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**THE PRESERVATION OF NEUTRALITY DURING WORLD WAR II**  
**DETERRENCE VS. APPEASEMENT**

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Deterrence vs. Appeasement**

İkinci Dünya Savaşı Döneminde Savaş Dışılığın Korunması  
Caydırmacılık ve Yatıştırıcılık

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores neutrality during World War II over the examples of Switzerland and Turkey, and the means by which small states of Europe protected and preserved their status as non-belligerents in the face of immense pressure both from friendly Great Powers that sought to draw them into the war as allied co-belligerents and from hostile Great Powers that sought to undermine their independence and sovereignty and carry out a hostile invasion. Theoretically, a small state has two options to this end: She can either deter the Great Powers through a show of force, or she can appease them through concessions. This study argues, however, that in actual fact, it is completely impossible for a small state to prevent being dragged into the war through the threat of force, that is, through deterrence. Throughout the study it will be shown that a small state's only hope for staying out of the war is to appease the Great Powers that have taken an interest in them.

**Keywords:** World War II, Neutrality, Turkish Foreign Policy, Swiss Foreign Policy, Deterrence, Appeasement

## ÖZET

Bu çalışmada İkinci Dünya Savaşı döneminde tarafsızlık ve savaş dışılık durumları, ve küçük devletlerin maruz kaldıkları dayanılmaz baskılara rağmen savaş dışılıklarını korumak için kullandıkları yöntemler tartışılacaktır. Küçük devletler dostane büyük devletler tarafından müttefik olarak savaşa çekilebileceği gibi, düşman büyük devletler tarafından bağımsızlıkları aşındırılıp istila edilerek de savaşa dahil olabilirler. Teoride, bu durumların ikisi için de küçük devletlerin savaşın dışında kalmak için kullanabilecekleri iki yöntemleri mevcut: Ya güç gösterisi yaparak büyük devletleri caydırmayı deneyebilirler ya da büyük devletlerin taleplerini yerine getirerek onları yatıştırmayı. Fakat bu çalışma küçük devletlerin pratikte caydırmacılık ile savaş dışı kalmasının imkansız olduğunu, zor kullanma tehdidinin küçük devletlerin kullanabildiği bir koz olmadığını savunacak. Küçük devletlerin savaş dışılıklarını korumak için ellerinden gelen tek şeyin, kendilerini nişanına almış büyük devletlerin taleplerini yerine getirip onları yatıştırmak olduğu gösterilecek.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İkinci Dünya Savaşı, Savaş Dışılık, Türk Dış Politikası, İsviçre Dış Politikası, Caydırmacılık, Yatıştırmacılık

## INTRODUCTION

The Second World War (WWII) is arguably the most influential event of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century alongside the Cold War that it brought about. Thus, WWII has been extensively researched almost to the point of exhaustion. The concept of neutrality and the policy and conduct of neutral countries was one of the most intriguing and controversial aspects of the war. And it was, in most cases, “hit or miss:” while many countries that claimed neutrality and wished to stay out of the war were crushed under the Nazi or Soviet jackboot, some others somehow managed to avert disaster. Of course, this does not mean that they were spared the immense tension of the war, nor that they weren’t subject to the overwhelming Nazi pressure, and to a lesser extent the Allied pressure. Sweden, for instance, supplied the Nazi war machine with tungsten until the very last years of the war, and far more damning, they acquiesced to allowing the Wehrmacht military access and the use of Swedish railroads, known collectively as the *permittenttrafik*. Was Sweden truly neutral in the war? Debatable. What is clear however is that they took no part in the fighting, unlike many others like the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, Denmark, Norway, Yugoslavia, Greece... One point should be cleared up here: The Swedes did not allow these privileges to the Third Reich out of the kindness of their hearts or a love for the Nazi regime. They did it because they felt they had to. This is true for all the neutral nations of WWII that stayed neutral, in that they all had to make sacrifices and allow concessions to appease the European aggressors, be it Italy, Germany or the Soviet Union. The incomparable orator Winston Churchill wrote to his foreign secretary Anthony Eden on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1944:

Of all the neutrals, Switzerland has the greatest right to distinction. She has been the sole international force linking the hideously sundered nations and ourselves. What does it matter whether she has been able to give us the commercial advantages we desire or has given too many to the Germans, to keep herself alive? She has been a democratic State, standing for freedom in self-defence among her mountains, and in thought, despite of race, largely on our side.

A critical part of this quote is that small addition of “to keep herself alive”. Although Churchill said this of Switzerland, all neutral Small States of the period who “stood for freedom in self-defence” had to make various concessions, big or small, to keep themselves alive.

Switzerland, however, has a whole other claim to distinction today, in addition to what Churchill remarked nearly eighty years ago. As many scholars, military experts and the more nationalistic of the Swiss people like to point out, Switzerland held the Nazis at bay through the strength and formidableness of their armed forces. Nestled in their mountains, rifle in hand, the Swiss people’s readiness to make enemy invasion a brutal, protracted affair deterred the Germans from marching into the tiny mountain nation, surrounded on all sides by the Axis. This Swiss policy that would later come to be known as “Offensive Neutrality” or “Armed Neutrality” is given much credit for the successful neutrality of Switzerland throughout the Second World War<sup>1</sup>. Was this truly the case? Was military might among the considerations of the Third Reich as she decided to postpone and ultimately scrap an invasion of Switzerland?

This question of how much military deterrence factored into the survival of Small States in the face of Great Power aggression can best be explored through a study of neutral Small States during World War II.

Here, however, an interjection must be made, and a distinction must be made clear between the two concepts of “Neutrality” and “Non-belligerency”. Neutrality, in reference to the period in question, was defined through the Hague Convention of 1907. This convention defined neutrality as strict impartiality and either prohibited the neutrals from aiding either party of a war (e.g., articles 2 and 4) or prohibited them from aiding one party but not the other (e.g., Article 9). In the

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<sup>1</sup> This position can be seen in many books and articles in relevant literature. A few of these are *The Eye of the Hurricane* (Braunschweig, 1999), *Swiss Neutrality Examined* (Dreyer & Jesse, 2014), *The Swiss and the Nazis* (Halbrook, 2006), *Between the Alps and a Hard Place* (Codevilla, 2000). While some scholars seem to value deterrence as the main pillar of Swiss independence, most if not all, conclude that it is one, albeit important, reason among others that saw the Swiss through the war unharmed.

contemporary scholarly discussions, however, many authors use the term “neutrality” to mean “non-belligerency”, which is to say they do not imply impartiality but the state of being out of the war. So, Sweden for instance, who was in contravention of the Hague Convention when she allowed the Nazis military access and the use of Swedish trains and railroads, is still cited among the European neutrals in every study. One does not even need to consult the Hague Convention to see that Spain, who provided Nazi Germany with ‘volunteer’ soldiers (Namely the *División Azul*), with labour, and who willingly shared military intelligence with them<sup>2</sup> was anything but impartial, however as she was a non-belligerent, she is, again, counted among the neutral states of World War II. Thus, we see that today, “neutral” has come to mean “non-belligerent” rather than “impartial”, and as the sources this study will consult and cite widely follow this logic, “neutral” and “non-belligerent” will be used interchangeably in this study as well, except for when it would lead to confusion or ambiguity. That said, readers are strongly encouraged to recognise and keep in mind that in large part, a “neutral” was on either the Allied side or the Axis, to varying degrees of support. This might constitute blatant support for the Axis Powers as in the case of Spain, or quietly hoping for the triumph of the Allies as in the case of Switzerland.

Of the six European neutrals that were spared the war, Ireland and Portugal were under considerably less tension, as they weren’t anywhere near the borders of the two main aggressors of the period: The Third Reich and the Soviet Union. It is possible to divide the remaining four into two camps:

1. Those who were relatively impartial and were threatened to be pulled into the war through an enemy invasion, namely Switzerland and Sweden.
2. Those who had decided or declared for one side and were threatened to be pulled into the war through the efforts of the nations they sided with, namely Turkey and Spain.

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<sup>2</sup> See Operation Mincemeat for the most concrete example of this.

In the first camp, Switzerland is relatively more representative of her camp as she was and still is not only the most famous neutral, but also a country known best and most widely for her neutrality. She was surrounded by the Axis as opposed to Sweden who had access to the Baltic Sea and who shared a long border with Finland. Finland was an Axis member in name, but hostile only to the Soviet Union<sup>3</sup>. And so, the Sword of Damocles was considerably more real and threatening for the completely besieged Switzerland than it was for Sweden.

In the second camp, Turkey is the more representative, as the Nazi efforts of bringing Spain into the war were infinitely smaller<sup>4</sup> and narrower in scope compared to the British efforts of bringing Turkey into the war, as we shall see further on. Spain was also only implicitly allied with Germany whereas Turkey was formally allied with Great Britain since before the war and all throughout.

In the interest of complete intellectual honesty, it must be admitted that Turkey and Switzerland were chosen because the author speaks Turkish and French in addition to English. That said, Turkey and Switzerland are also, as shown above, best fit to represent the neutrals of World War II in this context. Through the analysis of these two nations, we shall explore neutrality during World War II, how it was preserved and at what cost, and ultimately, how much deterrence and appeasement of the Great Powers each factored into the successful preservation of neutrality. The study will attempt to demonstrate that the preservation of the non-belligerence of a Small State is possible only through appeasement and concessions and never through deterrence via force of arms.

For such a rich and interesting subject, it is quite surprising that there are such few works on it in academic literature. Most of the works on this subject have been utilised in this study and can be found in the bibliography, however it is worth noting that none of them focus specifically on the pair of Switzerland and Turkey.

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<sup>3</sup> Finland never declared war upon the United States, and war was declared upon Finland by Great Britain, rather than vice-versa, in support of the Soviets.

<sup>4</sup> Hitler, a few days after the (unsuccessful) negotiations on bringing Spain into the war with Franco on 23 October 1940, is quoted to have said to Mussolini that he'd "prefer having his teeth pulled out without anaesthesia" than negotiate with Franco again.

Although the two countries are included alongside the other neutrals in a couple studies such as Neville Wylie's *European Neutrals and Non-Belligerents during the Second World War*, and Annette Baker Fox's *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II*, none yet focuses solely on these two countries. Most often, Turkey is left out of the "European neutrals" list, possibly because many do not consider Turkey a European country, whereas Turkish scholars largely choose to focus on Turkey alone.

For these reasons above, this study is expected to fill a glaring absence in academic literature.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **SETTING THE STAGE**

#### **1.1 Five Centuries of Neutrality**

The Swiss Army, long lauded for having the greatest infantry in all the world, was soundly defeated by the young king of France, François I de Valois, at the Battle of Marignano in 1515 bringing to a close the period of Swiss military ascendancy (Church & Head, 2013, p. 66). The two nations, as part of the peace deal, signed a “Treaty of Perpetual Peace” which required either party to seek a peaceable resolution to their problems in front of a tribunal rather than go to war, and also prohibited each party from supporting the enemies of the other in times of war (Holenstein, 2010). A counterpart of this Treaty of Perpetual Peace was already signed with the Habsburgs of Austria in 1511, and as a result, Switzerland was now at permanent peace with her biggest and most powerful neighbours (Church & Head, 2013, p. 67). Indeed, a few short years later Switzerland would abandon foreign adventures altogether, as the Second Musso War of 1531 would be the last ever war Switzerland initiated against an external enemy. From then on, until the Napoleonic Era, the Swiss would fight each other in bloody religious civil wars.

By the very end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the flames of revolution spread throughout Europe, fanned by Revolutionary France. In 1798, a small Swiss minority, with the military support of the French Revolutionaries, toppled the Swiss government, bringing an end to the Swiss Ancien Régime, and bringing about the new Helvetic Republic (Church & Head, 2013, p. 132). As a political entity, however, which was established with a French invasion of Switzerland, the Helvetic Republic was little more than a French client state, and this situation only solidified as Napoleon took charge and brought the entire continent to heel (Church & Head, 2013, pp. 132-143). Therefore, this new Switzerland participated in a series of foreign wars as part of Napoleon’s campaign. The end of this era, however, would also mark the official beginning of the famous Swiss Neutrality.

Following Napoleon’s exile to Elba, the members of the triumphant coalition met at Vienna in 1814 to decide on the reorganization of Europe and

relatedly, on a solution to the governmental and political crisis that plagued Switzerland since the fall of her Ancien Régime. The establishment of Switzerland as a neutral buffer state between France and Austria was added to the agenda on 20 March 1815 as Napoleon returned to France, but this was not accomplished until 20 November 1815, after Napoleon's final defeat, at which time the Great Powers of Europe all guaranteed the territorial independence and perpetual neutrality of Switzerland (Jorio, 2015). The Congress of Vienna had, in 1815, once and for all fixed the borders of Switzerland and established that Switzerland was and would forever be a neutral state.

When the Great War broke out, the Swiss were in a precarious situation. The people of Switzerland are culturally, ethnically, and linguistically composed of the German, French, Italian, and Romansch, and the Great War where the French and Italians fought opposite the Austrian and Germans, was a major test for Swiss neutrality as the population declared for either the Entente or the Central Powers (Rudolf Fuhrer, et al., 2015). This was also the first real application of the Swiss doctrine of Armed Neutrality, as the Swiss army was mobilised at the outbreak of the war, and although the number of mobilised troops fluctuated greatly during the four years, the borders were never left unguarded until the war finally ended in 1918 (Rudolf Fuhrer, 2015). One of the most impactful changes brought about, albeit indirectly, by the Great War, however, was the rise of Socialism in Switzerland. The Swiss political sphere increasingly fell within the influence of Socialists and Communists following the war, culminating at last in the Social Democratic Party (which was the leading Socialist party in Switzerland at the time) becoming the largest party in the country in the 1935 Elections with 28% of the votes. There were many different factors that contributed to this outcome, but all of them were, with varying degrees of directness, a result of World War I. Among these factors are:

1. Lenin's self-exile between 1914 and 1917 in Switzerland from Austria in protest of the war
2. the economic ruin of Switzerland due to the Entente's blockade on Switzerland and the general mobilization (Perrenoud, 2015)

3. the many workers' strikes during World War I (Bürigi, 2015)
4. the introduction of proportional representation in 1918 (Wylie, 2003, p. 333)

Despite the meteoric rise in power and influence of the Swiss Socialists, however, the conservative political establishment and the status quo challenged the left-wing at every step, and often succeeded in curtailing their efforts, with the wholehearted support of the military (Church & Head, 2013, p. 203). This political division would not be mended before World War II, and indeed, the people in power would use the coming of the storm as an excuse to further side-line the Socialist movement, alongside the Fascist movement as we shall see further on.

## **1.2 Out of the Ashes**

The Ottoman Empire had three great political rivals in her lifetime, amongst smaller ones like Venice and Genoa: The Austrian Habsburgs, the Persian Safavids and the Russian Romanovs. Of these three, two were familiar rivals that the Ottomans had dealt with, to varying degrees of success depending on the century, for long hundreds of years. Starting with the Battle of Mohács in 1526, the Ottomans and the Austrians vied for control over Hungary and the surrounding portions of the Balkans for nearly 300 years. The Ottomans, who had laid siege to Vienna twice and conquered much of Eastern Europe were later driven out of much of the lands they had taken. In 1791, Treaty of Sistova was signed, which made lasting peace between the Austrian and Ottoman Empires.

The Ottomans and Persians warred for a little over 300 years as well, starting with the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514. The conflict saw the two Empires compete for control over Eastern Anatolia, which was seen as an integral part of the Ottoman core of Anatolia but was closer to Persia culturally and religiously, over Mesopotamia and over the Caucasus. Although the conflicts wouldn't stop until the 1823 Treaty of Erzurum, the borders of the two empires were largely fixed in the 1639 Treaty of Zuhab.

In both rivalries, the Ottomans enjoyed enormous successes alongside disastrous defeats<sup>5</sup>. The Ottoman experience with the Tsardom of Russia, however, is an altogether different story. Whereas the two other rivalries had started during the period of Ottoman ascendancy in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, the overwhelming majority of the Russo-Turkish Wars<sup>6</sup> were fought after the latter half of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, well into the period of Ottoman stagnation and decline. Unsurprisingly, the history of the twelve Russo-Turkish Wars is a history of disasters for the Ottoman Empire, wherein only the War of 1710-1711 and the Crimean War of 1853-1856 ended in victory for the Ottomans, and that latter one only thanks to the intervention of France and Britain. With every victory, the Russians further undermined the Ottoman state and created new pretexts for successive wars, ultimately sponsoring the uprisings and independence of the Orthodox peoples in the Balkans (Finkel, 2007, pp. 636-638), leading to vast territorial losses for the Ottomans. As we shall see in detail below, this era of unmitigated disaster at the hands of Russia left a prominent legacy of mistrust and fear of Russians in the Turkish psyche.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Ottoman Empire, referred to famously as the Sick Man of Europe by Tsar Nicholas, was kept alive by the British and the French, who did not let this get in the way of some good old-fashioned imperialism. A nibble of Tunis for France, a bite of Egypt for Britain and maybe the island of Cyprus to wash it down. They dared not let the Empire collapse completely, however, as they were very wary of Russian interests in the region<sup>7</sup>. Around the same time when “The Great Game” was on between Russia and Britain in Afghanistan, the situation in the Near East was not very different. The charade finally came to an inglorious end, however, as the long-expired husk of what used to be the Ottoman Empire entered the Great War on the side of the Central Powers.

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<sup>5</sup> The Ottomans conquered their way through Eastern Europe and laid siege to the Austrian capital of Vienna twice, before ultimately being pushed out of Hungary and large parts of the Balkans. The Ottomans also conquered vast territories from the Safavids in the Wars of 1532-1555 and 1578-1590, and again in the War of 1623-1639.

<sup>6</sup> The first of the twelve major wars was fought between 1568 and 1570, but afterwards there was peace between the two empires for a little over a hundred years, until 1676. Then, from 1681 to 1914, the average period between two wars between the Russians and the Ottomans lasted 19.3 years on average.

<sup>7</sup> (Finkel, 2007, p. 604) (Ágoston & Masters, 2010, p. 162)

Defeat was prompt and total: the legendary defence of Gallipoli was the only real victory the Ottomans had won in the war (Finkel, 2007, p. 691), with the addition of Kut el Amara, which was perhaps the most humiliating defeat of the British in WWI, at the hands of the Ottomans, but which did not translate to success in the Middle Eastern Theatre. However, conjectural successes like Gallipoli or Kut el Amara, or the Russian withdrawal in 1917 in the Caucasus could not cover for the overall failure. After the Bulgarian Armistice severed the vital landline to Germany, the Ottoman Empire had no other option but to sue for peace, and the Ottoman Empire was set to be unceremoniously dismantled by the Triple Entente in the Sèvres Treaty following the war. The Great War left two important lessons for Turkish statesmen, both of which will be discussed in more detail further on:

1. The Committee of Union and Progress<sup>8</sup> were convinced to force the Empire into the war through German promises of restitution of lost territories. The Turks would no longer chase irredentist foreign adventures.
2. The Committee of Union and Progress were dazzled by Germany's military might and underestimated the power of the Entente. The Turks would later believe the French army invincible, and the British Empire to be infinitely resourceful.

As the Ottoman Empire was being invaded and occupied as stipulated in the Armistice of Mudros, however, something completely unprecedented happened. Whereas the rest of the Central Powers and affiliated nations were being pacified, invaded, and ruined by the various peace treaties forced onto them, the Turks began a movement of armed resistance in the Turkish core of Anatolia. This movement, *Milli Mücadele* (National Struggle), would turn out to be both a war of independence against the Entente's imperialistic ambitions, and a revolution against the obsolete and utterly impotent Ottoman Empire and its collaborationist leadership. The National Struggle would adopt the hero of Gallipoli, Mustafa

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<sup>8</sup> The Committee of Union and Progress was a military-political society that had played a very active part in the final years of the Empire, and which had forced themselves into dictatorial power through a coup in 1913. CUP was led by an infamous triumvirate, sometimes called the Three Pashas, Talat, Enver and Cemal Pashas.

Kemal, as its leader and would step by careful step secure Anatolia. After a brutal and devastating campaign, the Turks would drive out the Entente occupiers, emerge victorious in the conflicts with the Armenians and the Greeks and abolish first the Sultanate and later the Caliphate. Mustafa Kemal's close friend and second in command, İsmet Pasha, led the Turkish delegation in the Lausanne negotiations and eventually brought home victory in the form of the Western acceptance of most, but not all, Turkish demands. This would be a fateful proving ground for the man who would later come to be known as İsmet İnönü, successor to Kemal Atatürk as President and leader of the young Turkish nation.

İnönü was not a diplomat, but he was an expert of diplomacy. Joseph C. Grew, American diplomat and ambassador to Turkey, who had a history of dealing with İnönü and who was present at the conference, unwittingly demonstrates this perfectly. Traditionally, diplomacy was the playground of aristocrats or of well-bred, high-educated, well-spoken gentlemen. It was the art of making clever remarks and delivering moving speeches, of making subtle slights at your opponents and outwitting them verbally. İnönü perhaps had no skill for such things, or perhaps he didn't see the use in them. Either way, Mr. Grew paints a telling picture of İnönü's prowess, although perhaps unintentionally. Consider the following quote:

Some of the Allies failed to recognize the great change that had come about in Turkey since the Armistice of Mudros and the Treaty of Sèvres. They pounded the conference table and demanded one concession after another. General Ismet Pasha sat quietly and simply said 'no' to almost everything. He was in the driver's seat, and he knew it. The Allies had no stomach to fight so soon again. (Grew, 1954, p. 3)

Throughout the article, Mr. Grew details the many slights and insults directed at İnönü, oftentimes by Lord Curzon, and how he took them patiently on the chin. He was a soldier, and this was, one must assume, far from the worst injury he was subjected to. Mr. Grew relates the following story as a shortcoming of İnönü, however it points much to the contrary:

In actual debate [İnönü] was hopelessly outclassed, partly through the handicap of his deafness (...) and, also, I believe, because he was neither quick-witted nor keen of comprehension; nor did he appear to have a thorough grasp of the details of the subjects under debate, and many a time at the conference table he missed an admirable opportunity to score off Lord Curzon and others when being attacked and browbeaten. I remember once when Lord Curzon was attacking İsmet's objection to the continuance of the foreign stationnaire ships in Constantinople on the ground that they were a relic of the capitulations, Lord Curzon said, "But our only reason for keeping the stationnaires is for the purpose of obtaining transportation to and fro like cabs or taxi automobiles." What a hit İsmet would have made if he had replied "Then, Lord Curzon, I assume that you will have no objection to our maintaining a Turkish stationnaire in London, which is also a port and where transportation is equally as necessary as in Constantinople." (Grew, 1954, p. 6)

Leaving aside the question of the Turkish capacity to deploy and maintain a stationnaire in London, this citation shows all too well how the grand and famous diplomats of the era put far too much emphasis on witty repartee and not nearly enough on achieving actual results and how they allowed personal pride to get in the way of national interests. İnönü put aside the pageantry and instead focused on getting work done. During the conference, in both instalments, İnönü turned a deaf ear, at times literally, to Lord Curzon's insults and lengthy attacks and insisted stoically on his terms of independence and sovereignty, which he ultimately secured: The Treaty of Lausanne was an immense success for İnönü and for the Republic of Turkey (Cleveland, 2004, p. 178).

Despite the vast diplomatic, political, and cultural victories that followed the Turkish War of Independence, however, the already outdated and outclassed economy Turkey would inherit from the Ottoman Empire was further devastated during World War I and the National Struggle. Tens of thousands of men died or were mutilated during the wars; the earth was scorched, and towns and villages were burnt to the ground by friend and foe alike and war took its toll on the country in general. The global depression of the '30s certainly did not help and the immense dynamism and innovation of Atatürk's new Turkey in the cultural sphere was

absent in the economic sphere (Cleveland, 2004, p. 182). The result, going into World War II, was a young, bold, and daring new Turkey, but with an economy in shambles and a hollow excuse for industry. Indeed, even during World War II, the Turkish industry was woefully underdeveloped: Turkey only had one coal field, few enough industrial installations to be “counted on a single hand”, three fuel refineries that never worked at full capacity and one electrical plant (Weisband, 1973, p. 136).

## CHAPTER II

### BEFORE THE STORM (1918-1939)

#### 2.1 The Western Allies

As war steadily and openly approached in the 1930s, the Western Allies, which consisted at this point of France and the British Empire, were trying very hard to avoid it. Their most prominent and well-known means of doing so was the infamous policy of Appeasement<sup>9</sup>. This did not mean, however, that that was their only effort: Deterrence was a primary effort of the Western Allies as well. This can be seen in the unyielding diplomatic efforts of France and especially Britain in creating a network of alliances around Germany and Russia<sup>10</sup>, in a bid to have them avert their hungry gaze. As an extension of this policy, the Western Allies looked to guarantee the safety and stability of the independent nations in the region. The British hoped to preserve peace through appeasement all the way until March of 1939, when Hitler ordered the complete invasion of the rest of Czechoslovakia, at which point they started an extensive, if long overdue, re-armament program.

##### 2.1.1 Switzerland

Long before the war broke out, the Swiss saw the omens, and felt threatened by the Third Reich, which was building up its powerbase rapidly. Not only was Switzerland part-German (in addition to part-French, part-Italian and part-Romansch), which stoked anxieties about the Third Reich's appetite for culturally or ethnically German regions of sovereign countries, but they were, alongside Belgium, a buffer state between Germany and France. In the previous war, Germany had trampled Belgium as part of the Schlieffen Plan to outflank France, but Switzerland was the alternative to Belgium, spared only by virtue of her mountainous terrain<sup>11</sup>. There was no guarantee that the Germans would not try the

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<sup>9</sup> For further reading on the subject the author heartily recommends "British Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement, 1935-39" (Adams, 1993)

<sup>10</sup> See chapters 16 and 17 in "How War Came" (Watt, 1989) for British efforts in the Balkans, and "The Formation of Cordon Sanitaire" (Bondarenko, 2019) for details on the Franco-British sponsored Cordon Sanitaire.

<sup>11</sup> Helmuth von Moltke's comments on the Schlieffen Plan reveal that Switzerland is a strategically better choice than Belgium in the long run, however the German war plan relied on

same thing in this war, to outflank the much-improved fortifications of the Maginot Line, but this time through Switzerland. This led the Swiss to seek the aid of France, with whom they concluded a joint-defence stratagem. This stratagem dictated that in case of a German invasion of Switzerland, the French army would march in from the west and into Swiss defensive positions, buttressing and fortifying the Swiss army (Wylie, 2002, p. 344). Although some<sup>12</sup> may argue that this is a violation of the much-lauded Swiss neutrality, it is in reality but a defensive agreement which would only come into effect in case of a German invasion of Switzerland, in which case Switzerland would be a belligerent in the war, making their neutrality automatically forfeit. Of course, one could rightfully make the case that concluding such an agreement with France but not a counterpart of it with Germany is, in effect, a violation of their neutrality. One needs to keep in mind the realities of the period, however. France had such little appetite for war at the time that let alone an unprovoked invasion of Switzerland, they didn't even make an effort of enforcing the de-militarised status of the Rhineland for fear of escalation. Germany, on the other hand, had a habit of using any and all means of meddling in the internal affairs of sovereign nations to ultimately grab chunks out of them or annex them entirely<sup>13</sup>, and it would have been suicide to just hand over a perfect excuse to march German troops into Switzerland. Harkening back to the very beginning of this study, it is clear that with this agreement, Switzerland was just doing what it had to do to survive.

Meanwhile, Britain was building a base in Switzerland for counter-Axis espionage. Lieutenant-Colonel Claude Dansey started building an intelligence network, known as the Z Organisation, in Switzerland in 1936, with its headquarters in Zürich, for the British Secret Intelligence Service and astoundingly, the head of the Swiss intelligence service, Roger Masson, was one of the resources Dansey

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knocking France out of the war rapidly, and a march through the Swiss mountains would be anything but swift (Stackelberg & Winkle, 2002, p. 31).

<sup>12</sup> Such as Neville Wylie, cited just before.

<sup>13</sup> This can be seen in the *Anschluss* of Austria, in the Munich Conference and the ensuing fait-accomplis of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, in Memel and later after the start of the war, in the "protecting their neutrality against Allied aggression" pretext of invading the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, Denmark and Norway, as we shall see further on.

drew on (Wylie, 1996, p. 443). The Swiss knowingly allowed these operations, and would continue to do so during the war, even at the risk of provoking the Germans into invading, mostly because they believed this was an important factor in preventing a British blockade on Switzerland (Wylie, 1996, pp. 448-449). And although the official stance of the Swiss government against British intelligence operations in Switzerland was one of deliberate ignorance, that of individual Swiss officials and officers, such as the aforementioned Roger Masson or some high-ranking officers of the Swiss army, was one of collaboration and cooperation (Wylie, 1996, pp. 449-450).

### **2.1.2 Turkey**

Our object now is to strengthen the ties that bind us to other nations. There may be a great many countries in the world, but there is only one civilization, and if a nation is to achieve progress, she must be a part of this civilization. The Ottoman Empire began to decline the day when, proud of her success against the West, she cut the ties that bound her to the European nations.  
-Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, 29 October 1923 (Versan, 1984, p. 247)

Kemal Atatürk's new Turkey was intent on having amicable relations with and close ties to Europe. Atatürk desired nothing more than to have Turkey stand among European nations, especially Britain and France, as a friend and as an equal. There was, however, a small bump on the road to this desired future: the French Mandate of Syria's Sanjak of Alexandretta, known today as the Turkish Province of Hatay.

Hatay, due to its majority-Turkish population, was one of the few territories that the *Misak-ı Milli* (National Pact) included in the Turkish Homeland, but which Turkey failed to obtain at the 1923 Lausanne Conference. The disagreement was kept contained thanks to two agreements between the French and the Turks in 1921 and 1926. In 1936, however, the Mandate of Syria started a slow transition into a sovereign Syrian Arab State. A state that would rule over Hatay, which previously enjoyed an official special status of separate administration. This was unacceptable to Turkey, as well as to the Hatay Turks, who organised protests and riots, which

were put down quite heavy-handedly by Arab forces the French had raised to keep the peace in Syria, resulting in the deaths of Turkish civilians. Turkey, furious, lodged protests at France both directly and via the League of Nations and started amassing considerable amounts of soldiers on the Turkish-Syrian border. Although there were, among the French higher-ups, hawks who would have France go to war with Turkey over what they perceived to be Turkish insolence and warmongering, the French government, recognising that they had more pressing matters to deal with in the Pact of Steel, yielded to Turkey and the special administrative status of Hatay was protected, with its own government, assembly, and elections. The way these were set up, however, led to even more unrest in the province among the various ethnic and religious minorities and the Turkish majority, and following an almost exact repeat of the situation that led to this (riots, deaths, Turkish troop concentrations, protests, and arguments) the French once again conceded to Turkey. Turkish troops were admitted into Hatay to help keep the peace and the Republic of Hatay was founded. Although still under French sovereignty, it was a markable improvement to the previous resolution. (Watt, 1989, pp. 285-288) The Republic of Hatay would, in 1939, dissolve herself through a referendum and annex herself into the Republic of Turkey.

Turkey was the cornerstone of the Balkan security efforts of the Western Allies, especially of Britain (Watt, 1989, p. 271). So much so that, the British cabinet was advised that “every effort should be made (...) to persuade Turkey into an alliance.” (Watt, 1989, p. 213). This was the first foundations of what would later be signed as the Anglo-French-Turkish Tripartite Pact. Although the Turkish, as well as British, efforts to unite the Balkans into a self-sufficient block of joint-defence were thwarted at every turn by the Germans and Italians through Yugoslavia and mostly through Hungary and Bulgaria, (Watt, 1989, pp. 283-284) the Turks had been won over, concretely, by the Western Allies, as evidenced clearly in İnönü’s promise to Weygand: “Your security is our security.” (Watt, 1989, p. 282)

Although Turkey, according to Saracoğlu, did not fear Italy in the least (Watt, 1989, p. 281), she was still concerned over Italy's aggressive expansionism in the Balkans and her declared ambitions in the Mediterranean, especially considering her position just off Turkey's Aegean coast (Watt, 1989, pp. 272-273), and with the German and Italian habit of steamrolling small states in consideration, Turkey aligned herself with Britain and France for protection against a potential future aggression from the Fascist bloc, convinced that her new allies would extend their aid to Turkey but would hardly be in need of Turkey's aid themselves (Fox, 1959, p. 16).

Turkey had, however, still had several reservations to be assuaged before she was ready to commit herself to an open and official alliance with Britain and France, and chief of these concerns was the Turkish paranoia of Russia. In truth, paranoia is not exactly the right word. Although the Turks were veritably obsessed with the Soviet threat and saw security concerns vis-à-vis Russia in nearly every field, even those that have nothing to do with the Russians, paranoia implies that there is no real cause for concern and in the case of Turkey and Russia, there was every reason for the Turks to be afraid. This will be demonstrated in excruciating detail at the end of this chapter and in further chapters, but for now suffice it to say that the Turkish government was rightfully very threatened of the Soviets. To this end, the first instinct of the Turks was to include the Soviet Union into the tripartite and make it a four-way network of mutual guarantees, and they had informed their partners in France and Britain of this necessity (Watt, 1989, pp. 310-311). Although having the Soviet Union included in the alliance which Turkey saw as her guarantee of security had the obvious advantages, one of the primary motivations of the Turks in this overture was to make sure that if there was to be another Great War, the Soviets participated in it. It would be the greatest disaster should there be a Red Army standing unscathed after war had devastated the nations and armies of Europe (Watt, 1989, p. 282), an anxiety the Turkish government would repeat tirelessly to her British ally all throughout the war.

For the longest while, it seemed as though the Turks would have their prayers answered, as despite the obvious foot-dragging, the Soviets seemed to be genuinely interested in being a part of this alliance. Then, the blow that suddenly and without warning struck the world into a stupor shook these negotiations and Turkey's best aspirations as violently as it shook the world: The Soviets, still in the midst of negotiations with Britain and France of an alliance against Germany, signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact with Germany. (Watt, 1989, p. 311) Turkish hopes were irrevocably dashed. The Tripartite was still infinitely useful and necessary for Turkey, but now they had to take into consideration this new configuration of powers and alliances, where the Soviet Union, the primary source of Turkish anxiety, was allied to Germany, against whom the Turks were now siding with the Western Allies. To this end, Turkey added a reservation to the Tripartite Agreement, which they would, in the future, exploit to no end: Turkey would be absolved of any and all of her responsibilities if their fulfilment meant open conflict with the Soviet Union (Fox, 1959, p. 16). With that out of the way, the mutual assistance pact was signed between Britain, France and Turkey on 19 October 1939.

## **2.2 The Pact of Steel**

As the Allies looked to their friends and shored up their collective defences, the Pact of Steel was on a mission of domination. Italy was looking to expand her empire in and beyond the Mediterranean, preying on the hopelessly outmatched states like Ethiopia and Albania. Germany, meanwhile, was playing a more subtle game in addition to trampling small sovereigns. She did not shy away from duplicitously subverting and invading her neighbours like Czechoslovakia and Austria, but she was also on a quest to obtain new trading partners, on her own terms, that would in the long term secure her economic stability and at the same time leave said partners dependant on her. The spirit of Autarky was characteristically present in these trade relations. It may be argued, however, that this system was born out of economic necessity rather than out of expansionist ambitions; as the Great Depression of 1929 completely upended global trade in addition to absolutely obliterating Germany's economy, the German government

resorted to drastic and dramatic measures as part of their economic recovery program. As dictated by Hjalmar Schacht's New Plan, Germany traded with neutral nations leading up to and during the war with a barter system: Germany would import large quantities of goods, usually raw materials, and in return the exporters of said goods were repaid in credits with which they could choose and import German-produced goods (Weisband, 1973, pp. 98-99). This meant that any nation who wanted to export to Germany had to, in effect, also import from Germany, and consequently, they had fewer means at their disposal of trading with other countries.

### **2.2.1 Switzerland**

As a country with a significant German population, Switzerland was high on the hit list of the Third Reich. Hitler harboured an immense dislike for the tiny Alpine republic, which he called a "pimple on the face of Europe" (Hitler, et al., 2000, p. 800), made clear by his words to Mussolini and Count Ciano in a meeting in June of 1941: "Switzerland possesses the most disgusting and miserable people and political system. The Swiss are the mortal enemies of the new Germany." (Leitz, 2000, p. 14) In addition to this intense hatred, there was also the matter of the German people of Switzerland. A primary goal of Hitler was to unite all the German peoples under one country, a goal he pursued relentlessly especially before the September of 1939. These facts combined put Switzerland on the crosshairs of the Nazi leadership.

Indeed, the Swiss Nazi Party, which began operations in 1934, was under direct orders from Berlin to pave the path to an *Anschluss* in Switzerland (Codevilla, 2000, p. 70). Switzerland, however, was nothing like Austria. Not only did the crushing majority of the Swiss population lacked the smallest shred of sympathy for the Nazis, as demonstrated by the significantly small numbers<sup>14</sup> of Swiss Nazis, they were also staunch advocates of democracy, and they were acutely aware that the Nazis represented the death of democracy. The Swiss press<sup>15</sup> demonstrates this

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<sup>14</sup> (Braunschweig, 1999, p. 665) (Halbrook, 2006, p. 222)

<sup>15</sup> As the author speaks French but not German, only Swiss newspapers printed in French were examined for this study. That being said, contempt for Hitler and his Nazis was greater and was cultivated sooner in the German-speaking portion of the Swiss population (Braunschweig, 1999, p.

quite well. Below you will find their opinion on the *Anschluss* of Austria, which the Swiss Nazi Party was ordered to repeat in Switzerland. This will shed light not only on the position of the Swiss vis-à-vis Nazism but also how quite unrealistic the task of the Swiss Nazis was.

E. Paul Graber, editor of the Socialist Swiss newspaper *La Sentinelle*, wrote on the eve of *Anschluss*, on 12 March 1938, under the headline “A grave hour for Europe - Democracy is a reed that bends but does not break”: “Austria, forced into a corner with her back against the wall in Berchtesgaden, finds herself in an internal crisis which could at any moment now take a tragic turn and perhaps put an end to her national destiny.” and ends the article with this affirmation: “I believe in the invincible strength of the free peoples, just as I believe in the fateful collapse of tyrannies.” (Graber, 1938)

Two days later, on 14 March 1938, with the reception of the news of *Anschluss*, Graber wrote an opinion column on the front page of *La Sentinelle*, where he predicted that having swallowed Austria, Hitler would look next to either Czechoslovakia or Switzerland. “For the moment, the fate of our country is already being played out in Austria.” He says, and adds “(...) does everyone understand the necessity of creating, starting immediately, a moral unity in our country, on the foundations of the defence of democracy?” (Graber, 1938)

On the same issue of *La Sentinelle* is the article penned under the pseudonym “LABOR.” with the headline “Civilisation in peril!”, which is a scathing denouncement of Autarky, filled with criticisms and insults that liken Autarky to “poisonous mushrooms, growing out of the muck of the post-war” and concludes that the time has come for humanity to discard this absurd system, lest they lose their civilised ways and become “degenerates robbed of reason.” (LABOR., 1938)

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663), which leads one to assume that the media analysed here, as harsh as it is against Nazism, is not over-representant of the Swiss disdain for the Nazis.

On 13 March 1938, *Le Nouvelliste* reports the dissolution of Austria under the headline “Austria under German domination – Once again force triumphs over law – Tragic situation”. The article likens the situation to 1914 and says that the ultimatum given to Austria by Germany is even more humiliating than the one Austria had given to Serbia, against which Austria conceded. It goes on to print Kurt Schuschnigg’s final address to the nation with this preamble: “The poor chancellor's farewells are truly pitiable, and we dare anyone with a good heart to read them without deep emotion.” The article then calls *Anschluss* by what it really is with the subtitle “German troops invade Austria” (Le Nouvelliste, 1938)

*La Liberté*, on 14 March 1938, does not present its own editorial on the news, preferring instead to relay exactly the news as reported by Austrian news agencies, based in Brannau, Vienna and Linz, all dated the 13<sup>th</sup> which would mean they were already under the firm control and strict censorship of the Nazis. The headline under which this news is presented, however, written by the editor of *La Liberté*, is still telling: “Austria under Nazi reign”. (Le Nouvelliste, 1938)

And so, it is clear that Switzerland would never share in the fate of Austria. Subversion and undermining of democracy were quite clearly impossible to be achieved in Switzerland. The Swiss were simply too dearly tied to their democratic traditions and were too staunchly opposed to Fascism. Furthermore, they possessed a united and strong national consciousness, made even stronger in the 1930s as a precaution to the storm that was raging all around them (Wylie, 2002, p. 334), which necessitated and encouraged the people to speak up and speak out against Fascism, which meant that Menefreghismo, which ultimately was what led to the Fascist triumph in Italy, was resolutely out of the question. In any case, the Swiss government had indirectly banned the activities of the Swiss Nazi Party in 1936, when the leader of the party was assassinated, and the Swiss government prohibited any Swiss citizen from succeeding him. This was followed a year later by the Swiss government holding the German Embassy directly accountable for all the actions of the Nazi Party in Switzerland and finally the dissolution of the party in 1940<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> (Codevilla, 2000, p. 71) (Halbrook, 2006, p. 192)

There was, however, another precedent that could have doomed Switzerland in the interwar years: Czechoslovakia.

As with much of the world, the Swiss press made the mistake of accepting and endorsing the unlawful and illegitimate trampling of an independent nation's sovereignty in exchange for a vague promise of ephemeral peace. *La Liberté* writes on 1 October 1938 of the "Triumphant return of the negotiators of the peace." (*La Liberté*, 1938), and in the column adjacent, under the headline "Peace and the Rosary", tells its readers that

The nightmare of war has dissipated. The world has stopped on the brink of the cliff where it would have plummeted into the abyss. What mourning, what ruin, what horrors we have been spared! We can never give thanks fervently enough to Providence for having directed events in such a way that the catastrophe, to which we were already resigned, and the wreck of civilization, which seemed inevitable, were averted. (*La Liberté*, 1938)

An author of *Le Nouvelliste*, under the pen name Ch. Saint-Maurice, echoes the same naïveté but doubles down on it. On the front page of its 1 October 1938 issue, between the two articles with the headlines "Blessed are the peacemakers" and "Munich Agreement – All around the world is a delirious joy" are the photographs of Neville Chamberlain, Edouard Daladier, Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler, with the subtitle "The four who assured peace" (*Le Nouvelliste*, 1938), as if it wasn't Hitler, and to a lesser extent Mussolini, who hadn't endangered peace in the first place. The former of the two articles mentioned above is particularly insolent, an especially infuriating passage from it reads:

Nobody in any country believed that Czechoslovakia, born out of the Treaty of Versailles, having therefore, in its present territory, only twenty years of existence, was, via deus ex machina, the paragon of honour and of Europe. "For whom and for what would we fight?", asked the people all around. (Saint-Maurice, 1938)

Other Swiss newspapers published on 1 October 1938 are of the same mind: "The great day of peace", *La Gruyere* reports (*La Gruyere*, 1938); "The International Crisis – Agreement at last! The nightmare dissipates", *Le Jura* echoes

(E.J., 1938). Among the Swiss press published in French, only *La Sentinelle* takes a critical approach.

On 30 September 1938, Paul Graber of *La Sentinelle*, under the headline “No more collective security! No more L.O.N.” attacks everyone from bankers who financed Hitler and Mussolini’s rearmament efforts, to the diplomats and statesmen who supported the reign of violence in Ethiopia and Spain and hindered or prevented punitive sanctions, to the journalists and politicians who undermined democracy and glorified the dictatorship, who spoke of “strong power and inflexible will” and blames them for the death of the League of Nations and of the concept of “Collective Security”. “All these governments which, one after the other, withdrew their commitments of solidarity”, he says, have killed the rule of law, international peace and the collective security of all nations, and have delivered the world to the rule of force. He concludes with these words:

There is no law nor justice to the rules [Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler and Mussolini] set, there is but the weight of cannon and warplanes. Europe had tried to win back its place in the sun of law and peace, but instead she returns to the darkness of violence and of war. Such is the product of fascism. Accursed be its name. (Graber, 1938)

Graber follows up on this article on 3 October 1938, in *La Sentinelle*, under the headline “A new collection of “guarantees” – peace is saved, rule of law is delivered”, a sarcastic and facetious remark as we shall see. He starts off by explaining how a Nazi organisation, bankrolled by Germany, “worked” the Sudeten, and radicalised its German population and tormented the rest, and when things came to a head, Hitler intervened in defiance of all law. Prague armed itself, Hitler announced that he would attack these miserable Czechs, in direct contravention of the Locarno Pact, of the Briand-Kellogg Pact and of the principles of the League of Nations, and the British and French nations who were bound by all these international agreements, and France also by the mutual assistance pact with Czechoslovakia, to uphold the territorial integrity of Czechoslovakia, betrayed her and consented to the Sudetenland, which had never belonged to Germany, to be

given to Germany. “The only thing left [for Czechoslovakia] to do was to announce to the world her protests. What good are the protests of Small States? They’ll be gone with the wind. What purpose, then, do guarantees and treaties serve?” To conclude, he addresses how Hitler issued a guarantee to Czechoslovakia after ripping the Sudetenland from it, an act of hollow magnanimity that would prove to be a regular habit of Hitler.

Hitler guaranteeing Czechoslovakia! The wolf who forced himself in through the door of the sheepfold and ate a few of the sheep declares himself the protector of the sheep that remain. From now on, the rights of Small States no longer have any refuge. Peace is saved – except in Spain where Hitler and Mussolini continue the war against democracy, counting on the complacency of France and England. But the rule of law is lost, and it was the only safeguard of Small States. Czechoslovakia, at the heart of Europe, will remain a wailing testimony of decadence to an era buried in the most despicable moral bankruptcies and lowest abdications. (Graber, 1938)

The Swiss press can find some limited redemption, however, in the fact that they mostly clearly realised their mistake after the complete dismantling of Czechoslovakia on 15 March 1939. All the newspapers, printed in French, have returned to their critical position of the Third Reich with such articles as: “Czechoslovakia once again dismembered.”<sup>17</sup>, printed on 15 March 1939 (*La Liberté*, 1939) and “The annexation of the Czech countries to the Reich justified by arguments that are dangerous for all her neighbours.”, printed on 16 March 1939 (*La Liberté*, 1939), both by *La Liberté*; “A shocking turn of events – Czechoslovakia no longer exists. With a single stroke, Hitler has erased it – The triumph of cunning and daring.”<sup>18</sup> Printed on 16 March 1939 in *Le Jura* (E.J., 1939); “Czechoslovakia mercilessly butchered at the hands of her voracious neighbours –

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<sup>17</sup> This article goes a long way to make up for how *La Liberté* bungled the report on the Munich Agreement by pointing out to its readers that although Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ukraine “proclaimed their independences”, that is, in fact, “a flimsy façade that obscures their subjugation to the Reich.”

<sup>18</sup> Which is critical of Hitler despite what the title suggests, exclaiming, most noteworthy, “To think that there are still, even among [The Swiss], people who still put trust in the words of Hitler!”

Ukraine to Hungary, Bohemia to Germany – Occupation by armed forces here and there” printed on 16 March 1939 in *Le Nouvelliste* (Le Nouvelliste, 1939).

### 2.2.2 Turkey

Throughout the interwar period, and for the first half of the war, Turkey felt relatively unthreatened by Germany, believing them to be much too far away to be of any real danger (Fox, 1959, p. 16). Italy’s disregard for the rights and sovereignties of weaker states and her openly declared ambitions in the Mediterranean, or *Mare Nostrum* (Our Sea) as they called it, coupled with their presence in the Dodecanese Islands just off the Aegean coast of Turkey did, however, raise some eyebrows and cause a few headaches in the Turkish leadership (Watt, 1989, pp. 272-273). Neither of these two warmongers presented an insurmountable threat to Turkey in the eyes of the Turkish leadership, however, as evidenced by this exchange between Franz von Papen, the German ambassador to Turkey, and Şükrü Saracoğlu, the then Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs:

[von Papen’s] attempt to persuade the Turkish Foreign Minister that, so long as Turkey was Germany’s friend, she need not fear Italy, was met by the blunt remark that Turkey did not appreciate dependence on the friendship of others for her security. As for the Italians, the Turks were not afraid of them. (...) Did Germany intend to proceed further in the Balkans? ‘*Jamais de la vie*’ [Not in this lifetime] replied Papen. Then Germans can sleep quietly in their beds, replied Saracoğlu. Papen retired, visibly disconcerted. (Watt, 1989, p. 281)

The greatest concern that Turkey had vis-à-vis the Axis was her major and ever-growing economic dependence on Germany. Although the figures fluctuated through the years, mostly through a conscious cooperative effort by the Turkish government and the Western Allies to reduce Turkish economic dependence on Germany, Germany had the lion’s share of Turkish exports almost always, and consequently supplied most of her imports as well, most often several times higher than what Britain and the U.S. imported and exported (Weisband, 1973, p. 96).

Hjalmar Schacht’s scheme was already discussed above, but in addition to all the advantages it provided, trade with Turkey had a couple extra incentives and

advantages: First of all, Turkey was one of the leading producers of chrome, especially in this part of the world. About 17% of the world's chrome output was produced by Turkey, and in 1939, 60% of the chrome Germany required came from Turkey (İnanç, 2006, p. 908). Chrome was the cornerstone of military industry at the time, being used in everything from tanks to warships, which meant that Turkey was an invaluable trade partner. Secondly, pulling Turkey into the German sphere, aligning them ideologically and perhaps even adding them to the Axis later on was an enticing prospect for Germany. Above all, the Nazi leadership, particularly Hitler, had an almost obsessive fondness for Turkey.<sup>19</sup> Having Turkey in the Axis bloc would also allow for Germany to use her as a banner to rally the Turkic peoples of the Soviet Union around, both to use in the fight against the Russians and to later conscript as collaborator forces to serve in other fronts and to use in the occupation of the unbelievably vast Soviet lands, similar to the *Ostlegionen*. Pan-Turkism, as it's called, seems to have occupied at least some space in the considerations of the German leadership.<sup>20</sup> Finally, military relations between the two countries had been steadily improving since 1924, most significantly through the considerable number of military officers teaching in Turkish war academies, instilling the German school in many young Turkish officers, and the not insignificant German investments into developing the Turkish defence industry (Avcı, 2016, p. 204).

This dependence only deepened and became more disconcerting after the German invasion and annexation of Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia was the biggest supplier of armaments to every Balkan nation, including Turkey, and after the March of 1939, these nations had to play nice with Germany if they wanted to be able to arm their soldiers (Watt, 1989, p. 195). Turkey was relatively more fortunate in this regard, as the Tripartite she concluded with her French and British allies promised to alleviate her shortage of armaments, but in reality, the delivery of war equipment never was anywhere near enough, especially after the fall of

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<sup>19</sup> See "Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination" (Ihrig, 2014) for in-depth exploration of this.

<sup>20</sup> For more on the subject see "Pan-Turkism and Europeanism" (Çalış, 1997), especially pages 105-106. Note, however, that rather than hoping to use Turkey to recruit Turkic peoples, Germany might have been hoping to use Pan-Turkism to recruit Turkey into the Axis. A chicken-or-egg problem though it is, either explanation is demonstrative of German willingness to recruit Turkey.

France. Britain alone could never supply Turkey with the arms she needed, in fact Britain couldn't even arm her own army adequately (Watt, 1989, p. 195). This fact would throughout the war be the second excuse (in addition to the avoidance of conflict with Russia mentioned above) Turkey would use to absolve herself of her bellicose duties.

As for the Turkish press, which was in this period synonymous with public opinion, it was more divided than its Swiss counterpart<sup>21</sup>. The biggest newspaper of Turkey, by circulation, *Cumhuriyet* is an outright Nazi advocate. The big part of its writers were Nazi sympathisers, the newspaper itself was allegedly bankrolled by “the German underground” and the owners and editors of the newspaper “needed no bribing since they were Turanists and Racists” (Weisband, 1973, pp. 78-80). Of the five biggest newspapers, however, only *Cumhuriyet* could be considered relatively pro-Nazi on the whole<sup>22</sup>. The next biggest, *Tan* was unambiguously anti-Nazi, being a Socialist and pro-Moscow newspaper. With the exception of *Tasvir-i Efkar*, a smaller pro-Nazi newspaper, the rest of the Turkish press mostly followed a centrist approach. It should be said, however, that a centrist approach usually, although with very poignant exceptions, constituted a critical position of Germany, considering that most sane and unbiased people would agree that Germany under Hitler was a despicable bully and a gross abuser of human rights and freedoms.

Two important exceptions to this were the earlier years of the period in question and when Hitler was struggling against Communism. Before the Third Reich had once and for all kicked off World War II with the invasion of Poland, Turkish sympathies for Germany were still high, thanks to the “fellow victim of the Entente” narrative. The Ottoman Empire was dismantled at the hands of the Entente

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<sup>21</sup> The assertions that will be made following this sentence are based, unless otherwise specified, on the author's unpublished undergraduate dissertation “Perception of the Nazi Regime in the Turkish Press Leading up to World War II (1933-1939)” (Sanus & Tuğtan, 2019). For further reading on the attitude of the Turkish press in this period see amongst others “İkinci Dünya Savaşı Dönemi (1939-1945) Türk Siyasetinin Köşe Yazıları Üzerinden İnşası: Cumhuriyet Gazetesi Örneği” (Eroğlu, 2012), “II. Dünya Savaşının Cumhuriyet ve Tan Gazetelerinde Temsili” (Yavuz, 2016) and “Türk Basınında Hitler Almanyası (1933-1945)” (Kılıç, 2010).

<sup>22</sup> These five were: 1) Cumhuriyet with 16.000, 2) Ulus with 12.000, 3) Tan with 12.000, 4) Yeni Sabah with 10.000 and 5) Akşam with 10.000 (Weisband, 1973, p. 74)

and Turkey was almost butchered in the Sèvres Treaty, and therefore the Turks sympathised with Germany who was butchered in the Versailles Treaty, and looked past many of her early transgressions as attempts to gain back what was rightfully hers before being cruelly taken away by the Entente. As for the second exception, while Communism was a frightening and hated ideology in most everywhere around the world, it was often doubly reviled in Turkey owing to the Turkish phobia of Russia, and this usually led the Turkish journalists to endorse and support Hitler and the Nazis in such cases, or at the very least adopt an apologist stance. Therefore, the situation of the Turkish press can perhaps be described best as a spectrum where *Cumhuriyet* and *Tan* always found themselves on the opposite ends, with the other newspapers moving in between depending on the year and the content of the news they were reporting on.

The earliest demonstrations of this are present in how the Turkish press presented the annexations of Austria and of Czechoslovakia.

On 14 March 1938, Ömer Rıza Doğrul writes in *Tan*:

There are no doubts that the plebiscite that was to be held yesterday by the defender of Austrian independence Doctor Schuschnigg would result in favour of independence. However, today, the defenders of Austrian independence are imprisoned in dungeons under suspicion of spreading Bolshevism in Austria. And the new plebiscite will be held under the supervision of the German army, so it is expected for the whole of Austria to vote in favour of uniting with Germany. There is no other possibility. (Doğrul, 1938)

The same day, Yunus Nadi has this to say in *Cumhuriyet*:

Austria, who isn't self-sufficient financially, turns towards Germany with whom she shares a racial bond, and Germany takes on the duty of integrating this German country. This was prevented for as long as one can force apart two peoples of the same race, who speak the same tongue, who share the same culture and values and who share a border. (Nadi, 1938)

Still on 14 March 1938, Feyzullah Kazan, in *Akşam*, conjures a certainly interesting tale in which the Austrian people, the large majority of which were

Nazis, were very enthusiastic to unite with Germany, however their will was almost suppressed:

The supporters of the Catholic priests party and the Habsburg dynasty (...) forced Prime Minister Schuschnigg to call a hasty election in which the socialists and communists, and the Habsburg supporters who had infiltrated in a bloody manner the government and the [Fatherland Front] would be included but the younger generations, who are overwhelmingly national socialists, would be excluded.

Kazan claims that the national socialist movement in Austria pushed back against this “backward” decision of the prime minister and as a result Schuschnigg chose to resign his position to Seyss-Inquart, who formed a government with the members of his party and “requested military assistance from Germany to prevent bloodshed as a result of a potential intervention”, upon which the German army marched into Austria. (Kazan, 1938)

The story is more or less the same in the March of 1939. Ömer Rıza Doğrul, on 16 March 1939, in *Tan*, under the headline “The Death of Czechoslovakia”, claims the heroic last stand of the valiant Czech people against the tyranny of the Third Reich was undermined by the underhanded betrayal of the Slovaks who were incited by outside elements, and much like *La Liberté*, notes that now Slovakia is independent but only in appearance. (Doğrul, 1939)

The same day, Muharrem Feyzi Togay wrote in *Cumhuriyet* that the Slovaks and Ruthenians were subjugated and oppressed by the Czechs and yearned for independence, but when the Czechs “sent an army 100.000 strong to quell the separatist movements”, “Germany, who embraced the idea that every nation in Central and Eastern Europe should decide their own fate, welcomed and supported the Slovak and Ruthenian struggle for independence.” (Togay, 1939)

A.Ş. Esmer is scathingly critical of Czechoslovakia in his article in *Ulus*, published on 17 March 1939, “The Death of the Sick Man”, referring to Czechoslovakia. For much of the article he blames the rape of Czechoslovakia at the hands of Hitler on Czechoslovakia, for various reasons such as having been

granted far too much land and therefore minorities upon her foundation after World War I, having clung to her useless alliances with France and the Soviet Union, thereby invalidating her claim to neutrality and inspiring suspicion and concern in Germany, refusing the Slovaks and the Ruthenians equal partnership in a federative government and instead dominating them under a hegemonic government. He repeats many Nazi talking points and lobs insult after insult at Czechoslovakia, perhaps most audaciously claiming that her death will not be mourned, since she has died in dishonour, and clarifying by adding: “The only other instance in history of a head of state travelling all the way to the court of the enemy to beg permission to render his country unto them is once again a Czech feat.”, and following up with the story of Ferdinand I’s acquisition of the Bohemian crown in a personal union. So far, so pro-Nazi. He ends the article, however, with these words:

The Slovaks, in a bid to break away from the enslavement of a slave nation, delivered their brothers the Czechs into the German slavery, and their other brothers the Ruthenians, into Hungarian slavery. It isn’t a very sure fact that they themselves aren’t slaves either. Such is the Czechoslovakian disaster. Moral of the story: national unity is among the first conditions of independence. Only outsiders benefit from the feuds between brothers. A people who will not defend their independence to the death do not deserve that independence. (Esmer, 1939)

### **2.3 The Comintern**

Both the Soviet Union and the Republic of Turkey were newly formed nations, born out of revolutions that toppled their respective predecessor empires around the same time. In fact, the nascent Soviet state was instrumental in the successful conclusion of the Turkish War of Independence, with the not unsubstantial aid consisting of gold and arms to the Turkish revolutionaries<sup>23</sup>. Despite small hiccups, mostly regarding the Caucasus, the bilateral relations between the two young nations was very warm, with the mutual intention of cooperation (Coş & Bilgin, 2010, p. 48). Whether Atatürk actually intended to go down that route or merely pretended, Lenin was led to believe that this new

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<sup>23</sup> See chapter 4.7 of “Soviet Policy Towards Turkey 1920-1923” (Somel, 2016)

republic, who had fought the imperialists tooth and nail for five years to win her freedom and sovereignty, could be aligned by the Soviets (Somel, 2016, p. 127). Indeed, the two nations would find common ground in their continuing struggle against Western imperialism and would solidify their friendship, with for instance, the 1925 Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression (Coş & Bilgin, 2010, p. 51). In time, however, as the Soviet attitude toward Turkey turned domineering, the mood would sour irreparably between the two. The biggest contributor to this friction would be the ever-important geopolitical issue of the Turkish Straits. By 1939, the Soviets had expressed an interest in gaining either naval bases on the Straits, or a stronger say in their governance upwards of four times (Coş & Bilgin, 2010, p. 44). These all came on top of a request, although not a demand, by the Soviets that Turkey cede her three eastern provinces of Muş, Bitlis and Van to the newly established Democratic Republic of Armenia (Coş & Bilgin, 2010, p. 49). Every time the Turks had to parry the Soviet requests and reject the Soviet demands, one can only assume, their suspicion of their northern neighbour grew. After Stalin took the reins and steered the Soviet foreign policy into a path of conquest, domination and strongarming, Turkey was on full alert. The Soviets were invading their neighbours one by one, and there was no reason why Turkey shouldn't be next. By the start of the second world war, the Russian paranoia in the Turkish leadership was rampant and unbridled<sup>24</sup>. For the Turkish leadership, throughout the war, every decision taken, every move made, every initiative undertaken, every request accepted or refused, the first step of the calculation would entail the question "Would the Soviets be able to exploit this in the future and thus encroach on our sovereignty?". The first and foremost cause of miscommunication, misalignment and discord between Turkey and her Western allies was exactly this: For the Allies, Germany was the primary enemy but for Turkey, the Soviet Union was the primary enemy (Weisband, 1973, p. 22).

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<sup>24</sup> (Weisband, 1973, pp. 22, 44-45, 66, 127, 131, 145, 172, 182-183, 221, 228, 267) (Vanderlippe, 2001, pp. 67, 72-73, 79-80) (Fox, 1959, pp. 29-30) (Coş & Bilgin, 2010, p. 54)

## CHAPTER III

### LET SLIP THE DOGS OF WAR (1939-1940)

#### 3.1 Unrestrained Disdain for the Warmonger (1939-1940)

The period between the invasion of Poland and the French surrender at Compiègne was when the press of both Switzerland and Turkey were at their bravest and boldest against the Nazis. The Swiss press was much more audacious when the Germans were invading other countries, compared to when they were relatively unoccupied and free to focus their ire on Switzerland<sup>25</sup>, however, as we shall see, they would never be as daring, even when the Germans were invading other countries, as they were before the French, with whom they had a secret defensive pact and an agreed-on strategy of defence, were knocked out of the war. The Turkish press, already under much more pressure than their Swiss colleagues<sup>26</sup>, would go on to show moments of intrepidity all the way until the end of the war, but with severe pushback and punishment from the government. *Vatan*, for instance, was suspended for 90 days at the behest of von Papen “for publishing a picture of Charlie Chaplin caricaturing Hitler.” And when Ahmet Emin Yalman, owner and editor of the newspaper, appealed to Ankara, he was told:

Don't you know that Hitler is mad? Is it right to provoke a madman when he has large armed forces close to our frontier and is asking himself whether he made a mistake in not attacking Turkey before the offensive he has just started in Russia? You deserve the ninety days punishment for your thoughtlessness. (Avcı, 2016, p. 211)

At this time, however, from the start of the war to the fall of France, the Turks were more than confident: They were no longer lulled by the “fellow victim of the

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<sup>25</sup> For a detailed explanation of this phenomenon and better insight into the Swiss press of the period see “The Swiss Press and Foreign Affairs in World War II” (Hartmann, 1960)

<sup>26</sup> Starting on 26 March 1934, the Swiss press was regulated by the government, but owing to the cooperation of the editors and the desire of the Swiss government to keep at least a semblance of a free press, there wasn't much friction between the government and the press. The same cannot be said of Turkey, however, as newspapers were shut down for weeks at a time regularly because they violated the censorship regulations (Korkmazcan, 2017).

Entente” narrative, they were secure in their alliance with Britain and France, and they thought Germany much too far away to pose a real threat.

On 2 September 1939, Ömer Rıza Doğrul of *Tan*, under the headline “War!”, writes:

Both the Danzig issue and the Corridor matter could have been resolved via negotiations but there is one evident truth all the documents point to: Germany wants to enslave Poland and Poland was attacked because she didn’t yield. (...) The war Germany wages today is a war of greed. Germany is living proof that the era of trampling nations to sate one’s greed is over. Therefore, the only outcome of this war for Germany is to re-learn this lesson at the cost of much sacrifice. We do not believe war ever has any other result. (Doğrul, 1939)

On the same day, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın of *Yeni Sabah*, referring to the rape of Poland, wrote under the headline “Rape”, these words:

The Third Reich’s savage and barbaric assassination of Poland’s independence and liberty has been laid bare in all its ugliness. (...) This war that all humanity condemns furiously will no doubt end with the defeat of Germany and the end of this National-Socialism nightmare. There is not one shred of honesty, of bravery, in Hitler’s folly that’ll drown the world in blood. (Yalçın, 1939)

Still the same day, Necmeddin Sadak of *Akşam* writes in his article entitled “Finally the war begins”, that Hitler obviously had no intentions of resolving his problem with Poland peaceably, as his divisions marched into Poland before his ultimatums were delivered to Poland. Force of habit, he says; Hitler tried to repeat the actions of the traitors of Czechoslovakia in Poland, but “treason isn’t tradition in every country.” He goes on to assert that Germany will surely be defeated, and neither history, nor the German people will forgive Hitler for this grievous sin. (Sadak, 1939)

Yet again on 2 September 1939, Asım Us writes in *Vakit*, with uncanny foresight, that Germany will stay on the defensive behind the Siegfried Line in the Western Front while she knocks Poland out, and will most likely then expand through the Balkans, at which time Italy, who declared neutrality but is bound to

join Germany, will enter the war to share in the Balkans. “Whichever way one looks at it, there is one certainty: (...) Millions of innocents will fall victim to this war that Hitler is personally responsible for.” (Us, 1939)

That same day, *Ulus* publishes an article written by Winston Churchill under the headline and subtitles “An answer to those who say ‘You encircle us’ – It is once again Germany who encircles Germany – As such, both world peace and her future rests in the hands of Germany” (Churchill, 1939), and also another article written by Wilson Woodside, under the headline, which is printed in letters, all capitalised, large enough to cover 1/8 of the page, “GERMANY WILL LOSE THE WAR” (Woodside, 1939)

Even *Cumhuriyet*, the staunchest supporter of the Nazi cause, printed an article written by Abidin Daver on that same day, under the headline “War!” in which he openly blames Hitler for the war, supports the Polish decision to fight back and says that a repeat of M nich would have been a disaster. (Daver, 1939)

The Turkish press would go on to write news reports and articles that aggrandise the Polish by frequently using such terms as “the heroic Polish people”, “the valiant Polish army”, “the admirable defence of the Poles of their independence” and that vilify the Germans by reporting on German war crimes and other atrocities such as executions by firing squad in Germany<sup>27</sup>, indiscriminate bombings in Poland by the *Luftwaffe*<sup>28</sup>, sinking of neutral vessels by Germany<sup>29</sup>, use of poison gas by Germany<sup>30</sup> and perhaps most interestingly a report of “German planes dropping bombs on Red Cross trains and dropping poisoned candy on [Polish] children”<sup>31</sup> which is cartoonishly evil, and apparently not rooted in reality. Two other very obvious attempts to sway Turkish public opinion against Germany are published in *Akşam* on 3 September 1939 and in *Yeni Sabah* on 5 September

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<sup>27</sup> Published in *Vakit* on 9 September 1939 (Vakit, 1939),

<sup>28</sup> Published in *Akşam* on 4 September 1939 (Akşam, 1939)

<sup>29</sup> Published in *Akşam* on 5 September 1939 (Akşam, 1939) and in *Yeni Sabah* on 6 September 1939 (Yalçın, 1939)

<sup>30</sup> Published in *Yeni Sabah* on 4 September 1939 (Yeni Sabah, 1939)

<sup>31</sup> Published in *Ulus* on 6 September 1939 (Ulus, 1939)

1939. The former is a report on the Crimean Karaites, under the headline “Turkish elements in Polish lands – The Karaim Turks still to this day speak Turkish” (Akşam, 1939) and the latter is an interview in *Yeni Sabah* with a retired Turkish general who was in Poland for two months, examining the Polish army, under the headline “Turks Serving in the Polish Army”. Of particular interest in this article is this part:

The Poles recognise Turkey as an honest nation who embraces Poland’s place in the world, and they often repeat the Polish saying about Turks [Poland won’t be free until Turkish horses graze by the Vistula]. (Yeni Sabah, 1939)

The Swiss Press is just as defiant of Germany. On 2 September 1939, *La Sentinelle*, under the headline “German Duplicity”, reports that Hitler has demanded a plenipotentiary from Poland with the authority to negotiate with him, without further instruction from the Polish government. In other terms, the article clarifies, Hitler expected Poland to submit herself to the fate of Czechoslovakia. Naturally, says the article, Poland refused such a humiliation.

There is no precedent, even when peace conditions are imposed on a vanquished nation, for negotiators to not be authorised to refer to their governments for instructions. If the German government was sincere in her desire to solve their differences via negotiations, they wouldn’t have insisted on such a procedure. (*La Sentinelle*, 1939)

*La Liberté*, also on 2 September 1939, writes under the headline “German aggression against Poland”:

Hitler has finally carried out the criminal act which will set Europe ablaze. He alone bears the responsibility of the blood that has already begun to spill and will continue to pour in torrents. On him fall the curses of mothers whose children run to death either to defend the great cause of justice and liberty, or to support the wretched cause of vanity and thirst for domination: for we have no doubts that an immense number of German mothers wail in the depths of their hearts to see their sons forced to take up arms to cooperate in the assassination of Poland. (*La Liberté*, 1939)

*Le Jura*, still on 2 September 1939, writes these words under the headline “The war has started”:

Poland, a nation to which her secular martyrdom confers such high nobility, is attacked even though she is innocent of any provocation. The position of justice is therefore clearly established. Alas! we have seen only too well, that proclaiming justice is not enough to make it prevail. Brute force has a stranglehold on it. (*Le Jura*, 1939)

*Le Nouvelliste*, on that same day, under the headline “The Anschluss of Danzig to the Reich” reports the act of Forster to annex the Free City of Danzig to Germany and Hitler’s acceptance of it. Although the criticism of Hitler is subtle in this short article, it is still there, hidden in the choice of words:

In addition, Hitler relayed to the army an order of the day in which he tries to shift the responsibility for the war on Poland and in which he claims that the Germans in Polish territory are the object of ill-treatment. He has added that he will respond to violence with violence.

This trend continues in both the Swiss and Turkish press when Germany invades the neutral Small States of Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, Denmark, and Norway. In many instances, the armies defending the violated countries are referred to with adjectives such as “heroic”, “valiant” or “righteous”, German advances are downplayed and the ability of the nations under German invasion to resist is often portrayed as great victories. Almost all the newspapers in both countries make a point of mocking and denouncing the frankly absurd *casus belli* Hitler had made a habit of citing when invading neutral minors: “Britain and France are planning to invade [neutral small state], and Germany graciously extends her protection over them.”, as well as making sure to point out that Germany, with each new nation she invaded, was trampling neutral states, the neutralities of most of which she had previously promised to respect, and presenting these news in the

context that implied Switzerland or Turkey might be the neutral Germany invaded next.<sup>32</sup>

### **3.2 The Fall of France (1940)**

The whole status quo would be overturned, however, at The Second Armistice at Compiègne, on 22 June 1940. With the French army in shambles after the Battle of France and the German mechanised divisions freely running amok in France, the Third French Republic yielded to Germany. Negotiations took place in Compiègne Forest, where the previous world war ended, and Adolf Hitler had the very railway car in which the humiliating Treaty of Versailles was forced onto Germany brought back, inside of which the Third Reich avenged herself upon the French. Vichy France was founded in the small territory left to the French in the south and east of France, and the rest, containing the entire French Atlantic coastline, was occupied by Germany. The armistice's going into effect was delayed for a few days as the French refused to be humiliated by the Italians, who were demanding much by virtue of their alliance with Germany, but who had been largely unsuccessful in their war with France, but the Italians revoked much of their demands and their terms were eventually met. (Urner, 2002, p. 31)

#### **3.2.1 The Race to Close off the Circle**

The surrender of France changed everything for Switzerland. Whereas before she was secure in her alliance with France, now not only was she all alone, but she was soon to be completely encircled. The Swiss government, as we shall see clearly, went on high alert, having sensed the danger on their doorstep. The censorship regulations were severely tightened, so as to avoid provoking Germany, or giving her the slightest pretext for an invasion. When talking of the Armistice, the newspapers are careful to avoid any comments and stick to passing on the news

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<sup>32</sup> Although it's impossible to cite every instance of all of the aforementioned, as there are so many, a few examples that give a clear picture are: *Le Confédéré* on 10 April 1940, *Le Nouvelliste* on 10, 11, 13 April 1940, *La Sentinelle* on 10 April 1940, *La Liberté* on 10, 11, 12, 13 April 1940, *La Liberté* on 10, 11 and 13 May 1940, *La Sentinelle* on 11 May 1940, *Le Nouvelliste* on 11 and 13 May 1940, Burhaneddin Felek, Zekeriya Sertel and Ömer Rıza Doğrul's columns on *Tan* between 11-19 May 1940, *Ulus* on 11, 12 and 13 May 1940, *Akşam* between 11-20 May 1940, *Yeni Sabah* on 11 May 1940, *Vakit* between 11-15 April 1940, Abidin Daver's column "Hem Nalına Hem Mihına" on 18 May 1940 in *Cumhuriyet*

and information they have received from outside news agencies. This is the case even for *La Sentinelle*, usually the most daring of the lot. *La Sentinelle*, however, being the most daring, writes this in a small corner of the 4<sup>th</sup> page of their 24 June 1940 issue: “As for the conditions of the armistice, the Swiss press no longer has enough freedom for us to dare say what we think. We trust our readers to make the correct judgement about them.”

Indeed, the Swiss press either avoids the issue completely, focusing instead on internal affairs and Swiss politics and devoting very little space to the fall of France and the international goings-on, or they report on the matter strictly by citing foreign newspapers or news agencies. These attitudes can all be seen in the newspaper *Le Confédéré*, *La Sentinelle*, *Le Nouvelliste* and *La Liberté* between 22 and 26 June 1940.

A third case is when the press praises and endorses Maréchal Pétain and his new government, especially against de Gaulle’s Free France and Churchill, and spins the fall of France into a story of glorious rebirth and salvation from Socialism which plagued the country in the last decade<sup>33</sup>. In fact, the Swiss press, with the obvious exception of *La Sentinelle*, seem to focus their ire on Socialism. *Le Nouvelliste*, for instance, on 26 June 1940, holds Socialism solely responsible for the fall of France under the headline “The future of federal politics” (Bodinier, 1940). *La Sentinelle*’s Graber defends Léon Blum against *La Liberté*, *La Gazette de Lausanne* and others under the headline “Shameful process” (Graber, 1940) on the same day.

The Swiss newspapers would continue to their policy of relative indifference (compared to the period between 1938-1940) to the war, either through choice or through censorship, for its remainder. Whereas before every newspaper devoted some space, big or small, to the invasions of previously non-belligerent nations by Germany, after the fall of France, these articles are mostly relegated to

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<sup>33</sup> See for instance *Le Confédéré* and *Le Nouvelliste* on 26 June 1940

the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, or 6<sup>th</sup> pages, sometimes even behind the advertisement pages. The front page is devoted most often to news of internal politics.

And in all fairness, Switzerland had every right to feel an existential threat, against which she took precautions. Her security policy rested mainly on Henri Guisan's secret defence arrangement with France. In case of a German attack on Switzerland, the French army divisions stationed on the Franco-Swiss border in the Jura region would cross into Switzerland to occupy and buttress Swiss defensive lines. Instead of these French divisions, however, the Swiss woke up on the morning of 17 June 1940 to find Heinz Guderian's tank group on their French border (Urner, 2002, p. 3). Soon after, the Blitzkrieg general's units were reinforced with the rest of the German army, and the German build-up on the Swiss borders began in earnest. This was Hitler's means of waging an intense psychological warfare against Switzerland. As we shall see, Hitler would try his hardest to completely besiege Switzerland, and would even later order his troops on the Swiss border in the Rhône, as the German army was shattered and in general retreat in late 1944, "to keep Switzerland surrounded as long as possible." (Urner, 2002, p. IX) This sort of 'war of nerves' was a game Hitler liked to play, as we shall see him repeat with Turkey (Fox, 1959, pp. 22-23) further on.

We have already discussed the various reasons why Switzerland was on Hitler's hit list. For reasons that we will discuss later, however, the invasion of Switzerland was just not feasible... **not yet**. Switzerland still had much to offer Germany, however, and Hitler wanted it all. When Germany made a demand, Switzerland had to have no other option but to acquiesce. And to this end, the encirclement of Switzerland was ordered. Pétain took charge of France and sent the request of an armistice on June 16<sup>th</sup>, and on that day, at 11.22 p.m., Guderian, who was in full advance toward the Swiss border as was ordered and was scheduled to reach the border on the 17<sup>th</sup>, received a "very urgent" radio communication: "Reach Swiss border today still. Immediate message important for political reasons.", and a second one three minutes later: "Urgently desired still on 6/16 to reach Swiss border with scouting forces. Then immediate radio communication." (Urner, 2002,

p. 25). Guderian's scouting party first, and the rest of his group second, made a mad push toward the Swiss border that day, through 80 kms of enemy territory, through hilly or mountainous terrain, without sparing the horses, so to speak. Even as the German leadership, on the 17<sup>th</sup>, was preparing the conditions to be imposed on France, Hitler was occupied with the matter of the encirclement of Switzerland (Urner, 2002, p. 27). The circle had to be closed off before the Axis signed a ceasefire with France, to which end, Hitler brought in Mussolini. The Italians were to push northwards into Savoy, link up with the German troops at the western border of Switzerland and complete the circle, a plan which failed due to Italian incompetence and French refusal to yield to an unsuccessful Italy's demands (Urner, 2002, pp. 27-28, 31-32). The Axis even tried to trick France into submission in the negotiations over the French territory on the Swiss border with a manoeuvre Sun Tzu would give a standing ovation for: By bringing Italian troops behind German lines through friendly territory to give the illusion that the link-up was achieved (Urner, 2002, p. 32). In the end, however, despite Hitler's every effort, Vichy France, as it would come to be known, would keep a land connection to Switzerland, through which Switzerland could still access Britain and the rest of the world. A mistake which Hitler intended to rectify with *Fall Anton*, planned out in the December of that year and carried out finally in November 1942.

### **3.2.2 A Crisis of Confidence**

Although Turkey never believed her full commitment to the war would be necessary when she signed the Tripartite, she also did not sign the pact in bad faith. Ostensibly, the Turks were, at least in principle, willing to enter the war in fulfilment of their promise to their Western allies. Three obstacles remained in the way of this in this period:

- 1) The Turkish army was severely underequipped, and the arms promised by the British and the French were trickling in much slower than was promised
- 2) Turkey's obligations stemming from the treaty would be suspended if their fulfilment meant open conflict with the Soviet Union

3) Turkey's obligations kicked in only if and when war spread to the Mediterranean (If Italy joined Germany)

The first obstacle would only barely be removed by the very end of the war in 1945. The second would continue as a legitimate concern until *Unternehmen Barbarossa* in 1941<sup>34</sup> but as soon as the third was lifted with the Italian entry into the war nearing the end of the Battle of France, the Allies began their attempts to pull Turkey into the war. The problem, however, was that the Germans, against which the Turks would enter the war, had a defensive pact with the Soviets, with which they had very recently partitioned Poland. The Winter War had just concluded, Bessarabia was taken from Romania after a Soviet ultimatum and the Soviets were in the process of swallowing the Baltics. The Turks knew that the Soviet Union would jump at the first opportunity to occupy Turkey (Weisband, 1973, p. 22), and they knew too well that declaring war on Germany would give the Russians a perfect pretext for their next conquest. Turkey, however, was still firmly in the Allied camp (Weisband, 1973, pp. 219, 259) and as such, was ready to aid her allies to the fullest extent as long as it did not result in Turkish entry into the war. To this end, it seems, the then Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Şükrü Saracoğlu, ever the shrewd diplomat, implicitly gave the go ahead to a joint Franco-British air raid, through the Turkish airspace, on the Soviet Baku oilfields, the product of which fed the German mechanized divisions, as long as it was done as a *fait accompli*, without Turkey's express authorization, so as to allow Turkey plausible deniability. (Deringil, 2006, pp. 31-32).

Indeed, Turkey was supremely confident that the Allies would triumph over Germany<sup>35</sup> but they were cripplingly anxious about a conflict with the Soviets. Saracoğlu, owing to his past dealings and experience with Vyacheslav Molotov,

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<sup>34</sup> At which point the Soviet Union would join the Allied camp against Germany. As will be discussed later, from the point of view of the Allies, this meant that if Turkey joined the war, she would be fighting side by side with the Soviet rather than against them. From the Turkish point of view, this meant that should Germany push into Turkey, it would be the Soviets who "liberated" Turkish lands, after which point not even the Allies would be able to return to Turkey her lost territory.

<sup>35</sup> (Vanderlippe, 2001, p. 64) (Avcı, 2016, pp. 210-211) (Hakkı, 2005, p. 15)

was deeply suspicious of Molotov and his masters in Moscow (Weisband, 1973, pp. 56-57), and it might have been this bias that was responsible for the probable miscommunication that might have taken place in June 1940. It is unclear which of these two versions is closer to reality, but when the Turkish ambassador in Moscow duly informed Molotov that Turkey would mobilise in case of Italian entry, Molotov either responded with “do as you like” (Russian version of events) or “Turkey is free to choose by whom she gets wiped out” (Saracoğlu’s version of events) (Deringil, 2006, p. 39). Either way, Turkey had decided to delay her entry into the war despite her Tripartite obligations. This decision was no doubt reinforced by the Battle of France, which was going quite poorly, as evidenced by Saracoğlu’s retort to the British and French ambassadors, who emphasised to him the good effect a Turkish declaration of war would have in the Balkans: “A French victory would have an even better effect.” (Deringil, 2006, p. 37)

This, however, did not sit well with the British and the French. The French were adamant that Turkey should join the war, or at least be implied in it through the use of her naval and air bases (Deringil, 2006, pp. 39-40), but unbeknownst to Turkey at this time, they were also under no delusions as to how the war was going. The French knew full well that they were losing, and that the situation was untenable, Turkish assistance or not. And yet, they kept pushing Turkey to enter the war anyway, for they planned on using this to strengthen their hand in the negotiations over France’s separate peace with the Axis (Deringil, 2006, p. 36). Turkey was rightfully furious when she found out, as the Second Armistice at Compiègne was made public knowledge. This affair was the biggest setback to the Turkish willingness to enter the war: Not only were their confidence in the Allied cause shaken, as the previously invincible French army was defeated and forced out of the war in a mere six weeks’ time, but the French betrayal of attempting to throw Turkey to the wolves would make the Turkish leadership question the good faith of Britain as well. The Turks, who were up to this point cooperative if not enthusiastic, would take a cynical tone throughout the next period of the war.

The confidence of the Turkish press in Britain, however, was not shaken. The two speeches of the great Winston Churchill particularly inspired great interest and support, first the “We shall fight on the beaches” speech and second the one on 25 June 1940.

Falih Rıfıkı Atay of *Ulus*, on 26 June 1940, under the headline “France has surrendered”, after rightfully shaming the French for betraying her British ally, denying her the soldiers and arms that France and Britain could have put to good use overseas, especially in Africa, and surrendering to her enemy all the means by which they could wage war on Britain, expresses his confidence in Britain. Although hardship is a given, desperation isn’t a feeling conveyed in this article. It concludes:

Once she has gotten through the first trying months with success, the struggle that the British Empire will offer will be tremendous in size and importance. The British war enthusiasm, which is hard enough as it is to warm up, is now red-hot. And Britain is for the first time in history in position to make use of all the means available to her to the very end. (Atay, 1940)

On the same day, Ömer Rıza Doğrul of *Tan*, under the headline “The Mourning of France”, opens with a heavy criticism of France. He says that France, who had embarked upon this journey to rid Europe of the politics of domination, tyranny and conquest, had rendered all her capabilities to the service of the powers who pursue these politics, including her national resources, her arms and ammunition, her manufactories and industry and even her territory. He notes, however, that all hope is not lost for France, as Churchill explained the day before. With the support of the French fleet, Colonial France could fight to secure the liberation of France. Although he expresses some doubts about the feasibility of this, he mentions that “a French general” was founding a French National Committee in London to lead the struggle from the French Colonies. (Doğrul, 1940)

And although on 26 June 1940, Nadir Nadi, owner and editor of the Fascist-leaning *Cumhuriyet*, was in a celebratory mood, already speculating generously

(and delusionally<sup>36</sup>) about the future of Europe under German hegemony, Abidin Daver, in an article titled “Battle of the Mediterranean” in *Cumhuriyet*, wrote that Britain could still dominate the Mediterranean if the French fleet was secured and if Colonial France refused to accept the terms imposed on mainland France. (Daver, 1940)

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<sup>36</sup> Proclaiming that Germany, now the master of Europe, would rein in Bulgaria and Hungary’s territorial ambitions and bring peace and stability to the Balkans. (Nadi, 1940)

## CHAPTER IV

### THIRD REICH, ASCENDANT (1940-1943)

When France sued for a separate peace and left Britain alone in the fight against tyranny, she also abandoned the continent to the unchallenged supremacy of Germany. Before the war entered its third phase, Germany, together with her lackey Italy, would march through the Balkans, crushing their people under their heel. The German stranglehold on Switzerland would only get worse with each passing day, all the way until the very end of the war, and the pressure on Turkey would continue to mount.

#### 4.1 Dirge for the Balkans (1940-1941)

The Swiss press was at this point, compared to its pre-war state, quite pacified and silenced. There are few opinion columns or editorials on the invasions of the Balkans. *La Sentinelle* is especially tame, perhaps because the government was especially harsh with this socialist and (previously) very outspoken newspaper, and sticks to internal affairs, discussions on socialism and relaying foreign agencies' reports. In the other newspapers, however, there are rare moments where the Swiss authors and editors make a stand.

On 7 April 1941 under the headline "German army enters Greece and Yugoslavia", beneath the subtitle "The Balkans are on fire!", the editor of *Le Confédéré* says of the Yugoslavian coup that it was carried out to "establish a regime reflecting public opinion, that is to say the guarantee of all Yugoslav freedoms and of resistance against any and all aggressors", thereby legitimising and endorsing the new Yugoslav regime. (Le Confédéré, 1941)

Under the "News of the Day" column of *La Liberté*, on 8 April 1941, the editor, while talking about the German and Italian offensives against Greece and Yugoslavia, and how Yugoslavia, well aware that she cannot hold all the fronts, decided to pull her armies back to where they have the greatest chance of resisting the Axis troops, then says "Yugoslavia, a mountainous country, shares many similarities with Switzerland.", but does not elaborate further. (La Liberté, 1941)

*Le Nouvelliste* stands out proudly amongst the rest, despite the heavy censorship imposed on the press, where the editor, under the pen name “Ch. Saint-Maurice”, on 8 April 1941 writes:

[That the invasions of Greece and Yugoslavia did not come as a surprise] does not prevent the honest, good-hearted, and upright citizens of our country from experiencing unspeakable anguish at this news. Public authorities and citizens believe in what they desire, and since we all desire the return of peace, in justice, dignity, honour and freedom, we still held hope that the war would not spread to the Balkans.

We the Swiss will not even dip a pinkie in this mess. We will not even examine the origins of this extension of the war [to the Balkans], though there is much to be said.

(...) We will not comment [on whether the invasions were necessary for the survival of Germany]. But the Swiss will be well permitted to show sympathy to the patriots, no matter the nationality, who defend the sacred soil of their fatherland. The man who defends his native land is a brave man; he is worthy of esteem and admiration - even of his enemies, whatever his name and colour, and whatever the name of his nation. And no one in the world has the right to fix offensive epithets to him to justify treating him so cruelly. (Saint-Maurice, 1941)

On the same day, editor of *Le Jura*, under the initials “E.J.”, criticises Germany’s conduct as such:

The Reich had therefore suddenly made the state of war effective at the same time as she proclaimed it and had it notified. In the past, when we were still civilised, an ultimatum preceded the outbreak of hostilities. A period of a few hours, or even a day or two, was given to consider accepting or rejecting the conditions set. This was also the case in July 1914, when Serbia was notified of the famous Austrian ultimatum, the rejection of which triggered the other catastrophe. Now war is declared the moment it begins. This change of system gravely marks one of the important regressions of the civilisation of which Europe was so proud and which is currently in the process of being completely destroyed. (E.J., 1941)

Still on 8 April 1941, in *Le Rhône*, the editor, under the pen name “C. L....n.” writes under the headline “Fire in the Balkans”:

So, as was to be expected, Germany has just set the Balkans on fire. From the day when she amassed her motorised divisions and her air force in Bulgaria, on the very borders of Greece, it was clear that she was waiting for the right moment to descend upon the heroic nation of the Hellenes. This strike was simply delayed because of Yugoslavia's turnaround.  
(...)

We know that upon [Yugoslavia's] return [from signing the Anti-Comintern Pact in Vienna], wounded in their national self-esteem, the Serbs rose up and disavowed their political leaders who, at the cost of a shameful peace, would have sacrificed the independence of their homeland and facilitated the assassination of a neighbouring and friendly country. The example of Greece, moreover, which for five months has successfully resisted the invaders, gave courage to the Serbs. The cabinet was overthrown, the young King Pierre took power with General Simovitch as head of government. And this was done with popular enthusiasm, especially in Serbia. We still remember with what outburst of patriotism the inhabitants of this small country rose up in 1914 to resist the Austro-German armies and what exploits this people were capable of. (L....n., 1941)

The Turkish press was much more clearly poised against Germany during the invasions of Yugoslavia and Greece. Besides the opinion columns calling out the German bellicosity and referring to the Greeks as heroes at every opportunity, there was an article proclaiming that the Germans were halted in their advance every other day. All of this was true even for Cumhuriyet.

Ahmet Emin Yalman, on 6 April 1941, writes an unambiguously pro-Allies article in *Vatan*. He begins by listing the recent German defeats, a few of which are the coup in Yugoslavia, the Greek defiance against Germany and the British landing troops in Greece, the Italian blunder in North Africa, the British victory in the Battle of Britain, and the increasing hostility of the U.S. to the Axis. He says that a German counteroffensive was long overdue, which they decided to carry out in Africa. This sentence in particular stands out: “It is certainly not a pleasant thing that the British

have retreated from Benghazi, and it fell to German hands, however the real advantage of the British until today lies in the fact that they never overcommit themselves to secondary goals and thus don't waste their strength." He goes on to list examples like Norway and British Somaliland and says that having thoroughly crushed the Italians in Africa and captured their arms caches, Africa has become a secondary goal and thus the British have fixed their eyes on the Balkans instead. He laments the death of Count Teleki and calls it a very clear and very bitter protest against the German pressure on the Hungarian people and ends the article with these words: "Now it's Britain's turn for a counteroffensive. We can be sure that the British prepare their next move without anger or panic, without losing sight of their objective. We can believe and trust in Churchill, Eden and Wavell." (Yalman, 1941)

Necmeddin Sadak of *Aksam*, on 7 April 1941, first remarks that unlike the previous invasions, Germany, when declaring war on Yugoslavia and Greece at once, did not make any demands nor await an answer, and the notes given to the two states only list the reasons that make an invasion necessary. "It isn't right to call these 'reasons', however." He adds. Yugoslavia, says he, was invaded because she wanted to stay neutral and protect her independence, and Greece, "this small and heroic state", wasn't invaded by Germany on top of Italy to protect the peace in Albania as was previously believed, but because Greece was "guilty of a thousand murders standing in the way of peace in Europe." Citing the German narrative, he writes that Germany wanted to prevent the spread of war to the Balkans, but Greece nefariously invited the British into the Balkans to bring war, and then proceeds to dismantle this twisted logic:

If Germany wanted to prevent the spread of war to the Balkans, then who brought war into the Balkans? Was it Italy, who attacked Greece for no good reason, that brought peace to the Balkans and Greece, who was forced to defend herself, that brought war? Did the invasion of Romania serve to protect peace and security in the Balkans? Did the entry of the German army into Bulgaria heighten the peace and prosperity in the Balkans? (Sadak, 1941)

Falih Rıfkı Atay, on the same day, in *Ulus*, first reminds the readers that when Hungary refused to commit her troops to invade Yugoslavia under the German High Command, she was swiftly and quietly invaded in a *fait accompli*. “This fact invites one to contemplate the following truth”, he says, “signing the Tripartite [Anti-Comintern] Pact means, eventually, entering the war on the Axis side against the [British], or being invaded [by the Axis]” Reinforcing this point, he says that after Yugoslavia was coerced into signing, she had to choose between either honouring the Pact and all its implications from having to fight against Greece and Britain to being invaded, or defending her independence. He notes that if left alone to stay independent and neutral, Yugoslavia would have doubtless stayed out of the war, but she was in the way of both Italy’s bellicose ambitions in Greece and Germany’s path to the Aegean Sea, and therefore she had to be subjugated either through compliance or by force. (Atay, 1941)

Zekeriya Sertel of *Tan*, still on 7 April 1941, opens by saying that apparently, the sins of Greece and Yugoslavia that invited a German invasion were that they decided to defend their independence, that they wanted to stay neutral and that when the danger was finally at their doorstep, they sought refuge with the British. “Perhaps for the first time in history”, he says, “wanting to defend your freedom is considered a sin”. He goes on to list six reasons, including Soviet, British and American support and having to act before war plans are completed, which he thinks will prevent the Germans from gaining a swift victory in the Balkans. (Sertel, 1941)

Yunus Nadi, owner and editor of *Cumhuriyet* who was considered a sympathiser by the Nazis, writes a very pro-Greek and pro-Yugoslavian article on 7 April 1941. After a quick attempt at shifting the blame from Germany to Italy, he says that Greece and Yugoslavia have lunged at the battlefield against the German attack, “in the cause of defending their lives and freedom, with a very patriotic heroism, until the last drop of blood of all their sons”. He follows up by saying that although they will clearly be supported by their friends and allies, chief of which are Britain and the U.S., in their “righteous self-defence”, they are given “a superior

greatness” by the fact that the main pillar of their “noble struggle” is the “valour and zeal of their national quintessence”. He goes on:

It goes without saying that the Turks, alongside the majority of those who love justice and freedom, stand beside these two friendly nations of the Balkans fighting for their lives and freedom, and that we will follow their arduous and honourable struggle with our most sincere wishes of triumph.

That the war was brought to the Balkans because of the completely unjust and unnecessary Axis invasions is a clear truth. Try as Berlin and the German Foreign Affairs might to put the responsibility of the Balkans front on the shoulders of Britain, the events taking place before the eyes of all humanity are enough to show otherwise: Italy invaded Greece and Germany came to finish what the Italians failed to do.

Germany, who had invaded Romania and Bulgaria to this end, was about to trap Yugoslavia as well, when Yugoslavia rose up, fearing for her life, and Germany had to attack her as well. (...) It can be said that the Axis countries, in the Balkans, have declared war upon all humanity who stand for freedom and independence. (Nadi, 1941)

#### **4.2 Novus Modus Vivendi (1940-1943)**

For Switzerland, the new reality was that they were largely cut off from the world at large. Until the end of 1942, she still had a, if uncertain and unreliable, connection to the Mediterranean through Vichy France. Mostly, however, it was her trade connection to the as yet neutral United States and the daring British commercial smuggling operations that kept her from “a complete economic Anschluss” (Wylie, 2002, p. 339). This does not mean, however, that Switzerland wasn’t to the largest extent under Germany’s thumb. By the end of 1940, Swiss trade with Britain made up 2% of the total whereas Germany had claimed about 33% of the total Swiss trade (Wylie, 2002, p. 339). Especially when it came to coal, Switzerland was completely at Germany’s mercy (Golson, 2011, p. 249). Switzerland had no domestic sources of coal and Germany was, without alternatives, where the Swiss imported their coal from (Halbrook, 2006, p. 68). This meant that not only was Swiss industry largely reliant on Germany, but the Swiss

people also relied on Germany to not freeze in the winters. In fact, in the winter of 1942-1943, when Germany turned off the tap, the Swiss citizens had to decide between going out into the forests to chop wood, even in the middle of snowstorms, with worn out shoes that offered little protection because shoes were being rationed, or staying at home with no fuel to burn, risking hypothermia either way (Halbrook, 2006, p. 94). It was against this backdrop that the Swiss leadership needed to keep the people's morale high: The German High Command estimated that they could completely occupy their portion of Switzerland (as opposed to the portion Italy claimed and would invade) within 3-5 days, unless the Swiss managed to retreat into the Alps, in which case "it would become difficult to calculate the time required." (Urner, 2002, p. 8) The best scenario for Germany was if the Swiss, already exhausted and demoralized before the invasion, were dealt several large blows that completely shattered their resolve and sued for peace, much like France. This was the scenario the Swiss leadership needed to prevent.

#### **4.2.1 General Guisan**

Henri Guisan was the General of the Swiss Armed Forces throughout the war, and more than that, he was a national hero and the symbol around which the Swiss people rallied. As the de facto leader of Switzerland, he weeded out defeatism and raised and maintained high morale within Switzerland, and by all measures became the personification of Swiss resistance and unity (Wylie, 2002, p. 348). He also, especially by today's standards, displayed many fascist tendencies:

Guisan's political outlook was markedly conservative and authoritarian. He hated Communism, abhorred social and political disorder, and was quite prepared to use the army as a bulwark for traditional bourgeois values, a function he had performed with notable enthusiasm in suppressing the strike movement in 1918. As the war progressed, Guisan took an increasing interest in Switzerland's home front, and, much to the irritation of the federal council, made no secret of his contempt for civilian leadership. (Wylie, 2002, p. 349)

In addition to all this, it seems, he wasn't completely averse to the idea of getting along with the Nazis rather than resisting them, as shown by the two instances

where he called for a delegation to be dispatched to Berlin to negotiate “a cultural and political arrangement with the Führer.” (Wylie, 2002, p. 348)

For all his flaws, however, he saw to it personally that the Swiss people didn't fall into despair, and he made sure that the Germans knew this as well: Switzerland would not surrender and had to be conquered. His biggest undertaking to this end was the famous *Réduit National*, the National Redoubt.

#### 4.2.2 Le Réduit

The *Réduit* was a defensive project that was kicked off in the 1880s but was vastly expanded and incorporated into a national defence doctrine under Guisan. As part of the *Réduit*, dozens of small bunkers were built all along the mountainous terrain of the Swiss Alps, and three major fortresses were constructed and heavily reinforced: Fortress St. Maurice, Fortress St. Gotthard, and Fortress Sargan. The doctrine demanded exactly what the Germans sought to prevent: At the first sign of an enemy invasion, the Swiss army would abandon the Swiss lowlands and retreat to the redoubts in the mountains. Although a brilliant plan at face value that maximises the terrain advantages of defenders in mountainous terrain, the feasibility of this doctrine is a matter of question. It might very well have been a bluff that would not have been implemented in case of an actual enemy invasion. This is because the doctrine demanded that Switzerland abandon her lowland core, where most of her population lived, and where her industry and economic centres were located, almost exclusively. If this plan was ever implemented, it either meant abandoning the majority of the Swiss population, the families of the soldiers who were mobilised and in retreat, to German occupation or somehow managing to relocate millions of people into the Swiss Alps where there definitely were not enough infrastructure to house, feed and warm them, ahead of the army without causing chaos and without slowing down the retreat of the army, who would certainly be under hot pursuit of the German *blitzkrieg* divisions. The *Réduit* has for long been lauded as one of the central pillars of Swiss independence and survival

in the trying times of World War II<sup>37</sup>, although it might have just been a hollow bluff.

#### 4.2.3 The Porcupine

Switzerland was, during this period, was likened by many to a porcupine (Halbrook, 2006, p. 88). The image of the Swiss porcupine, nestled in her mountain fortifications, with an army numerous and well equipped enough to strike fear into the hearts of Nazis, is often cited as having deterred the Third Reich from ever daring to march into her lands. But how close is this to reality? Golson has put together a table that shows the military capabilities of European neutrals, in terms of men under arms, tanks, heavy guns, air forces, naval forces and mechanised divisions (Golson, 2011, p. 39), though in the interest of brevity, only Switzerland and Belgium, the “best equipped neutral” (Golson, 2011, p. 40), will be compared in this section. All the figures for both countries are dated from the year 1939.

To Belgium’s 600.000 men under arms, Switzerland had 403.000. This number would increase to 800.000 at its height but included in this number are local defence militias and auxiliary units (Wylie, 2002, p. 344). In 1940, however, just a week and a half before France fell, Guisan had ordered a partial demobilisation that saw the army drop down to 150.000 men (Wylie, 2002, p. 347).

To Belgium’s 10 tanks, 2 fully motorised and 2 partially motorised divisions, Switzerland had no tanks and no motorised divisions. Switzerland was substantially better prepared to fend off air raids, however, with 30 to 60 anti-aircraft guns to Belgium’s none, and with 200 modern aircraft to Belgium’s 50 modern and 200 obsolete. Still quite negligible, however, when compared to the *Luftwaffe*’s 4201 operational aircraft in 1939 (Corum, 1997, p. 271).

Of course, Belgium lacked the advantage of mountains, however she, like her Dutch sister, used her many rivers to her advantage by blowing the bridges which ran over them, effectively halting the German tank divisions. Still not as big

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<sup>37</sup> For this opinion see among others, “The Swiss and the Nazis” (Halbrook, 2006) and “Between the Alps and a Hard Place” (Codevilla, 2000)

an advantage as mountainous terrain, admittedly, but something to consider, nonetheless.

Now, having made that comparison, the reader is encouraged to be reminded that when the Third Reich marched into Belgium without a second thought, it took her 18 days to conquer the country, and the Belgian army was immensely bolstered by the several hundred thousand French and British soldiers fighting alongside them in Belgium, who would later be trapped in Dunkirk. The German army was also occupied in Luxemburg, the Netherlands and on the French border in the Siegfried Line at this point in time. How much resistance could the Swiss army, in worse condition than its Belgian counterpart, unaided by French and British forces, offer to a Germany who was under no other preoccupation and was free to bear down on the tiny Alpine republic, together with the Italians, with her full might? Even with the Alps included in the calculation, giving the *Réduit* the benefit of the doubt and assuming the Swiss stuck to the doctrine and somehow managed to pull it off perfectly, the odds of Switzerland look uninviting to put it mildly.

#### **4.2.4 *Unternehmen Tannenbaum***

*Unternehmen Tannenbaum* was the result of a series of studies and war plans evaluating the feasibility and means of invading Switzerland. Despite having both the means, and the will to carry it out, however, Germany never put *Tannenbaum* in motion (Wylie, 2002, p. 347). This led some academics and experts to the conclusion that *Tannenbaum* was never a serious undertaking, but instead a way to train the general staff officers of the *Wehrmacht*, “purely studies of the type that the general staffs of large armies are in the habit of composing”, or the work of “an overly eager military command post without the involvement of political leadership” (Urner, 2002, pp. 7, 9). Although others express doubts about these hypotheses, it really is a mystery as to why it was a junior staff officer with no previous experience that drafted the first plans of *Tannenbaum* (Wylie, 2002, p. 346) if Germany was serious in carrying this operation out.

Indeed, it was clear to even the Swiss themselves that Germany was not seriously contemplating the invasion of Switzerland, as Guisan remarked soon after

the fall of France that “henceforth the Germans would primarily exercise political and economic pressure and military action would scarcely be considered.” (Wylie, 2002, p. 347). This was, in fact, the single best opportunity the Germans would get of a surprise attack on Switzerland (Urner, 2002, p. 6), right on the tail end of the Swiss demobilisation, and having passed on such a perfect opportunity, it is clear that the Germans did not intend to invade Switzerland, at least not quite yet.

An explanation the author of this study favours is that, in addition to several complications with the invasion of Switzerland that would have caused Hitler a few headaches at least, the Swiss were of greater use to the Third Reich as an independent and neutral state, at least until the war was won and Britain (and later the United States) capitulated to Germany. Both the complications and the usefulness mentioned in the previous sentence will be discussed in the next two sections of this chapter.

#### **4.2.5 Concessions and Appeasement**

Hitler made quite the effort to besiege Switzerland, but now that the Alpine republic was encircled, he could finally reap his rewards. From then on until the Wehrmacht was pushed back into Germany, the Third Reich would leverage so much out of Switzerland, who was powerless to refuse. Marcel Pilet-Golaz would be the face of Swiss acquiescence to Nazi demands (Braunschweig, 1999, pp. 667-668).

The case of the “Nazi Gold” goes back further than this period, however. Unlike most others, the Swiss government has always held the position that “looting is legal: If a country invades another country and steals its gold reserve out of the vaults of its banks, takes property out of the homes of individuals, or takes gold out of the mouths of those it kills, legal title to those assets belongs to the looters.” (Weinberg, 1999, p. 101) The Swiss franc was one of the two globally accepted currencies, becoming the only one when the United States entered the war (Halbheer, 1999, p. 11). This meant that Germany could use the Swiss franc to buy whatever they needed, like for instance metal ore, from any country who wouldn’t accept her blood gold, like Sweden for instance (Weinberg, 1999, p. 101), or in case

they had a clearing deficit with them, or simply refused to barter. And Switzerland bought gold from Germany equal to a net total of 1.2 billion Swiss Francs between 1940 and 1944 (Golson, 2011, p. 351) It is also clear beyond doubt that the Swiss knew about the origin of the gold they were essentially laundering, even the bars that were smelted from the teeth of Holocaust victims (Bergier, et al., 1998, pp. 31-32, 35), and turned a wilful blind eye (Bergier, et al., 1998, pp. 121-122, 124). The Swiss had come up with various arguments designed to absolve them of the blame, but these are all excuses made up after they had realised that they would be held accountable for the gold by the Allies<sup>38</sup>. They even contemplated melting down the Nazi gold and recasting it to fool the Allies (Bergier, et al., 1998, p. 192). All in all, Switzerland was “the most important conduit for gold originating from countries occupied or controlled by the Third Reich.” (Bergier, et al., 1998, p. 191) In fact, Switzerland’s role in laundering this blood gold was so crucial that if for whatever reason Germany wasn’t able to sell her gold in exchange for Swiss francs, “[her] gold would (...) be worthless for all purposes of interest to [her]” (Bergier, et al., 1998, p. 25)

Perhaps the second most impactful Swiss concession to the Reich was that of labour. This issue is not as black-and-white as the previous one, however, as shall be seen. Regardless, the fact is that a maximum of 1800 high-skilled Swiss labourers were contributed to the German industry during the war, making up 12% of the skilled labour and 20% of the metal workers in the 10-kilometer free movement and trade area on the Swiss-German border (Golson, 2011, p. 426). Although the actual numbers are demonstrably hard to pin down, what is certain is that this labour provided by Switzerland was quite important to the Germans (Golson, 2011, pp. 428-429). The Germans, in exchange for a small number of unskilled female workers, received a much greater number of highly skilled Swiss workers, which made considerable contributions to the German industry of metal, machinery and other such specialised products, and the Swiss ultimately gave three times more than they received, a favour they never extended to the Allies (Golson,

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<sup>38</sup> See the Bergier Interim Report (Bergier, et al., 1998) Chapter 2.4

2011, pp. 451-452). That said, they really were in no position to make the same contribution to the Allies, as one can tell by just looking at a map of the period in question. The really interesting part about this, however, is that all the while the Swiss central government worked to facilitate the transfer of labour to Germany, which was sure to please the Reich sitting gun-in-hand on the Swiss border, eyeing them suspiciously, the local Swiss governments, those of the cantons and border towns, did everything in their power to limit the number of Swiss workers that could (or would want to) cross over to work in the German industry (Golson, 2011, pp. 430-431).

Swiss trade was also endlessly beneficial to Germany. The Swiss were a major producer and exporter of complex armaments and machinery (Bergier, et al., 2002, p. 177), and some areas of Swiss production, like the aluminium and machine industry, traded exclusively with the Axis powers (Bergier, et al., 2002, p. 180). Switzerland also granted seriously large volumes of loans and credits to Germany and Italy (Bergier, et al., 2002, pp. 182, 184-189) and continued exporting to Germany even though she was significantly behind in payments in the form of coal and steel (Golson, 2011, p. 255). Even as the Allies forcibly restricted Swiss trade with Germany and would reduce the Swiss exports to Germany by 50 to 60% , the Swiss would offer Germany 10 million more Swiss francs of credit, on top of the one billion francs of debt Germany had already accumulated, and this credit might have been larger had the Allies not forbidden any amount higher than 10 million (Golson, 2011, p. 260). The Swiss only reduced and later ended altogether their trade relations with Germany when the Allies forced them to, and even then, they did it so deliberately slowly that by the time Switzerland officially stopped trade with Germany, the Allies had already moved far enough inland in Continental Europe that they were able to physically prevent Swiss-German trade (Golson, 2011, p. 261). The Swiss eagerness to trade with Germany and willingness to disregard the one-billion-Swiss-Franc debt and the German tendency to miss payments, and to keep opening new credits for Germany and providing loans shows a clear attempt in appeasing Germany through trade and financial means. Indeed, an evaluation of the totality of the Swiss-German wartime trade shows “an active

choice by the Swiss government to provide aid [to Germany]” (Golson, 2011, pp. 348-349) A common saying in Switzerland at the time goes: “Six days we slog on for the Nazis, but on the seventh we pray for the victory of the Allies.” (Braunschweig, 1999, p. 672), and it may be that the Swiss, in their heart of hearts, hoped for an Allied victory, but it cannot be denied that they very truly did toil tirelessly to supply the German war machine, if only to appease Hitler.

Another Swiss concession came in the form of the freedom of the press. During the war, the Reich launched 23 diplomatic notes and 146 diplomatic interventions in protest to the “anti-Nazi attitude” in the Swiss press (Braunschweig, 1999, p. 664). Berlin’s attempts to rein in the Swiss press, however, started long before the war (Halbrook, 2006, p. 9). Members of the Swiss press regularly received death threats from the German media and the official Nazi Party mouthpiece, the *Völkische Beobachter* launched a war against the Swiss press in 1938 (Halbrook, 2006, pp. 9-10). With the fall of France, however, and the encirclement of Switzerland, the Swiss confidence was low. When Berlin made it clear that they would not tolerate the insolence of the Swiss press, and would resort to trade sanctions on food and coal or even outright military action (Halbrook, 2006, p. 19), as *La Sentinelle* attested on 24 June 1940, the Swiss government yielded and took action to suppress the press. This spirit, suppression of the press in appeasement of the Nazis, would continue until the siege of Switzerland was finally lifted. The aforementioned *Beobachter* was also previously banned in Switzerland, and on Berlin’s demand that ban was also lifted (Wylie, 2002, p. 337).

During the war, the Swiss airspace was a veritable battlefield. German aircraft, especially during the Battle of France, violated Swiss airspace very often, and the Swiss, in response, shot down many of their planes. Air battles between the Swiss and the Germans were not uncommon, especially after Hermann Göring took the battles and subsequent German losses personally and provoked and instigated further battles and attempts at sabotaging Swiss airfields in a failed attempt to avenge himself and the *Luftwaffe* (Urner, 2002, pp. 19-20). The situation got so bad that Berlin finally threatened invasion if more German planes were shot down, after

which the Swiss stopped shooting the planes down and instead forced them to the ground via Swiss escort fighter planes (Urner, 2002, p. 21). The Allied planes weren't shown the same leniency. Berne also agreed to release the captured German pilots, another courtesy never extended to Allied pilots (Wylie, 2002, p. 337).

There is also the matter of Jewish refugees. Switzerland was no more anti-Semitic than the rest of (non-Axis) Europe (Braunschweig, 1999, p. 666)<sup>39</sup> but there was a very clear anti-Semitic discrimination in the Swiss admittance of refugees. This can, once again, perhaps be explained as an attempt to appease Germany. The most infamous component of the Swiss refugee policy is the now widely known "J" stamp: Switzerland mandated that the passports of German Jews be marked with a "J" stamp (Wylie, 2002, pp. 351-352). As no other marks were ever required<sup>40</sup> one can rather safely conclude that if and when Switzerland actively sorted between the refugees for which to admit and which to turn away, she did this based solely on whether they were Jewish or not. In the end, Switzerland would turn away over 24.500 refugees from the Swiss border during the war (Wylie, 2002, p. 353).

Finally, there is the matter of the Red Cross. Two major controversial affairs involved the ICRC during this period. First, four separate medical missions, sponsored by the ICRC, were sent to tend to the German soldiers on the Eastern Front, but none to the Russians (Wylie, 2002, p. 342). Much more reprehensible, however, is the fact that the Swiss government prevented the Red Cross from making a public statement on the Holocaust (Wylie, 2002, p. 352), presumably so as to not upset Germany.

#### **4.2.6 A Pimple Unsqueezed**

Whereas the previous section dealt with the conscious and active efforts Switzerland made to appease Germany and stay her hand, this section will deal with

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<sup>39</sup> That is to say, there was still some level of anti-Semitism in Switzerland, by no means were the Swiss people free of prejudice against Jews, however, this level in no way corresponds to the outright racist policies regarding refugees.

<sup>40</sup> Like for instance denoting other ethnicities, political inclinations, education level, whether they can provide skilled labour etc.

all that which Switzerland had no control over, but which helped delay or prevent a German invasion of Switzerland.

The first of these is the matter of the St. Gotthard and Simplon tunnels that run through the Alps and, through Switzerland, connect Germany to Italy. This one actually belongs partly in the previous section, as it contains a Swiss concession. When Italy entered the war, she did so on promises from her ally Germany that her resources would be supplied by Germany in case of necessity, and upon her entry, Britain immediately put a blockade on Italy, cutting her off from her supply of coal, and to provide her with this crucial material, Germany demanded that Switzerland put her transit infrastructure, most importantly the Alpine tunnels, at the service of this endeavour (Urner, 2002, p. 18). Switzerland conceded, although as part of the agreement, only resources and materiel could pass through Switzerland, and not armies or divisions, a fact that would annoy Hitler to no end when planning *Fall Anton's* predecessor, *Unternehmen Attila* (Urner, 2002, p. 41). As part of the *Réduit*, Switzerland had prepared to blow these Alpine tunnels in the case of a German invasion, which was a consideration of the German High Command while planning the invasion of Switzerland (Urner, 2002, pp. 161, 164), however these tunnels were more of an incentive to not invade Switzerland than a deterrent against invading Switzerland. The Swiss air battles mentioned in the previous section were not exclusively against the Germans. In fact, after the Battle of France was concluded, the Germans seldom flew over the region, whereas from then on, especially after the American entry into the war, Allied planes would often go on bombing runs against Germany in the region, some of which would “accidentally” turn into Allied bombings of Switzerland<sup>41</sup>. The Swiss, however, fiercely defensive of their airspace, did not take these raids lying down, and shot down dozens of Allied aircraft. And indeed, as ready as Guisan was to blow the Alpine tunnels, he was also very eager to protect them (Wylie, 2002, pp. 347-348). Switzerland, as long as she was independent and neutral, and as long as she allowed the Axis use

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<sup>41</sup> For an account of Allied air incidents over Switzerland and the Allied bombings of Switzerland, see among others: “Shot from the Sky” (Prince, 2015) and “Diplomacy of Apology” (Helmreich, 1977)

of the Alpine tunnels and of the Swiss railways, essentially acted as free anti-air defence for Germany, protecting the artery that ran between Germany and Italy from Allied destruction.

A second reason why Germany refrained from marching into Switzerland is because the Nazi High Command was concerned that such an action would finally provoke the Sleeping Giant from abandoning isolationism and reaching across the Atlantic to punish Germany (Urner, 2002, p. 67). U.S. entry into the war on the British side, in December 1941, of course, automatically invalidated this reason, however, at that point, as already mentioned in the previous section, the Swiss franc became the only globally accepted currency, precisely because of the U.S. entry into the war, and as already cited therein, if somehow Germany lost her access to the Swiss franc, for instance because she invaded and wiped out Switzerland, her gold reserves would be practically worthless. Therefore, even after the threat of American intervention was made irrelevant, Swiss neutrality and independence was in German interests.

Although Italy and Germany were allies and were pretty chummy to say the least, it should not be forgotten that each were their own nations, with their own, sometimes clashing, national interests. The partition of Switzerland was one such case. Italians claimed and demanded a disproportionately large slice of Swiss land, larger than Germany was willing to part with, and invading Switzerland would mean a confrontation between the two Axis partners, inviting unnecessary friction (Wylie, 2002, p. 347).

As in the first war, Britain's plan was to starve Germany out. To that end, she enforced a strict blockade on Continental Europe, not just on the Axis nations but also on the neutrals. Any imports would have to be approved by the British authorities with "navicerts" to be allowed through the blockade. Through exclusive deals, however, Switzerland managed to largely bypass the blockade. Firstly, they had secured, essentially, an endless supply of navicerts on demand, and secondly, they secured permission from Britain to produce goods for Germany with material imported through the blockade in exchange for producing goods for Britain with

material imported from Germany (Codevilla, 2000, p. 107). Essentially, this meant that Switzerland became a source for everything Germany couldn't procure elsewhere because of the Allied blockade. Therefore, at least until Germany managed to invade Britain and knock her out of the war and relieve the blockade, Switzerland was vitally important to Germany as a neutral independent nation. It should also be noted that to the Nazi higher ups, this didn't mean they would have to tolerate Switzerland indefinitely, as until it was eventually abandoned, the Battle of Britain was expected to be concluded shortly and an invasion of Britain, *Unternehmen Seelöwe*, carried out promptly all throughout the length of the Battle of Britain. Therefore, one imagines, the Nazi leadership kept thinking they had to endure Swiss independence a bit longer and exploit Swiss neutrality a tad longer and then they would get to march into Switzerland any day now, following the surrender of Britain.

#### **4.3 Equidistant but not Neutral (1940-1943)**

The period between France's surrender and the German invasion of the Soviet Union was, for Turkey, when the threat of a Nazi invasion was at its most real. Beforehand the Third Reich was simply too far away, and afterwards Turkey would simply be too secure in her position to believe that the Germans would overextend their capacity with an unnecessary invasion of Turkey. This period was marked with German efforts at swaying Turkey into the Axis, and with limited British efforts at pulling Turkey into the war.

##### **4.3.1 Content, but at Arm's Length**

With the recent French betrayal of the Turks, and also the collapse of the Allied war effort on the Continent, Turkey was having a severe crisis of faith. As the Germans steamrolled through the Balkans and pushed ever closer to the Turkish borders, for the first time the Turks felt the need to placate Germany. The Germans, however, would begin attempts to woo Turkey into their alliance. Turkey, already committed to Britain, would have the unenviable task of keeping the Germans content, but at arm's length.

A vital part of this effort on the Turkish part consisted of convincing Germany that Turkey's alliance with Britain was born not out of enmity against Germany, but from sound reason and necessity. Hamdi Arpağ, a Turkish politician and diplomat, for instance, explained to Ribbentrop that it was only natural for Turkey to place herself beside the powers defending peace and not the ones out to obtain *lebensraum* by conquest when Turkey has never had any aggressive designs on other nations (Watt, 1989, p. 305). In a similar vein, Saracoğlu, in the Grand National Assembly, voiced his confusion as to why Germany was so outraged at Turkey's friendship with Britain when *Mein Kampf* advocated so strongly for Germany an alliance with Britain (Watt, 1989, p. 305). This effort would be so successful that even following the Adana Conference in early 1943, von Papen would not be disheartened in his conviction that Turkey would never go to war against Germany (Vanderlippe, 2001, p. 70). In all fairness, for all his flaws, von Papen was correct in this belief: Turkey truly had no interest in fighting Germany, not when their true enemy, the Soviet Union, still posed a threat (Weisband, 1973, p. 184).

Perhaps the very height of the tensions between Germany and Turkey was reached right before the Germans marched into Greece. The Balkan Pact, although long irrelevant in practice, still bound Turkey to come to Greece's defence if she was attacked by another Balkan nation, like for instance Bulgaria, the new Axis ally of Italy who was in the process of being pushed back into Albania as a result of her failed invasion of Greece. Saracoğlu informed the Greek ambassador on 28 October 1940 that Greece could doubtlessly count on Turkey in case the Bulgarians opened a Thracian front against Greece. Eager to prevent any situation that might require Turkey to declare war, however, Ankara informed Sofia that if Bulgaria attacked Greece, Turkey would declare war upon her. (Deringil, 2006, p. 46) The desired aim was achieved, and Bulgaria was deterred, however Germany was now marching toward Greece at full speed, and through Bulgaria. To resolve the part of the crisis that immediately concerned herself, Turkey signed a non-aggression pact with Bulgaria on 17 February 1941, and assured that Bulgaria wouldn't invade Greece, sat back to observe what would happen next. Even then, however, Turkish

troops remained mobilised and amassed on the Bulgarian border, which was not an insignificant cause for concern for the Germans (Fox, 1959, p. 22). In the end, however, the Turks contented with having performed their duties as required by the Balkan Pact, and did not escalate the tensions further, and Germany for her part assured Turkey that she meant Turkey no harm as long as Turkey didn't aid the British (Fox, 1959, p. 23) in contravention of her "neutrality", meaning, for instance, allowing the British to use Turkish airfields, which would be a topic of heated discussion between the British and the Turks in the coming years.

In 1939, before the war started, 60% of the chrome Germany required to feed her war industry came from Turkey. On the day the war began, Turkey broke off her trade relations with Germany, in support of her allies, and set about replacing Germany with the Allies as the destination of Turkish chrome, of which she produced 250.000 tonnes every year (İnanç, 2006, p. 908). Numan Menemencioğlu took charge of the negotiations and demanded at first that the British agree to buy 200.000 tonnes a year, for the next two years, and in exchange Turkey would not sell any to Germany. The British were reluctant, and by the time they eventually agreed, Menemencioğlu had raised his price: the deal stood the same, except if Britain didn't want Turkey to sell any chrome to Germany, she would have to buy £2.000.000 worth of dried fruit, nuts and tobacco from Turkey. This infuriated the British, but Menemencioğlu reasoned with them that the Germans refused to buy these products unless Turkey sold them chromite, so Britain would have to provide an alternative market. Britain begrudgingly accepted, but once again Menemencioğlu upped the ante: if the agreement was to be signed, it would be signed not for two years as was previously agreed upon, but for twenty. Britain refused (Weisband, 1973, p. 102). Eventually, on 8 January 1940, an agreement was signed between Britain, France and Turkey for two years, with an optional extension of one more year, that saw Britain buy 11/15 and France 4/15 of Turkey's total chrome production, after the United States' share was deducted (İnanç, 2006, p. 908). Britain would later come to regret her refusal, as the relatively short life span of this agreement she signed would cause her much headache (Weisband, 1973, p. 103).

But with the fall of France, Turkey decided to reconsider their stance on trade with Germany. On 25 July 1940, a trade agreement was signed between the two parties whereby Turkey would receive locomotives, industrial equipment, spare parts and pharmaceuticals in exchange for all kinds of agricultural goods. Menemencioglu wasn't completely misleading the British when he told them that Germany wouldn't buy Turkish goods without chromite in the deal, however: Chrome was still the main prize for the Germans, and they were steadily making their way to it. The second step on the German path to Turkish chrome was the 1941 Turco-German Treaty of Friendship. On the Turkish part, this treaty was desirable because it worked to placate Germany and to assure them Turkey bore them no enmity. On the German part, briefly, its desirability stemmed from the fact that Turkish trade was vital for Germany, for the chrome if for nothing else. The better the bilateral relations, the deeper the trade connections, and the closer Germany was to the chrome. Immediately after this treaty, the Nazi leadership resolved to dispatch Karl Clodius, head of Germany's trade affairs, to Ankara in order to get the chrome flowing. (Weisband, 1973, p. 104)

The first Clodius Agreement was signed on 9 October 1941, in which Turkey agreed to ship 45.000 tonnes of chromite ore in three months, but only starting on January 1943: when the exclusive chrome trade deal with Britain expired. Menemencioglu insisted, much to Germany's chagrin, that Turkey see her promise to Britain through (İnanç, 2006, p. 909). The deal also dictated that Germany would get double (immediately) and quadruple (eventually) the promised amount of chromite if she delivered the full 18 million Turkish liras worth of military equipment to Turkey as agreed upon (Weisband, 1973, p. 105). Turkey almost ever exclusively negotiated for armaments. As shrewd as Menemencioglu, Saracoğlu and İnönü were, they weren't out to swindle other nations for fat profits; they wanted to adequately arm and modernize the severely underequipped and obsolete Turkish army so that Turkey could weather the storm that was raging all across Europe, but even more importantly, so that she could weather the storm that they were sure the Soviets would bring afterwards.

The Germans, however, neglected their own end of the deal, and consequently received 1/45 of the chrome they were promised. Eager to remedy the situation, Germany negotiated the second Clodius Agreement, which, among other results, saw the Germans deliver enough arms to Turkey to receive nearly 47 thousand tonnes of chromite in return by the end of 1943 (Weisband, 1973, p. 113). The Allies were, of course, incredibly unhappy with all this, and were working very hard to stop the flow of Turkish chrome to Germany. Although these efforts will also be explored later in this study, it is important here to note that even when Knatchbull-Hugessen, authorised by Britain, proposed to purchase the entire yearly chrome output of Turkey at least for the coming five years (and at most however long the war took, plus one additional year) Saracoğlu refused to commit more than 50% of Turkey's production (İnanç, 2006, pp. 910-911) as the other 50% was promised to Germany as part of the second Clodius Agreement. Turkey's resolute refusal to go back on their promises, both in this instance and when negotiating the first Clodius Agreement, was instrumental in protecting her image as a fair neutral in the eyes of Germany and her image as an honest ally (who was doing all she could to help Britain without committing suicide) in the eyes of Britain.

In feeding Germany all the chrome she could ask for, at the cost of severely angering the British, the Turks not only made considerable strides in the re-arming of the Turkish army, and not only went a long way in appeasing Germany, but they also added another point of consideration for the Nazi leadership when deliberating a potential invasion of Turkey<sup>42</sup>: not only would chrome deliveries cease for as long as the two countries are in a state of war, but also the already underdeveloped infrastructure of the chromite mining operations of Turkey could very easily be fatally damaged, by Turkish hands if not by German ones, and then who knows how many months, even years, it would take to get the chrome flowing again. For a steady supply of chrome, an independent and friendly Turkey was the safer alternative.

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<sup>42</sup> Like for instance "Operation Gertrud" or "Gertrude Plan", a Nazi contingency plan on the invasion and occupation of Turkey in the case of Turkish entry into the war on the British side.

As Turkey worked to secure her position with Germany, however, some Nazi higher ups started getting ideas. Turkey, lynchpin of the Allies' security in the Middle East, lying smack-dab in the middle of German-occupied Balkans and many potential German goals like the Caucasus, Iraq, and Suez through Syria, would be an incredible addition to the Axis bloc.

As previously mentioned, Germany had been making efforts to tighten the military bond between Turkey and Germany. Two thousand German specialists, German investments in the Turkish defence industry, German military instructors teaching in Turkish war academies (especially after 1933), invitations to Turkish press to tour and inspect the German war industry... (Avcı, 2016, p. 204) By 1940, Germany had several very important tools to influence Turkey, and one of the most vital ones were the Turkish civilian students, including one of the adopted children of Atatürk, Abdülrahim Tuncak, and army cadets who had gone abroad for their education: 80% of these students were in Germany in 1937, and they were instructed and examined on the Nazi ideology and methods and of course a part of them became members of Nazi organizations, and although the government encouraged new ones to choose France or England in 1939, it would be at least three years before those new ones returned (Avcı, 2016, p. 206). Turkish leadership certainly wasn't happy with how much influence the Nazis wielded over the future of Turkey, as (especially in those times) foreign-educated students, both soldiers and civilians, were much more likely to rise to the highest positions in their respective organizations and in society and made efforts to limit this influence. Besides trying to send the new generations to allied foreign countries, the Turkish ambassador in Berlin was assigned to send back the more openly and radically Nazi Turkish students (Avcı, 2016, p. 206).

These above-mentioned efforts are quite evocative of how the German Empire swayed and wooed the Three Pashas into forcing the Ottoman Empire into World War I. This trend would continue as the Third Reich played its trump card in a bid to make history repeat. Only four days after securing her Balkan flank with a friendship treaty with Turkey, Germany would declare a surprise war on the

Soviet Union, in contravention of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and German troops would blitz into Russia at a dazzling speed as part of *Unternehmen Barbarossa*. This was to be the golden opportunity for Nazi propagandists to work Turkey into the Axis.

Probably the tastiest bait, at least in the eyes of the Nazis who cast it, was that of Turan. Now once again openly hostile to the Soviets, Germany made grandiose, if vague, promises of Soviet land to Turkey (Fox, 1959, p. 27). Turanism, otherwise known as Pan-Turkism or Pan-Turanism, is the ideology calling for the unification of Turkic peoples under one nation, with ill-defined but grand borders<sup>43</sup>. Most of these Turkic peoples to be “liberated” and unified, however, lived in Central Asia, largely if not completely inside Soviet borders. Especially Enver of the Three Pashas was fanatically committed to this fantasy, and in fact had worked during the first war to realise this fantasy, which demonstrates yet again that the Nazi intelligence on the leadership of the new Turkey was perhaps outdated. Granted, there was a large support base inside Turkey including prominent figures like Fevzi Çakmak, a minister of war of the Ottoman Empire, a field marshal, an ex-prime minister and the long-standing chief of general staff since the foundation of the republic. (Çalış, 1997, p. 108). Germany was trying to steer this movement, and in turn Turkey, from Berlin with the help of Nuri Pasha, the half-brother of Enver Pasha (Çalış, 1997, p. 106). But even at the best of times, when the delusional Turanists in Turkey did not pose an important threat to Turkey’s security, İnönü was cautiously and suspiciously tolerant, but never welcoming of them<sup>44</sup>. Until the last period of the war, İnönü allowed their presence, but never let their ideology penetrate the government (Çalış, 1997, p. 106), and afterwards cracked down on them and rooted them out altogether, as we shall later see. Atatürk’s Turkey had no interest in foreign adventures, in irredentist yearnings, in promises of territory, and

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<sup>43</sup> The vagueness of the borders is due to the controversial addition of countries considered by some Turanists as “Turkic”, such as Finland, Hungary, or Japan.

<sup>44</sup> (Çalış, 1997, pp. 106, 108) (Weisband, 1973, pp. 245-246)

İnönü's steadfastness, coupled with this central principle of Turkey meant that Germany had no luck in swaying Turkey this way.

That being said, Germany didn't miss all her swings. Turkey was already infinitely anxious about the Soviet Union, the primary enemy, so *Unternehmen Barbarossa* automatically scored some sympathy points. In August 1942, von Papen briefed von Ribbentrop about his meeting with the newly appointed Prime Minister of Turkey, Şükrü Saracoğlu. He reported that when he asked to learn Saracoğlu's mind on the Russian question, the latter responded that as a Turk, he passionately wished for the destruction of Russia and that the Führer's attempt at wiping out Russia is a great and once-in-a-century undertaking. In fact, if von Papen is to be believed, Saracoğlu had made some promises on cooperation on the occupation and administration of the lands "liberated" from the Soviets in exchange for a say on the interests of the native Turkic peoples inside Soviet borders. (Tuğtan, 2020, p. 74)

İnönü, for his part, publicly stayed aloof, as was his character, but privately, the German invasion of Russia was an incredible catharsis for him: Upon hearing of the news of *Barbarossa* from his son, having just been woken up by him, İnönü stared blankly at his son for a few moments, processing what he had just heard, and then he sat up and laughed for ten minutes straight (Hakkı, 2005, p. 13). The closest threat to Turkey's security had just descended upon the throat of Turkey's eternal and foremost enemy, a better scenario is scarcely imaginable. The Germans, however, were eager to spin this propaganda victory into a total triumph. The first step was the *casus belli*.

During the negotiations leading up to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Hitler deliberately brought up the issue of Turkey and the Straits and declared that Germany had no interest. Rising to the bait, Molotov made it clear that the Soviet Union was very much interested in the Black Sea and in the Turkish Straits (Çalış & Söker, 2019, p. 449). In addition to the Straits, Molotov also expressed a strong interest in "the area south of Batum and Baku" (Hakkı, 2005, pp. 12-13), meaning anything between the return of the Turkish provinces of Ardahan and Kars to the

annexation of the entire region of Eastern Anatolia. Joachim von Ribbentrop made sure to inform the Turkish ambassador Hüsrev Gerede that “Germany attacked Russia because the latter wanted to take Turkey and the Balkans under its own sphere of influence; but Germans could not let Turkey become dependent on a foreign country and they were fighting for peace and integrity in the whole world.” (Avcı, 2016, p. 209) Germany also made a grand show of declaring and publishing the “hidden clauses” of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact: The partition of Poland and the Soviet invasions of Romania and of Turkey. These declarations, particularly relating to the Turkish Straits, provoked immense interest and heated discussions in the Turkish press<sup>45</sup>. All the newspapers reported the German allegations, and most of them also reported the Soviet denial of the allegations, but until the relief of Stalingrad, the Turkish press mostly sided with Germany when reporting on the Eastern Front.

As opposed to the rest of the German efforts at swaying Turkey, which would have worked on the Three Pashas but not on Atatürk’s Turkey, this next attempt was actually quite well informed and actually geared to appeal to the principles of this new Turkey and of İnönü. To Kemal Atatürk and his Kemalist legacy which steered Turkey through World War II, civilisation was synonymous with Europe, which included Germany but not Russia, and the first and foremost goal of Turkey was to be a part of this civilisation (Çalış, 1997, pp. 108-109). In the French attempt at creating a unified Europe in the 1930s, Turkey was excluded from the designs, a profound insult to the Turkish Republic and as can be imagined, the Turkish public, through the press, expressed their heartbreak, disappointment and anger at this slight, demanding “Are we not a European nation?”. It was a rare moment of brilliance for von Papen when he expertly exploited this hurtful and still-fresh memory. When the Soviet Union surrendered to the unbearable might of the

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<sup>45</sup> A few select examples amongst dozens: “Moskovada son tedbirler” (Yalman, 1941), “B. Hitler diyor ki:” (Vatan, 1941), “Tas ajansının bir tekzibi” (Cumhuriyet, 1941), “Alman Büyük Elçisinin verdiği muhtıra” (Cumhuriyet, 1941), “Almanya ile Sovyetler Birliği arasında harp” (Atay, 1941), “Alman büyük elçisi Fon Papen Hariciye Vekilimize Alman-Sovyet harbine sebep olan hadiseleri izaheden bir muhtıra verdi” (Vakit, 1941), “Molotof’un 4 suali, Almanyanın cevabı” (Akşam, 1941)

German Reich, as it surely would soon enough, Germany could finally get to work on the reorganisation of Europe. Turkey, who saw herself as a part of Europe, had a mission to save Europe from her enemies, and should Turkey perform her duty unwaveringly, this would naturally make a profound impression upon the German leadership when they got to work on constructing the new Europe. Turkey had a choice to make: Did she belong in Europe, or was she an appendix to the British-American-Russian front? (Çalış, 1997, pp. 109-110) Although not nearly enough to make İnönü abandon his ally in Britain and do an about-face, one must assume that this was among the more successful German attempts to pull Turkey to the other side.

The final German undertaking was less an attempt to sway Turkey into the Axis and more one to push Turkey out of the Allies. An Axis-aligned Turkey was certainly in German interests, but failing that, a neutral Turkey was certainly more than acceptable. To this end, the Nazi leadership tried very hard to drive a wedge between Turkey and her British ally, and they did this, once again quite cleverly, by planting seeds of doubt about an Anglo-Soviet collaboration at the expense of Turkey (Fox, 1959, pp. 29-30). Although these efforts don't seem to have borne fruit immediately, they doubtlessly must have left an effect on the minds of Saracoğlu, Menemencioğlu and İnönü, as these three men would come to suspect their British allies of colluding with the Soviets for Turkey's ruin in the coming years, for instance when Churchill, despite Roosevelt's opinion to the contrary, decided to insist on forcing Turkey into the war (Weisband, 1973, pp. 172-173) or when the British, in opposition of the American July 1942 agreement with Turkey on lend-lease, convinced the U.S. to send all the aid going to Turkey to Britain, who would then relay them to Turkey (Vanderlippe, 2001, p. 68), the Turkish military attaché in Washington, Cemal Aydınalp, even went as far as claiming that this was a British bid to keep the Turkish army weak as per their pledge to the Soviets (Barlas & Yılmaz, 2016, p. 460). Menemencioğlu, for his part, was convinced the British Secretary of State for War and for Foreign Affairs, Anthony Eden, was doing the bidding of the Soviets (Weisband, 1973, p. 182), and a similar suspicion on Eden's

part with Menemencioglu and the Nazis (Weisband, 1973, p. 177) led to a profound and long-standing personal enmity between the two men (Weisband, 1973, p. 226).

Despite everything, however, the German efforts failed in swaying Turkey, as well as in making her abandon Britain. Turkey would stay out of the war (although mostly due to other reasons than German efforts) but she would not stay passive, nor would she refuse to assist Britain, albeit without being implicated in the war.

#### **4.3.2 Non-Belligerent but not Neutral**

With the collapse of France, Britain was left alone, not only in the war, but also in carrying out the promises France and Britain made together to Turkey. As part of the Tripartite Pact, France and Britain were to send large amounts of arms and equipment to Turkey, in an effort to adequately outfit her for war. Britain had also undertaken serious financial responsibilities together with France to keep Turkish chrome out of German hands. Alone, there was no real way Britain could shoulder all these responsibilities. Precisely because of this, Britain chose not to push the issue to the breaking point when Turkey picked Turco-German trade back up: It was the only way Turkey could procure armaments and equipment from Germany, the armaments Britain wanted Turkey to have but could not supply herself (Fox, 1959, p. 31). Before we move further, the author wishes to impress upon the reader the British (and later, to a slightly lesser extent American) reasonableness and understanding regarding Turkey in World War II, especially during the period covered in this section (from the Fall of France to the Soviet victory at Stalingrad). Turkey was only able to perform the complex and admirable diplomatic manoeuvres that will be explored in the next chapter because of the quite generous wiggle room afforded to them by Britain. Perhaps the best instance of this reasonableness concerns the Clodius Agreement, where the U.S. was convinced they would try to pressure Turkey out of it, Britain took the approach that “Germany’s legal and moral right to fill 180.000 tonnes of chrome under the Clodius agreement if they deliver required goods is an unassailable fact”, and took

charge of the negotiations with the Turks based off this stance (İnanç, 2006, pp. 911-912).

Time and again, Turkey, sometimes rightfully and sometimes duplicitously, refused to honour their alliance with Britain, at least from the British point of view. If it were the Third Reich or the Soviet Union in Britain's place, dictating terms to their junior partner in an alliance, they would have run out of patience much sooner than Britain and given up on Turkey, and worse, probably taken military action against her under the pretence that she was working with the enemy.

Indeed, Britain *did* eventually give up on Turkey as well, but this was due in part to the Soviets insisting that Britain isolate Turkey to punish her and perhaps thereby force her to join. All the while, the Americans themselves gave up on Turkey as her entry into the war was largely irrelevant to them by that point. When the Allies decided upon Operation Overlord, everything else seemed like a distraction to the Americans. All these points will be explored in detail below in Chapter 6.

Before exploring the many instances where Turkey successfully got out from under her wartime responsibilities, let us first go over the reasons why Turkey wished to stay out of the war. Most of these reasons will be explained in detail throughout the rest of this study.

1. Turkey was promised that her army would be adequately equipped and modernised before she was required to join the war. Even by the end of the war, this promise was not fulfilled. (Although Turkey was as much to blame for this as Britain, as we shall see.)
2. Very much related to the first point, the Germans had an excellent air force, and it was no secret at all that Turkey was not only completely outmatched by and vulnerable to the *Luftwaffe* (Weisband, 1973, pp. 136-137). Britain had promised to amend this shortcoming but couldn't. (Although, once again, this was as much Turkey's fault as Britain's, perhaps even more.)

3. Before *Barbarossa*, declaring war on Germany might have provoked a Soviet response, which was Turkey's worst nightmare, and also a clause they had added in the Tripartite. After *Barbarossa*, the Turkish reasoning was: If we join the war before we are ready and are invaded by the Germans, then the Soviets would gladly take up the mission of "liberating" (invading, occupying and subjugating) our lands<sup>46</sup> and even if we manage to hold our ground against the Germans, we would be expected to allow military access to our new "ally", the Soviet Union, which they would exploit to occupy our lands without even giving us an opportunity to resist<sup>47</sup>.
4. France, a major part of the Turkish confidence in the Allied cause, collapsed in a few short weeks, and attempted to bring Turkey into the war, only to throw them under the bus. Could Turkey ever trust the Allies to uphold their security and sovereignty after this betrayal?
5. As the Turkish army was hopelessly outmatched in terms of quality and quantity of equipment, Britain's guarantees were their only defence in case of war. This was the same Britain who, at the height of her power, had made the same guarantees when inciting the Greeks to invade Turkey but twenty years earlier, and the same generals who oversaw the resounding triumph of a miserably weak Turkey over the British-backed Greece then were now in charge of Turkey, being incited by the British to declare war on Germany.
6. This war was merely a prelude to the actual war for the Turks: they stressed time after time to their Western allies that the Soviets were the real enemy, that the Soviet army should not be left unscathed at the end of this war, that a negotiated peace with Germany rather than her unconditional surrender was instrumental in preserving the balance of power against the Soviets. Even if Turkey could have held her own against Germany, or better yet, pushed Germany off the Balkans, it would not be a victory, as she would have merely weakened herself before the ultimate confrontation with the Soviet Union.

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<sup>46</sup> (Weisband, 1973, pp. 201, 274, 301-302) (Vanderlippe, 2001, pp. 79-80)

<sup>47</sup> (Fox, 1959, p. 35) (Weisband, 1973, p. 145)

7. Later in the war, when the United States and Russia had concerted their efforts with the British and were all together calling on Turkey to enter the war, the Turks were, in principal, ready to enter the war<sup>48</sup>, but were demanding to be included as equal partners and be allowed in on the war plans, especially concerning the Balkans and the role Turkey would play in the war, and the Allies rejected these demands consistently.

Despite the strong desire to stay out of the war, however, Turkey was still very resolutely in the Allied camp, and wished for the victory of Britain and the United States, if not the Soviets, and aided them whenever they could without risking war. Two excellent examples showing Turkey's commitment to the Allies can be cited here. The first happened during the negotiations of the Clodius Agreement. Clodius dictated his terms and made his threats, and got his way in all of his demands but one: He had insisted that this agreement mustn't be communicated to the British ambassador, which Menemencioğlu resolutely refused, and informed Knatchbull-Hugessen of the agreement that same day (İnanç, 2006, p. 909). Indeed, Turkey felt the necessity to deal with Germany, but her alliance with Britain always took precedence, as can be seen in the report on the Clodius Agreement sent to Berlin by Germany's First Embassy Counsellor in Ankara, Hans Kroll:

In almost six years of working with Turks I have found that they are skilful enough to find a loophole in any treaty instrument. Although for propaganda purposes the agreement should be played up, it was a failure in real terms as the Turks had made no attempt to find such a loophole in their contract with Britain. (İnanç, 2006, p. 910)

The second example comes from Steinhardt's report to Washington, sent on 22 November 1943:

As a side light on the assistance being rendered by the Turk authorities in frustrating the movement of chrome to the Axis, I have been informed today that, although the Germans have sent to Turkey 117 locomotives and 1250 freight cars to be used for the movement of chrome destined for Germany from the mines to the Turkish railways terminals, that most of these locomotives and freight cars have "disappeared

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<sup>48</sup> (Weisband, 1973, p. 191) (Vanderlippe, 2001, p. 74)

in the military zone where foreigners are forbidden” resulting in an acute shortage of rolling stock for the movement of chrome to the Axis. (İnanç, 2006, p. 912)

There is a third instance, immediately after the unsuccessful British Dodecanese Campaign of 1943. As part of this campaign, British forces, with the aid of Italian garrisons, stormed German-held islands in the Aegean, were defeated and were even pushed out of British and Italian held islands and lost Rhodes. The Turkish government lent every effort to rescuing Allied soldiers from the Aegean Sea and bringing them ashore on Turkish beaches. This affair will be discussed in greater detail on in the next chapter.

For the approximately three years covered in this section the British, alongside their American allies after December 1941, made attempts to distance Turkey from Germany, mostly as per the recommendations of the Ministry of Economic Warfare, but never forced Turkey to comply. Knatchbull-Hugessen, privy to the Turkish reality, understood that Turkey was doing all she could to aid the Allied cause at this time, which is the only explanation for his drastically different account of the Turks than Hans Kroll’s: “The Turks are brave, honourable, and straightforward to deal with, and it is a pleasure to treat with them.” (Watt, 1989, p. 289). He convinced his masters in London, although sometimes with limited success (Weisband, 1973, pp. 177-178), of this as well. In the end, as much as Churchill wanted the Turks in the war, so that his strongly desired Balkan Front<sup>49</sup> could be started, he knew that they were doing their utmost save for all-out war, and more importantly he knew that the Germans were vying for the Turks as well and twisting the Turkish arm at this point could have driven them to the enemy’s arms<sup>50</sup>. It was also clear to the British that they could not, before 1943, provide Turkey with what she needs to ready herself for war, but the Germans could (Watt, 1989, pp. 306-307). Roosevelt was much more sympathetic to İnönü’s attempts at

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<sup>49</sup> Churchill famously called the south (Italy) and the south-east (the Balkans) Europe’s soft underbelly and fought the British and American military decision-makers tooth and nail for an invasion of the Balkans and of Italy, of which he only got the latter, for as soon as Normandy was decided upon, all other efforts were seen as distractions.

<sup>50</sup> This was a problem Britain was confounded with when dealing with many “neutrals”, such as Sweden, Finland, Norway and Spain. See “The Power of Small States” (Fox, 1959) for details.

staying out of the war (Weisband, 1973, p. 214), but as we shall see, Roosevelt was largely disinterested in this part of the world and when push came to shove, left dealing with the Turks to his British allies.

In the end, throughout this period of German ascendancy, as much as Churchill wanted Turkey in the war, he was more than happy with a non-belligerent Turkey as well. A non-belligerent Turkey, believed to be neutral by the Germans, was still of great importance to the British, and especially in this period where the British were stretched to their limit, especially in North Africa, having Turkey in the war might have proved to be more a burden than a blessing (Fox, 1959, p. 41). Turkey stood in the way of a German advance to Iraq, Iran and the Persian Gulf, and also prevented a pincer movement, in complement to Rommel's Afrika Corps, south through Syria into Egypt. And as long as Turkey was out of the war, the British didn't even need to reinforce these positions with their own units.

#### **4.3.3 The Turkish Way to Fascism?**

The author, at this point, feels the need to address certain claims that Turkey pursued a "pro-German neutrality", or flip-flopped between alliances depending on who had the upper hand<sup>51</sup>. We have already, in the previous section, seen how Turkey was much more willing to help the Allies at the expense of Germany, and as promised, a third instance of this, the Dodecanese affair, will be discussed in the next chapter. Clearly, far from a pro-German neutrality, Turkey pursued a pro-British neutrality, or in fact, a pro-British non-belligerence.

The very first claim, besides the whole of their arguments, that needs to be rebuked, is that Turkey, "in some important respects", "pursued an irredentist policy" (Çalış, 1997, p. 105). İnönü, who was wholly in charge of Turkey's foreign policy (Weisband, 1973, pp. 33-34, 63) and only shared<sup>52</sup> authority in this area with his two most trusted subordinates Menemencioglu and Saracoğlu, and only on his

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<sup>51</sup> For these stances, see first of all "Atatürk in Nazi Imagination" (Ihrig, 2014) particularly the last chapter, see also "Pro-German Neutrality" (Çalış, 1997), "Neutrality, Diplomacy and Statecraft" (Çalış & Söker, 2019) and "Surviving the Pressure" (Hakkı, 2005)

<sup>52</sup> Actually, "assigned" might be a better choice of words than "shared", as İnönü could have, at any moment, taken back any and all authority afforded to these two men.

terms (Weisband, 1973, p. 46), was not only uninterested in irredentism, but he was completely and utterly opposed to the notion (Weisband, 1973, p. 43). What Çalış refers to here with the term “irredentism” is a desire in the downfall of the Soviet Union, which cannot be called irredentism; it is merely a symptom of sound and rational national security policy. *Barbarossa* wasn’t only an “opportunity to take a deep breath”, as Çalış calls it, with regards to a potential German invasion, it was also a completely unexpected way of realising Turkey’s deepest desire since before the start of the war, as she has expressed many times (and as we have previously discussed many times): The Red Army cannot be left unscathed as the sole survivor of a ruined Europe at the end of this war. The Soviet Union was the primary threat to the security, integrity and sovereignty of Turkey since before and all throughout the war, and the Turkish reaction to *Barbarossa* would have been reasonable even if this was just a delusion in the Turkish mind, which it wasn’t<sup>53</sup>. One cannot logically conclude that Turkey was “pro-German” because she wanted Germany to triumph over Turkey’s biggest threat and enemy. Not while she did all she could to aid the rest of the Allies against Germany.

Indeed, Turkey was trying very hard to limit German influence. This came mostly in two forms: economic and technical. The economic efforts to free Turkey from dependence on Germany, although mostly side-stepped by the Germans when they made Turkey an offer they couldn’t refuse via Clodius, mostly consist of the previously explored 1939 negotiations with Britain and France, undertaken by Menemencioğlu, centered around chrome and the Anglo-American Preemptive Purchasing Program, which failed to pre-empt German purchase of Turkish goods critical to the German economy and industry (Weisband, 1973, pp. 105-106), but went a long way in preventing Turkey from being wholly dependent on German trade. The technical aspect consisted of the very conscious efforts Turkey made to limit German technical and military expert staff. The teachers in the war academies and the Turkish students and cadets studying abroad were already discussed

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<sup>53</sup> As demonstrated by the many demands of the Soviets from Turkey regarding the Eastern provinces and the Straits, by the Molotov-Ribbentrop negotiations and finally by Stalin’s demands made in 1945.

previously in this study, however another such decision of the Turkish leadership that is very telling is when, in 1942, they refused the German offer of 12 Messerschmidt-109s and Junker-88s, at a time when Turkey was desperately trying to create an air force, because the offer came with the condition that German technicians would accompany the planes (Avcı, 2016, p. 205).

Next is the issue of Turanism. As previously discussed in this paper, Turanism was a tool the Germans attempted to use against the Soviet Union and also to woo Turkey. The fact that the Germans intended it as such, however, does not mean that it was successful in swaying Turkey. In fact, the Nuri Pasha example shows that the Turkish government was strongly averse to endorsing Turanism. It must be admitted that Turanism held some purchase in the Turkish state: chiefly in Fevzi Çakmak, in Saracoğlu if von Papen is to be believed and in the Turkish ambassador in Berlin, Hüsrev Gerede. Gerede, in fact, proposed that Germany form foreign legions from Turkish and Caucasian Muslim prisoners of war captured from the Red Army, a request that Nuri Pasha had also made (Tuğtan, 2020, p. 73). This Turanist influence, however, held no sway on Menemenciöđlu or İnönü (Weisband, 1973, p. 246), the two men that mattered the most. Gerede's proposal must have come from higher up, presumably from Saracođlu, and Saracođlu, rather than believe in the Turan cause, might have been seizing an opportunity to strengthen Turkey's hand in international affairs. Either way, essentially, Turanism was only allowed to continue to exist in Turkey, by İnönü, as a potential card up the sleeve against the Soviet Union, and quite decidedly not because the Turkish leadership entertained delusions of a United Turan Empire like Enver Pasha, and probably also not in the name of "not souring relations with the Nazi regime" (Hakkı, 2005, p. 17). The ease and swiftness with which the Turan movement was crushed and rooted out and the Turanist elements in Turkey were imprisoned toward the end of the war shows rather clearly that İnönü had no sentimental attachments to this movement. Indeed, as the world slowly settled into the Cold War period and as Turkey no longer had to keep up appearances of cordial relations with the Soviets to placate the Western Allies, the Turanists who were arrested would be promptly released and once again employed as a weapon against the Communists (Tuğtan,

2020, p. 87). It is important that one should not misread this as İnönü being forced to arrest the Turanists and then releasing them at first opportunity: Alongside the Turanists, ex-Nazi agents and officials and Islamists were also employed by the Turkish government, with the aid and intermediation of the CIA<sup>54</sup>. Just as the Turkish government wasn't Islamist or Nazi, it also wasn't Turanist. These people were merely tools used by the Turkish government to combat Soviet and Communist elements.

Murat Metin Hakkı mentions the issue of allowing free passage to Germany so that they can prop up the German-sponsored coup that would take place in Iraq in 1941. This was an Iraqi nationalist coup that dethroned the pro-British regent Sultan of Iraq, Abd al-Ilah. The British invaded Iraq that same year and re-installed the regent. Hakkı, however, makes it sound as though the British took Iraq back while the Turks were still negotiating with the Germans on access to Iraq, thus ending the negotiations pre-maturely (Hakkı, 2005, p. 12). Granted, the Germans probably would have pushed Turkey much more insistently if Britain hadn't made it virtually impossible for the Germans to feasibly keep the Iraqi rebellion alive, but what Hakkı neglects to mention is that the Germans contented with moving matériel to Iraq from Vichy Syria, rather than whole divisions from the Balkans and through Turkey (Fox, 1959, p. 27) and one can only assume that this was because the Turks staunchly refused to allow access to Germany, as per their declaration in the friendship treaty with Germany that "existing obligations of the two parties are unaffected" and their promise to Britain that, amongst other things, "[Turkey] would not demobilize or permit German troops or war matériel to pass through Turkey." (Fox, 1959, p. 28)

The one point that the author will concede is regarding the Wealth Tax<sup>55</sup>. The Wealth Tax, implemented in November 1942, is a stain on the history of the

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<sup>54</sup> For a detailed exploration of this, see "Soğuk Savaş ve Türkiye'de Siyasal İslam'ın Yükselişi: 1945-1970" (Tuğtan, 2020)

<sup>55</sup> The claims made in this paragraph can be verified in "Tax me to the End of my Life" (Aktar, 2012), and Ayhan Aktar, an expert on Turkification policies of the early Republic, is recommended strongly to those wishing to do further reading on the subject.

Republic of Turkey. It was introduced in the Grand National Assembly as a “means of combatting profiteering and inflation”, however in private CHP circles it was admitted to being a means of Turkifying the Turkish economy by impoverishing the non-Muslim minorities. The “tax” was arbitrarily decided, increased not according to the total wealth of an individual but according to how lavish a life they led and how conspicuously they spent their money. Turks and Muslim minorities were “unofficially” exempt from enforcement of the tax whereas non-Muslim minorities who couldn’t or didn’t pay the extortionate and incredibly unjust tax were sent to a labour camp in Aşkale, in Eastern Turkey. Every single person sent to Aşkale was a non-Muslim minority and in total 21 of them died there from exhaustion and exposure. Eventually, American journalists found out and a report was published in New York Times, leading to widespread condemnation of Turkey in Western public opinion. The İnönü government, rather than seek redemption, doubled down, and threatened the American ambassador Steinhardt with anti-American articles to be published in the Turkish press in reprisal of what Menemencioglu called “anti-Turkish articles” and actually succeeded in forcing the United States to rein in her press as Steinhardt assured Turkey that no further articles concerning the Wealth Tax would be published in the New York Times. The damage to Turkey’s international reputation was already done, however, and Turkey decided to abolish the Wealth Tax on 15 March 1944, shortly after the NY Times article.

The arbitrariness in determining the tax, the exclusive targeting of non-Muslim minorities and in short the unlawfulness of the whole procedure, as well as the reprehensible punishment of a labour camp in which almost two dozen people died makes this policy unambiguously a Fascist, and as Hakkı rightly recognises, a racist (Hakkı, 2005, p. 17) undertaking on Turkey’s part. Does this mean, however, that it was a sign of a “pro-German neutrality”? Definitely not. The tax was implemented not for international reasons, but for internal ones: To “take back control of the economy”.

## CHAPTER V

### THE TIDE TURNS (1943-1945)

By 1943, the fortunes of the two sides were reversed, and Germany's slow collapse had begun. The four main heralds of this were:

1. In North Africa, the German *Afrika Korps*' advance toward Egypt and the Suez is stopped by the Allies in El-Alamein in October 1942.
2. On the Eastern Front, the German 6<sup>th</sup> Army under the command of Friedrich Paulus is encircled in October 1942 and eventually capitulates in May 1943.
3. The German *Kriegsmarine*, after the overwhelming U-boat losses in May 1943, loses the advantage in the Battle of the Atlantic for good.
4. Starting in Spring 1943, the American 8<sup>th</sup> Air Corps and the British RAF carry out devastating air raids on German cities and industrial centres.

As the Allies went from being on the back foot to being on the offensive, they also considerably ramped up the pressure on Turkey to force her into the war, most notably with the Casablanca, Adana, Moscow and the two Cairo conferences.

Though the fortunes were reversing, Switzerland was still under siege. Southern and Eastern France on the Swiss border, occupied by the Nazis, was liberated only in late 1944, which meant that until then, the Nazi blockade continued.

#### **5.1 Britain Looks the Other Way (1943-1944)**

By 1943, it was clear that the Third Reich did not have the strength left for a protracted war in Switzerland. As discussed above, Guisan was comfortable enough even in 1940, saying "henceforth the Germans would primarily exercise political and economic pressure and military action would scarcely be considered." (Wylie, 2002, p. 347). Since then, more than three million German soldiers were committed in the East, Germany had to occupy and defend vast lands in the Balkans and in Europe generally and on top of that, the German North African campaign was crumbling. And although the threat of a German invasion waned day by day, the German blockade did not let up. Even in late 1944, as the German army was shattered and in general retreat, Hitler would order his troops on the Swiss border

in the Rhône region “to keep Switzerland surrounded as long as possible.” (Urner, 2002, p. IX).

While the ever-growing success of the Allies did not help much in alleviating the material hardship Switzerland was in, it actually threatened to make matters worse. Growing more confident by the day, the Allies started in Summer 1943 to require the neutrals of Europe to slow their trade with Germany (Golson, 2011, p. 258). As the inevitability of the Allied victory got clearer as the months passed, the Allies ramped up their requests. Switzerland, though, despite promising to reduce trade with Germany by 20% in 1943, had still not made any significant changes by August 1944 (Golson, 2011, pp. 259-261).

The Allies had frozen the Swiss assets in the New York Federal Reserve Bank earlier in 1941, over controversies about Swiss-German gold transactions. Later, they bought 2.2 billion Swiss Francs with gold in 1944 but transferred the payment to the still-frozen Swiss account in the NYFRB (Codevilla, 2000, p. 19). The Allies would use these frozen assets as leverage over the Swiss when they really wanted to twist Switzerland’s arm. For more strong-arming, the Americans and the British came up with a blacklisting strategy to bring the Swiss companies into line (Golson, 2011, pp. 259-261). But force, threats and coercion weren’t an oft taken path by the Allies with Switzerland; more often than not the Allies would make demands of Switzerland, and then not follow through with the repercussion once Switzerland failed to meet them. Indeed, despite the clear inaction of the Swiss when faced with Allied demands of reducing and ultimately ending trade with Germany, no real attempt was made by the Allies to punish Switzerland. In fact, Switzerland would only reduce trade with Germany in August 1944 when the Allied armies approached the Swiss border in the West and would not completely sever trade with Germany before it was made impossible due the advance of the Allies into Germany (Golson, 2011, pp. 260-261).

Britain, it appears, saw the sincerity in the Swiss delegation when they pleaded *force majeure* between 1940 and 1943 against British warnings against trading with Germany (Wylie, 2002, p. 339). In addition, Britain herself was unable

to reach Switzerland, be it to deliver the repercussions for defying the Allied order to stop trade or to replace the trade the Swiss would cut off with Germany so that Switzerland can be supplied, and this may be why Britain was so lenient with Switzerland (Codevilla, 2000, p. 105). Finally, considering the navicert deal Switzerland made with Britain that was detailed in the previous chapter, it can be seen that the Allies, the British especially, were more than willing to make exceptions for Switzerland.

In fact, keeping in mind that Nazi Germany no longer had the strength required to realistically threaten Switzerland or make heavy-handed demands from her, and with the Allies more than willing to look the other way, it may be argued that this was the most comfortable era of the war for the Swiss. The Turks, however, weren't so lucky: For them, the real stress was only just beginning.

## **5.2 Foot-dragging in a Three-legged Race (1943)**

Back in the Great War, Churchill had devised a plan to storm the Turkish Straits, held by the hostile Ottoman Empire to secure passage into the Black Sea to supply Russia against the Communists. In an ironic twist of fate, Churchill now sought to secure passage through the same Turkish Straits, which were strictly neutral as per the demands of the Montreux Convention, to supply the Communist Russians against the Third Reich (Tamkin, 2009, p. 80). To this end, the foundations of Operation Hardihood were laid at the Casablanca Meeting. Churchill had secured Stalin's enthusiastic approval of bringing Turkey into the war, and convinced the Americans, in principle, to prepare the way for Turkey's active participation in the war (Weisband, 1973, p. 123). Churchill had also convinced Roosevelt that just as China was left completely to the United States, so would Turkey be left completely to Britain, and all troop reinforcements and lend-lease aid going to Turkey would go through Britain, and Britain would be given charge of the Allied dealings with the Turks (Weisband, 1973, pp. 123-125). Although in fairness, President Roosevelt probably didn't need much convincing anyway. Despite his admirable and unignorable decisiveness in aiding Britain in this war against Germany and eventually bringing the United States into the war, unlike

nearly all other politicians in the United States, and definitely unlike his opponent in the presidential election he had won; Roosevelt was still quite the isolationist and was largely uninterested in most of the Old World. This can be seen in three instances where he made his opinions known. The first is when the President, believing that it would prevent another war in Europe in which the United States would have to intervene, at the cost of abandoning the entire Old World to the USSR, made the outrageous suggestion that when the war was won, “only the Big Three, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States, should be allowed to possess armaments, with the smaller nations, including the neutrals, allowed to possess nothing more dangerous than rifles.” (Weisband, 1973, p. 149) The second instance demonstrates Roosevelt’s complete lack of information and interest in the region: When Stalin made known his demands regarding a revision of the status of the Turkish Straits, possibly the most sensitive issue for the Turks and one which the Soviets had been pressing for two decades now, Roosevelt’s utterly uninformed and irrelevant answer was that the U.S. and Canada shared a frontier of over 3000 miles without a fort and with no armed forces and that he hoped the same for the USSR and Turkey (Weisband, 1973, p. 300). Lastly, Roosevelt, concluding a talk with Anthony Eden, “noted that many territorial questions remained, but that he did not intend to go to the Peace Conference and bargain with Poland or the other small states.” (Weisband, 1973, p. 150) It is important that this study well establishes the complete disinterest of Roosevelt in the post-war Old World, especially the Balkans and the Middle East, for it will become very relevant later in this section.

Britain was much more involved in the greater region that Turkey was a part of. Whereas the United States was involved mostly commercially in the area, Britain was politically committed as well (Barlas & Yılmaz, 2016, pp. 451-452). Despite Turkey’s alliance with Britain, though, which was mostly borne out of necessity, the British imperial ambitions and undertakings in the region and in Turkey as well, was still in fresh memory (Barlas & Yılmaz, 2016, p. 453). The United States, perceived to be much more benign, with no territorial or political interests or ambitions in the region, provided an attractive alternative to Britain as the senior partner of an alliance and ultimately as the keeper of peace (Barlas &

Yılmaz, 2016, p. 454). The aforementioned Turkish suspicion of Anglo-Soviet collaboration also saw Turkey distance herself from Britain and seek an alternative “big brother” to depend on in the post-war Near East. Therefore, Turkey would rather see a *Pax Americana* reign over the greater region of the Balkans and the Middle East than the pre-war *Pax Britannica*. The Turkish leadership had already started inviting American influence in 1943 (Avcı, 2016, pp. 205, 212), and as we shall see, would insist on American presence in the Balkans during their liberation from Nazi occupation.

Therefore, when the lend-lease efforts for Turkey were delegated to the British Command in the Middle East, it came as a tremendous shock to the Turks, who suspected that this was a bid by the British to keep Turkey weak by hampering the flow of armaments to Turkey, in fulfilment of their promise to the Soviets (Weisband, 1973, p. 127). The American abandonment of Turkey to Britain inspired a desperation in Turkey, which made them question whether the U.S. would truly defend Turkey if she needed defending (Weisband, 1973, p. 128); she was more or less convinced that the British would leave Turkey to the Soviets in such a case and the Americans were their only guarantee at this point.

As discussed before, Turkey saw Germany as a necessary check against Soviet ambitions in Europe, and therefore hoped for a “compromise peace”. And indeed, until this point expected such a proposal from the Allies (Tamkin, 2009, p. 77). The Western Allies, however, in Casablanca, had agreed that there would be no negotiated peace, and that they would accept nothing less than the unconditional surrender of Germany, as the result of which Germany would cease to be a power in Europe. The Turks were vehemently against this decision, and they told their British and American allies as much, for it would mean that there would be no counterbalance to the USSR, nothing standing in the way of the Soviets from dominating Europe (Weisband, 1973, pp. 130-132).

Having gotten the green light from Roosevelt, Churchill set up a meeting with İnönü in Adana, to push Turkey into the war. İnönü, however, had two things in mind on the way there, and neither involved joining the war: He firstly intended

to warn Churchill, once again, about post-war Soviet ambitions, and secondly wanted to ramp up the armament deliveries to Turkey (Weisband, 1973, p. 133). Saracoğlu, at Adana, asked a very pertinent question of what guarantee Turkey had against the Soviets once the war was won, and added that an international security organization offered no real security (Weisband, 1973, p. 134). The League of Nations, after all, was utterly and completely powerless in protecting the small nations, and in fact, it was not even interested in protecting the small nations. Not to mention the fact that Germany simply quit the organisation in 1933, just like that, and wasn't really bound by it afterwards. Why would the next League of Nations be any different?

Regarding the first point, there was no understanding between İnönü and Churchill. Churchill merely shrugged off the Turkish warnings about the USSR and offered some reassurances that the Soviets had no ill intentions against Turkey, which rang hollow to the Turks. On the second point, however, there was some accord. Churchill wanted Turkey in the war, and he knew she needed to be well armed before she acquiesced to his demands. He therefore promised Turkey modern equipment and the technicians to teach the Turks how to operate them, and highest on the agenda was air power: As soon as the fields were constructed and Turkey was prepared to join, Churchill promised at least 21 British air squadrons to be stationed in these fields (Weisband, 1973, p. 136). The British, having won the Battle of Britain, had proved their aerial superiority to the *Luftwaffe*, and 21 squadrons was nothing to sneeze at. The Turks, however, weren't relieved. The Germans had hoped the devastating bombing of Belgrade would inspire terror in the Balkan nations, including Turkey (Fox, 1959, p. 22), and they were right. Istanbul, City of the World's Desire, Turkey's largest, most populous city, and the jewel of the Republic, was a city made of wood; and Turkey's complete industrial capacity, as well as Istanbul, was comfortably within range of the German bombers (Weisband, 1973, p. 136). By the end of the meeting in Adana, Churchill finally composed seven points, his "morning thoughts", and offered them to Turkey, and by all measures, these were quite generous and relieving: Firstly, he promised to ask nothing of Turkey beyond her capacity and outside of

her interests. Next, he emphasised that Turkey be reinforced in case war comes to her or in case she decides joining to be in her interest. Next, he ‘hoped’ Turkey might in the future consider “a departure from strict neutrality”, for instance by allowing the Allies the use of her airfields to bomb the Romanian oil fields and the Aegean islands. Finally, Churchill sought to once again reassure Turkey that Stalin had no ambitions in Turkey, and in any case, Britain would personally guarantee Turkey’s post-war security, and at the end of the war would get Stalin and Roosevelt to do the same, but he also added that the United States was bound by her constitution to refrain from long-term meddling in trans-Atlantic affairs. (Weisband, 1973, pp. 137-138)

Turkey was certainly relieved, thanks to Churchill’s first point if nothing else, but she was not reassured. As previously discussed, Turkish decisionmakers entertained suspicions of British collusion with the Soviets and sought American participation as a guarantee of Turkey’s safety, and Churchill’s final caveat that America wouldn’t be involved in the Old World for long must have disheartened the Turks greatly.

The impression von Papen got from what he knew about the Adana talks caused no concern to him. He knew Turkey would never go to war against Germany, and the agreements reached in Adana seemed to be supporting his convictions. (Vanderlippe, 2001, p. 70)

Churchill had advised the Turks at Adana to pursue friendlier relations with the Soviets if a Soviet threat was their fear, and he assured the Turks that Stalin would surely appreciate and reciprocate the gesture. When the Turks took his advice, however, their efforts were promptly and altogether rejected by Molotov, who held that the bilateral relations would not improve for as long as Turkey stayed out of the war (Weisband, 1973, pp. 143-144). The Turks were now more resolved than ever in keeping Turkey out of the war, lest they unwittingly invite a Soviet “liberation” (Weisband, 1973, p. 145).

Upon this backdrop, the British commenced Operation Hardihood: Provide Turkey with the necessary military equipment to prepare them for war. The British believed that once Turkey was adequately equipped and ready for war, she would join her allies against the Third Reich. Turkey, however, as discussed many times, had no intention of joining the war, even if she was excellently supplied, for she wished to give no pretext to the USSR to march through, and consequently into, Turkey and regardless, she intended to conserve her strength for a potential confrontation with the Soviets. To this end, an inglorious waltz would play out between the two nations.

Due to logistical constraints, Hardihood was to be carried out in four phases. First off, 25 RAF squadrons and accompanying anti-air artillery would be sent to protect the Turkish airfields. Immediately after, 25 more squadrons, with more AA batteries would be provided. The third phase would see the British send four anti-air regiments and two anti-tank regiments and lastly in the fourth phase, two armoured British divisions would enter into service in Turkey. The operation, however, never progressed beyond phase one. (Weisband, 1973, p. 154)

The Turks knew that once Hardihood was complete, Britain would press them harder to join, and they would have much fewer and flimsier excuses to sidestep their responsibility. What's more, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressly warned İnönü that from these new airfields, currently under construction, the British might stage a *fait accompli*, like the 1914 Black Sea Raid of the German Battle cruiser *Goeben* under the Ottoman flag on the Russian Sevastopol harbour, by bombing the Romanian oil fields (Weisband, 1973, pp. 160-161). So Turkey regularly accepted British proposals on how to proceed with Hardihood and later reneged and asked to renegotiate to delay progress, purposely maintain the low-efficiency and capacity of the Turkish railways, kept changing the subject and deflecting questions during official talks, assigned (whether by choice or by necessity) completely clueless, ignorant and unwilling students to the British technicians who were to instruct the Turks and resorted to any other means at their disposal to delay and decelerate the operation (Weisband, 1973, pp. 154-156). The

crux of the operation lay with the airfields, and Turkey worked very hard to delay their construction. First, they delayed the approval of their construction, and then they required that they be built by Turkish hands, under the supervision of British experts but only those who were already in Turkey, and the construction was to be disguised as a commercial undertaking (Weisband, 1973, p. 158). Weisband captures the hopelessness of the British effort excellently:

But even if there had been *enough* ships to supply *enough* locomotives with *enough* fuel to permit *enough* British engineers to receive *enough* equipment from *enough* ports to build *enough* airports to house *enough* planes which would protect Turkey in the event of war, Turkish policy-makers did not wish HARDIHOOD to succeed, certainly not at the pace the British had in mind. (Weisband, 1973, p. 157)

Indeed, this was a very conscious effort on the part of Turkey, as can be seen in the aforementioned warning the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had sent to İnönü, which stated clearly that the construction of the airfields, expected to take a year, was nearing completion after only five months. Crushing German air superiority over Turkey and the Turkish industry's vulnerability thereto was the most valid excuse the Turks had to stay out of the war, and they were trying very hard not to lose it. It's important to mention, however, that Turkey still accepted vast amounts of equipment to modernise and outfit her army (Weisband, 1973, p. 159). She wanted to stay out of the war to conserve her strength, and thus wouldn't pass on the chance to build up her strength.

As 1943 drew to a close, the Allies had toppled Mussolini with relative ease were beginning their endgame in Europe. Despite the fact that the Americans and the Joint Chiefs had decided that Operation Overlord and the subsequent re-opening of the Western Front would now take priority in all efforts, Churchill still believed that Turkish entry into the war would be very advantageous to the Allies and decided the time was ripe to make a dazzling display to convince Turkey to join. To this end, he greenlit the Dodecanese Campaign. (Weisband, 1973, p. 163) Italy had, under Vittorio Emanuele III, joined the Allies against Germany and the German puppet state of the "Social Republic of Italy", with which Italy was now at

civil war. The British acted fast, under orders from Churchill, to persuade the commanders of the Italian garrisons of Rhodes and the Dodecanese Islands to side with their King and join the Allies and cede command of the islands to Britain. The Germans, in response, invaded the islands, and after about 40 days, the Germans, 7500 strong, triumphed over the 55.000 strong Italians and the 5300 strong British, and not only captured the previously Italian controlled Rhodes and Dodecanese, but also the islands of Cos, Leros and Samos, which were held by the British (Weisband, 1973, pp. 164-165). The Dodecanese Campaign was supposed to inspire confidence and security in Turkey, to show her that Britain now held the security of the Aegean Sea and Turkey's Aegean Coast and that she had the capacity to protect Turkey. Instead, the humiliation in the Aegean showed Turkey that Germany, broken and weakened, steadily losing ground, was still strong enough to cause serious damage to Turkey and even invade at least a portion of Turkey, despite British efforts.

Although the British blunder only reinforced the already resolute Turkish conviction to stay out of the war, however, it worked to assure Britain once again, when they would begin to suspect otherwise, that Turkey was still her ally. Under the personal supervision of Menemencioğlu, the British forces that were driven into the sea by the Germans were rescued by the Turks and brought to Turkish shores, alongside hundreds of British and Italian civilians, and about 5000 tonnes of emergency material was shipped to the British forces in Leros and Samos (Weisband, 1973, pp. 165-166). The Turkish aid, however, led to yet another miscommunication between the two nations: The British believed that the Turkish involvement heralded a “real departure from neutrality”, and therefore expected a shift in the future Turkish position, whereas the Turks never thought themselves as neutral, they had been allied to Britain from the very beginning and were doing everything reasonably within their power to support the Allies, and this was merely a reflection of that fact (Vanderlippe, 2001, p. 73).

### 5.3 Counterproductive Domineering (1943)

The British had tried and failed to convince Turkey to join the war. It was now the Soviets' turn to coerce Turkey to join the war. As paranoid as the Turks were about the Soviets and about a collusion between the British and the Soviets, ironically, the Soviets were almost as paranoid about the Western Allies and the Turks. The USSR suspected that the Western Allies allowed Turkey to stay neutral so that the liberation of the Balkans wouldn't start before they were ready to occupy the Balkans themselves, and the arms and equipment they provided to Turkey weren't meant to be used against Germany but against the Soviets (Weisband, 1973, pp. 166-167). Even more ironically, of course, they were right to an extent: Although the British and the Americans didn't know this, Turkey intended to use those weapons not against Germany but against the Soviets. This combined with the fact that Moscow most probably<sup>56</sup> had post-war designs on Turkey which would have been facilitated by Turkish entry into the war, resulted in a strong Soviet desire to force Turkey into the war.

The Moscow Conference, between the foreign ministers of the U.S., Britain, and the USSR, was convened at the Soviets' request, specifically to communicate three important things they required to lighten the burden on the Eastern Front. One of these demands was that Turkey should immediately be forced into the war (Gürün, 2010, p. 256). Due, once again, to Roosevelt's lack of information and interest in Turkey, when Molotov insisted multiple times during the course of the conference to Eden and Hull that Turkey must be forced into the war, and that if all three Great Powers demanded Turkish entry into the war she could not possibly refuse, Hull declined to commit the U.S. to any such decision or declaration, because Roosevelt didn't bother to instruct Hull and instead passed the matter down to the Joint Chiefs and the Joint Strategic Survey Command, who disagreed among each other: The Joint Chiefs thought it would distract the Allies from Overlord whereas the JSSC believed it would be to the Allies' advantage (Weisband, 1973,

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<sup>56</sup> Judging by the many times the Soviets made demands for and expressed interest in the Straits and Eastern Anatolia, to Turkey directly, to Germany during the Molotov-Ribbentrop negotiations and later to the Allies; and then finally once more in 1945 to Turkey directly.

pp. 170-173). Churchill, however, was more than happy to instruct Eden to agree, and as a result, the British and the Soviets resolved, together, to press Turkey into the war, without American participation, whether she was ready and willing or not (Weisband, 1973, p. 173). To this end, Eden and Molotov agreed, in November 1943, to demand that Turkey immediately present airfields and other military facilities to Allied use and enter the war before January 1944, and that this demand be reinforced by a tripartite ultimatum (Gürün, 2010, p. 257). Now that two of the Big Three were in agreement, Roosevelt, with no opinion of his own, agreed to Eden's request that the U.S. join the ultimatum. (Weisband, 1973, pp. 174-175) Churchill was confident enough to write to Eden the following words:

If Turkey fails to act with us and take the small steps we now request as preliminaries, she may be told that not only will British import of arms be stopped at once, but we shall be unable to plead Turkey's case with the Soviets. The whole question of the Straits will be open, we shall regard the Alliance as a fraud, so far as we are concerned, if she fails as now she can settle her troubles for herself with Soviet Russia. (Önder, 1977, p. 249)

This was, in hindsight, the worst possible way to bring Turkey into the war. Knowing everything that we have explored about the Turkish mindset in this chapter and the one before, it is clear that this would be very counterproductive. The Turks were infinitely paranoid of the USSR and the more eager the Soviets were in bringing Turkey into the war, the more Turkey (in all fairness rightfully) suspected ulterior motives on the Soviet part and resolved to stay out of the war more than ever, and by supporting the Soviet position, the British only strengthened the Turkish paranoia that the British were in bed with the Soviets at Turkey's expense. This latter paranoia was reinforced all the more since Churchill had recently promised Turkey in Adana that she wouldn't be forced into a situation against her will and beyond her capacity, and now, after having his deputy meet Molotov in Moscow, Churchill demanded Turkey enter the war against her will, whether or not she had the capacity to protect herself. Britain and the USSR, with the demands agreed upon in Moscow, achieved nothing but to convince Turkey to stay out of the war, and to trust Britain even less in the future.

To make known the Allied demands, Eden set a meeting with Menemencioğlu in Cairo on 5-6 November 1943. The meeting went as bad as it possibly could. In effect, Eden demanded that Turkey allow the British the use of Turkish airfields, and thus allow ten RAF squadrons into Turkey within three weeks, and Menemencioğlu refused on the grounds that this was essentially a demand that Turkey declare war on Germany, since Germany would treat it as open hostility, and that the RAF squadrons were “just enough to enrage the Germans but not enough to guarantee Turkey against invasion.” Menemencioğlu made it abundantly clear that Turkey would not allow the British use of her airfields before she outright joined the war, and she would not join the war unless the British and the Americans committed themselves to an all-out invasion of the Balkans. (Weisband, 1973, pp. 176-180)

A key reason why this meeting went completely belly up is that Menemencioğlu believed Eden to be a Bolshevik puppet, and Eden believed Menemencioğlu to be a Nazi puppet. Therefore, when Eden made demands, Menemencioğlu believed he was pushing Soviet agenda on Turkey, and when Menemencioğlu explained to Eden that Turkey was concerned about the Soviets and their ambitions in Turkey and in the Balkans, Eden believed he was echoing baseless Axis propaganda. Matters were only made worse that upon an outburst from Menemencioğlu, accusing Eden of doing Stalin’s bidding, Eden responded: “[You] would do well to face facts (...) Britain [is] an ally of Turkey, but she [is] also an ally of Russia.” (Weisband, 1973, pp. 181-182) Eden threatened Menemencioğlu that if Turkey rejected these demands Britain wouldn’t protect Turkey against Russia in the future, but the Turks had given that hope up long ago anyway, and Menemencioğlu told Eden that Turkey wouldn’t aid in strengthening Soviet position and presence in the Balkans and in Eastern Mediterranean. To nobody’s surprise, Knatchbull-Hugessen was soon informed that Turkey officially rejected the British demands. (Weisband, 1973, pp. 182-184) In that meeting with Knatchbull-Hugessen, Menemencioğlu would, for the final time, appeal to the Allies regarding Russia: In a plea to the British ambassador, Menemencioğlu would tell him that in three separate accounts (Italy’s entry into the war, the invasion of

Yugoslavia and in anticipation of *Barbarossa*) the Allies attempted to erroneously force Turkey into the war and in each instance it would have been a disaster for the whole Allied cause if Turkey had honoured their request. He went on to say that they were doing the same thing again: They were proposing that Turkey be thrown to the wolves in service of nothing other than placating the Russians (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Araştırma ve Siyaset Planlama Genel Müdürlüğü, 1973, p. 160).

From then on, the Turkish leadership decided that they were on their own in the struggle against the USSR. They had explained to their Western allies for the umpteenth time the Soviet threat, and they had all but begged them to consider the post-war shape of the world and of Europe and the Near East with regard to the goliathan USSR which only got stronger as time went by and if they still were ignorant to all this, it's because they deliberately chose to be. Eden's attitude in Cairo was the straw that broke the camel's back. Therefore, from here on, the Turks would stop expecting the British to understand when they cited Soviets as the reason they couldn't join, and instead resort to pragmatic excuses.

The failed Cairo talks, on the Turkish part at least, had centred mostly around the USSR. Menemencioglu, shortly after his return, went to see Steinhardt, the U.S. ambassador. He brought with him a list of reasons why Turkey had to reject the British demands made in Cairo, which included no mention of the Soviets. Together, they pled the Turkish case to the U.S. ambassador. Steinhardt's subsequent conversation with Vinogradov, the Soviet ambassador in Ankara, shows that he embraced and supported the shift in the Turkish argumentation (Weisband, 1973, pp. 185-190).

Eden's vitriolic attitude in Cairo must have hit home, because soon after the Turkish cabinet convened, debated the risks of joining the war against the risks of staying out, and resolved to enter the war in principle, as soon as possible, on the conditions that aerial defences against Germany should be up to par and that the Allies should let Turkey in on war plans concerning Turkish participation before Turkey declares war. (Vanderlippe, 2001, p. 74)

#### **5.4 A Momentary Reprieve (1943)**

The Big Three met in November 1943 in Tehran, just recently retaken from Nazi elements, and Stalin invited Roosevelt to stay in the Soviet embassy, not too far from the British one, rather than the American embassy, on the other side of the city, and Roosevelt, for convenience and security reasons, accepted. During the several private meetings they held, they had agreed that having Turkey in the war was no longer desirable to either power. (Weisband, 1973, pp. 194-195) Turkish belligerence would inevitably mean the diversion of important equipment and divisions from Normandy to the Aegean, delaying the opening of the Western Front, which neither Stalin nor Roosevelt wanted. What's more, Roosevelt's advisors had informed him that they did not believe the Turks could hold the Straits against Germany alone, and the Western Allies would have to get themselves involved in the Aegean and in the Balkans, which Roosevelt must have divulged to Stalin. This would have upset Stalin's plans for the Balkans, which he envisioned as a collection of Bolshevik puppet states. All in all, it seems, Roosevelt, perhaps unwittingly, dissuaded Stalin from wanting Turkey in the war. Indeed, during the conference proper, Stalin had asked, point blank, whether the British and Americans would march into Bulgaria with the Turks should Turkey join, and when Churchill said yes, Stalin stated that it would not do to scatter the forces that were supposed to be dedicated to the cross-Channel invasion. (Weisband, 1973, p. 197) Churchill was now alone in pushing for Turkish entry into the war. In desperation, Churchill made yet another counterproductive error: He promised Stalin that if a three-power ultimatum was made to Turkey following Tehran, Churchill would personally back it up against the Turks (Weisband, 1973, p. 199). In a two-pronged bid to both placate Stalin generally and to sway and keep him on his side regarding the Turkish entry into war, Churchill not only divulged information with Stalin on Turkish military weaknesses, but also agreed to alter the status of the Straits should Turkey fail to enter the war, to the benefit of the Soviets and at the expense of the Turks (Deringil, 1994, p. 218).

Churchill, whether it truly was obstinate ignorance or just the position he was forced to take because of the circumstances, seemed to trust Stalin. Despite the

pre-war status of the USSR as the second biggest threat, despite Operation Pike, despite the many Hitler-esque Soviet invasions of neighbouring countries, Churchill now saw the Soviet Union as a friendly nation whose interests should be upheld, as evidenced by his belief that “such a large land mass as Russia deserved access to a warm water port and [that] this could be settled agreeably as between friends.” (Weisband, 1973, p. 199) In a few short years, Churchill went from (referring to Stalin) “If Hitler invaded hell, I would make at least a favourable reference to the devil in the House of Commons”<sup>57</sup>, to “Poor Neville Chamberlain believed he could trust Hitler. He was wrong. But I don’t think I’m wrong about Stalin.”<sup>58</sup> He would go on to trust Stalin, much to the chagrin and misfortune of the Turks, until after Stalin clearly cheated Churchill by underhandedly going back on their agreement at the Moscow meeting between the two men regarding the spheres of responsibility plan on the Balkans (Weisband, 1973, pp. 290-294, 301-302). Promising Stalin, at Tehran, that Britain would “wash her hands of Turkey” should Turkey refuse this one last ultimatum, Churchill succeeded in calling for a meeting, immediately after Tehran, with the Big Three and İnönü (Weisband, 1973, p. 200).

While Churchill had gotten the support of Stalin for one last push with Turkey, however, Roosevelt, although agreeing to the meeting that would be the Second Cairo Conference, was still convinced that he did not want Turkey in the war. He had remarked, in Tehran, that “if he were in the Turkish President’s place, he would demand such a price in planes, tank and equipment [to enter the war], that to grant the request would indefinitely postpone Overlord” (Weisband, 1973, p. 196) and his sympathy for İnönü, or at least the Turkish cause, extended to the Second Cairo Conference as well. When İnönü was invited Cairo, he accepted only on the condition that this meeting would be a “free exchange of views” between equals rather than the Allies communicating to İnönü an ultimatum agreed upon in Tehran, and Roosevelt cordially and respectfully approved this through Steinhardt (Weisband, 1973, p. 202). İnönü convened his cabinet and the CHP caucus to

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<sup>57</sup> (Churchill College Cambridge, 2013)

<sup>58</sup> Churchill is quoted to have made this very ironic statement, on which he would be proven wrong very promptly, after the Yalta Conference to his outer cabinet on 23 February 1945.

guarantee their support, and having solidified his position at home, set off to try and do the same abroad (Deringil, 1994, p. 220).

By this point, the shift from *Pax Britannica* to *Pax Americana* as previously discussed was more than cemented in the Turkish leadership, but İnönü was too steadfast in caution and not near enough arrogant or insolent to allow this shift to translate into an insult to the British. This can be seen in what would take place in Adana on the way to Cairo.

The Allies were to arrange the transportation of the Turkish party from Adana to Cairo, and to this end, whether due to miscommunication or competition, an American plane, piloted by Roosevelt's son-in-law, and a British one, piloted by Churchill's son Randolph, awaited İnönü in Adana. The crisis was mitigated by İnönü flying in the American plane and Menemencioğlu accompanying Randolph Churchill. The United States was preferred without Britain being wholly snubbed. (Weisband, 1973, pp. 203-204) The Turks saw this not only as a crisis of protocol they had to avert, however, but also as a sign of a rift between the Americans and the British (Vanderlippe, 2001, pp. 74-75). That the Turks gave the higher honour to the U.S. is a sign that the Turkish leadership highly valued the American support for (or in some cases benign indifference against) Turkey's neutrality, especially in comparison to the Britishers' active undermining of it (Avcı, 2016, p. 213).

Despite Roosevelt's assurances, İnönü still feared that, through Soviet puppeteering, the Allies would try to force Turkey into a commitment to war possibly against her interest, without adequate preparation, right there in Cairo. The decision to enter the war in principle was taken, but İnönü deliberately left his entire military staff behind in Turkey, so that he could plead that the Turkish delegation was unable to discuss military technicalities (Weisband, 1973, p. 203). At the conference, İnönü translated the decision taken by the cabinet after the previous Cairo talks: Turkey had mobilised every effort, but was still hopelessly inadequate to hold off the Germans, and of the arms promised by Churchill in Adana, only 4% had made it to Turkey; and the Allies refused to include Turkey in their war plans, Turkey could not be expected to enter the war blindly (Weisband, 1973, pp. 206-

208). He had also asked enough supplies to disrupt the preparations for the “Second Front”, for good measure. In the end, Roosevelt, who was already sympathetic, upheld the Turkish case and declared that “If he were a Turk, he would require more aid than Britain had thus far supplied before he would bring Turkey into the war.” (Weisband, 1973, p. 209) At the very end of the conference, Roosevelt talked, briefly, with İnönü in private, and asked him to commit Turkey to the United Nations by February 1944 via a declaration of war, İnönü informed him that he was ready to slacken the Turkish conditions on joining the war, but not to lift them completely, and Roosevelt once again voiced his sympathies (Weisband, 1973, pp. 213-214).

As a result of the conference, the Allied ultimatum was postponed, Turkey repeated that she was ready, in principle, to enter the war and the status quo was preserved. One important outcome, though, was that it went a long way in bringing İnönü around. At that time, the Turkish leadership still held out hope that the British-Soviet alliance would break down soon and they just had to buy time until then (Deringil, 1989, p. 230). That said, Turkey wasn’t seriously threatened by Germany for quite some time now, and İnönü was beginning to see that staying out of the war at the cost of displeasing the Western Allies might not be worth it if war didn’t pose quite so much risk anymore (Weisband, 1973, p. 215). And Britain, for her part, was more than dissatisfied: Churchill had put it bluntly to the Turkish leadership that should Turkey fail to honour the call to war, Britain would not be responsible for Turkey after the war was won (Deringil, 1989, p. 229)

### **5.5 Turkey Overplays her Hand (1944-1945)**

The British had had enough of the Turks, but mostly thanks to Roosevelt’s endorsement decided to give Turkey one last chance. After Cairo, British Air Marshal Linnell headed a military mission to Ankara to pin down the Turkish military requirements to join the war, and when the Turks once again avoided giving solid figures or making commitments and bogged the negotiations down in logistical matters, mostly due to Menemencioğlu’s Soviet phobia, the British mission abruptly left Turkey. Afterwards they not only swiftly downgraded their

ties with the Turks but also convinced the Americans to do the same. Roosevelt might have been sympathetic, but he was by no means very interested or invested. Turkey's primary contribution to the Allied cause, in American eyes, would have been the airfields and they were no longer needed as Italy was taken by the Allies and Italian airfields largely fit the same purpose as Turkish ones. Even Knatchbull-Hugessen, who was fast friends with Menemencioğlu, was now avoiding the Turkish foreign ministry on orders from home, and even when Menemencioğlu caved and offered, in January 1944, to promise in writing to enter Turkey into the war at most thirty days after an Anglo-American invasion of the Balkans, Knatchbull-Hugessen didn't even come by to pick up the written offer as arranged. Ambassador Steinhardt was instructed, just like Knatchbull-Hugessen, to "cool off in his relations with the Turks". All arms shipments and lend-lease supplies were also suspended immediately. (Weisband, 1973, pp. 219-225) Turkey was given a bitter taste of isolation.

Turkey, however, only wanted or needed Western support against the Soviet Union at this point, so Menemencioğlu decided to reinforce Turkey's weakened and crumbling position by attempting to mitigate the Soviet threat. To this end, he went to Ambassador Vinogradov to conclude an agreement guaranteeing the neutrality and independence of the post-war Balkan states and ensuring extensive cooperation and good will between the USSR and Turkey. The Soviet response essentially boiled down to "not until Turkey joins the war". This gesture by Menemencioğlu only served to deepen his mistrust of Russia. (Weisband, 1973, pp. 228-229)

By mid-1944, İnönü knew Turkey had overplayed her hand, and it was time to make amends. The threat of World War II was now largely over, and the future threat of the post-war era had taken its place. İnönü would have to take the necessary precautions to navigate Turkey through the coming years as he had done in 1938-1940 to ensure Turkey's survival through World War II. Recognising the gravity and urgency of the situation, he got to work. His efforts to this end can be divided into three categories: 1) removal of certain individuals from positions of power 2)

stricter regulation of German ships passing through the Turkish Straits and 3) taking action against Germany.

### **5.5.1 A More Amenable Turkey**

As previously discussed, the Turan movement called for the unification of all Turkic peoples under one nation, and a very sizeable portion of these peoples were inside Soviet borders. The Turanists in Turkey, who had until now been tolerated as a card up the sleeve against the USSR, had outlived their usefulness. Recognising that the removal of these elements might make for an attractive gesture to the Soviet Union, İnönü ordered the arrest of prominent Turanists and racist Fascists such as Zeki Toğan, a Bashgird Turk who was a professor of Turkish history in Istanbul University; Reha Oğuz Türkkkan, leader of the racist *Bozkurt* organisation; Hüseyin Nihal Atsız, perhaps the most influential racist ideologue in Turkish history. Fevzi Çakmak, the Turkish Chief of General Staff was also forced to resign, as he was a known Turanist as well, and the movement was scrubbed off the Turkish political arena.<sup>59</sup>

Completely unrelated to the Turan movement, Numan Menemencioğlu was also forced from his position as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in large part due to his personal enmity with Eden and the latter's conviction that the former is blatantly pro-Nazi, but also due to Menemencioğlu's rampant paranoia and phobia over the Soviets (Weisband, 1973, pp. 261-268).

Eden had, during his meeting with Menemencioğlu in Cairo, demanded that Turkey allow the Allies to send submarines through the Straits in contravention of the Montreux Convention on the Straits, and Menemencioğlu refused, reasoning that if Turkey allowed the Allies to trample the Montreux Convention now, what was to stop the USSR to disregard it completely tomorrow? (Weisband, 1973, pp. 173, 267) Menemencioğlu's forced resignation also heralded a change in Turkey's attitude in this matter.

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<sup>59</sup> (Çalış, 1997, p. 108) (Weisband, 1973, pp. 237-245)

### **5.5.2 When in Dire Straits...**

The Convention dictates that in times of war, the Straits is closed to all warships (including submarines) but is open to all commercial vessels. Concurrent to the goings-on discussed in the above section, the British, on top of their past demand of sending submarines through the Straits, were now regularly making demands that Turkey stop German vessels, which they claimed were disguised as commercial but in truth war vessels and refuse them access. They had launched many such demands during the first six months of 1944, and for the majority of these cases, the vessels were searched and determined by Turkish authorities to be legally fit to be allowed through the Straits according to the Convention. Menemencioğlu, who at this time was still in office, believed these to be British attempts at eroding Turkish authority and autonomy over the Straits, and when finally, a major incident erupted, this attitude led to the final nail in Menemencioğlu's coffin. In June 1944, the British once again demanded the Turks refuse passage to several German vessels, however in this instance the German ship *Kassel* refused to submit itself to Turkish authorities for a sanitary search, which was Turkey's right by the Convention. Menemencioğlu, rather than press the matter, went to von Papen, who assured him that *Kassel* was in no way in contravention of the Convention and was fully fit to be allowed passage, and Menemencioğlu, defying all logic, chose to trust him. The British, of course, protested and in the end a thorough search of *Kassel* was conducted by the Turks, who found that the vessel was completely unfit to be allowed passage. Following this blunder, Menemencioğlu resigned, Saracoğlu took over his post for the time being and announced several restrictions on German passage through the Straits and inspections of every German vessel by default. (Weisband, 1973, pp. 261-268)

### **5.5.3 No More Half Measures**

By 1944, the Clodius Agreement had run its course and was not renewed and thus the chromite shipments to the Axis had ceased, overall trade to the Axis countries had been reduced to half of what it was in 1943 and especially after von Papen's latest stunt with the *Kassel*, relations had hit a new low. Exactly one week after Menemencioğlu's dismissal, Eden, eager to capitalise on the momentum,

proposed to Hull that the British and Americans should force Turkey to sever her relations with Germany altogether. Steinhardt was instructed by Hull to cooperate with Knatchbull-Hugessen on this issue, and the British ambassador made the demand clear to Saracoğlu. The British reasoned that this was the perfect way for Turkey to recommit herself to the Allies and to clarify her exact position: It would have more or less the same effect on the Germans as a declaration of war, involved no military commitment, bore no risk to Turkey, could be enacted immediately and the British even offered to cover any financial disruption this would cause. The Americans were content with this demand and hoped it was the first step to Turkish entry into the war. The Soviets, however, were against it. Nothing short of active Turkish belligerence would please Moscow, and if this was merely the first step, there would be no time for the next step. The Soviets took the position that the Turks had stalled for far too long, and now it was much too late for them to claim special status in the peace treaty and the post-war order by making hollow gestures like this. (Weisband, 1973, pp. 268-272) Of course, they had plans for Turkey, we know today that the Soviets, at the very least, were interested in bases on the Straits and these plans would come to fruition much easier if the Turks were left isolated as they recently had been.

Turkey complied with the British demand and on 2 August 1944, severed all ties with Germany. Saracoğlu commented in the Grand National Assembly that this action was wholly in line with the policy Turkey had been pursuing throughout the war, that she was never neutral and was always allied to Britain, and now that the British had justly requested that she sever relations with Germany, Turkey complied without waver. (Weisband, 1973, pp. 272-273) Four months later, Turkey would, once again at the behest of her Western allies, take the next logical step and declare war on Germany, although this would be a symbolic act only and Turkish troops would never see combat.

## CONCLUSION

The Swiss, especially before the preparations for the *Réduit* were completed around 1941, were far from the best equipped small state in Europe. Below is a table taken directly from Eric Golson's work, "The Economics of Neutrality" (Golson, 2011, p. 39) showing a detailed comparison of the military strengths of European small states:

**Table 1.1: Selected Military Strengths of European Armies**

Country	Men under Arms	Tanks	Heavy Guns	Air Forces	Naval Forces (Home Fleet)	Mechanized Forces (divisions)
Belgium (1939)	600,000	10	lacked heavy guns	50 modern 200 obsolete	2 small warships; coastal defence vessels	2 fully motorized 2 partially motorized
Denmark (1940)	14,000	none	none	50 obsolete	2 coastal defence vessels	none
Finland (1939)	125,000	none	50 anti-aircraft; under 2,000 artillery	on order	small coastal defensive vessels	one partially motorized division
Greece (1940)	333,000	none	fewer than 450	300 obsolete	10 destroyers 6 submarines 53 other vessels	one partially motorized division
Hungary (1941)	216,000	190	no anti-tanks and anti-air weapons	189 obsolete	not applicable	two motorized brigades
Ireland (1939)	7,494	none	none	4 fighters	2 patrol boats	none
Netherlands (1940)	400,000	none	656 obsolete	50 obsolete	1 cruiser 1 destroyer 3 submarines 8 gun boats 5 minesweepers	bicycle corps
Norway (1939)	56,000	none	few anti-tank and anti-air weapons	24 modern 44 older 150 on order	7 destroyers 1 minelayer 40 smaller vessels	none
Poland (1939)	1,000,000	300 medium tanks; 500 light tanks	4,000 heavy field guns, of which 1,154 were of 'front line quality'	423 aircraft of which 16 were modern bombers and 27 were modern fighters	4 destroyers 5 submarines 6 minesweepers	2 complete, 1 incomplete motorized infantry brigades 100 armoured cars 10 armoured transport carriers
Sweden (1937)	403,000	none	79 anti-aircraft	257 modern (1936)	47 assorted vessels (Sept. 1939)	none
Switzerland (1939)	435,000	none	30 to 60 anti-aircraft guns	200 modern	not applicable	bicycle corps
Yugoslavia (1941)	700,000	110 light tanks	none	419 aircraft	4 destroyers, 1 cruiser, 1 submarine	none

As can be seen, Switzerland is severely outmatched in terms of tanks, motorised divisions, men under arms and aircraft by Poland, Yugoslavia and Belgium, all three of which were invaded by Germany. Poland lasted a little over a month, Yugoslavia fell in 11 days and Belgium capitulated after 18 days. Much more telling is that the Third Reich invaded the USSR.

On 22 June 1941, when *Unternehmen Barbarossa* began, the Soviets had 2.5 to 3 million men, 11,000 tanks and 7,000 to 9,000 aircraft mobilised on the German front, not to mention the millions more they were capable of mobilising, and eventually did throughout the course of the war, and the vastly superior industrial capabilities (compared to Switzerland) which churned out tens of thousands of tanks and aircraft, in addition to the tens of thousands more they received from the United States. It is quite absurd to think that the Swiss managed to deter a Nazi invasion through force of arms when not even the Soviet Union did.

The Turks were under no delusions. They knew, by the time the Germans arrived on their western doorstep, that they couldn't possibly deter the Germans through military means. They were always resolved to fight back if Germany ever invaded, these were the men who had fought in the National Struggle after all, but they knew that if they didn't want things to come to that, they would have to appease Germany rather than try and deter her.

As for the Allies, an invasion by Britain or the U.S. was never a realistic threat, and from *Barbarossa* in 1941 to Germany's surrender in 1945, the Soviets had their hands full with Germany and also would not risk antagonizing the Western Allies by invading their ally Turkey. That said, as we have seen, the Allies did their utmost to bring Turkey into the war on their side. To protect her non-belligerency, Turkey resorted to many different means, from underhanded diplomacy to minor concessions which would appease the Allies for some time without having Turkey join the war. Using military might to somehow deter the Allies from pressing Turkey into the war, however, wasn't one of these means.

Switzerland, when the Nazis encircled her and put her under siege, probed her frontiers for weaknesses and violated her airspace to assert dominance and assure compliance, refused to allow her sovereignty to be trampled through such thuggery. Afterwards, however, when the Third Reich diplomatically attacked Switzerland, precisely because of the aforementioned, and threatened all-out military action, Switzerland meekly surrendered her sovereignty, or parts of it, by her own hand. She took the Nazi's gold, which she knew full well was plundered from subjugated states and looted from the houses and corpses of subjugated and persecuted populations and laundered it. She surrendered her expert labour to German industry. She put Swiss businesses at German disposal. She worked out a deal with Britain to import the resources with which she would manufacture the goods Germany needed, or sometimes even just sell the imported goods to Germany without processing them. She silenced her press and silenced the Red Cross and pacified her anti-air defences against Germany. She appeased Germany to the very bitter end. She yielded to Germany everything Germany could want, in the hopes that Germany wouldn't take those things by force. She made herself more useful as an independent and sovereign nation than she would have been under German rule, and Switzerland was spared.

Turkey pursued the same strategy with Germany, although since she was in a much more secure position than Switzerland she did not need to concede as much. Regardless, to this end, Turkey also signed a non-aggression pact with Germany and took great care in all the dealings with Britain so as not to give Germany any cause for concern. Germany desired a secure flank in the Balkans, and Turkey resolved to be that secure flank. Turkey, too, limited the freedom of her press severely, although a little differently than Switzerland: In Switzerland, the newspapers were investigated before being published, and therefore much more rarely contained outright offensive content against Germany, whereas in Turkey the newspapers weren't investigated before being published, but if they were later found to be in violation of the censorship, they were shut down for weeks and even months on end. Turkey sold Germany all the chrome she could want, chrome which

otherwise Germany might have invaded Turkey for, and gave her no reasons for a security concern and no reasons to be angry at Turkey, and Turkey was spared.

Both countries appeased Germany through compliance and concessions, and neither deterred Germany through force of arms.

Switzerland's status as a neutral state was very well established by 1939, and the Allies, claiming to uphold international law, justice, and the rights of small states against Nazi tyranny, never attempted to force Switzerland to join the war on their side, and never gave Switzerland any reason to be threatened by an Allied invasion.

Turkey, on the other hand, was allied to Britain and France with the Tripartite Agreement and was contractually bound to join the war in 1940, when it spread to the Mediterranean. Turkey stretched diplomacy to its very limits, exploited every loophole and every opportunity born out of Allied helplessness to evade her obligations to join the war. Her main strategy for the majority of the instances when she was called to war, however, was the exact opposite of what one might call armed deterrence: she pled with the Allies that she was very weak, her armies were in shambles, her soldiers were underequipped, and her armaments were obsolete.

We have explored in detail the two ways in which a non-belligerent can be pulled into war. Whether it be the threat of an enemy invasion, or the pressure exerted by allies to join, a small state wishing to protect her neutrality will need to make distasteful concessions. These concessions might come in economic, political, or diplomatic form, and will most likely limit the nation's sovereignty and autonomy. Whether it's worth making such concessions to spare your country and your people the ravages of war is another argument altogether, but it is a decision that small states under threat of war will have to make. A small state, unfortunately, cannot have her cake and eat it too. Military deterrence is an option uniquely available to Great Powers, and a small state's claim to "armed neutrality" is but window dressing to cover the many deplorable concessions she was forced to make in the name of survival. There is, realistically, nothing a small state can do to deter

a Great Power, especially one as competent, confident, bloodthirsty, and reckless as the Third Reich.

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