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**'Second memorandum, by the Political Secretary, India Office, on German
press opinion regarding the Middle East. April and May'**

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About this record

This second memorandum by Sir Frederic Arthur Hirtzel uses press reports to present a general view of the current situation in Turkey with regard to German involvement in the country. Various topics are discussed including the new currency, Turkish nationalism, the Deutsche-Türkisch Vereinigung [German-Turkish Association] annual conference and language laws.

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SECOND MEMORANDUM BY THE POLITICAL
SECRETARY, INDIA OFFICE, ON GERMAN PRESS
OPINION REGARDING THE MIDDLE EAST.

APRIL AND MAY.

The Deutsch-Türkische Vereinigung held its second annual meeting 29th March. Membership has increased from 481 to 2,790. It has made contributions to German schools at Adana, Pera, Aleppo, Bagdad, and Jerusalem, and has acquired a site for a boarding-house for the school at Haider Pasha. A medical committee has been appointed for medical assistance to Turkey. Turkish translations of German literature in preparation; Turkish courses in Berlin and a number of other towns. Consul-General Koch succeeds Herr von Gwinner as President.—*Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2nd April.

Kölnische Volkszeitung, 8th April, reports from Constantinople that the coming into operation of the Turkish language law has been postponed till 23rd July 1919 in respect of railways and non-privileged foreign companies. The compulsory use of Turkish by the latter is also limited to written communications to Government offices, and to the paper they issue to the public. Land registers need not be kept in Turkish.

Hamburger Fremdenblatt, 1st April, gives the programme of Oriental lectures at the Hamburg Colonial Institute for the summer term, emphasising the fact that without serious work nothing is to be attained in Turkey, and that love of adventure is out of place there. Dr. Tschudi, a course on "the history of the Islamic empires" and two courses on the Turkish language. Refik Bey, two courses on the language. Zaid Effendi, a course on modern Arabic and the Egyptian dialect. Prof. Jaegers, a course on the political and economic condition of contemporary Persia, which will describe *inter alia* how British and Russian interference has prevented all real progress, and will discuss future prospects, especially those of German trade. Dr. von Rauchhaupt, a course on Turkish constitutional law. Dr. Krauss on Turkish public economy. Dr. Passarge on the geography of the Turkish Empire. And others.

In *Berliner Tageblatt*, 3rd April 1916, its Constantinople correspondent, Dr. Feldmann, has a long article on "the creator of Turkish nationalism," Sia Gök Alp Bey. This man is a thinker, and in an interview described his functions and those of his friends as setting up the ideals which it must be left to the Government to realise. Asked what they expect of the Germans, he said that first of all they furnished an example: Germany was formerly in the condition of Turkey, but had realised her own national ideal: so Turkey need not waste time in experiments. Further, the Germans can supply a scientific basis for Turkish nationalists to work on.

Dr. Feldmann follows this up with an article in the same paper for 19th April on "Our learned men at Stamboul," and describes what the 18 German professors who have already arrived are doing. The article is a reply to some German critics who continue to complain of the scheme. Of the 2,000 students most are serving; audiences are therefore very small, but they are enthusiastic. Professor Nord is lecturing, in Turkish, on European civil law. Professor Mordtmann (an ex-Consul-General) on the methodology of history. Dr. Giese, professor of Ancient Turkish, also lectures in the vernacular. The professor of Semitic languages, Dr. Bergsträsser, has learned enough Turkish in four months to be able to write and deliver his lectures in it. He is lecturing on Syriac, and on the general history of the Semitic languages.

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The professors of ancient Oriental history and of Archaeology, Lehmann-Haupt and Unger, are similarly situated. Dr. Arndt, professor of inorganic chemistry, manages to teach his 25 pupils in Turkish, and his books are being translated into the language by his Turkish assistant. The other German professors either have their lectures translated into Turkish and deliver them without understanding them, or have them delivered by Turkish assistants, or deliver them in German and have them interpreted sentence by sentence. The professor of Paedagogy and Psychology, Dr. Anschütz, does the latter, and has 15 pupils and an Institute for experimental Paedagogy and Psychology will very shortly be erected. Every Faculty publishes a review every other month.

The *Kölnische Zeitung*, April 4th and 5th, publishes Nos. 4 and 5 of its Constantinople War Letters. No. 4, on "Intellectual and economic defence," deals *inter alia* with the language question, and emphasises the fact that French will not be replaced by German; the movement is purely Turkish and nationalist, and we must accept it, although it excludes any leading rôle for the Germans, because we recognise its intrinsic justification. No. 5 is on "Nationalism and economic development," and points out that here there is an important rôle for the Germans. For there is no Turkish middle class from which the managers of Turkish industries can be drawn. One effect of the language law will be to benefit in this respect the Levantine-Armenian-Jewish class, who already exist to the detriment of both European and Ottoman. But they are unfit for management. For that purpose what is essential is genuine European management and European capital, though the Turk should be given as large a rôle as possible alongside of them. The Turk, it is true, is already trying to climb up into the management himself (e.g., the Ottoman Trading Company for the products of Anatolia and the Constantinople Telephone Company), and we must not condemn him out of hand; but there are difficulties—inherent in the character of the race, the social composition of the people and its entire historical education—which, though they may escape notice in a time of enthusiasm and striving after activity in all spheres, will not fail to assert themselves in quieter times and when it is a question of serious work on a grand scale, and which are hardly, if at all, to be got rid of.

In the *Vossische Zeitung* of 27th April, Dr. Hugo Grothe (President of the Middle East Society*) has an article on Turkish Nationalism. He traces briefly its growth since 1912 inside the Committee, and then goes to its practical bearing on German ambitions. The Turkish Nationalists, he says, are entirely friendly to the Turco-German alliance and value German help. They welcome the German, but wish to keep him at a certain distance in order to frustrate all idea of tutelage. Hence, they do not want more German schools nor the extension of the German language, and insist upon the use of Turkish. They must be careful not to carry this to excess; for after the war the Arab (!) will not easily acquiesce in it. Again, they are very sensitive to the exaggerated overtures of foreigners, and ever since the beginning of the war Germans have shown an excessive haste in that respect, which arouses Turkish suspicion. Further, Turkey for the Turk is the motto, and foreign capital is only wanted alongside of Turkish; Turkish participation in all enterprises is essential, and all big undertakings must be put up to open competition. This is a pity, because the Turk does not see that the German competitor, being the most honest and most capable, will come off worst, and the door be re-opened for English

* With this Society has now been amalgamated the Deutsche Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft, a society for the propagation of Germanism throughout the world. This fact is interesting as emphasising the importance in German eyes of the Middle East as a stepping-stone to world-power.

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and French. The object of these remarks is not to suggest that German hopes of winning economic supremacy in the Middle East are vain. The Nationalist movement will have sooner or later to recede from its exaggerated ideals. But account must be taken of these deep-rooted feelings, and the more thoroughly we study the ideals and appreciate the activities of the movement, the more will the Turco-German relations be saved from fantastic exaggerations.

An article by Dr. E. Jäckh, in *Deutsche Politik* for 12th May, discusses "Turkey's Goal in the War," and is an attempt to reconcile the German public to Turkish Nationalism. What the Old Turk could not do in 32 years the Young Turk has done in seven, and the work has stood the test of a war in which such a blow has been dealt to British prestige in the Dardanelles, in Mesopotamia, and probably also on the Suez Canal, as not even Napoleon himself dealt. Germany, it is true, helped with organisation; but it was the Turkish nation that fought and led. "Turkey for the Turks" is the goal. Von Moltke said that Turkey had first to conquer her own provinces. That she is doing. In Syria the Central Government has consolidated itself during the war; everything French has disappeared; "Syria really belongs to Turkey for the first time." The same will happen in Mesopotamia, through the fall of Kut. "Arabian Mesopotamia will obey and look up to the Turkish victor, who captures a whole English garrison larger than any bagged on the European front." The language law is another example. There is a little Chauvinism, but that is only superficial and transient. The more united and the stronger Turkey becomes, the more valuable will she be as ~~Turkey's~~ ally. "Turkish and German interests are so co-extensive that the student of German relations with the East during two centuries must pronounce the union of Turkey and Germany to be one of the inexorabilities of history."

Frankfurter Zeitung, 25th April. Its Buda-Pesth correspondent quotes an official Hungarian report from Jaffa to the effect that in spite of the opening of the Berlin-Constantinople line there had been no deliveries of goods there, nor could they be passed on. Despatch by parcels post on a larger scale is being tried. Syrian trade is, however, mostly internal. Larger towns like Beyrout, Damascus, and Aleppo still have considerable stocks, but in Jaffa they are very low and it will be a long time after the war before they can be replenished. Those who wish to work up the export trade should begin at once to make the necessary preparations by the despatch of catalogues, prospectuses, &c., so as to be in a better position to drive out British, French, and Belgian competition. There is a good market for agricultural implements. Payments are regular in spite of the Turkish moratorium.

Berliner Tageblatt, April 21st, announces (on the authority of the *Freisinnige Zeitung*) the forthcoming visit to Constantinople, on the invitation of the Turkish Government, of six members of the Reichstag, including Messrs. Bassermann and Spahn, the National Liberal and Centre leaders. The Social Democrats are not represented.

The first number has appeared of a new quarterly called "Archiv für Wirtschaftsforschung im Orient," edited by Reinhard Junge (author of a considerable work on the "Europäisierung orientalischer Wirtschaft"). According to the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of 30th April the idea from which the editor starts is the unity of Oriental Kultur and Civilisation based upon Islam, from which is deduced an essential unity of attitude towards economic matters. Among the articles is said to be one by Dr. C. A. Schäfer on the "Mesopotamian-Persian Petroleum Question," and one by Dr. Ch. Becker on "Islam and Commerce," which is "as remote from the now customary rosy optimism as from many other superficial judgments." His conclusion is that

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it is not Islam that hinders development: the question rather is whether the Islamic peoples are as capable of development as their religion is. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* also notices a work by Dr. Walter Busse on "Irrigation in Turan and its application to Agriculture" (Vol. VIII. of the publications of the Imperial Colonial Office). Turan = Russian Turkestan.

A rather savage article entitled "Drones and Bees" in the *Deutsche Export Revue* for 24th April replies to a speech by Mr. F. H. Steward, president of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the thesis of which appears to have been that after the war German trade with India must be conducted by Englishmen and carried in English bottoms. The *Revue* will have none of this. German trade conducted by Germans is necessary not only for commercial purposes, but because it "in its measure contributes to the maintenance of Germany's cultural relations with all the world, helps to make the appreciation of German knowledge, German art, German character and disposition, more and more the common property of all peoples, so that in future we shall be more highly valued not only for our good and cheap wares, but also for our personality." The threat of boycotting Indian raw materials is held out, but the article does not say from what other source Germany will replace them.

According to the *Kölnische Zeitung* of 1st May the Turkish Foreign Minister, Halil Bey, announced on 30th April the approaching ratification of the Turco-German treaty of alliance. The Entente, he said, had offered Turkey a guarantee of territorial integrity, which meant only "an oppressive protectorate." Germany on the other hand offered an alliance of long duration on the basis of equal rights for reciprocal defence. By accepting this, Turkey has released herself from the guardianship of Europe, and has recovered her independence. When the offer was made Germany also offered her assistance in repealing the capitulations. A series of conventions has now been prepared, dealing with such matters as consular relations, right of residence, naturalisation, extradition, and after four months' discussion a final agreement has been reached. The *Kölnische Zeitung* sees in this announcement the final overthrow of the Entente's hopes of a separate peace with Turkey. "This, on top of the fall of Kut-el-Amara, is rather much at one time for people who had expected something quite different."

The *Kölnische Volkszeitung* of 3rd May emphasises the defensive nature of the alliance, and dwells especially on the independence and recognition of equality as a modern State which Turkey has now secured, but adds a warning. We must now see how Turkey will behave on this new basis. There is not the slightest reason to doubt the good-will of her present statesmen. But not only they, but also numerous other organs in all provinces of the Empire are called to co-operation. It must not be thought that with the signing of a convention all difficulties will have been removed. Turkey has made a great step forward, but much labour and exertion will be required to maintain it, and after the war she will be faced with a task of internal reform which will not be solved in a generation. Germany will help, and Turkey will surely not reject her "unselfish and impartial assistance." The problem will be to secure that German subjects in Turkey shall enjoy the same political, economic, and religious liberties as Turkish subjects in Germany.

An answer by the German Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Reichstag on 12th May (*Kölnische Zeitung*, 13th inst.) gives a little more precise information on the subject. It appears that early in the war a long-term treaty of defensive alliance was signed and at once ratified: its terms are secret. What are now awaiting ratification are a number of separate conventions dealing with the subjects above mentioned. These

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are analogous to conventions already concluded by Germany with other Powers, but form in themselves a unified body of law. They will require the sanction of the German legislature before they can come into operation, and will be introduced in the Reichstag before ratification. The *Kölnische Zeitung's* Constantinople correspondent (18th May) emphasises the view that the new position accorded to Turkey among the Powers involves duties as well as rights.

An interview given by Talaat Bey to Dr. Feldmann, the Constantinople correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, was published in that paper on 4th May. It contains a defence of the Armenian massacres, admitting that excesses had been committed—"Talaat Bey hesitated, and passed his hand across his eyes as though to chase away the evil vision"—but explaining that in the circumstances it was impossible to distinguish between innocent and guilty. "The thought of Turkey's safety must silence all such considerations." As regards the Arabs, Talaat said that "they had almost without exception continued to behave as loyal elements of the Ottoman Empire. In Irak, as in the Yemen and Hadramaut, they are fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Turks against the common enemy. The treachery of the Sheikh of Basra, suborned by the English, is an exception. In Syria there have long been Arabs (mostly Christians, but some Moslem nationalists) who preferred French occupation to Turkish rule. Jemal Pasha found on some of them a petition to the French Government begging for the despatch of French troops. The military court at Damascus thereupon effected a series of arrests, and a number of Arabs have been executed. But these lamentable cases are fortunately so isolated, that there can be no question of a more serious movement. I repeat that not the majority, but the totality of the Arabs, with these exceptions, are loyal to Turkey." In conclusion, he said that the enemy's hopes and prophesies of internal disturbances had proved to be false. The course of the war had brilliantly shown that Turkish rule is firmly grounded. The means taken to insure internal tranquillity could not, from the nature of the case, always be gentle; but the end—the good of the Fatherland—justified even strong means.

The *Weser Zeitung* (3rd May) and the *Kölnische Zeitung* (6th and 18th May) deal at great length with the Turkish currency, and describe the provisions of the new law. This law introduces a gold standard. The piastre (=40 para) becomes the unit. 100 piastres = £T 1. (the current ratio having been 108, this means a further rise in prices which will hit the population hard). The law also deals with the scarcity of metallic currency and seeks to rehabilitate the much depreciated paper currency. The notes issued against German Treasury Notes were at a discount of 4 per cent. in January.

In this connection it may be mentioned that a German, Dr. Heinze, has been appointed Under Secretary in the Ministry of Finance.—(*Kölnische Zeitung*, 18th May.)

According to the Constantinople correspondent of the *Kölnische Zeitung* (16th May) the retirement of Hairy Effendi and the appointment of Mussa Kiazim Effendi as Sheikh-ul-Islam portends the subordination of the religious schools to the Ministry of Education, and probably also of the religious courts to the Ministry of Justice, a reform not unconnected with the abolition of the capitulations. The new Sheikh-ul-Islam is an uncompromising Nationalist and an ardent supporter of the Committee of Union and Progress.

The Constantinople Correspondent of the *Weser Zeitung* (May 20th) writes on the commercial development of Asia Minor. Agriculture is very backward, but the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, Nessimi Bey, who has just returned from a tour in Western Asia Minor, finds a new and great demand

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for agricultural machinery and appliances. Agriculture suffers especially from drought and locusts: a campaign against the latter is being undertaken by a German expert, Buchner, with laboratories supplied by Germany. Coal mines have been opened in Jalova, Derkos, Usun, Kopru, and in Mesopotamia. Sulphur is being worked, and it is believed that Turkey can be made self-supporting: an Austrian, Dr. Uriach, is in charge of a refinery (supplied by Germany). Another Austrian, Veit, is in charge of woods and forests.

Baron v. Mackay devotes two almost verbally identical articles (in the *Europäische Staats- u. Wirtschafts Zeitung*, April 20th, and *Die Hilfe*, May 4th) to the reform of the Turkish land laws. The great task is to get the land away from the dead hand of the *Wakf*. This is gradually being accomplished, and one of the most encouraging signs of the times is that the clergy are beginning to abandon their opposition to the necessary reforms. But the permeation of the legislation with passionately Nationalist ideas has led to some mistakes, of which the language law and the new Customs tariff are quoted as examples.

The semi-official *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (23rd May) welcomes a party of Turkish delegates to Berlin. It extols the achievements of the Committee of Union and Progress, and especially their military successes. "As far-shining symbols of the night of the Ottoman people the names of Gallipoli and Kut-el-Amara will remain ever unforgotten." The Turco-German alliance has not sprung from transient causes. "Germany's clear political interests point in the same direction as that upon which Ottoman statesmen have decided. It is no figure of speech, but a fact proved by the history of Turco-German relations, that Germany has never pursued a policy of self-interest in Turkey, and has never worked for the weakening of Turkey. We desire from our own point of view a strong Turkey, mistress of her own destiny. . . . The Ottoman nation will always find Germany willing to support her in her attempt to reorganise her public life. We Germans are accustomed to respect the idiosyncrasies of other nations, just as in our own country racial differences do not detract from imperial unity but rather regard it as an intellectual treasure. Thus the co-operation of Germans who may be invited to Turkey will be guided by the thought that their task is to place at the disposal of our Turkish ally the acquisitions of German creative power, and to aid the Ottoman nation in its efforts to build up at its own discretion on the basis of its recovered international independence a system of government which will secure for Turkey new prosperity internally, and externally a consolidated position."

The visit of the Turkish deputies naturally bulks largely in the German press. They have been received by the Emperor (25th May), and entertained by the Chancellor (24th May) and other high officials. The speeches delivered were, as is usual on such occasions, mostly platitudinous and rhetorical—"the words Gallipoli and Kut-el-Amara are deeply engraved on the German heart," said the Oberbürgermeister of Berlin—but a few remarks of more political importance may be quoted. Thus, the Chancellor emphasised the reciprocal nature of the alliance. "On the sound basis of give and take, in mutual complement, in respectful equality of rights, our people are called to create new values in the regions of commerce, kultur, and law. That this goal may be attained, we must be constantly getting to know one another better." (This aspect of the alliance is also emphasised by the *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, May 25th: and an essential condition of it is said to be that "each of the allies must be satisfied with the conditions of the alliance with all its consequences and implications.") In replying, Hussein Djahid Bey, vice-president

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of the Turkish Chamber, spoke of the sacrifices which Turkey has made. But "this alliance, which so far has laid sacrifices upon us, is to be a valuable means of progress to us in the future." "If Young Turkey had earlier found an ally who would have supported her in consolidating herself, perhaps this war would never have taken place" (a proposition which the *Tageszeitung* doubts). The times of European intrigues in Turkey and of obstacles to Turkish reforms are past. "We feel the necessity of entering the circle of European kultur. We have abolished the capitulations, but we will reform our judicial system—a task which we have entrusted to a German specialist. Similarly we will reconstitute our educational system; German professors are at work. Our youth, male and female, we will send to Germany, to accustom them to German knowledge and German virtue." It is noteworthy that at the banquet given by the President of the Reichstag (25th May), the Vice-President, Dr. Paasche, thought it expedient to explain the "Central Europe" idea. "The proud phrase 'Central Europe from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf' does not signify an economic and intellectual hegemony of the one over the other, but has found enthusiastic support in all classes in Germany and Austro-Hungary solely because we feel that only in loyal co-operation, by securing our territories against greedy enemies, can we attain the great objects of our cultural development. From the free German North Sea, over the plains and mountains of Austria and Hungary, across the fields of Bulgaria, the road must lead, through the rich regions of the Ottoman Empire, to the Far East, to enable true freedom and German kultur to flourish, and to prevent jealous rivals from hindering the possibility of our healthy development."

The well-known historian, H. Delbrück, has an article in the May number of *Preussische Jahrbücher* (of which he is editor) on "England's Future," from which the following passage is quoted:—

"England's rule in the remoter parts of the world is mainly based on victories won in past generations and the prestige which has grown out of them. Through her failure in this war—in particular through the reverses at the Dardanelles and in Mesopotamia—and scarcely less through the advance of the allied Russian forces in Persia, England's prestige is shaken everywhere in Asia and Africa. The ganglion of the Empire is Egypt with the Suez Canal. If, as we may hope, Turkey emerges from this world-crisis a consolidated State with a future before it; if this State provides itself with railways connecting the remote provinces and making possible the rapid concentration of all its military resources in Palestine and the Sinai peninsula; England's rule over Egypt, which she has hitherto been able to maintain with 6,000 European troops, will no longer be an impregnable fortress in the eyes of the fellaheen and of the whole Moslem world. If the Suez Canal is once lost, all the bonds that bind together the constituent parts of the Empire will be loosed."

An article by E. Daniels in the same number on the change of Viceroy in India, ascribes the substitution of Lord Chelmsford for Lord Hardinge partly to the latter's excessively pro-Russian policy which the Russian advance in Persia is thought to have discredited!

Otto Hoetzsch (*Kreuzzeitung*, 25th May) brings Sir A. Nicolson's retirement into a similar context.

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