

A. TURKEY. — Soviet Demands for Eastern Turkish Territories and Bases in the Straits. - Turkish Rejection of Territorial Cessions and Granting of Bases. - Willingness to revise Montreux Convention by International Agreement. - M. Saka's Discussions in London. - U.S. Proposals for Modifications of Montreux Convention. - Anti-Communist Demonstrations in Istanbul. - Soviet Protest. - Georgian Territorial Claims. - Statements by President İnönü, M. Sarajoglu, and Gen. Karabekir.

Following the Soviet Government's denunciation on March 19, 1945, of the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Friendship (7106 A), a progressive deterioration in the relations between the 2 countries took place in the second half of 1945, due largely to sudden Soviet territorial claims on Turkey. Developments in the situation are summarised below.

M. Vinogradov (Soviet Ambassador in Ankara) on June 22 informed the Turkish Government that the Soviet Union would be willing to conclude a new Treaty of Friendship on condition that Turkey agreed to: (1) the retrocession to Russia of the Turkish districts of Kars, Artvin, and Ardahan; (2) the granting of bases in the Straits to Russia; (3) revision of the Montreux Convention (due in 1946); (4) certain unspecified changes in Turkish Thrace in favour of Bulgaria and Greece.

The districts of Batum, Kars, and Ardahan belonged to the Ottoman Empire for many centuries, their population being predominantly, and in some places exclusively, Moslem. After its

declared that, while preliminary negotiations for a new Treaty of Friendship concerned Turkey and Russia alone, there could be no question of revising the Montreux Convention otherwise than with the consent of all the 9 signatory Powers.

Following a statement by Mr. Byrnes (U.S. State Secretary) that during the Potsdam Conference the "Big Three" had agreed to approach the Turkish Government separately on these questions, Mr. Edward Wilson, the U.S. Ambassador in Ankara, on Nov. 2 presented a Note to the Turkish Government.

This expressed the U.S. Government's readiness, if invited, to participate in any conference called to amend the Montreux Convention "in a sense more in harmony with the new conditions prevailing in the world"; and, for this purpose, put forth the following principles: (1) the Straits should be open to merchantmen of all nations in time of war; (2) the Straits should be open to the transit of war vessels belonging to Black Sea Powers in all circumstances; (3) passage through the Straits should be forbidden to war vessels belonging to other Powers, except with the consent of Black Sea Powers, or in execution of a mission under the authority of the United Nations; (4) certain changes should be introduced to bring the new Convention up to date, like substituting the United Nations Organisation for the League of Nations, and eliminating Japan from the signatory Powers.

M. Sarajoglu (the Turkish Premier), disclosing the above details at a Press conference, expressed the desire for American participation in the future conference; described the American standpoint as "reasonable"; declared that the Montreux provisions regarding



The shaded area (1) is approximately that region forming the subject of Russian claims on Turkey. The map also shows (2) the province of Azerbaijan in N.W. Iran, which is the subject of a dispute between Iran and the Soviet Union (see 7669 A), and (3) the Dardanelles and Bosphorus.—(New York Times).

defeat in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78, the Ottoman Empire was forced to sign the Treaty of San Stefano which provided that, in compensation for a war indemnity of 1,100,000,000 roubles which the Sublime Porte was unable to pay, the 4 Turkish districts of Batum, Kars, Ardahan, and Bayazid should be ceded to Russia. The Treaty of Berlin confirmed the cession to Russia of the districts of Batum, Kars, and Ardahan, whilst restoring the district of Bayazid to Turkey.

After the Russian defeat in 1917 the 3 districts were restored to Turkey by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, but after the first World War changed hands frequently and, for a time, were partly occupied by British forces. Later, Lenin and Kemal Ataturk agreed that the city of Batum and the area immediately surrounding it, which had been greatly developed by Russia and used as the Black Sea terminus of the Baku-Batum oil pipe-line, should remain Russian and that the rest of the 3 districts should be restored to Turkey, this agreement being embodied in the Treaties of Moscow (March 16, 1921) and Kars (Oct. 13, 1921).

On July 10 M. Hasan Saka (the Turkish Foreign Minister), returning home after the San Francisco Conference, discussed the situation in London with Mr. Eden (then Foreign Secretary). During the talks he handed the British Government a memorandum (a copy of which was also sent to the U.S. Government) setting forth the Turkish views; it stated *inter alia* that Turkey (whilst entirely opposed to the granting of bases in the Straits) was willing to ensure free passage through the Straits under international supervision, provided that such supervision did not infringe her sovereign rights or endanger her security, and expressed the desire that Russo-Turkish relations should be settled so as to exclude the possibility of future complications. In a Press statement on the following day, M. Saka

the passage of shipping might be amended and established in a manner compatible with Turkish security and sovereignty; but stated that his Government would be in a position to form its views only after taking cognisance of the points of view of the 3 interested Powers.

It was pointed out in *The Times* (Dec. 27) that the proposal that the Black Sea Powers should have the right to send their war vessels through the Straits "in all circumstances", if accepted, would supersede and enlarge Art. 11 of the Convention (which granted to those Powers the right of transit through the Straits for single war vessels of over 15,000 tons, with not more than 2 destroyer escorts); and that the U.S. proposal applying to "all circumstances" would supersede Art. 20, which stipulates that "in time of war, Turkey being belligerent . . . the passage of warships shall be left entirely to the discretion of the Turkish Government."

On Nov. 21 Sir M. Peterson (then British Ambassador in Ankara) handed to M. Saka a memorandum which stated that H.M. Government were agreeable to the U.S. proposals, and that, while holding that the matter did not present a character of urgency, if the Turkish or Soviet Governments proposed to convene an international conference for that object, H.M. Government would be disposed to participate.

President İnönü, opening a session of the *Kamunay* on Nov. 1, after strongly defending Turkish policy during the war and outlining her future progress towards more liberal institutions, claimed that Turkey had adhered strictly to the Montreux Convention and had fulfilled all her obligations under it; expressed the opinion that the true facts were being ignored or distorted; and declared: "No part of Turkish territory can be claimed by anybody; we lived with honour, and we are determined to die with honour."

The speech was regarded as an answer to Russian charges in the Press and broadcasts that Turkey, by maintaining her neutrality, had in fact assisted Germany, and also that, by signing a pact with Germany a few days before her attack on Russia, had thereby connived at that attack. It was pointed out in *The Times* (Jan. 7) that the Russian charges were contradicted by 2 documents, viz., (1) the Turco-Russian Declaration of March 25, 1941 (4523 B), and (2) the Anglo-Russian Declaration to Turkey on Aug. 18, 1941 (4789 B).

The expiration on Nov. 7 of the Treaty of Friendship marked the opening of a new phase in the relations between both countries, characterised by renewed attacks in the Soviet Press and continued pressure by means of growing territorial claims on Turkish territory. The tension was increased when university students demonstrated in Istanbul on Dec. 4, attacking left-wing newspaper offices and bookshops.

While the Ankara correspondent of the *Tass* Agency reported to Moscow that the demonstration was "Fascist" and "anti-Russian", an official Turkish statement issued immediately afterwards described the allegations as "completely unfounded", saying that the demonstration was spontaneously organised by students, in spite of the police, with the intention of "asserting the position of Turkish youth, which is neither Nazi nor Communist." A protest by the Soviet Government, however, declared that "these hostile acts occurred in the absence of any sort of counter-action on the part of the Turkish police which protected the demonstrations," and that the Soviet Government could not "let such provocative acts toward Soviet Russia pass unnoticed, and declares that responsibility falls on the Turkish Government." The Turkish reply of Dec. 11 reiterated the earlier Turkish denial, and on the same day M. Sarajoglu, in view of repeated attacks on Turkey by the Moscow radio and press as a "Fascist" State, said that the reason for the demonstration was "to suppress unpatriotic activities"; gave assurance of his Government's approval of the U.S. policy toward the Dardanelles question; and declared that his Government's main object was to maintain Turkish integrity, for which it had "adequate moral strength." "Turkey," he said, "can offer resistance and will not hesitate to do so if efforts are made to impinge on her integrity. . . . The whole country is resolved to remain free, and to fight for freedom if threatened. Turkey will never become a vassal of any Power."

Further sweeping claims on Turkish territory, far exceeding those made hitherto, were contained in an article written by Prof. S. R. Djanashia and Prof. N. Berdzenishvili (members of the Georgian Academy of Sciences), which appeared in the Tiflis paper *Kommunisti* on Dec. 14 and was given wide prominence by the Soviet radio and in the Moscow Press on Dec. 20 (during the Moscow Conference) under the heading "Our Lawful Demands to Turkey."

"The Georgian people," stated the article, "must get back its lands which it never gave up and cannot give up. We have in mind the districts of Ardahan, Artvin, Tortum, Ispir, Bayburt, Gumusane, and eastern Lazistan, including the districts of Trabzon (Trebzond) and Giresun. We appeal to world public opinion concerning our ancient lands wrested from us by Turkey. This is not a matter of insignificant territorial infringement but one of the cradle of our individuality as a nation that has been seized from us, of a crime which cut in two the living national body. In 1920 and the beginning of 1921, when the Georgian people were going through a difficult period, the Turks invaded and occupied the best Georgian territory. The Turkish authorities are at present changing Georgian geographical names, abolishing Georgian monuments, architecture, and masterpieces, and transferring masses of the Georgian population to remote districts. During the great patriotic war of the Soviet people against Fascist Germany Turkey voluntarily placed herself in the service of imperialist Germany, to the detriment of the anti-Hitler coalition. The Georgian people must get back their lands which they never gave up and cannot give up."

These claims, involving about 170 miles of Turkey's N.E. coastline with an extensive hinterland, were without reasonable historical or ethnological foundation. After the fall of the Greek kingdom of Trebizond (Pontus) in the 15th century, the Greeks were the only important minority left in that area, but their descendants were included in the 1923 exchange of Turkish and Greek populations, leaving an entirely Moslem and Turkish population (M. Saka, the Foreign Minister, is a native of Trebizond). The Lazos, who inhabit Lazistan, the region between Rizeh and the Caucasian frontier, in the extreme N.E. corner of Turkey, are also all Moslems with an entirely Turkish national consciousness, though some are ethnologically akin to the Georgians.

While lacking official endorsement, the new claims received so wide a publicity in the Soviet Union as to create the impression, in Turkey and elsewhere, that they were encouraged in high circles in Moscow as a warning to the Turks to come to terms on the earlier Soviet demands.

Before the Georgian claims had become known, Gen. Kazim Karabekir (who commanded the Turkish Army on the Caucasian front during the War of Independence), speaking in the *Kamutay* on Dec. 20, had expressed astonishment at the Soviet demands for Kars and Ardahan, saying that if Russia remained insistent, Turkey would have no alternative but to fight. M. Saka,

in reply, stressed the need for friendly relations between the 2 countries, but declared: "We ask nothing of anyone, but at the same time we will yield nothing."

M. Sarajoglu made a statement on the situation on Jan. 6.

After recalling the history of the Kars and Ardahan districts (see above), he said: "Certain reports and papers maintain that Kars and Ardahan were taken from Russia by the Turks at a time when Russia was very weak. First, there is no such thing as taking or being taken; the fact is that the people there wanted to return to their own Fatherland and to their own State. Secondly, in the days when Russia could be regarded as weak, Turkey could be regarded as so weak as to be non-existent. If one takes into consideration this fact, one realises that such a statement is completely unjustified."

About two weeks ago 2 Georgian professors demanded the annexation by Georgia of a part of Turkish territory on the Black Sea coast as being part of that State. This demand was published and broadcast abundantly to the entire world by Soviet papers and radio stations. There are people in these areas with Turkish culture, Turkish religion, and the Turkish language. These people are Turks who took refuge in their own Fatherland, fleeing from the Cossacs and the Czarist army. These refugees settled in Turkey in large numbers and continued to converse in the Georgian language. According to the census taken in Turkey in 1935, the total of these refugees amounted to 57,325. Of this figure, according to the two Georgian professors, the number of those Georgians to be repatriated to Georgia amounts to 15,598, against the Turkish total population of 1,746,329. Not only is the number of Georgians whose repatriation is being demanded insignificantly small, but furthermore it is even smaller in proportion to the population of the Marmora and Mediterranean districts.

Not a single Armenian lives in the areas of Kars and Ardahan. We have full confidence in our Armenian fellow citizens, who are scattered among other districts of the country, most of them living in Istanbul."

The "Armenian National Council" in Syria and the Lebanon, an organisation of Armenian refugees, on Jan. 17 telegraphed to the President of the UNO General Assembly in London, demanding "in the name of 200,000 Armenian refugees in both countries . . . the return to Soviet Russia of Armenian territories seized by the Turks."—(*Times* - Daily Telegraph - Manchester Guardian - New York Times - Le Monde - Neue Zürcher Zeitung) (Prev. rep. 7106 A; Montreux Convention, 2192 C; Moscow Conf., 7629 A.)

A. GERMANY. — British Zone to receive 1,500,000 Deported Germans from Poland.

It was officially announced in Berlin on Feb. 18 that after protracted negotiations between the British and Polish authorities an agreement had been reached whereby 1,500,000 deported Germans from Poland would be settled in the British zone of Germany. Four routes will be used: (a) from Szczecin (Stettin) to Lübeck by sea at the rate of 1,000 a day; (b) from Szczecin by train (1,000 a day); (c) from Kalawak (Kohlfurt) to Mariental and Alversdorf via Helmstedt by train (8,000 a day), and (d) from Kalawak to Friedland (2,500 a day). The expelled persons will be allowed to bring as much baggage, including bedding, as can be carried by hand, the amount of currency which they are allowed to take out of Poland being limited to Rm. 500 per person. The deportations will be carried out in an orderly and humane manner, families will not be split up, and pregnant women will not be allowed to travel within 6 weeks before or after confinement. Resettlement in the British zone will be carried out by the local German authorities under general British supervision.—(*Times*) (Prev. rep. British Zone, 7665 E; Deportees, 7644 C.)

B. AUSTRALIA. — Liberal Party Policy.

Mr. R. G. Menzies, Leader of the Opposition, issued on Feb. 1 a statement on the policy to be adopted by the Liberal Party of Australia at the forthcoming Federal elections. It called for: (1) the establishment of an all-party Parliamentary committee on foreign affairs; (2) the introduction of universal compulsory military training; (3) the abolition of the means test in social services; (4) the launching of a campaign to attract as many immigrants as the Commonwealth could absorb, with particular attention to war orphans; (5) reduction of income-tax by 40 per cent through progressive reductions spread over 8 years; (6) secret ballots to ensure democratic control of trade unions and the outlawing of strikes and lockouts.—(*Australian Dept. of Information*)

(Prev. rep. Liberal Party, 6889 B.)

C. CZECHOSLOVAKIA. — Resumption of Diplomatic Relations with Vatican.

Diplomatic relations between Czechoslovakia and the Vatican, which had been interrupted since the German occupation of Prague on March 15, 1939, were officially resumed on Jan. 30 when Dr. F. Schwarzenberg was appointed Czechoslovak *Chargé d'Affaires* to the Holy See, following the appointment in 1945 of Mgr. Forni as acting Nuncio in Prague.—(*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*)