

# TÜRKİYE TURING VE OTOMOBİL KURUMU BELLETENİ

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Cumhur Başkanımız Celâl Bayar ve Yunan Kraliçesi Frederika  
Le Président de la République Djélal Bayar avec la Reine Frédérika de Grèce

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Tepebaşı, Meşrutiyet Caddesi, No. 157 (Moralı Pasaj, Sol kısım No. 2) — Beyoğlu - İstanbul.

## A Short Survey of Turco - British Relations



Lady Montagu

The material shown in this exhibition is mostly of a diplomatic and cultural character, with a few items of economic and military interest. The activity of the famous «Levant Company» is not included since it is a very large subject in itself. Official records, documents, books, periodicals, pictures and portraits, arranged in chronological order, give an idea of the general development of Turco-British relations. The greater part of the records are Imperial Letters from Turkish Sultans (Grand Signors) to English Sovereigns; they are preserved in the Public Record Office in London. The cultural sections of the exhibition are represented mainly by English works. As activities in this field began in Turkey only in the XIXth century, not many books could be written in this short period.

Relations between Turkey and England started rather late: at the end of the XVIth century. The initiative for the first contacts came from some Englishmen who were concerned only with trade. In the middle of the XVIth century, when enterprising English merchants began to be interested in trade, business with remote places, with the countries of the Levant and with the lands of the Great Turk, could not escape their consideration. The first Englishman in this field was Anthony Jenkinson who obtained from Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent a "Safe conduct or privilege" at Aleppo, in Syria, in the year 1553. He was given permission "to arrive in Turkish ports with ships, to load and unload his merchandise, provided he will pay ordinary duties". But Jenkinson did not make use of this grant, and twenty-five years elapsed be-

fore interest in the Levant trade became alive in London.

The first real steps towards this trade were taken by two of the great London merchants of the time. Edward Osborne and Richard Staper. With the approbation of Queen Elizabeth, they sent William Harborne (a factor of Osborne's) to Constantinople. He arrived at Constantinople at the end of October 1578. Harborne's aim was to secure full freedom of trade for English subjects. He had a good reception at the Porte. The Grand Vizier, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, was inclined to give an attentive ear to the English «Agent's» claims, especially when he hinted at the value of England's alliance against their common enemy, Spain.

Harborne's arrival at Constantinople and his demands for privileges for English subjects led to the beginning of the official correspondence between the Turkish Sultan and the English Queen. Murad III's first letter is dated March 20th, 1579. Elizabeth's answer is dated October 25th, 1579. Both letters were written in a very friendly manner. In all these Imperial Letters of the Turkish Sultans, beginning with those of Sultan Murad (in 1579) and including the Letter of Sultan Selim III (in 1793), expressions of friendship and of the cordial relations between the two countries are the main subjects.

In spite of French intrigues, Harborne won from the Sultan a general promise of liberty of trade in Turkey. It was formulated in June 1580 in the form of a grant of twenty two articles, or Capitulations, defining the liberties accorded to English subjects trafficking in Ottoman lands. This success of Harborne's, which was won rather easily, was a result of the sympathetic attitude of the Porte towards Queen Elizabeth and her subjects. Because England was a Protestant country she was considered by the Turks as an enemy of "idolatory", i.e., of the Roman Catholics. This psychological factor played an important role in early Anglo-Turkish relations.

The first article of these first "Capitulations" was as follows:

"Our Imperial commandement (i.e. of Sultan Murad III) and pleasure is, that the people and subjects of the same Queen (Elizabeth), may safely and securely come to our princely dominions, with their goods and marchandise, and ladings, and other commodities by sea, in great and small vessels, and by land with their carriages and cattels, and that no man

shall hurt them, but that they may buy and sell without any hinderance, and observe the customes and orders of their owne country."

This was indeed a very good privilege for the English, and put them on the same footing as the French, who had enjoyed large privileges in the Ottoman dominions since 1535. The French privileges were based on the Capitulations given by Süleyman the Magnificent to François I. English merchants now enjoyed even more privileges than the French: Englishmen had to pay only 3% custom duties, while other foreigners paid 5%. This first grant of privileges was enlarged in 1601, as well as in 1641, and later became the basis of the so-called Capitulations which, in the period of the decline and weakness of the Ottoman Empire, were used as an instrument by foreigners for the economic and political exploitation of Turkey. The Capitulations were abolished by the Turkish Government in 1914, and were officially ended by the treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

After the privilege for trade in Turkey had been obtained from the Grand Signor, a Company was formed to conduct trade with the Levant. The Company was authorised by Queen Elizabeth on 11th September, 1581. This Company, known as the "Levant Company" (or Turkey Company) developed an active trade in Turkey. During the 244 years of its existence (it was abolished in 1825) the Levant Company was one of the main factor in Anglo-Turkish relations.

William Harborne, mentioned above, was also the first English Ambassador to Turkey (1583-1588). Besides promoting trade in Turkey he endeavoured to induce the Turkish Government to back England in her struggle with Spain. Turkish help would have been of the greatest value to Queen Elizabeth when the "Invincible Armada" was preparing to invade England (in the Summer of 1588); that is why Queen Elizabeth pressed for a Turkish attack against Spain. But, in spite of Sultan Murad III's promises, the Turks were prevented from helping England, because of the war with Persia.

Edward Barton (1588-1597) the English Ambassador who succeeded Harborne, distinguished himself as a diplomat and enjoyed great popularity among the Turks; he spoke fluent Turkish and had good connections with the Seraglio. He was successful in securing the first place for the English "flag" and in lessening the French predominance in Turkey. Barton participated in the Turkish campaign against the German Emperor (in 1593) and died of cholera in 1597, being then only thirty-five years of age. He is buried

on the island Chalki (Heybeliada). These two first English Ambassadors, Harborne and Barton, established and cemented good relations between Turkey and England; they both served with due zeal and skill the interests and aims of Queen Elizabeth, as well as those of the English nation.

Immediately after the beginning of official relations some Turkish merchants also began to visit England; but their number was comparatively small. First of them was a certain Garabet, a "Court merchant", who was sent to London in September 1580, to buy goods of value for the Seraglio. In trade relations the initiative was taken by Englishmen. Until the end of the eighteenth century, it was not the Turkish custom to have permanent Embassies in foreign countries. Only special envoys were sent from time to time. The first Turkish envoy, who had no official standing, was Mustafa Aga, who came to London in August 1607. The first official envoy was İbrahim Aga, in 1610. He was sent by Ahmed I to James I with a request concerning some problems connected with the Moorish refugees from Spain.

Changes in international affairs in the XVIIIth century also had repercussions on the character of the English Embassy in Turkey. To begin with, the English Ambassadors were primarily "commercial Agents" the Ambassadors developed into "Servants of the Crown" and henceforth political and diplomatic



İngiltere Başbakanı Mr. Çirçil ve refikası  
Mr. Churchill avec Lady Churchill

matic aims were their main concern. In conformity with this change, Trumbull was ordered to endeavour to mediate peace between Turkey and the German Emperor (in 1689), but he had not time to accomplish it. It was Lord Paget who successfully mediated peace between Turkey and her enemies, at Carlowitz in 1699. Lord Paget's successor, Sir Robert Sutton, did the same job between Turkey and Russia (in 1711-1712), and between Turkey and Austria at Passarowitz (1718).

Instructions to John Murray, given by King George III (in 1765), illustrate the aims of British policy in Turkey. Especial attention was given to commerce, good relations with Ambassadors of Christian powers and to the "protection" of the "Reformed Religion" in Turkey. This last point was an answer to the Russian demands for the protection of the Orthodox subjects of the Sultan. Anglo-Russian rivalry first became apparent in the "Oczakov case" in the year 1791. The Fortress of Oczakov, on the Black Sea, had been conquered by the Russians during the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-1774. The British Government, however, was not willing to leave it in Russian possession. The Prime Minister, Pitt, declared "that the Russian advance to the southern shores of the Black Sea was a menace and that she should not be allowed to retain the fort Oczakov". "In the aggrandisement of Russia and depression of Turkey", said Pitt, "our commercial and political interests are both concerned." But Pitt's view did not find the approval and support of Parliament.

The increasing Russian danger contributed very much to the closer relations between Turkey and England. The Porte judged it useful to create permanent Embassies in some European capitals, among others London. The first Turkish Ambassador to the Court of St. James was Yusuf Agâh Efendi, sent by Sultan Selim III in 1793. The Turkish Embassy in London has done good work in furthering Anglo-Turkish relations. Many prominent Turkish personalities have represented Turkey as Ambassadors: among them Mustafa Reshid Pasha, Ali Pasha and others. The greatest Turkish poet, Abdulhak Hâmid, also served in London as Secretary at the Turkish Embassy.

The first Anglo-Turkish military alliance was concluded in 1799. It was against General Bonaparte, who had invaded Egypt in 1798. The Turkish and British forces repulsed the French attack. But this alliance was not of long duration.

The XIXth century displays many aspects of Turkish-British relations, friendly as well as unfriendly,

depending largely on the nature of big political calculations. One personality of outstanding activity deserves our attention: Stratford de Redcliffe, the British Ambassador at the Porte (1842-1858), a veritable "Great Eltchi" (Ambassador). He acted vigorously against Russian ambitions in connection with Turkey. The Crimean War of 1854-55 was mainly the work of Stratford de Redcliffe, as was also the Proclamation of the Imperial Order (Hattı Hümayan) in 1856. During the Crimean War many British contingents were stationed in Istanbul: Turkish and British soldiers fought together in the Crimea against the common enemy. All this contributed very much to the deepening of friendship and to the mutual understanding between Turks and Britons. The visit of the Sultan Abdulaziz to London in 1867 gave a new opportunity for the demonstration of Anglo-Turkish amity. But of greatest importance was the intervention of the British Government in the Russo-Turkish conflict during the war of 1877-78. When the Russians reached St. Stephano, British naval forces were cruising in the sea of Marmara. The result was the Congress of Berlin in 1878.

It is true that, since the beginning of the XIXth century, there have been many people in Britain with an anti-Turkish outlook. The despotic rule of some Turkish Sultans has been held responsible for it.

The increase of German influence in the Ottoman Empire, especially in connection with the Baghdad Railway, was one of the main causes of the deterioration in the relations between Turkey and Great Britain. The deterioration grew so that the First World War found the former friends in opposite camps. Nevertheless the heroic defence of the Dardanelles by the Turks in 1915 raised the prestige of Turkish soldiers in the eyes of the whole world and when, later on, the unjust stipulations of the treaty of Sevres (in 1920) were annihilated by the nationalist movement and by the War of Independence, under the guidance of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), it was not long before the old friendship between Turkey and Great Britain was revived. The Turkish Republic has followed the same path as the Ottoman Empire, but foreign relations have been regulated on an entirely new basis with full regard for equal rights and with a better mutual understanding. The nature of the new policy is well revealed in the Anglo-Turkish Alliance of 1939 Turkey and since this pact was signed, Turkey and Britain have consistently worked together for the same ends and are now fighting side by side in Korea. Turkey's recent entry into the Atlantic Pact brings her yet closer to her old friend and ally, Great Britain.