasingly weaker against European power.

Feroze Yasamee identified three overlapping problems Abdülhamid II faced under strains of European modernisation. First, a previously advantageous position of territorial control from the Balkans to the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa was rendered vulnerable by revolutions in warfare and transport. Second, the territorial control maintained by flexible provincial government, largely left to its own devices but accountable to the centre in Constantinople, became vulnerable to the penetration of European powers. Third, the Christian population became a potential weapon in the hands of foreign powers practicing peaceful penetration, thus eroding domestic authority.³¹ Overall, changes and impacts of modernity caused fractures in

³¹ F.A.K. Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdülhamid II and the Great Powers, 1878-1888* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1996); for Abdülhamid II period see also; the Selim Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998); Lale Can and Aimee Genell, 'On Empire and Exception: Genealogies of Sovereignty in the Ottoman World', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 40, no. 3 (2020): 468–73.

the traditional *pax Ottomana* of imperial territories, a lack of external security diminished internal security.

Tanzimat reforms from 1839, and the first constitution in 1876, aimed at domestic reform to absorb the impacts of changing circumstances by reorganising state structures. They entailed the modernisation of central bureaucracy and army through piecemeal importation of European technology, institutions, and education. Thus, strengthening state control in the provinces by increased administrative and military centralisation. A corollary effect was the reduced independent power of provincial landowners, tribal chiefs, and local notables.³²

Social consequences of change were significant in creating modern cleavages between Muslim and non-Muslim. Growing foreign and domestic trade produced a new non-Muslim middle class of urban merchants and artisans formed of the indigenous Armenian, Greek, and Jewish communities. Their wealth financed education for coreligionists, contributing to lifestyles and outlooks reflecting European cultural influences.³³ Since these communities had constituted their own millets, some of this could be absorbed in the existing system. However, some schoolmasters, priests, clerks, and journalists, with exposure and receptivity to new revolutionary ideas such as ethnic or religious nationalism, could not.³⁴ The millet system was an internal political order, it could not accommodate separatist political constructs with aspirations of externality to the system. Moreover, these were professions dependent on education, the absence of a significant Muslim middle

³² Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, 7.

³³ *ibid*, 8.

³⁴ *ibid*, 10.

class to provide mass education disposed the Young Turks to think of the state as the paternalistic provider of such learning.

This leads to the problem of capitulatory privileges and Tanzimat reforms.

Capitulations, originally granted as far back as the 15th century to facilitate trade, expanded through the 17th and 18th centuries. They gradually came to be exploited by European powers, constraining the Porte's economic freedom of action. An aspect of the capitulatory privileges allowed foreign powers to grant citizenship to Ottoman subjects, affording indigenous, usually non-Muslim, merchants immunity from Ottoman law under the protection of a foreign power. Further, the removal of traditional disabilities on non-Muslims, and granting a measure of civil equality with Muslims under Tanzimat reforms was an unprecedented break with Ottoman tradition, that had assumed Muslim political dominance.³⁵

The socio-economic improvement of non-Muslims threatened the Islamic political legitimacy and supremacy of the Ottoman establishment. Muslims still dominated the military-bureaucratic institutions in addition to controlling most of the agricultural land. They were, however, largely absent from the commercial sector, new trades, and professions.³⁶ According to Yasamee, Muslims were increasingly seen as the backward element in society, with a political supremacy out of proportion to their economic and educational standing. The situation precipitated Muslim resentment against reformism in the form of anti-Christian outbreaks and a conservatism borne of deviation from a religiously sanctioned order.³⁷

³⁵ *ibid*, 7. Such as the *cizye*, a tax exempting non-Muslims from military service.

³⁶ This is closely tied to the *Gedik* market's facilitation of wealth transfer from Muslim to non-Muslim in 18th and 19th century Istanbul, explained in chapter four.

³⁷ Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, 10.

Abdülhamid II sought to counter the growing difference by raising the social standing of the Muslim population. An expanded school network was designed to strengthen the state by producing better educated officials and military officers. During Abdülhamid II's reign of over thirty years, a middle-class of state employees, officers, and free professionals emerged who, effectively, overthrew him in 1908.³⁸ The Young Turks, bound to the state, emerged from this socio-economic group. It was an indication of their *state boundness* and Zürcher's emphasis on their mantra of *saving the state*, that removing the last powerful Sultan was not a contradiction to the CUP. The state itself as a sacred object had supplanted the sultanate. The deposition, or even murder, of a sultan was not unheard of. However, the centrality of the institution of the sultanate and the Ottoman dynasty became subordinate to the state. For the Young Turks, it was not Abdülhamid II who had provided the material means of their advancement, but the state.

The search for new accommodations for changing circumstances during the long 19th century nevertheless preserved an important ethnic element in the Ottoman state. Abdülhamid II had sought to manage Albanians, Arabs, and Kurds by cultivating influential local chiefs and notables in the name of Muslim solidarity, the state though, remained an ethnically Turkish institution.³⁹ More specifically, an ethno-linguistically Turkish institution that was Sunni-Muslim and drawn heavily from the Balkans and western Anatolia.

In short, the ethnic, linguistic, confessional, and professional basis of the Turkish Republic's ruling elite was formed in the 19th century. This was combined with a

³⁸ *ibid*, 26.

³⁹ *ibid*, 28.

strong affinity for Balkan Muslims such as themselves, the majority Turkish-speaking Muslims of Anatolia, alongside an antipathy for any group, however small, which could potentially make a nationalistic claim on the territory of the state remaining after 1922. Consequently, all non-Muslims were tarred with the brush of the capitulations on a continuum ranging from, disposable enemies of the state, to tolerated indigenous foreigners. The Kurds on the other hand, were part of the theoretically holistic Muslim millet, but became marginalised as the nation-building project emphasised its ethnolinguistic characteristics.

Michael Meeker has shown the resilience of the Ottoman state-society structure into the 19th century Ottoman reform movement and its clash with modernity.⁴⁰ It is remarkable in its anthropological depth and historical connections in showing the establishment, rise, fall, and rise again of local intermediary-notables. Meeker shows how they established themselves during the Ottoman Empire, and absent a concurrent social revolution, regained their position as conduits for the Republican state too.

A significant continuity was the imperial sovereign's power based on radiating interpersonal association, this required the palace to hold Islam captive.⁴¹ That is, captive to a centrally authorised and patronised version of Sunni-Islam. Thus, the Republican system's need to define a new public life based on secularism, while destroying the old public life based on religion, emerges as a continuous and central theme of a historical political tradition of state-society relations.⁴² In both contexts, the

⁴⁰ Michael Meeker, *A Nation of Empire: The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

⁴¹ *ibid*, 256.

⁴² *ibid*, 65.

centre had to both be part of the numerically dominant religion and control it as a legitimating pillar. Tanzimat reformism did not disturb this association and Abdülhamid II attempted to strengthen it despite demands for Ottomanist reformism.

Meeker's work suggests important links to the early Republican project. The CUP-RPP efforts to inculcate the new Turkish nationalism, initially involved the use of local notables. These notables had recent experience with the more formalised versions of the millet system that began taking shape in the late 18th century, before being institutionalised in the Tanzimat era.⁴³ Early citizenship experiences with the expanding state bureaucracy of the mid to late 19th century, sharpened the distinctions between minority confessional groups on the one hand and the Muslim-Turk on the other. The CUP used this bureaucratic apparatus to quantify the number, type, distribution, and wealth of the population. This financially benefited local notables through later complicity in genocide, then provided the networks of association, communication, and supply for the Turkish-Muslim side of the civil war.

Command, control, and a certain debt derived from these links contributed to the nationalist project. On the one hand, the on-ground needs of the nationalist forces could be mobilised through these extant networks during the chaos of global war, genocide, and civil war. While on the other, the protection afforded to those on the nationalist side from non-Muslim reprisals, coupled with rhetoric of saving the state and the Sultan-Caliph from foreign domination, afforded Ankara the local legitimacy the Sublime Porte could not muster in Anatolia. The religious-dynastic rhetoric was

⁴³ Ohannes Kılıçdağı, 'Social and Political Roles of the Armenian Clergy from the Late Ottoman Era to the Turkish Republic', *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 43, no. 4–5 (2017): 540.

especially useful in gaining the adherence of the Kurds to what become the nationalist leadership in Ankara.⁴⁴

This was significant in how Turkish Republican nationalist identity was constructed around an existing Ottoman state system that was officially despised. The otherness of non-Muslim minorities was already a practiced reality before the CUP-RPP were in control. Their exclusion and removal were sanctioned by a perceived social Darwinist necessity for the state's survival, sharpened by war and dominant group othering. In short, the close association of Sunnism with the state was maintained throughout the war years and into the Republican period. This had implications for village level religiosity to be maintained as a pillar of Republican stability. Which occurred simultaneously with the state doling out its etatist largesse in infrastructure building in service of the titular core nation.

Capitulationphobia

I define capitulationphobia as the early Republican leadership's mobilisation of a set of interconnected foreign and domestic practices to protect and insulate the early Republic from the capitulatory system that broke the Ottoman Empire apart, and almost destroyed the state. It is rooted in the CUP-RPP state elite's political experience in the paucity of Ottoman sovereignty, its economic penetration, and its reactive foreign policy. It is intended to capture how the Turkish Republic acted internally and externally to reconstruct, then protect its sovereignty, national

⁴⁴ Robert Olson and William Tucker, 'The Sheikh Sait Rebellion in Turkey (1925): A Study in the Consolidation of a Developed Uninstitutionalized Nationalism and the Rise of Incipient (Kurdish) Nationalism', *Die Welt Des Islams* 18, no. 3/4 (1978): 199.

economy, and nation-building project, as derived from late Ottoman experience. The experience had broken the Empire apart, the elite's worst fears were realised after the Balkan Wars, as explored by Eyal Ginio.⁴⁵ However, enough of the state remained intact, for the reconstituted elite to save and strengthen.

Broadly defined, capitulationphobia can be understood as the impetuses helping to form the Republican elite's conceptions of sovereignty, legitimacy, and nationalism. It was not only an internal matter but connected Turkish state practice to the foreign policy realm of the 1920s and 1930s. The term can be used as a shorthand to bridge the mutual exclusivity in Turkish historiography between the domestic and the foreign.⁴⁶

Capitulationphobia helps to describe a set of factors in the assumptions of the Turkish leadership which had real and immediate consequences for the Republic. These realities were connected to the direct experience of the Turkish state's apex in the Ottoman Empire, their political success in overturning the foreign dominated capitulatory system, and the active prevention of its reintroduction to Republican Turkey. It was the exercise and demonstration of the new system's legitimacy over the old. Capitulationphobia has concrete examples and explanatory value for the 1930s in economic policy, domestic nation-building policy, and foreign policy. It is

⁴⁵ Ginio, *Culture of Defeat*.

⁴⁶ Capitulationphobia is distinct from Sèvres Syndrome because it is more rational and historically contingent. Sèvres Syndrome emerged during the 1990s as a conspiracy theory like set of assumptions that Western powers and internal foreigners were aiming to partition Turkey again, as in the post WWI period. It is a later nationalist response to deflect internal political competition, possibly rooted in the fracturing Cold War system and revitalised Kurdish nationalism. It is articulated as a reemergent threat to the foundational moment of the Turkish Republic. For more on Sèvres Syndrome see, Michaelangelo Guida, 'The Sèvres Syndrome and "Komplo" Theories in the Islamist and Secular Press', *Turkish Studies* 9, no. 1 (2008): 37–52; Türkey Salim Nefes, 'Understanding Anti-Semitic Rhetoric in Turkey through The Sèvres Syndrome', *Turkish Studies* 16, no. 4 (2015): 572–87; Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, 'Settlement Law of 1934: Turkish Nationalism in the Age of Revisionism', *Journal of Migration History* 6 (2020): 82–103.

time-limited to the early Republican period of national establishment-consolidation, seeking international acceptance as an equal among nation-states.

Capitulationphobia can be framed on three levels. A broad general level which operated within the contemporary nation-state system. A second, narrower level connecting the immediate experience of the Turkish state with its Ottoman origins. And a final, a more specific level which covers the concrete actions of the Republic in the 1920s and 1930s.

First, it is generalisable around territorial integrity, economic independence, and non-interference in internal affairs. The state wanted to fit itself into the League of Nations mediated nation-state structure on an equal footing to what it saw as contemporary civilisational norms. Ankara was eager to have this footing recognised at every conceivable opportunity.⁴⁷ The Ottoman Empire had been a recognised independent state but had lost its territorial, economic, and internal independence through the capitulatory system. For the former Ottoman new Republic, this *a priori* recognition was of vital importance as an internationally legitimate nation-state. After establishing its recognition at Lausanne, this was simultaneously consolidated at home through nation-building, and abroad through an active foreign policy.

The second aspect of the framing concerns non-Muslim and Muslim minorities. The state perceived non-Muslim minorities as capitulatory agents in waiting, as the local

⁴⁷ See for example, Umut Özsü, 'De-Territorializing and Re-Territorializing Lotus: Sovereignty and Systematicity as Dialectical Nation Building in Early Republican Turkey', *Leiden Journal of International Law* 22, no. 1 (2009): 29–49. In a legal case concerning a maritime collision between a Turkish and a French ship in international waters, Turkish Minister of Justice Mahmut Esat (Bozkurt) advocated the case personally. He drew on reciprocal rights to press for recognition of the Republic as a modern European state. One both willing to submit to the opinion and authority of European civilisation, but also laying claim to the same sovereignty of which each member of this civilisation was in possession. He blended appeals to normative supremacy of the international legal system with the inviolability of sovereign power, p. 36.

agents of the Great Powers. The construction of this perspective from the late 19th century was a key context as was the culture of defeat that permeated the Muslim intelligentsia after the Balkan Wars.⁴⁸ Muslim minorities on the other hand, essentially Kurds, were seen as having potential for religious reaction and nationalist separatism, also sponsored by the Great Powers. The Sheikh Said Rebellion, overlapping with the Turkish-British struggle over Mosul in Iraq, confirmed this view for Ankara. Whether or not the British actually supported Sheikh Said was immaterial, so long as an internal enemy to the state, that drew foreign support, could be constructed to justify repression. Further, Kurdish foreignness could be constituted by a perceived betrayal of the state despite Islam as a unifier during 1919-22. There is therefore an elasticity to capitulationphobia, at first connoting capitulatory privilege which targets non-Muslims, but also malleable enough to encompass sections of the post-Ottoman Muslim Millet. The result was the Turkish nationalising state's conceptions of sovereignty and legitimacy becoming bound up with the titular core nation of Turkish-speaking Sunni-Muslims.

There is normative international association seeking behaviour with foreign states, at the same time as fear of them as agents which infringe on the rights of other states. This is not necessarily paradoxical, however minorities then become targets of the exclusionary agency of the state for two reasons. First, to secure the territory against such action which may originate from another state. Second, to exclude and marginalise from economic or territorial positions those minorities which could not be assimilated or were needed as internal enemies. That is, non-Muslim minorities were

⁴⁸ In addition to Ginio, see also for a more general exploration of this trauma, Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat, On National Trauma Mourning, and Recovery*, trans. Jefferson Chase (London: Granta, 2003).

excluded as an internal foreigner, while Muslim minorities were subjected to a project of assimilation and internal distancing. Thus, in the period of nation-building, the nascent possibility of internal and external foes working against Lausanne (the ontological good) and for Sèvres (the ontological bad) as the foundational moment of the Republic can be encapsulated in capitulationphobia. This perception of minorities as disruptive elements to the state was a legacy of the Republican elite's Ottoman experience.

The third aspect of capitulationphobia concerns specific actions of the Turkish nationalising state from the general outlines of its thinking. That is, a 19th century nation-state nationalism, directed by the centre and understood in social Darwinist terms. It was distilled through the CUP-RPP mission to save the state and define the national core according to the state's material needs and close identifiability of a population to itself. Policy actions such as the Settlement Law of 1934, the Thrace Pogrom of 1934, treatment of foreign nationals, etatist industrialisation, the Dersim suppression of 1936-8, and the Saadabad and Balkan Pacts count as examples of capitulationphobia. The result of capitulationphobia domestically was therefore, Sunni-Muslim Turkish-speaking advantage, derived from the identity of the state elite, and the most readily available population which could be encouraged to identify with these. Externally, it manifested in the Balkan and Middle Eastern treaties which contributed to isolating the domestic space from external influence. In this way the population, the elite, the religion, territory, and the language could be made congruent, to borrow Ernest Gellner's terminology.

Outline

The content chapters of the thesis open with examinations of Turkish foreign policy in the Balkans and the Middle East. As will be seen, Great Power centrism is prevalent in the literature on the Balkan and Saadabad Pacts. A more region-centric analysis foregrounds Balkan and Middle Eastern nation-state agency in this diplomacy. More specifically, Turkey's involvement in regional foreign policy sets further ground for analysing Ankara's domestic policy and the connections between the two spheres.

Chapter one's focus is the Balkan Entente signed in 1934 by Greece, Romania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. It was an attempt at collective security to protect the Balkan territorial status quo, specifically from Bulgarian revisionism. While it was an attempt to reduce the reliance on Great Power security guarantees in the region, it also had the result of inhibiting Italian revisionism in the Balkans for a time. The Pact developed from common economic and political problems that prompted a series of Balkan conferences on regional cooperation. Here, nation-state interests eventually prevailed over initial thoughts on organising cross-border grass-roots governance.

I argue that the interwar Greco-Turkish alignment was instrumental in Balkan Entente signature. After Lausanne, Greek and Turkish policy became sufficiently aligned to cooperate for a regional understanding giving depth to their Entente Cordiale of 1933. For a short time, their foreign policy had aligned to such an extent that they practically guaranteed each other's common frontiers. The Greek crisis of 1935 demonstrated this. There was a quasi-polarity in the Pact, Athens-Ankara on one side and Belgrade-Bucharest on the other, though this did not suggest enmity. Rather the latter two were already in the Little Entente, a relatively Central European concern

compared to the Ankara-Athens bloc's more Mediterranean interests. The attempt of all four to keep others outside the Balkans was a key common interest.

For Ankara, the Balkan Pact was a crucial part of its consistent long-term foreign policy of restoring full sovereignty over the Straits and remilitarisation of Thrace. In the Balkans, Turkey demonstrated competence in upholding its foreign obligations with a view to gradual negotiated revision of standing agreements.

Chapters two and three are on Turkish relations in the Middle East exploring the contracting of the Saadabad Pact in 1937 by Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. These chapters continue the thematic exploration of regional agency against a historiography that posits Middle Eastern collaboration as dependent on direct Great Power influence or facilitation. Chapter two shows a pattern of Ankara's work in establishing bilateral relationships with Saadabad's eventual signatories in the 1920s, before giving them depth in the 1930s. Similarly, to the Balkans, the goal was to find workable and negotiated alternatives to protect the Middle Eastern status quo. In difference to the Balkans there were territorial adjustments, crucially however, these were negotiated among the Middle Eastern nation-states themselves, such as the Turkish-Iranian border adjustment and Turkish mediation of the Afghan-Iran frontier dispute in 1935.

The longer section on Turkish-Iranian relations demonstrates similar alignment in the Middle East to that of Ankara-Athens in the Balkans. This was based on geographical proximity and territorial security that converged on mutual interests. Where the security interest externally targeted a nation-state, Bulgaria, in the Balkans, it targeted internal Kurdish populations in the Middle East. The Perso-Turkish border

adjustment in 1932 increased Ankara's control of the frontiers around Little Ararat, where Kurdish resistance to the state had escaped after the Ararat Rebellions from 1930. Border collaboration contributed to trade diplomacy. Iran was seeking to diversify its markets and the transit routes which ran through Soviet and Iraqi territory, Ankara was willing to help and concurrently develop its capacity as a node of transit trade. This added to overall objectives of centralisation and nation-building to produce continuous diplomatic intercourse. Similarly, the chapter further demonstrates how relations between Baghdad and Ankara developed through a mutual interest in exercising control over their Kurdish populations. The result was a facilitating impetus in the three contiguous members of Saadabad for the treaty.

Chapter three continues and concludes the diplomatic processes that led to Saadabad. It begins by examining the partial resolution of the Iran-Iraq frontier dispute on the Shatt al-Arab, with Ankara's mediation. The episode is significant because it was resolved in the Middle East after British and Italian mediation failed in Europe. The literature has thus far held that the Middle Eastern alliance was a reaction to Italian expansionism in Africa, this was not the case. Each of the states had their Middle East-centric reasons for moving negotiations to the region. Chief among these was a mutual desire for security, reduction of border disputes, domestic centralisation, and nation-building. The Saadabad Pact, and the diplomacy leading to it, established a field of communicative good relations to facilitate responses to regional developments with limited scope. More broadly, the Pact sat within the League of Nations. In the processes of its signature and limited time of operation, it helped to constitute the modern Middle East as a region in the new transnational political forms of nation-state association.

Specifically for Turkey, establishing good regional relations was part of its long-term security interests. Ankara had no potential enemy like Bulgaria in the Middle East. However, it did have weak central control over its eastern provinces. The potential enemy was not a state, but the nation-state's own Kurdish minority. Since Baghdad and Tehran had similar concerns, the contiguous partners agreed to keep control over their mutual borders and inhibit cross-border Kurdish association. Turkey's east and south-east, then, can be read partially as an internal buffer zone. A buffer that was agreed to by regional nation-state association, giving time and space for Ankara's domestic policies of economic transformation and central control. This ties to Cyrus Schayegh's assertion that national power emphasised its hegemonic saturation of space within its frontiers.⁴⁹ All three capitals had this goal and could agree to first restrict then spatialise over their territories according to central priorities.

Despite efforts to keep the alliances regional, both the Balkan and Saadabad Pacts were destroyed by the weight of destabilisation from the Great Powers further west. This gives reason to the undercurrent of Great Power centrism in the historiography. Both pacts are judged as failures in the literature. But the metric of analysis that produces this conclusion is disproportional to the aims and contexts of these regional treaties. They were not designed to prevent global war and are judged for having failed to do so. They did, however, prevent war in their limited sphere of interests and operation for as long as each nation-state was still master of its own interests.

In chapters four and five the analysis has a domestic focus. Chapter four, 'Etatist Economic Nationalism' broadens the history of etatism beyond state industrial

⁴⁹ Cyrus Schayegh, *The Middle East and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 21.

planning in the 1930s to its Ottoman origins in socio-economic planning for economic transformation. The first issue with a longer history is the outline of economic changes in the last century and a half of Empire. This starts with an urban confessional transfer of wealth through the *gedik* system of capital accumulation. There was a significant transfer of urban wealth from Muslim *vakıfs* to Christian *gediks* from the mid-18th century.⁵⁰ This wealth transfer had implications for the weakening of Muslim elites' financial position relative to the growing wealth of autochthonous non-Muslims. Moreover, this class was protected by the capitulatory system and strengthened by the slow permeation of the industrial revolution into Ottoman land from the 19th century. In conjunction with capitulatory intervention, this wealth transfer was a driver of first Ottoman then Turkish nationalism under the CUP-RPP. Economic nationalism went further than attempts to secure economic sovereignty. It aimed to eradicate the other, conceived as non-Muslim, from all economic life.⁵¹ Alongside state planning of economic activity, then, etatism involved institutionalising the transfer of wealth from Ottoman non-Muslims to Republican SMTs.

Domestically, Ankara radiated its territorial control over the country by rail and industry. The state embedded itself into livelihoods through employment, social services, and schooling in new urban centres. It simultaneously excluded non-Muslims and non-Turks from etatism's opportunities, thereby contributing to the formative processes of Republican Turkish identity, an identity that could be

⁵⁰ Aslı Cansular and Timur Kuran, 'Economic Harbingers of Political Modernization: Peaceful Explosion of Rights in Ottoman Istanbul' (Working Paper, Economic Research Initiatives at Duke (ERID), December 2020), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3434656.

⁵¹ Ayhan Aktar, 'Conversion of a "Country" into a "Fatherland": The Case of Turkification Examined, 1923-1934', in *Nationalism in the Troubled Triangle: Cyprus, Greece and Turkey* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 21–35.

nationalised around the state. Moreover, in conjunction with the world agricultural price crisis borne of the Great Depression, Ankara became the shopkeeper of Turkish agricultural output. In the autarkic 1930s, self-sufficiency competed with the need for importing industrial materiel. The bilateral system of trade known as clearing was a mitigator for autarky. The state, instead of the market, acted as the exchange mechanism to stabilise prices domestically and sell the surplus abroad.

Consequently, the countryside bankrolled etatist industrialisation.

Etatism, then, was at once a system of wealth transfer from country to city, as well as a system that institutionalised the wealth transfer from Christian to Muslim within the nationalist civilisational assumptions of the ruling elite. It demonstrated the dynamics by which Ankara, strengthened after Lausanne and shedding the capitulations, could nationalise existing foreign concessions remaining from Empire. The start of urban regeneration, paid for with domestic resources, were secured by a new ability to keep erstwhile capitulatory powers at arm's length in foreign policy.

Through its socio-economic functions etatism acted as a securitising tool and legitimisation device. By embedding itself into the economic lives of the core-nation in urban areas and staving off a further price crash in the rural, Ankara legitimated itself as the centre of the new Republican order. Through the factories and expanded rail network it developed a measure of industrial self-sufficiency and extended its physical control around more of the territory to embed, in the 1930s, the new status quo established in the 1920s.

The final chapter explores how Turkey operated as a nationalising state in the 1930s. The CUP-RPP's mission to save and strengthen the state was bound up with the

desire to territorialise its legitimacy around Ankara's sovereignty. Strengthening the state involved first, a corrective to Ottoman failure to entrench itself in Anatolia, in Ankara's nationalist imaginary. Second, was Ankara's response to finding its civilising-modernising mission was progressing too slowly by 1930. A crisis of legitimacy intensified the state's particularistic nation-building around the SMT population as the core.⁵²

The chapter first explores theoretical approaches to nationalism in general and Turkish nationalism in particular. The latter includes Gökalp's formulations as the ideologue of Turkish nationalism, as well as recent critical scholarship. Analyses of Turkish nationalism have focused on the gap between official discourse of civic inclusion and exclusionary practice. I propose a compromise position between the explanatory spaces by offering Turkey in the 1930s as a nationalising state in formative flux. This is informed by Rogers Brubaker's focus on nationalisms as dynamic conceptions which should be analysed as categories of practice.⁵³ This is instead of analysing nation-states as inevitabilities. Gary Wilder's antinomies of discourse and practice help to frame analyses of Turkish nationalism, such as Gregory Goalwin's boundary making and Lerna Ekmekçioğlu's assimilability paradox.⁵⁴ Lastly, in this context, Goswami's work on the doubled character of the

⁵² This will be seen further in chapters four and five, the state intention to "civilise" met the inhibitory factor of resource scarcity. A crisis of discontent combined with economic crisis after 1929 helps to set up the 1930s as an analytical space. See also footnote (9) to page 265, for an acknowledgement of race as an explanatory variable that stands outside the framing of this study.

⁵³ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁵⁴ Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Gregory Goalwin, 'Understanding the Exclusionary Politics of Early Turkish Nationalism: An Ethnic Boundary Making Approach', *Nationalities Papers* 45, no. 6 (2017): 1150–66; Ekmekçioğlu, 'Republic of Paradox'.

national form, helps to show how nationalising processes in domestic and foreign policy reinforced each other.⁵⁵

There are then four empirical case studies of the state's practice. These cover the treatment of foreign nationals, the Thrace Pogrom of 1934, settlement of Muslim migrants, and the Dersim operations of 1936-38. The cases collectively demonstrate the state's repertoire of action according to the target population's identity relative to the state's chosen core. They help to delineate the processes by which the state aimed to nationalise the SMT core and excluded others. In short, Ankara sought to extend its hegemony over the total territory it claimed sovereignty over by nationalising the core group around itself, hence the nationalising state. Etatist achievements in extending the state's physical reach facilitated this process.

At first glance capitulationphobia appears marginal to the chapters on Balkan and Saadabad foreign policy. There are two reasons for this. First is my argument about regional agency in the treaties. Capitulationphobia was a set of practices against former capitulatory agency inhibiting local agency, it was aimed at and informed by relations with Great Powers. Regional pact-making had broadly similar aims to inhibit Great Power interference, as such capitulationphobia does not make an explicit appearance in these chapters but does inform Ankara's practice in managing Great Power influence. Balkan and Saadabad facilitation of sovereignty and security, gave depth to Lausanne as the external ontological good of the nation-state as viable in the long-term. In this sense of broad security aims, nation-state interest in keeping minority relations quiet for external peace and internal reform provided a broad base

⁵⁵ Goswami, 'Rethinking the Modular Nation'.

of agreement for signatories of both pacts. In short, capitulationphobia, in so far as regional dynamics were concerned, operated in the background that attempted to keep the Great Powers at bay.

Second, Ankara's construction of former Ottoman non-Muslims in Turkey as internal foreigners was bound up with their perception as capitulatory agents in waiting. Following imperial collapse, securing Republican borders, and population exchange minority relations became much more an internal matter that was shielded from the outside. The various quadruple relationships, between Athens-Ankara and their reciprocal domestic minorities for example, in the interwar period are beyond the bounds of the current study.⁵⁶ This limitation is a reason why I use capitulationphobia as a time limited conceptual shorthand that operated on the nation-state level against Great Powers externally, and domestically for the construction of the Turkish nation-state.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ For reciprocity in minority relations see, Samim Akgönül, ed., *Reciprocity: Greek and Turkish Minorities, Law, Religion and Politics* (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2008).

⁵⁷ Part of the reason the perception of minorities as disruptive agents of Great Power encroachment persisted was the actions or situation of former Ottoman minorities beyond Republican borders. For example, real or imagined assassination attempts by Armenians with French, Syrian, and Kurdish support; British use of Assyrians for colonial policing, French settlement of Armenians for social control of different groups in Syria; the Khoybun-Dashnak partnership in the Levant. These gave capitulationphobia a transnational persistence throughout the period, by showing any action by former Ottoman minorities as necessarily disruptive to Republican national unity. Though the reasons for these were not discussed, leading to a prevailing attitude of minorities as an ontological threat. However, the complicating dynamic of Syria as a French mandate in these examples, leave it beyond the parameters of the thesis. See, Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who Is a Turk?* (London: Routledge, 2006), 132–33; Laura Robson, *The Politics of Mass Violence in the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 69–71; Jordi Tejel, 'The Last Ottoman Rogues: The Kurdish–Armenian Alliance in Syria and the New State System in the Interwar Middle East', in *Age of Rogues: Rebels, Revolutionaries and Racketeers at the Frontiers of Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 376.

Primary Source Review

The principal primary evidence base of the study are the records found in The National Archives at Kew (TNA). The Foreign Office Political Departments General Correspondence, widely known by its series number FO 371, are well known and used. The less known and more important for a region-centric analysis is the HW 12 series at TNA. The HW series have been accruing since the early 1990s. These are records either created or inherited by the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) and its predecessor the Government Code and Cypher School (GCCS). These records broadly relate to intercepted enemy communications by British Signals Intelligence (SIGINT).

More specifically, HW 12 relates to the diplomatic section of SIGINT. Also known as the BJ series, these are decrypts of intercepted diplomatic communications. Each volume in the series is arranged chronologically from its start in October 1919 until and including 1945. The exceptions are the lost volumes HW 12/228 to HW 12/234, spanning June-December 1938 inclusive.

Nicholas Tamkin has made use of these sources to analyse British-Turkish relations during WWII.⁵⁸ The history of signals intelligence and their use to British decision makers are studied more extensively by John Ferris.⁵⁹ They have both demonstrated the value of unvarnished communications between diplomatic actors of other states intercepted, decoded, and circulated to selected departments of the British foreign

⁵⁸ Nicholas Tamkin, *Britain, Turkey and the Soviet Union, 1940-45: Strategy, Diplomacy and Intelligence in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Nicholas Tamkin, 'Diplomatic Sigint and the British Official Mind during the Second World War: Soviet Claims on Turkey, 1940-45', *Intelligence and National Security* 23, no. 6 (2008): 749-66.

⁵⁹ John Ferris, 'The Road to Bletchley Park: The British Experience with Signals Intelligence, 1892-1945', *Intelligence and National Security* 17, no. 1 (2002): 53-84; John Ferris, "'Indulged in All Too Little"?: Vansittart, Intelligence and Appeasement', *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 6, no. 1 (1995): 122-75.

policy making establishment. These include but were not exclusive to the Foreign Office, Cabinet Office, and the Admiralty.

Ferris traces the history of the establishment of GCCS, and the associated technical and political changes in signals intelligence gathering from the late 19th century. He describes GCCS's growth from a rag tag collection of disparate agencies and sub-departments to a recognised section under the aegis first of the Admiralty then Foreign Office, there is little cause to doubt his assertion that during 1919-1932 the GCCS was the best code breaking department in the World.⁶⁰ Ferris identifies a weakness related to the 1934-1939 period, when GCCS was not able to break the diplomatic codes of larger powers with the exception of Japan during 1936-1938.⁶¹ Ferris further analyses the differences in usage of the HW series by British diplomats and politicians; their attitudes to signals intelligence, their perception of its utility, and tangible results for British desiderata emanating from the work of cryptographers.⁶²

Although the Great Powers were largely immune British code breaking in the 1930s for diplomatic correspondence, others were not. Indeed, so rich and voluminous were the pickings in HW 12 that, according to Ferris, they could not be used effectively.⁶³ Prior to accretion, HW solutions of diplomatic traffic existed in fragments in other collections such as FO 371 and private papers. Ferris cautions against reading HW 12 as a source on its own, since information from signals intelligence by itself does not make political decisions.⁶⁴ Especially since for Britain, diplomatic information on

⁶⁰ Ferris, 'Signals Intelligence', 53.

⁶¹ *ibid*, 68.

⁶² Ferris, 'Intelligence and Appeasement'.

⁶³ Ferris, 'Signals Intelligence', 66.

⁶⁴ *ibid*, 55.

the Great Powers had primacy, but could not be reliably and consistently accessed through most of the 1930s.

However, the concern here with the Balkans and the Middle East allows for a different approach. The relative weaknesses of signals intelligence gleaned from central and western Europe, differences in how they were distributed and acted on by policy makers in London, are not a weakness for a Balkan and Middle East based analysis of interwar diplomacy. The documentation is rich without being exhaustive or complete. It contains the correspondence between the ambassadors and diplomats of non-Great Powers and their foreign ministries. This is not only between London and Ankara but also from capitals and major cities ranging from Paris to Tokyo. For example, document number 060298 in volume 190 of HW 12 (April 1935), is a telegram from an Iranian diplomat, Bagher Kazemi, in Tehran to the Iranian legation in Rome, containing instructions on the Iran-Iraq border impasse under discussion in Geneva. As such, for the diplomatic history of the interwar Balkans and Middle East, HW 12 is a little-tapped mine of considerable significance.

The collection is further valuable because, nowhere in either the primary or secondary literature is there any indication yet, that any of the states under consideration suspected their messages were being read. The unvarnished communications between Ankara and its various representations in the Middle East and Europe, therefore, are at once a historiographically valuable source in their own right and, secondly serve to confirm or place under suspicion the pronouncements of Turkish, and other, officials contained in FO 371. As will be seen, there was remarkable consistency in Turkish communication in both series. More specifically for the current project, the inaccessibility of official Turkish archives is to a significant

extent mitigated by HW 12. Furthermore, a drawback of FO 371 is a lack of first-hand information between other powers. That is, there is very little on communications between Greek and Turkish officials for instance. Thus, the diplomatic decrypts in HW 12, help to base the study on material produced by regional actors.

Moreover, the English language scholarship on the Balkan and Saadabad Pacts suffer from Great Power centrism at the expense of factors pertinent to the signatories. On the other hand, scholarship on diplomatic history in Turkish or by Turkish historians tend towards an official history narrative, which can put undue primacy on Turkish state pronouncements. The incorporation of HW 12 therefore, balances these tendencies towards a more regional analysis. However, the primacy of Turkey as the analytical focus is a limitation.

The sheer weight and wealth of FO 371 is also utilised. However, where FO 371 can and has been the driver of diplomatic history conducted in the UK, here both are used to inform, bolster, and plug the gaps in one another. This is especially useful for the gap in the HW 12 record spanning the second half of 1938. The dual use contributes to a reduction of extrapolation from FO 371.

There is a technical note to the presentation of HW 12 in the footnotes. There was a time lapse between the interception of a piece of communication, its decryption, and its reporting to departments. According to TNA, the lag depended on the difficulty of the cypher, contemporary intelligence priorities, and location of interception.⁶⁵ The lag could be a matter of a few days, though in some cases weeks or months. This can be problematic for historians such as Ferris and Tamkin in their examination of how

⁶⁵ <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C9291>, accessed April 2022.

British officialdom responded to the decrypts, no similar consideration exists for this study. As a result, HW 12 footnotes in the text are dated according to when they were sent instead of when they were solved by Bletchley Park cryptographers. This gives a better chronology of information flow between regional actors. It should also reduce confusion in tracking footnotes which at first glance might appear out of sync with the narrative. The two examples should be illustrative.

Document number 062126 in HW 12, Volume 196 is in the collection of telegrams deciphered in October 1935. The footnote reads, "HW12/196, 062126, Aras, Geneva to Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 28 September 1935". The discrepancy is due to the four-day delay between when the communication was sent, intercepted, decrypted, then filed on 2 October 1935.

The difference of a few days between the end of one month and beginning of another is a lesser problem than the more common occurrence of larger delays relating to Afghan communications. For instance, "HW 12/197, 062848, Afghan Delegate, Geneva to Foreign Office, Kabul, 1 October 1935", at first glance the volume number for November appears out of step with the date of communication at the beginning of October. This is because of a longer delay of seven weeks between communication, interception, decryption, and filing on 17 November. In any case, both dates are available in the documents and the citations guide the reader to the appropriate document in the archives.

Where HW 12 is less useful is in the domestic sphere of analysis. Aside from fragments dealing with material orders for domestic industrial consumption and military contracts, there is almost no information relating to Turkish domestic

considerations. For home policy therefore there is more reliance on the FO series. These are bolstered by the extensive literature on internal Turkish dynamics from a variety of theoretical and empirical studies that use official Turkish archival material. These are corroborative of each other in their deployment of primary material, if somewhat divergent on conclusions. Again, these are more specifically explored in the appropriate chapters.

In the absence of access to Turkish archives, there is supplemental use of Turkish newspapers published in the 1930s. The sporadic availability of contemporary Turkish print media is being expanded by Istanbul University's project to digitise Turkish newspapers for the years 1928-1942.⁶⁶ On the positive side, they are useful in confirming chronology and revealing the priorities of state communication to a wider audience. On the negative, they were produced under an authoritarian state. The press did not have much independence of action from which to glean contending priorities of different stakeholders.

More specifically, *Ulus*, the RPP's newspaper is deployed as an auxiliary source in chapter four, 'Etatist Economic Nationalism'. The newspaper was run by Falih Rıfki Atay, a CUP man who came to be an ally of Atatürk in the Republican period.⁶⁷ He was influential in theorising, systematising, and communicating Kemalism to the population through print media.⁶⁸ The press was a tool of hegemonic instrumentalisation in non-Muslim minority affairs, that helped to marginalise

⁶⁶ 'İstanbul Üniversitesi Gazeteden Tarihe Bakış Projesi', İstanbul Üniversitesi Gazeteden Tarihe Bakış Projesi, n.d., <http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/index.php>.

⁶⁷ Selim Deringil, *The Ottoman Twilight in the Arab Lands: Turkish Memoirs and Testimonies of the Great War* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2019), 1.

⁶⁸ Funda Selçuk Şirin, 'Bir Gazeteci ve Aydın Olarak Falih Rıfki Atay (1893-1971)', *Vakanuvis - International Journal of Historical Researches* 2, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 248.

minorities and entrench the identification of Sunni-Muslim Turks with the state.⁶⁹ Hintz further argues that the state's identity hegemony and its understanding of ontological security was spread through its domination of institutions such as the press.⁷⁰ The desire to cultivate politically loyal and economically productive subjects and citizens was pursued through print media.⁷¹ Further, just as media shaped itself according to diplomatic activity in foreign policy spheres, so it did in domestic activity, to sell the state's vision to its readers.⁷² The question of the success or otherwise of media in inculcating nationalism or pushing its foreign policy agenda is not under evaluation here. Rather, auxiliary use of the press demonstrates the state's priorities in communication. A snapshot of state industrial tendering in 1938 gleaned from *Ulus* bridges the end of the first five-year industrialisation plan and planning for the second, which was not completed. The newspaper both communicated state achievements in industrialisation from Ankara's perspective and served as a noticeboard for tendering further public works.

There is an acknowledgement to make on the 'Etatist Economic Nationalism' chapter's lack of primary documentation before 1930. The relatively extensive background is written through the scholarly literature. This takes advantage of historians who have gained access to primary material in Turkey, which has been

⁶⁹ Betül Açıkgöz and Erdoğan Keskinçilic, 'Renunciation of Minority Rights and the Making of the 1926 Civil Law: Mazhars Penned by Non-Muslim Minorities', *Middle Eastern Studies* 54, no. 1 (2018): 86; Alexandros Lamprou, 'Nationalist Mobilization and State-Society Relations: The People's Houses Campaign for Turkish in Izmir, June-July 1934', *Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 5 (2013): 828; Soner Çağaptay, 'Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s', *Middle Eastern Studies* 4, no. 3 (2004): 96.

⁷⁰ Hintz, *Identity Inside Out*, 5.

⁷¹ Benjamin Fortna, 'Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 21, no. 1-2 (2001): 39.

⁷² Tufan Turan and Esin Tüylü-Turan, 'Cumhuriyet ve Ulus Gazetelerinde Saadabad Pakti'nin İmzalanmasının Yansımaları', *Turkish Studies* 6, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 1762.

beyond the scope of this project. However, this scholarship provides a solid base and framing that leads to an analysis of economic policy of the 1930s based on primary evidence. The pre-1930 framing in the scholarship matches my departure point, of a largely coherent continuity in state elite leadership from late Empire to early Republic. More specifically, CUP-RPP continuities in economic nationalism, the *gedik* market, and securitised understandings of the territory through the homogenisation of Anatolia, all have Ottoman origins, which I argue had causal implications for Turkish policy in the 1930s. My point of departure of a continuity in CUP-RPP personnel, their conceptions of the sacred sovereignty of the state, and their actions encapsulated in what I have termed capitulationphobia, are congruent with the nationalising state's practice of entrenching their legitimacy economically in the 1930s. Consequently, while recognising the drawback in primary sourcing before 1930, omitting a review of the material legacy of Ottoman non-Muslims and CUP economic nationalism would render an analysis of etatism in the 1930s poorer.

In sum, the primary evidence base of the current study is found in the British archives. By incorporating the thus far little-used HW 12 series in conjunction with the voluminous FO material, a Balkan and Middle East region-specific history is possible through extra-regional primary evidence. These are supplemented by a selective sample of contemporary Turkish newspapers to fill archival gaps in the domestic analysis. This combined use contributes to expanding the primary evidence base through an analysis and incorporation of newly available material.

CHAPTER ONE - THE BALKAN ENTENTE

This chapter counters the dominance of the Great Power-centric histories of the Balkan Entente by focusing on the foreign policy interests of the Balkan Entente signatories. More specifically there is a focus on Turkish foreign policy interests and Ankara's alignment with Athens. However, despite the emphasis on a Balkan-centric narrative, it recognises the limitations of smaller power diplomacy in an overall context of balancing against the Great Powers.

The chapter engages with the diplomatic considerations and negotiations undertaken before the Treaty was signed. These shed light on attempts to build targeted collective security on the Balkan peninsula, against Bulgarian revisionism, which had the simultaneous effect of frustrating Italian revisionist designs. The chapter demonstrates the importance of the Balkan Pact, first as a defensive agreement for the protection of the Balkan territorial status quo; second as a link connecting longer-term Turkish foreign policy goals for sovereignty over the Straits and remilitarisation of its Thracian borders; and third, as the zenith of Greco-Turkish foreign policy relations at a particular moment when their interests in the Balkans were aligned. The final section on the Greek Crisis and military conversations demonstrate the Entente's operational capabilities, and the signatories' attempts to give military and diplomatic depth to the organisation within prevailing international practices.

Literature Review

The scholarly literature on the Balkan Pact has been framed by the Cold War and Great Power centrism. As early as 1954, Marin Pundeff described the Balkan Entente as an effort towards Balkan collaboration from which Bulgaria remained isolated because Sofia would not underwrite the territorial status quo established first at the end of the Second Balkan War and then by the Treaty of Neuilly in 1919.¹ The description was correct, however it was made in the context of Cold War treaty negotiations and strategic assessments of the 1950s. Ludmila Zhivkova argued, in 1976, that Turkey was an aggressively revisionist state in the interwar period, framing the Balkan Entente as part of a violently anti-Bulgarian policy by Turkey on the way to the signature of the Montreux Convention in 1936.² This had much more pertinence for contemporary Cold War dynamics since Turkey as a member of NATO could be construed as a security threat to Bulgaria and the southern border of the Warsaw Pact.

Great Power influence can be found in the later historiography of Turkish and Balkan foreign policy. These tend to draw their conclusions from the interests of and dynamics pertaining to the Great Powers instead of the Balkan states. In his study on the immediate results of the Balkan Pact, Mustafa Türkeş takes a usefully long view back to the Berlin Congress of 1878 and the Balkan Wars.³ As is common for the history of the interwar period he employs a clear-cut revisionist–status quo dichotomy, which is problematic for Turkish foreign policy of the time, though less so

¹ Marin Pundeff, 'The Balkan Entente Treaties', *The American Journal of International Law* 48, no. 4 (1954): 636.

² Ludmila Zhivkova, *Anglo-Turkish Relations 1933-1939* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1976). Zhivkova was the daughter of the Bulgarian head of state Todor Zhivkov.

³ Mustafa Türkeş, 'The Balkan Pact and Its Immediate Implications for the Balkan States, 1930-34', *Middle Eastern Studies* 30, no. 1 (1994): 123.

in the Balkan context.⁴ Türkeş examines the pros and cons of the agreement for each of Greece, Romania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia to draw pragmatic conclusions which are not under dispute here. However, one of his final judgements that, "The Balkan Pact made no provision for the possibility that a non-Balkan state, acting on its own, might attack a Balkan state...remained the Balkan Pact's weakest point", is characteristic of the literature which posits the Entente's futility on its lack of a Great Power sponsor or target.⁵

This was not the weakness of the four-power Balkan agreement. Drawing an agreement from outside the Balkans to gain this guarantee would have necessitated the input or signature of one or more Great Power. This would have made the Pact another in a long line of multilateral agreements patronised by a Great Power, such as the contemporaneous Little Entente. Thus, undermining its practical utility for non-Great Powers. The eventual signatories had more bargaining power over each other compared to a more powerful ally. In this case, the limited practical utility of a restricted regional understanding of collective security, produced better protection. Further, from the Turkish view, the Entente provided the international and regional support to make a concerted diplomatic effort to revise the Straits and Thrace issues. In short, Türkeş' analysis draws on Great Power analysis at the expense of a Balkan-centric approach.

While making perhaps a little too much of Turkish bellicosity and Atatürk's various private and public statements on his attitude to the German and Italian leadership, Brock Millman sees Turkey's Balkan policy as one of the chief principles of Turkish

⁴ For a critique of the revisionist-status quo dichotomy as it related to Turkey see, Çoban, 'Re-Evaluation'.

⁵ Türkeş, 'Balkan Pact', 141.

foreign affairs. He puts forward Turkey's strategic frontier in the Balkans as the Danube, its alliances with Greece and the Balkan Entente were, according to Millman, an attempt to contain Balkan quarrelling and to ensure common action against external threats.⁶ Further, he sees Bulgarian intransigence in joining the Pact as the limiting factor in the potential good it might have done, rather than seeing Bulgaria as the target of the alliance.⁷ There might be something in this, though it ends up being conjectural. The evidence seems rather to point to the Balkan Entente as a tool to maintain the Balkan territorial status quo, instead of a much larger project of insulating the peninsula in toto against anyone outside it. Millman's argument reads as a defence of Turkish foreign policy rather than an analysis of it. Though it does not attempt to hide this, taking its initial impetus from the argument on whether Turkey was a revisionist or a status quo state. It is more concerned with Turkish policy towards the eventual belligerents of WWII; thus, it is inflected with Great Power centrism.

In one of the standard works on Turkish foreign policy, William Hale puts forth the Balkan Pact as a notable achievement but qualifies it as falling short of the much broader pact of mutual assistance covering Britain, France, Italy, the USSR, and Balkan states desired by Tevfik Rüştü Aras, the Turkish Foreign Minister.⁸ The newer evidence in HW 12 does not bear out this desire. It is also not clear who this mutual assistance would be directed against or how competing interests could be balanced. Hale further shows that, soon after the Pact's signature Romania and Yugoslavia

⁶ Brock Millman, 'Turkish Foreign and Strategic Policy 1934-42', *Middle Eastern Studies* 31, no. 3 (1995): 489.

⁷ *ibid*, 490.

⁸ William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 61.

drifted into the German orbit and that signature did not stop Benito Mussolini declaring his infamous ambitions in Asia and Africa just a month later.⁹

These are pertinent points of contention on the success or otherwise of the Pact, however they are still Eurocentric. Little agency is attributed to smaller states.

Another view of Mussolini's speech may be that it was a case of sabre-rattling against successful Balkan diplomacy, which had the potential of strengthening the Aegean arm of the Mediterranean and Yugoslavia against Italian revisionism.

Nevertheless, the broad view taken by Hale is understandable considering the scope of his analysis covering more than two centuries.

Baskın Oran sees Turkish foreign policy of this time through the prism of relativised independence. In this framing, Europe after 1929 was in a gradual process of losing primacy as the central arbiter of world affairs and there was a lack of a *pax* able to dictate terms in Europe more specifically.¹⁰ He sees this as producing advantages for Turkey, and therefore an ability to exercise relative independence in foreign policy.

The first of these was that Turkey, as one of the more peripheral states, was able to exercise this independence of action, due in part to its geostrategic importance which caused both the status quo and revisionist blocs to seek its favour. The other was the diminished threat of Russia after 1917, turning in the 1920s to friendship. Some of this analysis correlates to approaches of middle-power activism. In the more

⁹ *ibid*, 62.

¹⁰ Baskın Oran, '1923-1939 Görelî Özerklik - 1', in *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar. Cilt 1: 1919-1980*, 12th ed., vol. 1, 2 vols (Istanbul: İletişim, 2006), 241–57. Other translations include comparative sovereignty or relative autonomy. This is a function of foreign policy independence on a relative scale, in the sense that first, it assumes no possibility of absolute independence or sovereignty in the international system. And second, that Turkey had had a level of sovereignty that was internationally recognised. As opposed to, for example, states administered under the mandate system.

fragmented and relatively independent foreign policy areas of the Balkans the description serves well. It works less well where smaller powers cannot relativise their interests as the Great Powers can, for instance in the much larger Mediterranean theatre.

In general Oran sees Turkish foreign policy in relation to three groupings, Britain and France, Germany and Italy, and the USSR. The Balkan Entente, then, was the culmination of the Turkish foreign policy goal of regional balancing and balancing against the advances of the status quo and revisionist Great Powers. But this was not particularly successful because of; the cautious policies of the Balkan Entente states, except Greece, and Anglo-French disagreements about how to counter Germany.¹¹

While Oran sees Turkey as a middle-power able to exercise some degree of independence in foreign policy, his analysis sticks to the prevailing discourses of Great Power politics. This is understandable, as the work is one of reference and an attempt at orienting Turkish historiography towards more independent scholarship and away from nationalist mythologizing. This is reflected in the structure of the book, where Oran provides the framework for the examination of Turkish foreign policy, while leaving the detailed examination of specific issues, to other contributors.

Melek Fırat brings out the detail for the Balkan Pact.¹² Her brief is more descriptive than analytical; it is nevertheless useful in corroborating dates, personalities, and treaty detail. It is more useful as an examination of Greco-Turkish relations, as the

¹¹ Oran, 254.

¹² Melek Fırat, 'Yunanistan'la İlişkiler', in *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar. Cilt 1: 1919-1980*, 12th ed., vol. 1 (Istanbul: İletişim, 2006), 350–53.

chapter title suggests. This is indicative of the general treatment of the Balkan Entente as either an episode in Greco-Turkish relations or as a failed experiment in the immediate WWII context.

The term middle-power is used quite regularly to describe Turkey in the scholarship of this period. While the merits of this description are not under consideration here, the definition Dilek Barlas uses is instructive and based on diplomatic action rather than a consideration of territorial size, economic output, or population size, as is often the case with Hale and Oran. Middle-power diplomacy in seeking to address international problems is guided by a tendency; to pursue multilateral solutions, to embrace compromise, and to embrace notions of good international citizenship.¹³ Elements of these will be seen in Turkey's policy towards the establishment and maintenance of the Balkan Entente. The difference in Barlas' approach to the others is that it does not ignore the framework of the international order largely described in the historiography through the Great Powers, but that it includes within this, the agency of the smaller independent nation-states.

Barlas also contextualises the Balkans to the Mediterranean. In the former, coalition building was easier because the Balkan states were geographically contiguous, power was more evenly distributed and no specific Great Power exercised decisive influence in the first half of the 1930s.¹⁴ As such, she presents an overall thematic analysis that is not primarily dependent on Great Power influence in the Balkans. Using the same categories, she shows how the situation was less amenable to sub-

¹³ Dilek Barlas, 'Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and Mediterranean: Opportunities and Limits for Middle-Power Activism in the 1930s', *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 3 (2005): 442.

¹⁴ *ibid*, 443. Another crucially useful aspect of Barlas' article is that it deploys Turkish, Italian, and British archival evidence which corroborates the material in the HW 12 series.

Great Power agency in the Mediterranean. These themes also provide a useful metric of comparison for Turkey's foreign policy action in bringing about the Saadabad Pact. The following, therefore, is an analysis which draws more on Barlas' methodology of taking for granted Great Power politics, while seeking to explore the Balkan Entente through the diplomatic agency of Balkan foreign policy makers, specifically on the Turkish side.

Finally, there is the contemporary account of the Balkan conferences and the Entente by Robert Kerner and Harry Howard, which was written before the Abyssinian crisis.¹⁵ It is different from the scholarship in that it is both an academic analysis and a journalistic account of the conference events over a five-year period and buttressed by official documentation, the appendix runs to 16 items.¹⁶ An optimistic tone for lasting international peace permeates the work, without diminishing the importance of revisionist threats to the status quo. It is hopeful that discussions and signatures of various international agreements will lead to a more peaceful future in Europe. There is a journalistic intent to follow and report first-hand the events as they unfold, which gives the work a more primary than secondary scholarly source value.

A pervading point throughout is that the conferences paved the way for the Entente treaty. Each of the conferences were addressed by the host nation's head of state and diplomats of all governments attended the conferences as observers.¹⁷ Kerner and Howard saw the conferences overall as a series of sub-state supranational

¹⁵ Robert Joseph Kerner and Harry Nicholas Howard, *The Balkan Conferences and the Balkan Entente: A Study in the Recent History of the Balkan and Near Eastern Peoples* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1936).

¹⁶ For example, The Statutes of the Balkan Conference (1930); The Statutes of the Balkan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (1931); The Convention on the Personal Status of Balkan Citizens (1932), and the Statute of the Advisory Economic Council of the Balkan Entente (1934).

¹⁷ Kerner and Howard, *Balkan Conferences*, 160.

organisations that should continue working towards ever closer cooperation and a possible Balkan Union. They feared that without the conferences, the new Pact would become an organ of the four signatories alone.¹⁸ When the fifth conference (1934) was postponed, their fears seemed to have been realised. The political goals of the states had been achieved in a treaty; the conferences were a forum for diplomacy that was now redundant.

Kerner and Howard hinted at this problem when discussing the shortcomings of the conferences before the fourth edition in November 1933. Resolutions adopted at conference were not being implemented by governments, but neither did the conferences attempt to count the costs of resolutions in money or effort.¹⁹ For the states involved then, the conferences were an effective talking shop for diplomacy, while the authors studiously focused on hopes for greater socio-economic cooperation bankrolled by states, but without state interference. Nevertheless, despite the cleavage in motivations of different stakeholders, the book is rich in describing the details of the conferences and useful for contemporary information on the development of the Balkan Entente.

Preamble

The impact of the Great Depression on the Turkish and Balkan economies was significant. Since they were based on the export of agricultural goods and raw materials, the fall in commodity prices caused major disruption. Of Turkey's main exports, cereal prices on the open market fell by more than 60%, with tobacco,

¹⁸ *ibid* 169.

¹⁹ *ibid*, 95.

hazelnuts, and cotton down by around 50% over the period 1928-1933.²⁰ Imports on the other hand declined from 256 million TL to 85 million TL from 1929 to 1932.²¹ Competing on the open market was not feasible which encouraged the use of the clearing system. These short-term agreements restricted Turkish imports from each country by the value of its exports to it, and vice versa.²² Clearing agreements were protectionist and state dominated, they did however prevent the Republican regime from becoming heavily indebted to the Great Powers. It was a point of economic principle which overlapped with doctrines of economic nationalism. Alongside other protectionist measures, it was a system of commercial agreements many of the other Balkan states employed to reduce reliance on primary product exports and increase industrialisation.²³

Economic difficulty produced some common trends in the Balkans.²⁴ The economies were agrarian, industry was small, and the price shocks outlined above for Turkey also held on the peninsula, contributing to centralisation and authoritarian rule.²⁵ Greece for instance, could not feed itself from its own resources in the 1930s, resorting to selling luxuries such as tobacco, olives, currants, and liquorice root to buy the necessities of wheat, fuel, and arms.²⁶

²⁰ Caroline Arnold, 'In the Service of Industrialisation: Etatism, Social Services and the Construction of Industrial Labour Forces in Turkey, 1930-1950', *Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 3 (2012): 367.

²¹ Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, Third Edition (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 197.

²² William Hale, *The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), 72.

²³ Dilek Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy in Turkey: Economic and Foreign Policy Strategies in an Uncertain World, 1929-1939* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 5.

²⁴ For an overall impression of the economic issues, also see: Derek Howard Aldcroft, *Europe's Third World: The European Periphery in the Interwar Years* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

²⁵ Dennis Hupchick, *The Balkans: From Constantinople to Communism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 352.

²⁶ Panayiotis Vatikiotis, *Popular Autocracy in Greece 1936-41: A Political Biography of General Ioannis Metaxas* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 135–36.

A significant underlying cause of this was overpopulation and low productivity. There was a surplus of labour in the agrarian economy, arable plots became fragmented and inefficient, the small industrial base could not absorb the surplus.²⁷ In this situation smallholders could neither compete on the world market nor retreat into subsistence, debts had to be paid and growing families fed.²⁸ There were small differences in Turkey, labour if anything was in short supply. Nevertheless, the modest industrial base, falling prices for primary products, and almost non-existent agricultural mechanisation produced similar problems of low tax revenue.

Where trade on the open market was prohibitively expensive inter-Balkan trade might have been the alternative, however this was hindered by the similarity of agrarian output. Balkan states exported largely the same products, further driving down their prices on the international market while concurrently keeping intra-Balkan demand for trade low. Addressing these problems was a catalyst for the Balkan Conferences. Building intra-Balkan consensus on economic issues was recognised as important, however the political imperatives of the interwar era precluded further work on these. In this sense, the negotiations leading to what was described as the imperfect or failed Balkan Entente, and the efforts to preserve it by the signatories can be read as an attempt to prevent further fragmentation.

Of the eventual signatories to the Balkan Entente the closest relationship Turkey had was with Greece. The Entente Cordiale signed in 1933 demonstrated a significant rapprochement after the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-22 and the population

²⁷ Leften Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453* (London: Hurst, 2000), 595–97.

²⁸ Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: From the End of Byzantium to the Present Day* (London: Phoenix Press, 2001), 128.

exchanges thereafter.²⁹ Turkish foreign policy became more active towards the end of the 1920s. This coincided with the relative stability of Greek governments headed by Eleftherios Venizelos from 1928 to 1932 and a rising current of revisionism elsewhere in Europe. At this juncture, the renunciation of *Megali Idea* by Greece and *Misak-ı Milli* by Turkey after Lausanne was significant.³⁰ This rejection of territorial claims was an essential initial contributor to the developing bilateral relationship which was compounded by the world economic crisis after 1929. Focusing on internal development and external security without irredentist claims in the Balkans were common to both Greece and Turkey. A second Treaty of Ankara in June 1930 achieved a workable settlement of the refugee issues.³¹

Further unifying factors for the two states lying beyond their immediate bilateral relations, were the perceived Italian threat to their long Aegean-Mediterranean coastlines and Bulgarian intentions of treaty revision. Bulgarian claims against Greece, stemming from Neuilly and the Balkan Wars, centred on parts of Macedonia, western Thrace, their associated Bulgarian speaking populations, and the port of Alexandroupoli which would constitute a Bulgarian outlet to the Aegean.³² Neuilly had demilitarised the Bulgarian frontier with Turkey, adding to the tensions around the heterogeneous Bulgarian and Turkish populations on either side of the border. In

²⁹ FO 371/17959, E 529/529/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 20 January 1934. Relations were strained until the 1930s because of the 1919-22 War, Lausanne, and the population exchange. Matters were complicated by disagreements over the distribution of property left behind in the forced migration. Further disagreements included, citizenship status of populations not subjected to the exchange, Muslims in western Thrace, Orthodox Christians in Istanbul, as well as the status of the Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul. Treaties in 1925 and 1926 failed to solve the problems.

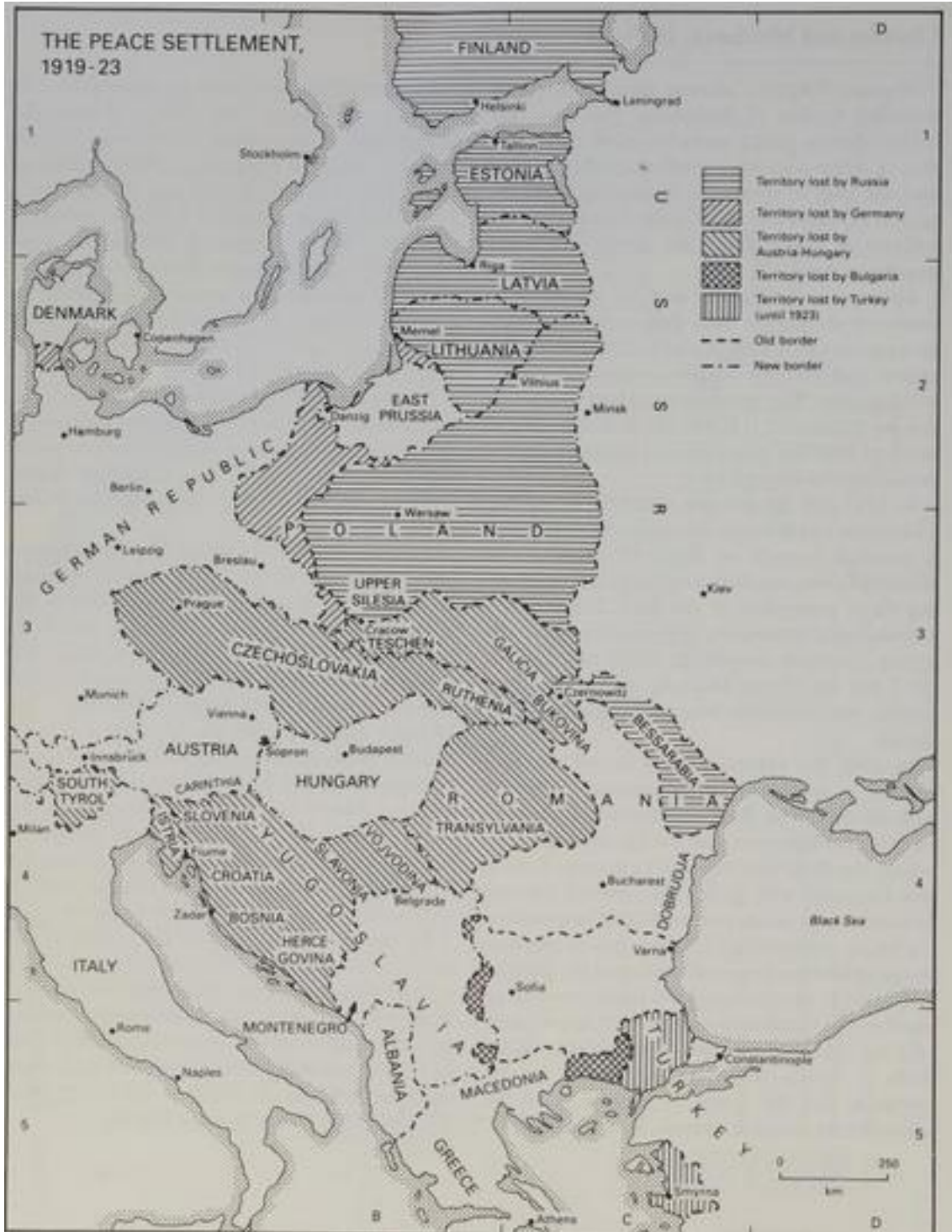
³⁰ *Megali Idea*, (The Great Idea) was broadly, the territorial and political unification of all Greek speaking Orthodox Christians within the Greek State, which would have entailed the addition from Ottoman Turkey, Istanbul and the Aegean coast of Anatolia. *Misak-ı Milli* (The National Pact) was a similar political-territorial manifesto that included territorial demands on Greece.

³¹ Fırat, 'Yunanistan'la İlişkiler', 346.

³² Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy*, 139.

short, Bulgaria pursued a foreign policy of revision that was incompatible with the status quo positions of Greece and Turkey in the Balkans. Greece having emerged as a satisfied nation from WWI, while Turkey had gained its own revision at Lausanne.³³

³³ For more on the post-1918 settlements see: Alan Sharp, *The Versailles Settlement: Peacemaking in Paris, 1919* (London: Macmillan, 1991); David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East 1914-1922* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991).



Map 1 Peace Settlements 1919-1923.³⁴

³⁴ Richard Crampton and Ben Crampton, *Atlas of Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 1996), 36.

Italy was an important consideration for Turkey and Greece in seeking an intra-Balkan understanding. Italian occupation of the Dodecanese Islands during the Italo-Ottoman war of 1911 was formalised at Lausanne.³⁵ The archipelago controls the south-eastern entrance to the Aegean extending considerably northwards, ending south of the Greek island of Samos and the Turkish mainland town of Kuşadası. This extension of a Great Power into the Eastern Mediterranean was an obvious security consideration for Turkey and Greece. Further, there were Greco-Italian tensions over ownership of the Islands, with their largely Greek-Orthodox population and the city of Rhodes as important assets. Previously too, the Corfu Crisis in 1923 had been a warning of Mussolini's revisionist ambitions against Greece, and more generally in the eastern Mediterranean, creating unease among smaller powers in Italian proximity.³⁶

Yugoslavia too had motives developed through apprehension of Rome. Italian territorial reach extended across the Adriatic in the 1920s to the Balkan mainland, causing friction and displaying the territorial ambition of Italian foreign policy. Although a victor in WWI, Italian desires were not satisfied at Paris. One of Italy's objectives was parts of the Dalmatian coast which had gone to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1929). Italy seized the disputed free state of Fiume on the Dalmatian coast in September 1923, during the French-German Ruhr crisis.³⁷ Yugoslavia did not resist, calculating concessions would be available in Albania, an area of competition between the two. However, the

³⁵ Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy*, 133.

³⁶ For the Corfu Crisis see: Peter Yearwood, *Guarantee of Peace: The League of Nations in British Policy 1914-1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 251–81.

³⁷ Türkeş, 'Balkan Pact', 126.

first and second treaties of Tirana (1926 and 1927) brought Albania firmly into the Italian orbit.³⁸ Moreover, Esmonde Robertson and Robert Mallet have shown evidence of Italian plans to encircle and attack Yugoslavia through either control or influence in Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria in the 1920s and during 1933-34 respectively.³⁹ Further, during the 1930s Rome assisted the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO), and Croatian separatists in Yugoslavia.⁴⁰ In short, the Balkan Peninsula had been flanked by active and radiating Italian belligerence since the early 1920s, which contributed to thoughts of Balkan cooperation.

Bulgarian claims on Yugoslavia emanated from the loss of the Struma Valley, Dimitrovgrad (Tsaribrod), and Stromitsa.⁴¹ Despite the later Bulgarian-Yugoslav rapprochement, the latter's adhesion to the Entente can be seen as favouring a balanced and unified Balkan approach towards a menacing Great Power, since Italy behaved as Bulgaria's sponsor. In this calculation, common pressure on Bulgaria, exerted through the collective diplomacy of four Balkan states could still be favourable to Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations, while giving a measure of protection against Italian aggression. It could also point to the signatories' collective desire to eventually secure Bulgarian accession to the Balkan Entente.

³⁸ *ibid*, 126.

³⁹ Esmonde Robertson, *Mussolini as Empire Builder, Europe and Africa 1932-36* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 20; Robert Mallett, *Mussolini and the Origins of the Second World War, 1933-1940* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 19–20.

⁴⁰ Ryan Gingeras, *Heroin, Organized Crime, and the Making of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 26. Founded in Salonica, IMRO had advocated for an autonomous state in Macedonia outside Istanbul's control since the 1890s. It organised armed bands predominantly from Macedonia's Slavic-speaking Orthodox Christian population, which found support in Bulgaria after 1919.

⁴¹ Türkeş, 'Balkan Pact', 124.

A measure of collective security was also a consideration for Romania in relation to southern Dobruja, where the Bulgarian claim of territory dated back to the settlements of the Balkan Wars.⁴² As shall be seen, the Romanian view was complicated by its trepidation over Soviet interests and Turkish foreign policy which took care not to antagonise its powerful northern and eastern neighbour.

In the Balkans, Turkish foreign policy operated on two foundations. Finding a place at the table of international politics and the long-term objective of gaining sovereign control over the Straits and its Thracian borders. As such, the Balkan Entente's development, signature, and maintenance was of the utmost importance to Turkish policy makers. While the Pact may have been historically short standing, it had lasting impact in the settlement of the Straits question at Montreux. It revealed the flexibility of Turkish foreign policy as well as its consistency in asserting and maintaining sovereignty. This consistency can be traced more fully from 1932 onwards when Turkey acceded to the League of Nations.⁴³ The Republican regime considered itself safer by this point, leading to a more proactive foreign policy.

Turkey's push towards sovereignty over the Straits found a ready audience in the Balkan context. Turkish delegates pushed for the creation of a Balkan maritime office in Istanbul during the second Conference in Bucharest in October 1932.⁴⁴ This would help to establish the feasibility of Turkish management of international shipping through the Straits Zone. Ankara further requested the removal of Lausanne's demilitarisation clauses at the Geneva Disarmament Conference in 1933, arguing out

⁴² *ibid*, 124.

⁴³ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 60.

⁴⁴ Kerner and Howard, *Balkan Conferences*, 79.

of the right to legitimate defence, with support from other Balkan delegations.⁴⁵ After the Balkan Pact was concluded and Turkey gained a non-permanent seat at the League of Nations Council, Aras made a further case, with Balkan support, for removing the military restrictions on the Straits in April 1935.⁴⁶ Thus, Ankara's foreign policy objectives of international recognition and achieving sovereign control over the Straits was significantly facilitated by its pursuance of a Balkan alliance.

Consequently, the Balkan Entente can be considered the most important step in Turkish foreign policy that facilitated the Montreux Convention.

The idea of a Balkan federation was initially vague and fanciful, any prospect of success was estimated by the British to be dependent on the growing Greco-Turkish collaboration.⁴⁷ In January 1932 the British ambassador in Turkey, George Clerk, outlined several points relating to Ankara's foreign policy in the Balkans. The Bulgarian Prime Minister Nikola Mushanov had visited Turkey in December 1931, preceded by Venizelos of Greece in August, both visits were successful and more than cordial in the messages they generated. Clerk further reported on Turkey's increasing desires for; a mediating role in Balkan affairs, non-aggression pacts with neighbouring states, and joining the League of Nations.⁴⁸ Ankara was ready to pursue foreign policy goals more actively in the 1930s.

After Turkish accession to the League in 1932 Italian antagonism towards Turkey grew. Italy opposed Turkish membership, with Mussolini seeing the League as an

⁴⁵ Harry Nicholas Howard, 'The Straits after the Montreux Conference', *Foreign Affairs* 15, no. 1 (October 1936): 200.

⁴⁶ Kerner and Howard, *Balkan Conferences*, 171, note 18.

⁴⁷ FO 371/16091, E 222/222/44, Clerk, Istanbul to FO, 7 January 1932.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

obstacle to his revisionist aims.⁴⁹ Turkey's foreign policy activism and distancing in relations with Rome were correlated in the 1930s. Thereafter, Turkey's efforts at collective security in the Balkans clashed with Italian designs for further influence on the Peninsula. This growing incompatibility of foreign policy would spiral into a deteriorating pattern after the Balkan Pact was signed.⁵⁰ Any strengthening of international cooperation in the Balkans under the League was simultaneously in Turkish interests and opposed to Italy. A historiographical result of this has been a reading of Turkish foreign policy as reactive to Italian revisionism, and more generally to Great Power politics, rather than motivated by its own interests. There were contextual inputs from the prevailing world order based on Great Power influence, however Turkey and other Balkan states were also proactive.

Greco-Turkish Alignment

The origin of the idea for a Balkan pact is not definitively established in the scholarship. Türkeş suggests it could have been as early as 1925.⁵¹ Barlas points to the Turkish minister in Bucharest, Hüseyin Ragıp Baydur's suggestion of a Balkan pact to the Romanian Foreign Minister in 1926 which was repeated by Aras the following year.⁵² They both agree with Fırat that the first identifiable steps were taken at the 27th Universal Peace Congress in Athens, 6-10 October 1929, organised by the International Peace Bureau.⁵³ The idea then originated with Alexandros

⁴⁹ Dilek Barlas, 'Friends or Foes? Diplomatic Relations Between Italy and Turkey, 1923-1936', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36, no. 2 (2004): 246.

⁵⁰ *ibid*, 247.

⁵¹ Türkeş, 'Balkan Pact', 132.

⁵² Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy*, 137.

⁵³ Fırat, 'Yunanistan'la İlişkiler', 350.

Papanastassiou, who suggested an institute to study matters of common interests to all Balkan states, which would come to be known as the Balkan Conferences.⁵⁴ This also overlaps with the inauguration of the Balkan games as a means of building bridges between antagonistic nations in the region.⁵⁵ Papanastassiou was a sustained supporter of the Balkan Entente .

While Papanastassiou worked on the ground to create the conditions for greater collaboration, the British Foreign Office deliberated on the Conferences before the fourth edition in October 1933 got underway. One official, Gage, saw Turkish attempts at bilateral dealings with Greece and Bulgaria to encourage a Balkan détente as worth encouraging. Orme Sargent did not think Aras could succeed where the Foreign Office had failed in 1930. George Rendel, while agreeing with Sargent, was somewhat more optimistic, “Turkey has recently acquired a much more serious international position than Aras’ improvising manner suggests, and it would, I think, be a mistake to take his schemes too lightly”.⁵⁶ London’s attitude then, was passive encouragement of intra-Balkan diplomacy.

The first Balkan Conference, held during 6-11 October 1930 in Athens, brought together representatives of all six Balkan nations, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. The Conference aimed to; organise an annual meeting of Balkan states at the level of foreign ministers, prepare the ground for a treaty on the outlawing of war and cooperation in the event of aggression, and the creation of institutions to foster, economic, cultural, and political cooperation with a

⁵⁴ Greek Prime Minister March-July 1924, May-June 1932, Foreign Minister March 1924, June 1932.

⁵⁵ Penelope Kissoudi, ‘Sports, Politics and International Relations in the Balkans: The Balkan Games from 1929 to 1932’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 25, no. 13 (November 2008): 1771–1813.

⁵⁶ FO 371/16682, C 5054/1060/62, Clerk, Istanbul to FO, 28 May 1933.

view to an eventual Balkan union.⁵⁷ The overambition of such pronouncements was exposed when political differences materialised over Italian foreign policy and the issue of minorities.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the emphasis on the need for self-sufficiency and discussions on economic and technical cooperation were reflective of the contemporary climate where national policies were attempting to readjust following the economic depression triggered the previous year.⁵⁹

While the Balkan Conferences continued at annual intervals, Greco-Turkish relations went from strength to strength. Two agreements signed either side of the first Balkan Conference in 1930 provided the bilateral foundations of the Balkan Entente. The first in June addressed the post-Lausanne property disputes, the second in October was the Treaty of Friendship, Arbitration, and Conciliation.⁶⁰ In foreign policy terms of the interwar period these constituted a striking rapprochement. The Balkan Pact rested on the Greco-Turkish axis of mutual interest and geographical proximity. While the Balkan alliance would waver and eventually succumb to the forces of WWII, it would also help steady the Greek ship through the crisis of 1935, contain Bulgarian revisionism, keep Italy at bay for a time, and play an instrumental role in Ankara achieving its long-term foreign policy goals of territorial security. These four points show that the Balkan Entente was a success in the Peninsula for as much time as the signatories were still controlled their own affairs.

The second edition of the Balkan Conference was held in Istanbul, 20-26 October 1931. No expense nor trouble was spared to make it a success according to Clerk,

⁵⁷ Fırat, 'Yunanistan'la İlişkiler', 350–51.

⁵⁸ *ibid*, 351.

⁵⁹ Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy*, 138.

⁶⁰ Türkeş, 'Balkan Pact', 130.

who noted that it was Papanastassiou and Aras who stopped the minority issues, raised by Albanian and Bulgarian delegates against the Yugoslavs, from wrecking the conference.⁶¹ Kerner and Howard reported the same, noting Aras' influence in conciliating conflicting opinions and interests.⁶² At the start of the conference, İsmet İnönü emphasised the need for good understanding and Balkan solidarity to rest on absolute equality of states and mutual adjustment of conflicting interests.⁶³ As will be seen in relation to the Saadabad Pact too, this professed respect for sovereignty and arbitration in disputes were characteristic of Turkish foreign policy in the 1930s.

Ever the pilgrim of European capitals, Aras visited Sofia in March 1932. In a conversation with British ambassador Sydney Waterlow, he made some of the first intimations towards a Balkan treaty which might include Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey.⁶⁴ The enquiry was cautious due to the minority and Aegean corridor issues complicating Greco-Bulgarian relations and the Balkan Conferences. The main rationale for the Balkan Entente was containment of Bulgarian territorial revisionism. Preventing Sofia's aspirations for a land corridor to the northern Aegean at the expense of Greece, was a pragmatic aspect of the Ankara-Athens rapprochement. Greece did not want to lose territory, while Turkey was satisfied with two states balancing each other on its border. Another factor was the centrifugal influence the Little Entente could have on Bulgaria.

The Little Entente contained Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia, buttressed by French support. To Greek and Turkish eyes, it could therefore constitute a forum

⁶¹ FO 371/16091, E 222/222/44, Clerk, Istanbul to FO, 7 January 1932.

⁶² Kerner and Howard, *Balkan Conferences*, 62.

⁶³ *ibid*, 51.

⁶⁴ FO 371/16093, E 1541/1541/44, Waterlow, Sofia to FO, 17 March 1932.

for Bulgarian grievances outside the Balkans, whereas Athens and Ankara were more regionally minded for collective security within the Peninsula. *The Balkans for the Balkan nations* is a maxim that occurs regularly in the primary and scholarly literature, which seems to have been taken seriously in the Aegean basin.

This issue arose in the discussions leading up to what would become the Greco-Turkish Entente Cordiale of 14 September 1933. Aras was wary of Little Entente influence on Bulgaria, going so far as to suggest to the Greek representative in Geneva, Nikolaos Politis, that their agreement of mutual assistance should be extended to Bulgaria. Aras intended to keep Bulgaria out of any other combination and allow Greece and Turkey to maintain their independent policy vis-à-vis the Little Entente.⁶⁵ This was an early indication of the Greek and Turkish desire to keep Bulgaria isolated and, as far as possible, everyone else out of the Balkans. If Bulgaria would not join a Balkan agreement, it was to be inhibited from joining another combination.

Discussions for the Cordiale produced a draft in May 1933. It is of some importance that Numan Menemencioğlu, the Turkish General Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was in Athens at the time. He is credited as the brains behind the bluster of his superior Aras.⁶⁶ During meetings with Greek Prime Minister Panagis Tsaldaris, Menemencioğlu sought a formula by which Greece would consent to Bulgaria joining the mutual guarantee of Thracian borders. He proposed a bilateral Turkish-Greek

⁶⁵ HW 12/164, 051498, Politis, Geneva to Foreign Affairs, Athens, 21 February 1933. Dates are given based on when the communication was sent. In the archive files, they are arranged by the date of decryption.

⁶⁶ Menemencioğlu was a career diplomat who reorganised and professionalised the Turkish Foreign Service, see: Yücel Güçlü, *Eminence Grise of the Turkish Diplomatic Service: Numan Menemencioğlu* (Ankara: Grafiker, 2002).

agreement which Bulgaria would be invited to join in the form of a further Turkish-Bulgarian agreement. However, Tsaldaris maintained he did not have the mandate for an agreement with Bulgaria and was cautious of provoking an Italian, French, or Little Entente response. Thus rebuffed, Menemencioglu was left to draft the terms on bilateral lines.⁶⁷

The draft was presented to Tsaldaris the next day, 4 May. It provided for; the mutual guarantee of the common Greco-Turkish border, cooperation in matters of mutual interest to both including coordination where required of their policies and interests, the joint representation on any international organisation of the interests of both parties, and efforts to secure the representation of the party most closely concerned on international bodies.⁶⁸ Which was substantively what was signed in September.⁶⁹ The Cordiale helped pave the way for Turkish accession to the non-permanent seat of the League Council a year later and Balkan support for the sustained Turkish proposals which were to become the Montreux Convention.

Conversations surrounding the specifics of mutual representation at the League of Nations continued throughout May 1933. A proposed visit of a Greek delegation to Turkey was postponed pending the preparation of the political atmosphere.⁷⁰ This gave time for the Greek government to sell the case to the opposition and for both to ensure favourable coverage of the other in the press.

⁶⁷ HW 12/167, 052558, Ahmet Celal, Athens to Aras, Geneva, 3 May 1933.

⁶⁸ HW 12/167, 052572, Ahmet Celal, Athens to Aras, Geneva and İnönü, Ankara, 4 May 1933.

⁶⁹ Kerner and Howard, *Balkan Conferences*, 231. Appendix, Document XIII, The Greco-Turkish Pact of 14 September 1933.

⁷⁰ HW 12/167, 052587, Aras, Geneva to Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 10 May 1933.

Turkish efforts at widening the developing bilateral alliance included a proposal for extending it to Yugoslavia, again first through a bilateral agreement. Athens continued with caution, reasoning that they already had good relations and a treaty with Belgrade and that more speculation over various formulae for tripartite alliances based on a Turkish-Greek core might make both Belgrade and Sofia nervous about the Greco-Turkish alliance.⁷¹ Athens needed some convincing over Turkish aspirations for diplomatic expansion generally and were getting not a little annoyed with Aras' penchant for proffering schemes.

Yugoslav nerves on this point stemmed from a fear that Bulgaria might achieve an outlet to the Aegean by negotiation. The Foreign Minister Bogoljub Jevtić was informed that the corollary of such an outlet might lead Sofia towards strengthening its case for the recognition of the Bulgarian minority in Yugoslavia.⁷² An advantage for Belgrade was thus revealed, a Balkan pact could help to freeze the status quo on minorities as well as territory.

The Yugoslav position at this juncture helped the Greco-Turkish axis to compromise on Bulgarian policy. Belgrade refused to engage with the minorities questions but was eager to cooperate on maintaining borders. The Greeks preferred isolating Bulgaria, though the threat this posed was in attracting influence from outside. The Turks tended towards inclusion, where in the long-term Sofia's complaints could theoretically be addressed in the Balkans.

By the end of 1933 Turkish and Greek decision makers considered each other the guarantor of their territorial integrity in Thrace. Isolated or included, the goal was to

⁷¹ HW 12/168, 053041, Pesmatzoglou, Athens to Greek Legation, London, 21 June 1933.

⁷² HW 12/168, 053046, Kramer, Belgrade to Yugoslav Legation, London, 19 June 1933.

reduce potential threats from Bulgaria, a larger Balkan Pact would increase the pressure group from two actors to four, inducing Bulgaria to de facto accept the territorial status quo. It was therefore the Greco-Turkish Entente Cordiale which constituted the spine of the Balkan Entente. When the Entente started to unravel in real terms after 1938, the Cordiale still held, giving the Balkan Pact a last lease of legal life before war broke out.

The Great Powers in Balkan Context

In London, the Foreign Office evaluated the situation in a memorandum before the fourth Conference in November 1933. Commenting on this Gage thought Aras had produced good results towards an equilibrium in the Balkans despite being "...accustomed to regard Aras as if he is of no consequence". He further suggested the Balkans should be left to their own devices since they seemed to get along quite well when the Great Powers left them alone.⁷³

Meanwhile, Turkey maintained friendly relations with the Soviet Union. Good relations with the USSR was the external anchor of Turkish foreign policy up to the end of 1939. Both states had been pariahs and fallen empires in the immediate aftermath of WWI. Soviet support was vital for the Turkish nationalist project of the 1920s. Turkey would drift towards Britain at the expense of its relations with Moscow during the 1930s, however this shift was gradual until it accelerated in the second half of 1939.⁷⁴

⁷³ FO 371/16682, C 9799/1060/62, Foreign Office Memorandum, 30 October 1933.

⁷⁴ Onur İşçi, *Turkey and the Soviet Union during World War II: Diplomacy, Discord and International Relations* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2019). İşçi argues that the rift did not emerge until the final hours of peace in 1939. He argues that since 1920, Soviet-Turkish cooperation rested on a geopolitical

Ankara maintained close communication with Moscow on foreign treaties. In October 1933 Baydur, by now ambassador in Moscow, informed the Soviets of the bilateral non-aggression pact proposed with Yugoslavia and probed for responses to the same being extended to Romania. These were precursors to the Balkan Entente. He was under instruction to reiterate the position that any treaty entered into by Turkey would not deviate from the general model of pacts and agreements already contracted.⁷⁵ In other words, no agreement Turkey made could be prejudicial to, or involve the consequence of taking action against the USSR.

After reassurances to the powerful neighbour were made, other Balkan-centric conversations could continue. At a meeting in Istanbul between King Alexander of Yugoslavia and Atatürk, the former expressed satisfaction at the Greco-Turkish agreement, they agreed on the importance of maintaining the Balkan status quo. They further concurred that it was preferable to bring Bulgaria close. More interestingly, they acknowledged the existence of a Turkish-Greek and Romanian-Yugoslav bloc, which they desired to encourage towards a rapprochement.⁷⁶ This quasi-polarity did not suggest hostility, however. It can be explained by the Greek-Turkish foreign policy considerations in the Balkans and Mediterranean compared to Yugoslav-Romanian interests in the Balkans and Central Europe.

The closest Great Power interested in all three theatres was Italy. In a meeting with Aras, Paolo Rossi emphasised that isolating Bulgaria was dangerous and asked whether the talk of guaranteeing borders included only the common or also the non-

alignment which sought to isolate the Black Sea region from Western intrusion. Turkey's aim was good relations with the Soviet Union without being subordinated to Moscow.

⁷⁵ HW 12/172, 054276, Minster for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Ambassador, Moscow, 3 October 1933.

⁷⁶ HW 12/172, 054403, Maximos, Athens to Tsaldaris, Geneva, 6 October 1933.

common borders of the Balkan states. Aras told him that joint protection of non-common borders was out of the question, seeing as they could run afoul of the USSR in Bessarabia and Hungary in Transylvania. Aras also took the opportunity to stress that Albania was discouraged from joining the proposed pact. These points were confirmed to Rossi in his later meeting with Venizelos.⁷⁷ Italian probing went as far as asking Moscow to intervene in Ankara to inhibit Turkish diplomacy in the Balkans.⁷⁸ While Italian foreign policy is seen as inconsistent and unamicable towards Turkey, after 1932 particularly, the formation of a Balkan bloc with interests in the Mediterranean was contrary to its revisionist designs.⁷⁹

There was context to this Italian-Soviet relationship. In searching for avenues to balance their varied interests, Maxim Litvinov had been in conversations with Rome for a Soviet-Italian pact. Ankara was disturbed by the potential for flanking Great Powers to cooperate against itself. Moscow for its part, had reservations about a Balkan bloc collectively acting against Bulgaria, despite vexations about Bulgarian revisionism.⁸⁰ The stronger Turco-Soviet relationship prevailed on this occasion, taking Turkish concerns seriously, Moscow kept its Turkish ambassador informed of negotiations with Italy, while Turkey reciprocated regarding the Balkan Pact.⁸¹ Rome's actively seeking the support of Moscow to hinder the Balkan project points further to a frustration of Italian interests. It also demonstrated the diplomatic quid pro

⁷⁷ HW 12/175, 055198, Rossi, Athens to Foreign Ministry, Rome, 25 November 1933.

⁷⁸ HW 12/175, 055303, Turkish Ambassador, Rome to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 30 December 1933.

⁷⁹ Barlas, 'Friends or Foes?', 231.

⁸⁰ İşçi, *Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 20.

⁸¹ *ibid*, 20.

quo Turkey could gain in Moscow by continued assurances of a foreign policy attitude of zero threats to the Soviet Union.

The Process of Signature

By the turn of 1934, Dimitrios Maximos, Jevtić, and Menemencioğlu could be found in Rome attempting to work out details and placate the Italians. The proposal for the pact was generally accepted and ready for the approval of national governments. Mussolini probed Maximos on the inclusion of Albania and seems to have been uncharacteristically quiet after being reassured that Tirana's inclusion was still out of the question. Still, Vasıf Çınar, Turkish ambassador to Rome, suspected Italy of wanting to play protector to Bulgaria. An observation that did not draw a response from the Italian undersecretary Fulvio Suvich.⁸²

In more Balkan-centric discussions in January 1934, the Greek and Turkish differences over their Bulgarian policies resurfaced. Çınar had instructions to attempt a final gambit, that Bulgaria should be approached jointly by Greece and Turkey with a view to asking Bulgaria to make a friendly advance to Italy towards Sofia's eventual inclusion in the Entente.⁸³ Maximos thought this impractical, and the record does not show whether the offer was made. Given Italian and Bulgarian disinclination to consider anything anti-revisionist this is not surprising. Maximos was eventually convinced of another proposal however, though he had to be dragged to the water.

⁸² HW 12/175, 055374, Turkish Ambassador, Rome to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 5 January 1934.

⁸³ HW 12/175, 055387, Turkish Ambassador, Rome to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 5 January 1934.

This was the Turkish formula for the inclusion of Bulgaria, making the Entente a five-power affair. Maximos accepted this in principle, with the proviso that Bulgaria would not be a founding member. Instead, joining the Pact four to five months later. He might have been confident in his relent, since he also rejected as incorrect the Turkish report that Tsar Boris III of Bulgaria was in favour of joining a quintuple pact and that Sofia was considering a counterproposal. Maximos also reported the Greek legation in Belgrade's conviction that King Alexander would not consent to Bulgarian inclusion.⁸⁴ The repetition, insistence, and a measure of fancy in the late proposals have some imprint of Aras on them.

Five days after these talks, on 10 January, Ankara summarised its position to its ambassador in London, Mehmet Münir Ertegün. The draft pact on Maximos' lines was ready and Turkey yielded to the Greek position of isolating Bulgaria. Still, after so much back and forth it was decided for prudence and prestige's sake that Bulgaria should be invited to join. The calculation was that Sofia would reject this anyway. The diplomatic face-saving mission was assigned to Yugoslavia, who would submit the five-power proposal to Bulgaria to be signed by the four or the five on 15 February at the latest.⁸⁵ A glimmer of Italian approval was also reported. It seems Mussolini was "disposed to view with a friendly eye" a Balkan understanding without interests in Albania, the Adriatic, or Central Europe, he saw the project as a Greco-Turkish interest.⁸⁶ Temporarily at least, Mussolini was persuaded that the project was solely a

⁸⁴ *ibid.*

⁸⁵ HW 12/175, 055436, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, London, 10 January 1934.

⁸⁶ HW 12/175, 055403, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, London, 10 January 1934.

Balkan one. It would be illuminating if in the future the Rome-Moscow exchange on inhibiting Turkish overtures, produced this wait and see attitude.

Turkey was still open to Bulgarian inclusion, but its Greek connection was much more important. Ankara reported to its ambassador in Rome that Bulgaria proposed four separate bilateral non-aggression treaties instead of joining the pact. These were impractical from the Turkish point of view which did not wish to cause misunderstandings with Greece. Turkey did not want to cut off Sofia, it preferred Bulgarian inclusion, but the Entente with Greece was vital, deciding not to adhere to the Balkan Entente was a choice Bulgaria would have to bear.⁸⁷

With this communication Turkey clarified its position on Bulgaria. They wanted Bulgaria to see the light and join, perhaps taking a share in the potential, though undefined, economic benefits of membership. Should Italy be willing to help in this endeavour, Rome's questionable reputation for peace might be boosted. Still, Bulgaria would not take the carrot of vague Aegean access, preferring to bide its time.

There were preparatory treaties between the other signatories. One after the other in October and November 1933 Turkey signed bilateral treaties of friendship, non-aggression, and reconciliation with Romania and Yugoslavia respectively.⁸⁸ Coming soon after the Entente with Greece it is not overly speculative to suggest these were discussed in Athens and Ankara as well as during the Balkan Conferences. Further, Bulgaria's rejection of the Romanian inspired Bulgaria-Yugoslavia-Romania tripartite

⁸⁷ HW 12/175, 055437, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, Rome, 11 January 1934.

⁸⁸ Kerner and Howard, *Balkan Conferences*, 120.

pact in June 1930, suggests that the eventual signatories had been working for some time towards an intra-Balkan understanding of maintaining the status quo.⁸⁹

Romanian desiderata are not always clear in cypher record, though it does make the occasional appearance. On 20 January Nicolae Titulescu, the Romanian Foreign Minister, enquired about the possibility of including all Balkan frontiers under the guarantees of the Pact. Jevtić also wanted the Albanian frontier included by a secret annexe. The Greco-Turkish bloc refused these requests, contending that the whole business would be jeopardised.⁹⁰ Inclusion of non-common borders would contain the possibility, if not the plausibility, of Turkey coming to Romania's aid against the Soviets in a dispute over Bessarabia, a red-line in Turkish foreign policy.

Nevertheless, Titulescu's desire for a quick resolution to the Pact suited Athens.

According to a Foreign Office minute, he aimed to hold a stronger position westward by having the Balkan Entente inhibit Bulgaria to the south.⁹¹ As such, the convergence of interests was not only on non-aggression and Balkan cooperation, but on hamstringing Bulgarian revisionism.

Similarly, considering Albania as a member would mean involving Italy in the negotiations. This was anathema to the Turks and Greeks. In fact, Greece would go onto sign the Balkan Entente with a similar qualification to that of Turkey's towards the Soviet Union. Athens could not be induced by any clause, to participate in conflict against Italy. The last HW 12 document cited is an example of the closeness of Greek-Turkish cooperation. Maximos passing a message onto Aras about a

⁸⁹ Türkeş, 'Balkan Pact', 130.

⁹⁰ HW 12/176, 055540, Turkish Delegate, Geneva to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 20 January 1934.

⁹¹ FO 371/18386, R 1240/22/67, Palairot, Bucharest to FO, 29 March 1934.

conversation with Titulescu, Jevtić, and Mussolini through the Turkish delegate in Geneva. While this is not necessarily unusual, it is rare and seen generally in cases of close foreign policy alignment. It is also indicative of the Entente Cordiale clauses in action.

As signature approached it transpired that Italian calm was short lived. In Bucharest the Italian minister Ugo Sola told the British representative Michael Palairet that he thought the Balkan Pact “a bad thing”, Palairet disagreed, without elaborating on reasons, leading Sola to suspect this was not only Palairet’s personal opinion but that of the British government too.⁹² A few days later rumours of an Italian proposal for a pact between Hungary and Bulgaria circulated, which appeared to cause more irritation than alarm.⁹³ Given Romania’s issues with Hungary and Bulgaria, both seeking territorial revision at Bucharest’s expense, some irritation at Italy from all prospective signatories could be expected. At any rate the vague threat was not heeded, The Pact of the Balkan Entente and Protocol Annexe was signed in Athens on 9 February 1934 by the foreign ministers Aras, Jevtić, Maximos, and Titulescu.⁹⁴

Some examination of the Pact’s clauses is appropriate here. The signatories: “Firmly resolved to ensure the observance of the contractual obligations already in existence and the maintenance of the territorial situation in the Balkans as at present established...”. This statement, setting the territorial status quo without conflicting with other standing agreements was the *raison d’être* of the Entente. It would be

⁹² HW 12/176, 055636, Sola, Bucharest to Foreign Ministry, Rome, 1 February 1934.

⁹³ HW 12/176, 055637, Trajan, London to Director of Press, Bucharest, 6 February 1934.

⁹⁴ <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/LON/Volume%20153/v153.pdf>, accessed April 2022. Reproduced in Appendix 1.

repeated in the Protocol Annexe, which was added to spell out the definitions employed by the signatories.⁹⁵

Article one stated: "Greece, Romania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia mutually guarantee the security of each and all of their Balkan frontiers". There was legal ambiguity here. It can mean all Balkan frontiers were guaranteed. However, the documentary record, along with the phrasing "all of *their* Balkan frontiers", suggests an agreement based on only common frontiers. It was this ambiguity which prompted the Annexe containing more stringent definitions.

Article two provided for cooperation over political issues in the Balkans. This included refraining from political action towards a Balkan state which was not a signatory without previous consultation with the other contracting parties. In other words, should Bulgaria become troublesome in some way there was to be discussion before action. However, the ambiguity contained in the clause above could also stretch to this one. If Bulgaria caused an issue on the Greco-Turkish common border for instance, it is not clear whether consultation was strictly necessary amongst the four or the two.

Article three was the conditional invitation. It stipulated that the Pact was "... open to any Balkan country whose accession thereto is favourably regarded". Bulgaria then, could accede provided it accepted the legal solidification of the territorial status quo.

⁹⁵ The Protocol was a further diplomatic problem. The signatories initially did not want to deposit the text alongside the Treaty with the League of Nations. After some nudging by the British and misinformation from state directed Bulgarian press suggested the secrecy was an attempt to cover up war plans against Bulgaria, the Annexe was formally published in April, see: Kerner and Howard, *Balkan Conferences*, 151, note 19; FO 371/18385, R 874/22/67, Waterlow, Athens to FO 10 February 1934.

This article was black and white, but Bulgarian foreign policy could not contort that far.

The Protocol Annexe defined the nature of the undertakings assumed by the contracting parties and established those definitions as an integral part of the Pact. While the Pact itself contained only three articles, the Protocol extended to nine, revealing the intricacies of the internal and external forces the Entente was attempting to navigate. One of these was on the definition of aggression in international relations some states, including Balkan signatories, were party to.

An aggressor was defined by Article II of the London Conventions of July 1933.⁹⁶ A stipulation of these concerned armed bands, this was one of the reasons Bulgaria refused to sign the convention, since it would involve the suppression of IMRO on Bulgarian territory. Interestingly, London did not seem to grasp this initially, complaining that the Balkan states preferred to wreck an agreement with Bulgaria over obsessions with how to specifically define an aggressor.⁹⁷ Notwithstanding the larger territorial status quo issue, this was part of a process of overlaying contemporary international agreements for increased stability, given the absence of any one guarantor of peace.

Point two of the Annexe said that it was not directed against any power and that it was to guarantee the security of Balkan borders. While the latter point would meet

⁹⁶ These were 1) Declaration of war. 2) Invasion by armed forces even without a declaration of war. 3) Attack by armed land, naval or air forces, even without a declaration of war on the territory, navy or aircraft of another state. 4) Naval blockade of coasts or ports. 5) Aid to armed bands invading the territory of another state; or refusal despite demands to take action on its own territory to deprive said bands any aid and protection. See: 'Supplement: Official Documents. Convention Defining Aggression.', *The American Journal of International Law* 27, no. 4 (October 1933): 193; Kerner and Howard, *Balkan Conferences*, Appendix, Document XII, 'Pact of the Soviet Union with the Little Entente [Czechoslovakia, Juogslavia, Rumania] and Turkey', London 4 July 1933.

⁹⁷ FO 371/18387, R 3460/22/67, Bentinck, Sofia to FO, 16 June 1934.

with approval, the initial sentiment was not taken seriously, the objective and target of the Entente was to contain Bulgaria.

This was confirmed in point three of the Annexe. If one state became the victim of aggression by a non-Balkan power and a Balkan state associated itself with such aggression, the Pact would be applicable in its entirety in relation to such a Balkan state. More simply, if Bulgaria attacked a Balkan state in concert with Italy, the pact would be directed towards Bulgaria, but crucially, not Italy. The implication was significant for Sofia. Whatever the extra-Balkan implications were in the event of Bulgarian aggression, in effect how the Entente would deal with Italy in such a situation, there was a unification of purpose against Bulgaria. Should Bulgarian revisionism become adventurous on the Peninsula, it could become costly for Sofia despite outside help.

Protocol number five reiterated the non-conflicting nature of the Pact as existing within all previous undertakings of the signatories. For Turkey and Greece this meant they could not be induced by the Balkan Entente to take any action against the USSR or Italy respectively. Further, number seven defined the Pact as a defensive instrument with a clear provision that in the event of a signatory acting as an aggressor, as defined by the London Convention, any military measures in defence of the aggressor would be void. The last protocol was rather verbose and ambiguous in defining the length of the pact. A reflection of the disagreements over duration and the uncertain international climate. In essence it provided for the perpetuity of the agreement unless the signatories denounced it, which could not occur in the first two years of signature.

In short, the Balkan Entente was a defensive agreement towards the protection of the existing status quo in the Balkan territories of the contracting parties. Its obvious limitation was the absences of Albania and Bulgaria to complete the Pact amongst the states with territory on the Peninsula. Albanian dependence on Italy precluded any serious effort to include it, what was left was incomplete without Bulgaria, or “an immediate half loaf was better than no bread at all” as the British Minister in Belgrade, Nevile Henderson commented.⁹⁸ This preference for the full loaf in contemporary records or the later historiography is indicative of a Great Power-centric view. For the signatories, during the time of the signature, and in the prevailing circumstances the Pact was a success. For a time at least, the defensive measures put in place by the Entente did contain Bulgarian revisionism, allowed a measure of security for Greece during a domestic political crisis, frustrated Italian designs, and for Turkey was an important step in facilitating Montreux.

Little more than a month after signature Mussolini made his infamous speech on Italian ambitions in Asia and Africa.⁹⁹ The Turkish leadership took this as a naked threat. So much has been covered in the scholarship, what is less known is Mussolini’s later indignation. The initial flames of the crisis had reduced to smouldering embers in Ankara after the Duce’s claims of being misunderstood and his protestations that he saw Turkey as a European rather than an Asiatic nation. Aras went on to deliver a speech at the Turkish Assembly repeating Mussolini’s flattering remarks about Turkey. But, significantly for Mussolini, he said nothing

⁹⁸ FO 371/19499, R 4062/1/67, Henderson, Belgrade to FO, 19 June 1935.

⁹⁹ Millman, ‘Turkish Foreign Policy’, 504, note 16: Mussolini, March 1934, “...The historical objectives of Italy have two names: Asia and Africa. South and East are the cardinal points that should excite the interest and the will of Italians. ... These two objectives of ours are justified by geography and history.”

acknowledging friendship with Italy despite, Suvich complained, the extra friendly tone of the Italian press towards Turkey.¹⁰⁰ The complaint was reiterated almost three weeks later, prompting Çınar to advise that press attacks on Italy should cease.¹⁰¹

The episode is significant in demonstrating Italian frustration at the new system of security in the Balkans with a Mediterranean dimension and a new confidence in the Turks who went from isolation in the 1920s to some confidence through a limited regional alliance by early 1934. Two further examples of the operative capabilities of the Entente were revealed in the Greek Crisis of 1935 and in the attempts to build Balkan military coordination. These showed that the signatories thought the pact worth some substance than merely a posturing signature in 1934, to be forgotten at the first sign of Italian aggression. Despite its unravelling because of a critically destabilised larger European situation in 1939, the Balkan Pact did work for the Balkan signatories for a time.

Greek Crisis

The clearest case of an operative success for the Balkan Entente occurred in 1935. It demonstrated the operative clauses of the treaty, the division of the two groups within it, and the strength of the Greco-Turkish alliance. This was the internal political crisis in Greece which occurred from March 1935 and culminated in the restoration of the Greek monarchy and later establishment of the Ioannis Metaxas dictatorship in 1936.

¹⁰⁰ HW 12/178, 056399, Turkish Ambassador, Rome to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 7 April 1934.

¹⁰¹ HW 12/179, 056627, Turkish Ambassador, Rome to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 24 April 1934.

Internal Greek politics had for some time been polarised between liberal Venizelists versus populist conservative royalists, both tending towards popular autocracy.¹⁰² The military was fragmented into patron-client networks through the interwar period which strove to promote their professional aims within the larger liberal-royalist confrontation.¹⁰³ However, the Venizelist coup of 1 March 1935 was somewhat different. John Kaliopoulos and Thanos Veremis describe it as a corporate military conspiracy, eroded by antagonisms between rival networks which failed miserably. It was the first and last coup to involve so many actors and the first to nurture the removal of civilians from management of the state.¹⁰⁴ As might be expected from such a situation, it took some time for high level politics in Athens to stabilise. Some order was restored by General Georgis Kondylis overthrowing the Tsaldaris government on 1 October. In the intervening time, Bulgaria saw its chance for revisionism and vindication of its determination against adhering to the Balkan Entente.

The Greek crisis precipitated a move by Bulgaria to claim an outlet to the Aegean. The documentary record in English is patchy, though the move is supported and added to by the secondary scholarship. Ankara reported to its legation in Athens that Bulgaria had withdrawn its complaint to the Secretary General of the League of Nations on Turkish troop concentrations on the common Greek-Bulgarian-Turkish border on 9 March.¹⁰⁵ This was shortly after İnönü's speech to the Turkish Assembly on the 7th, in which he spoke of Bulgaria and the Balkan Pact directly, "The Balkan

¹⁰² Vatikiotis, *Metaxas*, 136.

¹⁰³ John Kaliopoulos and Thanos Veremis, *Greece: The Modern Sequel. From 1831 to the Present* (London: Hurst, 2002), 153.

¹⁰⁴ Kaliopoulos and Veremis, 153.

¹⁰⁵ HW 12/189, 059896, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Minister, Athens, 10 March 1935.

Pact's value for international peace shows itself up as a shining example in every form. The allies are minded to view each other's security as their aim".¹⁰⁶ This was followed by expressions of pleasure on words of friendship towards Turkey from Bulgarian authorities.¹⁰⁷ In short, Bulgaria first moved to take advantage of the Greek revolt to force its revisionist claim on Greece. Sofia then backed down when it realised it would also have to contend with Turkish forces. The Turkish leadership took the credit.

Shortly after, Percy Loraine, British ambassador in Turkey, asked Aras about these, so far alleged, troop concentrations. Aras did not deny the incident, reasoning that the Greek insurrection and the temptation presented to IMRO might have made intervention irresistible to Bulgaria. He maintained that Turkey had an obligation to Greece and the Balkan Pact and therefore it was reasonable to effect a redistribution of forces to implement those engagements.¹⁰⁸ Waterlow confirmed the episode in his 1935 report on Greece. Turkish naval authorities had seized Greek merchant ships suspected of aiding the revolt, including one belonging to Venizelos' wife Helena. More importantly, Waterlow stated that Turkish troops were concentrated in Eastern Thrace to counter any aggressive move by Bulgaria.¹⁰⁹

Barlas and Anđelko Vlašić also found evidence of mutual accusations between Bulgaria and Turkey on troop concentrations from April 1935 onwards in Yugoslavian archives. These were outside the scope of regular Turkish manoeuvres in Thrace.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ İrfan Neziroğlu and Tuncer Yılmaz, eds., *TBMM, Hükümetler: Programları ve Genel Kurul Görüşmeleri*, vol. Cilt 1, 24 Nisan 1924-22 Mayıs 1950 (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 2013), 236.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ FO 371/19490, R 1898/831/7, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 15 March 1935.

¹⁰⁹ FO 476, R 1432/1432/19, Waterlow, Athens to FO, 26 February 1936.

¹¹⁰ Dilek Barlas and Anđelko Vlašić, 'The Balkan Entente in Turkish–Yugoslav Relations (1934–41): The Yugoslav Perspective', *Middle Eastern Studies* 52, no. 6 (2016): 1013.

The border crisis ignited almost immediately on the start of the Venizelist coup but would continue to simmer at a lower ebb throughout the Greek crisis. Rather ominously for the first stage of the affair in March 1935, parts of the above-mentioned conversation between Loraine and Aras were excised from the record. Loraine asked for two paragraphs of his communication to be treated as strictly confidential, fearing that "...if the language held in confidence by Aras received any circulation outside British officialdom, there might be embarrassing consequences".¹¹¹ Commenting much on this would be speculative, though the timing and context does suggest more than mere annoyance at mutual troop concentrations on contended borders.

Ankara saw Italian encouragement of Bulgaria. Suggesting that Mussolini's pursuance of the Four [Great] Power Pact showed a continuance of their old condescending attitude towards the Balkan Pact nations. In a call of unity to Belgrade, Ankara suggested, speculatively, that Italian and Bulgarian designs were towards striking Turkey from the west and Yugoslavia from the south.¹¹² While the threat outlined may have been guesswork, with Greece in turmoil such a move could have split the Entente operationally, isolating Greece and leaving Turkey to maintain borders in Thrace on its own. The call to maintain unity helped to remind Belgrade that Ankara had held up its side of the bargain:

¹¹¹ FO 371/19490, R 18989/831/7, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 15 March 1935. I have not been able to find these paragraphs or references to them elsewhere in FO 371, FO 424, HW 12, nor in the Loraine Papers, FO 1011.

¹¹² HW 12/193, 061053, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Minister, Belgrade, 23 June 1935.

*The Balkan bloc has thoroughly proved its strength and value... I have no doubt that the Balkan powers with their common interests, and especially Turkey and Yugoslavia, will continue a policy of whole-hearted cooperation.*¹¹³

By May, Bulgarian officials attempted to pass off the crisis as trivial. A Foreign Ministry official, Simeon Radev, explained Turkish aggression in March as a psychological threat intended to frighten Bulgaria into joining the Balkan Pact.¹¹⁴ Psychological or not, seeing Greece through an emergency and forcing Bulgaria into accepting the territorial status quo, were successes for Ankara and Athens. An FO minute on Radev's prevarication blatantly asserted that his was an argument that could not be taken seriously.¹¹⁵

Later, İnönü became concerned about how the situation in Abyssinia might influence developments in the Balkans. He contended that an army turned away from an objective which had become politically impossible, might be turned on another.¹¹⁶ Thrace had always consumed the bulk of Turkish military materiel, which was now in more visible demand due to the Greek crisis. To İnönü, this left the Mediterranean and Aegean flanks open to an attack from Italian forces already on a war footing. Whether or not this was feasible, it did have the Turkish Prime Minister concerned. Turkish military planners appear to have taken the continued threat from Bulgaria seriously into the late summer of 1935. Major Sampson, the British Military Attaché, reported that; units in Anatolia were reduced to 60% of capacity having been moved to the vicinities of the Straits and Thrace, that manoeuvres were held in Thrace

¹¹³ *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ FO 371/19500, R 3490/302/67, Bentinck, Sofia to FO, 18 May 1935.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹¹⁶ HW 12/195, 062083, İnönü, Ankara to Aras, Geneva, 17 September 1935.

during late August in the presence of the Chiefs of the General Staff, foreign attachés were not invited nor any regular information on size or character were given out. Sampson noted that the beginnings of a mechanised force would be capable of offensive action against Bulgaria. He concluded that there was no offensive design, but such concentrations of troops in Thrace outside their regular bases in Turkey had put “Turkey’s head into the lions’ mouth were Bulgaria able or willing to close her teeth”.¹¹⁷

The crisis appeared to be calming by October. Though continued Turkish preparations were still causing Bulgarian anxiety. The Bulgarian Foreign Minister Georgi Kyoseivanov was reported to have been reassured by Aras in Geneva. He explained to Aras that Bulgaria wished to act as if it were a signatory to the Pact without adhering to it and wished to cooperate towards peace in the Balkans. He also pointed to a possible moderating influence of Moscow on the Turkish leadership without being able to point to the reason.¹¹⁸ Ankara had made its point of backing its ally under the framework of international agreements and was perhaps willing to listen to Moscow’s suggestions to ease off.

October 1935 marked the beginning of the end of the Greek crisis. On the first, an interim government headed by Tsaldaris fell to an internal putsch by the monarchist generals Papagos, Platys, Reppas, and Kondylis.¹¹⁹ This precipitated the events leading to the Metaxas dictatorship through first, the reestablishment of the monarchy

¹¹⁷ FO 371/19041, E 5663/4809/44, Morgan, Istanbul to FO, 13 September 1935.

¹¹⁸ FO 371/19490, R 6226/831/7, Bentinck, Sofia to FO, 9 October 1935.

¹¹⁹ Sotiris Rizas, ‘Geopolitics and Domestic Politics: Greece’s Policy towards the Great Powers during the Unravelling of the Inter-War Order, 1934-1936’, *Contemporary European History* 20, no. 2 (2011): 152; Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 272.

in November and elections in January and March 1936, all helped along for Metaxas and the royalists by a quick succession of deaths, of Kondylis, Venizelos, Konstantinos Demertzis, Tsaldaris, and Panasasstassiou between January and May 1936.¹²⁰ They were all influential in the liberal camp or otherwise powerful enough to decelerate or inhibit Metaxas' rise. The internal Greek events are contentious and beyond the scope of this study, suffice to say that whatever the internal politics of Greece throughout the crisis, foreign policy remained stable. In fact, Sotiris Rizas argues that, the Balkan Pact was strengthened due to Venizelos' failure, since Yugoslavia provided material aid in the form of aircraft which the British and French had denied.¹²¹ Interestingly, the Entente may have allowed Venizelos to act in the first place, since he was sure Bulgaria would not take advantage of Greek weakness because of the alliance.¹²² Further, although Metaxas would exhibit fascist tendencies at home, in foreign policy he nurtured no expansionist ambitions and would continue to follow an overall pro-British and status quo foreign policy, this was mutually compatible with Turkish policy.¹²³

The developments, focused as they were on the Greco-Bulgarian border concerned Turkish security more immediately than Yugoslavia or Romania. Any adjustment to the Bulgarian-Greek border was enough of a security concern for Turkey that bending or breaking its treaty obligations on the demilitarized status of its Thracian borders could have been excused under the expedient pretext of external threat. More so in the in the context of increasing Italian aggression in 1935. Indeed, the

¹²⁰ Kaliopoulos and Veremis, *Greece*, 367; Vatikiotis, *Metaxas*, 150.

¹²¹ Rizas, 'Greece and the Great Powers', 149.

¹²² *ibid*, 149.

¹²³ Steven Morewood, 'Failure of a Mission: Anthony Eden's Balkans Odyssey to Save Greece, 12 February - 7 April 1941', *Global War Studies* 10, no. 1 (2013): 12.

British were somewhat perturbed by the developments, but did not regard Turkish troop movements as unduly alarming.¹²⁴

There were three results of the Greek crisis for Turkey. The first was the longer-term foreign policy advantage the leadership could see. İnönü informed Aras in Geneva that the cabinet council in Ankara had decided that the question of Thracian rearmament must be taken in conjunction with that of the Straits.¹²⁵

This was the latest in Turkey's foreign policy actions towards hastening the revision of the Straits system and Thracian remilitarisation. It provided additional validity for Turkish reasoning that the system should be revised in a chain extending from accession to the League of Nations (1932), concluding the Entente Cordiale (1933), the bilateral treaties with Yugoslavia and Romania (1933), The Balkan Entente (1934), accession to the League Council (1934), and now the demonstrable capability of deterring Bulgaria to protect the Balkan status quo. This was a significant display of Ankara's capability as a sovereign state in the international system, which helped to isolate its domestic behaviour from outside scrutiny.

The outcome of the Montreux Conference was not predetermined. However, the chain of Turkish foreign policy successes were indicative of a larger foreign policy agenda towards further security and sovereignty. Montreux moved the immediate defensive liability from the Great Powers to Turkey, the physical defence of which by the Great Powers was questionable in the short-term. The thinking was, Turkey could achieve this short-term goal independently. The international importance of the

¹²⁴ FO 371/19041, E 5663/4809/44, Morgan, Istanbul to FO, 13 September 1935; FO 371/20866, E 823/823/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 28 January 1937.

¹²⁵ HW 12/190, 060354, İnönü, Ankara to Aras, Geneva, 15 April 1935.

Straits would then lead to Great Power intervention should a protracted conflict arise on the waterway.

The second result was the change in tack of Bulgarian foreign policy. According to Yugoslav documents examined by Barlas and Vlašić, Bulgarian officers realised that access to the Aegean and recovery of Thrace could be realised through friendship with Yugoslavia, rather than forcing the issue at the expense of the strong Greco-Turkish alliance.¹²⁶ Sofia would pursue diplomatic methods in the potential breaches of the Balkan Entente, in essence continuing to bide its time.

The third result were the accelerated military contacts between Turkey, Romania, and Yugoslavia. The period during and after the Greek crisis saw greater attempts at military coordination in the Balkan Pact. Greece remained outside of these exchanges because it was militarily weak at this stage, it could rely on its Turkish alliance under the Balkan Entente umbrella, and it provided an avenue of evasion on the point of committing to protect Yugoslavia and Romania.

Balkan Military Conversations

There were indications in late 1934 that the signatories might be working towards strengthening the Entente with a military agreement. Loraine thought these were for discussing potential eventualities and coordination of the defence of Balkan frontiers between Turkey-Romania and Turkey-Yugoslavia. Greece, absolved from taking part, would provide benevolent neutrality, for example allowing the transit of war material to Yugoslavia through Salonica. However, it was not clear whether anything

¹²⁶ Barlas and Vlašić, 'Turkish-Yugoslav Relations', 1013.

was signed or agreed thus far.¹²⁷ Turkey had already shown its support for Yugoslavia after the assassination of King Alexander in October 1934, Atatürk having declared Turkey's readiness to send troops to the Bulgarian border to stop potential interference by Bulgaria.¹²⁸ Along with actions in the Greek crisis, Turkish action towards Bulgaria was both consistent and bellicose. The overthrow of the Bulgarian peasant government in the summer of 1934 and the crisis of the assassination afterwards calmed the combative Bulgarian attitude for a time. Sofia contributed to the investigation of Alexander's assassination and took measures to suppress IMRO.¹²⁹

More concrete conversations resumed towards the end of the Greek crisis. The Turkish Deputy Chief of Staff, General Asım Gündüz travelled to Bucharest and Belgrade for a general staff conference scheduled for 27 November 1935.¹³⁰ London speculated that there was no emergency to warrant such conversations, seeing it instead as a Turkish effort to harmonise the military agreement in support of Ankara's thesis that it should be permitted to remilitarise the straits.¹³¹ While providing a fair assessment of Turkish intentions, this reveals the Great Power thinking in terms of strategic interests at the expense of Balkan motives. Given the recent events in Greece and Thrace, the staff conversations can be seen as a pragmatic measure. On the last day of the conference on 29 November, Chief of the Turkish General Staff, Marshall Fevzi Çakmak, was still in contact with the delegation, fine tuning the wording of the military agreement.¹³² It was signed the same day between Romania,

¹²⁷ FO 1011/174, 51/159/34, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 1 December 1934.

¹²⁸ Barlas and Vlašić, 'Turkish-Yugoslav Relations', 1013.

¹²⁹ FO 371/19499, R 4062/1/67, Henderson, Belgrade to FO, 19 June 1935.

¹³⁰ FO 371/19500, R 6988/302/67, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 22 November 1935.

¹³¹ *ibid.*

¹³² HW 12/198, 063086, Çakmak, Ankara to Turkish Legation, Belgrade, 29 November 1935.

Turkey, and Yugoslavia. It is likely that contemporary Italian aggression in Abyssinia catalysed these conversations, though there was reason enough for a convention between the signatories in the Balkans. The new British ambassador to Yugoslavia Ronald Campbell thought the conference a coordination of military thinking in the event of an unprovoked Bulgarian attack.¹³³ This reveals some difference in the thinking of British officials depending on whether their offices were in a Balkan capital or London. Further it comports with the circumstances of the Greek crisis, where recent Turkish action is likely to have yielded information of value to Balkan allies on Bulgarian military dispositions.

Confident of the recent agreement and relative tranquility in the Balkans, Ankara suggested extending the triple military convention to Greece through the Yugoslav PM Milan Stojadinović, chairman of the Balkan Entente Council.¹³⁴ Greece though recovering some internal strength, was still on uncertain political ground and did not join the military dimension. Nevertheless, military contacts were maintained amongst the remaining three on an annual basis, with Greece either invited to, or kept abreast of the conversations.¹³⁵

Three themes emerge from the military contacts of the Balkan Entente. First, there was intention to coordinate Balkan defence within the confines of the Pact, in effect, for Bulgarian containment. Since the Greek crisis could be held as a success, it made sense to give some alignment to the processes by which Bulgaria could be

¹³³ FO 371/19500, R 7455/302/67, Campbell, Belgrade to FO, 7 December 1935.

¹³⁴ HW 12/199, 063465, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Minister, Belgrade, 7 January 1935.

¹³⁵ HW 12/216, 068516, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ministers, Athens, Belgrade, Bucharest, 18 June 1937; HW 12/219, 069355, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Minister, Belgrade, 22 September 1937.

constrained from seeking territorial revision in the future. Second, there was desire to formally conduct international business by the rules the signatories had themselves set, such as the approach to Greece through Yugoslavia because Belgrade held the chair of the Balkan Entente Council at the time. This was an effort to formalise and expedite procedures as they emerged, the Entente was attempting to operate within international processes. Finally, there was a willingness to provide breathing space, in this instance to Greece, from immediate formal commitments. The understanding was that the Balkan Entente was strong enough to support a member in the short-term with the understanding that commitments could be equalised in the long-term. Overall, the negotiations around a Balkan military understanding displayed a convergence of interests in maintaining and strengthening the Pact once it had been established.

Conclusion

Despite its successes, the Pact could not withstand the forces of extra-Balkan destabilisation. The Pact was not dissolved until after the war started. However, it was practically finished once Italy invaded Albania in April 1939, preceded by Germany's occupation of the remainder of Czechoslovakia in March. First Central Europe then the Balkans had been destabilised by Great Powers to an extent that broke the bonds of limited Balkan unity, utterly overriding the Pact's *raison d'être*, Bulgarian containment without Great Power interference. Turkey retreated into its bilateral relationship with Greece, which did not last much longer. The cypher record shows Balkan representatives attempting to formulate various solutions to stabilise a

situation that was hopelessly out of their control.¹³⁶ The Balkan Entente had relied on a measure of European stability which did not exist after March 1939. Nevertheless, the Balkan Pact was more than a regional alliance that wasted ink, paper, and space in the annals of the League of Nations Treaty Series. It was an attempt to create a Balkan-centric status quo bloc without reliance on security guarantees of the Great Powers. It developed from common economic and political problems in a portion of Europe where the signatories could agree on a restricted set of goals.

For Turkey more specifically, the Balkan Pact broadened its key bilateral alliance with Greece. First, Ankara and Greece built a Balkan bloc of understanding since all four eventual signatories had common interests in maintaining the territorial status quo from the challenge of a single identifiable Balkan threat. The Entente succeeded in thwarting the aggressive aspirations of its target in 1935. Second, in working towards a consensus and achieving interrelated foreign policy targets; League of Nations accession, bilateral treaties, temporary League Council membership, the Balkan Pact itself, Ankara pursued its longer-term foreign policy goals of political and military sovereignty over the Straits and Turkish Thrace. One of the most successful results of Turkish foreign policy in the 1930s, the Montreux Straits Convention of 1936, was a result of incremental work Ankara conducted in the Balkans throughout the 1930s. The Balkan Entente provided the ground on which Turkey could demonstrate international competence in upholding its foreign obligations.

Additionally, the conventional view of the Entente could be considered within Orientalism/Balkanism suggestive of Eastern failure in face of pressures created by

¹³⁶ See for example, HW 12/238 (April 1939), 074244; 074376; 074400; 074502; HW 12/239 (May 1939), 074552; 074553; 074737.

primarily Western interests. There were significant pragmatic issues, each state entered into reciprocal agreements and balancing acts which were complicated by each attempting to carve out the most advantageous line. However, assigning failure in Eurocentric terms significantly diminishes the intent of and work put into securing regional blocs of state cooperation. No Balkan state declared war on another until they were compelled by the external realities of a war already in progress.

Various pull forces from outside the Balkans exposed the weaknesses of small state alliances. The Great Power ability to weaken smaller units of obligation has led to the perception of the Pact being of little tangible utility. It was however tangible in restraining the action of other smaller states. In other words, the Entente held for as long as the signatory nations were able to operate within the founding remits of its establishment.

CHAPTER TWO - TURKEY AND THE SIGNATORIES BEFORE SAADABAD

This chapter presents an analysis of Turkish foreign policy in the 1930s Middle East, with a focus on Ankara's bilateral relations with Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran, the eventual signatories of the Saadabad Pact. As will be seen in the literature review immediately below, the existing scholarship is either too Great Power-centric or pro-Turkish in its analysis. As such, there is a need to establish the state level motivations of the signatories in an analysis of the years leading up to the treaty.

Two overall themes emerge from the examination. First, that contrary to the existing scholarship, there was Middle Eastern agency in these states' search for a regional understanding. The diplomacy to achieve this was conducted in an international environment dominated by the Great Powers, however this does not necessitate Middle Eastern action being rendered merely reactive to Eurocentric revisionist crises. Second, all states involved, within the framing of Saadabad, had foreign policy objectives of largely maintaining, with limited alterations, the status quo. In the period under consideration all four states achieved these limited, but most importantly, negotiated adjustments.

Turkey, the analytical centre of this examination, was instrumental in these adjustments. In the bilateral sphere, Turkey agreed a land exchange with Iran, rendered technical assistance to Afghanistan, and cooperated with Iran and Iraq in suppressing Kurdish communities. Multilaterally, Ankara mediated a frontier dispute between Iran and Afghanistan in addition to the Shatt al-Arab settlement between Iran and Iraq, which is a focus of chapter three. These negotiated settlements occurred in the 1930s. They were preceded by consistent Turkish foreign policy in

the 1920s, whereby foreign relations with Middle Eastern states were first established or normalised bilaterally before being given depth in the 1930s. Turkey promoted itself throughout the 1930s as the forum for arbitration in the Middle East as well as the Balkans. The diplomatic mediation and problem-solving Ankara practiced allowed it to develop the bilateral relationships into multilateral agreements capped by regional alliance. An examination of how these relationships developed is important to the examination of the Saadabad Pact in the next chapter.

Furthermore, an examination of Turkish relations with Iran and Iraq reveals an important motivation for Saadabad by the three contiguous parties. In short, there was a convergence of coercive interest in controlling Kurdish populations by three centralising states. All three, to varying degrees saw their Kurdish polities as domestic and foreign threats to be inhibited by centralisation (domestic policy) and diplomatically negotiated cooperation (foreign policy). This regional consensus to contain each state's Kurds to the domestic sphere and simultaneously exclude them from foreign influence reveals a sub-state target for the Saadabad Pact as well as an interaction between the foreign and domestic policies in three states.

Literature Review

The secondary literature on the Saadabad Pact has similarities to the scholarship on the Balkan Entente, it follows a Great Power-centric narrative. The best-known treatment of Saadabad in English is Cameron Watt's chapter in *The Great Powers in the Middle East, 1918-1939*. Critiquing Watt's work on Great Power centrism might be churlish given the title and context of its brief. However, as the only focused

analysis of the event in English, other scholarship which mentions the Pact has been constrained by Watt's conclusions and assumptions. There is hardly any literature in English which does not draw on this chapter. Thus, contributing to a historiography dependent on Eurocentric narratives without adequate contextualisation and a scant regard for foreign policy objectives not centred on Great Power interests. Further, Watt draws on much the same British archive material as this project, though not on the HW 12 series, which was not available at the time.¹

According to Watt, Saadabad constituted part of the Soviet security system against Britain, which then broke away.² The implication is that actions of the Saadabad signatories were directed by Moscow. But I argue that while each of the signatory states had concerns about their relations with Britain and the Soviet Union, and attempted to navigate these as best they could, this does not necessitate Moscow directing their actions. Watt's reasoning could be inverted to suggest the Pact was a British invention to protect the approach to India in addition to the Middle Eastern status quo against the Soviets. Such was the perception credited to Italy and Germany by Watt.³ In either case, it denies Middle Eastern, or oriental, agency.

The most repeated of Watt's arguments is that Turkey pursued closer relationships with Iran and Iraq because of a fear of Italy.⁴ First, while Turkey did seek a strategic

¹ Cameron Watt, 'The Saadabad Pact of 8 July 1937', in *The Great Powers in the Middle East 1919-1939* (New York: Homes & Meier, 1988), 333–52. There is mention of diplomatic cyphers in footnote no. 42 "referring to a reliable but most secret source" in FO 371/20091, 20 August 1936, Rendel to Loraine. This is a reference to HW 12 material that will be seen below.

² Watt, 334.

³ *ibid*, 349.

⁴ *ibid*, 334; Turan and Tüylü-Turan, 'Saadabad Paktı'; İbrahim Erdal, 'Türk Basını ve Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Atatürk Dönemi (1920-1938) Türk-Afgan İlişkileri ve Sadabad Paktı', in *Berna Türkoğan Uysal Armağan Kitabı*, ed. Şenol Kantarcı and Fatma Şimşek (Ankara: Soncağ Yayıncılık, 2015), 245–56; İbrahim Erdal, 'Türk Basını ve Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Atatürk Dönemi (1920-1938) Türk-İran İlişkileri ve Sadabad Paktı', *Karadeniz Araştırmaları* 34 (Summer 2012): 77–88; İbrahim Erdal, 'Türk Basını ve Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Atatürk Dönemi (1920-1938) Türk-İrak İlişkileri ve Sadabad Paktı', *The Journal*

security system, Italy was but one of the potential threats. Second, Watt does not explain, nor do others, how Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq, collectively or alone, could assist Turkey in a Mediterranean conflict with Italy.

A further issue with Watt is the undercurrent of modernisation theory. Referring to the pre-Iraqi independence stage of his analysis, he mentions all four of the states as passing through, or attempting to, similar stages of development.⁵ All indeed did attempt Western orientated or derived reform at the time, though Watt's phraseology reads deterministically. As do his initial assertions that Saadabad was designed to act as a regional bloc at the League of Nations as a forerunner of the Arab and African blocs at the United Nations, and finally as an antecedent of the Baghdad Pact of 1955, which included Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, and Britain.⁶ This is at the very least problematic in how it links reform programmes of the interwar period with the UN, NATO, and Cold War pact making of the 1950s.

The final problem with Watt's conclusions is an uneven comparison of Saadabad with the Balkan Entente and other treaties of the time. He says Saadabad lacked the *raison d'être* of other similar pacts; the common fear of and hostility toward one power of equal status to their own, such as the Little Entente towards Hungary and the Balkan Pact against Bulgaria.⁷ Watt sees alliance structures as necessitating a predetermined enemy, without which they were inconsequential. It is another example of Great Power-centrism which cannot see the objectives of the signatories

of *Academic Social Science Studies* 5, no. 5 (October 2012): 93–104; Behçet Kemal Yeşilbursa, 'CENTO: The Forgotten Alliance in the Middle East (1959-1979)', *Middle Eastern Studies* 56, no. 6 (2020): 854–77; Percy Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1940). While Sykes predates Watt by considerable time, their assumptions are underwritten by Great Power centrism.

⁵ Watt, 'Saadabad Pact', 336.

⁶ *ibid*, 333.

⁷ *ibid*, 342.

if they do not entail aggression towards, or protection, from a clear third source with nation-state boundaries.

In a more recent article, Thomas Volk places Saadabad in a long line of Turkish Republican engagements with the Middle East. Volk stresses that Turkey's relations with the Arab world or Muslim countries were never hidden, but neither were they emphasised.⁸ Volk's attempt is a worthwhile challenge to the current idea that the neo-Ottoman reading of 21st century Turkish engagement with the Middle East is neither new nor Ottoman. However, it is indicative of Great Power-centric scholarship in the sense that Saadabad is seen as a brief steppingstone in understanding Turkey's engagement with the Middle East, from within the context of the Cold War and organisations such as NATO. In other words, Turkey is scarcely seen as of the Middle East, but engaging with the region as an outsider.

The main analysis in Turkish of the Pact is in Oran's collection. This time elucidated by Atay Akdevelioğlu and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, in a chapter on Turkey's relations with the Middle East.⁹ The analysis concludes that the Pact was signed first, to settle border issues emanating from Iran, and second, to emphasise each state's independence and sovereignty.¹⁰ They reject the argument that the Pact was a reaction to Italy, or a middle road between British imperialism or Soviet communism. This shows a more Middle East-centric approach. It is, however, undermined by a pro-Turkish primacy in building regional peace. The final assertion that the Pact is

⁸ Thomas Volk, 'Turkey's Historical Involvement in Middle Eastern Alliances: Saadabad Pact, Baghdad Pact, and Phantom Pact', *L'Europe En Formation* 1, no. 367 (2013): 14.

⁹ Atay Akdevelioğlu and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, 'Orta Doğu'yla İlişkiler', in *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar. Cilt 1: 1919-1980*, 12th ed., vol. 1, 2 vols (Istanbul: İletişim, 2006), 357–69.

¹⁰ *ibid*, 366.

still largely in action, despite the acknowledgement that it is de facto defunct, cannot be sustained, if for no other reason than the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.¹¹ It is also a rather short treatment of the Pact which lacks diplomatic and political detail.

İbrahim Erdal has studied Turkey's bilateral relations with the Saadabad signatories in three pieces. He employs Turkish archive material with contemporary press material.¹² These have been useful in corroborating British archives through the Turkish record on names, dates, and meetings. For Erdal, causal primacy for Saadabad remains with Italian aggression in Africa.¹³ He describes accounts of the Turkish press on the successes of Turkish diplomatic initiative and mediation.¹⁴ It is interesting in showing the hold of the state over the media and building domestic support for foreign policy. However, how effective this campaign was, is not examined. Erdal suggests Saadabad was part of a Turkish attempt to contain European expansionism after WWI through a regional bloc.¹⁵ He builds towards an argument that Turkey exercised "soft power" to maintain its regional security through the state directed press.¹⁶ Erdal's work adds up to a contribution on official Turkish history rather than an analysis of the motivations of the other signatories. Tufan Turan and Esin Tüylü-Turan deploy the same methods and arguments, if more cautiously. They additionally describe the Iraqi press' positive reactions to Turkish

¹¹ *ibid*, 369.

¹² Erdal, 'Türkiye-İran ve Sadabad Paktı'; Erdal, 'Türkiye-İrak ve Sadabad Paktı'; Erdal, 'Türkiye-Afganistan ve Sadabad Paktı'.

¹³ Erdal, 'Türkiye-Afganistan ve Sadabad Paktı', 251.

¹⁴ *ibid*, 253.

¹⁵ Erdal, 'Türkiye-İrak ve Sadabad Paktı', 100.

¹⁶ *ibid*, 101.

overtures through Turkish newspapers.¹⁷ For all three, the emphasis is on growing Turkish prestige in the 1930s.

Nonetheless, there was significance to the press reports internationally and domestically. In foreign policy, it demonstrated Ankara's desire to conduct diplomacy with some controlled openness. Turkish officials knew foreign diplomats read and reported on newspaper material. There was a modest desire to do some business in the open after the relative isolationism of Ankara in the 1920s. This helped to dampen suspicions of favouring some governments over others through exclusively diplomatic channels. Internally, it functioned as a method of selling the growing friendships with eastern neighbours, and an experiment in directing and sustaining public opinion, such as it was.¹⁸ In short, press material on foreign policy action ties in with the close connection of foreign and domestic policy for the Turkish leadership.

Finally, Mustafa Serdar Palabıyık's study rejects external threat perceptions of a Great Power as a motivating factor for Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan.¹⁹ This implicitly suggests an external threat as a motivator for Turkey, this is a modest departure from the scholarship in English. He argues that the pact was seen by its founders as an instrument of internal (regime) and external (regional) security.²⁰ I will explore this below with an emphasis on the internal aspect Palabıyık posits. There are two main problems with the article. First, it takes the official history aggrandisement of early Republican Turkey uncritically. Similar to Erdal, Saadabad is shown as Turkey

¹⁷ Turan and Tüylü-Turan, 'Saadabad Paktı', 1775.

¹⁸ For a more complex analysis of popular readership and the extent of the state's hold on written information see, Fortna, *Learning to Read*, 2010.

¹⁹ Mustafa Serdar Palabıyık, 'Sadabad Paktı (8 Temmuz 1937): İttifak Kuramları Açısından Bir İnceleme', *Ortadoğu Etütleri* 2, no. 3 (2010): 156.

²⁰ *ibid*, 159.

projecting strength and regime legitimacy to Middle Eastern states by performing better at Western orientated modernisation.²¹ Palabıyık argues that Turkey facilitated the Pact because it wanted the signatories to modernise on Ankara's lines, to better serve regional security.²² As will be seen, Turkish reform was scarcely for export. Second, Palabıyık uses no primary diplomatic evidence. This omits the processes leading to Saadabad, with significant implications for a weak conclusion based on a lack of criticism of the scholarship.

There is thus a gap between pro-Turkish and Great Power-centric narratives. It is possible to give a fuller account, with Middle Eastern agency, by using the Anglophone and Turkish scholarship in conjunction with British archive material that includes Middle Eastern diplomatic cyphers. While a fuller understanding of Afghan, Iranian, and Iraqi positions is not possible to the extent of the Turkish here, grounding the analysis in Middle Eastern concerns should go some way to addressing this deficiency.

Turkish-Iraqi Relations

There were two principal reasons Turkish-Iraqi relations in the 1930s were important for the Saadabad Pact. The first was a convergence of coercive interests in controlling the Kurdish population. In the early 1930s, newly independent Iraq struggled to exert central control. When efforts at bilateral cooperation on border policing proved fruitful for Ankara and Baghdad, a wider state based regional effort to the same ends became attractive. Second, the persistence of the 1926 Ankara

²¹ *ibid*, 169.

²² *ibid*, 170.

Agreement, which fixed Mosul as an Iraqi possession, rehabilitated Turkey's image in Iraq. The former imperial master came to be seen as a reliable mediator for Baghdad in its relations with Tehran.

Of the four states Iraq was the latest to independence, having been bound by the British mandate until 1932. This resulted in an alliance with Britain, none of the others had a treaty relationship amounting to an alliance with a Great Power. This relationship dampened Iranian designs on frontier revision with Iraq; as it had done for Turkey over Mosul in 1926, which was not settled at Lausanne. Ankara made its claim and after some posturing, alongside the Sheikh Said Rebellion demanding state resources, it transpired that neither Turkey, Britain nor Iraq had the stomach or the means to fight over Mosul. The matter was settled in favour of Iraq and Britain. Turkey was compensated with a percentage of the oil royalties in 1927.²³

A further point was the Anglo-Iraqi relationship, which Susan Pedersen describes as London retaining a low-cost hegemonic position in Iraq with the latter's independence and adherence to the League of Nations in 1932.²⁴ Britain's recognition of Iraqi sovereignty was at the considerable cost of military access, British ownership of air bases, and the right to supply and train the Iraqi army.²⁵ The government in Baghdad was attempting to create a centralised state and saw British regard for the Kurds as part of fostering a federation of ethnic republics, a prospect also unacceptable to Iran and Turkey.²⁶ The international cooperation in the Middle East which would culminate in Saadabad was an expression of unitary nation-states centralising drives. Iran-Iraq

²³ Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 41.

²⁴ Susan Pedersen, 'Getting out of Iraq - in 1932: The League of Nations and the Road to Normative Statehood', *The American Historical Review* 115, no. 4 (2010): 985.

²⁵ *ibid*, 988.

²⁶ *ibid*, 994.

relations and Turkish mediation can be seen in this context of smoothing over nation-state rivalries to dampen cross-border sub-state ethnic political action.

The Mosul settlement did not arouse serious interest for a time, but it did leave a bad taste in the mouths of nationalists, Iraqi, Arab, and Turkish alike. It could be exacerbated by the slightest nationalistic utterance by Arab or Turk. Later Turkish irredentism on the question of Alexandretta at Syrian expense only irritated the slow healing wound. After Mosul, Iraq's main regional concern was the inheritance from the Ottoman Empire on the Iranian frontier, this drew Turkey into the mix of its solution immediately prior to the signature of Saadabad.

In contrast to the stability at the apex of Afghan, Iranian, and Turkish political leadership, Iraqi politics were fractured and fractious. Ethno-linguistic (Arab, Kurd, Turcoman), religious (Sunni, Shi'i), ideological (pan-Arab, Iraqi nationalist) differences mixed in a political class with its origins in the Ottoman officer corps and its imported Hashemite dynasty.²⁷ It was a heady mix that became more difficult to manage after independence. Still, the political regime persisted in the period under consideration, and for a time after. Nuri al-Said, who held various ministries including foreign and prime during the period and the personage of the King provided some stability in leadership.

This mix of identities can be mapped onto the domestic and foreign policy concerns of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey through Benjamin White and Sarah Shield's work on the

²⁷ Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 214, Gives a heterogenous social mix: 70% Arab, 25% Kurdish, 65% of Muslims as Shi'i, giving a total Sunni-Arab population of 15%.

slow construction and consolidation of identities in the Middle East after WWI.

According to Shields:

*The concept of the consent of the governed led to a remarkable inversion that insisted on the homogeneity of the governed, demanded the identification of 'minorities' with characteristics different to the 'majority'... that reified minority status and contributed to the escalation of 'sectarian' politics.*²⁸

Similarly, White argues that when the state is conceived as the expression of the will of the nation, there is a risk that mobilisation based on a different identity to the core, is seen by the state as inherently threatening to the integrity of the state.²⁹ The common problematic minority to the three signatories that shared a border were the Kurds. However problematic these states conceptions of their own nationalisms were, their privileging of their core-nations simultaneously excluded the Kurds in centralisation and nation-building projects. In short, Kurds were seen as a prospective threat to the domestic integrity for the varied nationalisms of Turkey, Iran, and Iraq. In foreign policy then, there was a conjunction of interest in state level cooperation to build a regional structure to mitigate against foreign influence on a domestic question.

King Faisal and Prime Minister al-Said's state visit to Turkey in July 1931 gave way to establishing more diplomatic contacts.³⁰ These were on some floating ideas of trade, but more significantly about an exchange of ideas on Kurdish issues. It was this in

²⁸ Sarah Shields, 'The League of Nations and the Transformation of Representation: Sectarianism, Consociationalism, and the Middle East', in *The Institution of International Order: From the League of Nations to the United Nations* (London: Routledge, 2018), 164. Shields' emphasis.

²⁹ Benjamin Thomas White, *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: The Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 119.

³⁰ Akdevelioğlu and Kürkçüoğlu, 'Orta Doğu'yla İlişkiler', 367.

particular which formed the core concerns of Iraqi-Turkish bilateral relations and significantly informed clauses of the Saadabad treaty.

High level contact was maintained with another official visit at the end of the year, al-Said returned to Ankara in December. Commercial, residential, and extradition issues touched on frontier problems, where Iraq wanted Turkey to grant Iraqi shepherds access to cross-border pastures. Ankara flatly rejected this because the shepherds were Assyrians and Kurds, who could keep each other in check, but it would be better, according to the Turks, if they did so on the Iraqi side of the border.³¹ Al-Said was not too insistent on this point, knowing that Aras was due to travel to Iran in January, by which time the hawkish Turkish view on Little Ararat was known.³² However, Aras did suggest Turkey, Iran, and Iraq should conclude an agreement to cooperate on any of the common frontiers should the Kurdish troubles recur.³³

In the northern Iraqi areas of Kurdistan, Sheikh Mahmud had emerged as the head of the Kurdish polity in the late 1920s. He had some autonomy tolerated by Baghdad, though this was not unchallenged by other Kurdish chiefs. This was when Mullah Mustafa of Barzan came to prominence. Mustafa was a brother of the nominal head, Sheikh Ahmed, and became the de facto leader of Iraqi Kurds until 1975.³⁴

Try as it did, the Iraqi government could not control the Barzan area until June 1932 when Iraqi forces had to be saved by RAF bombing, whereupon Sheikh Ahmed fled to Turkey.³⁵ His brothers Mullah Mustafa and Muhammed Sadiq joined him by April

³¹ Robin Birdwell, ed., *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, vol. 7, Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print, Eastern Affairs, June 1930-June 1932 (Bethesda: University Publications of America, 1986), no. 298, Morgan, Ankara to FO.

³² This is explored below in the section, Early Relations and the Iran-Turkey Frontier Adjustment.

³³ FO 371/16062, E 33/33/34, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 30 December 1931.

³⁴ Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 152.

³⁵ *ibid*, 153.

1933 during Baghdad's attempts to establish control in Barzan. Iraq wanted the brothers extradited; Turkey claimed it could not comply because they were asylum seekers. The Iraqi Foreign Minister protested by attempting to brush a sensitive nerve and wrote Aras that Iraq could not be held responsible should Kurdish lawlessness assume a national character.³⁶ Mustafa and Muhammed were still in Turkey in May; raiding villages across the border and feeling safe enough to remain in Iraq for longer periods.

With Baghdad increasingly frustrated at the lack of Turkish action against the Barzanis, British ambassador to Iraq, Francis Humphrys, suggested King Faisal write a personal letter to Atatürk to generate better Turkish collaboration.³⁷ This indicated three points. First, it was an example of a political niche being filled by the group with the greatest local powerbase, the Barzanis. The national political centre did not have the coercive capability in Barzan and the frontier locality for effective control. Second, it allowed Ankara to demonstrate to Iraq that it needed Turkish cooperation to secure its northern frontier and keep Kurdish nationalism from developing. A third point was Ankara's continual receptivity to London and its advisers even at this early stage of the Anglo-Turkish rapprochement. Control of peripheral populations on border areas deemed by state authorities to be of importance and formalising international cooperation, or at the very least non-interference, on such areas was to be the most important article of Saadabad.

The efficacy of bilateral cooperation was demonstrated in March-April 1935. This time in pursuit of another Kurdish chief Khalil Khossawi, a challenger to nation-state

³⁶ FO 424/634, E 2004/733/93, Humphrys, Baghdad to FO, 6 April 1933.

³⁷ FO 424/634, E 2830/733/93, Humphrys, Baghdad to FO, 18 May 1933.

authority. On an Iraqi request, a force of 3,000 Turkish troops arrived on the frontier near Barokh in the second week of March, arrested and drove over the border all the chiefs of Girdi who had been harbouring Khossawi.³⁸ Cooperation continued in early April, with the Turks handing over the families of a further five Khossawi followers.³⁹ Two weeks later, Iraqi forces were still in pursuit, with Khossawi last reported near the junction of the Turkish-Iraqi-Iranian frontier.⁴⁰ Mutually beneficial cooperation between Ankara and Baghdad ensured the Kurdish population was subject to more efficient state coercion.

This cooperation and convergence of coercive interest formed one of the most important bases of Turco-Iraqi relations in the 1930s. However, Iraq still probed periodically for signs of Turkish irredentism on Mosul. Such as during talks for a new neighbourly relations agreement in January 1937, and a formulaic renewal of the 1926 Ankara Treaty to go with it. The new agreement was concluded by an exchange of notes on 14 January.⁴¹

Another factor was the relative peculiarity of the short-lived Hikmet Suleyman and Bakr Sidqi government from November 1936 to August 1937. The British ambassador to Iraq described Suleyman as less disposed towards pan-Arabism, without suggesting he was Turcophile.⁴² Charles Tripp suggests both men had an affinity with all things Turkish.⁴³ Mohammad Tarbush is not clear, for lack of evidence, on how pro-Turkish Suleyman and Sidqi were. He says Sidqi was born in

³⁸ FO 371/18948, E 2453/433/93, Clark-Kerr, Baghdad to FO, 1 April 1935.

³⁹ FO 371/18948, E 2561/433/93, Clark-Kerr, Baghdad to FO, 11 April 1935.

⁴⁰ FO 371/18948, E 2826/433/93, Clark-Kerr, Baghdad to FO, 24 April 1935.

⁴¹ FO 371/20801, E 661/661/93, Clark-Kerr, Baghdad to FO, 14 January 1937.

⁴² FO 371/20795, E 804/14/93, Clark-Kerr, Baghdad to FO, 30 January 1937.

⁴³ Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 89.

Kurdistan to a Turkish family and that Suleyman was of a Turkish family who lived in Mesopotamia and were both admirers of Atatürk and his republic building.⁴⁴ While their provenance is not clear, they were alive to the restricted influence of pan-Arabism in Iraq which spoke to the 15% Sunni-Arab minority. Suleyman and Sidqi instead preferred an Iraqi nationalist course, that could, in theory, be more acceptable to a broader base in Iraqi society. It is only really by extension of this, and by relativising it against pan-Arabism, that Suleyman and Sidqi may be seen as pro-Turkish. As such, while Iraqi-Turkish relations were regular and friendly, circumstances of a relative Iraqi nationalist turn over the prevailing pan-Arab mood contributed to Iraq being the only Arab state in Saadabad.

In sum, two main factors from the Iraqi vantage point contributed to better relations with Turkey. Ankara made no move towards Mosul after 1926. Second, active and effective collaboration on the common frontier against Kurds, put Turkey in good standing with Baghdad. It showed Ankara could act in good faith if diplomatic lines were open. The good standing and common goals on the borders went some way to confirm Turkey as a reliable mediator with Iran, and thus towards the goals of Saadabad. Here we see the first example of the pattern of Turkish foreign policy relations in the Middle East. The pattern begins with normalising relations in the 1920s, followed by establishing deeper contacts and levels of cooperation in the 1930s bilaterally with a view to pursuing a more regional understanding.

⁴⁴ Mohammad Tarbush, *The Role of the Military in Politics: A Case Study of Iraq to 1941* (London: KPI, 1982), 140.

Turkish-Afghan Relations

An account of Turkish-Afghan relations serves two interrelated purposes in the analysis of the Saadabad Pact. First, it demonstrated a convergence of interests between the two states that developed throughout the 1930s. Regionally, the most important of these was Ankara and Kabul's attitudes toward Tehran. Iran was a threat to Afghan interests on their shared border. Turkey on the other hand, wished to develop closer associations with Iran as a partner in trade and border security. Turkey helped Afghanistan by tempering Iranian bellicosity to its east with promises of assistance to Tehran in securing gains to its west. Furthermore, Turkish assistance in trained personnel for internal Afghan reform had laid the basis of a good relationship since the 1920s. Second, it links Afghanistan more closely to other Saadabad signatories by demonstrating its role in the development of regional diplomacy. This establishes a pre-existing diplomatic connection which predates the conventional understanding that posits Middle Eastern cooperation as reactive to Italian revisionism. The vein of Turkish-Afghan relations constituted an example of a general indifference mixed with perceptions of mutual utility, leading to agreeable attitudes and positive foreign policy results.

Afghanistan's emergence as an independent nation-state pre-dated that of the Turkish Republic. It was recognised as such in the 1919 Treaty of Rawalpindi. Like Turkey, Afghanistan initially received some support from the Soviet Union.⁴⁵ Rawalpindi recognised King Amanullah's Afghanistan as a state with internationally recognised borders, standing army, a central administration, and a more or less

⁴⁵ Martin McCauley, *Afghanistan and Central Asia: A Modern History* (London: Pearson, 2002), 8.

regularised system of justice and taxation.⁴⁶ Kabul thought this recognition should elevate its status from colonial buffer to respected nation-state. Afghan ire at having to deal with the British Indian government rather than London is an undercurrent running through the archive material.

British Foreign Secretary (1919-24) Lord Curzon, formerly Viceroy of India, refused to engage directly with Kabul from London, he saw Afghan relations as a colonial matter. This was partly personal attitude but had more to do with the ambiguous Treaty of Rawalpindi; Afghanistan read independence in it, while the British could find cause to make sphere of influence claims through it.⁴⁷ The Anglo-Afghan Treaty of November 1921 resolved the ambiguity.⁴⁸

Amanullah was reform minded. He took encouragement from Turkey and Iran in his reforms. But while he had a state, he did not have a centralising administrative infrastructure which Ankara enjoyed and was being built around Tehran. Neither did he have the loyalty of the army as was the case in Turkey and Iran.⁴⁹ The inspiration Amanullah gained from Turkey remained just that. The reforming elite had no taste for secularism nor grassroots involvement in establishing goals or structural organisation, the country was poorer and relatively more isolated from outside ideas.⁵⁰ Early Afghan reforms such as education for women, banning the veil, Western dress in Kabul, and land reform were unpopular.⁵¹ More importantly, they

⁴⁶ Amin Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 15.

⁴⁷ *ibid*, 62.

⁴⁸ *ibid*, 63.

⁴⁹ Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan*, 2:312.

⁵⁰ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 60. For a counterpoint to Afghan isolation and Islam as a flexible yet binding phenomena see Nile Green, 'The Road to Kabul: Automobiles and Afghan Internationalism, 1900-1940', in *Beyond Swat: History, Society and Economy along the Afghanistan-Pakistan Frontier* (London: Hurst, 2013), 77–91.

⁵¹ McCauley, *Afghanistan*, 9.

were expensive. The treasury could not sustain Amanullah's spending, contraction of trade, decline in agricultural and industrial production, and the loss of the British subsidy on independence.⁵² Amanullah's increasingly precarious position was made worse by the internal rivalries of the ruling Musahiban family. His reformist rule ended with his overthrow in 1929.⁵³

There followed a few years of uncertainty before Nadir Shah steadied the Afghan ship, prior to being assassinated and replaced by his 19-year-old son, King Muhammed Zahir, on 8 November 1933.⁵⁴ The young king was dominated by his uncles Muhammed Hashim and Shah Mahmud who wielded real power as successive prime ministers. Hashim's rule, until 1946, was characterised by ensuring his power monopoly rather than radical reform of the socio-political structure.⁵⁵

In foreign policy there was little change. The new state squeezed between British India and the USSR had to tread a tightrope. There was continuity with Amanullah, who was quick to establish relations with Turkey in 1921 through a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, this was extended during the King's visit to Turkey in May 1928.⁵⁶ Ankara contributed modestly to the Afghan reform programme, sending teachers, civilian and military advisers, medical instructors, and received students for instruction.⁵⁷ Nadir Shah maintained these good relations, despite the Turkish military instructors having initially been expelled from Kabul for coming to Amanullah's aid in the 1929 crisis. He also attempted to further regional ties by signing treaties of

⁵² Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 96.

⁵³ *ibid*, 58.

⁵⁴ *ibid*, 105.

⁵⁵ Faridullah Bezhani, 'The Second World War and Political Dynamics in Afghanistan', *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 2 (2014): 108.

⁵⁶ Akdevelioğlu and Kürkçüoğlu, 'Orta Doğu'yla İlişkiler', 364.

⁵⁷ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 65.

friendship with Iraq and Saudi Arabia in 1932. Relations with Iran although regular, remained soured by disputes over Helmand irrigation and the frontier around Musabad.⁵⁸ Hashim continued a policy of gradualism at home and positive neutrality and friendship abroad, these twin policies maintained his control over the domestic sphere.⁵⁹ Thus, Afghanistan arrived in the mid-1930s with a measure of attempted reform and a stable group of decision makers at the top of its state structure.

In the late summer of 1933 Turkey was careful to disabuse suspicion in Kabul of any interference in internal Afghan affairs. When the ex-King Amanullah visited Istanbul in July 1933, Aras was studious in reassuring Kabul that his visit was a private affair. His reception by Atatürk was by virtue of their old acquaintanceship and that he had not met with any government representative nor gone to Ankara.⁶⁰ Afghanistan's caution in its reform programme did not concern Turkey. Atatürk's reform agenda was internally orientated. While the Republic looked to what it saw as advanced civilisation for a model of development, it was not inclined to export its vision. When the Afghan government banned the Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet* from entering Afghanistan, Ankara expressed no protest.⁶¹

Afghan foreign policy was concerned with self-preservation and balancing the British with the Soviets, no significant revisionism was on the agenda. Kabul saw this as converging with the British interest in the protection of India. According to British reports spaced a little over a year apart, and coinciding with Turkish arbitration of the Afghan-Iran frontier dispute – Kabul's pro-British foreign policy had to be tempered,

⁵⁸ FO 371/17198, N 1626/1626/97, Maconachie, Kabul to FO, 28 January 1933.

⁵⁹ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 106.

⁶⁰ HW 12/171, 054040, Aras, Ankara to Turkish Embassy, Kabul, 7 August 1933.

⁶¹ HW 12/178, 056321, Foreign Office, Kabul to Afghan Ambassador, Ankara, 8 February 1934.

lest public perception of subservience to Britain be exploited by Soviets for further influence or the Amanullah camp in royal power politics.⁶² The Afghans were eager to explain to London that their friendship with Turkey was connected to securing itself from Iran and not due to closer relations with the Soviet Union.⁶³

This explains the Turkish effusion at Afghanistan's entry to the League of Nations and its sponsorship thereof in 1934.⁶⁴ Afghanistan did not join the League in imitation of the Soviets, it was a balancing conducted through consultation with Turkey.

Afghanistan was lukewarm towards the League, though thought it best to be part of the organisation for self-protection and self-promotion instead of being outside looking in. However, Kabul could not join while Britain was a party to the League and the Soviet Union was not, such was the existing Kabul-London-Moscow status quo vis-à-vis the League of Nations.⁶⁵ Moscow's adhesion in 1934 therefore, prompted Afghan application in conformity with its existing foreign policy. Now, all four of the eventual Saadabad signatories were members of the League of Nations.

By the time the Abyssinian crisis heated in the autumn of 1935, Afghanistan had obtained some measure of protection from and normalisation with Iran through Turkish help. Kabul had little interest in Africa, though it was wary of Italy because of Amanullah's asylum there.⁶⁶ This weakens the claim that the Abyssinian crisis prompted the initialling of a Middle Eastern pact in October 1935. The crisis

⁶² FO 371/94409, N 217/91/97, Maconachie, Kabul to FO, 17 December 1934.

⁶³ FO 371/20315, N 452/38/97, Walton, India Office to FO, 24 January 1936.

⁶⁴ FO 371/18261, N 5687/5687/97, Morgan, Istanbul to FO, 29 September 1934.

⁶⁵ FO 371/18261, N6354/3332/97, Maconachie, Kabul to FO, 14 October 1934.

⁶⁶ FO 371/19416, N4726/122/97, Fraser-Tytler, Kabul to FO, 7 September 1935.

catalysed diplomacy certainly, it did not however have a direct causal relationship to the Saadabad Pact.

In the next crisis of European origin, Afghanistan attempted to feign ambivalence, but was frustrated at the League's inability to contain German remilitarisation of the Rhineland in March 1936. Kabul explained to its Iranian representative that Afghanistan was not prepared to take any action which would threaten the economic interests of Germany in Afghanistan.⁶⁷ The point being that Afghan-Iranian exchanges over a European crisis were not new. They had been within the purview of existing bilateral relationships of consultation each of the Saadabad signatories had established before any Italian or German crisis. Their durability may be questioned, however, regional international mechanisms for crisis diplomacy were already in place and developing.

Another example of the convergence of Turco-Afghan relations occurred in early 1937. Kabul engaged further Turkish officers as army instructors, instead of the German officers they had desired. The German contract had been cancelled because of Soviet displeasure. In a move significant of foreign policy practice and continuity, Ankara appointed Colonel Ziya Kayan as head of the mission, he had served as instructor in Kabul with the first Turkish missions to Afghanistan in 1922.⁶⁸

This context of bilateral relationship building since the 1920s combined with developing intra-Middle Eastern diplomacy of the 1930s produced positive foreign policy results. Turkish mediation of the Afghan-Iran frontier dispute in 1935 had the double effect of decreasing Kabul-Tehran tensions and linking Afghanistan more

⁶⁷ HW 12/202, 064816, Bahman, Kabul to Kazemi, Tehran, 19 March 1936.

⁶⁸ FO 371/21066, N 1455/70/97, Macann, Kabul to FO, 19 February 1937.

closely to the contiguous members of the prospective four power Middle Eastern pact.

Afghan-Iran Frontier Dispute, 1935

This issue on the long Perso-Afghan frontier was in the vicinity of Musabad and Yazdan.⁶⁹ It illustrated the tension between interests of local people's access to springs and grazing grounds on one hand, and the nationalising, centralising, and sedentarising impulses of the nation-state on the other. Afghan and Iranian governments were eager to establish their boundaries of action and coercion.

Mutual accusations of border incursion, selective arming of tribes, villages, and headmen had been going on for decades. Towards the end of 1933 moves for a settlement suggested by Afghanistan were tentatively agreed.⁷⁰ Since neither the Afghans nor the Iranians could agree on where to draw the frontier line, Turkey as an impartial state on good terms with both Kabul and Tehran was invited to arbitrate. The process began around the time of Turkey's increased international activism, the Shah's drive towards centralisation, and the dual control of Hashim and Mahmud in Afghanistan.

General Fahrettin Altay headed the Turkish arbitration mission. In the meantime, Iran and Afghanistan manoeuvred for position before the general arrived. In August 1934 Iran accused Afghanistan of moving some 2,000 families to contested areas to take possession of springs and pastures to show ownership of the land before the Turkish

⁶⁹ On current maps the area corresponds to the meeting point of two Afghan provinces, Herat and Farah with the Iranian province of South Khorasan.

⁷⁰ HW 12/176, 055800, Foreign Office, Tehran to Iranian Ambassador Kabul, 28 December 1933.

mission arrived.⁷¹ Less than a month later Kabul protested to Ankara that Iran was selectively arming frontier tribes which pushed some Iranian tribal families into Afghan territory.⁷² Both sides at the same time expressed, naturally, hopes that Turkey would favour their claim more.⁷³

The Turkish commission arrived in Afghanistan in November 1934; it found the work difficult due to the competing claims. Interestingly, despite differences on the ground, some officials in London saw Turkish interests in quite grandiose terms. Suggesting the formation of a

*...great Mahomedan Middle East Confederacy which might include Arabia and Trans-Jordania... this is what Mustafa Kemal and the Shah would like and what Enver Pasha stood for. After all the differences which now separate these states are nowhere of a serious nature.*⁷⁴

These were the views of J.D. Coleridge, though other minutes in the Foreign Office archives do not always go so far in their Saidian orientalism, there were undercurrents of Muslim essentialism which saw the process through the prism of an ill-defined Islamic solidarity which posited social and political conditions from Istanbul to Kabul as largely similar.

Ankara, though keen to mediate, became frustrated with the claimants' attitudes.

Feeling that the situation was impeding Altay's work, İnönü almost recalled the general on 14 December.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the commission remained in place until 19

⁷¹ HW 12/183, 057924, Soheili, Tehran to Iranian Ambassador, Kabul, 30 August 1934.

⁷² HW 12/184, 058074, Foreign Minister, Kabul to Afghan Ambassador, Ankara, 27 September 1934.

⁷³ *ibid*; HW 12/186, 058725, Kazemi, Tehran to Iranian Ambassador, Ankara, 28 November 1934.

⁷⁴ FO 371/19408, N 90/90/97, Maconachie, Kabul to FO, 13 December 1934.

⁷⁵ HW 12/186, 058906, İnönü, Ankara to Fahrettin, Meshed, 14 December 1934.

January 1935 after Iran and Afghanistan agreed under Turkish pressure to accept the commission's award without further protest or discussion.⁷⁶

The becalmed situation returned to the usual manoeuvring on the border by the end of February 1935. The Turkish representative in Kabul reported movements of Iranian tribes and troops to the disputed areas of Musabad and Yazdan.⁷⁷ By mid-March Afghanistan was sufficiently perturbed by Iranian action to appeal to the restraining influence of Turkey, lest Kabul refer the matter to the League of Nations and retaliate in the area by force.⁷⁸

The contending parties were anxious for news while Ankara was eager to be acceptable to both sides.⁷⁹ Altay drew up his report and award, which was delivered to the Afghan and Iranian embassies in Ankara on 15 May. Loraine noted the Afghan ambassador's disappointment, and acquiescence to the final decision.⁸⁰ There must have been delay in Afghan communications from Ankara to Kabul, for the latter was still requesting information on the decision on 6 June.⁸¹ Whatever political exercises in persuasion took place in Kabul in the interim must have worked, both sides accepted Altay's award. The grudging Afghan acceptance precipitated Kabul's insistence on the oversight of Turkish officers in applying the terms of the award.⁸²

Difficulties in communications and translations meant, it was not until January 1936 that William Fraser-Tytler, British Minister in Afghanistan, could report on the

⁷⁶ FO 371/19408, N 94/90/97, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 1 January 1935; FO 371/19406, N 924/89/97, Maconachie, Kabul to FO, 31 January 1935.

⁷⁷ HW 12/190, 060241, 28 February 1935, Şevket, Kabul to Foreign Office, Ankara, 28 February 1935; HW 12/189, 059759, Turkish Charge, Kabul to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 2 March 1935.

⁷⁸ HW 12/189, 059962, Foreign Minister, Kabul to Afghan Ambassador, Ankara, 14 March 1935.

⁷⁹ FO 371/19406, N 2269/89/97, Fraser-Tytler, Kabul to FO, 12 April 1935.

⁸⁰ FO 371/19408, N 2772/90/97, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 22 May 1935.

⁸¹ HW 12/193, 061357, Foreign Office, Kabul to Afghan Ambassador, Ankara, 6 June 1935.

⁸² HW 12/196, 062109, Foreign Office, Kabul to Afghan Ambassador, Ankara, 10 August 1935.

arbitration award.⁸³ Musabad was divided in half, the part containing the cultivated land and buildings was awarded to Iran by virtue of the irrigating spring having its origin in undisputed Iranian territory. Areas with winter grazing ground and springs used by Afghan tribes were awarded to Afghanistan. In Yazdan and the neighbouring settlements of Nazar Khan and Kabuda, Iran had the advantage of occupation. Nazar Khan, owned by an Afghan national, was turned over to Afghanistan while Yazdan and Kabuda remained with Iran, these were all areas to the east of the generally vertical line of the frontier.⁸⁴ Given the number of areas awarded to Iran, Afghanistan felt hard done by. Arming and pushing tribes over the frontier caused a *fait accompli* which influenced the Turkish decision towards the principle of possession in the context of competing claims and counterclaims on the ground.

Nonetheless, despite reservations, Iran and Afghanistan were both content for the dispute to be concluded and have a portion of the frontier settled. Turkey as the arbiter was the decisive factor. In January 1936, the Afghan Foreign Minister told Loraine that, Iran had not liked that he had suggested Turkish arbitration, but Tehran did not want to jeopardise the developing Perso-Turkish relationship.⁸⁵

Turkey gained significantly from the frontier dispute. First, Ankara's interests in attempting an equitable reward stemmed from its desire for closer relations with both claimants. Second, this endeavour for impartiality promoted Ankara as the forum for regional disputes, where regional powers could avoid the direct influence of stronger powers. Invoking Soviet arbitration would have invited unwanted interference of

⁸³ The full text, in Turkish, of the Iran-Afghanistan Frontier Arbitration can be found in FO 371/21070, N 1012/1012/97, the details of which conform to Fraser-Tytler's report.

⁸⁴ FO 371/20318, N 468/444/97, Fraser-Tytler, Kabul to FO, 3 January 1936.

⁸⁵ FO 371/20318, N 444/444/97, Loraine, Ankara to Oliphant, 11 January 1936.

Soviet officials. It was Iranian and Afghan policy to keep Moscow, as far as possible, at arm's length. Policy towards Britain was similar, though more so for Iran. It would also invite Soviet suspicion of British activity in the area. A third Great Power's assistance would cause similar suspicions, it was also far from clear whether they would be inclined to assist. By convergence of interest and geographical proximity, Turkey was the logical and politically neutral choice. There is no evidence yet found that the British or the Soviets were disquieted by Turkish involvement in this matter. Turkey taking the opportunity for regional mediation, therefore, is consistent with Turkish foreign policy action of the 1930s.

Turkish-Iranian Relations

Despite differences between Iran and Iraq on the contemporary political landscape, Turkey's diplomacy with Iran was chronologically similar to its approaches to Iraq and Afghanistan: a normalisation of relations in the 1920s, closer bilateral cooperation in the 1930s, capped with a regional pact at Saadabad. The key differences were Tehran's need to balance its actions against a potential Soviet threat and to settle the Shatt al-Arab dispute with Iraq. Baghdad and Tehran's common interests, plus Ankara's mediation, helped diminish these problems. Iran and Iraq agreed that border security and political centralisation were pillars of foreign and domestic policy. Further agreement on the benefits of peaceful relations were appreciated by Baghdad and Tehran too, for which the Shatt issue was an inhibitor. Finally, they both aspired to increased independence of action from Great Powers. For Iran then, this is where balancing Anglo-Soviet interests, domestic policy, and limited adjustment of the regional status quo overlapped. The Shah devoted himself to

strengthening relationships with Iran's neighbours, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Turkey, and to explore what could be extracted from each without breaking with any.⁸⁶

Turkish-Iranian relations in the lead up to Saadabad presents a relatively richer set of connections compared to Ankara's relations with Baghdad and Kabul. The diplomatic archive material in the UK is more extensive in allowing this bilateral analysis. It also has a qualitative difference in how Turkey and Iran inherited the traditions and practices of independent state institutions of foreign policy. They were comparatively more centralised and bureaucratic. Still, the main similarity that links all three bilateral narratives was the cautious two-way diplomacy initiated in the 1920s facilitating the closer diplomatic ties of the 1930s.

The bilateral contact shows a historiographical tension between Eurocentrism and independent Middle Eastern agency that can be generalised to the other signatories of Saadabad. As shall be seen, events such as news sharing or cross-border mercantile regulation agreements were celebrated with some oratory by local actors, much to British official perplexity. For Turkish and Iranian officialdom however, they represented normalising regional international intercourse in the nation-state system. For Middle Eastern actors these were part and parcel of building state institutions and simultaneously regularising them with regional partners for further diplomacy, trade, and repression. Significantly, these allowed space for solving bilateral problems without appealing to Great Power intervention or mediation.

More specifically, this contact fostered trade diplomacy. Both sides had a need for diversifying their trade routes and markets. Turkey also attempted to offset some of

⁸⁶ Amin Saikal, 'Iranian Foreign Policy, 1921-1979', in *The Cambridge History of Iran: Volume 7, From Nadir Shah to The Islamic Republic*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 433.

its entanglement in the clearing system on its eastern neighbour. Economic diplomacy was closely tied to the states' attempts to increase their national economic bases and bilateral trade simultaneously. It represented efforts towards regional trade integration. This will be seen especially in the diplomacy around the Trabzon-Tabriz trade route.

Overall, the development of the Tehran-Ankara relationship from the 1920s through 1930s represented a Perso-Turkish axis in the Saadabad Pact with similarities to the Greco-Turkish axis in the Balkan Entente. Similarly with Greece, this axis was based on mutual interest, geographical proximity, and territorial security. The contrast was that territorial security was not externally orientated to a nation-state, but internally towards the Kurdish population. Both Ankara and Tehran had interests in regularising their frontier relations and increasing state centralisation. These factors culminated in a convergence of centralising, coercive, and commercial interests.

When Reza Shah established his Pahlavi dynasty, he had an acute awareness of Iran's weakness in the face of the Anglo-Russian rivalry and Tehran's vulnerability to Great Power manipulation. In an environment where a sense of nationalism was tentative and made difficult by a dispersed population, weak communications; and a volatile society regulated by delicate interactions between monarchy, clergy, diverse ethnic groups, professional and commercial strata, the Shah's answer was centralisation.⁸⁷

The Shah's reforms, often following Atatürk's efforts in Turkey after a year or two, were not for foreign policy ingratiation but domestic consolidation. There was a good

⁸⁷ *ibid*, 428.

deal of success in centralisation and bureaucratic reform. Between 1921-41 government was transformed from a collection of titled grandees to 11 full-time ministries with 90,000 civil servants, the largest were the ministries of the interior, education, and justice.⁸⁸ Government personnel also grew more stable, between 1926-41 there were eight and ten changes of prime minister and cabinet respectively, compared to 60 and 35 through 1906-25.⁸⁹ There was a largely successful effort to disarm and settle nomads, often forcibly and onto land that was not adequate for their flocks.⁹⁰ State funded infrastructure projects set up 300 plants for various consumer and industrial products including sugar, tea, cigarettes, glycerine, jute, and cement.⁹¹ The Trans-Iranian railway connected the four compass points of the country to Tehran by 1941.⁹²

A generous measure of authoritarianism was the facilitator of centralisation and reform. Political life was limited to what the Shah deemed acceptable.⁹³ Political dissent amounted to subversion or treason. Where one may find in Afghanistan a loose ideology around Islam and monarchism or in Turkey a secular modernising authoritarianism, according to Ervand Abrahamian, the Shah's ideology, if any, was state power, order, and discipline.⁹⁴

Iran faced a similar situation to the Balkans when the Depression lowered demand for Iranian products, which already had a low share in European markets. In general

⁸⁸ Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 69.

⁸⁹ *ibid*, 77.

⁹⁰ Nikki Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 91.

⁹¹ Abrahamian, *Iran*, 79.

⁹² *ibid*, 80.

⁹³ Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 88.

⁹⁴ Abrahamian, *Iran*, 68.

terms the Middle East suffered the same problem of being a primary product exporter and importer of consumer or finished goods as the Balkans. The value of trade in Iran in the 1930s fell to less than a third of the 1929 level.⁹⁵ The price of Iranian goods on the world market fell by half, impacted more than the Balkans because of simple distance and the commensurate increase in logistical costs, while prices of manufactured Western products remained high. Leading to the similar Balkan situation where, by the end of the 1930s, Germany became Iran's leading trade partner.⁹⁶

The drive for internal strengthening allowed for some limited international action. The capitulations were abolished in 1928, though this was more than tempered by British ownership of the oil concession and therefore oil industry.⁹⁷ The concession was subject to a very moderate renegotiation in Iran's favour in 1933. Though this did not change the fact that the British controlled oil industry employed more workers than all other industries in Iran combined.⁹⁸ The Soviets also chafed at the British-Persian oil deal. Moscow, displeased at the Iranian refusal for access to oil, demanded Iran reduce its trade with third countries and periodically boycotted Iranian goods to achieve a better deal.⁹⁹ The Soviets probably could not afford the modest royalties and investment costs Britain had already deployed, so attempted to exploit its proximity and the vital trade routes to Iran's north. Overall, Iranian interests in

⁹⁵ Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 97.

⁹⁶ *ibid*, 98.

⁹⁷ Saikal, 'Iranian Foreign Policy', 432.

⁹⁸ Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 101.

⁹⁹ Zalmay Khalilzad, 'The Superpowers and the Northern Tier', *International Security* 4, no. 3 (Winter - 1980 1979): 9.

balancing Anglo-Soviet interests, limited adjustment of the status quo, and domestic policy considerations were fertile ground for pursuing relations with Turkey.

Early relations and the Iran-Turkey Frontier Adjustment

Early in the existence of Pahlavi Iran and Republican Turkey, two sets of leaderships could look across the border to see a quasi-mirror image of authoritarian strongman leadership directing a nationalising project held up by control of the military.

Externally, early gratefulness for Soviet support was turning to wariness of the USSR's foreign policy morphing into what was the erstwhile Tsarist policy of influence and expansion. In addition to British control of oil, Iran had to further consider the British maritime presence, merchant and naval, not only up the Shatt al-Arab, but also along the southern coast.

It was incumbent on both sets of leaderships to ensure good cross border relations, not just get along because they looked superficially similar as new nation-states. The desire of Kurdish chiefs to protect their autonomy was incompatible with the nation-state and its agents eager to drag societies through modernisation. Curbing this autonomy led to repression and resistance, actions which spilled over borders.¹⁰⁰

The Perso-Turkish border was largely set in 1639 at Kasr-ı Şirin (Qasr-e Shirin), this however only refers to the border of what is modern Turkey-Iran, leading, for most part, to the end of the Safavid-Ottoman territorial rivalry. An adjustment was made at the Treaty of Erzurum in 1847 after wars over what after 1921 became Iraqi territory. This was further modified with the Istanbul Protocol of 1913. However, the boundary

¹⁰⁰ Akdevelioğlu and Kürkçüoğlu, 'Orta Doğu'yla İlişkiler', 360.

commission, due to physically delimit the frontiers never set to work because of WWI. Without visible boundary demarcation, confusion over jurisdiction when pursuing Kurds was common to both sets of security forces.¹⁰¹ This may have been a convenient excuse when bilateral tensions were low, stakes relatively low, and areas isolated.

The Sheikh Said and Simko rebellions in Turkey (1925) and Iran (1926) respectively, catalysed bilateral efforts. A friendship, security and non-aggression treaty was signed in April 1926. Article six of this treaty aimed at “border tribes and actions towards preventing their habitual criminal activities”.¹⁰² In effect, the rebellions established the centralising states’ common ground in inhibiting the development of an ethno-linguistic Kurdish nationalism along their shared frontier.

In June 1928, a protocol appended to the 1926 document, turned it into an instrument of positive political assistance.¹⁰³ In the same year Turkey and the USSR signed a mutual border security assistance agreement for joint patrolling of the common Caucasian border.¹⁰⁴ Thus were the Kurds squeezed and subjected to nation-state policies. However, remnants of the Sheikh Said Rebellion crossed into Iran near Little Ararat.¹⁰⁵ They continued their resistance and excursions into Turkish territory in 1927. After some reorganisation the rebellion renewed in 1930, this was the Ağrı (Ararat) Rebellion. Turkish forces surrounded Little Ararat to end the resistance, thus violating Iranian territory. Tehran rejected the Turkish proposal for

¹⁰¹ *ibid*, 360.

¹⁰² *ibid*, 361.

¹⁰³ Watt, ‘Saadabad Pact’, 335.

¹⁰⁴ Onur İşçi, ‘Russophobic Neutrality: Turkish Diplomacy, 1936-1945’ (PhD, Washington D.C., Georgetown University, 2014), 34.

¹⁰⁵ The mountain is also known as Lesser Ararat.

adjusting the border to include Little Ararat in Turkey. The Istanbul Protocol was the basis of rejection, breaching this would undermine the Iranian claim against Iraq on the Shatt al-Arab. Turkish troops remained in the area.¹⁰⁶ Legally, this was an act of war, but one which did not impede closer relations.

This was no trivial matter; but it did remain between neighbours. Turkey was not yet a League member, Iran as a full member could refer the issue to Geneva and hope to generate diplomatic pressure on Ankara but did not do so. Aras suggested a bilateral solution, offering to travel to Tehran personally in December 1931.¹⁰⁷ The diplomatic calm on such a serious issue indicated a good working relationship and predicted an agreeable quid pro quo. Ankara and Tehran's interests in consolidating central authority and Kurdish suppression on the border were sufficiently aligned to avoid international attention on a temporary breach of territorial sovereignty.

A secret British despatch from Tabriz reported that Aras told the Iranians that Turkey would not evacuate the area around Little Ararat, adding that Iran could either take or leave the deal offered.¹⁰⁸ Given this attitude, it is less surprising Iran did not refer the matter to the League. Aside from the reputational aspect of protecting nation-state integrity, it is likely Iran was convinced of the potential gains. Giving up Little Ararat made the area easier to control for Iran as well as for Turkey. Moreover, while Turkey gained a mountain with more strategic than cash value, Iran received fertile land in Qotur. By 23 January 1932, Tehran was reporting to its legations that all difficulties were solved, and the land exchange agreement had been signed.¹⁰⁹ Crucially,

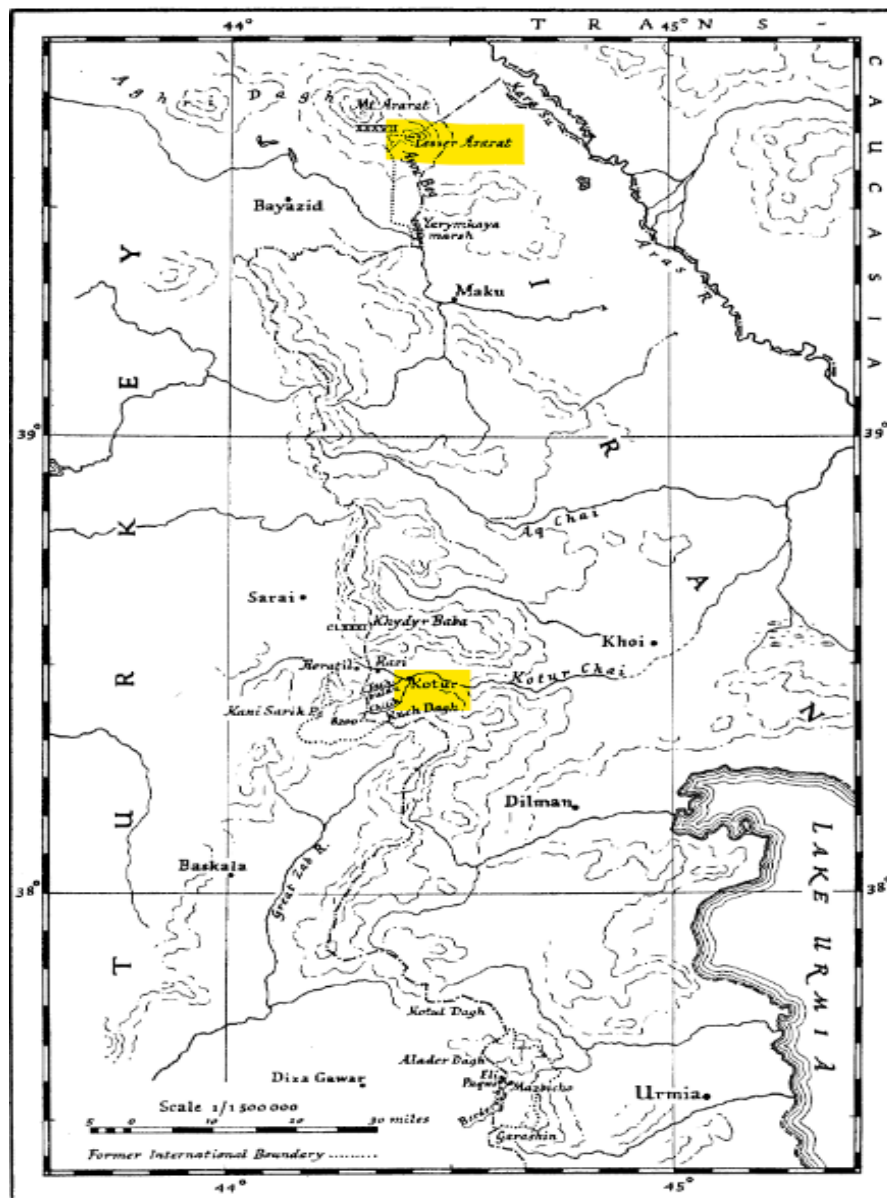
¹⁰⁶ Akdevelioğlu and Kürkçüoğlu, 'Orta Doğu'yla İlişkiler', 362.

¹⁰⁷ HW 12/151, 045495, Feroughi, Tehran, to Iranian Ambassador, Ankara, 25 December 1931.

¹⁰⁸ FO 371/16062, E 2033/33/34, Hoare, Tehran to FO, 5 April 1932.

¹⁰⁹ HW 12/153, 046638, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tehran, to Iranian Legation, Cairo, 23 January 1932.

Tehran's concerns for its claims against Iraq were protected, as the border adjustment was signed by a separate instrument not subject to Erzurum 1847 nor Istanbul 1913. This showed Turkey and Iran's bilateral ability to find room for manoeuvre. It would later be useful for the signature of Saadabad by navigating the Iran-Iraq frontier negotiations.



Map 2 Turkey-Iran Boundary 1937.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ G.R. C. (Crone?), 'The Turkish-Iranian Boundary', *The Geographical Journal* 91, no. 1 (1938): 58. There were minor adjustments after 1932, the final one in 1937.

Akdevelioğlu and Atay relate an interesting detail whereby some technical details causing disagreement were referred to an arbitrator. This arbiter was the Shah, who promptly decided in favour of Turkey.¹¹¹ It was more than an authoritarian's distaste for technical details. More likely it was a result of cautious diplomacy initiated in the 1920s that resulted in avenues of productive discussion. Further facilitated by a measure of the leaders' ideological affinity and a healthy dose of caution on involving the Great Powers. Nevertheless, there is likely more in the Turkish and Iranian archives that could further enrich this episode.

Later bilateral communications show Ankara and Tehran adjusted to the agreement quickly. The delimitation commission got to work in the summer of 1932.¹¹² The agreements facilitated further cooperation at the convergence of the Turkish-Iranian-Iraqi border area. Turkish frontier units were to maintain communication with Iranian counterparts on whatever movements were of mutual concern.¹¹³ This foreshadowed the Turkish-Iraqi cooperation in the spring of 1935 described above and indicated the tri-mutual interests of the contiguous signatories of Saadabad as having the Kurds as a target of cooperation.

In sum, by the early 1930s, Turkish-Iranian bilateral relations were strong enough to withstand a territorial crisis. Increased cooperation and security along the frontier were conducive to developing the Turkish-Iranian axis additionally by trade, further facilitating the diplomatic processes of Saadabad.

¹¹¹ Akdevelioğlu and Kürkçüoğlu, 'Orta Doğu'yla İlişkiler', 363.

¹¹² HW 12/158, 048886, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, Tehran, 28 July 1932.

¹¹³ HW 12, 159/049584, Emin Ali, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, Tehran, 8 August 1932.

Trade diplomacy and the Tabriz-Trabzon Route

Despite its long southern coast as a potential avenue for trade, Iran's more agriculturally productive regions were in the central, Caspian, and northern areas. The south was under the considerable economic influence of Britain, by virtue of its ownership of the oil works of Abadan. Further to the south-east and east, British India and Afghanistan could not absorb the Iranian surplus for trade. Iraq to the west had markets larger than Afghanistan but was also a primary agricultural producer. Indian Ocean trade further east does not occur in the documentary record to a significant extent. Though it is unlikely to have been able to absorb as much as Iran desired to export. The principal markets were to the west, the approaches to which were controlled by Britain at Suez. This meant competing with the cheaper transit costs of producers on or closer to the Eastern Mediterranean coast.

Iran's foreign trade to its north historically had two general directions. One from Tabriz via Erzurum to Trabzon, the other from Bandar Anzali to Batumi by way of Baku.¹¹⁴ Unhelpfully for Iran, the USSR had strengthened its control over the latter route since consolidating its revolution, as opposed to the former, more laissez-faire, situation. The Turkish route to Trabzon still afforded a possibility through the north-west. In addition to constituting an alternative to Batumi; Trabzon was an alternative to the Rowanduz road through Iraq, which connected to the Eastern Mediterranean through Syria. Though not new, the Tabriz-Trabzon route had fallen into disrepair since WWI. Further, rumours of Soviet meddling persisted throughout the region. Moscow's encouragement of Kurdish raiding on the Turkish side of the route brought

¹¹⁴ Akdevelioğlu and Kürkçüoğlu, 'Orta Doğu'yla İlişkiler', 360. The town is referred to as Enzeli in the sources, also known as Bandar-e Anzali and Bandar-e Pahlavi.

the road's security and viability under question and increased its associated costs. A greater portion of Iranian trade through the USSR meant greater political influence over Tehran.¹¹⁵ Such was the background to Perso-Turkish relations as it moved from questions of frontier adjustment to trade, one needed to diversify, the other wanted the revenue.

Soon after the conclusion of the Little Ararat affair, in June 1932 Ali Feroughi expressed the Iranian interest in opening the Tabriz-Erzurum-Trabzon trade route to the Turkish embassy in Tehran.¹¹⁶ Talks were ongoing when the British consulate in Tabriz received a report, from November, that Turkish agents were spreading news of the Rowanduz road's lack of safety.¹¹⁷ This was an effort to drum up custom towards Trabzon, in addition to countering the rumours of Soviet interference. Moscow's concern over the development of the Trabzon route had already been registered with the British. In March 1932, the Soviet Consul in Maku, Salaviov told Reginald Hoare that the frontier rectification between Turkey and Iran might make the exploitation of the Trabzon route safer, which was alarming for trade towards Batumi.¹¹⁸ Clearly the route was of considerable interest to all three parties, this fairly neutral state of affairs did not last into 1933.

Iran cancelled the oil concession with Britain in November 1932. This was renegotiated by April 1933, on terms of only slight improvement to Tehran. Moscow, pressed for an oil concession while the subject was in the air, but was refused since

¹¹⁵ *ibid*, 360.

¹¹⁶ HW 12/157, 048823, Numan Tahir, Tehran to Foreign Ministry, Ankara, 27 June 1932.

¹¹⁷ FO 371/16952, E 631/631/34, Davis, Tabriz to FO, 31 January 1933.

¹¹⁸ FO 371/16062, E 2033/33/34, Hoare, Tehran to FO, 5 April 1932.

Tehran sought better terms than it was getting from London.¹¹⁹ The Soviets did not want to pay more than another Great Power rival in the same market.

The costs of this moderate success in foreign policy flexing were considerable for Iran. For one, the influential and able Abdolhossein Teymourtash died in prison after the negotiations because the Shah suspected him of double dealing.¹²⁰ More broadly it prompted a trade war from Moscow which lasted for most of 1933. In June, Feroughi was outraged at Soviets dumping goods in northern Iran.¹²¹ British intelligence summaries reported Perso-Soviet trade at a standstill, staffs of Soviet trade agencies at absolute minimums, and hundreds begging near frontier villages.¹²²

Towards the end of July, Soviet action in Azerbaijan for renewal of trade, caused the arrests of several pro-Soviet Iranians.¹²³ There was no news of a trade deal by the end of August, though ministerial talks were held in Tehran.¹²⁴ Mallet explained how Iranian merchants, on word from Tehran, were not using the Batumi route.

Rowanduz, as the alternative, was only an auxiliary because of seasonal bad weather. He also mentioned the Trabzon road, which had scope for development. However, the chief difficulty according to Mallet was that, on Trabzon as well as Rowanduz, the Soviets were likely to reduce transit rates below economically viable levels rather than allow a significant portion of the trade out of their hands. Mallet's

¹¹⁹ Saikal, 'Iranian Foreign Policy', 433.

¹²⁰ Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 88.

¹²¹ FO 371/16939, E 3917/21/34, Mallet, Tehran to FO, 28 June 1933.

¹²² FO 371/16940, E 3927/44/34, Mallet, Tehran to FO, 1 July 1933. The latter point was not necessarily due to the trade issue, the destitute usually having come from the Soviet side of the border during the Soviet Famine of 1932-1933.

¹²³ FO 371/16941, E 4668/44/34, Mallet, Tehran to FO, 29 July 1933.

¹²⁴ FO 371/16941, E 5358/44/34, Mallet, Tehran to FO, 26 August 1933.

conclusion on the trade routes was that development of Trabzon and Rowanduz could be a lever for better terms but would not replace the Batumi route.¹²⁵

The immediate issue for Iran was the near absence of trade with the Soviet Union, which caught Tehran before levers for better terms were adequately developed.

Given the mounting human cost on the Soviet side of the frontier for the separate reasons of famine, it is arguable how far these levers might have swayed Moscow in the first place. The British Consul at Tabriz reported Armenian refugees crossing into Turkey, some of whom were former refugees from Turkey, demonstrating the abject situation in the region.¹²⁶

Iran still pursued some limited diversification. In the interim, Japanese commercial activity was reported around Khorramshahr (Mohammerah), for importing cement and cotton piece goods.¹²⁷ The Japanese returned in April 1934, to investigate the prospects of the Rowanduz route for goods travelling into Iran.¹²⁸ Though Iran was gaining some ground in diversification, the consequences mounted. By December 1933 Soviet exports to Iran were down to 8.1 million Roubles from 25.4 million in 1932 and a high of 60.3 million in 1930. Iran's exports to the USSR were down to 6 million Roubles from 1932's 49.5 million.¹²⁹

A new Perso-Soviet trade deal was signed on 10 December 1933.¹³⁰ This prompted signs of revival, imports to Iran of Kerosene and sugar, with livestock going the other

¹²⁵ BL, IOR/L/PS/12/3462, Coll 28/56, 'Persia. Perso-Turkish & Perso-Russian Frontier Affairs. Rowanduz Trade Route'. Mallet to Simon, 5 September 1933. Available at: https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100000000648.0x000010 Accessed June 2018

¹²⁶ FO 371/16952, E 7807/631/34, Palmer, Tabriz to FO, 30 September 1933.

¹²⁷ FO 371/16941, E 7122/44/34, Mallet, Tehran to FO, 4 November 1933.

¹²⁸ FO 371/17912, E 3753/2916/34, Palmer, Tabriz to FO, 7 June 1934.

¹²⁹ FO 371/16939, E 7572/21/34, Chilston, Moscow to FO, 5 December 1933.

¹³⁰ FO 371/16939, E 8035/21/34, Chilston, Moscow to FO, 23 December 1933.

way, and an increase in transit trade.¹³¹ The trade war with Moscow convinced Tehran of the pressing need for market diversity. If Tehran was not alive to the situation before, 1933 convinced it of the need for increased economic independence. One may view the Shah's visit to Turkey in 1934 partly through this prism. He avoided Iraqi and Soviet territory, by journeying to Turkey from Tabriz and westward through the bilateral frontier.¹³² The military trained Shah may have had in mind a personal inspection of the frontier and trade route for the viability of material communications.

More schemes were aired in conjunction with Turkish rail development and the bilateral desire to facilitate trade. The southern Turkish port of Mersin was mentioned as another potential avenue, for when it was connected to Van close to the Iranian border, by rail.¹³³ Talk of alternative trade routes during the Shah's visit caused some consternation in Baghdad. At this stage Iran and Iraq were negotiating in Europe over their frontier difficulties. The Van-Mersin route was not open, but a potential threat to Iraq in the future, while the Trabzon route was a chronologically more proximal issue. The British knew the Iranians wanted a new outlet and that Tehran had shown a desire to develop the Rowanduz-Mosul-Nusaybin-Alexandretta route, but thought Iraq was resisting for fear of a loss of influence to Syria.¹³⁴ Turkey could profit from this trade route through the Nusaybin transit, but this was a relatively insignificant stopover compared to Trabzon as the main port of departure for Iranian goods. Additionally, at this stage Alexandretta was not yet part of Turkey, thus the Iraqi

¹³¹ FO 371/17912, E 3707/2916/34, Palmer, Tabriz to FO, 6 June 1934.

¹³² FO 371/17905, E 1460/776/34, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 1 March 1934.

¹³³ FO 1011/175, 174/17/34, Matthews, Mersin to Loraine, Ankara, 10 March 1934.

¹³⁴ FO 371/17905, E 3632/776/34, Hoare, Tehran to FO, 2 June 1934.

reticence over the development of this route suited Ankara by diverting Iran's attention to Trabzon.

The attitude of Iraq was a curious addendum. Baghdad stood to gain from further developing the Rowanduz line but dithered over an unclear loss of influence. Later, in the spring of 1937, at the height of Turco-Iraqi relations, Baghdad was again reticent over linking the two countries railways at Mosul-Nusaybin for fear of giving strategic advantage to Turkey.¹³⁵ Clearly cooperation had its limits and Ankara could still stir suspicion, if not quite fear in Baghdad.¹³⁶

Throughout the early summer of 1934, Iraq was keen to get information on the reasons, processes, and results of the Shah's movements in Turkey. Iraqi authorities continually pressed the British and Iranians for news. Abdullah Damluji was convinced a military alliance was on the table as well as a commercial convention that included the development of the Tabriz-Trabzon route.¹³⁷ Alliance was on the Turkish mind, though it was unlikely Ankara wanted this to be a Perso-Turkish bilateral arrangement, which is what Iraq feared. The Iran-Iraq impasse over their border issues, the Shah's tour of Turkey, and active conversations over the Trabzon-Tabriz route all justified Iraq's anxiety.

Where Baghdad showed unease, the British thought everything was ordinary.

George Ogilvie-Forbes was shown a despatch from the Iraqi legation in Ankara outlining how the Turks had shown off to the Shah by military manoeuvres and tours

¹³⁵ BL: IOR/L/PS/12/2877, Coll 17/17, 'FO Annual Reports, 1932-1938, 1947, Annual Review of Events 1939-1942, Political Review 1943-1944', Annual Report for 1938, Morgan to Eden, 15 January 1938. Available at: https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100000000602.0x0001a3 Accessed June 2018.

¹³⁶ There is also the consideration that by 1937 Turkey had developed a hawkish attitude over Alexandretta.

¹³⁷ FO 371/17896, E 3972/197/34, Iraqi Minister-Iranian Ambassador Conversation, Baghdad 15 May 1934, copied to FO, 16 June 1934.

of the principal prosperous cities. The legation also reported a decision in principle to transfer northern Iranian trade through Trabzon. The Foreign Office comment was that Iran's needs in this direction were obvious and that there was no need to seek ulterior Turkish motive.¹³⁸

Further Turkish-Iranian contacts in the last quarter of 1934 emphasised the closeness of relations. A secret arrangement to cooperate on the Kurds coincided with anti-Kurdish action in both countries around the same time.¹³⁹ There followed discussion on Iran opening a legation in the Balkans, with Turkey as a conduit through which the available options were explored and reciprocal intentions communicated. Greece was prepared to establish representation in Tehran, while Iran preferred Romania, though was more interested in reciprocity than any particular Balkan state.¹⁴⁰ Iran likely preferred Romania as an oil exporter on the Soviet border similar to itself. The close relationship between Greece and Turkey may have prompted Ankara to suggest Greece to both sides to solidify itself in the diplomatic centre between what it saw as the most important Middle Eastern and Balkan states. These regional contacts gave rise to occasions which were not comprehended very well in London. What may seem at first glance to be historically unimportant in January 1936 illustrated the differences in thinking between a Great Power and a newly sovereign smaller one. Loraine in Ankara and Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen in Tehran reported the Anatolian and Pars agencies agreement for exchange of news. One of the goals was declared as defending the "orient against malicious legends". The FO minute commented that the event was unimportant and not deserving of

¹³⁸ FO 371/17905, E 5094/776/34, Ogilvie-Forbes, Baghdad to FO, 25 July 1934.

¹³⁹ FO 371/17912, E 6717/2916/34, Palmer, Tabriz to FO, 5 November 1934.

¹⁴⁰ HW 12/185, 058609, Kazemi, Tehran to Iranian Ambassador, Ankara, 19 November 1934.

such oratory as displayed by the authorities of each state. Though if Turkey and Iran wanted to flatter each other as pact makers any occasion was good enough.¹⁴¹ Two official news agencies sharing news, or disseminating official propaganda, would not ordinarily be cause for speeches. Or at least it would not in a news exchange context where *The Times* or *Le Temps* had their own correspondents in many places at once. Such established practice of news dissemination had scarce history in the Middle East.

Aside from the immediate and practical need for countering Italian Radio Bari propaganda in the region, it connects to state patrimony in facilitating the start and growth of social, economic, and political practices, which in the West began or grew through a moneyed middle class. It was similar to state economic planning in etatism where the attempt was to stimulate the creation of an internal entrepreneurial class and domestic markets. For Iran and Turkey, this was a step in their Western orientated development goals; a way to control the spread of information, self-promotion, advertorial for the flourishing Turco-Iranian relationship, and a joint declaration that they knew of and were countering outside propaganda. London may have been justified in thinking it unimportant, but the view from Ankara and Tehran was more than mere pact making.

This reading foregrounds Turkey, Iran, and the Middle East in general as agents of their own regional relationships. Butler reported on the excellent regard the Turkish embassy enjoyed in Iran, militarily, diplomatically, and at court. Turkish officers observed manoeuvres in Azerbaijan in October 1934 and near Tehran in November

¹⁴¹ FO 371/20045, E 356/356/34, Loraine, Ankara to FO 14 January 1936; FO 371/20045, E 729/356/34, Knatchbull-Hugessen, Tehran to FO, 18 January 1936.

1935. This was significant because other military attachés had not been invited for years. Ambassador Enis Akaygen was well regarded by the Shah and the diplomatic community while his wife and daughters visited the palace for tea with the Queen regularly. Butler supposed the Shah may have hoped that Turkish friendship might translate into some insurance against the USSR and greater influence on Iraq.¹⁴²

Lorraine thought the wide facilities afforded to the Shah in his state visit were being reciprocated to the Turkish representation in Iran. He also believed Turkish foreign policy kept in careful regard British interests in the Middle East and had a moderating and conciliatory effect on Iran's relations with Iraq.¹⁴³ British influence and support was a stabilising influence on Iraq. Turkish support for this stability, by moderating Iranian action and claims on Iraq, served both Turkey's main interest of security on its south-east and British interests in maintaining political, economic, and military influence in the Persian Gulf and the Shatt al-Arab.

Turkish-Iranian diplomatic and trade relations were taken note of outside Tehran and Ankara. Expanded activity on the Trabzon-Tabriz trade route in 1936 prompted the British to commission a report on distances, costs, and preferences which make for a useful snapshot. According to the report, the existing Tabriz-Trabzon route was 952 km, it could be completed in four to five days in summer or eight to ten in winter, at a cost of £13.2s per ton of carpets shipped ultimately to Hamburg, with promised reductions in taxation and therefore the transit rate. The Jolfa-Batumi rate was £10.12s.6d, but with the Soviets capable of reducing it further by a recent increase in rail facilities to and from Iran, should the Turks and Iranians have succeeded in

¹⁴² FO 371/20045, E 2296/356/34, Butler, Tehran to FO, 28 March 1936.

¹⁴³ FO 371/20045, E 3081/356/34, Lorraine, Ankara to FO, 23 May 1936.

making their rates more competitive.¹⁴⁴ These rates, taken as a cautious baseline, with appreciation for supply, demand, and perishability fluctuations, still afforded an avenue for a portion of Iran's trade to be transited through Trabzon to gain the lever for diversification away from the Soviets in the north and British to the south.

However, a curiosity arises on the Rowanduz route, for which Butler did not have a ready answer. At a rate of £19 per ton of carpets, the Rowanduz road was the shortest to the sea. It was also the most expensive and precarious, because of closures in winter and out of favour with Iranian authorities. Nevertheless, it was afforded the credit facilities by European and American banks not extended to the Batumi and Trabzon routes.¹⁴⁵

Details of why this should be so, were not found in the primary documentation, though there are some educated guesses. An ideological preference not to facilitate business with the Soviet Union could be one reason. Though, this is more likely tied to a Euro-American state's trade guarantees being less enforceable with pressure brought to bear on Moscow, compared to Damascus for example. Transporting goods through Rowanduz ensured they were travelling through mandatory territory under considerable political influence, with branches or representatives of credit houses on the ground. More specifically for the Trabzon route, it is probable that merchants had become frustrated with Turkish and Iranian practices of blocking credits as part of clearing agreements, protecting internal markets from external competition, but reducing investor confidence. It is also possible that Iraqi reticence on developing cross-border trade transit at Nusaybin was to prevent Turkey from

¹⁴⁴ FO 371/20052, E 1965/1965/34, Butler, Tehran to FO, 20 March 1936.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*

claiming a larger slice of the Rowanduz transit trade. Whatever the relative combination of factors, the possibilities of the Trabzon route and flourishing political relations intensified diplomatic contacts to produce the Cemal Hüsnü Taray mission.

Taray was an experienced diplomat, previously Ankara's representative at Berne and the first Turkish permanent representative at the League of Nations. He had also been part of the Turkish delegation at Lausanne in 1923.¹⁴⁶ Alongside the high regard Akaygen enjoyed in Tehran, Taray acted as a further conduit in Turkish diplomacy on the ground. It was first reported that Taray would travel to Tehran at the head of a delegation in early September 1936, to discuss trade relations and transit of goods.¹⁴⁷ He was delayed because the Iranian ministers of finance and economy, together with the ambassador to Ankara, had just completed a visit to Istanbul and were on the way to eastern Turkey to inspect the trade route to Iran on 19 September.¹⁴⁸ By the time Taray arrived in Tehran in early October, his remit had grown to encompass promoting the Trabzon route, commercial exchange, residence convention, frontier security, judicial assistance, and extradition.¹⁴⁹

Negotiations were ongoing at the end of January 1937. Minor questions on the frontier of 1932 were settled but there were difficulties over a trade agreement emanating from Iran's commercial commitments to Germany and the USSR.

¹⁴⁶ Muzaffer Başkaya, 'Atatürk'ün Genç Diplomati ve Türkiye'nin Milletler Cemiyet'indeki İlk Daimi Temsilcisi: Cemil Hüsnü Taray'ın Hayatı ve Diplomatik Faaliyetleri', *Tarih Okulu Dergisi* 11, no. 34 (June 2018): 670–71.

¹⁴⁷ FO 371/20044, E 5943/182/34, Butler, Tehran to FO, 5 September 1936.

¹⁴⁸ FO 371/20044, E 6277/182/34, Butler, Tehran to FO, 19 September 1936.

¹⁴⁹ FO 371/20045, E 6275/356/34, Butler, Tehran to FO, 19 September 1936; FO 371/20045, E 6514/356/34, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 6 October 1936.

Nevertheless, Taray was described as having made an excellent impression socially and as a patient negotiator.¹⁵⁰

The virtue of his patience was rewarded on 22 April with signature of a commercial agreement. The British ambassador in Tehran, Horace Seymour, found it puzzling that it took so long as it only amounted to mutual most favoured nation treatment. There was agreement that rail systems would be connected, and road communications improved, though without details on how or under what financial circumstances.¹⁵¹ This was another case of unimportance from the Great Power perspective, but not for Iran and Turkey. Ankara had become increasingly burdened by its clearing agreements with Germany and had a bad credit rating with Britain and France, coupled with a perceived unwillingness to grant foreign concessions alongside a propensity for nationalising extant infrastructure. Any lightening of these burdens with a clearing agreement to offsets its own at Iranian expense was positive for Ankara. Iran, on the other hand, had a clear objective of diversification, but was also conscious of further entanglements in clearing agreements. Therefore, the various bilateral agreements should be seen as steps taken towards greater political and economic independence facilitated by a convergence of interests. They were insignificant in and of themselves to a Great Power but were pieces in larger objectives of regional trade integration for the signatories.

Taray further signed conventions on security at the frontier zone, on civil and commercial judicial assistance, an extradition treaty, agreement on common customs houses at the frontier, aerial navigation, agreement for facilitating and strengthening

¹⁵⁰ FO 371/20835, E 1117/1117/34, Seymour, Tehran to FO, 26 January 1937.

¹⁵¹ FO 371/20835, E 2566/1117/34, Seymour, Tehran to FO, 23 April 1937.

transit trade, and transport of goods on the Tabriz-Trabzon route.¹⁵² These were significant in attempting to regulate cross-border practices of developing state institutions for domestic policy and facilitating trade in foreign policy goals.

Seymour was able to flesh out the agreement on the frontier to London after its ratification in June. Here again London thought the texts did not contain anything remarkable, this was a matter of perspective. The frontier security and extradition agreements spelled out a zone of 100 km, 50 km on each side of the frontier where incidents were to be dealt with bilaterally by central government officials of reciprocal administrative rank. They were to meet at regular intervals, or urgently upon request, empowered to fix indemnities and obligated to produce bilingual records of evidence taken in addition to issuing permits to visit localities in the zone for the collection of such evidence.¹⁵³ These were not remarkable from London; however, they did provide institutional frameworks for coordinated action on the border for control of frontier populations. The Foreign Office did not misunderstand the intentions, it was simply not interested. While for the signatory states and the Kurds it was certainly interesting and important. Though there were reasons beyond bilateral frontier security agreements for this, there were no further large-scale Kurdish troubles along the Perso-Turkish border in the interwar period after 1937.

Commercially, the contacts continued to bear fruit for the short period before the outbreak of war. By the end of 1937 road construction and improvement were underway on the Trabzon road, where over 1,500 men had been employed on the Turkish side, plus tendering in the pipeline for work the year after. Further, more

¹⁵² FO 371/20832, E 2571/560/34, Seymour, Tehran to FO, 25 April 1937.

¹⁵³ FO 371/20835, E 3687/1117/34, Seymour, Tehran to FO, 19 June 1937.

German made lorries and busses had been ordered to increase traffic to the frontier.¹⁵⁴ By mid-1938 Loraine reported on further construction and road traffic on the Trabzon route to Iran. The Turkish state bus and lorry service went as far as Gürbulak on the border, with negotiations for extension to Tabriz.¹⁵⁵

Iran-Turkey bilateral relations reveal generalisations that can be applied broadly to include Turkish relations with Afghanistan and Iraq. First, that there was significant Middle Eastern agency despite Great Power influences on the international sphere. The documentary record does not show much Great Power interest in influencing the Iran-Afghanistan and Iran-Turkey frontier adjustments for instance. Middle Eastern states had scope for independent international action and took such opportunities when and where they occurred.

Second, the regional context and states involved were instrumental in these negotiated international actions, they significantly informed the decisions to form the Saadabad Pact. Recent foreign policy experience demonstrated workable and mutually beneficial interest seeking behaviour. Furthermore, the consistency in Turkish foreign policy which first fostered bilateral relations, then multilateral diplomacy, and negotiated settlements enabled Turkey to present itself as the facilitator of productive hearings on regional disputes. Turkish arbitration, worked towards crystallising the benefits of cooperation which pre-dated Saadabad, where centralising states were eager to isolate their domestic spheres from external consequences.

¹⁵⁴ FO 371/21928, E 81/81/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 22 December 1937.

¹⁵⁵ FO 371/21928, E 3117/81/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 17 May 1938.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined how Turkey helped build bilateral understandings in the Middle East that allowed Ankara to position itself as a hub of regional mediation.

Turkey's promotion of state level interests in regime consolidation helped clarify the mutual interest in limited and negotiated adjustments of the status quo for long-term stability. In the first instance Iran, Iraq, and Turkey had the common goal of inhibiting transnational Kurdish connections. The convergence of nation-state coercive interest revealed itself in Ankara-Baghdad and Ankara-Tehran collaboration on shared borders. Afghanistan's interest in mediation clarified during Ankara's arbitration of a border dispute with Iran, where Turkish influence softened Tehran's stance on its eastern border.

The normalisation of bilateral relationships in the 1920s gave way to deeper contacts in the 1930s and multilateral regional pursuit of stability. This further demonstrated that regional cooperation had roots further back than a reaction to Italian revisionism in the 1930s, its causality was in the Middle East, not in Europe. It establishes Middle Eastern state's scope of action as independent of Eurocentric crises and shows how Middle Eastern agency informed the later Saadabad Pact.

Furthermore, the chapter has elucidated the Iran-Turkey axis as instrumental in Saadabad conclusion. Despite legal cause for war in 1930, Ankara and Tehran pursued a productive relationship that included bilaterally negotiated border adjustment. The centralising tendency in both states caused them to be more interested in anti-Kurdish, and pro-nation-state, coercion than belligerence. Ankara

and Tehran were further able to deepen this relationship by trade diplomacy that was of common benefit. This put Ankara in a favourable position in Tehran where Turkish mediative efforts were well received and facilitated further Middle Eastern diplomacy for Saadabad.

CHAPTER THREE - THE SAADABAD PACT

Around a third of this chapter examines the Iran-Iraq dispute on the Shatt al-Arab.

There are two pertinent reasons for this. First, Shatt settlement was a prerequisite for a regional non-aggression pact because it was the single most important dispute between Iran and Iraq. More importantly, the narrative demonstrates the process by which the situation moved from deadlock in Europe to solution in the Middle East. An attempt to resolve the situation in Geneva satisfied the nation-state institutional prerequisite to involve the League of Nations but was undermined by competing British and Italian interests taking precedence in a European forum. It transpired that Iraq and Iran could work towards a solution in a Middle Eastern forum instead.

There are two results of this analysis. First, it undermines the Great Power primacy in the narrative of the Saadabad Pact's conclusion. Middle Eastern states came to a workable solution where the Great Powers could not. Second, the examination shows Ankara's mediating role in the Shatt dispute, similar to the Afghan-Iran frontier settlement. Turkey's role in the Shatt dispute demonstrates the consistency of Turkish regional foreign policy moving from bilateral to multilateral then onto regional diplomacy in pursuit of internal and external policy goals.

While Shatt resolution was primarily a Perso-Iraqi affair, the documentary evidence indicates instrumental Turkish involvement in the settlement. Active Turkish diplomacy pushed for a regional alliance at every opportunity during the negotiations. The acceptance of a Shatt agreement, with which Britain was dissatisfied, that the USSR could not influence, and the Italians failed to stop, demonstrated a level of

Middle Eastern agency not found in the scholarship and paved the way for the Saadabad Pact.

Saadabad's conclusion came about through the crystallisation of what the signatories had in common. These were security, centralisation, and reducing border disputes in a context of nation-state building. Agreeing to and drawing the boundaries of nation-states regionally, it was hoped, would lead to regularisation of foreign relations.

Turkish arbitration, which predated Saadabad and worked to emphasise the benefits of cooperation, was based on Ankara's desire to isolate its domestic sphere from external consequences. Turkish decision makers identified this as a common goal that could be acceptable to other states in the region. Consequently, Turkey supported the movement of dispute resolution to the Middle East from Europe, then took the opportunity to press for the non-aggression pact while all the important actors capable of the decision were on the ground.

There is a significant point of similarity between the Balkan Entente and the Saadabad Pact which bridges this and the chapter immediately above. Unlike the Balkan Entente, where individual treaty articles were subject to long negotiation, there was little to no wrangling over the wording of terms in Saadabad. This was because the thinly veiled target of the Balkan alliance was a nation-state, Bulgaria, while for Saadabad it was a sub-state polity. Kurdish populations lay outside the nation-state system under which Saadabad was pursued, they constituted a tangible, but unnamed, target of the contiguous members of Saadabad. Kurdish containment balanced the enmities of Ankara, Baghdad, and Tehran towards their long-term goals of state centralisation. The Kurds became constructed as the common unmentioned

sub-state enemy of nation-states in the region due to securitised understandings of centralised state formation.¹ These were outlined in the bilateral relations sections above. Saadabad then, was partially designed as a buffer zone of non-contestation between Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. Afghanistan benefitted by having Iranian attention to its east constrained by the non-aggression pact, Kabul's further motives of centralisation and stability matched the other signatories. For Turkey, just as the Balkan Pact was part of a long-term strategy of establishing sovereignty over the Straits and Eastern Thrace; Saadabad contributed to long-term policies of Eastern border security, control of provinces where central administration was weak, and released resources for defence of western Turkey.

The chapter further demonstrates some operative successes of the short lived Pact. The first was Ankara's drawing criticism from Moscow and London to protect the other signatories diplomatically. This was followed by weathering the Iraqi crisis of August 1937, further Shatt al-Arab mediation, and intercession on smaller disputes between the USSR-Afghanistan and France-Iran. Finally, the Pact was able to project some small power in the calculations of the belligerents after war officially started in Europe. These episodes are significant because, as has been seen, the scholarship regards it as insignificant for not being able to sustain itself in the face of WWII, or as a prestige success for the early Turkish Republic, its goals were neither. Saadabad was for establishing a field of non-aggression and communicative good relations to respond to international developments with limited scope. It was an intra-Middle Eastern agreement for the Middle Eastern status quo against Middle Eastern threats.

¹ This is explored further from the Turkish angle in chapter five '1930s Turkey as a Nationalising State'.

The sheer force of the destabilisation that came from the west unbalanced these priorities.

The Iran-Iraq Frontier Dispute on the Shatt al-Arab

According to Randall Lessafer, the 1847 Treaty of Erzurum did not reflect the interests of the Ottoman and Persian empires. The treaty and by extension the Istanbul Protocol of 1913 and the minutes of the 1914 Delimitation Commission, reflected British and Russian imperial interests in how their colonial spheres were to be divided.² Erzurum confirmed Ottoman sovereignty over the whole of the Shatt al-Arab, the modification of 1913 gave anchorage off Khorramshahr to Persia, required to exploit the oil concession Britain held from Tehran.³

Iraq inherited these borders from the Ottoman Empire. Imperial interests were not yet dead by the 1930s, but the nation-state was establishing itself in the Middle East. It was a stormy period where new central authorities attempted to come to a livable accommodation and limited adjustment of the new status quo. In effect, newly independent Iraq had to contend with the increasingly centralised, stronger, and more assertive Iran over a water frontier which had not been definitively settled. The road

² Randall Lessafer, 'The Iran-Iraq Border: A Story of Too Many Treaties', in *Oxford Public International Law* (Oxford University Press, n.d.), 4, <https://opil.ouplaw.com/page/502>; For a more detailed study on the Ottoman-Iranian borderlands see, Sabri Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843–1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013). There are some technical distinctions between the three documents referred to in this chapter. Erzurum 1847 was a full international treaty, the Istanbul (Constantinople) Protocol 1913 was an amendment to Erzurum. The Perso-Ottoman Delimitation Commission of 1914 was to give effect to the Istanbul Protocol by erecting border posts, however the work was never completed. What is referred to as the minutes are the *process-verbaux* as they are given in the primary documentation, of the Delimitation Commission. When any of the years are given in the narrative by themselves, they refer to the corresponding documents.

³ Lessafer, 'Iran-Iraq Border', 7.

to Saadabad via the Shatt al-Arab then, helped Baghdad demonstrate its viability as a nation-state in the new systems of international association.

The central claim and counterclaim on the Shatt rested on a disagreement on where the river boundary was. As it stood, Iraqi territory ended where the Iranian shore began, that is the whole of the Shatt al-Arab was Iraqi territory. Tehran's thesis was that this should be adjusted to the thalweg line, the line running along the lowest point of a riverbed or valley, in this case the midline of the Shatt al-Arab between Iran and Iraq. An Iranian note of 1931 rejected the validity of the Istanbul Protocol because the Majlis had not ratified it.⁴ Tehran insisted that it was not reasonable to have a long riverbank without any sovereignty over it except the anchorage at Khorramshahr, Iraqi sovereignty over the whole of the river was not equitable. Iran further posited that the non-ratified documents were obsolete, signed under the duress of foreign powers, and contrary to present requirements.⁵ Iraqi complaints centred on Iranian breaches of the legal status quo such as violations of the frontier by war vessels and officials, demolition of frontier pillars, and the establishment of posts within Iraqi frontiers.⁶

There was also an economic dimension to water rights. Baghdad claimed Iranian damming of smaller rivers traversing the joint boundaries restricted irrigation water on the Iraqi side, which had been allotted by the 1913 Protocol. This caused reduced fruit harvests, destroyed orchards, and contributed to peasant flight from affected areas.⁷ Such agricultural complaints do not occur in the documentary record, though

⁴ FO 371/17895, E 3859/197/34, Ogilvie-Forbes, Baghdad to FO, 30 May 1934.

⁵ Jasim Abdulghani, *Iraq and Iran: The Years of Crisis* (Kent: Croom Helm, 1984), 115.

⁶ FO 371/17895, E 3859/197/34, Ogilvie-Forbes, Baghdad to FO, 30 May 1934.

⁷ Abdulghani, *Iraq and Iran*, 112.

were likely significant in one of the more productive tracts of Iraqi land. Perhaps more so considering David Pool's assertion that the fractured Iraqi political elite transformed itself into a landowning class in the interwar period.⁸

Furthermore, for Iran, neither the Ottoman Empire nor the Turkish Republic had ratified the 1913 and 1914 documents. This was of little significance to Ankara which had solved its border issues with both Iran and Iraq by 1932. The closeness of Iran-Turkey bilateral relations and that neither officially recognised the most recent treaties caused Baghdad concern.⁹ This was heightened by Reza Shah's visit to Turkey in June 1934. Though by 23 July there was an impression in Baghdad that the Shah had been disappointed by Turkish reluctance to pressure Iraq on the Shatt frontier, leading to a tempering of his perceived arrogance.¹⁰

Mutual accusations of border violations and tribal incitement were a routine that maintained an impasse. Iran and Iraq both professed willingness to come to terms bilaterally, while refusing each other's premises for discussion.¹¹ Turkish offers of mediation had been received coldly by London and Baghdad before the Shah's disappointment was known.¹² Baghdad attempted to break the deadlock by referring the question to the League of Nations in December 1934.¹³ Tehran reiterated its denial of the treaties Baghdad relied on but acquiesced to the submission.¹⁴ It was a gesture of goodwill on Tehran's part, claiming that the situation could only be solved

⁸ David Pool, 'From Elite to Class: The Transformation of Iraqi Leadership, 1920-1939', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 12, no. 3 (1980): 331-50.

⁹ FO 371/17896, E 4942/197/34, Ogilvie-Forbes, Baghdad to FO, 19 July 1934.

¹⁰ FO 371/17896, E 4840/197/34, Ogilvie-Forbes, Baghdad to FO, 23 July 1934.

¹¹ FO 371/17896, E 5741/197/34, FO Minute, Rendel, 13 September 1934.

¹² FO 371/17896, E 5657/197/34, FO Minute, Rendel, 7 September 1934.

¹³ FO 371/17897, E 7502/197/34, Humphrys, Baghdad to FO, 6 December 1934.

¹⁴ FO 371/17897, E 7705/197/34, Humphrys, Baghdad to FO, 27 December 1934.

by direct bilateral talks, but agreeing to the attempt at international arbitration first. How far Tehran would willfully attempt to frustrate the process to hasten bilateral talks is not clear from the record. In the meantime, Iraq had reconciled to the idea of enlisting Turkish help, despite Aras' insistence that Turkey could not endorse the 1913/1914 documents since it had denied their validity in border negotiations with Iran. Nuri al-Said was not deterred, he proposed a meeting with İnönü on his way to Geneva at the end of December.¹⁵

Al-Said and the British thought Iraq had scored a great success at this meeting. Al-Said gained Turkey's assurance that they would not support the Iranian case at the League because, although Turkey denied the validity of 1913, it recognised 1847, which was less favourable to Iran. Additionally, the Shatt was the only maritime outlet for Iraq, this was not the case for Iran, therefore its navigability was vital to Baghdad and not Tehran, which would be best assured by single management. Finally, the predominance of British shipping meant a direct British economic interest.¹⁶ The reasons were compelling enough; however, Turkey had not indicated any position other than neutrality and its legal position in the case. This makes it curious that al-Said thought it a success, though it was also an easy assurance to make from the Turks who were interested in using the middle ground. Al-Said would make his case at the League in the same terms. It is likely he was trialling his speech on an, as yet, undecided actor.

Referral to the League complicated the matter further. The direct interests of one Great Power was joined by the machinations of Italy, through the appointment of the

¹⁵ FO 371/17897, E 7650/197/34, Humphrys, Baghdad to FO, 21 December 1934.

¹⁶ FO 371/17897, E 7738/197/34, Humphrys, Baghdad to FO, 27 December 1934.

Italian representative at the League, Pompeo Aloisi, as rapporteur to the dispute. Aloisi was not interested in arbitration so much as undercutting the British position in the Persian Gulf. His insistent advocacy for Iran and more specifically for the Iranian aim of extracting Britain from the projected UK-Iran-Iraq tripartite conservancy and navigation convention on the Shatt, contributed to the breakdown of League arbitration in September 1935.¹⁷ Nevertheless, there would be signs of improvement by then. At the start of the Geneva-Rome portion of negotiations in January 1935 however, the only matter al-Said and Bagher Kazemi could agree on was opposition to internationalising the Shatt, they wanted Shatt questions to be under their own purview as far as possible.¹⁸

Aras was more solution orientated than Aloisi. He told al-Said that Iran might accept the 1914 line if they obtained navigation rights as well as use of Shatt water for drinking and irrigation. Al-Said's skepticism gave way to considering this if he saw the proposal in draft.¹⁹ The British representative, Edmonds, thought this a sign of Iranian weakening. A better estimation is that Iran knew Iraq had a strong bargaining position with Britain as backer and Geneva as the stage. Before Aloisi muddied the waters, which was to Iranian interests in clogging the League process, Tehran thought it could get a better deal with bilateral talks in Baghdad or Tehran with the Turks as mediator. In sum, the stage was important and Italian involvement helped the Iranian cause. A consequence of Italian action in European negotiations was to shift the forum of discussion to the Middle East, where Turkey exerted diplomatic pressure

¹⁷ This proposed convention was for establishing a conservancy board, basically a regulatory body for navigation and trade on the Shatt. Whoever controlled it had influence over revenue and access. Iran did not want Britain involved, Iraq was caught between chafing under British influence and wanting more control but was in a weaker position against Iran on its own.

¹⁸ FO 371/18970, E 116/32/34, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 4 January 1935.

¹⁹ FO 371/18970, E 376/32/34, UK Delegation, Geneva to FO, 14 January 1935.

towards the regional non-aggression pact. Thus, Italy circumstantially, but not causally, aided the formation of Saadabad.

In his speech to the League Council outlining the Iraqi case on 14 January 1935, al-Said gave full effect to the legal issues. The main thrust was undermining the Iranian case that previous treaties had never been in operation. Al-Said emphasised that between 1847 and 1911, when the process leading to 1914 started, Persia had made frequent appeals to mediating powers on alleged violations by the Ottoman Empire of the Treaty of Erzurum, thus falsifying the claim that nothing had given effect to the treaty. Al-Said continued that the Protocol of 1913 merely confirmed the Erzurum Treaty of 1847, and that the boundary commission work of January-October 1914 used this treaty as the basis for marking the frontier. He finished by asserting that the current situation was not advantageous to Iraq but was nevertheless established in law.²⁰ Iraq's legal standing was strong, putting Iran at a disadvantage. While Iran's requests for a thalweg boundary and acknowledgement of changed circumstances could be thought reasonable, there was no legal requirement for Iraq to agree to these. Nor any reason for Britain to lose influence over commerce on the waterway. Aras, usually the optimist for all, did not think Iran's case was strong either.²¹

Tehran was stung, still the impetus moved towards talking in the Middle East instead of Europe. The Iranian minister in London related a conversation he had with al-Said to his ministry in Tehran which occurred on 2 February. It first relates Iran-Iraq contacts from early 1934 when a visit by the Shah to Baghdad was still in the air. These envisaged an agreement for joint policing of the frontier without mention of the

²⁰ FO 371/18970, E 353/32/34, UK Delegate, Geneva to FO, 14 January 1935.

²¹ FO 371/18970, E 377/32/34, UK Delegate, Geneva to FO, 16 January 1935.

Treaty, Protocol or Delimitation, and a bilateral non-aggression pact. It is not clear how far these ideas were developed, but they were not followed up after the Shah's visit to Turkey. Al-Said suggested two ways remained for action, submit the case for judicial review at the Hague and accept their judgement or abandon the League and work it out bilaterally based on the 1934 recommendations.²² Clearly, alternatives had been on the table before referral to the League.

One may wonder why al-Said suggested abandoning League talks where the Iraqi case appeared strong, or at least intimated receptivity to such a suggestion, should it be made by Iran. The situation on the ground was important. Iran could conceivably go on harassing the Iraqi side of the frontier indefinitely by relying on its comparatively stronger central administration. This could be by dam control and exerting its influence over Kurds on the border. Baghdad's means for similar action was weaker, it needed border stability to at least attempt to develop the systems of domestic control achieved by Tehran and Ankara, there was the wider frame of nation-state building in operation. Giving Tehran an option to save face, by making the approach, was therefore politically expedient.

The rest of February 1935 gave substance to Italian meddling and convenience to Iran. Aloisi's design to supplant Britain on a proposed conservancy board under the initial guise of Italy representing the League Council alongside Iran and Iraq, caused al-Said to excuse himself from discussions on the pretext of having no authority to discuss such a scheme, though Kazemi thought the idea was reasonable.²³ Al-Said was already annoyed at Aloisi's attitude of advocating for Iran, for which it was

²² HW 12/188, 059416, Iranian Minister, London to Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tehran 2 February 1935.

²³ HW 12/188, 059620, Kazemi, Rome to Iranian Ambassador, Ankara, 16 February 1935.

difficult not to see the substantial influence of Iran placing naval orders with Italy.²⁴ London had already seen that Aloisi's scheme for an ad hoc convention on Shatt navigation could circumvent British interests.²⁵ Such was the divergence of interests that there was little to be done while negotiations continued in Rome or Geneva. Iraq was beholden to protect British interests as well as its own on the Shatt. Britain had the shipping interests, Iran wanted to extract Britain from having a legal say on the waterway, and Italy was only too happy to frustrate Britain.

For the next few months there was little tangible achievement. There were two consistent aspects, disagreement over the acceptability of the 1914 *process-verbaux* as a basis for discussion. And, on the water frontier, Iran's insistence on a thalweg was matched by Iraq's on the status quo.²⁶ Aloisi's agenda was not getting anyone anywhere fast. Both appeared to prefer bilateral talks but could not admit it with any force until al-Said consulted Aras in Geneva. Tehran was not receiving Baghdad's requests for a visit favourably. Aras convinced al-Said not to mention 1914 and seek an audience on that basis. To get around al-Said's usual excuse of not having appropriate instructions, Aras also telegraphed Yasin al-Hashimi (Iraqi PM) on the matter, al-Said was then invited to Tehran.²⁷

Al-Said's mission to Tehran produced little improvement at first. Then, at the farewell audience on 25 August 1935, Reza Shah gave way. Iran would consent to the whole of the river frontier on its bank, in exchange for an anchorage extending to the thalweg opposite Abadan.²⁸ Despite there being much to discuss this was a

²⁴ FO 371/18972, E 1108/32/34, Humphrys, Baghdad to FO, 15 February 1935.

²⁵ FO 371/18971, E 922/32/34, Drummond, Rome to FO, 9 February 1935.

²⁶ HW 12/190, 060298, Kazemi, Tehran to Iranian Legation, Rome, 10 April 1935.

²⁷ HW 12/192, 060786, Kazemi, Geneva to Foreign Ministry, Tehran, 26 May 1935.

²⁸ FO 371/18975, E 5396/32/34, FO Memorandum, 6 September 1935.

breakthrough. Then, increasing Italian aggression towards Abyssinia, better bilateral and multilateral contacts, and Turkish pressure towards a tripartite non-aggression pact convinced Iran and Iraq to withdraw the issue from the League on 25 September.²⁹

Bilateral negotiations were ongoing in Baghdad when the whole affair was thrown into confusion by Kazemi's resignation on 20 March 1936. The Shah's rupture with his Foreign Minister looked sudden, even though there were warning signs about the latter's conduct. In April 1935 Knatchbull-Hugessen had suggested Kazemi's personal position was closely bound to the Shatt issue, the loss of which the ambassador thought would do Kazemi considerable harm.³⁰ Added were Kazemi's attempt to append a navigation agreement to the unrelated draft treaty of non-aggression at the end of September 1935, when Feroughi was trying to get navigation to be discussed in the planned Baghdad talks.³¹

Whether Kazemi was telling the Shah one thing and negotiating another is not clear. However, the Shah was convinced Baghdad had changed the basis of discussion accepted at Tehran in August, or at least used the pretext of the Kazemi situation to make the accusation. Namely, the refusal to allow the frontier to follow the thalweg line for a distance sufficient for the establishment of a post at Abadan. The newer proposal was for a line of three kilometres in length, considerably inside the Iranian side of the thalweg. Reza Shah appealed to Turkey before giving orders for the

²⁹ FO 371/18976, E 5852/32/34, From League of Nations, 27 September 1935. By this stage Turkey had arbitrated the Iran-Afghan frontier dispute and collaborated with Iraq on securing borders in Kurdistan.

³⁰ FO 371/18972, E 1746/32/34, Knatchbull-Hugessen, Tehran to FO, 30 April 1935.

³¹ HW 12/196, 062118, Foreign Office, Baghdad to Iraqi Representative, Geneva, 28 September 1935.

Iranian delegation to be withdrawn.³² Ankara, seeing the prospects of the Middle Eastern pact threatened, leapt to heal the breach with a joint demarche to Iraq and Iran urging the continuation of talks, non-withdrawal of delegates, and requested information on the grounds of the dispute.³³

Further communications added little tangible detail to the exchanges between the governments. Except where one side then the other asked the Turkish authorities to interject on their behalf.³⁴ Turkey, by this point had grown into its role as a mediator, was happy to oblige in each case, but did not forget to mention the non-aggression pact each time. In September 1936, after a lot of complicated bargaining Ankara felt able to probe for a date for the non-aggression pact. Aras sent the following to Akaygen in Tehran:

*In view of the termination of the frontier question between Iraq and Iran on the basis of proposals made by the Shah in 1935 and the desirability of signing treaty of non-aggression in Tehran next March [1937], it is necessary to arrive at a solution of what remains of dispute in regard to navigation of Shatt before that date. If difficulties cannot be got over, a protocol be drawn up for settlement of navigation question at a later date. Try to persuade Iranians on this line. We will try the same with Iraqi government.*³⁵

³² HW 12/201, 064471, Turkish Ambassador, Tehran to Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 20 March 1936.

³³ HW 12/201, 064472, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, Tehran, 21 March 1936. Incidentally, it was the last two communications which were referred to in the FO Minute in FO 371/20038, E 1174/10/34 with the words "...according to information which has reached us from a very secret but entirely reliable source...".

³⁴ HW 12/204, 065353, Fahimi, Ankara to Foreign Minister, Tehran, 15 May 1936; FO 371/20038, E 3148/10/34, Butler, Tehran to FO, 15 May 1936.

³⁵ FO 371/20039, E 6059/10/34, Bateman, Baghdad to FO, 24 September 1936.

The outlines of the territorial settlement were almost ready, that of granting the limited thalweg for anchorage to Iran. The issue of shipping could, hopefully for Turkey, be kicked further down the road for solution later.

After so much effort and thousands of miles on the Simplon line, a Machiavellian scheme brought signatures closer. James Morgan in Ankara reported on the dressing up of an Iraqi plan in Turkish garb to be presented to Iran. It would be executed thus: Turkey would tell Iran that they had put pressure on Iraq to sign the non-aggression pact on condition that Iran accepted the existing frontier and anchorage at Abadan, and that Iraq agreed to work towards a settlement of the navigation question.

According to al-Said's reasoning, Tehran would be more liable to accept a reasonable solution proffered by Turkey and concurred by Iraq, rather than accept an Iraqi thesis. Al-Said saw another advantage, it was better than having Turkey try to force a solution on Iraq originating in Iran.³⁶ Whatever its origin, it suited Turkey. Ankara's interest was getting the non-aggression pact signed, for which there had to be some solution to the frontier dispute. Pragmatism dictated that it did not matter where the scheme came from as long as it had a chance of acceptance. This was reported to London on 6 October; in another three weeks the whole business was in danger again with the Sidqi and Suleyman coup of 29 October 1936.

Despite their forceful, alarming, and in the end short-lived rise to the top of Iraqi politics, Suleyman and Sidqi were positive for the conclusion of the frontier issue and the non-aggression pact. All sides naturally showed some concern about what to do in the context of the unknown priorities of the new government. Ankara, though

³⁶ FO 371/20039, E 6525/10/34, Morgan, Ankara to Rendel, 6 October 1936.

unsure, had information that the new government were well disposed towards Turkey. Aras wanted the Shah informed that he was doing all he could to get information from Baghdad, urged calm, and reiterated Turkey's profound concern for the Shah's interests.³⁷

It transpired that the Suleyman-Sidqi government was very much minded towards good and accommodating relations with its neighbours, especially to its north and east. The policy programme issued by the new cabinet, put in priority order its foreign policy objectives. First was, unsurprisingly, maintaining the British alliance. Second was "to strengthen the ties of friendship and cooperation between Iraq and the Turkish Republic, and to use every endeavour to hasten the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan".³⁸ The desire for settling outstanding issues with Iran came next, while Arab relations were in a relatively relegated fourth.³⁹ The coup created a moment of opportunity with a leadership more focused on Iraqi rather than Pan-Arab nationalism. According to Tripp, Suleyman and Sidqi were willing to foster tranquility on the eastern border at the cost of some concessions.⁴⁰ This was a common theme for all signatories to the non-aggression pact who needed peace to consolidate internal hegemonies.

At the turn of 1937 movement was still slow. The Suleyman government, though willing, had still to contend with domestic factions. The Taray mission was in Tehran, supporting ambassador Akaygen's efforts. Loraine thought the Turks were getting impatient with Iran, but this is not entirely evident in the record. Instead, Iran was

³⁷ HW 12/209, 067021, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, Tehran, 11 November 1936.

³⁸ Tarbush, *Military in Politics*, 191.

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Tripp, *Iraq*, 90.

convinced of London's causing difficulties in its relations with Iraq, the Foreign Office was indignant, minuting that it was nonsense that London had interfered in anyway in the signature of the pact.⁴¹

Yet, there is a case to be made that Britain did indeed hinder the pact by justified prejudice. The Foreign Office did not actively prevent the pact, but by pressuring Iraq, and by extension Iran, for a place on a tripartite conservancy board did put inhibitory pressure on the pact's signature. Claims of perfect indifference cannot be sustained when there was a concrete policy objective in securing British merchant and naval interests along the Shatt. This converges with Iraqi interests in having the protection afforded by the Royal Navy's presence in the area.

On 3 February Archibald Clark-Kerr reported the acceptance of a draft treaty on the frontier. The first four articles were largely agreed; however, the appended protocols were still to be finalised.⁴² Predictably, the smallest divergences and quibbles in wording still prevented signature of the frontier treaty. In further meetings involving Aras, Naji al-Asil (new Iraqi Foreign Minister), Khalil Fahimi (Iranian ambassador, Ankara), and Atatürk in Ankara during 27-29 April, the Turks bid to smooth over differences.⁴³ By 1 May Atatürk had induced Fahimi to telegraph the Shah, impressing on him that Turkey found the terms equitable, he urged signature.⁴⁴ The general appeal of the head of state was then deputised to Aras for literary tinkering.

⁴¹ FO 371/20786, E 474/398/65, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 16 January 1937.

⁴² FO 371/20829, E 881/73/34, Clark-Kerr, Baghdad to FO, 3 February 1937.

⁴³ HW 12/215, 068192, Iranian Ambassador, Ankara to Foreign Minister, Tehran, 28 April 1937, and reply of 29 April.

⁴⁴ HW 12/215, 068245, Naji al-Asil, Istanbul to Iraqi Minister, London, 1 May 1937.

He suggested this change or that to the wording, flexing his linguistic skills to squeeze through an accommodation acceptable to both.⁴⁵

As signature approached, Ankara increasingly became a conduit between the two governments. On 7 May Fahimi reported to Tehran that Aras shared with him the Iraqi note addressed to the Turks. It enquired about the defects (from the Iraqi perspective) of his last draft and Iran's related objections. Aras replied comprehensively on Iran's participation, sovereign rights, and safeguards on the Shatt and requested al-Asil's efforts towards agreement with the Iranian minister in Baghdad. Aras further told Fahimi that he had obtained the Iraqi government's concurrence, urging that the Iranian foreign ministry should not take further advantage of this opportunity. The letter addressed to the Turkish government ended with assurances from the Iraqi side that they intended to end the frontier dispute so that the eastern pact could be signed when Aras went to Tehran.⁴⁶ Aside from an agreement prior to signature, this also indicates that there was work towards a timetable after the abortive date in March.

On 14 June Morgan reported from Ankara that Aras was embarking on further travels. His stated destinations and objectives were as follows. To Baghdad to discuss direct oil supplies to Turkey. To Tehran to persuade the Iranians to settle the border issue. Finally, to Moscow, to reassure the Soviets about the increased German economic penetration into Iran. Aras would, as he put it, act as a stout upholder of His Majesty's Government, throughout.⁴⁷ Since Aras was doing plenty of travelling in an RAF aircraft on the Middle Eastern leg of his tour, one would suppose

⁴⁵ HW 12/215, 068205, Fahimi, Ankara to Foreign Minister, Tehran, 2 May 1937.

⁴⁶ HW 12/215, 068263, Fahimi, Ankara to Foreign Minister, Tehran, 7 May 1937.

⁴⁷ FO 371/20860, E 3238/188/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 14 June 1937.

as much. Though why he resorted to such a circuitous story given London's knowledge of Turkey's regional aims is less clear. Maintaining diplomatic decorum only goes so far. Turkey had grown into the role of mediator and was getting used to talking fairly openly about one party to another. At any rate, Turkey could not realistically advise Moscow not to pay any mind to its foreign policy, they were too suspicious with good reason. However, by mid-1937, Ankara could tell London not to fret too much about what it was doing and be confident of not only being listened to but also gain a certain quiet acquiescence. There was, again, a convergence of interests in maintaining the larger Middle Eastern status quo, do business, and check Soviet power, or at least agitation. As a corollary example, Ankara did not fear rumours of subservience to Britain as Kabul did, not domestically anyway. Internationally though, it paid to heed Moscow's grumbles.

On the first leg of his travels to Baghdad, Aras oversaw the initialling of the draft frontier treaty, before leaving for Tehran on 24 June.⁴⁸ On 2 July there were still differences over the when and how of a conservancy convention, the status quo in the meantime, and visiting rights of foreign warships.⁴⁹ On the 4th, the problems over the conservancy convention were still unsolved, al-Asil was having to continually parry this issue, while making assurances that it would be discussed bilaterally in the future.⁵⁰ All sides placated for the time being, the Treaty of Tehran on the Iraq-Iran Boundary was signed in the evening of 4 July 1937.⁵¹

⁴⁸ HW 12/216, 068601, Knabenshue, Baghdad, to Secretary of State, Washington, 28 June 1937.

⁴⁹ FO 371/20829, E 3652/73/34, Seymour, Tehran to FO, 2 July 1937.

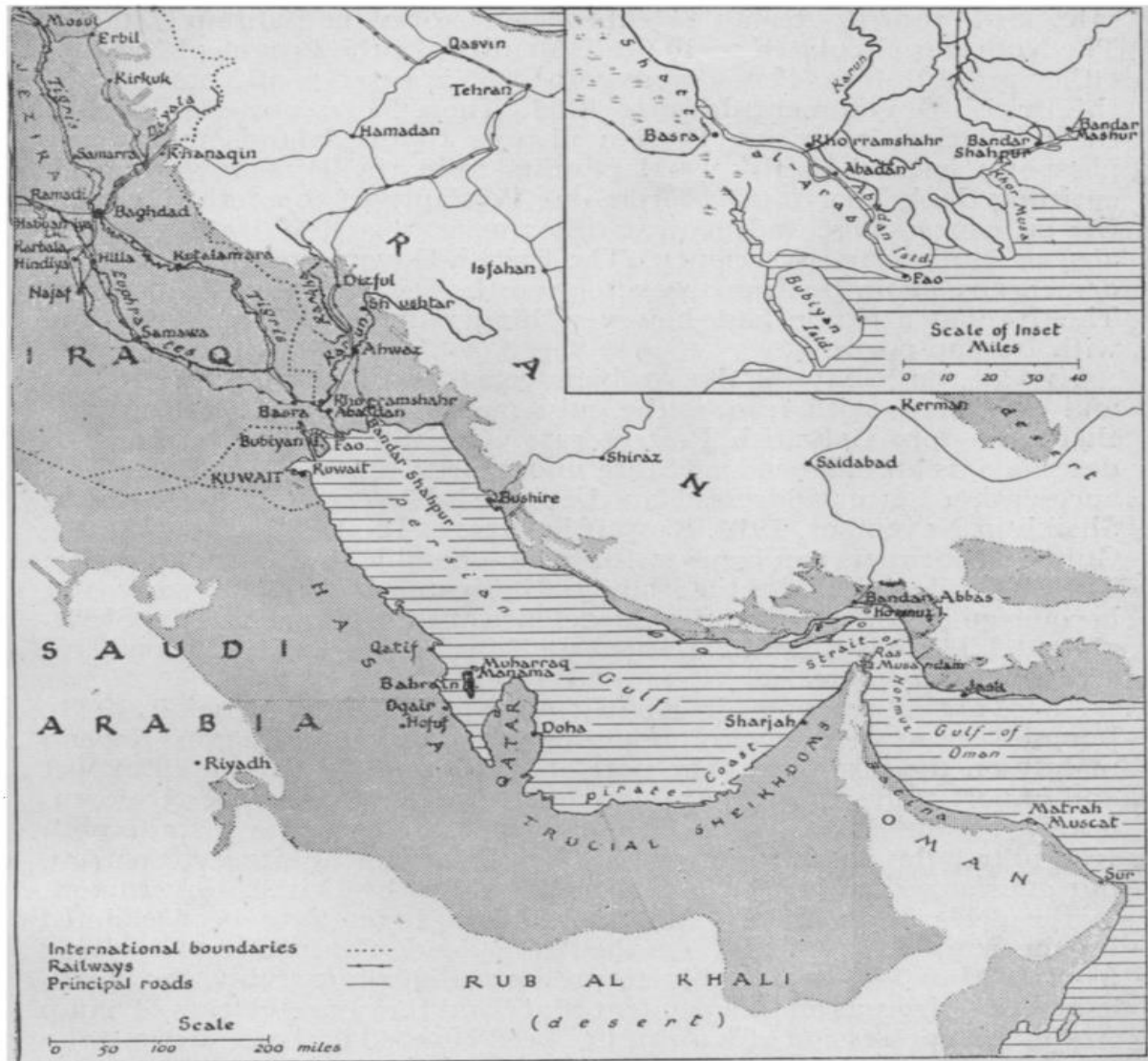
⁵⁰ FO 371/20829, E 3655/73/34, Seymour, Tehran to FO, 4 July 1937.

⁵¹ FO 371/20829, E 3653/73/34, Seymour, Tehran to FO, 4 July 1937.

It was agreed that Iran would recognise the Istanbul Protocol (1913) and the *process-verbaux* of the 1914 Frontier Delimitation Commission (Article I).⁵² This recognition was subject to the modification in Article II which stipulated that Iran gained a boundary rectification to the thalweg, of four miles between the anchorages of Khorramshahr and Abadan, from whence the border would return to the left bank (Iranian) of the Shatt al-Arab. The Shatt was to be open to vessels of all, and the war vessels of both signatories (Article IV). A commission was to be set up forthwith to

⁵² For the text of the treaty and protocols see Appendix A in, Abdulghani, *Iraq and Iran*, 239–41.

erect frontier markings (Article III).



Map 3 Iran-Iraq Boundary on Shatt al-Arab.⁵³

Article further IV provided for the establishment of a conservancy and navigation convention. Of the additional protocols to the treaty, number three stated that permission granted by one party to war vessels of a third to enter the Shatt would be deemed to have been granted also by the other on immediate notification. London felt that protocol number two did not adequately address the contingencies for the

⁵³ M. B., 'British Interests in the Persian Gulf', *Bulletin of International News* 18, no. 19 (1941): 1195.

conservancy convention. It instructed that a convention would be concluded within a year of ratification. If not, the time limit could be extended by common accord. Iraq had responsibility for conservation and administration in the meantime.

The main benefit to Iraq was Iran's recognition of the agreements and discussions of 1913 and 1914 based on the treaty of 1847. Iran gained anchorage at Abadan, in addition to Khorramshahr and a thalweg boundary between the two ports but had to relinquish its demand for a thalweg line along the rest of the river to the Persian Gulf. London's concern was that Iraq gave way on the conservancy convention. The Foreign Office concluded that if Iran was content with the treaty without a convention, it could refuse the extension period of one year and Iraq could not insist on extension or say the treaty had been breached. The consequence being that Iran would then achieve liberty of action in the anchorage zones, which followed from sovereignty over them.⁵⁴

This was however of little concern for Ankara. For all immediate practical purposes and while the relevant people were either on the ground or en route, the path was now clear for a multilateral Middle Eastern non-aggression pact. Crucially, much of the preparatory work had been done and interests aligned along the way, a limited adjustment to the status quo was achieved. Crucially, Middle Eastern diplomacy brought this about where Great Power involvement failed. Extricating the problem from larger international oversight did not reduce the number of variables which had to be negotiated on the ground, however it did reduce the cacophony around the negotiating table where Italian aims of frustrating the British was indifferent to a

⁵⁴ FO 371/21892, E 222/127/34, Clark-Kerr, Baghdad to Rendel, 4 January 1938.

peaceable Middle East. Presenting the issue to the League first showed Middle Eastern states submitting to larger frameworks of international association. However, because of local conditions that included comparative Iranian strength over Iraqi weakness in central authority and confident Turkish facilitation, borne of recent successes in regional mediation, Middle Eastern states found the diplomatic space to conclude an agreement much more on their own terms compared to the larger forum of the League. Objectives were sharpened towards an understanding that British reservations on conservancy were less important than a potentially long-term agreement towards peace and internal hegemony building.

There was another overlapping domestic aspect for Turkey. In addition to state centralisation and Turkification, the limited capacity of Ankara to bring the whole country and especially the less accessible east and south-east under coercive control increased Turkey's need for isolating the region from interference. Party structures and institutions had difficulty in penetrating Turkish Kurdistan in the 1930s. In this context the Turkish nationalising-state's domestic aims of centralisation show significant overlap with and inform foreign policy in the Saadabad context. Externally, protection from outside forces, state-based or otherwise, was a central pillar of foreign security. Internally, domestic weaknesses in engaging peripheral populations, geographically or ethno-linguistically, produced a security need for isolating the border population. In short, domestically the state failed to engage with the Kurdish population in the 1930s, which had causal significance for a foreign policy which aimed to isolate them from external influence.

Preamble

It was in October 1932, not 1935, that the first words of a Middle Eastern pact of some sort, to which al-Said and Aras were privy, were mentioned. Al-Said informed the British ambassador in Baghdad that, Aras planned to sound out the British about their views on a scheme in the region.⁵⁵ Aras brought up the question a little over a week later, purely in an unofficial way, to ascertain Britain's views on joining Iran, Iraq, and Turkey in a regional instrument to foster peace. The Foreign Office took a dim view of Aras' vague plans for British inclusion; however it did note that fostering a closer relationship with Turkey was important for communications between the Balkans and the Middle East.⁵⁶

The Foreign Office took the issue seriously enough to produce a memorandum where the origin of the idea was credited to Aras and Feroughi. The memo pointed to Aras' intentions for a pact of regional consequence with no positive obligation, and the difficulty of agreeing on what constituted aggression. In short, Britain was sympathetic to Middle Eastern states exploring the idea but was not enthused about joining it.⁵⁷ Since Turkey, Iran, and Iraq were League members by this time, Britain thought the idea was superfluous. An attitude that was repeated on the vague suggestion of Soviet inclusion in the scheme by way of a bilateral treaty with Iran.

The question over the definition of an aggressor was important as far as establishing the foundations of a non-aggression pact. Defining this internationally had Turkish support, which Aras communicated to the Iranian ambassador in London.⁵⁸ The

⁵⁵ FO 371/16011, E 6030/6030/65, Clerk, Ankara to FO, 31 October 1932.

⁵⁶ FO 371/16011, E 6035/6030/64, Clerk, Ankara to FO, 9 November 1932.

⁵⁷ FO 371/16011, E 6254/6030/65, FO Memorandum, 29 November 1932.

⁵⁸ HW 12/168, 053135, Fathollah, London to Foreign Minister, Tehran, 27 June 1933.

Soviet Union proposed the scheme, and its terms were drafted by Politis.

Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey acceded to the 3 July Convention of London defining aggression.⁵⁹ As did Yugoslavia and Romania, Turkey's Balkan allies, amongst others. The stipulations of this convention would go on to influence clauses of the Saadabad Pact. Of more immediate importance was that the Convention, alongside each of the signatory's membership of the League of Nations, constituted the international institutional framework by which the Saadabad Pact would stand as a recognised international treaty. In addition to the international nation-state prestige that was important to each, these were the legal prerequisites for realising the pact.

The Turks were aware that their probing thus far was vague. While exploring multiple bilateral pacts of neutrality Ankara became alarmed at what it perceived to be a possible Soviet attempt at binding each of the four states to itself by bilateral agreements.⁶⁰ Thus reviving, this time officially, the request to London about their views on a non-aggression pact between Turkey, Iran, Iraq, USSR, Afghanistan, and Britain in December 1933. The Foreign Secretary John Simon informed Turkey's ambassador to London Ertegün on 20 January 1934 that the British position was unchanged, there were already enough pacts to make this one unnecessary.⁶¹

This drew a line under any Great Power involvement in a Middle Eastern Pact. The Turkish design in this grand arrangement was to have Britain and the Soviet Union cancel each other out as unilateral actors but involve them jointly in the maintenance of the regional status quo. Having failed to corral Britain, it would no longer do to have only the USSR involved. The idea was dropped for a short but expedient time.

⁵⁹ Watt, 'Saadabad Pact', 342.

⁶⁰ FO 371/16011, E 6254/6030/65, FO Memorandum, 29 November 1932.

⁶¹ FO 424/648, Part 27, No.6, E 400/400/65, Simon to Mehmet Munir, 20 January 1934.

That is until Reza Shah's state visit to Turkey in June 1934. Hereafter, arrangements were pursued in a regional fashion. This plan coincided with the increased diplomatic tensions along the Iran-Iraq frontier recounted above.

As can be seen, until early 1934 the Turkish scheme for freezing the Middle Eastern status quo included powerful states outside the Middle East. The accelerated historiography studying the 1930s onwards has swallowed up the events of the mid-1930s Middle East, and elsewhere, in its quest to explain WWII and the new world order thereafter. Histories of the causes and events of WWII rarely engage with sub-Great Power interests outside Europe. Where they do, local events are instrumentalised in the analysis of Great Power interests. Therefore, demonstrating Middle Eastern agency, crucially before the Italian-Abyssinian crisis of autumn 1935, is important. The remainder of this chapter is concerned with this Middle Eastern agency in regional diplomacy.

The Saadabad Pact of 1937

After Reza Shah's return to Iran in the summer of 1934 and for the rest of the year, there was a general sense of the implausibility of a Middle Eastern pact in Britain. The assertions of a British journalist, Bosworth Goldman, on a four-power pact in preparation after the Shah's visit to Turkey, were rubbished by the Foreign Office as ill-informed and misleading.⁶² Naturally enough, this impression was based on the Perso-Iraqi impasse on the Shatt. Loraine concluded that since the Shatt was the vital point of Iran's aspirations and Iraq was unyielding, it was difficult to see how they

⁶² FO 371/17905, E 4487/776/34, Minute on 'Evening Standard Extract', 11 July 1934.

might be joined in a Pact. It is noteworthy that in the same communication, Loraine reported on vague Turkish-Iranian exploratory talks on a railway connecting Trabzon all the way to Herat and Kabul.⁶³ Loraine mentions the scheme as being very expensive, difficult, and unremunerative, as it certainly might have been, the importance for Ankara and Tehran however was in continuing to communicate on mutual interests.

In early September 1935, Iran and Iraq were moving closer to an understanding. Aras saw an opportunity to pursue the pact now that Iran's borders with Afghanistan, Turkey, and Iraq were settled. As has been seen, this was not yet the case, this time British Foreign Office minutes were accurate in describing the prematurity of Aras' enthusiasm.⁶⁴ However, the point remains that much like the Turkish pursuit of the Balkan Entente, its pursuit of a similar arrangement in the Middle East was no flash in the diplomatic pan caused by fear of an expansionist Italy. The Abyssinian crisis catalysed rather than caused the diplomatic efforts of the last quarter of 1935 in the Middle East.

On 28 September 1935 Aras was anxiously awaiting the results of the al-Said-Kazemi talks, to sign a tripartite treaty of non-aggression.⁶⁵ While Iran and Iraq were coming to terms on the basic outlines of what the pact might include, such as non-aggression, respect for frontiers, and referral of important matters to the League, the Turkish legation in Kabul told the Afghans, on 1 October, that they had a free choice

⁶³ FO 371/17905, E 4914/776/34, Loraine, Istanbul to FO, 21 July 1934.

⁶⁴ FO 371/18975, E 5350/32/34, Clerk, Paris to FO, 4 September 1935.

⁶⁵ HW 12/196, 062126, Aras, Geneva to Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 28 September 1935.

to join the arrangement being prepared.⁶⁶ Iran, Iraq, and Turkey initialled the draft pact on 2 October.

Ankara was confident that inclusion of Afghanistan would cause no issues. Yet it was not until 7 October that Baghdad communicated its acquiescence to Kabul's inclusion.⁶⁷ This may have been a quid pro quo for the Iraqi desire to leave the pact open to Saudi Arabia. On the same day the Iraqi representative at Geneva, received instructions from Baghdad to request information from Turkey to this effect. Interestingly, Baghdad was keen for Turkey not to know that they had already asked for Iranian opinions on the matter.⁶⁸ The records show that the Turkish representative, Taray, was ignorant of Baghdad's first approach to Tehran.⁶⁹ There may be no further motive than Baghdad wanting information unvarnished by Ankara's considerations for Tehran, and vice versa, on Saudi inclusion, it is however interesting and not explicitly resolved in the documentary record. However, it does indicate that a regional non-aggression pact was not the exclusive brainchild of Ankara. Iran tempered by Afghanistan on its eastern border was a positive for Iraq, at least in so far as dividing Tehran's resources.

Ankara preferred to give the agreement some formality. Turkey wanted a formal meeting of the three foreign ministers to discuss the adhesion of Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, this also constituted the Turkish answer to the Iraqi question on Saudi

⁶⁶ HW 12/197, 062848, Afghan Delegate, Geneva to Foreign Office, Kabul, 1 October 1935.

⁶⁷ HW 12/196, 062263, Turkish Delegate, Geneva to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 7 October 1935.

⁶⁸ HW 12/196, 062296, Foreign Office, Baghdad to Iraqi Representative Geneva, 7 October 1935.

⁶⁹ HW 12/196, 062263, Turkish Delegate, Geneva to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 7 October 1935.

adhesion.⁷⁰ Turkey signalled reluctance to the Saudis, while already having agreed with Iran and Iraq on Afghan adhesion on 10 October.⁷¹ It was agreed and communicated to Kabul on 17 October that, Kazemi was empowered by Iraq and Turkey to invite Afghanistan to join the prospective treaty when he arrived in Kabul in November.⁷² As can be seen, there was considerable diplomatic traffic between Ankara, Baghdad, Geneva, Kabul, and Tehran concerning what would become Saadabad. What is conspicuous by its absence is any reference to Italy or Abyssinia by the Middle Eastern states between October and November 1935 in the diplomatic decrypts. One might expect to find a trace of concern towards Italy if protection from Rome was the primary causal factor in this quadrilateral initiative.

Kazemi went so far as to suggest a grouping of the four at the League. This emerged from League sessions where there was talk of appointing an Asian delegate for joint representation of China, Siam, and India at the League. Whereupon Kazemi thought there should be two members for Asia, the second would represent Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Turkey.⁷³ Iraq agreed with Kazemi's suggestion.⁷⁴ It seems Iran and Iraq could work together despite their differences on the Shatt, but Kazemi was jumping the gun. Turkish interests, outlook, and inclination was to be seen as more European than Asian, which alongside Afghan misgivings about the pact put paid to this idea. Furthermore, it indicates regional non-aggression as a security instrument for

⁷⁰ HW 12/196, 062289, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Delegate, Geneva, 9 October 1935.

⁷¹ HW 12/197, 062945, Kazemi, Stockholm, to Iranian Ambassador, Kabul, 10 October 1935.

⁷² HW 12/197, 062931, Afghan Delegate, Geneva to Foreign Office, Kabul, 17 October 1935.

⁷³ HW 12/198, 063201, Kazemi, Tehran to Iranian Ambassador, Kabul, 30 October 1935.

⁷⁴ HW 12/198, 063319, Foreign Office, Tehran to Kazemi, Kabul, 10 November 1935.

Turkey's eastern flank, rather than any supranational ideas which were at least part of the Balkan Pact's germination.

At the end of November Kazemi had scored Afghanistan's consent to the proposed pact, but not its enthusiasm. He reported this to Ankara on 25 November, whereupon Aras suggested he work out with al-Said a time and place for signature.⁷⁵ According to Fraser-Tytler, Kabul was not impressed with the pact, seeing it as an attempt to gratify the vanity of the contracting parties. Being unimpressed did not contain ill will however, the imperative of peace in the region, and especially with Iran, impelled Afghanistan to accept joining for fear of arousing Iranian suspicion if they did not.⁷⁶ Kabul officially communicated its readiness to join the proposed treaty of non-aggression on 8 December 1935.⁷⁷

Afghan suspicions of Iran were confirmed when Faiz Muhammed Khan, Afghan Foreign Minister, arrived in Baghdad on 27 December. Iraq and Afghanistan could readily agree on their common policy of checking Iran's worst tendencies. But the Afghans discovered that Kazemi had lied to them in Kabul. Contrary to his statements, the Iran-Iraq frontier dispute was not yet settled, nor had the Turks been enthusiastic about a western Asiatic bloc at the League.⁷⁸ Just like his resignation two months later, Kazemi's motives for statements in Kabul were not clear. He provided Afghanistan with a rosier picture to secure their assent, without it being obvious how he might have sustained the pretence. In the end it was the Turks who

⁷⁵ HW 12/198, 063058, Kazemi, Delhi to Iranian Ambassador, Ankara 25 November 1935 and reply of 27 November.

⁷⁶ British Library, India Office Records, R/12/110, Microfilm, #20-21. Fraser-Tytler, Kabul to Hoare, 6 December 1935.

⁷⁷ HW 12/199, 063555, Kazemi, Karachi to Iranian Legation, Baghdad, 8 December 1935.

⁷⁸ FO 371/20315, N 821/38/97, Clark-Kerr, Baghdad to FO, 3 January 1936.

persuaded Muhammed not to withdraw from the process when he reached Ankara a few days later.⁷⁹

As has been seen, Kazemi's resignation in March 1936 had thrown the Shatt settlement into flux, so was the case for Saadabad. In April the new Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Soheili expressed his frustration that Iraq was linking the pact with the settlement of all other questions, suggesting that without a modification of the Iraqi attitude, perhaps the remaining three should sign the pact without Iraq.⁸⁰ Turkey, playing the placatory mediator, pressed for time. On the one hand Akaygen in Tehran suggested any fresh pact which might be required could be signed, while the Foreign Ministry in Ankara stalled on giving the Iranian ambassador any answer during Aras' absence from the capital.⁸¹ Ankara was alive to the perceived threat such an Iranian plan could have on Iraq. A non-Arab regional alliance concentrated on its borders would contribute to distrust and a lack of security. Turkey above all wanted to foster security, especially internally on the common borders. The confrontational attitude of Iran towards effecting a solution on the Shatt, however, was proving counterproductive. Furthermore, given the Afghan-Iraq talks of January, there was room to doubt Kabul's favourability to a tripartite pact rather than a four-power arrangement.

In a meeting on 12 April, Aras attempted to kill the three-way arrangement while fostering the quartet. He suggested to the Iranian ambassador, that existing Turkish-Iranian and Turkish-Afghan bilateral treaties stood for more than the proposed pact

⁷⁹ FO 371/20866, E 823/823/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 28 January 1937.

⁸⁰ HW 12/202, 064612, Soheili, Tehran to Iranian Embassy, Ankara, 4 April 1936.

⁸¹ HW 12/202, 064612, Esfandiari, Ankara to Foreign Minister, Tehran, 6 April 1936. File numbers are the same for this footnote and the above, occasionally more than one despatch appears in the same decrypt.

aimed to achieve, which was to bring Iraq into closer cooperation with the other three. He promised to discuss the matters with the Iraqi minister personally and feigned ignorance of the problems causing delay, since his current information from al-Said in London was that matters were approaching settlement.⁸² This was another of Aras' attempts at multilateral mediation in service of establishing a future of multilateral compromise negotiation. By emphasising the importance of the bilateral ties, he attempted to smooth over immediate difficulties. A regional pact was important to Turkey as an inhibitory mechanism for such bilateral tensions on its borders.

In the days connecting September to October 1936 this basis seemed acceptable to all parties. Ankara forwarded a message from Aras in Geneva to Akaygen in Tehran to the effect that a tentative agreement had been made with the Iraqi and Afghan foreign ministers to visit Tehran in late March to sign the Eastern pact. The proposal was communicated to the Iranian government with the approval of its representative in Geneva. Aras urged the ambassador to make efforts to reconcile Iran to an agreement as he was working on the Iraqis to accept.⁸³ According to the British delegation at Geneva, Aras was not convinced the March meeting in Tehran would take place, but if nothing else he thought there might be some opportunity for progress.⁸⁴

Just as the Iran-Iraq frontier talks were threatened again, by government upheaval in Iraq, there were explorations towards expanding the pact. On 22 November Iran

⁸² HW 12/202, 064690, Esfandiari, Ankara to Foreign Minister, Tehran 12 April 1936.

⁸³ HW 12, 208/066520, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, Tehran, 1 October 1936; HW 12/210, 067299, Foreign Office, Tehran to Iranian Embassy, Kabul, 14 November 1936.

⁸⁴ FO 371/20039, E 6238/10/34, United Kingdom Delegation, Geneva to FO, 2 October 1936.

probed Afghanistan for thoughts on the Iraqi enquiry to Turkey about Saudi Arabia joining the pact.⁸⁵ Unfortunately, this document is an example of one where the detail was indecipherable, though it did lead to others. On 7 December the Iranian office in Kabul reported that the Afghans would agree to the Hejaz government joining if the Turks and Iraqis did.⁸⁶ There were concurrent contacts that were more fruitful, such as the agreement by all four to support the Iranian candidacy for a place on the League Council shortly to be vacated by Turkey.⁸⁷ Ankara used this as an advertorial for the future benefits of a pact.

Iraq gained a grudging acceptance to Saudi Arabian adhesion in April 1937. The Foreign Office minute commenting on Clark-Kerr's report was commensurate to the Turkish attitude. Mentioning that Turkey was previously cold to the Saudis joining because of their strong religiosity not being congruous with modern Turkey, but more importantly because Saudi Arabia was not a member of the League, which was important to Ankara in grounding the pact in international institutions.⁸⁸ Another cause may be appended to London's reasoning. Aras' previously mentioned visit to Tehran to oversee the conclusion of the pact was postponed to the end of June. Reasons for the delay are not explicit, but it did afford Suleyman, Sidqi, and al-Asil the time to marshal domestic Iraqi politics in line with their foreign policy aims towards Iran and the pact. By showing that they had gained Turkish consent to Saudi inclusion, they could, to some extent, quiet the voices accusing them of betraying the larger Arab cause.

⁸⁵ HW 12/211, 067383, Foreign Office, Tehran to Iranian Embassy, Kabul 22 November 1936.

⁸⁶ HW 12/212, 067594, Bahman, Kabul to Foreign Office, Tehran, 7 December 1936.

⁸⁷ HW 12/212, 067595, Bahman, Kabul to Foreign Office, Tehran, 19 December 1936.

⁸⁸ FO 371/20786, E 1889/398/65, Clark-Kerr, Baghdad to FO, 2 April 1937.

Due to the preceding setbacks, the apex of Turkish foreign policy shifted into higher gear in the spring of 1937.⁸⁹ First, Aras secured an invitation to Tehran for the end of June. He had ostensibly given up on the Iran-Iraq agreement, and merely wanted to offer respects to the Shah and make the acquaintance of important Iranian gentlemen. Still, in the telegraph correspondence with Tehran to arrange the trip, Aras let it be known that his proposed journey had hastened the Iraqi governments desire to sign the frontier treaty.⁹⁰ Aras also intimated to Loraine that his upcoming visits to Baghdad, Tehran, and Moscow were merely of courtesy.⁹¹ It is more likely that the Turks spotted an opportunity to conclude the pact.

The second phase of Turkish diplomatic acceleration involved the personal touch of the president. During a reception at Aras' residence for the Iraqi Foreign Minister at the end of April, Atatürk thanked the Iranian ambassador, Fahimi, for the affectionate reception the Turkish delegation in Tehran were receiving. Going onto impress upon the ambassador of the need for the four countries to work together for binding east and west, and how profitable for peace this would be. Not forgetting to finish his point by praising the Shah as the means of Iran's progress and salvation.⁹² A further move attempting to give the positive impression that the pact and the multilateral Middle Eastern friendship was inevitable, was Ankara's invitation to the chiefs of the general staffs of all three to manoeuvres in Turkey. The invitation was made in ample time, 11 June, for the exercises in mid-August.⁹³

⁸⁹ The timeline of the Alexandretta dispute was likely a significant variable here too.

⁹⁰ HW 12/214, 068079, Foreign Minister, Tehran to Iranian Ambassador, Ankara, 5 April 1937.

⁹¹ FO 371/20860, E 2042/188/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 9 April 1937.

⁹² HW 12/215, 068253, Fahimi, Ankara to Imperial Secretariat, 29 April 1937.

⁹³ HW 12, 216/068460, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Minister, Tehran, 11 June 1937.

İnönü completed the efforts from a distance by marking Turkey as the lightning rod for potential international criticism. In a speech to the Turkish assembly on 15 June, he reiterated the friendly and longstanding relations with the USSR. He then went on to explain that the eastern pact had been initialled with the cognisance of Britain and the Soviet Union. Aras' journey, in repetition of above, was not connected to the objectives of the pact.⁹⁴ Thus the President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and Chief of the General Staff were all involved in efforts to speed the conclusion of regional non-aggression. Notwithstanding that few could have believed Aras was on no more than a jolly, there are two broad ways the Turkish acceleration can be interpreted.

The heightened Turkish involvement produced some backtracking, save anyone think Ankara was gaining too much influence. Not overreaching was important, because with greater influence, some Great Powers could have thought Turkey could do more if pressed. A certain caution in limiting expectations was expedient. Secondly, and more practically, this was Ankara's bid to take some responsibility and assuage the fears of all involved to complete the alliance. Placating Britain on this was not difficult, London was glad of Turkish influence in softening Iran's stance in the Gulf. Ankara was also showing that it was prepared to do the explaining and taking the political heat from Moscow. This explains the addition of the Russian capital to Aras' itinerary and is implicative of what was discussed among the four states at the time of Atatürk's intimations to Fahimi.

⁹⁴ FO 371/20860, E 3390/188/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 16 June 1937.

Aras arrived in Baghdad on 22 June and left for Tehran on the 25th. Before leaving he found time to speak to Clark-Kerr. Aras explained that he had impressed on Suleyman, al-Asil, Sidqi, and the King Ghazi of the importance of maintaining good relations with Britain. Aras' mission was to convince and pacify, Britain as one of his targets was the easiest one. More interestingly, Celal Bayar, the Minister of Economics, had arrived in Iraq with Aras and stayed on for a visit to Basra, not leaving until the 29th.⁹⁵ Bayar was already important in Turkey, he would succeed İnönü as Prime Minister in November, after the latter's rift with Atatürk. He was no low-level diplomat, the documentary record does not show why he went to Basra, though it may be cautiously concluded that it was not entirely innocent of motives related Shatt negotiations.

After the slow slog of the previous five years matters developed quickly. Aras and al-Asil arrived in Tehran on the 26th.⁹⁶ The flurry of negotiations to conclude the frontier treaty continued at the ministerial level. These were resolved to an extent sufficient to prompt Faiz Muhammed to leave Kabul for Tehran on 30 June.⁹⁷ Last minute reports on Egypt's future accession, or Italians on the ground being convinced of it being directed against them, did not delay the process any further.⁹⁸

The Treaty was signed at the Palace of Saadabad on 8 July by the foreign ministers of the four states, Aras for Turkey, al-Asil for Iraq, Faiz Muhammed for Afghanistan, and Enayatollah Sami for Iran. The text of the treaty did not deviate from that initialled

⁹⁵ FO 371/20860, E 3930/188/44, Clark-Kerr, Baghdad to FO, 30 June 1937. Aras' departure is given as the 24th in HW 12/216, 068601, Knabenshue, Baghdad, to Secretary of State, Washington, 28 June 1937 above. However, a day's difference in this context is not significant.

⁹⁶ FO 371/20832, E 4124/560/34, Seymour, Tehran to FO, 3 July 1937.

⁹⁷ FO 371/21066, N 3974/70/97, Fraser-Tytler, Kabul to FO, 9 July 1937.

⁹⁸ FO 371/20786, E 3848/398/65, Seymour, Tehran to FO, 7 July 1937.

in Geneva almost two years previously.⁹⁹ Some of the most concrete meetings of the Saadabad Pact took place almost immediately after its signature. A secretariat was to be established in Tehran; representatives were to meet in council at least annually. The parties agreed to support jointly the candidacy of Iran to a seat on the League Council, due to be vacated by Turkey in September 1938. An alphabetical order of candidacy for the temporary council seat in question was agreed for mutual support, as well as support for the candidacy of Turkey for a semi-permanent seat on the Council. A communique in the *Journal de Teheran* styled the pact as Council of the Eastern Entente.¹⁰⁰

One of the major differences between the Saadabad and Balkan pacts was the absence in the former of diplomatic wrangling on treaty articles and their wordings, with all the potential implications or consequences derived from them, as seen in the Balkan Entente negotiations. It was remarkable that it remained the same from October 1935 to July 1937. The main reason was the absence of a clearly defined external threat. The absence of a political motive derived from targeting a state in the League of Nations system removed the Bulgarian Question from Saadabad which existed in the Balkan Entente. The other was Saadabad's stipulation of non-interference in the internal affairs of signatory powers, which while readily agreeable, had not always strictly been the case. Some elaboration of the terms of the treaty will be useful as illustration.

The innocuous passages in the preamble stated that the treaty was "... actuated by the common purpose of ensuring peace and security in the Near East ... within the

⁹⁹ FO 371/20786, E 4500/398/65, Seymour, Tehran to FO, 14 July 1937.

¹⁰⁰ FO 371/20786, E 4502/398/65, Seymour, Tehran to FO, 14 July 1937.

Covenant of the League of Nations".¹⁰¹ This was a delimitation of responsibility for issues in the region to the concerned states, outside interference was not needed. The signatories could manage their regional affairs locally within the larger international structure. Article I established a policy of complete abstention from any interference in each other's internal affairs. Next, Article II bound the contracting parties to expressly respect the inviolability of their common frontiers, in effect a confirmation of existing boundaries as negotiated in the various frontier settlements. Article III provided for consultation on all international disputes effecting their common interests, thus calling for a measure of foreign policy cooperation and coordination.

Article IV incorporated wholesale the Kellog-Briand Treaty (1928) for the Renunciation of War. Going further it included, verbatim, the provisions of the London Conventions on the Definition of Aggression.¹⁰² Any breach of which Article V called for referral to the League Council. The Saadabad Pact, therefore, was not only a regional attempt, but was also designed to be embedded into the existing system of international association. The other articles (VI,VII-X) dealt with technicalities relating to the length of the treaty, rolling periods of five years unless denounced, and further mentions of the League Covenant and Kellog-Briand. The most substantive and revealing article was number VII:

¹⁰¹ <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/LON/Volume%20190/v190.pdf> accessed, December 2022. Reproduced in Appendix 2.

¹⁰² These were 1) Declaration of war. 2) Invasion by armed forces even without a declaration of war. 3) Attack by armed land, naval or air forces, even without a declaration of war on the territory, navy or aircraft of another state. 4) Naval blockade of coasts or ports. 5) Aid to armed bands invading the territory of another state; or refusal despite demands to take action on its own territory to deprive said bands any aid and protection. See: 'Convention Defining Aggression'.

Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes to prevent, within his respective frontiers, the formation or activities armed bands, associations or organisations to subvert the established institutions, or disturb the order or security of any part, whether situated on the frontier or elsewhere, of the territory of another Party, or to change the constitutional system of such other party.

This sweeping article was both readily agreeable and had important implications. As has been seen, border disputes were common, after some regularisation and settlement of boundaries leading up to it, Saadabad showed a desire by each to be able to assert central control over peripheral provinces and populations. By confirming the borders and acknowledging spheres of action each state was left with freedom to exert control over their peripheries without fear that another would interfere. In writing at least, it aimed to cut off the cross-border networks of nomadic and tribal populations. It would be the fortune or misfortune of these to be subjected to the state control of whichever national administration they fell under. In this sense the Pact was an attempt to remove cross-border disputes from the contracting states' international relations. Alongside domestic policies of Turkification, this delimitation of action under the aegis of the League was a significant joining of Turkish foreign and domestic policy.

Saadabad's Value for Turkish Policy

The Saadabad Pact had three overlapping results for Turkey in the Middle East, two relating to foreign policy, the other domestic. Firstly, with Iraq it solidified the arrangements made after the Sheikh Mahmud, Barzani, and Khossawi movements

for autonomy. For Ankara and Baghdad, establishing border and internal security were necessary in solidifying their nation-states. In the prevailing circumstances cooperation was desirable, but prone to breakdown because of the instability of Iraqi political leadership for one. The negative obligation of non-interference on the other hand could be easier to maintain and easily given at the conference table. Saadabad was a logical conclusion of this understanding of state sovereignty within territorial boundaries between states with asymmetries in internal stability, and mutual interests in increasing this stability.

Secondly, with Iran much the same agreement delineating spheres of influence over Kurdistan prevailed. Some of this had already been achieved by the Little Ararat-Qotur exchange, and the border control agreement signed by the Taray mission in April. There was the bonus of better relations through mutually beneficial trade route diplomacy and head of state ideological affinity, if only superficially in the latter.

Domestically, Saadabad increased the scope for concentrating the coercive powers of the state internally in the east and south-east. By cutting off border populations from their transnational networks, the state could increase assimilatory pressure on the Kurdish population for territorial nation-building and associated Turkification programme. Additionally, following from Gingeras' argument, the lack of resources available for the east in the Atatürk era, could be mitigated somewhat by the isolation from the external of a domestic sphere.¹⁰³

The Saadabad Pact was successful for Ankara. The multi-polarity of the agreement balanced the enmities of the contracting parties, while giving Iran, Iraq, and Turkey a

¹⁰³ Gingeras, *Eternal Dawn*.

common subnational target in the form of Kurdish populations, structured within the alliance as an unmentioned foe. This is what Aras was referring to when he spoke to Loraine after his multi-capital diplomatic mission. He emphasised the Pact as one of negative obligation, fraternisation, reciprocal burying of hatchets, and the narrowing down by area of the field for speculation in terms of military and power politics.¹⁰⁴ As the Balkan Entente was part of a longer-term policy of establishing sovereignty over the Straits and Thrace, Saadabad aimed to institute eastern border security and internal control of the associated provinces. It was a transitional phase of adjustment to new international and domestic circumstances of post-Ottoman Turkey. Ankara performed sovereignty with the internal and external means it had at its disposal and adapted to the nation-state dynamics of the 1920s and 1930s after imperial collapse. There were implications for Turkish policy regarding the Great Powers too. The first related to Italy, the second more complex issue was the Turkish relationships with Britain and the USSR. As has been shown, the link between Italy and the Saadabad Pact was not causal. However, the result of releasing resources from the east for defence plans of the west of Turkey were significant. So much is hinted at by the Italian protest even on the day of signature. Here however, a detailed study of Turkish military planning throughout the 1930s could be illuminating.

The thornier issue was the developing rapprochement with Britain, contrasted to the distancing from the USSR. In the same Loraine-Aras conversation related above, Aras enumerated the advantages of Saadabad for Britain as lessening friction, increasing security and helping to reduce a large area of south-west Asia to

¹⁰⁴ FO 371/20860, E 4402/188/44, Loraine, Istanbul to FO, 26 July 1937.

adventurous policies by ambitious states. These were of course advantages to Turkey also. Loraine thought Aras had played the role of apostle for relations of trust and confidence in the United Kingdom in his dealings with other participants of the Pact.¹⁰⁵ A certain independence of action on the Turkish part was welcome in London. Their broadly status quo and Mediterranean stability policies had been dovetailing for some time. And, while Britain would not underwrite the Saadabad Pact, it welcomed it as a stabilising influence in the region that checked Iranian bellicosity towards Iraq and Afghanistan.

However, growing Turkish independence of action did not suit Soviet interests in the same way. Aras had a tough time in Moscow after signing Saadabad. The Soviets were inclined to distrust any bloc of nations or international action in proximity to their ample territory. It was not necessarily that Saadabad itself was a threat so the Soviet Union, but Moscow did not like the cumulative effect of growing Turkish foreign policy independence throughout the 1930s. League membership in 1932, Balkan Entente in 1934, Montreux in 1936, and now Saadabad, made the erstwhile anti-imperialist Turkish ally of the 1920s, resemble Britain more than the Soviet Union in foreign policy alignments.

Aras sought to make it understood that Turkey's friendship with the USSR was intact. That the old formula of any agreement Turkey made could not be directed against the Soviets, still held. But he resisted Litvinov's formulations that friends and enemies of Moscow were *ipso facto* friends and enemies of Ankara. Aras explained to Loraine that while misunderstandings and suspicion were cleared up, an insidious rift had

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

been left. Loraine told London that Turkey was unwilling to accept Turkish policy being in tow of Moscow. A Foreign Office official summed it up by pointing out the determination of the Turks not to fall under the exclusive domination of any Great Power, the Japanese Embassy in Moscow also reported to Tokyo on the same lines.¹⁰⁶ Until further information comes to light, it seems that the only Saadabad power to endure this political flak from Moscow was Turkey.

Operative Period of Saadabad

For a short time after its signature, the Saadabad Pact worked as it was intended. That is, as a Middle Eastern forum, Turkey continued to act as a mediator, there were vague allusions to expanding the Pact, it even weathered the storm of Sidqi's assassination. However, it did not have the structural integrity to sustain itself once a much stronger wind blew in from another direction. Italy and Germany were causal this time.

Sidqi was assassinated in Mosul in August 1937 while travelling to Turkey to attend military maneuvers.¹⁰⁷ Though Suleyman attempted to keep the Iraqi government together, the situation was untenable without the military strong man. After a short period of apprehension in the Saadabad capitals, no great shift in policy materialised. By the end of November, approaches from Saudi Arabia and Yemen to join the Pact

¹⁰⁶ FO 371/20861, E 4434/386/44, Loraine, Istanbul to FO, 26 July 1937; HW 12/224, 070531, Japanese Ambassador, Moscow to Foreign Minister, Tokyo, 30 January 1938.

¹⁰⁷ BL: IOR/L/PS/12/2877, Coll 17/17, 'FO Annual Reports, 1932-1938, 1947, Annual Review of Events 1939-1942, Political Review 1943-1944', Annual Report for 1938, Morgan to Eden, 15 January 1938. Available at: https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100000000602.0x0001a3 accessed, June 2018.

were rejected, with Egypt tentatively welcomed, in the hopes that it would not show the initiative to join.¹⁰⁸

This points to the context of opportunity engendered in the short lived Suleyman-Sidqi government in Iraq. The measuredly Turcophile and Iraqi nationalist government left the prospect of adherence to the Pact open to other Arab states when conclusion of the treaty looked near. Such was not the case after Sidqi's death and Suleyman's fall. The northern and multiethnic characteristics of the Pact would have assumed a more Arab, conservative, and politically Muslim centre of gravity at odds with Turkish and Iranian policy. On the other hand, charges of Iraqi nationalism at the expense of Arab solidarity could be downplayed by a new Iraqi government of any stripe when the Pact was an inherited *fait accompli*. The pragmatic utility of Saadabad outstripped the competing nationalisms of the Baghdadi political apex.

Turkish mediation between Iran and Iraq as Saadabad diplomacy continued in 1938. An argument over the order of ratification for the frontier agreement and Saadabad presented itself.¹⁰⁹ When each side accused the other of intransigence, Ankara became the forum where the Turks and Afghans tried to foster dialogue and effect ratification. Aras, as witness and broker to the agreements reached in June-July of the previous year mediated again.¹¹⁰

The barriers to ratification were the same as before. Regularisation of spheres of responsibility in Shatt navigation and the composition of the conservancy board. The details are less important than the fact that Ankara urged the sides to postpone

¹⁰⁸ FO 371/20786, E 7282/398/65, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 27 November 1937.

¹⁰⁹ FO 371/21836, E 963/84/65, Seymour, Tehran to FO, 22 January 1938.

¹¹⁰ HW 12/224, 070594, Iranian Embassy, Ankara to Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Tehran, 12 February 1938.

technical questions in favour of an immediate compromise, with assurances that it would work for the eventual satisfaction of all questions.¹¹¹ Ankara's interest was in preserving Baghdad-Tehran communication, to avoid a breach thereby maintaining a collective interest and receptivity in neighbouring capitals. Ankara got what it wanted, Iran and Iraq would continue to talk and agree to ratify so long as the Turks would continue to offer their good offices.¹¹² In short-term at least, this was Saadabad's success as a mediating forum.

In its short life Saadabad was not only a forum of exchange between Tehran and Baghdad. Moscow also looked for mediation from Ankara on frontier questions with Kabul "as the sincere friend of Afghanistan".¹¹³ On the same day, 21 February 1938, the Foreign Ministry in Ankara asked whether it could be of help to Iran in the amicable settlement of a contentious concession Iran was considering granting to Germany, near its frontier with the Soviet Union.¹¹⁴ The details of each situation are less germane than the fact that Ankara, having gained receptivity, consciously maintained it.

In other cases, there were clues to Turkey's agenda of influence in the Middle East, for its own more western orientated foreign policy outlook. Aras was less inclined to help when Afghanistan requested Turkish intercession in London regarding frontier issues with British India. He instead warned the Afghan ambassador against courting

¹¹¹ HW 12/224, 070606, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, Tehran, 14 February 1938.

¹¹² HW 12/224, 070666, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, Tehran, 25 February 1938.

¹¹³ HW 12/224, 070643, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador Kabul, 21 February 1938.

¹¹⁴ HW 12/224, 070644, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, Tehran, 21 February 1938.

German and Japanese influence in Kabul.¹¹⁵ That the British thought it best that the Turkish ambassador in Kabul should not interfere on any more than the most general lines, could demonstrate the geographical limits of Saadabad mediation.¹¹⁶

Nevertheless, Turkish mediation extended into February 1939. A French-Iranian diplomatic breach occurred at the end of 1938 because of Tehran's displeasure at articles in the French press.¹¹⁷ Paris asked Ankara for help in restoring diplomatic relations with Iran.¹¹⁸ Ankara obliged cautiously, instructing the ambassador in Tehran to ascertain whether its overtures would be suitable to Iran.¹¹⁹ Where France and the Middle East was concerned, overt advocacy of a Western power during the maelstrom of the Sanjak question could be counterproductive to Turkey's regional relations. Nevertheless, a deciphered communication between Iranian officials in Paris and Delhi, showed French efforts to restore the breach through the mediation of another government. After which, the Shah agreed to restore diplomatic relations on 20 February.¹²⁰

Unravelling of the Saadabad Pact

After the German and Italian occupations of Czechoslovakia and Albania respectively in March and April 1939, the delicate appeasement policies between the revisionist

¹¹⁵ FO 371/22251, N 4124/76/97, Loraine, Istanbul to Oliphant, 13 August 1938.

¹¹⁶ FO 371/22251, N 14116/76/97, Fraser-Tytler, Kabul to FO, 18 August 1938.

¹¹⁷ *Foreign Relations of the United States*, vol. 2, 5 vols, Diplomatic Papers 1938, The British Commonwealth, Europe, Near East and Africa (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1955).

¹¹⁸ HW 12/235, 073274, Turkish Ambassador, Paris to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 6 January 1939.

¹¹⁹ HW 12/235, 073302, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, Tehran, 8 January 1939.

¹²⁰ HW 12/237, 073829, Iranian Charge d'Affaires, Paris to Iranian Consul, Delhi, 23 February 1939.

and status quo camps of Europe unravelled. What follows below, is again, less a recounting of these events, but a more broad-based outlook on how they impacted the Saadabad Pact. In effect, the dramatic shift in international focus coupled with the loss of independent action of the states concerned, pulled the carpet from under the signatories. As significant as regional histories are, the periphery could not contend with the catastrophic break in Europe.

On 1 May 1939, Seymour reported on the Saadabad Council meeting in innocuous terms, relations between the powers remained unchanged at that stage.¹²¹ The situation shifted within a week. The Anglo-French guarantee to Greece and Romania of April, was about to be extended to Turkey by a joint Anglo-Turkish declaration on 12 May.¹²² Representatives of the Saadabad powers were invited to the Foreign Ministry in Ankara on 7 May and informed that:

*Owing to the situation in Europe and the unprecedented acts of aggression which had occurred, we were obliged to come to some decision, and we have therefore finally decided to conclude a treaty of mutual defence with England in which it will be stipulated that in the event of aggression in the Mediterranean, Turkey and England would act together for purposes of defence...France will also join with England in this treaty...The principle of the Montreux Convention will be observed with regard to the Dardanelles. We are informing the powers signatory to the Saadabad Pact in order that they may know.*¹²³

¹²¹ FO 371/23194, E 3376/2768/65, Seymour, Tehran to FO, 1 May 1939.

¹²² İlhan Uzgöl and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, 'İngiltere'yle İlişkiler', in *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar. Cilt 1: 1919-1980*, 12th ed., vol. 1 (Istanbul: İletişim, 2006), 275.

¹²³ HW12/239, 074672, Iranian Embassy, Ankara to Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Tehran, 7 May 1939.

The situation was such that the announcement did not contravene any article of Saadabad. Article III on consultation in international disputes affecting common interests, could have been cited to suggest Baghdad, Kabul, and Tehran should have been consulted rather than told. However, the threat came so far from the west of Saadabad's centre of gravity that this would have been churlish at best. The overwhelming weight of Turkish security concerns to the west destabilised its relationships to the east and therefore Saadabad.

According to the Turkish minister in Kabul, loss of the Turkish counterweight to Iran compelled Afghanistan to attempt an understanding with Britain.¹²⁴ The precarity of Saadabad became further evident when the Iranians agreed that the Turkish reaction was compelled by imperative necessity. Though the Iranian Foreign Minister still managed to express displeasure at what he saw as British obstruction in solving frontier troubles with Iraq.¹²⁵ Thus, the détente Ankara fostered between Baghdad and Tehran through Saadabad was also effectively over. Afghan-Iranian mutual distrust similarly reared its head at this time prompted by Iran's fear of isolation. Ankara nevertheless attempted to assure the Shah that, Turkey would not adopt a foreign policy which did not consider Iran's interests.¹²⁶

During the death throes of Saadabad, Baghdad worried about how Turkey might be rewarded for belligerence in Europe. Namely the possible attachment of Mosul to Turkey, though London rejected this outright.¹²⁷ Considering the ongoing breakdown

¹²⁴ HW 12/239, 074710, Turkish Minister, Kabul to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 17 May 1939.

¹²⁵ HW 12/239, 074754, Turkish Ambassador, Tehran to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 18 May 1939.

¹²⁶ HW 12/240, 074772, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, Tehran, 23 May 1939.

¹²⁷ FO 371/23210, E 4083/474/93, Newton, Baghdad to FO, 30 May 1939.

of the Pact and the increasing likelihood of Alexandretta joining Turkey from Syria in agreement with France, the Iraqi fear was justified. The painstaking construction of Saadabad was irreparably undone in the last three weeks of May 1939. Turkish overtures in its formation, could not withstand the pull forces to the west emanating from Ankara's foreign policy priorities. Furthermore, Iraq protested in Ankara on the Sanjak question in mid-June. This directly prompted the Italians to warn Iran of the risks of association with Turkey through Saadabad.¹²⁸ Though a notion of Turkey dragging Iran into a European war was a stretch of the imagination, it was an easy and reasonable point for Rome to drive home in an uncertain climate.

Although Saadabad was on shakier ground with each passing day, a minor success it had was a modest projection of its potential strength. The German ambassador to Ankara, Franz von Papen probed his Afghan counterpart as late as 2 August on the rumoured possibility of the Pact as a whole joining an alliance with Britain.¹²⁹ The Afghan's were sympathetic to the Turkish predicament, but quickly distanced themselves from supporting Turkey. Kabul did not have the compelling reasons Ankara did to act.¹³⁰ Even after war started in Europe in September, the Japanese and Italians were still asking questions as to the collective response of the Saadabad powers to the war's development.¹³¹ There was a similar request for information from the India Office as late as 2 November.¹³² The diplomatic traffic from outside the Pact, then, was an indication of the wider view of Saadabad. As something which at

¹²⁸ HW 12/240, 074934, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome to Italian Legation, Baghdad 18 June 1939.

¹²⁹ HW 12/243, 075905, Afghan Embassy, Ankara to Foreign Office, Kabul, 2 August 1939.

¹³⁰ HW 12/243, 075906, Foreign Office, Kabul to Afghan Embassy, Ankara, 2 August 1939.

¹³¹ HW 12/244, 076534, Japanese Ambassador, Ankara to Foreign Minister, Tokyo 16 October 1939; HW 12/244, 076645, 21 October 1939, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome to Italian Legation Kabul, 21 October 1939.

¹³² FO 371/23630, N 5920/277/97, India Office to FO, 2 November 1939.

least merited diplomatic investigation to ascertain its strength as a whole and the ties between its signatories.

Turkey was much more concerned about European developments from the spring of 1939 onwards. This intensified from September by preoccupation with negotiations with Britain and France on one hand and the Soviet Union on the other. Saadabad was relegated, though with reassurances made to the signatories before important diplomatic missions, for instance to Moscow during September and October.¹³³

Ankara was still keen to hold the rickety ship together. Knatchbull-Hugessen, reported that Aras wanted to convene a meeting of Saadabad states in Ankara, who were all apprehensive of the Soviet attitude.¹³⁴ The intention was reiterated by the Turkish Prime Minister, Bayar, while he was in Moscow to the Iranian ambassador there. But time had run out for Saadabad. Iran pointed out the lack of necessity for such a meeting by alluding to the possibility of its misrepresentation.¹³⁵ Iran's pragmatism in the face of overwhelming variables and pressures drove the final nail in Saadabad's coffin.

Conclusion

The Saadabad Pact, in so far as it is discussed, is usually judged as a failure.

However, the high bar of measuring its success is entirely disproportionate to its intentions. One of the foremost functions of both Saadabad and the Balkan Entente

¹³³ HW 12/243, 076050, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, circular to ambassadors on Foreign Minister's visit to Moscow, 21 September 1939; HW12/243, 076120, Turkish Ambassador, Kabul to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 25 September 1939.

¹³⁴ FO 371/23194, E 7120/2768/65, Knatchbull-Hugessen, Ankara to FO, 22 October 1939.

¹³⁵ HW 12/245, 076767, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran to Iranian Ambassador, Ankara, 29 October 1939.

were for establishing a field of non-aggression and communicative good relations, fostering an ability to respond to international developments with limited scope. Like its Balkan counterpart, Saadabad's foremost strength and weakness was its regional character. It was a limited intra-Middle Eastern instrument for maintaining the regional status quo against potential trouble from within the Middle East. It was not intended to provide protection from outside its narrow scope of influence, as spelled out in the preamble to the Treaty.¹³⁶ The framework of the League, from which Saadabad derived its international legitimacy, had also broken down. The Saadabad Pact did not have the capacity to absorb the vast pressure from its outside.

Turkey's bilateral relations with the eventual Saadabad signatories showed a tendency towards developing closer relationships. The Iran-Iraq case on the Shatt al-Arab was complex, nevertheless Turkish mediation was instrumental in its solution. Mediated solutions crystallised, to varying degrees, the benefits of a regional non-aggression pact for all states involved. Just as the Balkan Pact was part of long-term Turkish foreign policy to establish sovereignty over the Straits and Thrace, Saadabad constituted a long-term interest in isolating the eastern provinces from state based foreign influence. This was congruous with Tehran's policy towards Iranian Kurdistan and Baghdad's to the Iraqi portion, it was a central pillar of Saadabad.

More broadly, Turkey secured Britain's benign acquiescence, thereby keeping London informed of the processes and emphasised the convergence of British and Turkish interests in regional problem solution where suitable. Finally, with its growing foreign policy activism, coupled with geographical proximity to European

¹³⁶ *Actuated by the common purpose of ensuring peace and security in the Near East by means of additional guarantees within the framework of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Treaty for the Renunciation of War.*

developments, Ankara provided the diplomatic shield against Moscow's displeasure. Saadabad was a significant episode of Turkish foreign policy history. Developments elsewhere however, unbalanced the pact and eventually destroyed it.

In the final analysis then, Saadabad was an instrument for adjusting then maintaining the regional status quo agreed to by local agents. This agency was state based, and the Kurds were constructed as the unmentioned internal enemy of the Saadabad system. It was at once a part of the League of Nations system, within which it institutionally sat, and helped to constitute a part of the modern Middle East as a region within new transnational and international political forms of nation-states.

CHAPTER FOUR - ETATIST ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

The emergence of etatism in 1930s Turkey converged around overlapping domestic and foreign concerns. As will be seen in the literature review below, etatism has been, rightly and largely, studied as the economic policy of the early Republic. I aim to broaden the explanation beyond the economic to show first that, etatism was an institutionalisation of wealth transfer from Ottoman non-Muslims to Republican SMTs. This was causally connected to continuities in CUP-RPP policies in the fall, transition, and establishment dynamics between late Empire and early Republic. Second, etatism was a policy choice between protectionism and liberalism that had Ottoman origins. The policy choice became entrenched as a legitimisation device for the regime when external economic circumstances met domestic reaction and policy impasse in 1930.¹ Through etatism, the state expanded its military-political legitimacy by adding employment and social services. This broadened the state's legitimacy horizontally across the country through railways and industrialisation. Thereby building national affinity of the majority with the state. Third, economic growth was, in relative terms, secondary to foreign and domestic security in etatist policy. Territorial defensibility, internal strategic communications, and the state attempt to carve a cohesive national entity from the extant heterogeneity, overrode purely economic concerns for growth. There were mutually reinforcing inputs and objectives which produced etatism as

¹ As will be seen, I situate etatism within regional trends of the Balkans and the Middle East with emphasis on smaller state attempts to kick-start industrialisation as a means to diversify economies away from primary commodity production and for greater self-sufficiency. My focus here is more specifically on how etatism operated in Turkey as a process of the nationalising state, and the foreign policy links that can be made with the Saadabad and Balkan pacts. For larger context on global political economy and etatism/statism as the interwar hegemonic ideology see, Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Adam Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War and the Remaking of Global Order, 1916-1931* (London: Penguin, 2015).

economic nationalism analysed below under the following headings, Ottoman legacies in etatism, autarky and the clearing system, railway infrastructure, and factories and industrial building.

Ottoman failure at protecting the domain economically led the Republic to defend its economic sovereignty from foreign encroachment. They saw economic weakness as necessitating wider losses in sovereignty that was antithetical to their need to save and strengthen the state. Ottoman and Republican non-Muslims were construed as complicit in foreign encroachment because of capitulatory dynamics. This perception was embedded in the state elite from the CUP onwards which contributed to demographic, religious, ethnic, and linguistic understandings of economic nationalism that continued into the Republic. Capitulationphobia then, manifested in rejection of expensive loans, marginalisation of domestic minorities, and nationalisation of foreign concessions. Its results were modest industrialisation and economic, thus political, independence borne of mutually reinforcing foreign and domestic policy.

Establishing and growing industrial capacity was pursued by diplomatically instrumentalising the agricultural and mineral surplus in the autarkic climate of the 1930s. The state acted as shopkeeper of the country's surplus in the clearing system, bartering Turkish goods for foreign machines. This had three overlapping results. First, it helped to protect domestic producers from external price shocks, in tandem with domestic stockpiling. Second, the state could determine imports based on its planned needs. Finally, it contributed to nationalisation of concessions by leveraging Turkey's relatively strong diplomatic position compared to the past and as a state closer to the interwar status quo camp. In effect, relative diplomatic strength helped to eliminate erstwhile capitulatory concessions.

Through mutually reinforcing railway and industry construction, the nationalising state attempted to spatialise its central control over the territory. This project aimed to build Gellnerian congruence into the national system. Railways increased state capacity for military, bureaucratic, and supply communications. New industrial sites were spread over west-central Anatolia, with Ankara as the focal point of the new etatist network. These had three results. First, stockpiling food reserves at strategic locations on the railways, gave the state a role in flattening prices for domestic consumption.² This offset some domestic discontent and secured the army's food supply. Second, defence planning was built into the twin construction project, with planners interested in developing evacuation capacity for industry. Further, foreign experts were ignored in some construction projects for their emphasis on profit efficiency, Ankara showed preference for military defensibility of heavy industries. Third, the physical marginalisation of minorities from sites of communication and industrialisation in tandem with the state as provider of work and services for the titular core nation, contributed to the constitution of Turkish national identity and othering of minorities. The ostensible classlessness of the SMT worker and exclusion of internal foreigners from etatist opportunities, further intersected with the preservation of village level traditionalism as a pillar of stability. Transfer of the agrarian surplus to industry, via clearing, caused rural discontent, which was bought off by dispossession and persecution of minorities.³ These results, stockpiling,

² Veli Yadirgi, *The Political Economy of the Kurds of Turkey: From the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 178. In 1932 The Agricultural Bank was tasked with this price regulation. The responsibility was transferred to the Office for Soil Products in 1938, *Toprak Mahsülleri Ofisi*.

³ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 102.

defence prioritised planning, minority exclusion, indicated the securitised practices of the nationalising state.

Finally, the marginalisation of Kurds from sites of etatist construction connects to chapters two, three, and five. When increased state coercive control over the east and south-east through railways, population settlement zones, and a lack of industrial investment is allied to the Saadabad Pact, the notion that Turkish Kurdistan was imagined as an internal buffer zone becomes stronger. Saadabad, as foreign policy, attempted to sever Kurdish cross-border networks by state-level agreement with Iraq and Iran; etatism further isolated Kurds domestically.

Literature Review

The orthodox view on the Turkish economy of the 1930s holds that choice in economic development was directed towards import substitution industries through etatist pragmatism, a choice that put the burden of investment on the state.⁴ Etatism was conceptually developmental, designed to mobilise domestic resources for economic advancement and improve Turkey's international balance of payments.⁵ The pragmatic choice of etatism was prompted by the open market putting primary producers like Turkey at a chronic disadvantage compared with industrial economies. Thus, it was a rational choice to control the effects of the Great Depression domestically.⁶ Moreover, the orthodoxy holds that, etatism was a significant

⁴ William Hale, 'Ideology and Economic Development in Turkey 1930-1945', *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)* 7, no. 2 (1980): 101; Hale, *Political and Economic Development*, 55.

⁵ Z.Y. Hershlag, 'Atatürk's Etatism', in *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 177.

⁶ Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi 1908-1985* (Istanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1988), 49.

achievement in state led industrialisation based on domestic resources, despite a lack of attention paid to the majority rural areas.⁷ This broad view is not unanimous. However, Korkut Boratav and Hale's work, for example, are significant starting points for exploring 20th century Turkish history. Consequently, scholarship which does not have an explicitly economic perspective relies on these. There is an undercurrent in this work that sees etatism as a distinctively Turkish Republican response to the country's contemporary post-imperial and economically peripheral situation.

Specific work on etatism and the Turkish economy of the 1930s provide more detailed framing and analysis. Faruk Birtek argues that etatism was embedded in a larger context of a contentious relationship in the national economy between the political centre and agricultural periphery.⁸ Birtek reasons that the direction of the resource flows, from country to town, were aligned with the rationality of the political centre to match economically, the political transformations of the 1923-30 period.⁹ This is tied to the stake the state created for itself in the newly developing urban centres. State industries as the spine of social development were preoccupied with public welfare instead of the exclusive profit motive of private industry.¹⁰ Birtek prompts considerations of etatism as a primarily domestic phenomenon that catalysed state directed urbanisation. This prompts questions about who the beneficiaries of industrialisation and urbanisation were.

Barlas takes a broader view which combines domestic and foreign policy. She frames Turkish economic policy within wider trends affecting the Great Powers, Balkan

⁷ Boratav, 56; Hershlag, 'Atatürk's Etatism', 177.

⁸ Faruk Birtek, 'The Rise and Fall of Etatism in Turkey, 1932-1950', *Review* 8, no. 3 (Winter 1985): 407-38.

⁹ *ibid*, 409.

¹⁰ *ibid*, 413.

states, and, to a lesser degree, Middle Eastern states. The Depression is the primary external shock for Barlas, among others.¹¹ Barlas demonstrates how the subordinate role of Balkan countries in the world economy propelled them towards protectionism in attempts to change their peripheral role through state led development of material and social infrastructure.¹² There are further Balkan similarities according to Barlas; the bureaucracy was essential in the state's expansion in political and economic life; national interests were equated with the interests of the state, which was raised above social groups and conflicting interests; economic advancement was seen as the key to decreasing economic difference to industrial powers. Thus, motivation for industrialisation was defensive in service of economic sovereignty.¹³ Barlas shows the generalisability of etatism beyond Turkey.

However, Barlas does demonstrate themes specific to the Turkish case. She contends that etatism was a continuation of the War of Independence at the economic level, which directed the concentration of capital for the wellbeing of society.¹⁴ She describes Turkey as a semi-colony under the capitulations, and the Republic as a realist revolutionary movement.¹⁵ Etatism was the leadership's tool to fix external and internal problems which had eroded Ottoman independence. She construes this as a means of defence, simultaneously against the ineffectiveness of the old system and for contemporary economic problems.¹⁶

¹¹ Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy*; Boratav, *İktisat Tarihi*; Roger Owen and Şevket Pamuk, *A History of Middle Eastern Economies in the Twentieth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998); Birtek, 'Etatism'; Baskın Oran, ed., *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar. Cilt 1: 1919-1980*, 12th ed., vol. 1, 2 vols (Istanbul: İletişim, 2006); Zürcher, 'People's Party'.

¹² Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy*, 40.

¹³ *ibid*, 38–41.

¹⁴ *ibid*, 50.

¹⁵ *ibid*, 55.

¹⁶ *ibid*, 66.

Roger Owen and Şevket Pamuk make similar generalisations about the Middle East. The Depression decreased the international volume of imports, pushing down export commodity prices faster and more steeply than imported manufactured goods, causing a collapse of trade flows to developing economies in the Middle East which had been net borrowers before 1929.¹⁷ New Middle Eastern borders after 1918 affected intraregional trade relationships by placing nation-state borders where they had not existed. Responses to the situation included attempts to expand domestic demand, protectionist trade measures such as tariffs and quotas, expansionary fiscal and monetary policies, in addition to seeking moratoriums or demands for debt renegotiation.¹⁸

The Depression induced economic protectionism, had similar effects, and prompted similar responses in the Balkans and Middle East. The common problems based on a global crisis show historical generalisability, though should not preclude from more detailed regional or country studies.¹⁹ A general view of Turkish etatism that emerges from the literature already recounted is that it was uncontested. This corresponds to understandings of the early Republic as a stage exclusively dominated by the apex of the state. The prevailing discussion of etatism as the only dominant form related to its

¹⁷ Owen and Pamuk, *Middle Eastern Economies*, 6.

¹⁸ *ibid*, 7.

¹⁹ See for example Cyrus Schayegh's work on transpatialization, which links cities and regions in former Ottoman territories as significant after 1918, despite the historiography which pigeonholed inquiry into nation-state spaces rigidly defined by territory. It is similar to Turkish-Iranian bilateral transit trade, recounted in chapter two, which had to compete with pre-existing routes to the Mediterranean, through Rowanduz for example. The important difference here is that Iran and Turkey represented newer systems outside of the former Ottoman system, relative to Schayegh's focus on Bilad al-Sham. Further, the transpatialization that was attempted with the revival of the Tabriz-Trabzon route was state mediated towards increased central revenue with central planning and control. A more top down than bottom up process in relation to Schayegh's analysis. Schayegh, *Middle East*.

dual conception as a pillar of the emergent constitution and its presentation as a particular type of, Turkey specific, protectionism.²⁰

The 1930s deployment of etatism emerged from a conservative tradition of Ottoman-Turkish economic thinking in search of broad economic policy. If there were Turkish particularities in the 1930s, they were embedded in the interplay between foreign and domestic policy with Ottoman continuities, stemming from a contest between protectionism and liberalism.

Vedit İnal has demonstrated continuity in economic thought between late Empire and early Republic. He has shown that, Ahmed Mithat Efendi (1844-1912) and Akyiğitzade Musa Bey (1865–1923) advocated for protectionism through technology transfers and import restrictions on manufactured goods. Sakızlı Ohannes Efendi (1830–1912) and Mehmed Cavid Bey (1875–1926) espoused economic expansion through free trade.²¹ İnal traces the protectionist-free trade competition through the 1920s and 1930s to the *Kadro* journal's thinkers, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, İsmail Hüsrev Tökin, and Vedat Nedim Tör. These protectionist intellectuals emphasised the centrality of the state in economic decision making to facilitate the transformation of society, while conceding that the private sector could exist during societal transformation.²² Ahmet Ağaoğlu expounded the liberal view. He conceded that the capital stock of the country was too small for comprehensive development, thus agreeing that the state should take the lead in industrial investment. However,

²⁰ There is more recent work on how newly independent nation-state protectionism went beyond Turkey, the Balkans, and the Middle East. See for example, Klaus Richter, *Fragmentation in East Central Europe, Poland and the Baltics, 1915-1929* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

²¹ Vedit İnal, 'Evolution of Economic Thought in the Ottoman Empire and Early Republican Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies* 57, no. 1 (2021): 22.

²² *ibid*, 26.

Ağaoğlu thought this a temporary solution, arguing for support of the private sector.²³ As the state grew more authoritarian, both the *Kadro* group and Ağaoğlu became marginalised.

The increasing authoritarianism has contributed to etatism being read as an inevitability. Competing voices gradually fell foul of the developing concept of Kemalism. Nazım İrem contends that different factions of thought, socialist, republican, conservative all considered themselves Kemalist, but that their definitions of the nature of the Turkish revolution and Kemalism as a nation-state building ideology, differed.²⁴ İrem challenges the idea that Kemalism was a monolithic ideological construct even in the 1930s, arguing that it had strands of thought from conservative Bergsonian modernism and Marxian materialism which were debated close to the power structures of the day. He does not dispute, however, that they all saw Kemalism as a nation-building ideology.

İnal's narrative then, permits a longer view in Turkey, showing that the protectionist-liberal competition significantly connects the late Ottoman and early Republican periods. When İrem's contention of more theoretical competition and complexity in political discussions of the 1930s is added, one may expect attempts at more complex explanations of economic policies. There are two examples of this from the more recent scholarship by Adnan Türegün and Başak Kuş.

Türegün approaches this through economic models. He discusses Balkan responses to the Depression as neoclassical liberal orthodoxy, changing to various

²³ *ibid*, 27.

²⁴ Nazım İrem, 'Turkish Conservative Modernism: Birth of a Nationalist Quest for Cultural Renewal', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 1 (2002): 104.

interventionist methods as the crisis continued.²⁵ He describes etatism as the cutting edge in the neomercantilist response. Driven by maximising domestic production and exports on the one hand, and minimising import consumption within the restrictive macroeconomic framework presented by the Depression on the other. It was combined with autarky in foreign economic policy, eschewing monetary transaction in favour of the quasi-bartering of the clearing system, which produced a successful application of “sound money and balanced budget orthodoxy”.²⁶

The relativistic discussions of the relationship of the centre to the periphery are interesting in Türegün’s analysis. Etatism was both a project to transform Turkey’s status as a peripheral economy to a semi-peripheral one in the European context and a project to reshape the domestic periphery in accordance with the needs of a centralised-modernised polity inside Turkey.²⁷ Türegün asserts that this policy mix arose from a combination of choice and necessity. Since policy makers had no room for macroeconomic policy innovation, they used the available international economic tools for conservative policy goals.²⁸ These were conservative in that they aimed to preserve internal fields of action from outside influences. In other words, Ankara knew it needed to be integrated into the world and European economic system on terms better than the Ottoman Empire had been but could not start or sustain economic development as a primary commodity exporter in a free market, hence protectionism. Domestically, the state wanted the internal periphery to develop according to its needs of industrial development and maintain self-sufficiency, hence

²⁵ Adnan Türegün, ‘Policy Response to the Great Depression of the 1930s: Turkish Neomercantilism in the Balkan Context’, *Turkish Studies* 17, no. 4 (2016): 667.

²⁶ *ibid*, 667.

²⁷ *ibid*, 673.

²⁸ *ibid*, 675.

interventionism. This is a central point in the narrative which will follow and is linked to capitulationphobia. Turkish foreign and domestic policies were directed towards the protection of the domestic space from interventions other than those dictated by the state's priorities in nation-building; this necessarily included the economic sphere. Kuş' study helps to further complicate explanations around the domestic aspects of etatism by focusing on political developments precipitated by the growth of an entrepreneurial class. She argues that the turn to etatism was due to the state's shortcomings in governing the newly emerging class of self-interest seeking entrepreneurs.²⁹ For Kuş, etatism was a move to prevent emergent domestic capitalists from constituting a threat to the state's political authority. This combined with previous regulatory failure, drove the state to assert overarching control over the economy.³⁰ These provide further avenues of explanation and exemplification of Turkey's preoccupation with establishing and consolidating central control in the early Republican period. Economic growth was desired, but only in line with the state's objectives. Thus, etatism came with a regulatory impetus, where legal boundaries drawn by the state dictated the direction of economic growth and development.³¹ The dynamic of economic creation and regulation revealed the state's tendencies to centralise and bind economic activity to its own purpose. It was disturbing to some ideologues in the RPP that a particular social group, new industrialists, had accumulated enough influence through capital to affect state policy.³² The self-

²⁹ Kuş, 'Unruly Capitalists', 358.

³⁰ *ibid*, 359.

³¹ *ibid*, 368.

³² *ibid*, 369.

interest seeking entrepreneur was less mindful of the CUP/RPP need to save and preserve the state.

CUP, RPP, or Kemalist convictions in the power of positivism did not anticipate the tension borne of the creation of a capitalist class by a bureaucratic one. Moreover, state overseen capital accumulation channelled resources in affirmation of the state's project, in effect, only approved groups in approved locations could be enriched through central coffers. Any threat perception which may have occurred to the state elite, which officially disavowed class politics, was assuaged because this new class was not an existential threat. The newly enabled capitalist class was formed of Turkish-speaking Sunni-Muslims.

In economic terms, the Turkish case in the 20th century fits well with Eric Hobsbawm's model of nationalism. First, he asserted that nation implied a national economy and its systematic fostering and protection by the state in a 19th century context.³³ Shifting this notion to the early 20th century, to relatively peripheral economies, newly emergent from imperial contexts should not be too controversial. Second, his argument that the economic protectionism of the interwar period became so defensive that it came close to autarky, softened somewhat by bilateral agreements, includes Turkey.³⁴ His further general point that, for governments the central item in the equation "state=nation=people", as plainly the state is significant.³⁵ Etatism, then, may be brought closer to an assessment of nation-building policies not

³³ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 29.

³⁴ *ibid*, 132.

³⁵ *ibid*, 23.

only from an economic point of view, but also from avenues of ethnic, linguistic, and religious nationalisms.

Further, the Ottoman to Republican change demonstrated a Gellnerian move from an agro-literate society of sharp population separation of millets.³⁶ The move from the agro-literate to early industrial demonstrated societal dislocations on what became Turkish territory. Significant factors of Gellner's model for early industrialisation were absent, such as population explosion, rapid urbanisation, and labour migration. However, in the quest to strengthen the state and build the nation to maintain it, the state attempted to supply these conditions by directing the flow of the other factors. Namely, economic and political penetration of inward turned communities, a centralising polity, and a global economy.³⁷ Gellner stresses the needs for relationships between the societal level of literacy, technical competence, and a standardised medium of conceptual currency required for full, effective, and properly employed moral citizenship. The state having eliminated the sections of the Anatolian population which had levels of such competence, turned towards building it around the remaining native core-nation. The Republic attempted to fill the role of developing the Gellnerian 'national competences' which could not be provided by kin or local units.³⁸ Ankara immersed itself in its role as patriarchal provider, at once gaining legitimacy from the role and facilitating and financing it through etatism as a central pillar.

Industrialisation through etatism cannot be separated from Turkish nationalism as a discrete economic subject; it was not just a pragmatic economic choice. As such, it

³⁶ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 12.

³⁷ *ibid*, 41.

³⁸ *ibid*, 33.

also cannot be separated from its late Ottoman origins. It provided the material conditions by which in and out groups were mutually constituted in the context of a nationalising-state which was attempting to both expand its coercive control and entrench its legitimacy.

Ottoman Legacies in Etatism: From Gediks to Sovereignty to Nationalism

One of the earliest and most important economic transformations of the Ottoman Empire with a bearing on 20th century Turkish history was the growth of the gedik market in the mid-18th century. This market had implications for the Tanzimat and Hamidian periods, in addition to providing causation for the economic nationalism of the CUP and RPP eras. The significance of gediks have only recently been analysed by Asli Cansular and Timur Kuran. Gediks were shares in productive assets, tradeable in a decentralized equity market, for example shares in a shop or equipment, used mainly by Ottoman Christians.³⁹ In existence since the 1600s, their use expanded after 1750 because the capitulations provided stronger property rights for the Empire's Christians against the Sultan's power.⁴⁰ This rudimentary stock market constituted 17% of all capital investments registered in Istanbul courts in 1750, growing to 68% during 1800-1824.⁴¹ More than half of all gedik transactions were among Christians in the first quarter of the 19th century.⁴²

Growth of the Christian dominated gedik market coincided with the weakening of the Muslim capital instrument of the vakıf, charitable trust funds. Assets and capital held in a vakıf were ostensibly inviolable, though this immunity became weaker from the

³⁹ Cansular and Kuran, 'Economic Harbingers', 5.

⁴⁰ *ibid*, 6.

⁴¹ *ibid*, 20.

⁴² *ibid*, 21.

1800s, because the state was under fiscal pressure. The Sultan's periodic demands on vakıf wealth pushed Muslim investors towards gediks, explaining the remaining portion of the total investments given above. This meant assets of hundreds of weakening vakıfs were bought by non-Muslims at low prices.⁴³ The shift was slow yet significant; it did not draw strong reaction partly because it conferred property rights to the Muslim elite engaged in gedik trading and provided a tax base for state spending. According to Cansular and Kuran, the Gülhane Edict of 1839, taken as the start of Tanzimat reforms, legitimised the transfer of wealth from Muslim to non-Muslim which had already taken place since it further institutionalised property rights.⁴⁴ Furthermore, as innovation through the industrial revolution permeated the Empire, businesses, and assets securitised as gediks, benefited disproportionately in contrast to vakıfs.⁴⁵ This significantly locked-in the capital accumulation dynamics during the critical juncture of economic transformation in the Empire, it solidified the wealth of a significant portion of urban Ottoman Christians.

Cansular and Kuran show this transformation as a domestic economic basis for the increasing prevalence of minority political power in the late Ottoman Empire. The chronological overlap with the revisionist view on the millet system is worth noting. Ohannes Kılıçdağı, for example, asserts that the Millet system was a modern one which started forming in the late 18th century, before becoming institutionalised in the Tanzimat period.⁴⁶ One may hypothesise that increased capital accumulation by a society's subsection in relation to its majority, in tandem with increased

⁴³ *ibid*, 44.

⁴⁴ *ibid*, 45.

⁴⁵ *ibid*, 37.

⁴⁶ Kılıçdağı, 'Armenian Clergy', 540.

bureaucratisation, could show that wealth accumulation and transfer was a driver for the crystallisation of the millet system in the 19th century. This has further implications since state administration was simultaneously growing in competence regarding demographic accounting. In short, and as will be seen below, the state had good accounts on what was owned where, and more importantly by whom. Economic identifiability of individuals and communities provided the administrative tools of expropriation in the Empire, followed by redistribution and institutionalisation in the Republic. This socio-economically and religiously marked the other in relation to the core.

It is not yet known how far gedik wealth could be generated outside urban centres. Cansular and Kuran's research is based almost exclusively on Istanbul. That said, Istanbul as well as being the administrative and political centre was also the economic capital of the Empire and home to much of the moneyed Muslim and Christian population. As has been discussed, the material and socio-cultural enrichment of Ottoman Christians in the provinces, as far as it reached, was financed by their urban coreligionists. Thus, while there is further work to be done in exploring the link between gedik generated wealth and the extent of its transmission to the provinces, the net growth in Christian wealth relative to Muslim wealth has at least one avenue of causation in gediks.

Furthermore, capital accumulation and wealth transfer were understood in increasingly nationalist terms towards the end of the 19th century. Cansular and Kuran demonstrate that foreign intervention and capitulatory privilege as external factors were significant to domestic wealth transfer and accumulation through gediks, thus allowing the increasingly nationalist CUP to paint the Empire's religious

minorities as fifth columnists. The minorities, according to the CUP, had either stolen or profited from the misfortunes of the majority Muslim community, in tandem with foreign powers. The simultaneous failure of the vakif system and Sultanlic expropriations thereof, while little mentioned in nationalist discourse, constitutes a basis of the Republic's preoccupation with damning the Ottoman past to glorify the Republic.

Wealth transfer, economic growth, and capitulatory privilege then, converge around the Republican nationalist experience through capitulationphobia towards domestic economic nationalism that attempted to isolate it from foreign intervention. Once combined with demographic accounting and social-Darwinist nationalism, the economic policies of the CUP and the RPP proceeded to transfer the accumulated wealth of the minority to the majority. This process could be continued, and institutionalised, more easily by the Republic, after the Armenian Genocide and population exchange with Greece. There is therefore an overlap in nationalist economic policies of the ruling elite that bridge the Empire and the Republic.

Foreign concessions, gained, maintained, and protected by the capitulatory regime, were compounded by the wealth transfer which inhibited Ottoman economic sovereignty. The CUP's turn to economic nationalism targeted indigenous Ottoman Christians, who were portrayed as native separatists and collaborators with Great Powers.⁴⁷ Additionally, Ahmad sees a labour aspect to the growing separation between core-nation and other. First, the division of labour in the Empire was on largely ethnic lines, meaning economic competition contributed to a greater

⁴⁷ Gingeras, *Heroin, Organized Crime, and Turkey*, 44.

consciousness based on ethnicity and religion. Muslims were overrepresented in the working classes and Christians in the capitalist. Second, the CUP recognised an emergent movement of workers' rights advocacy. It attempted to channel this by portraying minorities as the exploiting classes, thus underplaying the social aspects of the labour struggle in favour of nationalising them.⁴⁸

Policies to undercut the economic position of Ottoman Christians overlapped with the Balkan Wars. In addition to the loss of almost the entire Balkan possessions of the Empire, homelands to many in the CUP, more than 400,000 Muslim refugees sought shelter in the remaining Empire.⁴⁹ This dislocation was one of the reasons for a range of policies the CUP passed in and after 1913. Such as providing support to industry, agriculture, and encouragement for Muslim citizens to set up joint stock companies, which excluded foreign nationals. These were assisted by Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa, CUP Special Organisation, harassment of Christian businesses into using Turkish and bullying those accused of treacherous or shameless behaviour. It had the desired effect of having some Armenians and Greeks fleeing the Empire instead of complying.⁵⁰

Ayhan Aktar outlines how bases of a Muslim centred economy to the dispossession of Christians originated with CUP policies. To gain some control over domestic markets and prices the CUP organised urban artisans and traders into associations.

⁴⁸ Feroz Ahmad, 'The Development of Class Consciousness in Republican Turkey', in *Workers and the Working Class in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, 1839-1950* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995), 78.

⁴⁹ Fredrick Anscombe, *Faith and Nation in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Lands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 132.

⁵⁰ Fred Lawson, 'Ottoman Legacies in Economic Sovereignty in Post-Imperial Anatolia, Syria and Iraq', in *Sovereignty After Empire, Comparing the Middle East and Central Asia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 66–87. See also for how the history of Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa as it is thus far written is problematic, Polat Safi, 'History in the Trench: The Ottoman Special Organisation – Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa Literature', *Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 1 (2012): 89–106.

Similar 'national' companies were set up in Anatolia for the same motives and encouraged by CUP appointed governors.⁵¹ The state did not trust, nor could it depend on the economic output of its minorities. Exigencies of war pushed incipient nationalist policies to their catastrophic conclusion. The implication is that the Armenian Genocide and the Turkish-Greek population exchange had an economic security dimension rooted in CUP goals of increased homogeneity in remaining Ottoman territory. This thinking informed the Empire's immigration settlement, which continued into the Republican period. Muslim migrants from the Balkans were variously settled in or encouraged to settle in depopulated areas, or among remaining minorities chiefly in Anatolia. Watenpaugh describes this as instrumentalising the migrant as a labour force. It was a means to create new loyal citizens in areas where separatism might be a concern or original inhabitants could be marginalised.⁵² This distribution of population informed the Republic's distributive factory building in the 1930s.

Economic policy was securitised around nationalist discourse. The political power of the Islamic Ottoman Empire had lost its economic primacy to the double bind of capitulations and wealth exchange through *gediks* since the 18th century. CUP economic nationalism was an effort to redress this exchange of wealth in favour of the indigenous, and migrant, Muslim population. According to Aktar, the national companies did not generate economic transformation in rural Anatolia; instead, the political gains of economic nationalism were more important to the CUP than real economic transformation to increase productive capacities. However, the networks

⁵¹ Aktar, 'Turkification', 29.

⁵² Watenpaugh, *Bread from Stones*, 10–11.

formed under the companies had a function in creating and sustaining resistance to Greek occupation after 1919.⁵³

Aktar acknowledges the implication that CUP policies to homogenise Anatolia secured victory for the nationalist resistance and helped create the Turkish nation-state.⁵⁴ A further implication is that the Republican state's efforts to recover and rebuild after 1922 was financed, at least partially, by the wealth left behind by Christian victims of war and Empire. When this is coupled with the burden of Muslim-Turkic migration into the Republic, encouraged by the state, it points to the continued programme of economic nationalism. The 1920s, then, were a period of economic adjustment and stock-taking.

A crucial factor of the pre-1930 economic changes was the property left behind by the native non-Muslim population. The state and Muslim notables complicit in genocide seized or appropriated their economic assets, working towards a socio-economic transformation in tandem with the ethno-religious homogenisation of 1912-1924. This connects chronologically to three catastrophic dislocations and destructions of populations which led to the relative Turkification of what was to become the territory of the Turkish Republic. First, persecution by Christians during and after the Balkan Wars pushed Muslims towards Anatolia, which added to previous instances of Muslim flight from the Caucasus. Second, the Armenian Genocide practically eliminated the Armenian population in Anatolia. Third was the reciprocal and legally sanctioned ethnic-cleansing of the Christian-Greek population of Turkey in exchange for the Muslim-Turks of Greece.

⁵³ Aktar, 'Turkification', 29.

⁵⁴ *ibid*, 28.

How the Ottoman then Turkish state managed the abandoned and seized property of the non-Muslims had implications for the Republican socio-economic structure.

Whilst these issues are not without controversy, there is some important critical consensus on the state as seizer, appropriator, and distributor of non-Muslim economic assets.⁵⁵ This narrative exposition of Ottoman to Republican continuities constitutes a link in causation which left the new Turkish nation-state with the physical economic assets Keyder refers to as the “dowry” of the new state.⁵⁶ Etatism then, allowed Ankara to distribute the assets as it saw fit, serving to expedite the creation of a native Muslim bourgeoisie and make it beholden to the state. A process, which according to Kuş, prompted problems of regulating the emergent entrepreneurial class.

From Empire to Republic, there was continuity of state institutions to process this distribution. Established in 1913, the Ottoman Directorate of the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants (İşkân Aşair ve Mühacirîn Müdüriyeti) was tasked with providing accommodation for Muslim refugees expelled from lost territory, in addition to sedentarization efforts of Turcoman, Kurdish, and Arab tribes.⁵⁷ Next, the Abandoned

⁵⁵ Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Lerna Ekmekçiöğlü, *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016); Çağlar Keyder, 'The Consequences of the Exchange of Populations for Turkey', in *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 39–52; Bedross Der Matossian, 'The Taboo within the Taboo: The Fate of "Armenian Capital" at the End of the Ottoman Empire', *European Journal of Turkish Studies [Online]*, 2011, 1–18; Ellinor Morack, *The Dowry of the State? The Politics of Abandoned Property and the Population Exchange in Turkey, 1921-1945* (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2017); Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Uğur Ümit Üngör and Mehmet Polatel, *Confiscation and Destruction: The Young Turk Seizure of Armenian Property* (London: Continuum, 2011); Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, and Norman M. Naimark, eds., *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁵⁶ Keyder, 'Consequences', 45.

⁵⁷ Üngör, *Nation and State*, 36.

Property (Emvâl-i Metruke Komisyonu) and Liquidation Commissions (Tasfiye Komisyonu) kept detailed registers of the property confiscated from deported Armenians with ostensible promises of returning the assets.⁵⁸ The CUP had already begun to enumerate the demographic composition of the Empire before the continuous wars from 1911, through the Interior Ministry's Office of Population Registry (Sicil-i Nüfus İdaresi).⁵⁹ It has been further shown that the central government compiled economic information on Christian populations including occupations, businesses, factories, shops, farms, and immovable property.⁶⁰

After more than a decade of war the new nation-state attempted to draw a line under the Ottoman past. But it could only formalise its policies through references to Ottoman institutions when building a legal framework for abandoned Christian assets that were not yet in Republican hands. This is thus both a significant institutional continuity between the periods and led to what Elinor Morack describes as a significant break from Ottoman cosmopolitanism in the state's conception of private property, as recognisable only for Muslims in the Republic.⁶¹

First, after the ratification of Lausanne, in 1924 the return of Armenian deportees from Cilicia and the Eastern provinces was forbidden.⁶² This enactment, Law 441, stated that those who had lost property during the war would be given property rights to land out of "the property currently under control of the government which is owned by people not subject to the exchange [of populations]".⁶³ That is, Armenian property

⁵⁸ Matossian, 'Armenian Capital', 2.

⁵⁹ Akçam, *Young Turks' Crime*, 33.

⁶⁰ *ibid*, 37.

⁶¹ Morack, *Dowry of the State?*, 324.

⁶² Matossian, 'Armenian Capital', 11.

⁶³ Morack, *Dowry of the State?*, 241.

under state control. Then, a May 1927 law stripped Turkish citizenship from Ottoman subjects who took no part in the War of Independence, remained outside Turkey, and had not returned between signature at Lausanne and May 1927.⁶⁴ The following year, Law 1349 transferred the incomes of Abandoned Property Current Accounts (Emval-i Metruke Hesab-ı Carileri), held in the name of absent Armenians and Greeks, to the state budget, amounting to 300,000 TL in 1928.⁶⁵

These were, at best, grey areas under Lausanne's minority provisions which were chiefly concerned with non-Muslims still in Turkey. They were therefore a set of domestic policies which legally transferred Ottoman Christian wealth to Republican Muslims. Moreover, an international dimension transpired during the Greco-Turkish normalisation of the 1930s. The 1930 Ankara Agreement contained a clause which passed the property of non-exchanged Greeks in Turkey (excluding the Istanbul Rum) to the Turkish state. Further, Athens paid Ankara £425,000 from which Turkey was to indemnify the Istanbul Rum and Greek citizens for seized property that could not be returned.⁶⁶ The matter was complicated due to imbalances in property values and numbers of exchangees, nevertheless Ankara succeeded in balancing foreign and domestic concerns based on its Greek minority. Because first, Athens paid the cash price for a portion of the Ottoman-Turkish indemnity bill. And second, the agreement conferred a measure of foreign policy legitimacy on state appropriation of non-Muslim property.

⁶⁴ Matossian, 'Armenian Capital', 11.

⁶⁵ Morack, *Dowry of the State?*, 298.

⁶⁶ *ibid*, 316. See also, for more specific work on minority education and related property issues, Irini Sarioglou, *Turkish Policy Towards Greek Education in Istanbul 1923-1974, Secondary Education and Cultural Identity* (Athens: Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive, 2004).

Accounting for exactly how much Ottoman-Christian property passed into Republican-Muslim ownership in the 1930s has been difficult, due in no small measure to the 1920s as a decade of reconstruction, reform, and appropriation. The pool of assets the state controlled, passed into Republican registries which blurred the lines between previous ownership and state assets. However, some broad contours can be drawn. While the 1920s saw a formalisation of state appropriation of economic assets, Morack asserts that it was only after 1931 that Muslims were granted full rights to Greek exchange property.⁶⁷ Or as Keyder puts it, the Republican state became a reincarnation of the patrimonial Ottoman state shorn of capitulatory fetters, able to dispense land and benefits to trusted clients.⁶⁸ The client was the nascent SMT middle class that was to be moulded into the core constituent of the nation, the economic engine of the nationalising state, in short the beneficiary of etatism.

Uğur Ümit Üngör and Mehmet Polatel point to the difficulty in enumerating the exact amount of seized property and cash which drove the overall Republican economy.⁶⁹ They do, however, add to the general contours of wealth transfer with comparative statistics from the Ottoman era and an analysis of property seizure in Adana and Diyarbakır. Firstly, they claim that 164 of the 172 Ottoman industrial establishments in 1915 belonged to non-Muslims.⁷⁰ This generally tallies with non-Muslim preponderance in capital intensive economic activity, though no definition is given on what constituted an industrial operation. More striking is the almost total seizure of

⁶⁷ Morack, *Dowry of the State?*, 342.

⁶⁸ Keyder, 'Consequences', 45.

⁶⁹ Üngör and Polatel, *Confiscation and Destruction*, 8.

⁷⁰ *ibid*, 18.

the cotton industry around Adana, much of it appropriated to the Anatolian Cotton Company, a front business of the CUP, during and after 1915.⁷¹ This was an example of a national company facilitated by the CUP according to Aktar.

Further examples are given related to Muslim notables seizing and operating alcohol, brick, ice, silk, and flour factories belonging to native Armenians in Diyarbakır.⁷²

Another asset with significance for how the rail network expanded in the 1930s was the copper mines of Ergani; north of Diyarbakır, they had been owned and operated by Armenians but mined by the state owned Etibank during the Republic.⁷³ Bedros Der Matossian gives further pertinent examples of Kayseri as a centre for manufacturing and supply of goods to Tokat, Adana, Sivas, and Istanbul; Trabzon as a hub of hazelnut cultivation, processing, and export; Samsun for tobacco cultivation, all in the hands of Armenian entrepreneurs.⁷⁴ All of which overlap with later Republican centres of manufacture and commercial marketing of the same goods.

Although individual enumeration of wealth transfer would be useful, it lies outside the scope of this study. Suffice to say, there appears to be a significant mass of economic assets seized and appropriated from Ottoman Christians, based on critical research in Ottoman and Turkish archives. There was a potential economic energy of productive assets which the state deployed in the 1930s through etatism.

Ekmekçiöğlü sees the absence of Christians, but the presence of their property as a contributor to the modernisation project.⁷⁵ Üngör and Polatel suggest that the old and

⁷¹ *ibid*, 113.

⁷² *ibid*, 159.

⁷³ *ibid*, 160.

⁷⁴ Matossian, 'Armenian Capital', 4. See also for further examples in Kayseri, Oya Gözel Durmaz, 'The Distribution of the Armenian Abandoned Properties in an Ottoman Locality: Kayseri (1915-18)', *Middle Eastern Studies* 51, no. 5 (2015): 838–53.

⁷⁵ Ekmekçiöğlü, *Recovering Armenia*, 120.

new Turkish middle class profited both by direct redistribution of wealth and the disappearance of competent competition.⁷⁶ Morack goes further, asserting that the distribution of the wealth transfer became one of the *raisons d'être* of the state. Arguing that a state claiming full sovereignty was challenged by individuals and whole towns by their occupation of abandoned property. When people's expectations of property were frustrated, they argued that failure to meet their needs undermined the foundation of Republican government.⁷⁷

Cumulatively then, the state's aim to create an economic basis by supplanting the indigenous Christian economy with a Sunni-Muslim-Turkish one loyal to the state dovetailed with the poverty of the population and their expectations from a political elite in the process of solidifying its legitimacy on the one hand and trying to push through its reform agenda on the other. Thus, the overall etatist industrialisation project was entrenched in the institutionalisation of wealth transfer from autochthonous Christians to SMTs in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic.

This societal demand emerged at a critical juncture when post-war recovery, limits of liberal growth, and a crisis of legitimacy converged with the Great Depression and the end of the Lausanne tariff regime. In the 1920s there was recovery but little growth. Turkish peasants cultivated crops but had lost the competent non-Muslim middlemen who had facilitated its export.⁷⁸ What the state gained in relative homogeneity was lost in economic capacity. The capitulations had ended with

⁷⁶ Üngör and Polatel, *Confiscation and Destruction*, 170.

⁷⁷ Morack, *Dowry of the State?*, 336.

⁷⁸ Banu Eligür, 'Ethnocultural Nationalism and Turkey's Non-Muslim Minorities During the Early Republican Period', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 1 (2019): 171.

unilateral abrogation in WWI, but this was only formalised at Lausanne in 1923. The price for their end was preservation of existing concessions and customs tariffs until June 1929.⁷⁹ Turkey accepted economic hamstringing for a time to extract nation-state recognition. Imperfect as it was, with recognition came a degree of international independence for Turkey that the Empire had not enjoyed during the lifetimes of the Republican leadership.

Boratav characterises the 1923-1929 period as liberal rebuilding.⁸⁰ Sovereignty allowed straightforward attempts to integrate into the international economy on terms better than the Empire, and economic reform was directed internally. The Izmir Economy Congress of February 1923 bid to establish a blueprint for economic policy. In practice, it was a forum for Istanbul and Izmir based Muslim-Turkish capital interests to ingratiate themselves to authorities from Ankara.⁸¹ To this end, the Law for Encouragement of Industry (Teşvik-i Sanayi Kanunu) of 1927 gave wide and generous tax exemptions to expedite local industrialisation.⁸² However, the middlemen with accumulated capital for such enterprises had been eliminated in homogenisation. According to Zürcher, it took a generation to build an indigenous bourgeoisie capable of such investment.⁸³ It was a question of how to finance industrialisation without a ready cash supply.

This connects to what Ersel Aydınlı has described as national regime security syndrome. The Republic's attempts to liberalise the economy failed to transcend the

⁷⁹ Zürcher, *Turkey*, 162.

⁸⁰ Boratav, *İktisat Tarihi*, 7.

⁸¹ *ibid*, 33.

⁸² Erdal Yavuz, 'The State of the Industrial Workforce, 1923-1940', in *Workers and the Working Class in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, 1839-1950* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995), 97.

⁸³ Zürcher, 'Ottoman Legacy'.

binary relationship between political liberalisation and security. Thus, political discussion on most issues at most levels became securitised.⁸⁴ This was one of the reasons for etatism, the state chose to fill the capital void, since the only alternative seemed to be Great Power money. The state directed domestic resources for investment, the price was a slower pace of industrialisation.

One of the most significant reforms of the early Republic was abolishing the tithe in 1925. This was a tax on the proportion of the annual agricultural produce, the dominant relationship between the independent peasantry and Ottoman political authority.⁸⁵ It had accounted for around 20% of government revenue before its abolition, a vast proportion that was risky to reform; however, it also ended tax farming.⁸⁶ This reduced loss of the taxed surplus up the chain of transmission by reducing corruption, at least in the short term, while increasing centralisation through bureaucratisation of the tax collection system.

Abolition of the tithe was a move from an agricultural commodity transfer system to a cash system on the domestic agrarian sphere. More practically, it coincided with easy access to credit for exporting farmers. Rising agricultural prices from the early 1920s, plus government assistance to bring land back under cultivation after war, resulted in agricultural output increasing by 115% to 1929, contributing to annual GNP growth of 10.9% for 1923-29.⁸⁷ It was earned from primary agricultural commodities tobacco,

⁸⁴ Ersel Aydınli, 'The Turkish Pendulum between Globalization and Security: From the Late Ottoman Era to the 1930s', *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 3 (2004): 116.

⁸⁵ Çağlar Keyder, 'Small Peasant Ownership in Turkey: Historical Formation and Present Structure', *Review* 7, no. 1 (Summer 1983): 57. Tithe, *öşür* or *aşar* in Turkish.

⁸⁶ Owen and Pamuk, *Middle Eastern Economies*, 15. On the relationship between the millet system as a modern one, the legibility of minorities to the state, and 19th century attempts at tax farming reform see, Richard Antaramian, *Brokers of Faith, Brokers of Empire: Armenians and the Politics of Reform in the Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022).

⁸⁷ Keyder, 'Small Peasant Ownership', 71; Boratav, *İktisat Tarihi*, 55.

raisins, cotton, figs, hazelnuts, opium, and eggs, which accounted for around 70% of exports.⁸⁸ Much of the growth represented recovery to pre-1914 levels rather than real expansion. Nevertheless, it showed that the agricultural sector could provide a profitable surplus. Thus, etatism was a response to first, the availability of a potentially productive surplus and second, the lack of a capitalist class to use it. The state, informed by its securitised priorities was the most viable instrument of giving the surplus direction.

Then, the precarity of primary commodity export economies came into sharp relief when the Great Depression hit product prices. In Turkey overall, prices of agricultural products fell by a third in 1932-3 compared to 1925. More specifically, export goods lost market value, hazelnuts (73%), dried figs (52%), tobacco (50%), cotton (48%), and wheat (63%) were all down after 1929.⁸⁹ Low domestic consumption could not maintain previous prices. The price crisis was compounded by taxes fixed in cash after tithe abolition, resulting in taxes often being higher than the market value of the product.⁹⁰

Turkey's abandoned experiment with a state controlled two party system coincided with this period of economic difficulty. The end of the Lausanne tariff regime was welcome to Ankara, in terms of both economic and political sovereignty. However, the price crisis undermined its immediate practical effect. The political system's economic thinking, perennially gripped by a tension between liberal and protectionist approaches was in a logjam. Critique was difficult to express outside parliament and was becoming increasingly so at the Assembly too. The state elite decided that some

⁸⁸ Boratav, *İktisat Tarihi*, 38.

⁸⁹ Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy*, 81.

⁹⁰ Keyder, 'Small Peasant Ownership', 71.

measure of opposition was needed to help generate policy ideas. To this end, the Free Republican Party (FRP) was founded under Fethi Okyar and Mehmet Nuri Conker in August 1930, only to be closed by November of the same year.⁹¹

The FRP was not fundamentally different to the RPP. Economically it leaned to the liberal side. Politically it had the same origins as the RPP in the CUP. Okyar, later the ambassador to London, was one of Atatürk's closest allies. It was a party of the establishment; that could act as a safety valve for discontent and contest policy ideas. However, the popular opposition was such that it quickly coalesced around the FRP, taking the state by surprise that there was such discontent to its rule.⁹² It was a legitimacy crisis for which the state needed a plan.

The FRP showed that the socio-cultural modernisation programme had not permeated enough of the population for the RPP's liking. Efforts would have to redoubled in propaganda and education.⁹³ Passive acquiescence of the population, at the very least, was important to RPP reforms; especially in urban centres, this had not yet been sufficiently achieved. Reforms in areas such as dress and alphabet, important as they were, were superficial from an economic point of view. The end of the Lausanne tariff regime, combined with the Depression and finally the Free Party experiment, convinced the state apex of a need for more thoroughgoing economic initiative.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası.

⁹² Feroz Ahmad, *From Empire to Republic, Essays on the Late Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2008), 311.

⁹³ Zürcher, 'People's Party'.

⁹⁴ Boratav, *İktisat Tarihi*, 52.

The result was a double conviction in etatism as a securitising tool and legitimisation device. Industrialisation would provide economic, material, and logistical assets to secure the territory. Through industrial investment in Anatolian towns, alongside the attendant social services, the state aimed to provide the core-nation with jobs and education, through which it could entrench its political legitimacy. Etatism was as much a political as an economic choice. By attempting to entrench the state into the livelihoods of more of the population as an investor and employer, it was designed to consolidate RPP rule and build legitimacy for the Republic.

Etatism was the result of a pragmatic synthesis which could be put to productive use quickly for economic benefit and societal transformation. The price was a rift between the regime and the peasantry who were pauperised by bankrolling the twin urbanisation-industrialisation projects.⁹⁵ Onur Ulaş İnce has described this as a form of internal colonialism, where the rural base was subordinated to the imperatives of urban industrialisation by state capitalists to build a national economy.⁹⁶

Domestic policy choices in support of etatism were enacted in the aftermath of the dual economic and legitimacy crises, these set the tone for the rest of the decade.

The state sought to further project, extend, and entrench its sovereignty over the

⁹⁵ Keyder, 'Small Peasant Ownership', 72.

⁹⁶ Onur Ulaş İnce, 'Friedrich List and the Imperial Origins of the National Economy', *New Political Economy* 21, no. 4 (2016): 394; Vedit İnal and Merve Kılıçkan, 'Refugee Scholars of the 1930s and the German Contribution in the Development of Economics in Turkey', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 23, no. 2 (2021): 283–300. İnce arrives at this conclusion by considering Friedrich List's imperial and anti-imperial theories on the national economy split between free trade and relations of dependency, which has similarities to Ottoman-Turkish searches for a developmental economic avenue between liberalism and protectionism. The former imperial Ottoman state elite can cautiously be said to have turned their imperial gaze inward on the axis of a centre-periphery dynamic on urban-rural lines. This protection of the internal imperial space from external exploitation can be correlated to the dynamics between foreign and domestic policy, where foreign action protects the internal space from external encroachment. İnal and Kılıçkan's work suggest German refugee scholars might have influenced this Listian approach of strong paternalistic government that intervenes when necessary to create social justice.

country. The Central Bank was established in 1930 to protect the currency, import quotas and export regulation were enacted in 1931, and most foreign concessions were nationalized in the 1930s.⁹⁷

In foreign policy, Ankara wanted to escape its position as commodity supplier to the industrial manufacturer in the international centre-periphery relationship. However, Turkey recognised its relative economic and technological backwardness and pursued economic sovereignty in the first instance. Yet, some Eurocentric attitudes had not changed from the 19th century. William Churchill's attitude in the 1840s was the same as the German delegation's at the London Economic conference in 1933.⁹⁸ That, agricultural nations should not build their own industries for fear of extending the Great Depression, exports to help commodity producers to industrialise should be cut to protect the centre-periphery status quo.⁹⁹ The attitude persisted but did not reflect changing circumstances at the end of the capitulations. Great Powers could no longer protect their co-nationals' financial interests as intrusively as they had. Peaceful penetration was over in Turkey. Further, the Soviet Union was willing to supply Turkey since it had little stake in the status quo. And despite the German position in London, Berlin did supply Turkey with the industrial goods it needed, because the clearing system provided a ready market for German manufacturers in the autarkic 1930s. In sum, the disruptions of the Depression, allied to a lack of capitulatory privilege, allowed Turkey room for manoeuvre in foreign economic policy to seek the resources it needed for an etatist industrialisation programme.

⁹⁷ Boratav, *İktisat Tarihi*, 53.

⁹⁸ A British resident in Istanbul, proprietor of the Turkish language newspaper *Ceride-i Havadis*.

⁹⁹ İnal, 'Economic Thought', 100; Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy*, 88.

Autarky and the Clearing System

There was significant national economic interventionism coupled with a variable withdrawal into autarky in the international economic system after 1929. Though counterintuitive at first glance, autarky contributed to increased Turkish diplomatic activity throughout the 1930s. The capitulationphobia derived imperative of non-entanglement in foreign debts and desire for economic self-sufficiency clashed against the need for industrial material the country could not supply itself. Prices the modest agricultural surplus could command at market was ruinous after October 1929. This is where the clearing system of international trade played the most important role in disposing of the agricultural surplus in exchange for industrial and military hardware.¹⁰⁰ What follows is an explanation of the clearing process, a sample account of Anglo-Turkish negotiations around the clearing system, and links to Turkish domestic policy.

The clearing system derived from Germany's economic recovery attempts as the biggest debtor in international trade imbalances.¹⁰¹ In short, it circumvented the use of foreign exchange in international payments. A preference for variable import duties was tied to a growing preference for bilateral over multilateral trade agreements from 1931, in conjunction with import and foreign exchange controls. Barter was easier to manage bilaterally than multilaterally, crucially it avoided the use of foreign currency

¹⁰⁰ Approximately 80-85% of Turkish trade was conducted through clearing by 1935. Birtek, 'Etatism', 418; Türegün, 'Neomercantilism', 669; Aldcroft, *Europe's Third World*, 62.

¹⁰¹ Tobias Straumann, *1931: Debt, Crisis, and the Rise of Hitler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 8; Zara Steiner, *The Triumph of the Dark: European International History 1933-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 374; Türegün, 'Neomercantilism', 674. According to Türegün, clearing was an explicit part of the German economic plan, after 1934, to establish east-central and south-eastern Europe as the supplier of its raw materials and foodstuffs.

when the value of cash, or the cash price of goods, was precarious. This bilateral barter system is commonly called the clearing system in the literature.

Importers from country A deposited their own currency into the accounts of the country from which it imported goods, country B. The foreign creditor (B) could access this money only if they purchased goods from country A, and vice versa. Thus, exchange was completed, but no cash was converted into another currency. The quantity and type of goods for import were strictly controlled, which made the system one of exchange between governments.¹⁰² The German economic plan directed trade to states which accepted German products without demanding foreign currency in return, south-east Europe was fertile ground for this policy. After concluding clearing agreements with Greece and Bulgaria, one was signed with Turkey in August 1933; cereals, tobacco, fruit, nuts, wool, cotton, hides, leather, and chrome were exchanged for manufactured goods, iron, steel, vehicles, engines, tyres, and rubber products.¹⁰³ Turkey signed further clearing agreements with France, Britain, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Balkan Entente allies, Denmark, and Belgium in the 1930s for example.¹⁰⁴ They were subject to frequent renegotiations on quota adjustments and prices that demanded diplomatic time and effort.

¹⁰² Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy*, 150–51.

¹⁰³ *ibid*, 151–52.

¹⁰⁴ 'Kliring Vaziyetimiz', *Ulus*, 1 January 1938,

http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/ulus/ulus_1938/ulus_1938_sonkanun_/ulus_1938_sonkanun_1_.pdf; 'Danimarka İle Ticaretimiz', *Ulus*, 6 January 1938,

http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/ulus/ulus_1938/ulus_1938_sonkanun_/ulus_1938_sonkanun_6_.pdf; 'Türk – İsviçre Ticaret ve Kliring Müzakereleri Bitti', *Ulus*, 20 February 1938,

http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/ulus/ulus_1938/ulus_1938_subat_/ulus_1938_subat_20_.pdf; Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy*, 83.

The clearing system helped Ankara's drive to centralisation and in mitigating domestic economic shocks for agricultural producers. High offices of state behaved as shopkeepers of Turkish produce. Bankers and merchants close to the Ankara political elite acted as intermediary envoys in the bartering. Muammer Eriş for example, was one of a delegation of bankers in London attempting to secure a long-term credit agreement for the second five-year industrial plan, to be paid for with cereals, coal, tobacco, and fruit by expanding the extant clearing agreement.¹⁰⁵ He remained in London with his colleagues and was folded into the official delegation headed by ambassador Okyar in March 1938.¹⁰⁶

There was a fair amount of diplomatic wrangling. The British Board of Trade, Credits Department, the Guarantee Board, and the London branch of the Ottoman Bank all agreed in principle to the credits but pressed for more of the repayments to be made in foreign exchange instead of through clearing.¹⁰⁷ Turkish obstinacy against parting with cash as opposed to goods was well known. A United States Embassy report to Washington on the Anglo-Turkish clearing agreement four months earlier, referred to the "FO's ardent desire to be very friendly with the Turks", despite British creditors remaining 18 months in arrears in obtaining payment from Turkish buyers.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, during the negotiations, Eriş gave interviews to British media in attempts to drum up business for Turkish products.¹⁰⁹ Anschluss occurred as the

¹⁰⁵ HW 12/225, 070697, Eriş and Pamir, London to Prime Minister, Ankara, 28 February 1938. Eriş was also an MP, suggesting the close confluence between Turkish bankers and the political centre.

¹⁰⁶ HW 12/225, 070831, Prime Minister, Ankara to Eriş and Pamir, London, 14 March 1938.

¹⁰⁷ HW 12/225, 070823, Eriş, London, to Prime Minister, Ankara, 10 March 1938.

¹⁰⁸ HW 12/221, 069783, American Embassy, London to Secretary of State, Washington, 2 November 1937.

¹⁰⁹ 'Britanya Daha Fazla Türk Malı Satın Almalıdır!', *Ulus*, 9 March 1933, http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/ulus/ulus_1938/ulus_1938_mart_/ulus_1938_mart_9_.pdf.

negotiations were ongoing and the Sudeten crisis that would end in the Munich Agreement was on the horizon. This helps explain the politically accommodating attitude of the Foreign Office to Turkey compared to the commercial departments.

Negotiations continued throughout March and April 1938. Proposals and counterproposals suggesting various percentages, comptoirs, and special accounts to expediate payments to British holders of Turkish clearing debts abounded, with Turkish negotiators on instructions from Ankara doggedly sticking to barter payments within Turkey's capacity.¹¹⁰ On 25 April the Prime Minister Bayar told the negotiators that failing any further positive movement, the delegation should play the card of negotiating with France instead and return to Ankara.¹¹¹ Talks concluded the following month. Ankara secured the £10 million credit to purchase British machinery and £6 million for war materiel by expanding the supply of agricultural produce through the clearing agreement, to which, coal, antimony, iron, and industrial and edible olive oil was added.¹¹²

This round of negotiations, extending from February to May 1938 is just one of the, albeit more detailed, examples found in the diplomatic cyphers. Exchange of primary products for arms and industry were also explored with the USA and Japan.¹¹³ A sample batch of rifles were bought from Sweden and field guns from Germany.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ HW 12/225, 070954, Turkish Ambassador, London to Prime Minister, Ankara, 22 March 1938; HW 12/226, 071144, Prime Minister, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, London, 8 April 1938; HW 12/226, 071145, Prime Minister, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, London, 8 April 1938.

¹¹¹ HW 12/226, 071171, Prime Minister, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, London, 25 April 1938.

¹¹² HW 12/227, 071317, Simopoulos, London to Foreign Affairs, Athens, 13 May 1938; HW 12/227, 071426, Kelley, Ankara to Secretary of State, Washington, 27 May 1938.

¹¹³ HW 12/177, 056139, Skinner, Ankara to Secretary of State, Washington, 19 March 1934; HW 12/178, 056599, Skinner, Istanbul to Secretary of State, Washington, 20 April 1934; HW 12/179, 056704, Japanese Ambassador, Ankara to Foreign Minister, Tokyo, 2 May 1934.

¹¹⁴ HW 12/179, 056884, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Minister, Stockholm, 15 May 1934; HW 12/221, 069732, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, Berlin, 28 October 1937.

These pointed to Turkish efforts to diversify sources of supply, the limits of the markets for its produce, as well as the varying desirability of barter as a trade system. There were no large-scale purchases from Japan or Sweden; supplies were bought largely from former capitulatory powers.

Additionally, Ankara chafed at the overreliance of the clearing system on Germany. German firms were aware of their strong position of holding most Turkish clearing accounts.¹¹⁵ One firm demanded 25% payment in foreign exchange for modifications to destroyers and submarines in late 1937. This drew a firm response from Aras to Berlin, pressing for the company to abide by the existing clearing agreement.¹¹⁶ Germany attempted to leverage its advantages in materiel and funds in Turkish clearing accounts for more foreign exchange. Turkish trade policy remained consistent in its bartering of mineral and agricultural resources in exchange for arms and finished products for industrial development. It did however trap Ankara into exchange with Germany, the political accommodations of London in contrast to its commercial houses relate to this too. Where clearing offered an outlet to productive agricultural capacity for primary producers, the downside was a rigidity in the system unable to adjust to nation-state needs for flexibility.

The clearing system had results for the domestic sphere. First, the collapse of the primary product prices after 1929 was devastating for Turkey's agriculturalists. Since the abolition of the tithe their conditions had improved because of favourable market prices. However, the price collapse meant they now produced at a loss after having

¹¹⁵ Germany absorbed 48% of Turkish exports in 1935, Birtek, 'Etatism', 418; İşçi, *Turkey and the Soviet Union*, 32.

¹¹⁶ HW 12/222, 070084, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ankara to Turkish Ambassador, Berlin, 2 December 1937.

so recently recovered to pre-war levels of production. The state as shopkeeper staved off an internal agricultural crash, which could have threatened the elite's legitimacy by starving the cities and threatening the domestic supplies of the military. That is, both failing in its role as provider of internal stability and inhibiting the legitimate means of coercive violence. Thus, the clearing system provided a measure of state protection to the domestic producer from external price shocks.

The trade policy fit into the space leftover by the elimination of the non-Muslim mercantile class. Fortuitously, the decline in trade volume and prices occurred when the Lausanne tariff regime ended, allowing the state control over the import flow of manufactured goods. The state stepped into the shoes of the non-Muslim merchants as the institution capable of mobilising enough resources for targeted imports. Ankara, as the merchant house, positioned itself as the agent of exchange, putting inhibitory pressure on the potential subversion of its post-Lausanne economic sovereignty by an emergent entrepreneurial class at home and capitulatory pressure abroad.

Ankara, through the clearing system maintained its legitimacy and domestic hegemony. A measure of central control over domestic prices, facilitated by more favourable terms of barter exchange steadied the ship of state. Furthermore, central control over what could be obtained through the proceeds of clearing as opposed to a liberal model, drove the type of material modernisation pursued by the state. That was, top-down, patriarchal, and securitised.

Railway Infrastructure

The nationalisation and development of rail infrastructure demonstrates threads of continuity and change in state level political practice in the 1930s. Strategic linking of different parts of the country for military security; domestic economic expansion for revenue growth at home and abroad; and privileging the titular core nation at the expense of minorities, manifested in what Fredrik Meiton calls “A deliberate effort to erect the material predicates of sovereignty”.¹¹⁷ Much of this was possible because of the removal of capitulatory fetters. Meiton, in his study on the development of electric power infrastructure in Palestine, explains that the powers of a given technology disposes its agents to pursue expansion along certain lines. He further sees a feature of the history of large infrastructure systems as being uncritically promoted as prescriptions for the whole societal order in that system.¹¹⁸ In the Turkish case the system of rail and industrialisation was constructed around CUP-RPP notions of economic nationalism that excluded minorities to build an urban Turkish ethnic aligned to itself. Ankara sought to further entrench its legitimacy around industrialisation and urbanisation, knit together by expanding the rail network. The state, as the guarantor of security and facilitator of economic growth, legitimised itself around these twin goals, which its late-Ottoman iteration could not achieve.

Expansion of the railroads served two explicit functions. First, to increase the efficiency of military and bureaucratic communications, thus extending the state’s reach. Second, to develop the internal market economy by knitting new industrial manufacturing centres to their markets and sources of supply. Thus, creating an

¹¹⁷ Fredrik Meiton, *Electrical Palestine: Capital and Technology from Empire to Nation* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 6.

¹¹⁸ *ibid*, 17.

economic model which did not rely overwhelmingly on foreign capital and markets to the detriment of state sovereignty. A third function was the alienation of indigenous non-Turkish and non-Muslim populations. By creating exclusion zones around rail lines and other key infrastructure minorities were spatially marginalised in addition to their political isolation. It is not necessarily the case that the state elite cared much for the opinion of an ordinary Sunni-Muslim Turkish speaker; however, this group could live and work within sight of a rail station, the rail lines, or the factories which were dotted around the country. Consequently, the economic and strategic imperatives which drove infrastructure construction around the larger policy of etatism, also revealed an avenue of separation of minorities from “the technoscientific order and the civilizational assumptions that underwrote it”.¹¹⁹

The task of building a rail infrastructure did not begin from scratch. In 1923, the 3,716 km of rail lines were almost entirely foreign owned.¹²⁰ Lines were fragmented and unconnected, inhibiting economic integration.¹²¹ The situation conformed to colonial practices that prioritised revenue and resource extraction ahead of internal market cohesion. According to Nevin Coşar and Sevtap Demirci, the first phase of rail development (1920-26) consisted of renovating existing lines, followed by increased construction from 1927 onwards. The building programme culminated in a largely connected network of 7,381 km with 94% Turkish ownership by 1940.¹²²

¹¹⁹ *ibid*, 20.

¹²⁰ Nevin Coşar and Sevtap Demirci, ‘Incorporation into the World Economy: From Railways to Highways (1850-1950)’, *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 1 (2009): 24.

¹²¹ *ibid*, 19.

¹²² *ibid*, 25. For comparison, there was around 32,000 km of track in Britain and around 56,000 km in Germany during the interwar period, ‘British Railways’, in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, n.d., <https://www.britannica.com/topic/British-Railways>; ‘Deutsche Bahn AG’, in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, n.d., <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Deutsche-Bahn-AG>.

The British Embassy gave ample space to Ankara's railway construction in its annual reports. A highlight for 1932 was the completion of the Ankara-Sivas line, which, through intermediate stations, connected Samsun and Mersin.¹²³ This established rail communications between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea for the first time. Ankara planned to establish two arterial lines running east to west, one connecting Kars on the Soviet border to Balıkesir via Ankara. The second, southern route, would connect Diyarbakır, through Malatya and Afyonkarahisar to İzmir. The main arteries were supplemented by four north-south routes, intended to help develop the agricultural sector and stimulate export trade, though the British Embassy expressed concern on how the whole scheme was running at a loss.¹²⁴

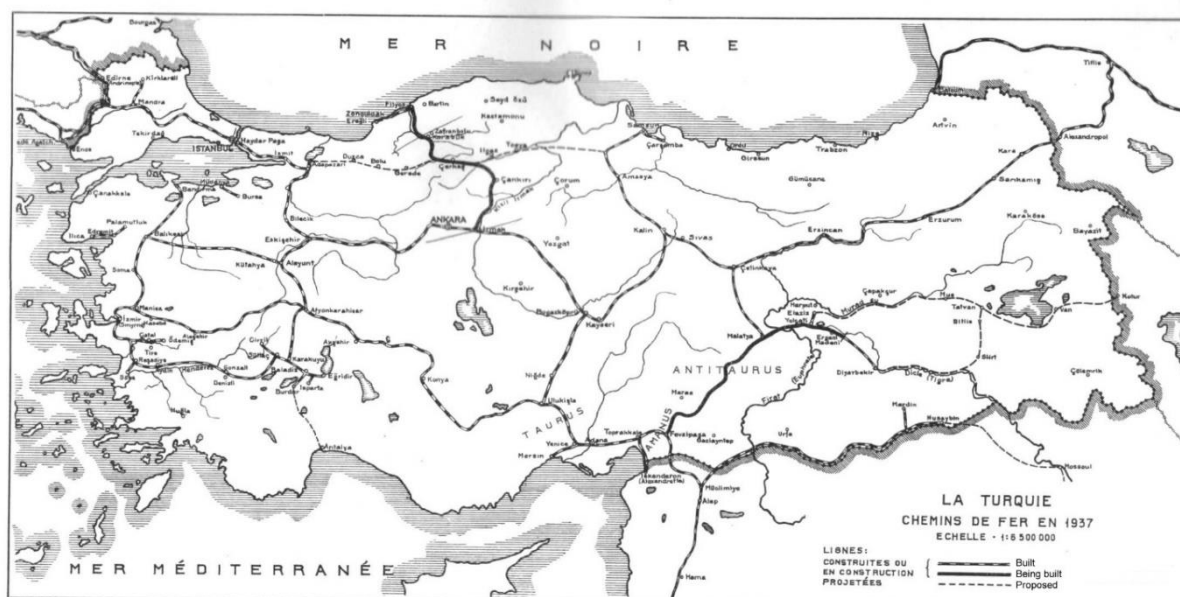
The railway development plan indicated Ankara's interest in consolidating the new capital as the fulcrum of the north-south and east-west axes of the country. The Party newspaper *Ulus* reported and propagandised what it saw as successes in the radiating expansion of the network. For example, it credited the establishment and growth of the town of Kavak, in Samsun province, to its connection to the railways on the Samsun-Ankara line.¹²⁵

¹²³ FO 371/16983, E 529/529/44, Clerk, Ankara to FO, 17 January 1933.

¹²⁴ FO 371/17659, E 596/596/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 20 January 1934.

¹²⁵ 'Yeni Kurulan Bir İlçemiz', *Ulus*, 11 January 1938,

http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/ulus/ulus_1938/ulus_1938_sonkanun_/ulus_1938_sonkanun_11_.pdf.



Map 4 Railways in Turkey – 1937.¹²⁶

Further development of Diyarbakır's connections revealed state intentions of strategic connectivity and resource extraction. A southern branch line was to connect it to Fevzipaşa, in Gaziantep province, just north of the Syrian border close to the disputed Alexandretta. Another line running north to Elazığ connected the main arteries with the copper mines of Ergani and restive Kurdish provinces of the interior. The line connecting Fevzipaşa to Ergani via Diyarbakır was completed in 1935, which was also the first year the state rail enterprise reported a profit, of 1.5m TL.¹²⁷ The Diyarbakır example shows how defence and military planning, establishing central authority, exploiting industrial resources, alongside general connectivity for agricultural commerce were all served by the extension of the rail network. While

¹²⁶ *Turkish Railways in 1937*, 1:650000, Irmak-Filyos & Fevzipasa-Diyarbakir. Travaux Exécutés En Turquie Par Le Groupe Suédo-Danois 1927-1935 (Nydquist & Holm, 1937), http://www.trainsofturkey.com/uploads/Maps/turkey_map_1937.jpg.

¹²⁷ FO 371/20091, E 933/933/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 31 January 1936.

there was precious little industry building in the east and south-east, the state reached for firmer military control over Kurdish populated provinces.

Records on the Fevzipaşa-Diyarbakır-Ergani line show how rail schemes were financed through the clearing system, with the profits of state sales of agricultural and mineral products. It was the first to be built entirely through domestic capital, that is state capital channelled through centrally established national banks. The British Department of Overseas Trade lamented that no foreign banks operational in Turkey were invited to subscribe to the 12m TL scheme announced in January 1933.¹²⁸ The financing displayed another difference in attitude between London and Ankara. The latter wanted to use income generated by the Ergani copper mines to contribute to industrial imports through clearing. The Foreign Office had a dim view of the world copper price, nor did it consider the internal loan useful as a strategic expenditure of local resources in the hands of inefficient state capitalists.¹²⁹ It was a case of some British diplomats missing the point of Turkish intentions directed towards physical and economic security in transport infrastructure. Supplementally, the transfer of liquidity from the state to the emerging national banking sector could be construed as a stimulus for growing a domestic market. Contrary to how it was perceived in London, these were not losses, but costs of establishing the state and nation.

Moreover, it was indicative of a cash flow problem for a state building its physical assets. Income from primary agricultural goods had to be supplemented with mineral deposits. A confidential report by MacDowall Russell detailed the mines and mineral deposits in Turkey, he had been a businessman with considerable mining interests.

¹²⁸ FO 371/16977, E 633/10/44, Department of Overseas Trade to FO, 30 January 1933.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*

He wrote of the great potential of the Ergani mines, from which the Turks intended to supply copper ore to Germany in exchange for manufactured goods.¹³⁰ Ankara paid for a portion of its needs with ore instead of the foreign exchange it could ill afford. Thus, rail infrastructure was a direct conduit to enable further industrialisation.

In addition to building railways, Ankara took a heavy-handed approach to nationalising the existing stock of foreign concessionary assets. In 1935 the British owned Smyrna-Aidin Railway Company was finally sold to the state for £1.8m after some years of what the company considered harassment by authorities. The sum was to be paid in foreign exchange over 40 years, other assets, such as buildings and accumulated earnings still in Turkey, were exchanged through the clearing system for goods such as figs, raisins, and olive oil. Company executives were disappointed with the Foreign Office's hands-off approach to their dealings with the Turkish government. They were eventually resigned to the low price they extracted.¹³¹ Similarly, the French owned Oriental Railways were bought for 6m TL in 1936, payable over 20 years, half in foreign exchange and half in goods through the clearing system.¹³² Comparatively smaller concerns also attracted the state's heavy hand. Also in 1936, the Belgian director of electrical and tramway companies in Istanbul was pressured to sell the concessions under threat of detention and ruinous fines for trumped up charges of breaking smuggling laws.¹³³

In May 1937, Ankara bought the French owned section of the Baghdad Railway connecting Payas to Fevzipaşa.¹³⁴ The overall military, economic, and political points

¹³⁰ FO 371/19041, E 5079/4540/44, Lorraine, Istanbul to FO, 9 August 1935.

¹³¹ FO 371/19036, E 4388/236/44, Lorraine, Ankara to FO, 10 July 1935.

¹³² FO 371/20866, E 823/823/44, Lorraine, Ankara to FO, 28 January 1937.

¹³³ *ibid.*

¹³⁴ FO 371/20853, E 2628/83/44, Lorraine, Ankara to FO, 7 May 1937.

bear repeating here. Payas on the eastern Mediterranean coast was linked as far as Diyarbakır, around 450 km inland to the east, covering most of the Syrian border region's hinterland. This was not inconsequential for the eventual incorporation of Alexandretta into Turkey. Economically, the clearing system allowed for flexibility in the exchange of concessionary property for goods. Politically and economically, Ankara achieved this type of nationalisation by strong arming foreign companies no longer protected by capitulations. Turkey's foreign bargaining position in the 1930s, characterised by leaning towards the status quo bloc, sustained by its consistency in mediation, and constancy in what it could and could not accept domestically, helped to produce these mutually reinforcing foreign and domestic policy gains.

As Neslişah Lotz has shown, it was not that there was no foreign capital still in Turkey after 1923. But their previous favourable circumstances and privileges were diminished by direct interaction with a stronger government. Turkey's main concern was national and economic sovereignty alongside prevention of foreign influence in political decisions.¹³⁵ Provided foreign companies could accept conditions such as employing Turkish workers, use local raw materials, and pay more in local indemnities, in short submit to Turkish law, they could operate in Turkey.¹³⁶ Still, after the switch from liberal rebuilding of the 1920s to etatism of the 1930s, the state nationalised more concessions. Suggesting an instrumentalisation of extant concessions to first establish then consolidate a centralised industrial base.

¹³⁵ Neslişah Leman Başaran Lotz, 'Between National Sovereignty and Foreign Capital: The Fate of French Companies' Concessions in Turkey after the War for Liberation', *Middle Eastern Studies* 55, no. 6 (2019): 880.

¹³⁶ *ibid*, 891.

Control of the railways also helped secure the army's food supply and absorbed some price shocks to agriculturalists. In January 1934, more than a year before Turkey nationalised the line, British officials in Rome thought the stockpiles of wheat being gathered along the Izmir-Aydın line were for military defence against potential Italian aggression. Turkish requests to the Smyrna-Aidin Company to camouflage depots and stations buttressed this view, a request that had been made with some indeterminate regularity in the past.¹³⁷ The British company tended to acquiesce to such requests, though such indirect jurisdiction over lines of communication was insufficient for Ankara. In clarification to the Foreign Office, Loraine accepted that the measures might be military. However, he put more emphasis on the state's action to check the depreciation of stocks accumulated by agriculturalists in the interior.¹³⁸ The lingering reduction of foreign markets after 1929 had prompted Ankara to establish a central office for regulating prices through bulk purchases of key stock such as wheat. Strategic rail links afforded opportunity for better movement of this existing stock to where it was needed. Further, the Afyonkarahisar-Antalya line, one of the north-south arteries, was nearing completion by 1936, it would connect the Antalya littoral to an existing divisional headquarters at Isparta.¹³⁹ In short, military, economic, foreign, and domestic considerations consistently converged in rail policies.

Fanfare in the opening of strategic links in the rail system functioned as displays of continuity in foreign and domestic policy. When the Divriği (Sivas Province) – Erzincan section of the railway to Erzurum was inaugurated on 11 December 1938, the Minister of Public Works Ali Çetinkaya, Minister of Defence Kazım Özalp, and the

¹³⁷ FO 371/17957, E 230/230/44, Drummond, Rome to FO, 6 January 1934.

¹³⁸ FO 371/17957, E 1540/230/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 27 February 1934.

¹³⁹ FO 371/20866, E 823/823/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 28 January 1937.

new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Şükrü Saraçoğlu were all in attendance. This signalled a united front of the state elite's stability despite some flux in the transition from Atatürk to İnönü. The line was to be connected to Diyarbakır further south, with plans to establish links to Iran and Iraq from there.¹⁴⁰ As has been seen, these connections were discussed between Turkey and its, by now, Saadabad allies. Moreover, the functioning sections of the Erzurum and Diyarbakır lines added to the mobilisation capacity of the military in pacifying Dersim/Tunceli. The railway was thus also a tool of internal control.

The story of rail development in the first two decades of the Republic draws some scholarly consensus on its success, especially on the state's intentions which coalesced around strategic defence and control over the flow of resources.¹⁴¹ There were, however, fundamental drawbacks, which stemmed from the priorities the state set itself as well as a simple lack of resources.

Caroline Arnold shows how the logic of etatism worked with the communications infrastructure to broaden the economic base. The rail system was an important skeletal framework, alongside industrial planning in smaller Anatolian towns to diversify economic capacity beyond the principal cities. It was the approach of a planned and a command-like economy. Prioritising industrial building by labour supply would have excluded anywhere else but the three big cities.¹⁴² Whereas

¹⁴⁰ FO 371/21928, E 7721/81/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 14 December 1938. İnönü replaced Aras with Saraçoğlu, though it was Numan Menemencioğlu who provided Foreign Ministry stability. Özalp's presence spoke to stability as Defence Minister, while Çetinkaya's was as a domestic signal of continuity in ongoing public works. The latter two, however, were about to lose their portfolios alongside the Prime Minister Bayar with the new government formed a month later.

¹⁴¹ Ahmad, *Modern Turkey*; Arnold, 'Etatism'; Birttek, 'Etatism'; Coşar and Demirci, 'Railways to Highways'.

¹⁴² Arnold, 'Etatism', 368.

industrial investment in towns such as Kayseri, where three railways connected it to Konya, Adana, Sivas, and Ankara, was planned so that the town could grow and draw surplus labour from the countryside. In many cases the type of industrial plant was dictated by the type of source material it connected to. The Ereğli (Konya) and Malatya textile factories were built along the Konya-Adana link, connecting them to the cotton growing region of Çukurova. Similarly, the sugar beet processing plant at Turhal (Tokat province) was built on the Samsun-Sivas line, while after Sivas was linked to the capital, the state railways engine and car factory was constructed there in 1939, as the hub for distributing the finished rail product throughout the network.¹⁴³

Discarding to significant extents the received wisdom of the market, which might have concentrated industrial production and communications around the very few existing urban centres gave the state an interest in many livelihoods outside of the traditional civil service bureaucracy. Building, maintaining, and sustaining the emerging industrial production hinged on state level resources constructing the communications network, to generate a class of capital interest with the resources and risk-taking behaviour that was crippled in the pre-republican period. It also connected to the social transformation envisioned by spreading the state's educational and social institutions of nationalist secularism. Growth of the rail network could in theory spread the Kemalist nationalist creed beyond the large urban centres by giving the smaller towns a stake in state based economic investment.

This interest in the populations livelihoods was exclusionary, however. The remaining non-Muslim minorities were largely consigned to the cities. Kurds, on the other hand,

¹⁴³ *ibid*, 368.

were prevalent in the countryside. The Settlement Law of 1934, having provided for areas of settlement according to categories of Turkishness, established exclusion zones around factories, highways, vicinities of natural resources, and railways explicitly forbidding the settlement of non-Turkish speakers. Erol Ülker has itemised many of these. For example, along the Ergani-Diyarbakır railway line connecting to the Iranian border through Siirt, Bitlis, and Van, over 500 km, was subject to a 20 km wide exclusion zone on both sides to the re-settlement of non-Turkish speakers. This was not an isolated example, connections from Diyarbakır further south to Mardin and Akçakale close to the Syrian border, or north to Elazığ were subject to the same exclusions.¹⁴⁴

Where the railways did not reach, highways covered some of the gaps. Here too, state directed exclusion was built into the communications system. For example, highways passing through Elazığ, Erzincan, and Divriği were subject to a 15 km exclusion. As was the Ergani mine, it was designated a Type One Zone forbidden to the re-settlement of non-Turkish speakers.¹⁴⁵ The pervasiveness of the exclusion zones in Kurdish speaking provinces showed the extent to which the state securitised its citizen-subjects as a potential threat. In the attempt to build as comprehensive a communications network as possible the state excluded minorities from the material benefits of etatism. This was domestic economic nationalism which channelled the resource flows of etatist industrialisation to the titular core nation. This will become clearer in the section below, where the concentration of state industrial investment excluded, to a large degree, the east and south-east of the country.

¹⁴⁴ Erol Ülker, 'Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey: The Settlement Law of 1934', *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, no. 7 (2008): 8.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid*, 9.

Despite the central instrumentalisation of the agrarian surplus, etatism was still constrained by scarcity of resources. Yet it still found a political accommodation in balancing the urban focus with the rural majority. Although road coverage increased alongside rail expansion, from around 18,000 km to approximately 47,000 km (1923-50), it was not enough to stimulate national development by linking regional economies or integrate villages into the national economy, according to Mustafa Tuna.¹⁴⁶ The roads were not networked efficiently to the railways, which meant most of etatism's target population was left out. Like the rest of the country, Turkish-Muslims were overwhelmingly rural. Nevertheless, Tuna argues that in the absence of extensive resources to target existing authority structures directly and vigorously in the countryside, the state tried to preserve village communities as sources of political stability.¹⁴⁷ That is, small urban centres could be encouraged to grow and receive the positivist Kemalist creed, balanced by the perceived traditionalism of the countryside embedded in orthodox Islam. This could also provide opportunity for Turkish-speaking settlement into Kurdish speaking areas by incentivising it around the exclusionary barriers. On balance then, for the state, urban social reform had a rural counterweight in traditionalism to offset challenges to the legitimacy of the system that emerged around the FRP.¹⁴⁸

The physical security of the state took precedence due to the limited resources.

Important as economic growth was it ranked a relative second to physical protection.

¹⁴⁶ Mustafa Tuna, 'The Missing Turkish Revolution: Comparing Village Level Change and Continuity in Republican Turkey and Soviet Central Asia', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50, no. 1 (2018): 28.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid*, 36.

¹⁴⁸ See also, the Menemen incident, where a junior officer was murdered by religious reactionaries according to Zürcher and Ahmad. Zürcher, 'People's Party', 109; Feroz Ahmad, 'Islamic Reassertion in Turkey', *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (April 1988): 754–55.

Strategically linking east to west and north to south emphasised military deployment in strategic locations; smaller centres could be linked later. Though somewhat conjectural, focusing on main communication lines had potential to starve a mechanised invasion force of the hinterland for food supply, especially further east. To Republican decision makers, heavily drawn from Ottoman staff officers, this may have been an attractive consideration in conjunction with their field experience on Anatolian land. A negative implication of long supply lines for defence could also cause the Turkish army difficulties in accessing resources. Though these could be mitigated by the stockpile facilities alluded to above.

The resource bound prioritisation of security was tied to the state's conception of territoriality. Günay Özdoğan argues that territoriality became a fiction of political geography seen through security concerns aggravated by the recent past plagued by communal conflict. According to Özdoğan, the multi-ethnic Anatolia became subsumed under an alleged Turkish ethnies, thus territoriality became a function of political geography perceived through security concerns.¹⁴⁹ The growth of the communications network too was a means to spread the idea that the new state was an indivisible, continuous, monolithic whole internally accountable only to a very limited stratum of itself.¹⁵⁰

This idea can be generalised through Goswami's modular nationalisms. The modern vision of Turkey brought separate but related fields of economics, politics, and culture together under a process of territorialisation. Ankara sought to bring the separate threads of the country's resources together, spatially bounded in the particulars of

¹⁴⁹ Özdoğan, 'Statist Patriotism', 55.

¹⁵⁰ For Ottoman antecedents of the state's spatial conception of itself see, Benjamin Fortna, 'Change in the School Maps of the Late Ottoman Empire', *Imago Mundi* 57, no. 1 (2005): 23–34.

nation-state structures. As Goswami states, this is a social process rooted and reinforced by the practices of a modern nation-state.¹⁵¹ The institutions of the state were largely built by the early 1930s, but the nation itself was still in the making. And as John Breuilly argues, building a railway can have more of a nation-building effect than any amount of government propaganda.¹⁵²

In sum then, internal and external security considerations shaped the growth of rail communications in the 1930s. The external protection the nationalising state pursued for territorial integrity was limited by the economic resources available to it. The clearing system shorn of capitulatory disadvantage, provided some alleviation of the scarcity by exporting the agricultural surplus. Strategic links made throughout the territory was undermined by the lack of rural penetration where most of the population resided. Late-Ottoman to early Republican concerns with economic nationalism dovetailed with a state led drive to establishing the socio-economic dominance of the majority population. Systematic exclusion of minorities from economic life spread by rail, bounded the national territory as the right of the majority. The railway infrastructure was both useful for economic growth and external security. Simultaneously, it reinforced the civilisational assumptions of the nationalising state's elite, that of privileging the SMT population.

¹⁵¹ Goswami, 'Rethinking the Modular Nation', 794.

¹⁵² John Breuilly, 'Bringing History Back into Nationalism?', in *Nationalism in the Troubled Triangle: Cyprus, Greece and Turkey* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 16.

Factories and Industrial Building

In mutual support and viability of the rail communications system, prospective industrial sites were chosen with a mix of the already established and target areas for development. Sites with earlier connectivity and a ready base became established and grew quicker, in addition to becoming more quickly adapted to specialisation. In Izmir, for example, the second city with a rich, productive hinterland that had been well connected by rail before the Republic, the number of factories increased from ten in 1923 to 129 in 1933, producing textiles, flour, lumber, and tobacco.¹⁵³ Later, a chemical factory was opened in Izmir in 1938, in addition to similarly connected and established Bursa becoming a centre for textile specialisation with artificial silk and worsted spinning mills opening there in the same year.¹⁵⁴ Highway connection between Bursa and Kocaeli helped grow Gemlik as centre of synthetic silk too.¹⁵⁵ In Izmit-Kocaeli itself, a paper factory opened in 1936, and by 1938 13 factories employed 3,500 workers in cellulose, flour, textile, cement, and cement production.¹⁵⁶ Existing textile operations were expanded in the Bakırköy district of Istanbul in 1934.¹⁵⁷ Glass specialisation developed in Paşabahçe on the Asian shore of the old capital with a bottle factory established there in 1935.¹⁵⁸ These were examples of

¹⁵³ Devrim Dumludağ and Bülent Durgun, 'An Economy in Transition: Izmir (1918-38)', *Middle Eastern Studies* 47, no. 6 (2011): 940.

¹⁵⁴ FO 371/23301, E 1214/1214/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 11 February 1939.

¹⁵⁵ 'Başbakanımız Gemlikte', *Ulus*, 28 January 1938, http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/ulus/ulus_1938/ulus_1938_sonkanun/_ulus_1938_sonkanun_28_.pdf.

¹⁵⁶ 'İlk Kâğıd Fabrikamız Dün İzmitte Merasimle Açıldı', *Cumhuriyet*, 7 November 1936, http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/cumhuriyet//cumhuriyet_1936/cumhuriyet_1936_ikincitesrin/_cumhuriyet_1936_ikincitesrin_7_.pdf; 'İzmitte Endüstri Hayatı', *Ulus*, 15 March 1938, http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/ulus/ulus_1938/ulus_1938_mart/_ulus_1938_mart_15_.pdf.

¹⁵⁷ FO 371/19031, E 5946/25/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 27 September 1935.

¹⁵⁸ FO 371/19031, E 7519/25/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 20 December 1935.

how, by 1938, 71% of all industrial concerns were based in the Aegean and Marmara regions.¹⁵⁹

This may seem disproportionate given the prevailing readings of etatism as opening the country to manufacturing and economic connectivity. Clearly there were practical limits to motives of rapid development and quick profit. What little skilled labour, material supply, infrastructure, and capital that was initially available, was concentrated in these western regions. It is still noteworthy that, where the remaining 29% of industrial activity was established, had been almost completely devoid of it before state enterprises, except for the Armenian enterprises recounted above.

Industrialisation was not solely for profit, but for economic and societal transformation through factories scattered throughout Anatolia.¹⁶⁰ While Kemalist ideals found difficulty penetrating the villages, they were better received in the towns and cities either built or which grew alongside the new rail stations.¹⁶¹ Outside the Marmara and Aegean regions, some of important state industrial concerns were textiles in Kayseri and Malatya, iron and steel in Karabük, sulphur in Keçiöorlu, sugar in Eskişehir and Turhal, and coal facilities of Zonguldak. Though this is not an exhaustive list, it constitutes a significant bulk of the examples given both in the secondary literature based on Turkish archives and the British records.¹⁶²

When these towns and cities are plotted on a map, they form a wide ring around west-central Turkey with Ankara at the centre. This spread lends itself to the notion

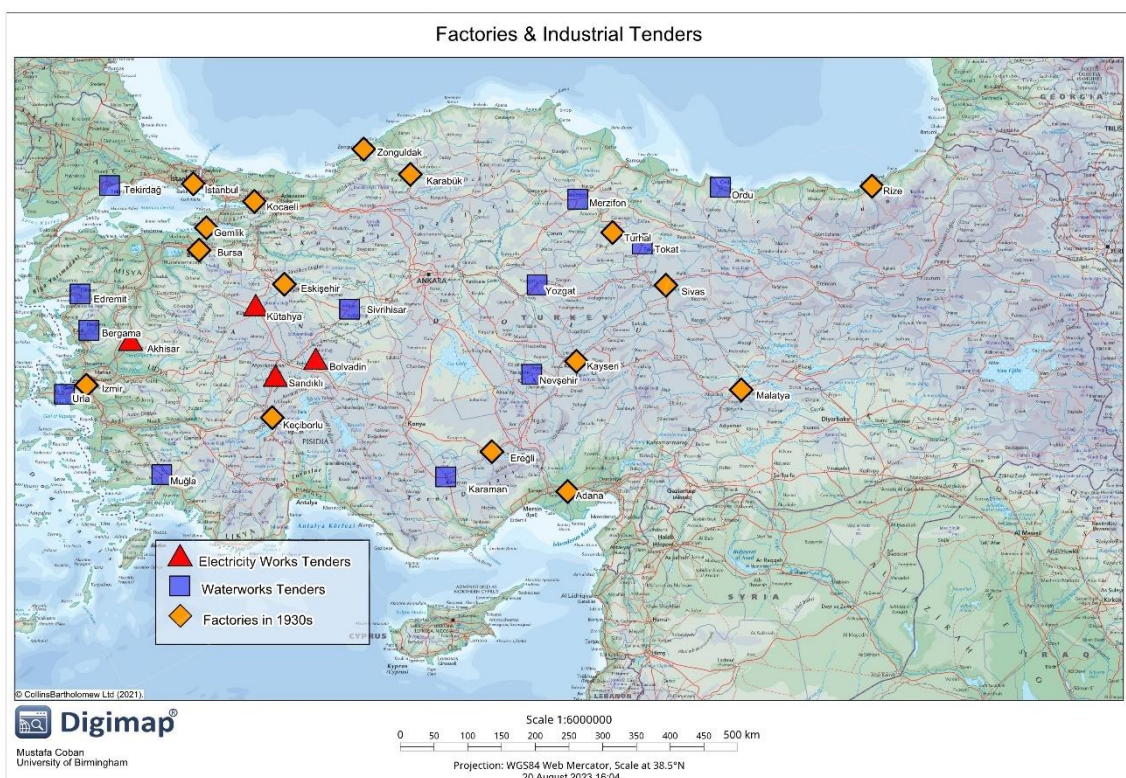
¹⁵⁹ Yavuz, 'Industrial Workforce', 97.

¹⁶⁰ Ahmad, 'Class Consciousness', 91.

¹⁶¹ Zürcher, *Turkey*, 193.

¹⁶² Arnold, 'Etatism'; Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy*; Birtek, 'Etatism'; Boratav, *İktisat Tarihi*; Hale, *Political and Economic Development*.

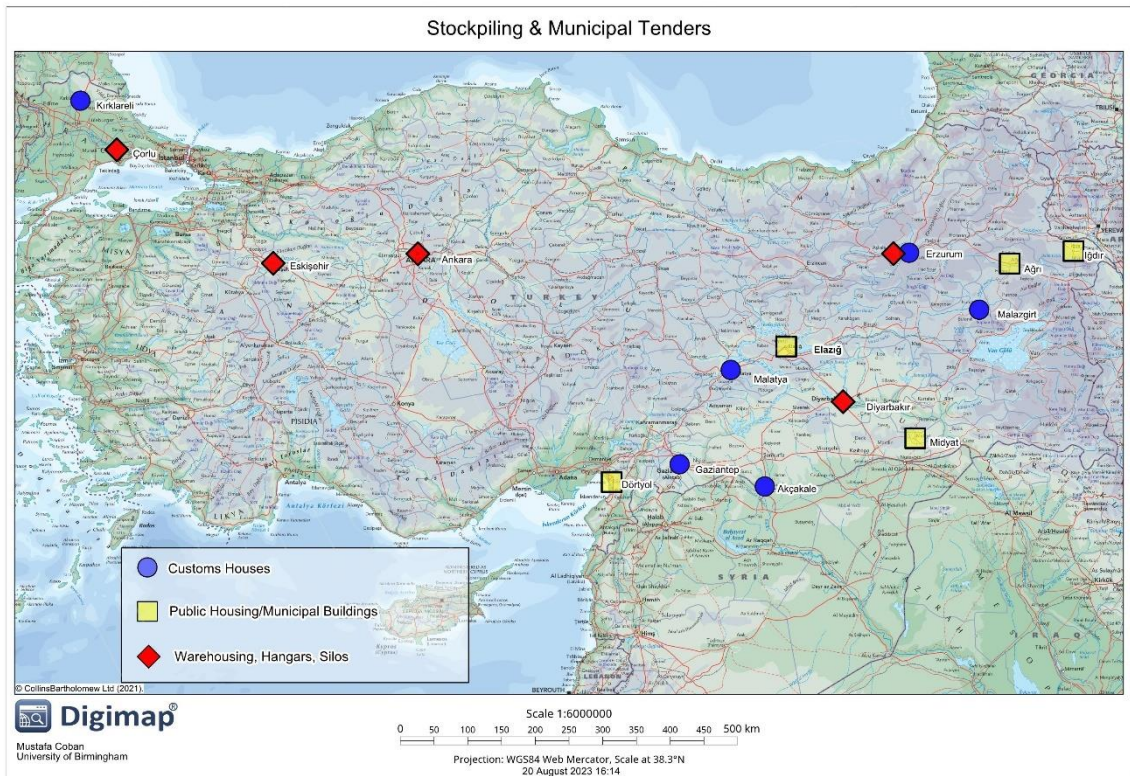
that in building a new centre of political power, corollary relationships to the periphery emerged. Malatya as the relative outlier of this sample, nevertheless, conforms to the larger model. It was not only connected to the rail network but held an important strategic position connecting Fevzipaşa-Payas on its west to Elazığ-Ergani-Diyarbakır to its east, finally it was still west of the Euphrates, the line where most state industrial investment stopped.



Map 5 Factories & Industrial Tenders.

This west-central spread was further sustained by a tawl of *Ulus* as an organ of state industrial advertising. The newspaper served as a noticeboard for state tendered contracts for industrial construction. During 1938, bids were invited for waterworks in Tekirdağ, Bergama, Urla, Muğla, Karaman, Edremit, Sivrihisar, Merzifon, Ordu, Tokat, Nevşehir, and Yozgat. Electricity works tenders were advertised for Sandıklı,

Bolvadin, Akhisar, and Kütahya to cite examples outside the factory towns already established. Bids for building customs houses can be mapped further from the centre in strategic locations such as Malatya as well as towns on or near borders such as Gaziantep, Akçakale, Malazgirt, Erzurum, and Kırklareli. Furthermore, public housing in Iğdır, near the Soviet and Iranian border, and Elazığ overlapped with new municipal buildings in the same places in addition to those in the border towns of Dörtöy, Midyat, and Ağrı. Finally, tenders for warehousing, hangars, and silos in Ankara, Çorlu, Diyarbakır, Eskişehir, and Erzurum correspond to centres of agricultural stockpiling on critical rail routes alluded to above.¹⁶³



Map 6 Stockpiling & Municipal Tenders.

¹⁶³ 'Ulus Gazetesi 1938', İstanbul Üniversitesi Gazeteden Tarihe Bakış Projesi, n.d., <http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/gazete.php?gazete=ulus>.

This mapping suggests planning for manufacturing closer to centres of power.

Bureaucratic mechanisms for trade expanded further out into the country. Municipal buildings and public housing helped to first, connect the gap between the centre and periphery, and second, incentivise bureaucrats to serve there. As explained in the introductory section on primary sources, this is only a snapshot based on one newspaper in one year that bridges the end of the five-year industrialisation plan and the planning stages of the second. However, it does indicate state attempts at spatialisation over the territory to build national congruence into the system.

Of note in this emergent centre-periphery image are the self-sustaining economic units of the Marmara-Aegean regions in the west, and Kurdistan in the east. As outlined above, the social, economic, cultural, and demographic base of the RPP's political leadership was Balkan-west Anatolian. This leaves Turkish Kurdistan as the outlier, the furthest from the centre economically, politically, linguistically, ethnically, and religiously. The scarcity of resources, and the lack thereof made available, to centralise Turkish Kurdistan, suggests that the nationalist leadership saw it as a buffer zone protecting the Turkish heartland from the Middle East. Thus, a lack of industrial infrastructure investment east of the Euphrates, coupled with the region's integration into the communication infrastructure, indicates the extent of securitisation in domestic and foreign policy. The dynamics explored in the Saadabad Pact may give further credence to the hypothesis that, the non-aggression pact served to isolate Turkey's Middle Eastern borders from Kurdish nationalism by contracting Iran and Iraq to exercise coercive control over their Kurdish populations. This gave space for Ankara to concentrate on etatist rebuilding first in west and central Turkey.

A case which revealed the priorities of Turkey's state industrialisation was the Karabük iron and steel plant. First, the industrial know-how for construction was imported. The British firm H.A. Brassert & Co. was contracted to build it in December 1936. Second, while ostensibly it could not be financed through the clearing system, this was circumvented by a special comptoir in London, to facilitate the sale of Turkish minerals for the requisite amount in sterling.¹⁶⁴ Another example of minerals such as copper and chrome supplementing the predominantly agricultural exports in clearing. Third, the scheme was criticised on cost-benefit terms.¹⁶⁵ Karabük is around 100 km inland from its chief supply of coal in coastal Zonguldak. Arnold has shown that foreign missions of industrial feasibility at the time wrote damning reports on the Karabük plant, which drew particular attention to an inadequate labour supply.¹⁶⁶

Arnold outlines two overarching motivations for the state's persistence in pursuing the project. First, that the plan was more than just industrial efficiency. Locating factories in medium sized urban centres had the objective of recruiting and relocating workers over a wider area, to spread the population and industrial base against the consequences of concentrated attack.¹⁶⁷ Second and closely related, was protection from aerial warfare. The Zonguldak coalfields had been bombed during WWI. Therefore, some planning to keep key industry out of aerial bombardment range was warranted.¹⁶⁸ However, in heavy industries, such as iron and steel, defence was deemed more important than profit alone. This fits the logic of the rail transport system, which was geared towards strategic mobilisation ahead of profit efficiency.

¹⁶⁴ FO 371/20866, E 823/823/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 28 January 1937.

¹⁶⁵ Hale, *Political and Economic Development*, 79.

¹⁶⁶ Arnold, 'Etatism', 367.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid*, 365.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid*, 369.

Furthermore, nationalisation of industrial and infrastructural concessions proceeded in similar fashion to the rail network. That is, first by encroaching on the operations of foreign companies variously by legislation inducing employment of Turkish workers, where Turk was interpreted as Muslim, preventions from state tendering, trumped-up fines, and increased administrative costs.¹⁶⁹ Simultaneously importing foreign technical expertise and by sending students abroad for technical instruction.¹⁷⁰ Then, nationalising when there was enough technical capacity for local operation or when concessionary companies resigned themselves to withdraw. In January 1938 *Ulus* triumphantly declared the nationalisations of the Izmir Telephone Company, waterworks in Kadıköy, silver, lead, and zinc mining in Hopa (Rize province), and an antimony mine in Balıkesir.¹⁷¹ This was part of a larger drive to restrict jobs to Turks too. In addition to the above, Law 2007 foreclosed some trades to foreigners, musicians, street vendors, barbers, photographers, and construction workers for example.¹⁷² According to Banu Eligür this targeted Istanbul Greeks, who were Greek nationals not subject to the population exchange and caused about 15,000 people from a community of around 26,000 to leave Turkey.¹⁷³

Despite the unevenness of industrial construction, there was significant growth.

Industrial growth during 1930-39 was 11.6% annually, compared to 8.6% for 1923-

29.¹⁷⁴ Boratav underlines the significance by calculating growth in the 1920s as post-

¹⁶⁹ Emre Öktem, 'The Legal Notion of Nationality in the Turkish Republic: From Ottoman Legacy to Modern Aberrations', *Middle Eastern Studies* 53, no. 4 (2017): 647.

¹⁷⁰ FO 371/16983, E 529/529/44, Clerk, Ankara to FO, 17 January 1933.

¹⁷¹ 'Üsküdar Su Şirketi Artık Bize Geçti', *Ulus*, 20 January 1938, http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/ulus/ulus_1938/ulus_1938_sonkanun_/ulus_1938_sonkanun_20_.pdf.

¹⁷² FO 371/16983, E 529/529/44, Clerk, Ankara to FO, 17 January 1933. Aktar, 'Turkification', 31.

¹⁷³ Eligür, 'Ethnocultural Nationalism', 172.

¹⁷⁴ Boratav, *İktisat Tarihi*, 54.

war recovery instead of real expansion. Moreover, a previously chronic deficit in foreign exchange was converted to a surplus, achieved by the country's own resources despite some foreign credits.¹⁷⁵ This was possible through fiscal discipline to build within means. Despite industrial ambition, credits at high interest and political concession were not contracted. Stung by capitulations, the state managed its priorities to what it could afford. And while the total amount of investment cash generated in this way was probably lower than what Ottoman governments could raise, the positive result for the treasury was a balanced account book and reinvestment of profits locally, thus removing one of the most significant aspects of foreign encroachments on sovereignty.

The focus on building a domestic market for basic consumer goods was another factor in these results. In 1928, the last full year of the Lausanne tariff system, textile, clothing, and sugar accounted for 45% of imports, reduced to 19% by 1939. While imports of metals, machinery, and vehicles showed a comparable increase from 20% to 42.5% over the same period, these had a facilitating effect on domestic consumption, industrial growth, and transit trade, which contributed to the feedback loop of domestically managed growth.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, despite the inefficiency of domestic growth, foreign trade grew 52% over 1929-39, mainly due the reduction in consumer imports.¹⁷⁷

Fostering domestic consumption of the three whites - flour, sugar, and textiles - formed the starting block of industrialisation. Raw materials for industrial production were available, but reliance on the import of finished goods contributed to the export

¹⁷⁵ *ibid*, 56.

¹⁷⁶ Hale, 'Development', 108.

¹⁷⁷ Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy*, 83.

of foreign exchange. After the first industrial plan, domestic production provided 80% of cotton finished goods.¹⁷⁸ A government monopoly was established for sugar in 1930. A law of 1934 exempted the sugar industry from consumption tax. In the same year, the government reduced the price of locally produced sugar by 32%, directly undercutting imports and channelling sales to state-run producers. By 1935, the processed sugar imports of 64,000 tons from 1926 were eliminated.¹⁷⁹

Sugar production feeds into a further example of the state creating a domestic consumer industry with Ottoman origins, in this case tea. Serkan Güneş has traced the commercial origins of tea in Turkey to the Ottoman Ministry of Forestry, Minerals, and Agriculture's report of 1894 commenting favourably on its feasibility. Imported tea was popularly consumed in the 1910s. As the crop was already being grown successfully in Batumi, a 1924 commission passed Law 407 incentivising its production as a cash crop around Rize. The first commercial harvest was yielded in 1938. True to the pattern, a state monopoly in production, processing, and sale followed.¹⁸⁰ It can be surmised that the ubiquity of tea was sown into Turkish culture through etatism. Indeed, wages and prices in most goods began to be controlled in supported industries throughout the 1930s.¹⁸¹

Another practical result of industrialising under the command and control of the state was embedding defensive mobilisation capacity into the system. The British Consulate in Mersin obtained a confidential questionnaire sent to factory owners in Adana in February 1939. Factory owners were summoned to local police stations

¹⁷⁸ *ibid*, 98.

¹⁷⁹ *ibid*, 99.

¹⁸⁰ Serkan Güneş, 'Türk Çay Kültürü ve Ürünleri', *Milli Folklor, International and Quarterly Journal of Cultural Studies* 93 (Spring 2012): 239.

¹⁸¹ Kuş, 'Unruly Capitalists', 367.

and warned to keep the matter to themselves. The questionnaire revealed the concerns of the state in a climate of increasing European tension. Ankara wanted information on the following: name and size of the factory or mill; working capital and number of hands employed; kind, quantity, and weight in tons of machinery and tools capable of removal in case of evacuation; number of foremen and machine operatives necessary to work the material capable of removal and time in days and hours necessary for transportation to the station; number of lorries or horse carts necessary for transport to the station; number of factory owners, engineers, and foremen and their families who would accompany the removed machinery. In addition to the police summons, the questionnaire reiterated the strict secrecy to be observed.¹⁸²

The Mersin consulate suspected similar information was obtained from industrial concerns there too. The questionnaire suggests Ankara did not have such detailed information readily at hand, but also that the number of industrial plants had grown considerably by 1939, necessitating an update to central records. The emphasis on the type of information requested shows at least the germination of a plan to continue industrial production during a potential war, by moving industry out of hostile range through the rail system.

Industrial growth had implications for how the state saw the industrial workforce in relation to its nation-building goals. It is important to note that industrial labour was still a very small proportion of the population in a country where 86% lived in the countryside. Nevertheless, with increased industrialisation, the aims of etatism in

¹⁸² FO 371/23292, E 2361/143/44, Knatchbull-Hugessen, Ankara to FO, 18 March 1939.

relation to the small number was still important. The Republic aimed for a classless society. It did however take early countermeasures to prevent the spread of left-wing ideas amongst students and cadets. Leftist writers, such as Nazım Hikmet, Kerim Said, and Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, received long prison sentences or were exiled from the 1920s. Repression directed more specifically towards industrial workers was introduced later in the 1930s. Ahmad traces this legislation to the Italian penal code articles designed to prevent discussion of class and class struggle.¹⁸³

The Assembly passed Law 3457 in June 1938. Its purpose was to increase the technical capacity of industrial workers by compulsory technical instruction. Plants and factories with more than 100 employees were to run the courses at their own expense, instructing apprentices, masters, and foremen for no more than six hours per week, outside of normal working hours. Enterprises with fewer than 100 workers were to organise joint courses if they fell within a predefined catchment area of two kilometres. Penalties for docked wages and dismissal for repeated non-attendance, in addition to examinations and repeat courses for failure, prompted London to conclude it was “an unpleasantly totalitarian measure”.¹⁸⁴ Further details are indicative of central securitised thinking. In addition to input from the ministries of economy, education, and health the law was under the purview of the Defence Ministry. Courses at factories that supplied the military and railways were to be provided by the ministries of defence and public works, instead of the enterprises themselves.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Ahmad, ‘Class Consciousness’, 94.

¹⁸⁴ ‘Fabrikalar, İşçiler İçin Meslek Kursları Açacak’, *Ulus*, 10 June 1938, http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/ulus/ulus_1938/ulus_1938_haziran_/ulus_1938_haziran_10_.pdf; FO 371/21935, E 4592/4592/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 29 July 1938.

¹⁸⁵ ‘Fabrikalar, İşçiler İçin Meslek Kursları Açacak’.

Given that the state centre attempted to control as much as it could, Birtek's observations help to explain the Republican elite's position on industrial labour. Etatism as the axis of resource flows, aligned to the rationality of the political centre, meant state industries were seen as the conduits of public welfare.¹⁸⁶ They were designed as poles of regional development with the additional purpose of creating a modern, harmonious workforce. Law 3457 then, was the legal instrument to foster ideal productive citizens shorn of interests in class struggle but imbued with the state's nationalism.

This ideal cannot be separated from other policies of population exclusion. The physical exclusion of minorities from the vicinities of infrastructure and removal of foreign nationals, that is indigenous Greeks, from employment, was an attempt to create a Sunni-Muslim Turkish industrial labour force. A labour force that was loyal to the state, employed directly by the state, or was a beneficiary of the corollary social services. The state was trying to balance the costs and benefits on a demographic rather than an industrial level, in a country where in the 1930s half of all salaried and wage workers were on the state payroll.¹⁸⁷ Finally, the technical and managerial cadre of bureaucratic origin was crucial to the growth of the private sector in the 1930s.¹⁸⁸ This white-collar cadre's identification with the nationalising state elite converged with the state's self-identification with the titular core nation. Etatist industrialisation, then, was also an attempt to make a blue-collar worker out of an SMT peasant, devoid of class interests.

¹⁸⁶ Birtek, 'Etatism'.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid*, 417.

¹⁸⁸ Turan, 'Turkish Bureaucracy', 118.

Conclusion

In sum etatism connected to how nationalism operated in the 1930s and cannot be separated from its Ottoman origins. It provided the means of the state's spatialisation over territory by rail infrastructure and helped grow new urban centres through direct state investment in industrial production. The dual construction privileged sections of the SMT population as beneficiaries of the new economic system. This legitimated the state as a provider of livelihoods in tandem with its aim to secure an economic base for the country. Further, expanding the communications network extended the state's mobilising capacity into more of the territory.

The inclusion of the SMT population in etatist benefits was matched by exclusion of minorities. This was in the foreclosure of employment available to non-Muslims and Kurds in etatism and practices that aimed to extract foreign concessions from the economy. It was informed by CUP practices in the social and economic removal of the non-Muslim population from the system, tied dually to capitulatory experience and the earlier wealth transfer in the *gedik* system. The RPP followed earlier CUP policy of broad and deep economic transformation on nationalist lines that went much further than regaining economic sovereignty. Etatism then, was a broad policy choice that institutionalised the wealth transfer from Ottoman minorities to the Republican majority to be nationalised around the state.

More general economic conditions informed state practice in pursuing etatism. The disruptions of the Depression drove autarky in the macroeconomic system, for primary producers like Turkey the loss in revenue was almost catastrophic. The fortuitous timing of the last capitulatory impediment ending in 1929, allowed Ankara room for manoeuvre. Having secured its sovereignty, the state entered into bilateral

trade agreements in the clearing system. This spurred Turkish diplomatic activity as the merchant of the agricultural surplus. Further international contact stimulated Turkish diplomacy beyond trade toward regional mediation and rapprochement with Great Powers in the 1930s. Autarky then, had a facilitating effect on Turkish foreign relations. The dual domestic and foreign dynamic can be read through capitulationphobia, where the state's international and home policies entrenched both its sovereignty in the international system and legitimacy at home by protecting the economic sphere from concessionary encroachment in favour of the titular core.

CHAPTER FIVE - 1930s TURKEY AS A NATIONALISING STATE

Following from Zürcher's periodisation and the existence of the state before the nation in Turkey, I employ Brubaker's conception of the nationalising state for Turkey in the 1930s. Brubaker arrives at the nationalising state by first differentiating between categories of practice and categories of analysis:

Nationalism can and should be understood without invoking 'nations' as substantial entities. Instead of focusing on nations as real groups, we should focus on nationhood and nationness, on 'nation' as practical category, institutionalized form, and contingent event. 'Nation' is a category of practice, not (in the first instance) a category of analysis. To understand nationalism, we have to understand the practical uses of the category 'nation', the ways it can come to structure perception to inform thought and experience, to organize discourse and political action.¹

Turkish nationalism in the 1930s was a category of the state's practice in building and simultaneously nationalising the population of a particular geographic area. This area was bounded in the new Turkish Republic, over which the state exercised political power and legitimacy gained in the previous decade, bolstered by its institutional roots in Ottoman continuity. In a Gellnerian sense, the state aimed to build bureaucratic congruity across the imperfect, but functional, political and national congruity created during the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.

Brubaker uses the term nationalising state:

¹ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 7. Brubaker's emphases.

...rather than the 'nation-state' to emphasize ... a dynamic political stance – or a family of related yet competing stances – rather than a static condition.

Characteristic of this stance, or set of stances, is the tendency to see the state as an unrealized nation-state, as a state destined to become a nation-state, the state of and for a particular nation, but not yet in fact a nation-state (at least not to a sufficient degree); and the concomitant disposition to remedy this perceived defect, to make the state what it is properly and legitimately destined to be, by promoting the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing, or political hegemony of the nominally state-bearing nation.²

This analysis will show that in 1930s the Turkish nation was in a state of formative flux. This flux can be tracked in the repertoire of state practice deployed against differently identified minorities in the national space. State repression of minorities actively privileged the titular core nation that was Sunni-Muslim and Turkish-speaking (SMT). Simultaneously, the state demonstrated a capacity for inaction that was part of the repertoire of nationalising the titular core around itself.

As will be seen below, there are differing analyses of Turkish nationalism that centre the differences in the state's exclusionary practice against its official discourse of civic inclusion. I argue that these differences are related to the nationalising state's effort at giving depth to its hegemony across a wider base, through the titular core of the SMT population, in the 1930s after foreign and domestic legitimacy was established in the 1920s.

² *ibid*, 63. Brubaker's emphasis.

The chapter begins with an exploration of theories of nationalism which move from the general to the specific. That is, from how Turkey, and the state elite's thinking based on 19th century liberal nationalism, connects to the more specific framing posited by Brubaker. The latter framing centres the state's practice and its nationalising of a core population around itself. The examination of Brubaker's theory first, grounds the state's actions in its agency. It shows that the state took active decisions with implications for people's lives in its goals to entrench its claims to sovereignty and legitimacy, thus indicating the primacy of the state in the nation-building process. This is in opposition to deterministic readings of nationalism where agency can be unclear. Moreover, foregrounding an analysis of nationalism which then considers scholarship on Turkish nationalism specifically, interlaces connections between foreign policy, domestic policy, and capitulationphobia.

There is a supplemental description of Gökalp's ideas on the Turkish nation between the general theories and exposition on Brubaker's specific framing. Gökalp, as the ideologue of Turkish nationalism and a CUP member helps to exemplify how state-based thinkers saw their nationalising mission. He embodied the state's priorities in Turkification, Sunnism, and modernising around the titular core.

Turkish nationalism in the 1930s was in a state of formative flux. Fields as varied and interconnected as the economy, security, minority relations, religion, and language policy, amongst others, were at various levels of formation and institutionalisation. Analyses of these themes, on whether Turkish nationalism was civic or territorial, pigeonholes complex historical questions. To reconcile the extant scholarly work on Turkish nationalism in the 1930s, I use the dynamic conception of nationalisms as categories of practice, from Brubaker, alongside Wilder's antinomies to make space

for an empirical treatment of Turkish nationalism in the 1930s.³ These cover the repertoires of the state's practice towards foreign nationals, non-Muslim minorities through the example of Thracian Jews, Muslim-Turkic migrants to Turkey, and the Kurdish population exemplified by Dersim/Tunceli.

In the nationalising flux of the 1930s, Turkey's goals of sovereignty, legitimacy, and security were predominant. These goals were nominally for the interests of all citizens according to the discursive framing of the constitution. In practice however, there were significant exclusions. The exclusions, and inclusions, revealed themselves in the repertoire of state action that reinforced which sections of the population could and could not be nationalised around the state. The SMT population was the favoured titular core. The section on muhacirs fleshes out the dynamic of a territorially extraneous group becoming included as a core constituent of the nationalising state.⁴ They had privileged access to land within the codes of the 1934 Settlement Law and their appropriation of former Ottoman non-Muslim property was legalised after the fact. This was in addition to SMT access to etatist growth examined in the previous chapter.

Case studies on foreign nationals and the 1934 Thrace Pogrom show the contrast in the state's approach compared to the SMT population. Inculcation of a nationalist zeal, through The Turkish History Thesis, *Speak Turkish!* campaigns, discriminatory employment laws, and etatist nationalisation of foreign concessions created a social environment where xenophobia could be openly expressed.⁵ That citizens speaking

³ In short, a contradiction between two beliefs or conclusions that are in themselves reasonable. Wilder, *French Imperial Nation-State*.

⁴ Muhacir, a term for Muslim migrants from former Ottoman territory to Turkey.

⁵The Turkish History Thesis was a pseudohistorical theory that claimed Turkish origins for civilisations. It had political use in exhibiting Turkey as an equal of what it saw to be contemporary advanced

languages other than Turkish could be targeted for xenophobic attack demonstrated one of the blurred lines between foreign nationals and indigenous minorities. This produced a disciplining effect on the population that privileged the outwardly Turkish signs of their identity, simultaneously dampening expressions of difference from the titular core.

A limiting factor in this domestic history was foreign policy. Diplomatic complaints on treatment of foreign nationals or international media reporting on repression in the towns and cities of the better-connected west of the country, prompted strong central state action to end violence. However, this was after local nationalists had made material gains. The state fostered both, an environment where *fait accompli* gains in favour of the titular core could be legitimised and demonstrated its ability to restore order to its foreign policy interlocutors.

The final case study will show that the Kurdish population had no such protection. Isolated from channels of information as well as the Saadabad Pact's effect of atomizing Kurdish communities within nation-states, Ankara's repertoire of action extended to bringing military resources of repressive violence to Dersim/Tunceli. With frontiers secured, the state aimed to domestically cement its control, sovereignty, and legitimacy over the whole of the national territory. Internal consolidation of

civilisations to its nationalising population. It also purported to show Turkish ethnic priority over Anatolia, thereby pre-empting other territorial claims. It was useful for the state as agent of nation-building, not necessarily because they thought the theory was true, but because in their 19th century conception of the nation, it helped to map their established state, administrative vernacular, and military control over a relatively smaller and more homogeneous territorial unit. Furthermore, it fits Anderson's argument that nationalism is bound up with hierarchical organisations and a conception of history indistinguishable from the origin of the nation itself Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (London: Verso, 2016), 36; Çağaptay, 'Race, Assimilation and Kemalism'; Clive Foss, 'Kemal Atatürk: Giving a New Nation a New History', *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 5 (2014): 826–47; Juliette Tolay, 'Rewriting National Narratives through the Study of Past Migrations: Turkey's History of Migrations', *Ethnopolitics* 17, no. 2 (2018): 201–22.

Dersim/Tunceli occurred in conjunction with policies that extended physical state power through infrastructure and a self-proclaimed civilising mission of Turkification around the state. The nationalising state in this case, can also be thought of as the Turkifying state.

From 19th Century Nationalism to Brubaker and the Nationalising State

The CUP cum RPP conceptions of nationalism were embedded in 19th century discourses on the subject. Hobsbawm proposed three qualifying criteria for a nation in the 19th century. The necessity for association with a current state or one with a lengthy and recent past and the existence of a large established cultural elite with a written administrative vernacular.⁶ Turkey satisfied these conditions in transitioning from Empire to Republic. The third qualifier, a proven capacity for conquest as a Darwinian condition of social evolutionary success was satisfied in the wars of 1919-1922.⁷ Furthermore, this classical liberal era of nation-building only applied to some nations.⁸ Ottoman reformist statesmen thought themselves part of this limited Eurocentric group, which became translated in Republican language into *muasır medeniyetler*, or contemporary civilisations.⁹ State action over the territory it

⁶ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 37.

⁷ *ibid*, 38.

⁸ *ibid*, 42.

⁹ This limited Eurocentric group was informed by Eurocentric scientific racism, where the state attempted to define the nation's new identity within frameworks of white/western civilisation. The Turkish race was put forth as belonging to the white European race, which had purportedly sprang from primordial Turkic civilisational spread, according to the Turkish History Thesis. Domestically, the state pursued 'scientific' racism to bolster its civilisational assumptions in the primacy of the SMT population. However, an analysis of racism in the construction of the new nation-state is beyond the scope of this thesis, where the nationalising state approach takes hegemonic construction around the Sunni-Muslim population and linguistic majoritarianism as the central framing. For more on race as constitutive of modern Turkish identity and state practice see, İsmail Beşikçi, *Türk Tarih Tezi, Güneş Dil Teorisi ve Kürt Sorunu* (Stockholm: Dengê Komal, 1986); Nazan Maksudyan, 'The Turkish Review of Anthropology and the Racist Face of Turkish Nationalism', *Cultural Dynamics* 17, no. 3 (2005): 291–322; Bülent Gökay and Lily Hamourtziadou, "Whiter than White": Race and Otherness in Turkish

controlled aimed to erode the industrial economic gap to the Great Powers and social homogenisation, these goals were conceived as mutually reinforcing.

The Turkish state, in seeking to build a nation for itself from Ottoman dissolution perpetuated the millet system, but crucially without the external entanglements this system had with the capitulations. Capitulationphobia had a Gellnerian dimension. As has been seen in chapter four, the CUP/RPP elite had more interest in destroying and rebuilding the socio-economic order, rather than reforming it. The state had seen the self-defence of minority communities conducted by rival, dominant, exploitative, imperialist foreign powers, thus construed all non-Muslim Ottomans as foreign and hostile. This extraction from the capitulatory system helped perpetuate the state's behaviour with an interest in buying off societal discontent in the wider population by dispossession and persecution of minorities.¹⁰ The wealth transfer from Ottoman non-Muslims to Republican SMTs can be seen through this light of privileging, and therefore nationalising, one section of society by the persecution of others.

The state loomed large in Hobsbawm and Anderson's conceptions of nationalism. Hobsbawm stressed that nationalisms needed to be understood from below but conceded they were constructed from above.¹¹ Hobsbawm, Anderson, and Geller attempted to understand nationalism in the context of modernity and in the most generalisable forms possible. According to Hobsbawm, the state was the central piece of the equation, state=nation=society, as far as governments were concerned.¹² In the case of Ottoman to Turkish transition and nation-building in the

and Greek National Identities', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 18, no. 2 (2016): 177–89; Zarakol, *After Defeat*.

¹⁰ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 102.

¹¹ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 10.

¹² *ibid*, 23.

1930s the state was the strongest element. Anderson also saw the state centrism of official nationalisms. They were consciously self-protective, linked to preservation of imperial-dynastic interests, essentially serving the interests of the state first because they emanated from it.¹³ In Turkey the dynastic angle was of course much diminished, since Abdülhamid II's deposition. From the CUP to the RPP in the 1930s, the interests of saving and strengthening the state remained and took on new forms to pursue the goal variously through exclusion, assimilation, and homogenisation.

These themes were articulated at the inception of the Republic by perhaps its most famous ideologue Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924). He based his conception of the nation on collective socialisation in language, religion, and moral and aesthetic outlook.¹⁴ By this reckoning there was no option except to accept anyone who said they were a Turk, if they were sufficiently socialised into the body politic, but those who had betrayed Turkism had to be punished.¹⁵ This both allowed for assimilation and tutelage of Kurds and foreclosed the inclusion of non-Muslims. It was a discursive argument with mono-directional emphasis, becoming Turk in Turkey was paramount and at the expense of other identities. For Gökalp, Greeks and Armenians were unassimilable because of their Christian identity.¹⁶ He was a Diyarbakır native of joint Turkish and Kurdish ancestry and a member of the CUP, his personal position in the transformative state elite from Ottoman to Republican, was not incidental to his

¹³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 13.

¹⁴ Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Easaları*, 22. *Principles of Turkism*, first published in 1923.

¹⁵ *ibid*, 24. There is an implication of retrospective justification for CUP persecution here too.

¹⁶ Aviel Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires: Central Europe, Russia and the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2001), 61.

thinking. Gökalp thought the Turks should be recognised not only as a *millet*, but *the millet* whose identity and interests should be expressed by the state.¹⁷

Gökalp contributed to the coding of Ottoman-Republican non-Muslims as internal aliens. In his description of the social division of labour in the Ottoman Empire he wrote:

*In old Turkey, 'Turks' and 'non-Muslims' lived a common economic life. But their division of labour was not a true one. It was only mutual parasitisation. Because 'Turks' and 'non-Turk' elements did not share common conscience.*¹⁸

This was the common conscience that came from collective socialisation in Turkishness. As can be seen, he gave non-Muslim and non-Turk as interchangeable categories in opposition to the positive category of Turk which implied Islam. Gökalp labelled non-Muslims as communities which could not partake in Turkism, and by extension the Turkish nation.

Moreover, Gökalp articulated the state's aspirations in foreign policy. He worked to incorporate the state's self-conception as part of the limited Eurocentric system of largely similar nation-states, for whom it was natural to claim territorial sovereignty and equality in the prevailing international association:

Since western civilisation supplanted eastern civilisation everywhere, it was necessary that this should be so in Turkey too. Ottoman civilisation will necessarily be replaced by Turkish culture, Muslim religion, and western civilisation. The mission of Turkism is to find and raise Turkish culture hidden in the people and

¹⁷ *ibid*, 60. My emphasis. Turkish words for nation and nationalism, *millet* and *milliyetçilik*, likely followed from this reduction of confessional categories to a unitary national one.

¹⁸ Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Easaları*, 88. My emphasis.

*inject western civilisation into the national culture ... Turkists are those who seek to join western civilisation on the condition of remaining completely Turk and Muslim.*¹⁹

This conception foreshadowed Turkey's diplomatic intercourse in the early Republican period and pointed to the intention to develop an internal cultural hegemony that was both protected from potential encroachments from contemporary civilisations, as he conceived it, and to join them. It has links to how Turkey embedded itself into the doubled character of the national form.

Finally, there was significant overlap in his emphasis on Turkish language, Sunni-Islam, and a contemporary civilisations outlook which dovetails with my argument that the state identified the SMT population to be nationalised around itself. As Türkay Salim Nefes argues, Gökalp's project to create cultural unity was rooted in Turkish Sunni-Islam, a construct that excluded non-Muslim and non-Sunni minorities.²⁰ In sum, Gökalp contributed to the discursive framing around which the state's nationalist practice can be identified. He influenced the nationalist zeal and the social environment that favoured the SMT population by state sponsored idealising of the titular core's language and religion, in addition to the state's aspirations in civilisationally understood foreign policy.

Nevertheless, modernist theories and nationalising ideologues can be supplemented with theories which give primacy to the state's practices as social processes.

Brubaker's critique, central to this study is as follows:

¹⁹ *ibid*, 44–45.

²⁰ Türkay Salim Nefes, 'The Sociological Foundations of Turkish Nationalism', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 20, no. 1 (2018): 15–30.

The problem with this substantialist treatment of nations as real entities is that it adopts 'categories of practice' as 'categories of analysis'. It takes a conception inherent in the practice of nationalism and the workings of the modern state-system – namely the realist, reifying conception of nations as real communities – and makes this conception central to the 'theory' of nationalism. Reification is a social process, not only an intellectual practice. As such, it is central to the phenomenon of nationalism.²¹

In other words, Brubaker's is a critique of approaching nationalisms as if nation-states are the necessary destination, a critique of determinism where the nation-state emerges as the necessary conclusion of the theory. In the Turkish case, the reinforced and reified social processes were to a large extent dictated by the state in the 1930s. The material advancement of the SMT at the expense of other groups fed into the social process of the SMT as the legitimate receiver of state benevolence.

Here then, my previous emphasis on the state's modern practices, in rail for example, are informed by Brubaker's separation of analysis and practice. The state did practice modernity to centralise mechanisms of economic growth and territorial control around itself. Reification of the nation occurred because of political decisions, a social process, that favoured the SMT as the core constituent to uphold the state. These did not happen because the nation already existed onto which the state mapped itself with further control and infrastructure. They also did not occur because centralisation was a necessary result of an expanding rail system. Fundamentally,

²¹ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 15. Brubaker's emphases. Substantialist approaches, in Brubaker's framing, are those which posit that nations are shaped by forces of industrialisation, uneven development, growth of communications networks, and homogenising forces of the nation-state; as well as those espousing the importance of shared characteristics such as language and religion. These include modernists and constructivists.

Ankara had agency. More specifically, as the case studies below will show, state action or inaction towards foreign nationals, in Thrace in summer 1934, on muhacirs, and in Dersim/Tunceli were all socio-political processes that emphasised the inclusion and exclusion of groups as constitutive of the nation or not, based on demographic categories inherited from the Ottoman Empire and sharpened in the Republic. These were social processes, not inevitabilities, that treating the nation solely as a category of analysis might suggest.

Brubaker does not deny the reality of nationhood. Rather, he focuses on nationness as a conceptual variable. He suggests examining the nation as an institutionalised form, practical category, and contingent event. Two of the questions he posits with consequence for this study are: "How is nationhood as a political and cultural form institutionalised within [and among] states? And, what makes the nation-evoking, nation-invoking efforts of political entrepreneurs more or less likely to succeed?"²²

The short answers to these in the Turkish case of the 1930s are first, the Ottoman system bequeathed a set of sufficiently strong scaffolding institutions which could be used to exert legitimacy over the remaining geography of the Empire after 1918, which was concurrently recognisable to the international nation-state community. Second, the political-military entrepreneurs of the Turkish Republic efficaciously identified the polity available within the political boundaries they controlled from which to mould a nation for the state. Crucially, the political community was sufficiently aligned with their own demographic profile. In short, contingent events, variegated

²² *ibid*, 16.

factors, and their transformative effects contributed to nationalism as practice and the Turkish Republic as a nationalising state.

For Brubaker, understanding nationalism as normative nation-state seeking behaviour in pursuit of self-determination grounds nationalism in a social ontology that sees nations as real entities which seek independent nationhood, hence a nation-based state seeking activity. He posits this as a problem that does not find resolution. For if it was true, these self-limiting nationalisms, would be expected to end national conflicts once nationalist demands over a political space were fulfilled. Since nationalist demands for statehood do not end nationalist programmes, nationalism as state seeking is insufficient.²³ This can be seen in the Turkish case where a nation-state seeking nationalism succeeded in 1923, to then continue nationalising policies throughout the 1920-30s and beyond.

Instead, he conceives of an impossibility theorem in nationalisms. A situation of chronic contestation, in which national conflicts are necessarily irresolvable.²⁴ It usually manifests as a defensive populist nationalism which seeks to simultaneously create and protect the national economy, language, and cultural patrimony against alleged threats from the outside.²⁵ In Turkey, the chronic contestation highlighted the *foreignness* of some groups and *assimilability* of others during nation-building.²⁶

²³ Rogers Brubaker, 'Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism', in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 276.

²⁴ *ibid*, 280.

²⁵ *ibid*, 277.

²⁶ See for example, Olivier Bouquet, 'Non-Muslim Citizens as Foreigners Within: How Ecnebi Became Yabancı from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic', *Middle Eastern Studies* 53, no. 3 (2017): 486–99; Ioannis Grigoriadis, 'Between Citizenship and the Millet: The Greek Minority in Republican Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies* 57, no. 5 (2021): 741–57; Feryal Tansuğ, 'Native Foreigners' of Turkey: The Non-Muslim Minority as an Instantiation of Homo Sacer', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 23, no. 4 (2021): 643–66; Şule Toktaş, 'The Conduct of Citizenship in the Case of

Capitulationphobia shaped the inclusion-othering dynamic and contributed to the securitised understanding of the new nation-state. Securitisation was both externally oriented to gain and solidify a place in the international community of nation-states and isolating the domestic sphere from the erstwhile encroachment of foreign powers. In this sense then, the impossibility theory has implications for foreign and domestic spheres.

Brubaker suggests avoiding the constricting definitional oppositions between civic, ethnic, ethnocultural, and other framings of nationalisms since when nationalisms are state framed, they are often imbued with cultural content which can be ethnicised.²⁷ Therefore, the arguments in the literature over whether Turkish nationalism was civic, ethnic, religious, linguistic, or some combination results from treating the nation as category of analysis instead of practice.²⁸ Practices are complex and subject to flux, each of the conceptions have a measure of empirically verifiable validity which are not automatically exclusive of the others. The relative weight, of whether Turkish nationalism was this or that type, is less part of the consideration of Turkish nationalism in the 1930s here, but of how it operated in the context of its contingent factors.

The term nationalising state serves to stress the importance of dynamic processes over static conditions. It further connotes the impossibility of the nationalist project

Turkey's Jewish Minority: Legal Status, Identity, and Civic Virtue Aspects', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 26, no. 1 (2006): 121–33.

²⁷ Brubaker, 'Myths and Misconceptions', 301.

²⁸ I am not suggesting all these authors treat the nation as category and not practice, though there is often a discursive framing which posits one type of nationalism as superior to others in explanation. Aktar, 'Turkification'; Ali Kemal Özcan, 'Nationalism: Distilling the Cultural and the Political', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 11, no. 2 (2005): 163–93; Çağaptay, 'Race, Assimilation and Kemalism'; Benjamin Fortna et al., eds., *State Nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey: Orthodox and Muslims, 1830-1945* (London: Routledge, 2013); Öktem, 'Nationality'; Nefes, 'Sociological Foundations'; Özdoğan, 'Statist Patriotism'; İrem, 'Conservative Modernism'.

having a terminus. The nationalising state, as its central characteristic, views the state as an unrealised nation-state of and for a particular nation, though not yet a nation-state to a satisfactory degree. It is further disposed to cure the defects on the road to make the state what it is legitimately destined to become through promoting the language, culture, demographic position, economic welfare, and political hegemony of the state bearing core nation.²⁹ The dynamic conception of the nationalising state has space to accommodate the formative flux of early Republican Turkey. The completed condition of 1923 was different, demographically and politically, to name two, from the Turkey of 1939. This gives weight to Brubaker's notion of a nationalising state conceived by its elites as an unfinished state as opposed to the nation-state as a completed form.³⁰

Goswami takes the dynamic nature of nationalisms and nationalising states to the foreign policy sphere by describing the doubled (universal-particular) character of the national form. This is where the particularistic claim of the nationalising state can only be comprehensible against an international order of formally similar nations and nation-states.³¹ This is a domestic concern in how the state claims to represent the universal interests of a territorialised citizenry and international because it is bound in an inter-state system. The post-Ottoman Republican elite had emerged from these systems, they had internalised the order of international nation-states but had previously been relatively powerless to prevent the external (universal) imposing itself on the domestic (particular). In saving and strengthening the state, the maintenance of the doubled character of the national form was paramount. Positivist

²⁹ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 63.

³⁰ *ibid*, 63.

³¹ Goswami, 'Rethinking the Modular Nation', 785.

education, Westernising reform, eradication of autochthonous minorities provided space for Turkish nationalism to grow under the scaffold and patrimony of the Republic.

As such, the nationalist and nationalising flux of the Turkish Republican experience of the 1930s should be seen as dynamic, not static with precise end goals. Two general level goals although identifiable, preservation and strengthening of the state, do not detract from the variability in the practice of how the twin goals were pursued. Hence the term nationalising state is applicable to the processes of early Republican Turkish nationalism. There were and are arguments over the types of nationalism in Turkey precisely because the early Republic was a site of contestation over what the new Turkish state was to be. Particularised arguments over competing nationalisms in the literature may have some origin in treating the nation as a category of analysis rather than practice. Nevertheless, there are avenues for reconciling the scholarship.

Competing Nationalisms vs. Formative Flux

One of the arguments for Turkey's competing nationalisms is that it was paradoxical. Ekmekçiöglü makes an explicit and forceful argument for the paradox:

Given how much the terms of this [assimability] paradox borrowed from the Ottoman past but belonged to the world of a nation-state that endorsed laïcité, I refer to the state-minority relationship in the early Turkish Republic as 'secular dhimmitude'. Secular dhimmitude captures the intricacies of non-Muslims' assimilability paradox because it is an oxymoron that self-consciously places an Islamic legal category, dhimmi, in the framework of a secular, majority Muslim

*state. Moreover, the term enables us to conceive of the relationship in contractual and bidirectional terms. ‘Secular’ was the project of the state and ‘dhimmi’ referred to minorities.*³²

Ekmekçioğlu demonstrates the simultaneous estrangement and inclusion of non-Muslim communities from the national community, analysing axes of inclusion and exclusion to describe them as step-citizens.³³ This line of thinking can be traced in other work, such as that of Olivier Bouquet, Soner Çağaptay, Banu Eligür, Emre Öktem and Şule Toktaş, though they do not explicitly use the term paradox.³⁴ This body of work generally assumes a human and minority rights mode of thinking; it draws on the discrepancies of an inclusionary civic conception of the nation and nationality professed by the state, against the ethnic, linguistic, and religious policies of exclusion.

A further underlying assumption with this work is that the state should have valued individual or collective rights. The primary and secondary literature instead suggests that the state valued its own advancement as an end in itself, with the SMT as an instrumentalised population which would gain by identifying itself with the state. The population was not seen as a citizenry, but as a collection of subjects to be moulded into a citizenry at some indeterminate point in the future, citizenship was secondary to the state’s sovereignty, in other words deferred.³⁵ The privilege enjoyed by the Turkish section, compared to minorities, was by its virtue of being aligned with the

³² Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 108, Ekmekçioğlu’s emphases.

³³ Ekmekçioğlu, ‘Republic of Paradox’.

³⁴ Bouquet, ‘Non-Muslim Citizens as Foreigners Within’; Çağaptay, ‘Race, Assimilation and Kemalism’; Eligür, ‘Ethnocultural Nationalism’; Öktem, ‘Nationality’; Toktaş, ‘Turkey’s Jewish Minority’.

³⁵ My thanks to Simon Jackson for the phrasing.

state elite. This is not to trivialise the real problems and oppressions non-SMTs experienced, but to expand the base of explanation to include the state, as a historical phenomenon with little regard to the individual.

In this vein, Goalwin's approach may contribute to a wider understanding of nation formation taken in conjunction with the authors above. He rejects the paradox, seeing instead the civic-ethnic divide in terms of a boundary making process to forge a cohesive nationalist community, a process of national mixing.³⁶ Thus, the exclusionary politics and inclusionary rhetoric represents multiple aspects of the project of crafting a cohesive national community with strong boundaries and a powerful sense of political loyalty to the nation, by any means necessary.³⁷ The strength of Goalwin's argument is its generalisability. It also ties together both, the RPP elite's preoccupation with their impersonal, paternalistic, state-bound conception of the nation and the population, to where they drew the boundaries of this inclusion in terms of national security.

Another angle on the line of security is from Ahmet İçduygu and Özlem Kaygusuz, who draw parallels between citizenship construction and foreign policy.³⁸ They bind the politics of citizenship, nation-building, and foreign policy practices, to suggest the latter as an identity generating activity for domestic solidification. This occurs on three levels. First, official foreign policy draws the boundaries of the community inside. Then, a concept of national security is built to domesticate a particular identity to be secured. This framing at once encloses, claims, and builds a hegemonic

³⁶ Goalwin, 'Ethnic Boundary Making'.

³⁷ *ibid*, 1164.

³⁸ Ahmet İçduygu and Özlem Kaygusuz, 'The Politics of Citizenship by Drawing Borders: Foreign Policy and the Construction of National Citizenship Identity in Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 6 (2004): 26–50.

cultural identity through the available resources of ethnicity, religion, and language. The final level is as an ethical-political closure, where hegemonic integration continuously reproduces the desired political disposition, a body of institutions and a system of values, which foreign policy actions continuously reinforce.³⁹

This is similar to what Hintz describes as the Republican nationalist proposal for identity hegemony in the 1920s and 1930s.⁴⁰ Supporters of the proposal see the benefits of the identity proposal in terms of ontological security and have consequent and necessary interests in having their understanding of identity accepted as right, this can be achieved through dominating institutions such as education and media.⁴¹ Advocates of the Republican nationalist proposal wielded the capacity to enforce social and political rules within the state, behaviour of the state, foreign policy preferences, and lifestyles of citizens.⁴² This was the case to a significant extent in the cities, though much less so in the countryside. Differences in discourse and practice of the state in the 1930s were related to the effort of the hegemonic proposal of the nationalising state being spread across a wider base in the 1930s after foreign and domestic legitimacy was established in the 1920s.

İçduygu and Kaygusuz's work show how effective foreign policy gives states room for manoeuvre domestically. An example of this practice is Turkish relations with the League of Nations. By drawing borders and having them accepted, non-interference in internal affairs was secured as a matter of international practice. As the external space was managed effectively, there was internal space for isolation from

³⁹ İçduygu and Kaygusuz, 29.

⁴⁰ Hintz, *Identity Inside Out*.

⁴¹ *ibid*, 5.

⁴² *ibid*, 19.

international norms, which removed some inhibitions to persecutory state action against citizen or subject. Turkey benefited from the variable adherence to nominally normative international behaviours in respect of life, liberty, and property on the nation-state level by being able to persecute the non-Muslim minorities supposedly protected by international treaty. Ankara benefited externally from the League of Nations Minority Commission's tendency not to cause trouble on the nation-state level.⁴³ Similar boundary and identity drawing processes can be found in relation to the Kurds in the Saadabad Pact and the Jewish population of Thrace soon after the signature of the Balkan Entente. Moreover, as Laura Robson argues:

*The [post-WWI] minorities treaties enshrined two well-established imperial principles: that ethnicity and religion were potentially relevant to citizenship and should be institutionally defined with a view to state stability, and that minority communities represented a legitimate site of external intervention into the affairs of theoretically sovereign but less civilized nations.*⁴⁴

It was Ankara's success in resisting these Great Power principles of external intervention, while embedding itself into the League system that characterised Turkish policy in the 1930s. This gave the state a free hand in attempts to mould the domestic space as it saw fit. For the state, capitulationphobia justified both internal repression and external compromise diplomacy.

⁴³ Brendan Karch, 'A Jewish "Nature Preserve": League of Nations Minority Protections in Nazi Upper Silesia, 1933-1937', *Central European History* 46, no. 1 (2013): 124–60; Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş, 'Embedded Turkification: Nation Building and Violence within the Framework of the League of Nations 1919–1937', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 52 (2020): 229–44.

⁴⁴ Laura Robson, *States of Separation: Transfer, Partition, and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 29.

Yet, differing analyses need not be mutually exclusive. Wilder's antinomies can be instructive at this juncture.⁴⁵ Wilder sees the tension between coexisting policies to modernise (Turk) and primitivise (Kurd) populations not necessarily as state ambivalence or failure but as a potentially structural feature of modernity, marginalisation of non-Muslim minorities can be added.⁴⁶ As an alternative he presents antinomy; a contradiction between two propositions each of which are obtained by sound reasoning, are logical, valid, neither more real than the other, nor the cause of the other.⁴⁷ An antimony can exist on the centre-periphery axis, it can also be expressed in discourse as well as practice.⁴⁸ Such as the contradiction between the bounded universal territorial nationality of the Turkish population presented in discourse, and the social exclusion exercised in practice. The logic and tools of the nationalising state – rational administration, social scientific knowledge, assimilation – particularised sections of the population and informed knowledge production in service of nationalising the people and territory.⁴⁹ True, in the Turkish case the particularisation of non-Muslim minorities had occurred before 1923, but corporate identities were further eroded during the Republic.⁵⁰ Similarly, Kurds

⁴⁵ Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). Wilder's analysis emerges from French Imperial Nation-State and European colonialism, there are nevertheless important connections with the Turkish case. Additionally, there are connections between Wilder and Goswami on the doubled character of the national form not only between external and internal spheres but also on the objective-subjective axis of the state's action towards its minorities, see Manu Goswami, 'Rethinking the Modular Nation Form: Toward a Sociohistorical Conception of Nationalism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44, no. 4 (2002): 775.

⁴⁶ Wilder, *French Imperial Nation-State*, 10.

⁴⁷ *ibid*, 10.

⁴⁸ *ibid*, 4.

⁴⁹ *ibid*, 18.

⁵⁰ Açıkgöz and Keskinılıç, 'Mazhars'.

became subject to particularisation after the Ankara government secured its hold and legitimacy in the 1920s.⁵¹

Wilder helps to reconcile the apparent incompatibility between Ekmekçioğlu's paradox and Goalwin's boundary making. They are both parts of an antinomic equation attempting to explain nationalism in Turkey, which are arrived at by sound reasoning, are logical, and valid. They are bound further by Brubaker's impossibility theorem since it is not clear that demands for this or that national community can be entirely satisfied, either in a subnational corporate identity sense nor for the nationalising state. This is to argue that both Ekmekçioğlu and Goalwin are correct and can be reconciled with Brubaker. That is, in the formative flux of the Turkish nationalizing state, the goal of perpetuating and strengthening the state took varied forms of practice which cannot be reduced to single explanations such as civic, linguistic, religious, or ethnic nationalisms.

It might not be unusual for anomalies in terminology to occur in the space between the discourse and practice of a state, when the nation is treated as the object of analysis. Theories of nationalism that analyse a finished object of study, a nation-state for example, might not be able to cope with the anomaly of paradoxical republics or secular dhimmis. Leaving determinism behind and treating nationalism as a set of dynamic practices, with indeterminate end points, leaves space for anomalies, such as Ekmekçioğlu has found, to come to the fore. These are anomalies which arise from treating nationalism as categories of analysis, they take the establishment of nations as given and their discourse as self-evident. Nationalism

⁵¹ Barış Ünlü, 'Türklük Sözleşmesi'nin İmzalanışı (1915-1925)', *Mülkiye Dergisi* 38, no. 3 (2014): 47–81.

as a category of practice, in the case of the nationalising state, on the other hand, rejects the self-evident end point of the nation-state as is. It seeks to flesh out the processes by which the state's practice framed the types of nationalism they carried out.

The antinomic equation also points to the redundancy of *a priori* ascribing either domestic or foreign policy primacy to the analysis of nationalism. For instance, İçduygu and Kaygusuz base their analysis of foreign practice on domestic needs, whereas Hintz's argument follows from how domestic identity contestation manifests in foreign policy. While these are not necessarily oppositional on a foreign-domestic axis, the analysis is internally based in the former and externally based in the latter. External borders were relatively easier to police once drawn, at least in the sense that they conformed to the limited universality of the contemporary international system. Internal societal borders were more difficult. The state centred bureaucratic logic however, buttressed by nationalising zeal, thought building an internal universality through separation and assimilation was possible. In this sense jealous guarding of internal policy, coupled to the external experience of Ottoman disintegration, revealed the interrelated functions of domestic and foreign policy of the Turkish Republic.

The reconciliation offered by Wilder's antinomy is useful in allowing the development of historically specific structural analyses of political forms without the fear of a lack of generalisability which can hinder researchers.⁵² In this case, the specific analysis of Turkish nationalism can incorporate capitulationphobia, without being bound by

⁵² Wilder, *French Imperial Nation-State*, 301.

conceptual purity in political theory or bland but precise narratives from documentation.⁵³

In sum then, there were antinomies in the nationalist practice of the Turkish Republic, with continuing implications. However, the nationalism itself might not be consciously paradoxical, since it was a search for boundaries of normative international behaviour and its domestic operations derived from the late Ottoman experience and nation-building. As a historical phenomenon, the formation of the nation was subject to flux. This flux was a function of competing centrifugal forces and a centre attempting to impose order on an inherited model of imperial dominance. The state elite, in its conception of the state, and the nation to be built around it, could not tolerate any alternative avenue of identification to itself, nor the inhibition of the double goals of saving and strengthening itself.

Change from the Ottoman system to the Republican was predicated on the socio-economic base that was available. The root and branch change envisioned by the modernising elite largely failed in the countryside, principally because it lacked ideological depth and economic resources.⁵⁴ Realising that complete secularisation was not possible, the state opted to monopolise religious authority to create a positivist and prostrate Islam.⁵⁵ However, under circumstances of scarce resources and village habitation of over 80% of the population, the state tried to preserve village communities as sources of political stability.⁵⁶ In other words, traditional modes of life heavily influenced by religion, were a significant stabilising anchor of the Republic.

⁵³ *ibid*, 302.

⁵⁴ Tuna, 'Missing Revolution'.

⁵⁵ *ibid*, 32; See also, Pierre-Jean Luizard, *İslâm Topraklarında Otoriter Rejimler*, trans. Egemen Demircioğlu (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2013).

⁵⁶ Tuna, 'Missing Revolution', 36.

This majority Sunni-Muslim community limited the inclusionary practice of the state while the discursive rhetoric of citizenship-based inclusion served the state's professed aspirations abroad.

This idea can be generalised through Goswami's modular nationalisms. The modern vision of Turkey brought separate but related fields of economics, politics, and culture together under a process of territorialisation. Ankara thought it natural that the separate threads of the country's resources should be brought together, spatially bounded in the particulars of nation-state structures. According to Goswami, this is a social process rooted and reinforced by the practices of a modern nation-state.⁵⁷ The state elite was a very small section of the society with disproportionate powers to influence further change but hampered by a lack of precision tools and resources. The haphazardness as well as the repertoires of action in Turkish nationalism can be traced empirically in how the state interacted with foreign nationals, non-Muslim minorities, Muslim migrants, and Kurds.

Foreign Nationals in the Nationalising State

Foreign interests and individuals were largely treated with suspicion if their activities were not directly in the interests of the state. Institutions that pre-dated the Republic came under increased pressure inducing them to close or scale back operations. Individuals were harassed by a generation imbibing the nationalist creed supplemented by capitulationphobia. The practice was variable, nonetheless the direction towards an overall nationalisation around Turkification of most, if not all,

⁵⁷ Goswami, 'Rethinking the Modular Nation', 794.

aspects of life can be detected. The conduct of the state and its nationally confident population was jarring for foreign officials at times, who had been more used to interacting with a previously cosmopolitan population.

Evidence of the nationalising state asserting itself domestically around the SMT core can be seen throughout the 1930s. British Ambassador Clerk, in his final annual report on Turkey covering 1932, noted that, "Wherever one looks, there is evidence of determination of the government to build up a Turkey managed exclusively by Muslim Turks".⁵⁸ His report touched on the financial straits American, French, and Italian schools faced in remaining open in the face of the prohibition on Turkish children being educated in foreign schools, as well as the pressures exerted on foreign owned companies.⁵⁹

In the following year's report Morgan observed that the chauvinistic attitude of Turkish officials towards foreign nationals had not improved since 1923. He did, however, presciently note that, "The reaction, which was an inevitable consequence of the abolition of the capitulatory regime, shows every sign of being as lasting as it is drastic".⁶⁰ He further noted a lack of uniformity in the treatment of foreign nationals; in essence those of European powers were treated worse than those of the Americas, whose economic and trade interests were not seen through a capitulationphobic lens. Morgan thought the history of the capitulations central to the issue of how foreigners were treated in Turkey: "The whole crux of the question lies there, and it is deeply rooted".⁶¹ There was a pragmatic appreciation elsewhere in the documentary record

⁵⁸ FO 371/16983, E 529/529/44, Clerk, Ankara to FO, 17 January 1933.

⁵⁹ For a more specific case of Greek education in the Republican period see, Sarioglou, *Greek Education*.

⁶⁰ FO 371/17959, E 596/596/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 20 January 1934.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

of the nationalist government's aim to take control of its resources, though Morgan's cause and effect connection is rare, much less so was his prognosis.

Differential treatment could be based on national origin converging with philanthropic and religious activity. Two separate examples occurred in 1933. Some women of German and United States nationality were told to leave the country after it was discovered there had been some conversions to Christianity in the Maraş area.⁶² The women from the USA remained in Turkey because they, according to the document, did not have an overt religious interest. Whereas the Germans were induced to leave for Syria because they were members of an explicitly missionary society which had converted Muslims; thus, they were doubly unwanted by virtue of their activity and origin. In September a British national W. Clark-Kerr, chaplain to the Evangelical Union Church of Pera, was detained on the Thracian border for having the book *With Lawrence of Arabia* in his possession. The matter was later dropped but indicated to consular officials an exaggerated suspicion on the part of the Turks.⁶³ In this case a convergence of religious function, perceived sympathy for Arab nationalism, and a British passport drew the state's ire.

The situation could be exacerbated by international tensions as occurred during the summer of 1934. Mussolini had made his *Asia and Africa* speech and the Sanjak question had flared with France. Additionally, the '*Citizen, Speak Turkish!*', campaign to encourage linguistic assimilation was ongoing. British subjects in Izmir were threatened and beaten for speaking a foreign language in public; the Italian consulate

⁶² FO 371/16986, E 4960/1506/44, Clerk, Istanbul to FO, 15 August 1933.

⁶³ FO 371/16986, E 559/1506/44, Clerk, Ankara to FO, 12 September 1933.

complained to the governor of the same issue.⁶⁴ Loraine reported similar incidents in Mersin against British, Italian, and French nationals; as well as attacks on Turkish citizens speaking languages other than Turkish, including Kurds, Cretans, Jews, and Arabs.⁶⁵ It appeared in most cases that local policing turned a blind eye to the perpetrators until prompted by central authority, which was in turn prompted by diplomatic complaints. National and linguistic lines were blurred which contributed to the perception of non-Turkish-speaking citizens as foreigners. And foreign was necessarily construed as potentially dangerous for the state and therefore the country.

As has been seen in the chapters on foreign policy, Turkish interaction with foreign nationals in diplomacy was regular. However, domestically, there was a prevailing attitude that foreign interest, however big or small, was aligned with one Great Power or another. By extension this meant a potential for undermining Turkish nationalism for foreign gain. The state tended to see anything foreign as serving on some level either a foreign state or working with pernicious intent against the Turkish state. There was little room for a perception of neutrality, precisely because it may not have had the furtherance of the previously maltreated core-nation as its aim. In other words, any good for Turkey, ontologically could not derive from what the state did not control or did not emanate from SMT interests.

The normal diplomatic contact Turkish officials had with their foreign counterparts was no contradiction to this attitude. Precisely because routine diplomatic contact

⁶⁴ FO 371/17969, E 4844/4844/44, Consul General Greig, Izmir to Istanbul, 19 July 1934. The Consul General would complain of a similar incident in 1937, though this time the authorities were reported to be entirely courteous; see, FO 371/20864, E 1597/466/44, Consul General Greig, Izmir to FO, 12 March 1937. For an account of the incidents in Izmir see, Lamprou, 'Nationalist Mobilization'.

⁶⁵ FO 371/17958, E 4912/256/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 21 July 1934.

was in the foreign policy sphere and not the domestic. Furthermore, diplomatic contact was much more proximal to centres of institutional and bureaucratic power. The diffusion of foreign nationals on a much more horizontal plane across the country, despite their small numbers, and thus beyond close central oversight, was more dangerous for Ankara. It was a xenophobia that operated inside the territory.

Some thought the prevailing xenophobia was attributable to the General Staff and the need for military secrecy in general. The British Military Attaché thought the efforts to conceal military deficiencies worthy of sympathy.⁶⁶ The state suffered from a chronic lack of resources of all kinds including policing and surveillance. In the context of the creation flux of the nationalising state, it made sense for officials, high and low, to be wary of foreign nationals. A conversation on aviation between Aras and Loraine in August 1935 indicated the caution. Aras did not contradict Loraine's observation that air travel was not well patronised and could be better developed if military and civil aviation were pursued in tandem, but the General Staff's sensitivity on the subject prohibited its further pursuance. Loraine advised the Foreign Office against requesting further access to facilities on Turkish soil for Imperial Airways.⁶⁷ This spoke to both the state's inability to provide adequate resources for all types of development simultaneously and its refusal to countenance foreign interests in building something in which knowhow could not be domestically generated or controlled.

The British record gives some justification for Turkish circumspection of foreign nationals. An Indian tourist's conversation with consular officials in Trabzon from

⁶⁶ FO 371/16986, E 7374/1506/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 20 November 1933.

⁶⁷ FO 1011/177, Loraine, Istanbul to FO, 29 August 1935.

1934 reads much more like an intelligence report than a travelogue. The informant (the word used in the document) had travelled west and north to Trabzon from the Iranian border over the course of four weeks, observing that; troop movements were quiet, an aerodrome had been built within the strengthened defences of Erzurum, and that the river waters had been raised should the need arise for flooding the airfield in an emergency.⁶⁸ Notwithstanding whatever else may have been innocently discussed, the state's caution towards foreigners with connections to European powers within its territory was inseparable from the nationalising state through capitulationphobia.

In the reports presented in this section there are similar but seemingly contradictory accounts suggesting differing levels of official courtesy for foreign nationals against societal xenophobia. Throughout accounts of Turkish nationalist excess there is blame ascribed to excitable students, overzealous local officials, ardent junior officers, and the like. Alexandros Lamprou suggests a situation of organisational dysfunction before 1935, when the RPP and its local branches were reorganised. A condition where party duties collided with those of the state, produced an undefined common area of action which could be taken further by local agency than the state had intended.⁶⁹ I would argue, supplementally, that the state, having created the conditions for the supremacy of its chosen core constituent, left spaces for action from which it could exercise plausible deniability then reap the rewards of decisive action. It was a flexibility of approach which served domestic goals of core-nation dominance and foreign policy goals of effectively responding to diplomatic demands

⁶⁸ FO 371/17958, E 7430/256/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 1 December 1934.

⁶⁹ Lamprou, 'Nationalist Mobilization', 833.

for action. These were cases of *faits accomplis* which initially consumed fewer state resources to achieve, but once achieved took lesser still to consolidate. As such, the state's action and attitude towards foreign nationals was part of the operation of the nationalising state. This will be seen more clearly in the next section on Thrace and the pogrom of 1934.

Security, Centralisation, Foreign Policy, and the Jewish Minority: The Thrace Pogrom of 1934⁷⁰

The Thrace Pogrom of June-July started as a series of boycotts in Çanakkale on 21 June 1934 and spread, after a brief hiatus, to other cities and towns in Turkish Thrace before being stopped by decisive state action on 5 July. It resulted in increased demographic and economic homogenisation of Thrace around the Turkish core. Estimates of the Jewish exodus out of Thrace varied significantly. However, the academic consensus is stable around 5,000 to 7,000 people fleeing the pogrom, based on Loraine's reports, out of a total of around 13,000.⁷¹ The pogrom contributed to an overall decline in the Jewish population of Turkey, by 2.6% between the censuses of 1927 and 1935.⁷² During the same period, the percentage of people

⁷⁰ I use the term pogrom because despite disagreement in the literature on whether the motivations were antisemitic, the victims of rioting, boycott, looting, and violence were Jewish.

⁷¹ FO 371/17969, E 4633/4633/44, Loraine, Istanbul to FO, 7 July 1934; FO 371/17969, E 4905/4633/44, Loraine, Istanbul to FO, 22 July 1934; FO 371/17969, E 4916/4633/44, Loraine, Istanbul to FO, 22 July 1934; Banu Eligür, 'The 1934 Anti-Jewish Thrace Riots: The Jewish Exodus of Thrace through the Lens of Nationalism and Collective Violence', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 1 (2017): 91.

⁷² Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism*, 140.

declaring their mother tongue as Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) declined from 84% to 54%.⁷³

The situation of Turkey's Jewish minority in Thrace is a striking case study of the various factors which contributed to the operation of the nationalising state in the early Republic.⁷⁴ Once more there is no single explanation but a convergence of factors both foreign and domestic. The literature is diverse. Çağaptay and Lamprou put primacy on assimilation policies, though they differ on how far it was motivated by antisemitism.⁷⁵ Hatice Bayraktar sees strong state culpability in the riots based on her analysis from an external security angle.⁷⁶ Eligür argues on the same line; she does not see popular antisemitism but locals taking advantage of an economic opportunity left by the Jewish population.⁷⁷ Fuat Dündar also writes from a security perspective, as does Ülker, who adds ethnic nationalism to his argument.⁷⁸ Finally, Senem Aslan considers linguistic, economic, and religious factors to argue that two factions of nationalists, one made up of the central state elite, the other local nationalist missionaries, had different motivations but the same goals of homogenisation, respectively by the assimilation or exclusion of the Jewish population.⁷⁹ Relative heterogeneity in urban centres, likely activated the state-

⁷³ *ibid*, 60. The Jewish population of Turkey according to the 1927 census was 81,827, from a total population of 13.5 million. Giving an overall percentage of 0.6-0.7 of the total. Jews were concentrated in cities and were a significant minority in the larger Thrace area, making up 5% of the regional population and around 15% in Edirne and Çanakkale. The total Jewish population had declined to 78,730 in the 1935 census.

⁷⁴ See also, Rifat Bali, *1934 Trakya Olayları* (Istanbul: Çağaoğlu Kitabevi, 2008).

⁷⁵ Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism*; Lamprou, 'Nationalist Mobilization'.

⁷⁶ Hatice Bayraktar, 'The Anti-Jewish Pogrom in Eastern Thrace in 1934: New Evidence for the Responsibility of the Turkish Government', *Patterns of Prejudice* 40, no. 2 (2006): 95–111.

⁷⁷ Eligür, 'Thrace Riots'.

⁷⁸ Fuat Dündar, 'Deporting Demos, Militarizing Natives: Forced Migration and Conflicts in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey (1908-1947)', in *Migration to and From Turkey: Changing Patterns and Shifting Policies* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2014), 15–47; Ülker, 'Settlement Law'.

⁷⁹ Senem Aslan, "'Citizen, Speak Turkish!': A Nation in the Making", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 13, no. 2 (2007): 245–72.

inspired cadres of the RPP. Compared to the rural inaccessibility of state directed policies the urban was more fertile ground for state missionaries.

Domestic and international factors show how singularly illustrative the Thrace riots were of the varied practices of the nationalising state. First, the Balkan Entente was signed on 9 February 1934, which as has been seen, gave Turkey increased confidence in pursuing its regional foreign policy goals. It followed that, more security on the border could translate into more decisive state action, domestically, in the region most closely connected to this particular foreign policy success. The Balkan alliance had an objective of checking potential Bulgarian expansionism. Further military strengthening was important in securing Thrace, the Dardanelles, and for the defensive depth of Istanbul against potential aggression. As Dündar argues, this precipitated a remilitarisation of Thrace which entailed cleansing the area of undesirable elements for fear of jeopardising military success and secrecy.⁸⁰ It was not coincidental that more than half the army with all its modern equipment was redeployed to eastern Thrace from 1934.⁸¹ Moreover, the British Military Attaché connected the Jewish expulsion with the increase in troop garrisons in Thrace from June 1934 onwards.⁸² Finally, the Thracian borders with Greece and Bulgaria and the Straits Zone had been demilitarised at Lausanne, so Turkifying Thrace would, alongside raising the troop presence in the remainder of Thrace, make the demilitarised zone less vulnerable.

Second, Ankara had already built new centralising institutions of authoritarian control in the form of General Inspectorates. The First General Inspectorate, as it came to be

⁸⁰ Dündar, 'Deporting Demos, Militarizing Natives', 38.

⁸¹ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 81.

⁸² FO 371/17969, E 4633/4633/44, Loraine, Istanbul to FO, 7 July 1934.

known, was established in the aftermath of the Sheikh Said Rebellion in the south-eastern provinces in July 1927. Aside from official goals of streamlining the administration of restive provinces, it was designed to fill the power vacuum with central state authority. The Second Inspectorate General was established on 19 February 1934, a mere ten days after the western land borders were secured diplomatically by the Balkan Entente. It would be known as the Thrace Inspectorate, covering the provinces of Edirne, Kırklareli, Tekirdağ, and Çanakkale.⁸³ These were the principal cities and provincial centres which Turkish Jews would leave behind. The second, third, and fourth inspectorates established in the 1930s were part and parcel of the state radiating its control further around the country after the work of legitimation and control was achieved in the 1920s, as exemplified by the First Inspectorate.

The inspectorates were formally charged with maintenance of order, administrative inspection, and interprovince coordination. They reported to the Interior Ministry directly.⁸⁴ Inspectorates had responsibilities over use of security services, requisitioning military support from neighbouring jurisdictions, power of veto over governor decisions, and oversaw local budgetary decisions where interprovincial public works were concerned.⁸⁵ The Inspector General, usually a serving or former army general, was beyond the oversight of local administrators; their only constraint was financial dependence on central government, consequently they were close to an autonomous institution in their jurisdictions.⁸⁶ This level of authority in one of the

⁸³ Engin Çağdaş Bulut, 'Devletin Taşradaki Eli: Umumi Müfettişlikler', *Cumhuriyet Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 11, no. 21 (Bahar 2015): 92.

⁸⁴ *ibid*, 96–97.

⁸⁵ *ibid*, 98.

⁸⁶ *ibid*, 108.

richer and better connected parts of the country significantly diminishes claims of overzealous local officials, excitable students, or rowdies being entirely culpable for the riots.

The final domestic factor which suggests state culpability was the Settlement Law of 14 June 1934 (Law 2510). It aimed to engineer the demographic structure of the country, largely for the assimilation of Muslim ethnic (Kurds) and linguistic (Kurds and muhacirs) minorities into a cohesive nation of Turkish-speaking Muslims. The country was categorised into three zones. Zone 1 referred mostly to the eastern provinces; these areas were closed to people who were not considered *culturally Turkish*; however, the zone was open to the movement of people who were *racially Turkish* and Turks who had lived there before 1914.⁸⁷ Zone 3 was on the western land border with Greece and Bulgaria as well as in Çanakkale, corresponding largely with the demilitarised zone. Zone 3 could be evacuated for military, economic, political, and public health reasons; there was to be no resettlement in Zone 3. Most of the rest of Thrace was also designated as Zone 1, thus closed to the resettlement of those *not holding attachment to Turkish culture*.⁸⁸ Zone 2 was where assimilation was to occur, where internal deportees would be settled, and from where culturally Turkish elements could be transplanted to Zone 1 areas.⁸⁹ Thus theoretically Turkifying the population throughout the territory. The zones displayed an internal territorialisation based on the state's racial and ethnic understandings of the population as well as corresponding to the exclusion practices of etatist communications infrastructure.

⁸⁷ Üngör, *Nation and State*, 152. Üngör's emphasis.

⁸⁸ Eligür, 'Thrace Riots', 98. Eligür's emphasis.

⁸⁹ Üngör, *Nation and State*, 152.

Given the scope of the Settlement Law, the responsibilities of the Thrace Inspectorate General, the conclusion of the Balkan Entente, and the chronology of events, it is difficult to suggest the state did not have a strong interest in the movement of the Jewish population out of Thrace. No smoking gun has thus far been found on Ankara's direct culpability. However, when the factors above are taken together with some of the other reforms of the 1930s, the circumstantial evidence on demographic engineering becomes strong enough to point either towards central planning or, better still, at the creation of a social environment where people knew the state would look the other way and reap the *fait accompli* gains. Çağaptay calls the period 1931-38 Kemalism par excellence. 1934 especially might be considered the *annus mirabilis* for the state's work on creating the image it desired; women were enfranchised and the law on surnames was passed.⁹⁰ It was the peak year of the language purification movement, the '*Citizen, Speak Turkish!*' campaign was revived and it was the year when Arabic and Persian words were being shorn from Turkish.⁹¹ What is more, many in the towns and cities, old and new, could associate the benefits of the reforms with good governance because they were concurrent with statist economic growth and the five-year industrial plan. Even where growth was uneven, the plight of minorities was an acceptable cost in a context where, as Gellner suggests, a great deal of discontent in the wider population could be bought off by dispossession and persecution of the minority.⁹²

⁹⁰ Homogenisation of names, no ethno-linguistic markers in names other than Turkish. Jewish, Armenian, and Greek populations not legally bound to change names, but this was not made explicit. Many members of minorities chose to shed their names of markers of ethnic affiliation. Soner Çağaptay, 'Reconfiguring the Turkish Nation in the 1930s', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 8, no. 2 (2002): 68; Meltem Türköz, 'Surname Narratives and the State-Society Boundary: Memories of Turkey's Family Name Law of 1934', *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 6 (2007): 893–908.

⁹¹ Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism*, 55; Aslan, 'Citizen, Speak Turkish!', 250.

⁹² Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 102.

The riots were stopped by central government action with İnönü's speech in parliament on 5 July.⁹³ The pogrom stopped first because its goals had been achieved; rioters participating in collective violence gained economically from property left behind by Thracian Jews.⁹⁴ In this sense it was a microcosm of pre-1930 socio-economic developments where a portion of non-Muslim wealth was transferred to Muslim hands and the demographic stature of non-Muslim minorities was reduced. Second, the pogrom could no longer be contained. The state could control the Turkish press but not international reporting. *The Times* and *The New York Times* reported on the riots in the first week of July. Meanwhile Greek consuls in Edirne and Istanbul were reporting to Athens, as were the British and US ambassadors to their capitals.⁹⁵

Radiation of state control over the entire territory was desirable, but visible persecution of League recognised minorities was less internationally acceptable. Especially when foreign relations were becoming more frequent and important. State caution on persecution was stronger when it concerned non-Muslims and occurred geographically in the west.

The abrupt halt to the violence with a word from Ankara is indicative but not conclusive of the state's direction of the pogrom's broad parameters. It does, however, reveal that the limit of the state looking away was tied to foreign policy. Western Turkey was the closest and most easily accessible area to the prying eyes of outsiders. Since the goal of Turkification and increased security had been largely achieved, Ankara could perform its remit of restoring order and showing that it had

⁹³ FO 371/17969, E 4633/4633/44, Loraine, Istanbul to FO, 7 July 1934; Eligür, 'Thrace Riots', 106.

⁹⁴ Eligür, 109.

⁹⁵ *ibid*, 105–8.

brought the situation under control, then leave the matter to the judiciary.⁹⁶ A police commissioner and some members of a chamber of commerce were arrested.⁹⁷ They were later acquitted while six others of *unimportance* were convicted.⁹⁸ Essentially 1934 was a year of foreign, specifically in the Balkans, and domestic policy success for the nationalising state. Turkey's Balkan territory was economically and demographically further Turkified, there was an increase in military defensive depth, and externally this arrangement gained the passive acquiescence of the Balkan Entente. When the situation could not be swept under the carpet for longer, the state showed its ability to stage manage its external image and impose domestic control. These foreign and domestic processes were mutually reinforcing.

In an analysis of the Settlement Law, Morgan correctly opined that it was not encouraging for the prospects of Thracian Jews returning home. More interestingly a Foreign Office official commenting on the report wrote that the Law was "...contrary to spirit and intention of Section III (Articles 37-45) of Lausanne [minority clauses]...but when one tries to put one's finger on precise infractions of these articles it is not quite so easy".⁹⁹ This was similar to how the state operated throughout the riots; precise infractions from Ankara are difficult to find or are circumstantial or anecdotal enough to be able to shift blame to the local level.

In sum, there were few negative foreign consequences for Turkey, but a series of policy successes instead. Turkish foreign policy activism had been increasing in the 1930s. Turkey had joined the League of Nations in 1932, and by September 1934 it

⁹⁶ Reza Shah was on a state visit to Turkey at the time, providing an extra foreign policy reason to have the matter concluded quickly.

⁹⁷ FO 371/17969, E 4916/4633/44, Loraine, Istanbul to FO, 22 July 1934.

⁹⁸ FO 371/17969, E 5406/4633/44, Loraine, Istanbul to FO, 9 August 1934. My emphasis.

⁹⁹ FO 371/17970, E 6434/5161/44, Morgan, Istanbul to FO, 13 October 1934.

was on the non-permanent seat at the League Council.¹⁰⁰ Alongside the marginalisation of the Minorities Commission, this showed Turkey had achieved a measure of success in isolating its internal affairs from international scrutiny. The nationalising state had succeeded in embedding itself into the doubled character of the national form, while simultaneously furthering the interests of the SMT core at the expense of the Jewish minority.

Muhacirs: Turkish and Turkifiable Migrants to the Nationalising State

As mentioned above, the Settlement Law was primarily for the distribution of the Muslim population over the territory. It was closely connected to the migration of *muhacirs*, Muslim refugees from neighbouring territories and former Ottoman land. It was not an entirely new policy, but one updated to meet the conditions of the 1930s. According to Üngör the 1934 Law was directly modelled on previous deportation laws and the 1926 law bearing the same title.¹⁰¹ As Ülker further demonstrated, the function of the 1934 law was to merge previous practices of settlement-immigration of other regulations under the same legislation to construct cultural and linguistic homogeneity as a device of nation-building that was on the nationalist programme before 1934.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Zarakol, *After Defeat*, 141.

¹⁰¹ Üngör, *Nation and State*, 150. He points to further Young Turk antecedent, the CUP interest in collecting ethnographic knowledge on Ottoman society. Since the CUP was aware that ethnic majoritarianism was becoming the legitimising principle of the developing nation-state system, the Directorate for the Settlement of the Tribes and Immigrants (İskân-ı Aşair ve Muhacirîn Müdüriyeti) was established in 1913 to sedentarise Turcoman, Kurdish, and Arab tribes, and to provide accommodation to Muslim refugees expelled from former Ottoman territory. It was replaced by Department of Settlement under the Ministry of the Interior in 1924.

¹⁰² Erol Ülker, 'Assimilation of the Muslim Communities in the First Decade of the Turkish Republic (1923-1934)', *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, 2007, 3.

Turkification was the overall aim, but Islam was the binding glue of the settlement policies and the mortar of the nationalising state. Despite the strong discursive emphasis on secularism, being Turk was synonymised around Islam, thus it served to bind various immigrant groups but excluded non-Muslims from the nation.¹⁰³ Once again, as Morgan observed in his analysis of Law 2510, it was the logical step in kneading all Muslim elements in a whole entirely Turkish in character, speech, manner of life, and outlook by providing the machinery for receiving and settling elements of Turkish culture and for assimilating Turkish nationals of non-Turkish culture within it.¹⁰⁴

Despite my narrative which is focused on state interests first, there are questions about the relationship of the population to the state and vice versa in the context of refugee settlement. The general view is that, in the transition from Empire to Republic, land left behind by Armenians in the east was taken over by large landlords and in the west small plots were transferred from Greeks to indigenous or immigrant Muslims.¹⁰⁵ Morack has since suggested that refugee settlement had roots in questions over whether the state served the people, or the people served the state.

This was ... of major importance in a freshly declared republic, the general population of which was living in dire poverty. A government claiming to represent the nation, and to exercise full sovereignty in its name, was challenged by ...

¹⁰³ Şule Toktaş, 'Turkey's Jews and Their Immigration to Israel', *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 3 (2006): 124.

¹⁰⁴ FO 371/17970, E 6434/5161/44, Morgan, Istanbul to FO, 13 October 1934.

¹⁰⁵ Keyder, 'Small Peasant Ownership', 70.

*individual people, and even populations of whole towns, chose to occupy abandoned property for their own ends.*¹⁰⁶

This is significant because it exhibited the state's flexibility in dealing with what it construed as the constituent elements of its nationalising project. First, because the indigenous Turkish, and the immigrant Muslim population did not have other foci of loyalty beyond the Republic. In the sense of a state based national loyalty that was important to Ankara. Village or family level loyalties were important as pillars of Sunni-Muslim based countryside stability, which the state fostered, but could not territorially challenge the state which was also Sunni-Muslim and Turkish-speaking. As far as the state was concerned, they were Turkish or Turkifiable Muslims returning home. Second, the seizure of abandoned property by Turkifiable Muslims was compatible with state aims of homogenisation and economic nationalism. Property could be appropriated by Muslim migrants because they were constitutive of the titular core. The law could be changed to accommodate their appropriation of property after the fact. It was a legal practice that did not apply to non-constitutive populations in the Republic. In this sense then, bottom-up demands could be more easily accommodated by the state if those making the demands were part of the state's conception of the titular core. The state could behave flexibly towards populations which it construed as contributing to its strengthening.

The country was underpopulated and ravaged at the establishment of the Republic. The need for a productive population compatible with Ankara's nationalism underpinned the open-door policy to Muslim migrants. Turkish immigration settlement

¹⁰⁶ Morack, *Dowry of the State?*, 336.

was similar to Watenpaugh's characterisation of the Ottoman version, as the instrumental use of the migrant as labour resource to create loyal citizens in sections of the country where separatism was a concern or original inhabitants could be excluded.¹⁰⁷ The practical purpose of Turkification and the logic of nationalisation determined that once diverse peoples were settled (Albanians, Circassians, Laz, Bosnians, Cretans, Arabs) appropriately in areas separate from large numbers of their kin non-Turks, where they would assimilate to the political and cultural norms of the Republic.¹⁰⁸ Thus it was a dual socio-economic entrenchment of territorial nationalism dictated by Ankara, that could be responsive to the needs of migrants who would be loyal to the state.

The state-bearing core-nation could therefore be supplemented from the outside. The state's assumption in the 1920s that all Muslims in the territory were, or could be made into, Turks regardless of ethnicity was continued into the 1930s.¹⁰⁹ Attempts to secure the assumption were reinforced in education policy which privileged the migration experiences of the refugees. Migration experiences which were highlighted included the movement of Central Asian nomads westwards, refugees seeking asylum in the late Ottoman Empire during its territorial shrinkage (1860-1914), and the post-Lausanne population exchanges.¹¹⁰ These experiences were supported by the Turkish History Thesis; movements of Muslim populations to the Republic were

¹⁰⁷ Watenpaugh, *Bread from Stones*, 10–11.

¹⁰⁸ Gingeras, *Heroin, Organized Crime, and Turkey*, 35.

¹⁰⁹ Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism*, 46.

¹¹⁰ Tolay, 'History of Migrations', 206. Tellingly excluded migration experiences were, migrations in pre-Turkish Anatolian history, forced migrations within Ottoman territory, systematic sedentarisation of tribal populations, and the Armenian Genocide (or deportation/relocation in the Turkish parlance - *tehcir*).

presented as Turkish populations returning home, thus reinforcing the preconception of the homogenous Turkish nation-state.¹¹¹

Estimates vary on the total number of Muslim refugees into Turkey during the early Republic, though there is some stability around 800,000.¹¹² It was a large undertaking which revealed itself in the diversity of reported and planned movements the state organised. Refugees from Romania were settled as far as Elazığ in the east before the Settlement Law, in December 1933.¹¹³ Interior Minister Şükrü Kaya reported that 14,000 migrants from a total of around 24,000 were settled in Thrace between June 1933 and November 1934, more than 20,000 of whom had arrived from Balkan nations.¹¹⁴ Around 2,000 arrivals from Bulgaria in 1935, were settled around Edirne and Lüleburgaz.¹¹⁵ Further migrants from Romania and Bulgaria in the same year were settled in Babaeski, Çanak, Tekirdağ, and Uzunköprü.¹¹⁶ These were all areas in Thrace where it was desirable for the arrivals to be socially inculcated into Turkish culture, Zone 2 areas of the Settlement Law. Their quick settlement was desirable to entrench Turkish presence in Thrace.

Muhacirs were welcome, but the state was careful not to incur the costs of their travel while they were still outside Turkey. Reporting on a group leaving Costanza for Turkey, the Turkish representative there explained to the British Minister that Ankara

¹¹¹ Tolay, 215.

¹¹² Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *İkinci Adam: İsmet İnönü, 1884-1938*, vol. 1, 2 vols (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1966); Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism*; Ercan Çağlayan, 'Cumhuriyet Döneminde Muş, Bitlis ve Van'a Yapılan İskan Çalışmaları (1923-1938)', *Tarih Okulu Dergisi* 8, no. 22 (2015): 269–93; Ülker, 'Assimilation'.

¹¹³ FO 371/16981, E 8001/260/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 13 December 1933.

¹¹⁴ FO 371/17963, E 7281/1858/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 16 November 1934.

¹¹⁵ FO 371/19040, E 3967/3031/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 13 June 1935.

¹¹⁶ FO 371/19040, E 6722/3031/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 9 November 1935; FO 371/19040, E 6968/3031/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 23 November 1935.

did not bear the cost of transfer until they reached Turkish territory.¹¹⁷ Such was the scale of migration from Romania an immigration treaty was signed in March 1936, likely supported by the Balkan Entente connection.¹¹⁸ The agreement provided for Bucharest to purchase land belonging to Turkish emigrants in Dobruja; the withdrawal of people from the region was to be completed in four years with payment to Ankara spread over seven. The proceeds would be used to support the migrants and for Turkey to purchase Romanian products.¹¹⁹ This exemplified the domestic nationalising policies of both states converging around the prevailing economic autarky to use the clearing system for organised population movements. Put another way, the institutional infrastructure to manage the population movement first met the inhibitory variable of the state's lack of resources, which was addressed by its foreign policy of autarkic mercantilism.

Most muhacirs in the 1930s arrived from the Balkans, though the state still had an interest in the reorganisation of the demographic structure inherited from the CUP period as well as the 1920s. Ercan Çağlayan has documented this in a snapshot of the resettlement work conducted in Muş, Bitlis, and Van. There was significant variation in the origin of the arrivals from inside and outside Turkey. Caucasian, Balkan, and Iran origin refugees were resettled in these provinces; as well as those from within the country from Kars, Iğdır, Erzurum, Artvin, Trabzon, Sürmene, Çoruh, and Arapçay. He concludes that the main factors for these movements was to dilute the Kurdish population, availability of property left behind by Armenians, the fertility of

¹¹⁷ FO 371/17963, E 7282/1858/44, Palairat, Bucharest to FO, 26 November 1934.

¹¹⁸ Ülker, 'Assimilation', 6. Of the 117,000 arrivals from Romania, about 80,000 arrived after 1933.

¹¹⁹ FO 371/20091, E 1779/694/44, Hoare, Bucharest to FO, 27 March 1936.

plains, and securing the land route to Iran with Turkish or Turkifiable people.¹²⁰

Furthermore, he shows evidence that at meetings of the inspectorate generals in December 1936, a decision was made to settle either side of the railways with Turkish villages strengthened by Turkish refugees.¹²¹ These were the prospective Turkish villages to be settled either side of the railways as shown in chapter four. By the simultaneous exclusion of Kurds from around the railways, the population was securitised to serve the state's nationalising interests through demographic engineering, revealing another instance of the state's joined up thinking.

In sum, the state instrumentalised migrant Muslims as Turkifiable constituent elements of the nationalising state. They could help to expand and entrench the SMT core, their appropriation of non-Muslim abandoned property was permitted, and they could theoretically displace and dilute the Kurdish population. Furthermore, their potential economic productivity was dually compatible with etatist economic nationalism as a population that could benefit from state assistance as well as a demographic profile which matched the policy of maintaining Muslim stability in the countryside. The state's range of nationalising action then, extended to policies of selective inclusion in addition to targeted exclusion.

Infrastructure, Control, and Eliminating the Significant Other: Kurds and Dersim 1936-38

Ottoman Kurdistan had had a degree of autonomy from the state until the mid-19th century. Kurdish emirates had supported the state in its tensions with Persia, gained

¹²⁰ Çağlayan, 'İskan Çalışmaları', 285.

¹²¹ *ibid*, 273, footnote 14.

posts in Ottoman civil and military bureaucracy, and governed provinces.¹²² The weakening of the Empire in the late 19th century eroded this political status quo when Constantinople's attempts to centralise encroached on Kurdish autonomy. Bülent Gökay argues that abolishing the emirates destroyed the prevailing political organisation leading to tribal individualisation and an increase in tribal confrontations, over which, Ottoman governors were ineffective.¹²³ The sheikh emerged as the local political and religious authority in the absence of the state's capacity to provide law and order. The first, post-emirate, rebellion of Sheikh Ubeydullah in 1880 challenged both the Persian and Ottoman state.¹²⁴ The Sheikh Said Rebellion of 1925 challenged the new Republican state specifically, while it was consolidating domestic power. A significant factor, in addition to its separatism, was the institution of the sheikh as mediator between religion and nationalism, where dervish lodges (tekkiyes) and sects (tarikats) became parts of the social space where Kurdish national identity formed.¹²⁵ The removal of the Caliphate in 1924 broke the Turkish-Kurdish alliance formed during post-1918 occupation. Taken broadly, this revealed a tension between Ankara's modernisation and Kurdistan's traditionalism, in addition to the prevailing tension between central authority and local autonomy.¹²⁶ In Dersim more specifically, Alevism as opposed to the orthodoxy of Sunnism, added a

¹²² Bülent Gökay, 'The Kurdish Question in Turkey: Historical Roots, Domestic Concerns and International Law', in *Minorities, Peoples and Self-Determination* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 319. For more detail on this complex background see, Sabri Ateş, 'In the Name of the Caliph and the Nation: The Sheikh Ubeidullah Rebellion of 1880–81', *Iranian Studies* 47, no. 5 (2014): 735–98; Djene Bajalan, 'Early Kurdish "Nationalists" and the Emergence of Modern Kurdish Identity Politics: 1851 to 1908', in *Understanding Turkey's Kurdish Question* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 18–39; Naif Bezwan, 'State and Violence in Kurdistan: A Conceptual Framework', *Kurdish Studies* 9, no. 1 (May 2021): 11–36; Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structure of Kurdistan* (London: Zed Books, 1992); Hakan Yavuz, 'Five Stages of the Construction of Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 7, no. 3 (2001): 1–24.

¹²³ Gökay, 'Kurdish Question', 320.

¹²⁴ Yavuz, 'Kurdish Nationalism', 5.

¹²⁵ Gökay, 'Kurdish Question', 320.

¹²⁶ *ibid*, 321.

religious character to the ethnic supremacy of the Turk fostered by Ankara.¹²⁷ As Barış Ünlü has argued, Dersim remained a thorn in the side of the state which only mustered enough strength for internal conquest in the 1930s.¹²⁸

The nationalising state helped foster internal differentiation by prioritising the centre for development and the periphery for control and security of the centre. First, Ankara inherited the political dislocations between the state and Kurdistan in transition from Empire to Republic, then intensified these with a drive to Turkify the territory. Turkish Kurdistan, cut-off from its neighbours by the nation-state system and the Saadabad Pact, became a space for potential assimilatory expansion for Turkish nationalism. But Ankara's sovereign control and legitimacy was not yet complete. Dersim became coded as enemy territory because it was the last centre of alternative political identity within the national borders, an internal island that was a challenge to the state by its existence and difference. It was ethnically, religiously, and linguistically different to the titular core, to which the state gave precedence in nation-building to sustain the state.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ *ibid*, 322.

¹²⁸ Ünlü, 'Türklük Sözleşmesi', 74.

¹²⁹ There are two caveats to make before moving onto the narrative analysis. First is the complex question of various identity claims of Dersim's inhabitants. They are variously described as Dersimli, Kurd, Alevi, Zaza, Armenian, and combinations thereof. I make no distinct claim about Dersim identities but follow the conventional scholarship on broadly identifying the inhabitants of the Dersim region as Alevi-Kurds, imprecise as this may be. Second, is how to characterise the local response to state action in Dersim. There are variations in language deployed which have differing connotations. For example, Çağaptay, Demirel, and Orhan use 'rebellion'; Bezwan, Yadirgi, and Gökay use 'uprising'; Kumral and Yavuz use 'revolt'; Gorgas uses 'resistance'; Zürcher uses 'insurrection'. I use the terms rebellion, resistance, and revolt interchangeably since these occur in my primary evidence base in largely equal frequency, see Pinar Dinç, 'Collective Memory and Competition over Identity in a Conflict Zone: The Case of Dersim' (PhD, London, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2016); Martin van Bruinessen, 'Review Article: Kurds, Zazas and Alevis', *Kurdish Studies* 8, no. 2 (October 2020): 371–81; Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism*; Ahmet Demirel, 'Representation of the Eastern and South-Eastern Provinces in Turkish Parliament during the National Struggle and Single Party Era (1920-1946)', *New Perspectives on Turkey* 44 (2011): 73–102; Mehmet Orhan, 'Kurdish Rebellions and Conflict Groups in Turkey during the 1920s and 1930s', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 32, no. 3 (2012): 339–58; Bezwan, 'State and Violence in Kurdistan'; Yadirgi,

1934's Settlement Law continued the state's Kurdish settlement policies since 1916, and the original version of 1926.¹³⁰ It was a further legal articulation of state practice sharpened for Turkification policy with Ottoman origins. Its anti-Kurdish deployment went back to the post-Ararat revolt period and connected to the land exchange agreement with Iran. Many Kurdish families sent to settle in Thrace in 1932 were reported in the same dispatches as prisoners from the Ararat zone being tried en bloc in Adana.¹³¹ In September 1934, the British Consul in Tabriz referred to a general deportation order in regions from Van to the Syrian border and an alleged agreement between Turkey and Iran to cooperate in dealing with the Kurds.¹³² While a general deportation order is unclear in scale, we have already seen the Perso-Turkish agreement to coordinate efforts against Kurds. Significantly, the arrest of rebels and removal of families from the Ararat zone occurred after the Ankara-Tehran agreement on the Little Ararat-Qotur exchange.

Three factors concentrated the state's attention more specifically on Dersim in the 1930s. Securitised understanding of the population, cross-border state-based cooperation in inhibiting Kurdish transnational connections, and increased state control over frontiers after the Sheikh Said and Ararat rebellions. These turned the state's attention further inward since Dersim was left as the most powerful Kurdish

Political Economy of Kurds; Gökay, 'Kurdish Question'; Mehmet Akif Kumral, *Rethinking Turkey-Iraq Relations: The Dilemma of Partial Cooperation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Yavuz, 'Kurdish Nationalism'; Jordi Tejel Gorgas, 'The Shared Political Production of "the East" as a "Resistant" Territory and Cultural Sphere in the Kemalist Era, 1923-1938', *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 10 (2009): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejts.4064>; Zürcher, *Turkey*; Bulut, 'Umumi Müfettişlikler'.

¹³⁰ Üngör, *Nation and State*, 150; Serhat Bozkurt, 'The Kurds and Settlement Policies from the Late Ottoman Empire to Early Republican Turkey: Continuities and Discontinuities (1916–34)', trans. Djene Bajalan and Ezgi Ulusoy-Aranyosi, *Iranian Studies* 47, no. 5 (2014): 834.

¹³¹ FO 371/16074, E 646/646/34, Consul Palmer, Tabriz to FO, 9 February 1932; FO 371/16981, E 258/258/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 26 December 1932; FO 371/16983, E 529/529/44, Clerk, Ankara to FO, 17 January 1933.

¹³² FO 371/17912, E 6717/2916/34, Consul Palmer, Tabriz to FO, September 1934.

centre in Turkey. The Tabriz consulate reported as early as December 1931 that the Dersim Kurds were suspicious of this developing situation and the Turkish encouragement for them to abandon hills for villages.¹³³ It is not clear how far back planning for the Dersim operations of 1936-38 went. However, state practice in increasingly sharp Turkification policy of the 1930s and foreign policy that constrained Kurdish agency within the nation-state, gave cause for suspicion in Dersim as early as 1931. Still, at that time geography was a barrier to connectivity for the state and a means of defence for Dersim. By 1937 however, rail linked Erzincan, Sivas, and Tokat to the north and west of the region, with the Malatya-Elazığ-Diyarbakır railroad covering the south and west. Troop concentrations in the Ararat zone, Van, and Bitlis to the east augmented the military industrial encirclement of Dersim. Etatist industrialisation and foreign policy space for domestic action combined to give the state opportunity to extend its claim to sovereignty and legitimacy over Dersim during 1936-38.

The Dersim operations occurred between 1936-38 in three distinct phases. First in 1936, Ankara encircled the province to extend its physical reach to the environs of the hitherto difficult to access region. In 1937, the state put down armed rebellions and extended a foothold into the province. In 1938, the state embarked on an ethnocidal campaign of uprooting whole populations and power structures to create a vacuum which Ankara itself could fill with coercive tools.

Before the active military phases of the Dersim operations of May 1937 to August 1938, Ankara prepared the ground for extending its control. British consular reports

¹³³ FO 371/16074, E 646/646/34, Consul Palmer, Tabriz to FO, 9 February 1932.

suspected Ankara would use the pretext of Dersim Kurds committing highway robbery around Erzincan in the summer of 1934 as pretext for asserting its monopoly of legitimate violence where it previously could not.¹³⁴ Incidents such as these established a precedent for direct repressive action on lawlessness in line with the state's claim to total territorial sovereignty. Mehmet Orhan adds that, further to conflict with the state, Dersim was undergoing an internal conflict. Agricultural land was scarce because of mountainous terrain and wheat was in short supply. He asserts that food scarcity caused some Dersim tribes to raid in Erzincan and Harput.¹³⁵

The pretext was ideological as well as legal. Kemal Soleimani argues that the state reduced identitarian Kurdish uprisings to tribalism to justify military campaigns for law and order. The mere notion of Kurdish resistance clashed with the territorial national singularity the state wanted to establish.¹³⁶ Ankara labelled any resistance from Kurdish areas as reactionary, obscuritanist, and feudal; tribal leaders were motivated by irrationality and were therefore illegitimate as obstacles to civilisational progress, thus deserving of punishment.¹³⁷ Aslan found that the state's attempts to breakdown tribal structures, settle nomads, weaken the prestige of religious notables, and disarm the population could not always overcome the challenge of a lack of

¹³⁴ FO 371/17969, E 6663/4564/44, Morgan, Istanbul to FO, 24 October 1934.

¹³⁵ Orhan, 'Kurdish Rebellions', 352. This may connect to the crisis in food supply the state addressed through Etatism and stockpiling facilities that controlled domestic prices. It is possible that Dersim inhabitants could not access this facility since the state's reach did not yet extend there.

¹³⁶ Kamal Soleimani, 'The Kurdish Image in Statist Historiography: The Case of Simko', *Middle Eastern Studies* 53, no. 6 (2017): 958.

¹³⁷ Gorgas, 'Political Production', 5; Burak Basaranlar, 'Pragmatic Coexistence: Local Responses to the State Intrusion in Dersim during the Early Republican Period of Turkey (1938-1950)', *Middle Eastern Studies* 58, no. 6 (2022): 931–49.

resources, corruption, and abuse which pushed locals further from the state.¹³⁸

Popular culture in urban areas reinforced the binary of Kurdish inferiority to Turkish superiority conceived as a war between the modern and the backward, the civilised and uncivilised.¹³⁹

Ankara articulated the othering, primitivisation, and civilising mission of the state specifically for Dersim in the winter of 1935-36. First, the Tunceli Law (No 2884) wiped the name Dersim from official discourse, replacing it with Tunceli. This was followed by creation of a fourth inspectorate general covering Dersim/Tunceli, Erzincan, Bingöl, and Elazığ on 16 January 1936.¹⁴⁰ The Interior Minister Kaya conveyed the state's intentions to the Assembly on 25 December 1935. He characterised Dersim as a wild and mountainous district populated by primitives with predatory instincts. The administrative reorganisation of Dersim, which according to Kaya had not been clearly delimited, would bring a definite fixity and solve the problems of a region that had been neglected.¹⁴¹ State action then, was purposed to bring centralised rationality to the region bolstered by the fictions of the Turkish History Thesis, Kaya asserted that the population was purely Turkish in origin. Additionally, this was a Republican nationalist corrective to Ottoman failure to expedite the total incorporation of sovereign territory into state structures. Kaya's enumeration of military failures to absorb Dersim through 11 military operations since 1876 spoke to this. Ankara would establish the civilised organisation in Dersim,

¹³⁸ Senem Aslan, 'Everyday Forms of State Power and the Kurds in the Early Turkish Republic', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 1 (2011): 80.

¹³⁹ İlkin Büke Okyar, 'Ethnic Stereotyping and the Significant Other: Re-Imagining the Kurd in Early Turkish Political Cartoons', *Middle Eastern Studies* 56, no. 4 (2020): 622.

¹⁴⁰ Bulut, 'Umumi Müfettişlikler', 94.

¹⁴¹ FO 371/20087, E 129/129/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 3 January 1936.

enjoyed by the country as a whole.¹⁴² Thus building further territorial congruity under the nationalising state. Previous Ottoman failure, the ideological drive of the state, added to by the infrastructural penetration of the 1930s goes some way to explaining the level of violence meted out to Dersim during 1937-38. The state, now internally unfettered, strengthened, reorganised, could not afford another failure that could be construed as a challenge to its total claim of territorial sovereignty and legitimacy.

The documentary record for 1936 revealed consistencies in state practice. A general, Abdullah Alpdoğan was appointed as the Dersim Inspector General, who was assisted by the bureaucrat Fuat Baturay, lately the chief advisor to the First Inspectorate at Diyarbakır.¹⁴³ A notice went around the country calling for natives of Dersim/Tunceli to complete their civil registration and start their national service within a two-year grace period.¹⁴⁴ This indicated first that the Settlement Law had already purged some people from Dersim, and the state was still working to complete its demographic accounting. Local instances of lawlessness later in the year drew the state's attention. In mid-August a group of cattle merchants from Kayseri were robbed by Kurds near Erzurum, then a village in Erzurum was raided by another Kurdish group later in the month.¹⁴⁵ In September, Turkish muhacirs from the former Russian Empire, who had been settled in Kurdish villages abandoned during WWI, had their claims challenged by returning Kurds and outlaws from Dersim.¹⁴⁶ Instances such as these constituted a challenge to the state through both, a contestation of the state given claims of the titular core group and a rejection of the

¹⁴² *ibid.*

¹⁴³ FO 371/20087, E 1484/129/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 4 March 1936; FO 371/20087, E 2010/129/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 3 April 1936.

¹⁴⁴ FO 371/20087, E 2010/129/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 3 April 1936.

¹⁴⁵ FO 371/20092, E 5833/1517/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 12 September 1936.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*

new order whereby Ankara would dictate the parameters of law and order. Moreover, state efforts to make groups legible to central administration added to pretexts for direct repressive action. Not all these incidents were strictly in Dersim, however its proximity to disturbance amplified its importance as a centre for a potential challenge to the state.

The Dersim Inspectorate set to work building schools, roads, bridges, police stations, gendarmerie posts, and government buildings.¹⁴⁷ The inspectorate's blockade of Dersim intensified the state's expanding power from 1936; local leaders such as Seyit Rıza, Hasan Meki, and Alişar objected to the state's encroachment.¹⁴⁸ This extension of state infrastructure, blockade, and local objection over a number of years suggested Dersim was an object of internal invasion instead of reform only. Passive resistance to the state turned violent in April 1937 and full rebellion by 8 May when Seyit Rıza's forces inflicted heavy losses on Turkish troops. The rapid response of air and ground action from Elazığ the day after, further indicated Ankara had planned to use arms at large scale to neutralise expected resistance.¹⁴⁹

Lorraine reported on 23 May that the press was entirely silent on the rebellion and military engagements, apart from *Son Telgraf* hinting at trouble on the 14th, which resulted in a four-day closure of the newspaper.¹⁵⁰ However, even a cursory reading of the article shows that the newspaper had jumped the gun on a government press release. In summary, the article said that the government had completed preparations for a radical restructuring in the east and was about to put plans into

¹⁴⁷ Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism*, 111; Bezwan, 'State and Violence in Kurdistan', 30.

¹⁴⁸ Demirel, 'Provinces in Turkish Parliament', 90.

¹⁴⁹ FO 371/21935, E 2214/2214/44, Lorraine, Ankara to FO, 2 April 1938.

¹⁵⁰ FO 371/20864, E 2893/466/44, Lorraine, Ankara to FO, 23 May 1937.

action. It mentioned Dersim/Tunceli specifically and Kaya's speech to the assembly given above. It reported that "...the Republic's and the regime's total authority will be established".¹⁵¹ Tacitly acknowledging that the state had no presence in Dersim, and that the situation was about to be reversed. The article had breached the façade of state propaganda positioning itself as developmentally benevolent while repressive military action was ongoing.

The infrastructure built and nationalised in the 1930s significantly facilitated the large-scale rapid response of the state to violent escalation in Dersim. Chief of the General Staff Marshall Çakmak and Commander-General of the Gendarmerie General Ahmet Naci Tinas proceeded to Elazığ via Kayseri on 8 May to oversee military operations.¹⁵² Together with Alpdoğan, the weight of the general staff supervising the operation was considerable, this was no simple reaction to a local matter of lawlessness. From their base in Elazığ, they formed a cordon around the north, west, and east of Dersim and captured the Kurdish stronghold by 19 May.¹⁵³ In addition to garrisons in Elazığ, the generals could call on an infantry division in Erzincan, an army corps in Erzurum, local gendarmerie units, and aircraft from Diyarbakır.¹⁵⁴ This was a mobilisation capability that did not exist prior to etatism.

For the next few months British reports were not clear on whether the rebellion was over. The Trabzon consulate reported the surrender of the last body of rebels,

¹⁵¹ 'Şarkta Cezri İslahat Hareketine Başlanıyor', *Son Telgraf*, 14 May 1937, http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/son%20telgraf/son%20telgraf_1937/son%20telgraf_1937_mayis_/son%20telgraf_1937_mayis_14_.pdf.

¹⁵² FO 371/20864, E 2893/466/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 23 May 1937; FO 371/21935, E 2214/2214/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 2 April 1938.

¹⁵³ FO 371/21935, E 2214/2214/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 2 April 1938.

¹⁵⁴ FO 371/20864, E 2891/466/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 17 May 1937; FO 371/20864, E 2892/466/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 22 May 1937.

around 500 strong, on 24 June. In the same dispatch, the Mersin consulate reported on the surrender of most rebel leaders, but with Seyit Rıza still at large.¹⁵⁵ Loraine reported ongoing fighting into mid-July, though his report's emphasis on resumption of public works and use of Kurdish labour in these indicated that the fighting was winding up.¹⁵⁶ The 1937 operations ended on 12 September after the capture of Seyit Rıza.¹⁵⁷ He was executed on 16 November in the inspectorate zone, where the sentence was not subject to the usual parliamentary ratification.¹⁵⁸ After the blockade of 1936, the 1937 operations constituted an advancement of it from the periphery of Dersim/Tunceli to inside the region proper. Further public works acted as a dual beachhead for disarming the population and the following year's operations.

The third and final phase of Dersim operations took place in June-August 1938. Dersim became coded as enemy territory that did not fall in line with the new state's conception of sovereignty and territorial unity. A last attempt to co-opt the inhabitants was Law No 3323 exempting Dersim/Tunceli inhabitants from fines and penalties relating to civil and military service registrations.¹⁵⁹ It had little effect. By mid-May around 3,000 troops, supported by aircraft were concentrated in southern Erzincan close to the Dersim/Tunceli provincial border. The concentration was concurrent to reports of Kurdish brigands raiding villages in Erzincan and attacking gendarmerie posts.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ FO 371/20864, E 3819/466/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 3 July 1937.

¹⁵⁶ FO 371/20864, E 4238/466/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 16 July 1937.

¹⁵⁷ FO 371/20864, E 5799/466/44, Morgan, Istanbul to FO 21 September 1937; Dinç, 'Collective Memory in Dersim', 75.

¹⁵⁸ FO 371/20864, E 6962/466/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 20 November 1937; 'Seyid Rıza İle 6 Avanesi Dün İdam Edildiler', *Cumhuriyet*, 16 November 1937, http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/cumhuriyet//cumhuriyet_1937/cumhuriyet_1937_ikincitesrin_/cumhuriyet_1937_ikincitesrin_16_.pdf.

¹⁵⁹ FO 371/21925, E 2721/69/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 4 May 1938.

¹⁶⁰ FO 371/21925, E 3105/69/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 20 May 1938.

Ankara aimed to finally, and definitively, overturn the Ottoman status quo in Dersim that was now antithetical to Republican organisation. Bayar explained the situation to the Assembly on 29 June. He claimed that the Kurds [of Dersim] wanted to live in privilege, rob, slay, carry arms, and refuse taxation. Bayar continued that the Republic did not recognise such citizens.¹⁶¹ In effect, Ankara could not countenance an island of territory in Turkey living beyond the state's control. He referred to the programme of reform, but the thrust of his explanation was military. Military operations would take place this year with larger forces. It now remained to achieve the final settlement and liquidation of the question; the army was given a *special mission* in support of the *forces of repression* to clean up the area.¹⁶² To the same dispatch to London was appended a report from the Trabzon Consul from 22 June. Operations were already in full swing. The Kurds upon ignoring airdropped leaflets calling for their surrender had whole villages burnt down by planes and artillery by government forces.¹⁶³

There was little direct information available to foreign eyes and ears while Ankara had Dersim/Tunceli sealed off in the summer of 1938. It was common practice that foreign attachés were not permitted to observe manoeuvres. However, Alpdoğan addressed service attachés in Elaziğ on 31 August. This was an attempt to manage the information flow out of the inspectorate zone and present state action as revolt suppression and state benevolence. Alpdoğan's address contained allusions to the Turkish History Thesis in an explanation of migration routes from further east into

¹⁶¹ FO 371/21925, E 4017/69/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 1 July 1938.

¹⁶² FO 371/21925, E 4017/69/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 1 July 1938. Morgan's emphasis.

¹⁶³ FO 371/21925, E 4017/69/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 1 July 1938. Given the perennial problems of the region's inaccessibility, lack of schools, low general rates of literacy, lack of information on what language was used, and in what script, this incident raises more questions on whether the leaflets were ignored or were comprehensible to their audience.

Anatolia to assert the original Turkishness of Dersim's population. He explained that this second phase of military action was designed to crush lingering signs of rebellion, thereby touching on law and order. The general explained the composition of engaged forces, three army corps and 40 aircraft, to give a positive impression of military capability in difficult conditions. He touched on the removal of some chiefs and inhabitants out of the region to bring in aspects of the Settlement Law.

Confiscation of arms and the population left under the supervision of garrisons spoke to the securitisation of the population as well as the exercise of exclusive right to legitimate violence. Finally, Alpdoğan touched on plans for complete pacification through a construction programme, including two arterial roads connecting Elazığ to Erzincan, both passing through Dersim/Tunceli and connected laterally to form a network of communications.¹⁶⁴ Here again the etatist logic of connectivity dovetailed with the claims of the nationalising state's control over the totality of the territory. It was all couched in state action within the confines of legitimate nation-state practice of exclusive spheres of action in its exclusive national zone.

This briefing to foreign service attachés came after the only news *Ulus* carried on Dersim/Tunceli up to that point in 1938. It contained two loosely linked pieces reporting on the evaluation of manoeuvres by the top brass after operations were concluded on 28 August. Çakmak and Alpdoğan were conspicuous names as were the Deputy Chief of the General Staff Gündüz, and other generals such as Altay, İzzettin Çalışlar, Kazım Orbay, Defence Minister Özalp as well as Prime Minister Bayar, and *Ulus'* editor Atay.¹⁶⁵ Such a high-level meeting to discuss what were

¹⁶⁴ FO 371/29125, E 5363/69/44, Morgan, Ankara to FO, 9 September 1938.

¹⁶⁵ 'Manevra Kitiği Yapıldı', *Ulus*, 29 August 1938, http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/ulus/ulus_1938/ulus_1938_agustos_/ulus_1938_agustos

ostensibly military exercises suggested first, the crucial importance the state put on Dersim's suppression and second, the stage management of its goals of invasion after the fact. Atay's presence as the conduit to domestic opinion through the press, alongside Alpdoğan's version of events to attachés in the foreign sphere can be read in this context.

Later reports severely contradicted the state's account. Loraine could not bring himself to believe Atatürk's government would tolerate, far less sanction, massacres of women and children, deprivation of property, and deportation to central Anatolia. Or more generally, the military's use of "methods similar to those used against Armenians during the war".¹⁶⁶ Loraine kept further explicit personal opinion out of his final annual report on Turkey the following February, though he noted that the Kurdish question was to all intents settled.¹⁶⁷ Thousands were killed, there is no clear consensus on the death toll from official, critical, or anecdotal sources, except that the scholarship tends to revise the numbers up with new research.¹⁶⁸

Loraine's details on which military units participated gave a useful snapshot of the communications capabilities the state had achieved by 1938. He mentioned that the 6th (Kayseri), 7th (Tokat), and 9th (Erzincan) army corps participated in the Dersim

29.pdf; 'Başvekilimiz Dün Şehrimizden Geçti', *Ulus*, 29 August 1938, http://nek.istanbul.edu.tr:4444/ekos/GAZETE/ulus/ulus_1938/ulus_1938_agustos_/ulus_1938_agustos_29_.pdf.

¹⁶⁶ FO 371/21925, E 5961/69/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 5 October 1938.

¹⁶⁷ FO 371/23301, E 1214/1214/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 11 February 1939.

¹⁶⁸ Dinç gives official figures of almost 14,000 dead plus 12,000 exiled. Bezwan gives official numbers of up to 8,000 dead against critical scholarship's estimate of up to 30,000 dead. Deniz has since revised the death toll higher to between 46,000 and 63,000 deaths. The scale of the death toll is further difficult to establish or relativise because of difficulties in establishing the total population of Dersim at the time. Deniz further explores this difficulty, and gives a total population of around 150,000. Bezwan, 'State and Violence in Kurdistan', 30; Dilşa Deniz, 'Re-Assessing the Genocide of Kurdish Alevi in Dersim, 1937-38', *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 14, no. 2 (2020): 39; Dinç, 'Collective Memory in Dersim', 76.

operations. These resulted, partially, from the completion of the Sivas-Erzincan rail link, which connected the 3rd Army Headquarters to the 7th and 8th army corps areas. Additionally, the opening of the road connecting Trabzon to Iran via Erzurum, further facilitated communications of units in Erzurum.¹⁶⁹ It has not been possible to definitively establish the precise locations of army units with Loraine's report. However, taken together with the enumeration of rail and road connectivity given in chapter four, it is clearer that the main cities of Anatolia were militarily connected to the west (Kayseri, Malatya), north (Sivas, Trabzon, Erzincan, Erzurum), and south (Diyarbakır) of Dersim/Tunceli. It was a level of communications cohesion for military control of an interior province that the state had not had before. Once the capability existed and the region was sealed-off from outside influence, Ankara took the opportunity for its conquest.

The internal conquest of Dersim in stages was the most violent of the state's repertoire of nationalist actions in the 1930s. Conquest might be viewed as a peculiar framing in a context where the term is usually reserved for international cross-border action. It is apt however, when considering the Ottoman era status quo and the continuities and changes entailed in the Republican project. The state continued, but the dynastic relationship to its domestic territorial periphery had to change. The state-bound congruence of land to the centre imagined in Ankara, could not countenance what had remained an island of autonomy within the national territory. When the state accumulated the necessary resources, it acted decisively to first uproot

¹⁶⁹ FO 371/23301, E 1214/1214/44, Loraine, Ankara to FO, 11 February 1939. There is an anomaly in Loraine's report on army corps locations, the 9th is given as based in Erzurum and Erzincan.

alternative sources of political power and attempted to extend its reach through infrastructure.

Turkey's drive to fit itself into the nation-state system on its Middle Eastern borders through Saadabad significantly cut-off Kurds into national borders. Turkey's Kurds were squeezed into an area where their only extraneous interlocutor was the state. A situation that was largely defined by the resources the state could bring to bear on this negotiation; of Dersim's desire to remain extraneous to a new system Ankara insisted was unitary. The situation was further exacerbated by the dual, and complex, ethno-linguistic and religious differences of the local population to the state bound SMT core. Individual and collective agency was denied to groups that were not of the core.

Finally, Kurds lacked the international protection other groups had; the political protection of diplomacy for foreign nationals and the media coverage which helped to wind down the Thrace pogrom. The lack of inhibitory forces on persecutory action were compounded by the state's active isolation of Dersim from 1936. The result was disastrous for the local population. State culpability in Thrace was deniable to an extent that facilitated *fait accompli* gains. This was not the case in Dersim, the nationalising state's violence in repression met few inhibitory factors.

Conclusion

The discourse and practice of the state as analysed above has shown that the Turkish Republic chose the Sunni-Muslim Turkish (SMT) elements of the population as the core to be nationalised around the state. More specifically, the state aimed to

Turkify the nation-state. The core, according to Ankara, had not had its aspirations sufficiently met before the establishment of the Republic. The process to achieve such aspirations had started in the last decade of the Ottoman Empire, it turned into the Turkification policies of the 1930s. It was a question of existing economic and demographic conditions in association with the state elite's demographic and missionary self-conception as saviours of the Ottoman then Turkish state. Moreover, this was connected to Turkey's foreign policy choices in the 1930s. Ankara's international practice was geared towards the protection and perpetuation of its nationalist project, an instrument for isolating the internal from external encroachment, tied to the experiences of capitulationphobia.

Domestically, the Republic was in formative flux in the 1930s, specifically on how the state aimed to build a nation to support and strengthen the institutional structures inherited from Ottoman dissolution. The nationalising state worked to broaden its hegemony across a wider base. It did this through the titular core of the SMT population in the 1930s, after having established foreign and domestic legitimacy by 1923. The state in its different manifestations according to varied target groups, demonstrated its ability to fit into the doubled character of the national form.

Concurrently isolating its domestic sphere for nationalisation around the state and having these legitimated by the international order by effective diplomacy.

State repression of minorities privileged the titular core group. Simultaneously, the state demonstrated a capacity for inaction as part of its repertoire that nationalised the titular core around the state. Ankara not only looked away when SMTs made illegal gains, but legalised these even if they challenged the state; so long as the

appropriation continued practices of wealth transfer from non-Muslims and non-Turks to SMTs.

Various analyses of Turkish nationalism have focused on the contrast in the state's exclusionary practice against its official discourse of civic inclusion. These scholarly differences have an avenue of reconciliation when nationalism is analysed as a set of practices that do not take the nation-state as an *a priori* conclusion. The reconciliation can occur on three levels. First, Brubaker's nationalising state provides an overall framework, by marginalising the emergence of the nation-state as the finished object of analysis and promoting the examination of its practices as nationalising processes instead. Second, Wilder's antinomies help to contextualise the apparent contradictions in state discourse and practice, as well as differences in the scholarship, such as Goalwin's boundary making and Ekmekçioğlu's paradox. Finally, Goswami's doubled character of the national form help to flesh out the Turkish case in foreign and domestic policy spheres, where nationalising processes at home and abroad reinforced each other.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has shown how, in two interconnected parts on foreign and domestic policy, Turkey gave depth to its sovereignty, security, and legitimacy in the 1930s after establishing itself in the 1920s. In the first part covering regional diplomacy in the Balkans and Middle East, I have demonstrated how Turkey contributed to fostering regional security by identifying common interests in nation-state sovereign security. This manifested in the Balkan Pact consisting of Greece, Romania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia against the potential for Bulgaria to destabilise the regional territorial status quo. Ankara helped repeat this in the Middle East by the Saadabad Pact formed of Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. This time the target was not a nation-state, but the transnational Kurdish population. The objective was to protect, with limited negotiated adjustments, the status quo. The hallmark of both pacts was collective good relations to prevent regional problems. This is in direct contrast to the prevailing historiography, which has so far viewed these alliances as directed by Great Power interests. The analysis in this thesis has demonstrated Balkan and Middle Eastern nation-state agency in the conclusion of these treaties.

Domestically, an examination of etatism, Turkey as a nationalising state, and the overarching conceptual shorthand of capitulationphobia has shown that the continuity of the state elite informed the nationalist practices of the reconstituted state in Ankara. The analysis of etatism shows the state's consistent policy aiming to transform economic relationships instead of reforming them. The political opportunity to execute this was not available until the Empire had fallen and the Republic could muster the means to institutionalise them around a unitary and recognised nation-

state. 1930 was a turning point, a crisis of domestic legitimacy met the effects of the Great Depression on commodity prices and the end of the Lausanne tariff regime, the last capitulatory trade restriction on Turkey. Thereafter economic and nationalist policy dovetailed. Extension of the communications infrastructure by rail and state investment in factory towns helped Ankara to extend its reach. This was concurrent with the state as the merchant of the country's agricultural surplus in the clearing system of trade in the autarkic 1930s. Trade diplomacy facilitated political approaches, that helped Turkey isolate its domestic sphere from external scrutiny. The comparative, peace time, impunity Turkey had domestically, was greater than in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. A freer hand in domestic policy showed Ankara's priorities in nationalising the population, or its largest constituent, around the state. The core nation of the Republican state, Sunni-Muslim Turkish-speakers, was a nation whose aspirations had been insufficiently realised according to the state elite. The social processes of nationalism, taken as dynamic and not deterministic, revealed how the state privileged this titular core to strengthen the state in the 1930s, after it had been saved in the 1920s.

Ottoman continuities in the state elite have informed my examination of foreign and domestic policy. Their practice was informed by how they understood their task of first saving and then strengthening what they considered to be the sacred state. I have used Zürcher's assertion of a political continuity between the CUP as the party of the late Ottoman Young Turks and the RPP of the Republic. This group formed during the Hamidian period (1876-1909) when the state made efforts to centralise, reorganise, and modernise. They formed the post-Hamidian political elite, constituting a social group convinced of the state's power to drive modernising change through

positivist education. This reflected their experience as men of relatively modest backgrounds honed for duty to the state by education. The Young Turks viewed their personal and professional advancement as state-mediated, for them, it was not the sultanate but the state that had provided the material means of their progress. They came of political and professional age while Abdülhamid II's regime attempted to manage the forces of change; to stabilise an Empire that was becoming increasingly weaker relative to European power. Moreover, this has informed the narrative analysis of the thesis, where the state is the chief agent. This is not to suggest that the state operated unilaterally everywhere, nor that a centre-periphery analysis is the most useful in all cases, rather it has been a limitation of the study by virtue of its source material. Nevertheless, the state's intentions, the political, material, economic, and coercive capacity it could bring to bear on policy are valuable to historical inquiry. The state as an agent, finally, helps to situate Ankara as the link between foreign and domestic policy, as the main interlocutor of both international relations and the domestic space.

To help explain the connections between foreign and domestic policy, in addition to how the latest version of the state was newly reconstituted in Ankara, I have offered the conceptual shorthand of capitulationphobia. Capitulationphobia captures the motivations of the CUP cum RPP state elite stemming from their political experience in the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Republic. It lies at the intersection of foreign political encroachment on imperial territory, loss of economic independence, 19th century nationalism, Constantinople's eroding domestic authority, and fractures in the millet system. Capitulationphobia was a set of stimuli that

informed Republican conceptions of sovereignty, legitimacy, and nationalism; in its practice, it aimed to assert the new system's legitimacy over the old.

I have framed capitulationphobia on three interrelated levels that simultaneously gave effect to Ankara's embedding of the Republic into international nation-state forms of association and isolated the domestic space from international encroachment. As the name suggests, it originates with the capitulations that originally facilitated trade but by the 19th century came to encroach on Ottoman sovereignty. In short, Great Power protection of European commercial concessions operating in imperial territory, coupled with their protection of Ottoman merchants by conferring citizenship, subverted Constantinople's domestic authority, limited its scope of economic action, and consequently constrained its foreign policy independence. Furthermore, 19th century Tanzimat reformism which granted a measure of civil equality to the Empire's non-Muslim population, breached the Ottoman tradition of Muslim political domination.

At the macro-level, capitulationphobia is generalisable around economic independence, territorial integrity, and non-interference in internal affairs. Ankara fit itself into the League of Nations mediated nation-state association to secure for itself an equal place in contemporary civilisational norms after the Treaty of Lausanne. This *a priori* recognition as an internationally legitimate nation-state within new boundaries, that was off-limits to other powers was vital to Ankara's nation-building project.

Second, the state perceived its non-Muslim minorities as capitulatory agents in waiting, as the local agents of Great Power intervention. The construction of this view

from the late 19th century was tied to the culture of defeat that prevailed among the Muslim elite, especially after the Balkan Wars the state was forced to confront an existential crisis. After defeat in 1918, the crisis was no longer a mere threat, it was realised. Muslim minorities, chiefly Kurds, were also seen as bearing potential for religious reaction and nationalist separatism, again sponsored by Great Powers. This time, in 1925, the Sheikh Said Rebellion confirmed this view for Ankara, since the crisis with Iraq and Britain over Mosul overlapped with the Rebellion's timeline. In effect, the view was that minorities had undermined the state and could do so again. State-minority relations were seen through Great Power interventionism that echoed the capitulations, leading to minorities being seen as necessarily disruptive to the state. During the early Republic, the potential for internal and external enemies of the state working against Lausanne and in favour of Sèvres, was perceived as the struggle between the ontological good and the ontological bad respectively.

At the third, more specific level, capitulationphobia links the state's thinking based on Ottoman experience to its actions in the Republic. This was a distillation of Ankara's mission to save, strengthen, and perpetuate the state by defining a core nation to be nationalised around the state. Capitulationphobia domestically resulted in privileging the SMT population. This rose from the identity of the state elite and the availability of the comparatively homogeneous, population that could be encouraged to identify with new structures of sovereignty and legitimacy. There was a corresponding exclusion of minorities from the nation by state action marginalising them from territory, employment, and benefits of citizenship. Moreover, the SMT core had not been collectively tarred with the brush of capitulatory encroachment on the state's interests. Externally, capitulationphobia manifested in regional treaties that helped to

isolate the domestic sphere from foreign influence. Capitulationphobia in practice, aimed to build congruence around the elite, the core population, religion, territory, and language.

Capitulationphobia seems uncontroversial in so far as a nation-state seeking to assert sovereignty. However, it delineates the context for processes and practices of how the Turkish state reconstructed itself, by performing nation-state sovereignty, as a Republic from the experience of imperial collapse. These were the dynamic processes, of what Brubaker calls, a nationalising state, and fits into, Goswami's, doubled character of the national form where foreign and domestic practices are mutually reinforcing.

Chapter one provided a Balkan-centric analysis of the dynamics that led to the Balkan Entente of 1934. It covered the negotiations between Greece, Romania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia, with graded specificity towards the alignment between Ankara and Athens, and Turkey's interests in particular. The region-centric analysis has shown the agency smaller nation-states exercised in an overall context of Great Power geopolitics. My conclusion is that the historiographical accounting of the Entente as an international relations failure is wrong. The prevailing view is based on a failure to assess the Pact on its own terms and conclude that, since it was ineffectual in preventing WWII, it must have failed. This metric of measurement is out of proportion to the intentions of the Balkan Entente, which was designed to protect the Balkan status quo from Balkan threats. This does not preclude the Balkan Entente from demonstrating the limits of smaller power diplomacy. More specifically for Ankara, the Balkan Entente was causal in generating and sustaining diplomatic

pressure to revise the Straits system and remilitarise Thrace. It contributed to Ankara's aims to enhance its sovereignty and security.

Conversations leading to the Balkan Entente emerged from economic problems common to the peninsular neighbours, fall in commodity prices, the similarity of exports, and low industrialisation. Initial ambitions to align governance structures to alleviate the Depression's effects, below the governmental level, produced a series of Balkan conferences. Governance was discussed at these, but they essentially functioned as a forum for nation-state diplomacy where the four signatories found common ground in diplomatic cooperation and hamstringing Bulgarian revisionism. The Balkan agreement succeeded within its scope of operation for as long as the signatory states oversaw their own affairs. It contained Bulgarian revisionism, protected Greece during its political crisis in 1935, frustrated Italian intervention as Sofia's sponsor, and facilitated some military conversations among the signatories.

In addition to contributing to Turkey's longer-term desiderata, the Balkan Entente chronologically connected to the Thrace Pogrom in 1934, examined in chapter five. The enhanced diplomatic security afforded by the alliance allowed space for domestic nationalist action that had direct influence on reducing the presence of Turkey's Jewish minority in Thrace. The 1934 Settlement Law stipulated areas in Thrace for Turkification, which were overseen by the Thrace Inspectorate General in conjunction with the external space created by diplomacy that was focused on Bulgaria. The Balkan Entente, then, provided ground for Turkish demonstration of international competence in upholding its foreign obligations and helped Ankara to pursue nationalist policies domestically.

Chapters two and three provided a Middle East-centric analysis of the dynamics that led to the Saadabad Pact of 1937. Much like the Balkan Pact chapter, these covered the negotiations between Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Turkey with more focus on the Ankara-Tehran alignment and Turkey's interests in particular. The Middle East-centric analysis has shown the agency of regional nation-states in the international relations of the period. The conclusion is the same as that for the Balkans, that the historiographical account of the Pact as a failure is wrong. The extant view is again based on a failure to evaluate the Pact on its terms and instead focuses on its ineffectiveness in preventing a general war. The Saadabad Pact was an instrument to defend a limited portion of the Middle East from Middle Eastern threats, to protect, and minimally adjust, by negotiation the prevailing status quo. Moreover, the literature posits Middle Eastern cooperation as reactive to Italian revisionism. I have demonstrated that this was not the case; neither the intra-Middle Eastern dynamics that led to the Pact, nor the documentary record supports the prevailing literature.

Chapter two has shown how Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East, moved from normalising bilateral relations to bilateral cooperation then to multilateral non-aggression. Turkey worked to demonstrate how Ankara-Baghdad and Ankara-Tehran relations were mutually beneficial for nation-state centralisation by inhibiting Kurdish transnational contact. Turkey's bilateral contacts with Afghanistan since the 1920s, coupled with Ankara's good standing in Tehran, produced, in Kabul, the impression of Turkey as a balancing influence on Iran. This manifested in Turkish arbitration of an Afghan-Iranian border dispute in 1935, further contributing to the Turkish reputation for mediation.

In chapter three, Turkish mediation on the Iran-Iraq dispute on the Shatt al-Arab showed how Ankara consistently pushed for a regional alliance during negotiations. The resolution of the Shatt question was not only a prerequisite to a regional pact, it also demonstrated Middle Eastern agency in dispute resolution that had failed in Europe. Maintenance of diplomatic contact, among the contiguous members of Saadabad, crystallised the common interest in Ankara, Baghdad, and Tehran, that preventing cross-border Kurdish nationalism was in the interests of nation-state centralisation and nation-building. The incorporation of the Conventions on the Definition of Aggression, that explicitly spelled out the state's responsibility to prevent armed groups from encroaching on another state's territory spoke to this clarification. In short, Kurds were the sub-national target of Saadabad. This is a point that the surveyed literature on Saadabad has not covered, it connects to the assertion that Saadabad was ineffectual because it did not have an explicit target. Instead, the older literature did not conceive as a target, political entities that were not nation-states.

From a Turkey specific perspective, Saadabad and the Kurdish population as its target connects to Ankara's domestic practices. Etatist economic and infrastructural growth both excluded the Kurdish population physically from sites of industrial production and extended the state's coercive capacity into previously more difficult to reach areas in the east of the country. Turkish Kurdistan was deprioritised for industrial investment relative to regions west of the Euphrates, where new centralising structures took Ankara as the focal point. Saadabad then, helped create a buffer zone of non-intervention, where foreign policy confidence in communicative good relations allowed meagre resources to be concentrated more centrally, both

physically and administratively. Furthermore, Turkish-Iranian trade diplomacy chronologically overlapped with Turkish domestic efforts to expand the communications network. Trade diplomacy as well as the political alignments recounted above, gave another layer to Middle Eastern international relations that did not necessarily need Eurocentric explanations.

Overall, Turkish foreign policy seen through the Balkan and Saadabad pacts show how regional diplomacy while not needing Great Power inputs, still sat within new forms of international nation-state association. These points are not mutually exclusive, both alliances were formed in the League mediated international system, both had regional origins, and both contributed to the history of how the modern Balkans and the modern Middle East became constituted in the 20th century. In the context of capitulationphobia, these regional agreements coupled with the League functioned as a shield against Great Power encroachment on Turkish independence. They contributed to the external shell by which Ankara could isolate its domestic space and protect its international sovereignty.

In chapter four, I argued that Turkish etatism in the 1930s was more than an economic choice between liberalism and protectionism. Rather it was a fundamental part of Turkish economic nationalism with Ottoman origins. Moreover, it was a securitising tool and legitimation device for the new Republic. Etatist production prioritised defensibility of industries over purely profit motives and excluded minorities from sites of construction and production. The state as the provider of work and social services in urban nodes across west-central Anatolia, helped insert the state into the lives of the SMT population that could benefit from state economic planning.

By 1937 etatism was written into the constitution, demonstrating its discursive, bureaucratic, and institutional role in the regime's legitimation and consolidation.

As economic nationalism, etatism institutionalised the wealth transfer from former Ottoman non-Muslims to the SMT core. In short, the late Ottoman state had accounts for economic assets that were broken down by millets. After the ethnic cleansing and genocide of the war years, Republican institutions inherited seized Ottoman non-Muslim property. These assets in buildings, land, and cash provided some of the capital that was subsumed under state resources that paid for etatist projects. In effect, a state directed wealth transfer to the titular core of the Republic.

The growth and establishment of railways and factories through etatism was a pillar of the Republic's ontological security. It helped to consolidate the state's hegemonic claim and legitimacy spatially over the territory and contributed to the nationalisation of the titular core. This had implications for the state's securitised understanding of the country too. Physically excluding minorities from sites of communication and industrial production, coupled with SMT access to these contributed to the mutual formation of core groups and other identities. It also revealed the state's securitised view of the population.

The contraction of world trade in the 1930s provided an opportunity for direct bilateral trade relationships in the autarkic decade. The lack of capitulations to inhibit this facilitated Turkey's sale of agricultural products and minerals for industrial machinery bilaterally. This both protected domestic producers from the volatile market and allowed the state to determine imports according to its industrialisation plan. Moreover, bilateral trade diplomacy helped Ankara nationalise concessions by

leveraging Turkey's relatively stronger diplomatic position, compared to the Empire. Ankara as the merchant house of the country's product, inhibited the subversion of its post-Lausanne economic sovereignty. Economic weakness, construed as foreign involvement in the domestic economy, was antithetical to the need to save and strengthen the state. These foreign and domestic overlaps in policy, rooted in Ottoman experience, were examples of capitulationphobia in practice.

In the final chapter, I argued that Turkey in the 1930s demonstrated practices aligned with Brubaker's conception of the nationalising state. In the Turkish case, the state already existed but it was not yet a nation-state to a sufficient degree. The culture, demographic position, economic success, political hegemony, and language of the state-bearing core nation needed to be promoted to achieve a sufficiency of nation-statehood. The nationalising state in this case can be called the Turkifying state.

Brubaker foregrounds the analysis of the state's practices, instead of analysing the nation-state itself in the first instance. The state has an interest in deepening its sovereignty and legitimacy. In doing so it takes actions that can be empirically tracked, which may not fit into specific framings of nationalism that take the finished condition of the nation-state as its object of analysis. In Turkey, this analysis has tended towards a focus on the gap between the discursive inclusivity of the state and the exclusion of minorities in practice.

Both lines of enquiry are part of Wilder's antinomy, where two propositions can be simultaneously correct. I suggest a compromise position between the lines of argument around a process of formative flux, informed by the dynamism of nationalisms. In 1930s Turkey, the economy, security, minority relations, and

language policy were at various levels of formation and institutionalisation that are difficult to reconcile by single theme explanations. Formative flux does not propose a definitive answer on whether the state was being built on civic or territorial lines but allows for analyses of how the state's practice was variable and contingent.

The nationalising state was in formative flux yet there were goals of entrenching sovereignty, legitimacy, and security. These were nominally in the interests of all citizens in the discursive framing of the constitution. However, significant exclusions revealed the practices of who could and could not be nationalised around the state to fulfil the condition of nation-state sufficiency. The empirical results of this shows the SMT population as the core nation for nation-building to strengthen and perpetuate the state.

Turkish nationalist practice in the 1930s stemmed from the state elite's ideas on 19th century liberal nationalism that stressed the availability of a nation-state to a restricted group of sufficiently advanced nations. They saw themselves as part of this limited Eurocentric club. Gökalp exemplified this state-based nationalising mission. He stressed the priorities of Turkification, Sunnism, and modernisation of the titular core around the state.

The chapter then turned to four case studies which demonstrated the state's repertoire of action according to differently identified groups. Ankara's range of action exhibited its demographic priorities in forming the national identity around the SMT population. State practice on muhacirs expressed the inclusivity of the nationalising state. They were territorially extraneous former Ottoman Sunni-Muslims who spoke Turkish or could be linguistically assimilated. Their access to land in codes of the

Settlement Law, legalisation of their appropriation of Ottoman non-Muslim property, and inclusion in etatism, showed muhacirs as part of the core.

The distinction between foreign nationals and non-Muslim minorities was opaque, as shown in the sections on the Thrace Pogrom and foreign nationals. The inculcation of a nationalist zeal in the wider population created a social atmosphere of xenophobia. It had a disciplining effect on the population that diluted expressions of difference from the core. State action towards these groups revealed a foreign policy limit on domestic practice. Diplomatic complaints, international media, and the proximity of western Turkey to Europe, induced robust state action to end violence. However, this was only after *fait accompli* gains in favour of the titular core.

Dersim's population did not have similar external protections. They were isolated from channels of information, Saadabad diplomacy had atomised Kurdish populations into nation-states, and etatist capacity in communications all enabled repression in Dersim. For Ankara, Dersim was an Ottoman hangover of autonomy that was anathema to the new regime. It showed how the state aimed to cement domestic control, sovereignty, and legitimacy over the whole national territory.

The reconstituted state built on its domestic and international legitimacy to entrench itself in the sovereign territory. The objective was to strengthen its hegemonic claim across the Republic by nationalising the largest section of the population, from which it sprang, around itself. Inclusion of SMTs and exclusion of non-Muslims displayed continuity with CUP practice, while the variable ethno-linguistic exclusion or assimilation of Kurds demonstrated newer practices. Moreover, the state's practice in SMT benefit, significantly weakened its claim to secularism.

Finally, I have shown how in the 1930s Ankara attempted to reconstruct the ability, lost by Constantinople, to isolate its domestic space from foreign influence. However, this was not a clean break with the Ottoman system. Foreign and domestic policy practices of the early Republic demonstrated significant continuities in how the state's understanding of sovereignty, security, and legitimacy were informed by the continuity in the state elite and their experience of capitulationphobia. The political elite's aim to strengthen the state was comparatively easier in a smaller, comparatively more homogenous, territory that emerged after the profoundly violent dislocations in the decade from 1912. After re-establishing the state in the 1920s, Ankara worked to consolidate its hegemony horizontally across the territory through the SMT population. It achieved the political space for this by effective foreign policy in the Balkans and Middle East in the 1930s.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Treaty of The Balkan Entente, and Protocol Annex. Signed at Athens, 9 February 1934.¹

No 3514.

GRÉCE, ROUMANIE, TURQUIE ET YOUGOSLAVJE

Pacte d'entente balkanique, et protocole annexe. Signés à Athènes, le

9 février 1934.

GREECE, ROUMANIA, TURKEY AND YUGOSLAVIA

Pact of Balkan Entente, and Protocol-Annex. Signed at Athens, February 9th, 1934.

TRADUCTION. - TRANSLATION.

No. 3514. PACT OF BALKAN ENTENTE BETWEEN GREECE, ROUMANIA, TURKEY AND YUGOSLAVIA. SIGNED AT ATHENS, FEBRUARY 9TH, 1934.

French official text communicated by the President of the Permanent Council of the States of the Balkan Entente. The registration of this Pact took place October 1st, 1934.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC, HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF ROUMANIA, THE PRESIDENT OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC, and HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF YUGOSLAVIA, being desirous of contributing to the consolidation of peace in the Balkans;

Animated by the spirit of understanding and conciliation which inspired the drawing-up of the Briand-Kellogg Pact 2 and the decisions of the Assembly of the League of Nations in relation thereto;

Firmly resolved to ensure the observance of the contractual obligations already in existence and the maintenance of the territorial situation in the Balkans as at present established;

Have resolved to conclude a "Pact of Balkan Entente".

And to that end have designated their respective Plenipotentiaries, to wit:

THE PRESIDENT OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC:

¹ Reproduced from, League of Nations, 'Treaty of The Balkan Entente, and Protocol Annex.', *Treaty Series: Treaties and International Engagements Registered with the Secretariat of the League of Nations* CLII, no. 3501–3533 (1934): 153–59.
<https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/LON/Volume%20153/v153.pdf>

His Excellency Monsieur Demetre MAXIMOS, Minister for Foreign Affairs;

HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF ROUMANIA:

HIS Excellency Monsieur Nicolas TITULESCU, Minister for Foreign Affairs;

THE PRESIDENT OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC:

HIS Excellency Monsieur Tevfik RÜSTÜ Bey, Minister for Foreign Affairs;

HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF YUGOSLAVIA:

His Excellency Monsieur Bogolioub JEVTITCH, Minister for Foreign Affairs,

Who, having exchanged their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed upon the following provisions:

Article 1.

Greece, Roumania, Turkey and Yugoslavia mutually guarantee the security of each and all of their Balkan frontiers.

Article 2.

The High Contracting Parties undertake to concert together in regard to the measures to be taken in contingencies liable to affect their interests as defined by the present Agreement. They undertake not to embark upon any political action in relation to any other Balkan country not a signatory of the present Agreement without previous mutual consultation, nor to incur any political obligation to any other Balkan country without the consent of the other Contracting Parties.

Article 3.

The present Agreement shall come into force on the date of its signature by all the Contracting Parties, and shall be ratified as rapidly as possible. It shall be open to any Balkan country whose accession thereto is favourably regarded by the Contracting Parties, and such accession shall take effect as soon as the other signatory countries have notified their agreement.

In faith whereof the said Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Pact.

Done at Athens, this ninth day of February, nineteen hundred and thirty-four, in four copies, one of which has been delivered to each of the High Contracting Parties.

D. MAXIMOS.

Dr. T. RÜSTÜ.

N. TITULESCU.

B. JEVTITCH.

PROTOCOL-ANNEX.

In proceeding to sign the Pact of Balkan Entente, the four Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Roumania, Yugoslavia, and Turkey have seen fit to define as follows the nature of the undertakings assumed by their respective countries, and to stipulate explicitly that the said definitions form an integral part of the Pact.

- I. Any country committing one of the acts of aggression to which Article 2 of the London Conventions of July 3rd and 4th, 1933, relates shall be treated as an aggressor.
2. The Pact of Balkan Entente is not directed against any Power. Its object is to guarantee the security of the several Balkan frontiers against any aggression on the part of any Balkan State.
3. Nevertheless, if one of the High Contracting Parties is the victim of aggression on the part of any other non-Balkan Power, and a Balkan State associates itself with such aggression, whether at the time or subsequently, the Pact of Balkan Entente shall be applicable in its entirety in relation to such Balkan State.
4. The High Contracting Parties undertake to conclude appropriate Conventions for the furtherance of the objects pursued by the Pact of Balkan Entente. The negotiation of such Conventions shall begin within six months.
5. As the Pact of Balkan Entente does not conflict with previous undertakings, all previous undertakings and all Conventions based on previous Treaties shall be applicable in their entirety, the said undertakings and the said Treaties having all been published.
6. The words "Firmly resolved to ensure the observance of the contractual obligations already in existence", in the Preamble to the Pact, shall cover the observance by the High Contracting Parties of existing Treaties between Balkan States, to which one or more of the High Contracting Parties is a signatory party.
7. The Pact of Balkan Entente is a defensive instrument; accordingly, the obligations on the High Contracting Parties which arise out of the said Pact shall cease to exist in relation to a High Contracting Party becoming an aggressor against any other country within the meaning of Article 2 of the London Conventions.
8. The maintenance of the territorial situation in the Balkans as at present established is binding definitively on the High Contracting Parties. The duration of the obligations under the Pact shall be fixed by the High Contracting Parties in the course of the two years following the signature of the Pact, or afterwards. During the two years in question the Pact cannot be denounced. The duration of the Pact shall be fixed at not less than five years, and may be longer. If, two years after the signature of the same, no duration has been fixed, the Pact of Balkan Entente shall ipso facto remain in force for five years from the expiry of the two years after the signature thereof. On the expiry of the said five years, or of the period on which the High Contracting Parties have agreed for its duration, the Pact of Balkan Entente shall be renewed automatically by tacit agreement for the period for which it was previously in force, failing denunciation by any one of the High Contracting Parties one year before the date of its expiry ; provided always that no denunciation or notice of denunciation shall be admissible, whether in the first period of the Pact's validity (namely, seven or more than seven years) or in any subsequent period fixed automatically by tacit agreement, before the year preceding the date on which the Pact expires.
9. The High Contracting Parties shall inform each other as soon as the Pact of Balkan Entente is ratified in accordance with their respective laws.

ATHENS, this ninth day of February, nineteen hundred and thirty-four.

(S.) D. MAXIMOS.

(S.) N. TITULESCU.

(S.) Dr. T. RÜSTÜ.

(S.) B. JEVTIC.

Appendix 2Treaty of the Saadabad Pact, Signed at Tehran, 8 July 1937.¹

No 4402.

 AFGHANISTAN, IRAK, IRAN ET TURQUIE

Traite de non-agression. Signé à Tèhèran, le 8 julliet 1937.

 AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ, IRAN AND TURKEY
Treaty of Non-Aggression. Signed at Teheran, July 8th, 1937.

TRADUCTION. - TRANSLATION.

No. 4402. TREATY OF NON-AGGRESSOPM BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF AFGHANISTAN, THE KINGDOM OF IRAQ, THE EMPIRE OF IRAN AND THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY. SIGNED AT TEHERAN, JULY 8TH, 1937.

French official text communicated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iran. The registration of this Treaty took place July 19th, 1938.

 PREAMBLE.

Hrs IMPERIAL MAJESTY THE SHAHINSHAH OF IRAN,

Hrs MAJESTY THE KING OF AFGHANISTAN,

Hrs MAJESTY THE KING OF IRAQ,

THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY;

Being desirous of contributing by every means in their power to the maintenance of friendly and harmonious relations between them;

Actuated by the common purpose of ensuring peace and security in the Near East by means of additional guarantees within the framework of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and of thus contributing to general peace; and

Deeply conscious of their obligations under the Treaty for Renunciation of War, signed at Paris on August 27th, 1928, and of the other treaties to which they are parties, all of which are in harmony with the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Treaty for Renunciation of War;

Have decided to conclude the present Treaty and have for that purpose appointed:

Hrs IMPERIAL MAJESTY THE SHAHINSHAH OF IRAN:

¹ Reproduced from, League of Nations, 'Treaty of The Saadabad Pact', *Treaty Series: Treaties and International Engagements Registered with the Secretariat of the League of Nations* CXC, no. 4401–4430 (1938): 21–27. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/LON/Volume%20190/v190.pdf>

His Excellency Monsieur Enayatollah SAMIY, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iran;

Hrs MAJESTY THE KING OF AFGHANISTAN:

His Excellency Monsieur FAIZ MOHAMMAD Khan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan;

Hrs MAJESTY THE KING OF IRAQ:

His Excellency Dr. NADJI-AL-ASIL, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq;

THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY :

His Excellency Dr. Tevfik RUSTU ARAS, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey;

Who, having exchanged their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed upon the following provisions:

Article 1.

The High Contracting Parties undertake to pursue a policy of complete abstention from any interference in each other's internal affairs.

Article 2.

The High Contracting Parties expressly undertake to respect the inviolability of their common frontiers.

Article 3.

The High Contracting Parties agree to consult together in all international disputes affecting their common interests.

Article 4.

Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes in no event to resort, whether singly or jointly with one or more third Powers, to any act of aggression directed against any other of the Contracting Parties.

The following shall be deemed to be acts of aggression:

1. Declaration of war;
2. Invasion by the armed forces of one State, with or without a declaration of war, of the territory of another State;
3. An attack by the land, naval or air forces of one State, with or without a declaration of war, on the territory, vessels or aircraft of another State;
4. Directly or indirectly aiding or assisting an aggressor.

The following shall not constitute acts of aggression:

1. The exercise of the right of legitimate self-defence, that is to say, resistance to an act of, aggression as defined above;
2. Action under Article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations;
3. Action in pursuance of a decision of the Assembly or Council of the League of Nations, or under Article 15, paragraph 7, of the Covenant of the League of Nations, provided always that in the latter case such action is directed against the State which was the first to attack;

4. Action to assist a State subjected to attack, invasion or recourse to war by another of the High Contracting Parties, in violation of the Treaty for Renunciation of War signed in Paris on August 27th, 1928.

Article 5.

Should one of the High Contracting Parties consider that a breach of Article 4 of the present Treaty has been or is about to be committed, he shall at once bring the matter before the Council of the League of Nations.

The foregoing provision shall not affect the right of such High Contracting Party to take any steps which, in the circumstances, he may deem necessary.

Article 6.

Should one of the High Contracting Parties commit an aggression against a third Power, any other High Contracting Party may denounce the present Treaty, without notice, as towards the aggressor.

Article 7.

Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes to prevent, within his respective frontiers, the formation or activities of armed bands, associations or organisations to subvert the established institutions, or disturb the order or security of any part, whether situated on the frontier or elsewhere, of the territory of another Party, or to change the constitutional system of such other Party.

Article 8.

The High Contracting Parties, having already recognised, in the General Treaty for Renunciation of War of August 27th, 1928, that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts, whatever their nature or origin, which may arise among them, shall never be sought by other than pacific means, reaffirm that principle and undertake to rely upon such modes of procedure as have been or shall be established between the High Contracting Parties in that respect.

Article 9.

No Articles of the present Treaty shall be considered as in any way diminishing the obligations assumed by each of the High Contracting Parties under the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Article 10.

The present Treaty, drawn up in the French language and signed in quadruplicate, one copy having, as they severally recognise, been delivered to each of the High Contracting Parties, is concluded for a period of five years.

On the expiry of that period, and failing its denunciation, with six months' notice, by one of the High Contracting Parties, the Treaty shall be deemed to be renewed for successive periods of five years, until its denunciation with six months' notice by one or more of the High Contracting Parties. On its denunciation as towards one of the Parties, the Treaty shall nevertheless remain in force as between the others.

The present Treaty shall be ratified by each of the High Contracting Parties in accordance with its Constitution, and registered at the League of Nations by the Secretary-General, who shall be requested to bring it to the knowledge of the other Members of the League.

The instruments of ratification shall be deposited by each of the High Contracting Parties with the Iranian Government.

On the deposit of instruments of ratification by two of the High Contracting Parties, the present Treaty shall at once come into force as between those two Parties. It shall come into force as regards the third and fourth Parties respectively on the deposit of their instruments of ratification.

On the deposit of each instrument of ratification, the Government of Iran shall immediately notify all the signatories of the present Treaty.

Done at the Palace of Saad-Abad (Teheran), on the eighth day of July, one thousand nine hundred and thirty-seven.

Enayatollah SAMIY,

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iran.

Dr. NADJI-AL-ASIL,

Minister for Foreign Affairs

of Iraq.

FAIZ MOHAMMAD Khan,

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan.

Dr. Tefvik RUSTU ARAS,

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

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