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No. 15.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

REVIEW OF TURKISH FOREIGN AND HOME AFFAIRS.

July 1st to October 31st, 1918.

15th November, 1918.

The events of the first six months of 1918 were such as to effect a very decided change in the attitude of the Turkish Government. The despondency of the winter gave way before the prospects of a peace with Russia early in the new year and entirely vanished when the spring brought some practical realization of its most ardent hopes. It seemed for the moment as if the policy of Enver Pasha and the military party was about to justify itself and that the Ottoman Empire after six and a half years of continuously disastrous warfare had at last found salvation in its alliance with the Central Powers. Not only did the downfall of the hereditary enemy, Russia, appear to throw open the way to those Turkish speaking countries which Ottoman Chauvinists were pleased to claim as "unredeemed Turkey," but the rapid advance of the German Armies in the West seemed to offer prospects of a victorious peace in the near future which would restore to the empire its rapidly vanishing hold over the Arab race. The elation of Ottoman politicians had assumed extravagant proportions by the end of June and this in spite of the fact that the situation at home was by no means reassuring and that even abroad the restraint placed by Germany on Turkey's ambitious schemes was already being felt.

At this critical juncture, when the successes which followed on the downfall of Russia were at their height and the result of Turkey's bid for domination in the Crimea, the Black Sea and the Caucasus still hung in the balance, when the most strenuous efforts were being made to persuade Bulgaria to yield to Turkish demands and when the urgent necessity of internal reforms had reached a point when it could no longer be neglected if the war were to be continued to its anticipated victorious conclusion, the old Sultan, Mehmed V, died quite suddenly on July 3rd. He was succeeded by his younger brother Vahideddin with the title of Mehmed VI, a man previously considered to have Ententophil leanings and known to have little sympathy with the Committee of Union and Progress. Fortunately, perhaps, for the new Sovereign, the retired life he had led until he was called to the throne caused him to be somewhat of an unknown quantity in the political world. The Young Turks can never have doubted but that he would prove as pliable an instrument in their hands as his predecessor. Had they suspected that he was capable of the independence and energy which he subsequently showed, it is possible that his reign would have been short or that he would never have succeeded at all. From the very first the authority of the Government clique was threatened in a quite unexpected manner. Instead of confirmation in office being granted to the Cabinet as a matter of course, the Grand Vizier found himself obliged to accept conditions imposed upon him by the new Sultan before he was able to carry on the Government. Much to the surprise and annoyance of the Committee, the Sultan refused to accept their nominees for his civil and military household and they found themselves pledged to promises of specific reforms in place of the vague generalities which had hitherto been uttered rather as a method of propaganda than with any clear intention of their execution. The Sultan's "Hatti Humayun," the Imperial rescript on his accession, was studiously moderate and contained no suspicion of Pan-Turkish declarations. An amnesty was granted to political and civil offenders who had served two-thirds of their sentence, martial law outside the war zones was to be abolished and special measures were promised to alleviate the distress into which the unsatisfactory state of the supply question had plunged the people. Changes in the Cabinet were shortly afterwards announced, most of them introducing adherents of Talaat Pasha at the expense of friends of Enver Pasha—Ismail Jambolat Bey became Minister of the Interior, Dr. Nazim Minister of Education, Topal Ismail Hakki Pasha the corrupt head of the military and civil supply department was transferred to more purely military functions at the War Office, and the title of Enver Pasha himself was changed from Vice-Generalissimo to Chief of the Imperial General Staff—not that any of these persons were less fanatical supporters of the Committee than their predecessors, but they represented rather the civilian and Turkish Nationalist element which had never accepted the war policy so whole heartedly as the pro-German military party. The Sultan by his independent attitude for the first time provided a point round which the anti-Enver members of the Committee, whether inspired merely by jealousy or by worthier motives, could rally, and by the interest he displayed in their welfare secured for himself no less the support of the people.

From this time onwards a violent outburst of political activity was noticeable, as if the Government, intent above all things on maintaining their position, had accepted the new situation which circumstances had thrust upon them, and were throwing themselves heart and soul into the task of reorganization. The establishment of a new Ministry of National Economy charged with the control of supplies, transport facilities, imports, exports and other commercial activities was loudly proclaimed in the press as the inauguration of a new economic era, the programme of the new Minister of the Interior included the suppression of brigandage, which had increased to such an extent as seriously to threaten public security in Asia Minor, the immediate repatriation of deported Armenians, Greeks, and Arabs, the establishment of a special administration in the reoccupied provinces in the Caucasus and the reorganization of the police, while from the Ministry of Public Instruction it was announced that far reaching improvements were contemplated in the system of national education. Nevertheless, the Government's protestations and show of activity carried little conviction. This was not the first time in Turkish history that such a situation had arisen, and there was little to lead people to suppose that any but the usual negative results would be the outcome of this campaign of reform.

The Government's desperate efforts to maintain its vanishing prestige was made all the more necessary by the course of events abroad. For a time it had appeared as if the boasts of the Pan-Turkish party might in some measure be realised, but already before the end of June the opposition of Germany to the ambitious schemes of the Turkish Government had considerably darkened the outlook. As time went on it became increasingly clear that in spite of their overwhelming self-confidence the Turkish chauvinists were quite incapable of enforcing their claims. The provisional agreement which was signed at Batum in June, left Trans-Caucasia divided into separate Georgian, Armenian and Tatar Republics, the first under German, the last under Turkish influence, with Armenia, a little strip of territory existing on sufferance round Erivan and Lake Sevanga, helplessly hemmed in on all sides by hostile populations. The Turks, extending their occupation eastwards to include the Alexandropol-Tabriz Railway, were also advancing through the Persian province of Azerbeijan, but owing to the opposition of German forces based on Tiflis, Baku remained throughout July isolated as before and the scene of continual internal struggles between the Bolshevist and moderate parties. The conference which assembled at Constantinople to conclude a final settlement of Caucasian affairs achieved nothing definite. Turkish pretentions to a protectorate over Armenia and Azerbaijan, as the Tatar republic called itself, and the support given by Turkey to the Tatar demand for Baku as their capital were offset by Georgian claims, supported by Germany, not only to certain Tatar territories but to coastal regions on the Black Sea coveted by Turkey and even to Batum itself. The Turks made every effort to improve their position in the Caucasus. The Turkish force known as the "Islam Ordu" and including large numbers of Tatars enrolled locally and trained by Turkish officers continued their advance against Baku. By the end of July the situation of the town was almost desperate and in spite of the arrival of a small British force to the assistance of the anti-Bolshevist element, the Turks succeeded in breaking through the last defences. The British force was obliged to retire and about the middle of August the Turks entered the city. The victory was, however, a barren one as, in the disturbances which followed the Turkish occupation, the oil wells were badly damaged and as in view of their weakness the Turks were unable, quite apart from German opposition, to cope with the general disorder in the surrounding regions. As in the Caucasus so elsewhere the lack of sufficient force to back up their claims rendered the Turkish Government impotent. Month after month went by and the Russian Black Sea Fleet, upon the possession of which such great hopes of domination in the Black Sea had been built, remained under German control, neither did there seem any prospect of Turkish claims to protect the Moslems of the Crimea receiving satisfactory attention, while nearer home the dispute with Bulgaria over the retrocession of territory in Thrace dragged on with violent mutual recriminations, but without a settlement appearing to come any nearer.

Although the self confidence of the Pan-Turkish politicians never seem to flag for a moment, their failure to fulfil their programme reacted on their position at home. As time went on it began to be realized that they were unable to carry out efficiently the reforms which had been inaugurated with such enthusiasm on the new Sultan's accession. The old Committee régime of corruption, profiteering and jobbery continued unabated, and the celebration on July 23rd, of the tenth anniversary of the revolution of 1908, must have appeared somewhat of a mock ceremony to those few people who realized the difference between the promise of those days and its fulfilment, and to those masses who were suffering privations in order that their false gods should be upheld. Such laws as were promulgated took the form of provisional enactments, approved by meetings of Committee deputies and were put into force by the Young Turk Government, with a view to presenting Parliament with a "fait accompli" against which dissentients to the Committee's methods of legislation would be unable to protest effectively.

Meanwhile the animosity against the Germans, on account of the way in which, both at home and abroad, the Turks were being treated as vassals rather than allies, continually increased, and in a corresponding degree the position of Enver Pasha and the pro-German party in the Government became more and more insecure. The Sultan was endeavouring to gather round him such men as Fethi Bey and Shukri Bey and certain older soldiers and politicians, such as Izzet Pasha and Tewfik Pasha, whose interests or convictions were opposed to those of Enver, and popular opinion at any rate credited him with a desire to conclude peace as soon as possible. The obvious difficulty, however, to any rapprochement with the Allies was how to obtain satisfactory terms while at the same time providing for the punishment of the Government which had so far been responsible for Turkey's share in the war. It was probably realized that the Arab provinces could never be restored, but it was perhaps hoped that some nominal suzerainty might be retained over them, and that possibly they might be allowed to keep what they had won in the Caucasus and even get satisfaction from Bulgaria as a reward for breaking away from the Central Alliance. By the middle of August, confidence in the inevitability of a swift German victory was being rapidly shattered by events on the Western front, and even if other and decisive events had not soon occurred, it is not unlikely that Turkey would have made a serious effort to come to terms rather than face another winter of war in her present exhausted condition.

Just at this time, however, negotiations were proceeding at Berlin between Germany and the Bolshevist Government for the settlement of matters arising out of the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The Turks were told that there was no necessity for them to participate as nothing concerning them would be discussed. But when the terms of the agreement were made puplic after its signature at the end of August, it was found that a clause existed whereby the Germans, in return for recognition by the Bolshevists of the independence of Georgia, had themselves recognized the whole of the rest of the Caucasus with the exception of the retroceded provinces of Batum, Kars and Ardahan as an integral portion of the Socialist Republic of Soviets.

The effect of this underhand action on the part of Germany was naturally very keenly felt in Turkish Government circles. It seems in fact to have provoked a crisis. The Sultan is said to have sent for Talaat Pasha and told him that he considered that his policy had been a failure. He had been unable to get Bulgaria to agree to the retrocession of any territory in Thrace, or to persuade Germany to recognize Turkish claims to supremacy in the Caucasus, the Crimea and the Black Sea, or to obtain military support in return for the assistance given by Turkey in Galicia and Dobruja. He was therefore told that he must proceed at once to Berlin and demand immediate satisfaction on all these points under threat of concluding a separate peace. Talaat Pasha accordingly left Constantinople on September 4th, and the resumption of the Parliamentary session, which had already been fixed for the middle of the month instead of for the normal date of November 1st, was now postponed until his return.

The mission was not a success. It appears that Germany agreed to use her good offices with Bulgaria to obtain the necessary concessions, but that she refused Talaat Pasha's other demands, while insisting that Turkey should still keep her place in the alliance. But even before the Grand Vizier's return to Constantinople events occurred which determined the future line of action to be taken by Turkey beyond any possible doubt. The Allied offensive in the Balkans and in Palestine which culminated on Sept. 30th in the unconditional surrender of Bulgaria and the annihilation of the Turkish forces in Syria between Sept. 19th and the end of the month, completely destroyed any hopes the war party may have had of further assistance. Direct communications with the Central Powers were interrupted, and only the hazardous routes through Constanza or Odessa remained open. No Turkish army any longer existed which would be able to withstand the allied advance through Thrace and through Syria, and the temper of the people who had long been hostile to the continuance of the war, no less than the feeling in certain Committee circles and the Sultan's entourage, made the conclusion of an armistice an absolute necessity.

Talaat Pasha reached Constantinople in the last days of September. He was instructed by the Sultan to summon the Cabinet and sue for peace, but at the Cabinet Council held on Sept. 27th the ministers are said to have decided to remain faithful to the alliance. On the refusal of the Sultan to accept this decision, the Grand Vizier resigned, but continued to direct the Government until a new Cabinet could be formed. The views of the ministers appear, however, to have changed before this firm attitude of the Sultan. The reports of subsequent meetings indicate that Enver Pasha alone remained obdurate in his insistance that hostilities should be continued, but his argument that it would be better to submit to a German occupation in the hope of saving the situation, rather than to admit defeat found no response among his colleagues, who were now more anxious to save themselves by an appearance of eagerness to seek a reconciliation with the Entente, than to persist in useless resistance in the face of a hopeless situation.

The formation of a new Government was first offered to Said Halim Pasha, but the ex-Grand Vizier of the early days of the war refused to accept such a responsibility. Tewfik Pasha, the late Turkish ambassador in London, was persuaded to make the attempt, but after fruitless efforts to construct a Cabinet, which should not include undesirable members of the Committee of Union and Progress, he resigned the task to Izzet Pasha, a general of the old school with adaptable political opinions, who assumed office in the second week in October, with a ministry which claimed to represent pro-Entente and pacifist opinions in Turkey.

Enver and the German faction were now finally discredited, but the failure of Tewfik Pasha to form a Cabinet showed that the Committee of Union and Progress was still in control of the situation. Tewfik was supported by the clerical party of Ulema and Hojas as well as by the navy, but the guns of the Goeben and the presence of German troops in Constantinople and the Dardanelles defences still acted as a deterrent to those who would have liked to see the power of the Committee completely overthrown. It was evidently thought that the Entente would be willing to treat with a Cabinet from which the extremists had been excluded, and that such a Cabinet might be able to obtain good terms for the members of the Committee who remained. Izzet Pasha's Government was therefore rather in the nature of a makeshift, and in fact does not appear from the comments in the Press to have been received with much confidence. The fact that Javid Bey remained as Minister of Finance, that the Minister of Justice was that Hairi Bey, who as Sheikh ul Islam had signed the decree proclaiming a Jehad at the beginning of the war, that the Minister of Foreign Affairs was Rifaat Bey, who had only recently been appointed ambassador in Berlin, and that the Minister of Marine was Raouf Bey, who had been prominent in 1915 as the head of a mission to stir up anti-British feeling in Persia, amply justified the pessimism of liberal circles. Although efforts in this direction were being made, no party had as yet come into being strong enough to combat Committee influences, and in the absence of a more suitable combination Izzet Pasha's Cabinet stood its ground.

Parliament opened on Oct. 10th, and it appeared from subsequent ministerial declarations that the Government still hoped to obtain terms so favourable as to include the retention of some kind of Ottoman suzerainty over the Arab provinces, and the recognition of the Sultan's claim to the Caliphate. But the almost incredible effrontery of such ideas was far surpassed by Halil Bey in his speech on his appointment as President of the chamber. He represented Turkey as the power which had caused the fall of Tzarism and saved the world from Russian domination. "If we had not participated in this war" he said "the arbitrator in the liquidation of this great calamity would not have been the lofty President of the civilized United States, but the absolutist and tyrannical Tzar of Russia. The Turkish armies have granted to the Russian nation itself, and to more than twenty subject nations, groaning under the Tzar's despotism, the chance of obtaining their independence. I like to hope that friends will look back upon the past and remember the great assistance their faithful ally gave them, and that enemies will appreciate the services we rendered to

European civilization and the whole of humanity." And only a few days later Enver, Talaat, and Jemal Pashas, Dr. Nazim, the notorious pan-Turkish propagandist, with Bedri Bey and Azmi Bey, the ex-Valis of Aleppo and Beirut, silently vanished from the scenes of their past activities, fearful lest the responsibility for the massacres of Armenians, the execution of Syrian Arabs, and the deportations of Greeks should be brought home to them, and not at all confident that the "services" they had rendered to humanity and the races of Turkey, would be duly appreciated by the victorious Entente Powers.

In spite, however, of the unsatisfactory nature of the new Cabinet, the necessity for an immediate peace outweighed any other considerations, and so long as his activities were confined to the speedy conclusion of an armistice, Izzet Pasha could count on the necessary support. Towards the middle of October, Rahmi Bey, the Vali of Aidin, presuming upon the friendly relations he had maintained throughout the war with the British colony at Smyrna, began to show great activity in the direction of opening negotiations; but the independent attitude which he took up, doubtless inspired by a desire of self aggrandisement, did not meet with the approval of the Government and resulted in his dismissal. Shortly afterwards the Turkish Government dispatched General Townshend to accompany the Turkish plenipotentiaries to Mudros, where an armistice was signed involving the complete surrender of Turkey.

Hostilities ceased at noon on Oct. 31st, and from that moment the phase of settlement may be said to have begun. There is a long account due from Turkey not only for her misdeeds during the war but also for her offences against the common rights of mankind during the whole ten years of Young Turk rule. That the fault has lain with a comparatively small number of criminal or misguided individuals is an extenuating circumstance, but it reflects little credit on the Turkish nation. The Turk has once again proved his incapacity not only of governing foreign peoples but also of choosing a good government for himself. With all their good qualities, their bravery and their courtesy, the Turks cannot get over their imperviousness to all the finer influences of civilization. Situated as they are in direct contact both politically and economically with the West, their only hope of salvation seems to rest in their willing acceptance of a tutelage which will give them a good government they have been unable to find for themselves.

G.S.P.I.,
G.H.Q.,
E.E.F.

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The events of the first six months of 1918 were such as to effect a very decided change in the attitude of the Turkish Government. The despondency of the winter gave way before the prospects of a peace with Russia early in the new year and entirely vanished when the spring brought some practical realization of its most ardent hopes. It seemed for the moment as if the policy of Enver Pasha and the military party was about to justify itself and that the Ottoman Empire after six and a half years of continuously disastrous warfare had at last found salvation in its alliance with the Central Powers. Not only did the downfall of the hereditary enemy, Russia, appear to throw open the way to those Turkish speaking countries which Ottoman Chauvinists were pleased to claim as "unredeemed Turkey," but the rapid advance of the German Armies in the West seemed to offer prospects of a victorious peace in the near future which would restore to the empire its rapidly vanishing hold over the Arab race. The elation of Ottoman politicians had assumed extravagant proportions by the end of June and this in spite of the fact that the situation at home was by no means reassuring and that even abroad the restraint placed by Germany on Turkey's ambitious schemes was already being felt.

At this critical juncture, when the successes which followed on the downfall of Russia were at their height and the result of Turkey's bid for domination in the Crimea, the Black Sea and the Caucasus still hung in the balance, when the most strenuous efforts were being made to persuade Bulgaria to yield to Turkish demands and when the urgent necessity of internal reforms had reached a point when it could no longer be neglected if the war were to be continued to its anticipated victorious conclusion, the old Sultan, Mehmed V, died quite suddenly on July 3rd. He was succeeded by his younger brother Vahideddin with the title of Mehmed VI, a man previously considered to have Ententophil leanings and known to have little sympathy with the Committee of Union and Progress. Fortunately, perhaps, for the new Sovereign, the retired life he had led until he was called to the throne caused him to be somewhat of an unknown quantity in the political world. The Young Turks can never have doubted but that he would prove as pliable an instrument in their hands as his predecessor. Had they suspected that he was capable of the independence and energy which he subsequently showed, it is possible that his reign would have been short or that he would never have succeeded at all. From the very first the authority of the Government clique was threatened in a quite unexpected manner. Instead of confirmation in office being granted to the Cabinet as a matter of course, the Grand Vizier found himself obliged to accept conditions imposed upon him by the new Sultan before he was able to carry on the Government. Much to the surprise and annoyance of the Committee, the Sultan refused to accept their nominees for his civil and military household and they found themselves pledged to promises of specific reforms in place of the vague generalities which had hitherto been uttered rather as a method of propaganda than with any clear intention of their execution. The Sultan's "Hatti Humayun," the Imperial rescript on his accession, was studiously moderate and contained no suspicion of Pan-Turkish declarations. An amnesty was granted to political and civil offenders who had served two-thirds of their sentence, martial law outside the war zones was to be abolished and special measures were promised to alleviate the distress into which the unsatisfactory state of the supply question had plunged the people. Changes in the Cabinet were shortly afterwards announced, most of them introducing adherents of Talaat Pasha at the expense of friends of Enver Pasha—Ismail Jambolat Bey became Minister of the Interior, Dr. Nazim Minister of Education, Topal Ismail Hakki Pasha the corrupt head of the military and civil supply department was transferred to more purely military functions at the War Office, and the title of Enver Pasha himself was changed from Vice-Generalissimo to Chief of the Imperial General Staff—not that any of these persons were less fanatical supporters of the Committee than their predecessors, but they represented rather the civilian and Turkish Nationalist element which had never accepted the war policy so whole heartedly as the pro-German military party. The Sultan by his independent attitude for the first time provided a point round which the anti-Enver members of the Committee, whether inspired merely by jealousy or by worthier motives, could rally, and by the interest he displayed in their welfare secured for himself no less the support of the people.

From this time onwards a violent outburst of political activity was noticeable, as if the Government, intent above all things on maintaining their position, had accepted the new situation which circumstances had thrust upon them, and were throwing themselves heart and soul into the task of reorganization. The establishment of a new Ministry of National Economy charged with the control of supplies, transport facilities, imports, exports and other commercial activities was loudly proclaimed in the press as the inauguration of a new economic era, the programme of the new Minister of the Interior included the suppression of brigandage, which had increased to such an extent as seriously to threaten public security in Asia Minor, the immediate repatriation of deported Armenians, Greeks, and Arabs, the establishment of a special administration in the reoccupied provinces in the Caucasus and the reorganization of the police, while from the Ministry of Public Instruction it was announced that far reaching improvements were contemplated in the system of national education. Nevertheless, the Government's protestations and show of activity carried little conviction. This was not the first time in Turkish history that such a situation had arisen, and there was little to lead people to suppose that any but the usual negative results would be the outcome of this campaign of reform.

The Government's desperate efforts to maintain its vanishing prestige was made all the more necessary by the course of events abroad. For a time it had appeared as if the boasts of the Pan-Turkish party might in some measure be realised, but already before the end of June the opposition of Germany to the ambitious schemes of the Turkish Government had considerably darkened the outlook. As time went on it became increasingly clear that in spite of their overwhelming self-confidence the Turkish chauvinists were quite incapable of enforcing their claims. The provisional agreement which was signed at Batum in June, left Trans-Caucasia divided into separate Georgian, Armenian and Tatar Republics, the first under German, the last under Turkish influence, with Armenia, a little strip of territory existing on sufferance round Erivan and Lake Sevanga, helplessly hemmed in on all sides by hostile populations. The Turks, extending their occupation eastwards to include the Alexandropol-Tabriz Railway, were also advanceing through the Persian province of Azerbeijan, but owing to the opposition of German forces based on Tiflis, Baku remained throughout July isolated as before and the scene of continual internal struggles between the Bolshevist and moderate parties. The conference which assembled at Constantinople to conclude a final settlement of Caucasian affairs achieved nothing definite. Turkish pretentions to a protectorate over Armenia and Azerbaijan, as the Tatar republic called itself, and the support given by Turkey to the Tatar demand for Baku as their capital were offset by Georgian claims, supported by Germany, not only to certain Tatar territories but to coastal regions on the Black Sea coveted by Turkey and even to Batum itself. The Turks made every effort to improve their position in the Caucasus. The Turkish force known as the "Islam Ordu" and including large numbers of Tatars enrolled locally and trained by Turkish officers continued their advance against Baku. By the end of July the situation of the town was almost desperate and in spite of the arrival of a small British force to the assistance of the anti-Bolshevist element, the Turks succeeded in breaking through the last defences. The British force was obliged to retire and about the middle of August the Turks entered the city. The victory was, however, a barren one as, in the disturbances which followed the Turkish occupation, the oil wells were badly damaged and as in view of their weakness the Turks were unable, quite apart from German opposition, to cope with the general disorder in the surrounding regions. As in the Caucasus so elsewhere the lack of sufficient force to back up their claims rendered the Turkish Government impotent. Month after month went by and the Russian Black Sea Fleet, upon the possession of which such great hopes of domination in the Black Sea had been built, remained under German control, neither did there seem any prospect of Turkish claims to protect the Moslems of the Crimea receiving satisfactory attention, while nearer home the dispute with Bulgaria over the retrocession of territory in Thrace dragged on with violent mutual recriminations, but without a settlement appearing to come any nearer.

Although the self confidence of the Pan-Turkish politicians never seem to flag for a moment, their failure to fulfil their programme reacted on their position at home. As time went on it began to be realized that they were unable to carry out efficiently the reforms which had been inaugurated with such enthusiasm on the new Sultan's accession. The old Committee régime of corruption, profiteering and jobbery continued unabated, and the celebration on July 23rd, of the tenth anniversary of the revolution of 1908, must have appeared somewhat of a mock ceremony to those few people who realized the difference between the promise of those days and its fulfilment, and to those masses who were suffering privations in order that their false gods should be upheld. Such laws as were promulgated took the form of provisional enactments, approved by meetings of Committee deputies and were put into force by the Young Turk Government, with a view to presenting Parliament with a "fait accompli" against which dissentients to the Committee's methods of legislation would be unable to protest effectively.

Meanwhile the animosity against the Germans, on account of the way in which, both at home and abroad, the Turks were being treated as vassals rather than allies, continually increased, and in a corresponding degree the position of Enver Pasha and the pro-German party in the Government became more and more insecure. The Sultan was endeavouring to gather round him such men as Fethi Bey and Shukri Bey and certain older soldiers and politicians, such as Izzet Pasha and Tewfik Pasha, whose interests or convictions were opposed to those of Enver, and popular opinion at any rate credited him with a desire to conclude peace as soon as possible. The obvious difficulty, however, to any rapprochement with the Allies was how to obtain satisfactory terms while at the same time providing for the punishment of the Government which had so far been responsible for Turkey's share in the war. It was probably realized that the Arab provinces could never be restored, but it was perhaps hoped that some nominal suzerainty might be retained over them, and that possibly they might be allowed to keep what they had won in the Caucasus and even get satisfaction from Bulgaria as a reward for breaking away from the Central Alliance. By the middle of August, confidence in the inevitability of a swift German victory was being rapidly shattered by events on the Western front, and even if other and decisive events had not soon occurred, it is not unlikely that Turkey would have made a serious effort to come to terms rather than face another winter of war in her present exhausted condition.

Just at this time, however, negotiations were proceeding at Berlin between Germany and the Bolshevist Government for the settlement of matters arising out of the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The Turks were told that there was no necessity for them to participate as nothing concerning them would be discussed. But when the terms of the agreement were made puplic after its signature at the end of August, it was found that a clause existed whereby the Germans, in return for recognition by the Bolshevists of the independence of Georgia, had themselves recognized the whole of the rest of the Caucasus with the exception of the retroceded provinces of Batum, Kars and Ardahan as an integral portion of the Socialist Republic of Soviets.

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The mission was not a success. It appears that Germany agreed to use her good offices with Bulgaria to obtain the necessary concessions, but that she refused Talaat Pasha's other demands, while insisting that Turkey should still keep her place in the alliance. But even before the Grand Vizier's return to Constantinople events occurred which determined the future line of action to be taken by Turkey beyond any possible doubt. The Allied offensive in the Balkans and in Palestine which culminated on Sept. 30th in the unconditional surrender of Bulgaria and the annihilation of the Turkish forces in Syria between Sept. 19th and the end of the month, completely destroyed any hopes the war party may have had of further assistance. Direct communications with the Central Powers were interrupted, and only the hazardous routes through Constanza or Odessa remained open. No Turkish army any longer existed which would be able to withstand the allied advance through Thrace and through Syria, and the temper of the people who had long been hostile to the continuance of the war, no less than the feeling in certain Committee circles and the Sultan's entourage, made the conclusion of an armistice an absolute necessity.

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G.S.P.I.,
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POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

REVIEW OF TURKISH FOREIGN AND HOME AFFAIRS.

July 1st to October 31st, 1918.

15th November, 1918.

The events of the first six months of 1918 were such as to effect a very decided change in the attitude of the Turkish Government. The despondency of the winter gave way before the prospects of a peace with Russia early in the new year and entirely vanished when the spring brought some practical realization of its most ardent hopes. It seemed for the moment as if the policy of Enver Pasha and the military party was about to justify itself and that the Ottoman Empire after six and a half years of continuously disastrous warfare had at last found salvation in its alliance with the Central Powers. Not only did the downfall of the hereditary enemy, Russia, appear to throw open the way to those Turkish speaking countries which Ottoman Chauvinists were pleased to claim as "unredeemed Turkey," but the rapid advance of the German Armies in the West seemed to offer prospects of a victorious peace in the near future which would restore to the empire its rapidly vanishing hold over the Arab race. The elation of Ottoman politicians had assumed extravagant proportions by the end of June and this in spite of the fact that the situation at home was by no means reassuring and that even abroad the restraint placed by Germany on Turkey's ambitious schemes was already being felt.

At this critical juncture, when the successes which followed on the downfall of Russia were at their height and the result of Turkey's bid for domination in the Crimea, the Black Sea and the Caucasus still hung in the balance, when the most strenuous efforts were being made to persuade Bulgaria to yield to Turkish demands and when the urgent necessity of internal reforms had reached a point when it could no longer be neglected if the war were to be continued to its anticipated victorious conclusion, the old Sultan, Mehmed V, died quite suddenly on July 3rd. He was succeeded by his younger brother Vahideddin with the title of Mehmed VI, a man previously considered to have Ententophil leanings and known to have little sympathy with the Committee of Union and Progress. Fortunately, perhaps, for the new Sovereign, the retired life he had led until he was called to the throne caused him to be somewhat of an unknown quantity in the political world. The Young Turks can never have doubted but that he would prove as pliable an instrument in their hands as his predecessor. Had they suspected that he was capable of the independence and energy which he subsequently showed, it is possible that his reign would have been short or that he would never have succeeded at all. From the very first the authority of the Government clique was threatened in a quite unexpected manner. Instead of confirmation in office being granted to the Cabinet as a matter of course, the Grand Vizier found himself obliged to accept conditions imposed upon him by the new Sultan before he was able to carry on the Government. Much to the surprise and annoyance of the Committee, the Sultan refused to accept their nominees for his civil and military household and they found themselves pledged to promises of specific reforms in place of the vague generalities which had hitherto been uttered rather as a method of propaganda than with any clear intention of their execution. The Sultan's "Hatti Humayun," the Imperial rescript on his accession, was studiously moderate and contained no suspicion of Pan-Turkish declarations. An amnesty was granted to political and civil offenders who had served two-thirds of their sentence, martial law outside the war zones was to be abolished and special measures were promised to alleviate the distress into which the unsatisfactory state of the supply question had plunged the people. Changes in the Cabinet were shortly afterwards announced, most of them introducing adherents of Talaat Pasha at the expense of friends of Enver Pasha—Ismail Jambolat Bey became Minister of the Interior, Dr. Nazim Minister of Education, Topal Ismail Hakki Pasha the corrupt head of the military and civil supply department was transferred to more purely military functions at the War Office, and the title of Enver Pasha himself was changed from Vice-Generalissimo to Chief of the Imperial General Staff—not that any of these persons were less fanatical supporters of the Committee than their predecessors, but they represented rather the civilian and Turkish Nationalist element which had never accepted the war policy so whole heartedly as the pro-German military party. The Sultan by his independent attitude for the first time provided a point round which the anti-Enver members of the Committee, whether inspired merely by jealousy or by worthier motives, could rally, and by the interest he displayed in their welfare secured for himself no less the support of the people.

From this time onwards a violent outburst of political activity was noticeable, as if the Government, intent above all things on maintaining their position, had accepted the new situation which circumstances had thrust upon them, and were throwing themselves heart and soul into the task of reorganization. The establishment of a new Ministry of National Economy charged with the control of supplies, transport facilities, imports, exports and other commercial activities was loudly proclaimed in the press as the inauguration of a new economic era, the programme of the new Minister of the Interior included the suppression of brigandage, which had increased to such an extent as seriously to threaten public security in Asia Minor, the immediate repatriation of deported Armenians, Greeks, and Arabs, the establishment of a special administration in the reoccupied provinces in the Caucasus and the reorganization of the police, while from the Ministry of Public Instruction it was announced that far reaching improvements were contemplated in the system of national education. Nevertheless, the Government's protestations and show of activity carried little conviction. This was not the first time in Turkish history that such a situation had arisen, and there was little to lead people to suppose that any but the usual negative results would be the outcome of this campaign of reform.

The Government's desperate efforts to maintain its vanishing prestige was made all the more necessary by the course of events abroad. For a time it had appeared as if the boasts of the Pan-Turkish party might in some measure be realised, but already before the end of June the opposition of Germany to the ambitious schemes of the Turkish Government had considerably darkened the outlook. As time went on it became increasingly clear that in spite of their overwhelming self-confidence the Turkish chauvinists were quite incapable of enforcing their claims. The provisional agreement which was signed at Batum in June, left Trans-Caucasia divided into separate Georgian, Armenian and Tatar Republics, the first under German, the last under Turkish influence, with Armenia, a little strip of territory existing on sufferance round Erivan and Lake Sevanga, helplessly hemmed in on all sides by hostile populations. The Turks, extending their occupation eastwards to include the Alexandropol-Tabriz Railway, were also advanceing through the Persian province of Azerbeijan, but owing to the opposition of German forces based on Tiflis, Baku remained throughout July isolated as before and the scene of continual internal struggles between the Bolshevist and moderate parties. The conference which assembled at Constantinople to conclude a final settlement of Caucasian affairs achieved nothing definite. Turkish pretentions to a protectorate over Armenia and Azerbaijan, as the Tatar republic called itself, and the support given by Turkey to the Tatar demand for Baku as their capital were offset by Georgian claims, supported by Germany, not only to certain Tatar territories but to coastal regions on the Black Sea coveted by Turkey and even to Batum itself. The Turks made every effort to improve their position in the Caucasus. The Turkish force known as the "Islam Ordu" and including large numbers of Tatars enrolled locally and trained by Turkish officers continued their advance against Baku. By the end of July the situation of the town was almost desperate and in spite of the arrival of a small British force to the assistance of the anti-Bolshevist element, the Turks succeeded in breaking through the last defences. The British force was obliged to retire and about the middle of August the Turks entered the city. The victory was, however, a barren one as, in the disturbances which followed the Turkish occupation, the oil wells were badly damaged and as in view of their weakness the Turks were unable, quite apart from German opposition, to cope with the general disorder in the surrounding regions. As in the Caucasus so elsewhere the lack of sufficient force to back up their claims rendered the Turkish Government impotent. Month after month went by and the Russian Black Sea Fleet, upon the possession of which such great hopes of domination in the Black Sea had been built, remained under German control, neither did there seem any prospect of Turkish claims to protect the Moslems of the Crimea receiving satisfactory attention, while nearer home the dispute with Bulgaria over the retrocession of territory in Thrace dragged on with violent mutual recriminations, but without a settlement appearing to come any nearer.

Although the self confidence of the Pan-Turkish politicians never seem to flag for a moment, their failure to fulfil their programme reacted on their position at home. As time went on it began to be realized that they were unable to carry out efficiently the reforms which had been inaugurated with such enthusiasm on the new Sultan's accession. The old Committee régime of corruption, profiteering and jobbery continued unabated, and the celebration on July 23rd, of the tenth anniversary of the revolution of 1908, must have appeared somewhat of a mock ceremony to those few people who realized the difference between the promise of those days and its fulfilment, and to those masses who were suffering privations in order that their false gods should be upheld. Such laws as were promulgated took the form of provisional enactments, approved by meetings of Committee deputies and were put into force by the Young Turk Government, with a view to presenting Parliament with a "fait accompli" against which dissentients to the Committee's methods of legislation would be unable to protest effectively.

Meanwhile the animosity against the Germans, on account of the way in which, both at home and abroad, the Turks were being treated as vassals rather than allies, continually increased, and in a corresponding degree the position of Enver Pasha and the pro-German party in the Government became more and more insecure. The Sultan was endeavouring to gather round him such men as Fethi Bey and Shukri Bey and certain older soldiers and politicians, such as Izzet Pasha and Tewfik Pasha, whose interests or convictions were opposed to those of Enver, and popular opinion at any rate credited him with a desire to conclude peace as soon as possible. The obvious difficulty, however, to any rapprochement with the Allies was how to obtain satisfactory terms while at the same time providing for the punishment of the Government which had so far been responsible for Turkey's share in the war. It was probably realized that the Arab provinces could never be restored, but it was perhaps hoped that some nominal suzerainty might be retained over them, and that possibly they might be allowed to keep what they had won in the Caucasus and even get satisfaction from Bulgaria as a reward for breaking away from the Central Alliance. By the middle of August, confidence in the inevitability of a swift German victory was being rapidly shattered by events on the Western front, and even if other and decisive events had not soon occurred, it is not unlikely that Turkey would have made a serious effort to come to terms rather than face another winter of war in her present exhausted condition.

Just at this time, however, negotiations were proceeding at Berlin between Germany and the Bolshevist Government for the settlement of matters arising out of the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The Turks were told that there was no necessity for them to participate as nothing concerning them would be discussed. But when the terms of the agreement were made puplic after its signature at the end of August, it was found that a clause existed whereby the Germans, in return for recognition by the Bolshevists of the independence of Georgia, had themselves recognized the whole of the rest of the Caucasus with the exception of the retroceded provinces of Batum, Kars and Ardahan as an integral portion of the Socialist Republic of Soviets.

The effect of this underhand action on the part of Germany was naturally very keenly felt in Turkish Government circles. It seems in fact to have provoked a crisis. The Sultan is said to have sent for Talaat Pasha and told him that he considered that his policy had been a failure. He had been unable to get Bulgaria to agree to the retrocession of any territory in Thrace, or to persuade Germany to recognize Turkish claims to supremacy in the Caucasus, the Crimea and the Black Sea, or to obtain military support in return for the assistance given by Turkey in Galicia and Dobruja. He was therefore told that he must proceed at once to Berlin and demand immediate satisfaction on all these points under threat of concluding a separate peace. Talaat Pasha accordingly left Constantinople on September 4th, and the resumption of the Parliamentary session, which had already been fixed for the middle of the month instead of for the normal date of November 1st, was now postponed until his return.

The mission was not a success. It appears that Germany agreed to use her good offices with Bulgaria to obtain the necessary concessions, but that she refused Talaat Pasha's other demands, while insisting that Turkey should still keep her place in the alliance. But even before the Grand Vizier's return to Constantinople events occurred which determined the future line of action to be taken by Turkey beyond any possible doubt. The Allied offensive in the Balkans and in Palestine which culminated on Sept. 30th in the unconditional surrender of Bulgaria and the annihilation of the Turkish forces in Syria between Sept. 19th and the end of the month, completely destroyed any hopes the war party may have had of further assistance. Direct communications with the Central Powers were interrupted, and only the hazardous routes through Constanza or Odessa remained open. No Turkish army any longer existed which would be able to withstand the allied advance through Thrace and through Syria, and the temper of the people who had long been hostile to the continuance of the war, no less than the feeling in certain Committee circles and the Sultan's entourage, made the conclusion of an armistice an absolute necessity.

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