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## THE SITUATION OF THE VARIOUS NATIONALITIES

### a) The Case of Greek Nationals

A year after the passage of the law and a month before its application the Greek government tried to obtain favourable treatments for the Greek Nationals but failed. A report from the British Foreign Office to Sir John Simon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs stated this failure as follows:

The Greek Government attempted to obtain exemption in favour of Greek nationals in Turkey from the Turkish law reserving certain vocations to Turkish citizens as from the 16<sup>th</sup> June next. They were unable to secure the insertion of any provision to this effect in the commercial agreement, and the best that they could secure was a verbal promise from the Turkish Prime Minister to the Greek Prime Minister that the application of this law will be postponed for one year. The Greek Government understand that the application of this law will also be postponed for all foreigners resident in Turkey.<sup>30</sup>

A year later, after the Foreign Office's report, the American Embassy would picture the situation to the State Department in a number of reports:

30 National Archives (UK), FO/E2496/587/44 dated May 12, 1933.

*Report dated June 30, 1934*

I have heard informally from the Greek Consul General that no less than 15,000 Greeks will be forced to depart shortly if the Government persists in its intentions, as seems entirely probably. Practically all of these individuals are city dwellers, and small shop-keepers, and the Hellenic Government is believed to be embarrassed to know how to deal with the problem about to present itself. Thus far no program has been devised. It would be easy enough, perhaps, for the Hellenic Government to place these people on the land, but the feeling prevails that they would be unable to gain their livelihood as small and utterly inexperienced farmers, and all the Greek towns, both large and small are already over-run with shopkeepers.

Apparently the majority of these people are without financial resources, and will have to be sent to Greece eventually at the expense of the Government. The Greeks of Istanbul are greatly depressed by the present turn of affairs, and offer gloomy reflections upon the political and military entente now existing between the Turkish and Hellenic Governments, which has not sufficed to protect them in their employment in Turkey. If I may draw inferences from what I have overheard on this subject, I conclude that although the Hellenic Government deplores the action announced by the Turkish Government, it regards the political and military understandings as too important to be risked in possible acrimonious controversy respecting the present matter.<sup>31</sup>

*Report dated July 24, 1934*

I have the honor to report that, as might be expected, the recent summary expulsion from Constantinople of the Greeks employed there has not been passed over in silence by the Greek press, the comments of which, reflecting no party spirit but the true national sense of repugnance and horror over the injustice

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31 NARA, document dated June 30, 1934, reference 867.504/11.

thus inflicted on innocent people, many of whom are not immigrants, but natives of Turkey, have caused the Turkish Legation in Athens to address lively protests to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Greek public opinion, which has been steadily moving in a direction favorable to Turkey, under the guidance of responsible leaders of all political shades, has, however, received a shock which official protests will do little to overcome. It may even be that the Greek Government will indulge in reprisals against the Mussulmans of Turkish origin still holding rich tobacco lands in Western Thrace. The friendship recently struck up with Turkey means too much to Greece at present to be lightly jeopardized. But the Government does not seem averse to letting Ankara know, if so far only through the medium of the press, the profound effect which this Turkish action has had on the development of the rapprochement between the two nations. Greek friendship must mean something, after all, to a nation like Turkey which stands in such fear of the growth of Italian power in the Aegean. But, with a new army of refugees to be provided for, many voting Greeks are having their eyes opened to the possible cost of Turkish friendship, and it is not to be doubted that the enemies of the Balkan pact, who see Greece's interests lying chiefly in the Mediterranean, will take new heart from this affair.<sup>32</sup>

*Report dated July 28, 1934*

The press understands that, following negotiations between the Greek Consul General and the Governor of Istanbul, certain concessions have been made to the Greeks in the matter of the application on July 21 of the law which reserves certain professions and callings to Turkish citizens. These concessions are said to consist of permission for owners of shops, except barber shops, who do not themselves labour in the said shops, to continue in business with Turkish labour; gratis exit visas for those who leave the country; and exemption of this category of visa

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32 NARA, document dated July 24, 1934 reference 867.504/13.

applicants from the obligation to present a certificate from the fiscal authorities showing all taxes due to have been paid. One gathers from the *Cumhuriyet*, which makes a specialty of watching the editorial utterances of its confreres in Balkan countries, that the Greeks have been showing themselves quite annoyed as the date for the application of this law has drawn nearer, some of the editorials quoted reminding one of a few years ago before the two countries became fast friends. One assumes that this press campaign in Greece is designed, in part, at least, to assist the Greek diplomatic and consular representatives in Turkey in obtaining everything they can to help them in the solution of the problem facing them as the number of Greek citizens affected by the law is considerable and the work devolving upon the said representatives in connection with their repatriation enormous. It is also a fact not always remembered that the Greek and many other governments are not able to exercise the same effective control over the expression of opinion that is exercised by the great Anatolian democracy.<sup>33</sup>

#### *Report dated August 7, 1934*

I have the honor to report that although the Bulgarian Government is said to be considering reprisals on account of such of its nationals as are thus being deprived of home and livelihood, it appears that the Greek Government has decided to take no action in the matter, at least for the moment. In this connection, the following characteristic statement made by Premier Tsaldaris, which appeared in the *Ethnos* of July 31 st, may be of interest to the Department. Speaking in Saloniki, he is reported by the *Ethnos* to have said:

Two years ago, when we were in Ankara, I made representations on this subject, but it is a question of a law which affects all foreigners. All peoples today are following a nationalistic policy. They are expelling foreigners because it is a matter of professions which should be practiced by their own citizens. I wrote letters

33 NARA, document dated July 28, 1934 reference 867.9111/419



on this very subject to Ismet Pasha last year as well as this year. The law enacted by the Turkish Chamber was to have been put in force last year, but its application was postponed in order to assist the Greeks of Constantinople, whose number is equal to that of all other foreigners. I hope that the number of Greeks who are leaving will be limited, for Turkey is not expelling foreigners but only forbidding them to practice certain trades. Don't we do the same thing? I have recommended to our nationals affected by this law not to take refuge in Greece if they are able to find other work in time. In any case, I would say that the Turkish Government, in order to be agreeable to us, postponed for one year the application of the law regarding occupations of foreigners. Greeks may remain in Turkey by changing their professions.

Such specious remarks may indeed be justified by the supreme importance to Greece of her recent rapprochement with Turkey, which is the keystone of Greek foreign policy today. But the situation created by Turkey's action, which the Premier attempts to palliate, is one which entails real hardship and will undoubtedly impress many voters more forcefully than any policy, foreign or domestic. Popular resentment has been outspoken, and the press of both major parties thoroughly aroused. But the Premier has disregarded the rumblings, and risked a liability at home for a credit abroad. Why? One can only say that it is unlike him to do so unless he really believes that his régime will survive long enough to reap the benefit of its wise forbearance.<sup>34</sup>

Sixty-eight Greek families which were deprived of the right to practice their professions or trades under the Turkish law against the employment of foreigners in certain occupations, have already arrived in Greece from Istanbul and a large number more is expected in the near future.<sup>35</sup>

34 NARA, document dated August 4, 1934, reference 867.504/14.

35 NARA, document dated August 7, 1934, reference 868.00/general conditions/43

## Number of Greek Nationals Affected

According to the British Legation in Athens the number of Greek nationals who would leave Turkey was around 10.000:

The measures recently taken by the Turkish Government to remove foreign nationals from its territory are expected here to involve some ten thousand Greeks, of whom it is said that two thousand will shortly arrive in this country. There have consequently been veiled expressions of anti-Turkish feeling in parliament and a certain amount of criticism of Turkey in the press, although the government press has not been allowed to express openly the resentment that is felt.<sup>36</sup>

Most of the foreigners residing in Turkey affected by the law were Greek nationals. The reason of this was the Turco-Greek Population Exchange Agreement signed on January 30, 1923. According to this agreement Greeks with Greek nationalities living in Istanbul, categorized as “(établis)”, were exempted from the application of the agreement and had the right to stay and live in Istanbul without obtaining the Turkish nationality. According to the 1927 Turkish Census results there were 26431 Greek nationals in Istanbul.<sup>37</sup> In the 1935 Turkish Census the number of Greek nationals was 17642. Therefore the total number of Greek Nationals who will have to leave Turkey would be around 10.000, a figure which concurred with the British Legation of Athens’ report.<sup>38</sup>

### b) The Case of Russian Emigrés

Another group which was affected were Russians. All of them were “white émigrés” who arrived to Istanbul in the wake of the

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36 National Archives (UK), FO371/18396/R4179/45/19 dated July 18, 1934

37 Ayhan Aktar, *Varlık Vergisi ve “Türkleştirme” Politikaları*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2010, p. 125.

38 Alexis Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of İstanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918-1974*, Center for Asia Minor Studies, Athens, 1983, pp. 184-185.

Russian Bolshevik revolution in 1920.<sup>39</sup> The American Embassy's report on this group was as follows:

On August 21 the law restricting certain trades to Turkish nationals was applied to the Russian refugees in Istanbul. As the law had been applied to other foreigners on July 21 and it had been understood that the Russian refugees would be exempted, the decision came as a complete surprise. Some ten days notice was given. The Russian refugees – men, women and children – in Istanbul at the present time are estimated at about 2,000. The order of August 21 affected some 50 chauffeurs, mostly owners and drivers of taxicabs, and a certain number of musicians and barbers. Refugees in other trades will be compelled to abandon their activities and further effect is given to the law. By November 21, next, most of the Russian refugees will be out of regular employment. As it has become virtually impossible to evacuate the refugees to other countries and as conditions in Russia have changed to such an extent as to make exceedingly precarious any attempt at adjustment of the refugees in the country of their birth even if the Soviet authorities should express a willingness to receive them, the present lot of the refugees in Istanbul is a most pitiable one.

Having in mind the sympathy which has been manifested in the United States for the Russian refugees and the efforts made by Americans to succor them ever since 1921, the Ambassador considered it appropriate, just before his departure on leave, to address to the Minister of Foreign Affairs a personal letter, a copy of which I enclose. On September 5 I wrote Mr. Hugh Wilmon at Geneva transmitting to him excerpts from letters which give a fairly complete picture of the present predicament of the refugees. Miss Ruggles and Mitchell, Americans who have for many years actively assisted the refugees, and Mr. Gabriel Couteaux, Honorary Delegate of the Nansen Office for Refugees, have spared no pains in seeking to convey to Turkish officials and to officials of

39 For further information on these emigrés see Eugenia S. Bumgardner, *Undaunted Exiles*, McClure Co., Staunton, VA., 1925.



the League of Nations the tragic seriousness of the present situation of the refugees. Miss Mitchell is at present in Geneva.

I have noted with such satisfaction the conversation which Mr. Wilson had on September 15 with Tevfik Rüştü Bey<sup>40</sup> at Genova. I am inclined to think that it is true that the law on trades was applied to the Russian refugees in response to outside pressure Soviet, Greek and perhaps also Italian. There is no chauvinism behind the move and I have gained the distinct impression that the Turks are decidedly unenthusiastic about the whole business. I understand that the Istanbul papers were appropriately instructed with the result that there were but one or two references in the Press and no comment whatsoever. Tevfik Rüştü Bey's statement to Mr. Wilson concerning the alleged anti-Soviet activity of certain White Russians is nothing new. In January, 1928, he made a similar observation to Mr. [Joseph] Grew. As to the naturalization of the refugees this solution has been mentioned in the past, but the impression has been general that a change of religion would be necessary. In any event, applications for naturalization in Turkey have heretofore not been looked upon with favor by the authorities. Unless, under present circumstances, the remedy of naturalization be applied with dispatch, it will be no remedy at all.<sup>41</sup>

The letter mentioned in the above report was the following one written by Ambassador Robert Skinner to Tevfik Rüştü Aras, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs:

My dear Minister:

I had hoped to have the pleasure of seeing you before my departure (I am leaving to-night), but I fully realize that being on vacation you are entitled to a complete rest after the long months of your absorbing work in the Capital. I hope and wish that your leave of absence will give you the necessary relaxation from your many responsibilities and preoccupations.

40 Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs.

41 NARA, document dated September 18, 1934, 861.48/Refugees/67/124.

I had intended to talk with you, altogether unofficially, among other subjects of a matter of great concern to certain of my compatriots. I refer to the application to the Russian refugees of the law prohibiting the exercise of certain trades exclusively reserved to Turkish nationals. It was believed at first that as refugees this law would not be applicable to the said Russians, but a few days ago the chauffeurs were notified by the Vilayet to stop their work on August 1<sup>st</sup>. As these unfortunate people are unable to proceed else where I thought that perhaps – in view of Turkey's generous and traditional attitude towards exiles and taking into consideration purely humanitarian reasons – the Turkish authorities might find a means of permitting these Russian refugees to carry on their work, whatever it may be, thus enabling them to earn their living notwithstanding the provisions of the law in question.

You will realize, my dear Minister, the altogether personal character of my letter from its very contents. I have taken the liberty of writing it to you in the first place because my compatriots, sympathizing with the misfortunes of these unhappy Russians, have assisted them for over ten years by giving them their time and their money in order to facilitate for the Turkish authorities the solution of this difficult problem.<sup>42</sup>

### c) The Case of French Nationals

The first reaction of France to the law was a cable from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to its Embassy in Ankara. In this cable the Ministry asked how the other states were reacting for the repatriation of their nationals as well as their reactions to the law.<sup>43</sup> The French Ambassador Albert Kammerer reply was as follows:

This Turkish Law first of all affects the Greeks and to a certain extent the Italians. 4000 Greeks have been affected. The other affected nationalities are Austrians, Hungarians, Bulgarians and

42 NARA, document dated September 18, 1934, 861.48/Refugees/67/124.

43 Archives Quai D'Orsay, Direction des Affaires Politiques et Commerciales, 678, Serie E, carton 249. Cable no. 202 dated July, 3, 1934.



Yugoslavs. The Greek Ambassador, in spite of the strong alliance between Greece and Turkey have obtained no softening of the application of the law from the Turkish government. The same situation is with the Italian Ambassador. In Turkey measures of another age have been elaborated towards people who although are of Turkish nationality are attached to another culture. The Turkish Jews are being expelled from the Dardanelles, from Edirne and from the entrance of the Bosphorous. They have been given 48 hours for evacuation.<sup>44</sup> There are other measures being prepared towards whose daily language is not Turkish. There is since six weeks a campaign going in Adana against Turkish nationals whose language is Arabic. On the other hand the nation of Turkish nationality is being limited to the Muslims. Thus the Ottoman Bank who is obliged to use 60% of its staff with Turkish nationals, the Turkish nationals of the Christian faith have been considered as foreign staff since a short time. Islam who has been fought as religion remains the principal criteria of race. The Turkish government who is expulsing the foreign nationals does not permit at all to these people to take with them their capitals which is the money they are getting by selling what they have. The Turkish government, by putting formalities and delays, will create obstacles for these people to cash their receivables they might have with Turks. The government is pursuing strongly the perception of taxes for the entire year although these people have only exercised their profession for 6 months. The sale of their tools and estates is practically impossible since their neighbours know that within a few days they will acquire it for nothing. These foreign nationals will not even be accepted to Turkish nationality even if they ask so. These poor people, victims of a

44 The events referred here occurred in June-July 1934 in the major cities of Thrace where a sizable Jewish population existed. Jews living in Edirne, Kırklareli, Çanakkale, Çorlu were threatened and they were obliged to leave, leaving behind them their shops and houses which were looted. For further information on English language see Hatice Bayraktar, "The Anti-Jewish pogrom in Eastern Thrace in 1934: New Evidence for the Responsibility of the Turkish Government", *Patterns of Prejudice*, 40, no. 2 (2006), pp. 95-111.

real execution, will leave totally nude. In order to be fair I have to recognize that in this racist furor, which will only develop further the French are not treated worse than the others.<sup>45</sup>

### Number of French Nationals Affected

The number of French nationals affected by the law was 204, including women and children and living in Istanbul and Izmir.<sup>46</sup> In order to cover the expenses of the return of these French people Ambassador Kammerer asked 150.000 French Francs to its Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>47</sup> The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs also asked the High Commissioner of France in Beyrouth if he could accept some of these nationals<sup>48</sup> to which Beyrouth replied negatively.<sup>49</sup> Finally after lengthy exchanges of letters the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs accepted to support the expenses of rapatriations of its nationals.<sup>50</sup> A report submitted to Mr. Barthou, Minister of Foreign Affairs by Ambassador Kammerer at the occasion of the French Republic Day stated that "due to a ferocious nationalism the draconian legislation of Turkey is closing its doors to the activities of the foreigners in Turkey and bringing an irreparable prejudice to the French nationals and to the French companies who are active in the field of public ser-

45 Archives Quai D'Orsay, Direction des Affaires Politiques et Commerciales, 678, Serie E, carton 249. Cable dated July 5, 1934 from Kammerer to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

46 Archives Quai D'Orsay, Direction des Affaires Politiques et Commerciales, 678, Serie E, carton 249. Document dated July 25, 1934.

47 Archives Quai D'Orsay, Direction des Affaires Politiques et Commerciales, 678, Serie E, carton 249. Document dated July 3, 1934.

48 Archives Quai D'Orsay, Direction des Affaires Politiques et Commerciales, 678, Serie E, carton 249. Cable dated July 10, 1934.

49 Archives Quai D'Orsay, Direction des Affaires Politiques et Commerciales, 678, Serie E, carton 249. Cable dated July 13, 1934.

50 Archives Quai D'Orsay, Direction des Affaires Politiques et Commerciales, 678, Serie E, carton 249. Document dated August 16, 1934.

vices. I will not be able to give to my compatriots some illusions in the rather dark future of our enterprises in Turkey".<sup>51</sup>

#### d) The Case of German Nationals

A report sent from the German Embassy in Ankara to Berlin, a few months before the implementation of the law, described the situation as follows:

The Turkish government is standing firm by its plans to impose the Trade Prohibition Law for Foreigners, set to go into effect 16 June 1933. Due to the definition of the terms 'worker' and 'iron-' and 'wood work' in the law the Interior Ministry's legal counsel has stated that all mechanics, locksmiths, electricians and technicians should be understood to fall into those categories. This interpretation contradicts certain utterances by Interior Minister Şükrü Kaya Bey, whereby specialist workers were not to be affected by the law. I spoke with then-acting Foreign Minister Şükrü Kaya. and asked him, and he said that he foresaw that the law would be implemented in as "mild" a possible manner, esp. toward technicians, locksmiths, etc., and that mechanics (Mechaniker) would be grouped as 'specialists' who could retain their employment in Turkey, specifically mentioning E.I.G., Berlin, whose Turkish affiliate Telgaz employs German workers, as well as the typesetters at the *Türkische Post*; and others who would count as "mechanics" (machinists, foremen, etc.) who would retain their work permits/employment. A request for clarification regarding the *Türkische Post* typesetters, sent by the Interior Ministry, is still in the Istanbul Governor's office. The Interior Minister also ensured that foreign wine producers and their employees would not be affected. They, and wine cellar owners may all be foreign. Likewise friseurs owning their own business. All in all, relatively few Germans will be affected. They, and wine cellar owners may all be foreign. Likewise friseurs own-

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51 Archives Quai D'Orsay, Direction des Affaires Politiques et Commerciales, 678, Serie E, carton 249. Letter dated July 21, 1934.

ing their own business. All in all, relatively few Germans will be affected by the law. For the future, however, the affect on Germany will be such that, without express permission of the Turkish Council of Ministers, German mechanics and such shall not be able to travel to and find work, likewise, it will be near impossible for Germans with few means to travel through Turkey and find enough work to tide them over.

I have received reliable information that in the coming days the various embassy heads will intervene with the acting Foreign Minister/Interior Minister Şükrü Kaya, in particular the British ambassador, who is interested in making an exception for a great number of Maltese Christians, and the Greek one, who is looking at an outflow of 10-15,000 of his countrymen from Turkey, something that may generate much ill-feeling in Greece and seriously threaten the Greco-Turkish friendship. We'll have to wait to see if it proves successful.

The Interior minister told me that the Turkish govt. is not averse to allowing the affected parties – who prove to be acceptable, unblemished elements to adopt a Turkish citizenship on a case-by-case basis so that they may remain in their positions. No religious conversion will be necessary.

I believe that other measures are likely to be taken as well. I am continuing the steps taken by those other missions with whom I stand in reciprocal counsel, and I have also requested of our Turkish consular officials that they provide me with more detailed material regarding those affected by the law.<sup>52</sup>

In another report Lt. General Max Schlee Pasha, General Inspector of the Turkish field artillery during World War I, gave his impression as follows:

The Turkish Law Prohibiting [Foreigners from certain] Professions has not only caused great distress among the Germans in Turkey, but among and their respective missions have taken efforts with the Turkish officials on their behalf. Of these, the

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52 Auswartiges AMT, PAAA, R78615, document dated February 6, 1933.

Greeks are the most affected, w/some 10,000 families, and the Italians, with more than 5,000 of their citizens in Turkey. After them, there are a large number of Yugoslavs, Bulgarians, and others.

The Germans will not be as harshly affected by the law, and the embassy hopes that, in the final analysis, few German citizens will lose their jobs; it will be more difficult for those here seeking manual trades such as handworkers, locksmiths/fitters, carpenters, masons and such. They found earlier found a need for such tasks, as well as employment opportunities, but today they are prevented from taking these positions. Most states – including Germany-are today forbidding entrance to such foreign workers today.

The Turkish regime, which has from the start been pressured by domestic circles to enact the law, has attempted, through the adoption of Article 3, which strengthens the Council of Ministers, to prevent further professions/trades not found in the original list but which parliamentary members have demanded to be added to the prohibition. Unto now they have, due to our objections, always declared that they did not want the law to create the impression of xenophobia, and have provided lengthy explanations of their views to the protesting diplomatic missions. These efforts have met a further defeat in the recent decisions of the RPP Party Executive to gradually implement the prohibitions over a two year period.

It also appears as if the embassy's proposal that, in the goal of avoiding hardships, every German citizen affected by the prohibition should receive written notification for a high official in the provincial govt. of its impending imposition, along with a calculation of the expected time frame after which the fines foreseen by the new law will be imposed.

In such a situation the embassy should be able to find ways, through separate negotiations with the central authorities in Ankara, to find ways to minimize the number of persons affected. Every case that comes under consideration will be examined in



consultation and communication with the various German consulates in Turkey, as well as with the "Federation of German Emigres" (Bunde der Auslandsdeutschen); and thereby give thorough support to these negotiations.

A special office within the Turkish Interior Ministry, where in individual cases can be discussed, has yet to be created, but an office expected to come into existence soon.

The embassy has thus far had to limit itself to making personal inquiries about specific questions to the Interior Minister with a request for more information regarding upcoming developments.

The embassy is making particular effort to have as many workmen, laborers, etc. labeled as "specialists" in order to exempt them from the trade prohibition. The effort that most needs to be followed at present is the establishment of the aforementioned special office within the Interior Ministry. In the future an exact interpretation of the prohibition will be sought insofar as it affects German minor tradesmen such as construction, iron, and wood workers. We also expect to receive further individual reports on questionable cases.<sup>53</sup>

According to a report from the German Embassy in Ankara few German nationals would be affected by the law. The Embassy was working with the Consulates and the German Ex-patriots Association (Der Bund des Auslaensdeutschen) in Istanbul for studying every case and thru negotiations with the Turkish government to reduce the number of Germans to be affected by the law. Efforts were spent to allow as man as possible master tradesmen (Werkmeister), mechanics (Monteur) to be classified as "specialists" in order that they be left outside the application of the law.<sup>54</sup>

53 Auswartiges AMT, PAAA, R78615, document dated February 6, 1933.

54 Auswartiges AMT, PAAA, R78615, report from Ankara to the Foreign Ministry, Berlin dated May 6, 1933.

### e) The Case of British Nationals of Malta Origin

Another greatly affected foreign community was the British nationals mostly from Malta living in Istanbul and Izmir and this would result in a great lot of correspondence between the British diplomats in Istanbul and Ankara and the Foreign Office.

W. Hough, Consul General of Great Britain sent the following report to Sir George Russel Clerk, British Ambassador in Ankara:

1. Your Excellency is aware that not only is the new law of wider scope than previous ones, but it contains no provision for acquired rights, so that a foreigner who was born here, and possibly his father before him, who thus has no other domicile but Constantinople, is on the same footing as the most recent arrival. It is this amongst other considerations that leads me to concentrate the discussion on the Maltese colony. The difficulties which may beset the British residents of United Kingdom origin seem likely to occur in casual cases here and there, and they can be dealt with separately as they arise. The Maltese colony on the other hand is affected wholesale.
2. According to the most careful estimate which in the circumstances I have been able to make, there are about 1200 Maltese in the town. The heads of families and young people of working age number, I believe, about 500. Of these 1200 people a more handful have retained any connection with Malta. They are completely assimilated to the local Christian population. In addition, a very large proportion of them are following the occupations which the new law prohibits to foreigners. I estimate that about 300 of the 500 persons in employment or employable will have to abandon their occupations in June. The law gives them the alternative of changing their calling but this is obviously not of any practical value. Together with the families of such of these as [they] have wives and young children, the number of persons who will be deprived of the means of a livelihood will be in the neighbourhood of 600.
3. I gathered from Your Excellency that the chances of the Turk-

ish Government consenting to make any modification of this law were remote. The only argument which conceivably might be used is that of reciprocity, but conditions in the two countries are so different that reciprocity becomes almost an academic expression. I believe I am correct in stating that Great Britain has no legislation forbidding aliens who have lived in the country all their lives from pursuing any given calling, nor any immediate intention of introducing such, but unfortunately the Anglo-Turkish Treaty contains a clause which gives her the discretion to do so if she desires. Also, a person born in the United Kingdom of foreign parents would not be an alien in English law, whereas in the like case in Turkey he would be an alien. Furthermore, the normal tendency of an alien who had lived in England for many years and who intended to make it his permanent home would be to apply for naturalization. I believe that the Home Secretary would not as a rule make it difficult for him, if his bonafides were beyond doubt and his police record were clean. In Turkey, on the other hand, naturalization is very rare. In practice, only Moslems and such as are willing to make a profession of Islam for the purpose are accepted. The only exception to this within my personal knowledge is the case of a Jew, who was over military age and had no sons. He succeeded in getting Turkish papers for the more profitable exercise of his calling, but had considerable difficulty, which was overcome partly by the help of influential friends and partly I believe by bribery.

4. Even if the Turkish Government would consent to accept as naturalized citizens such Maltese as were born here or have lived here for many years, it would be very rough on the Maltese afterwards. The Turkish Government, in theory a lay state, makes in practice a considerable difference in its treatment of its Moslem and Christian citizens. In particular, military service for the Moslem is, however rough its conditions are, effectively conscript training, while for the Christian it consists in stone breaking in the remoter parts of the interior, and other such jobs, which make it more like penal servitude on insufficient food than anything else.

5. In submitting, then, for your Excellency's consideration certain possible solutions of the difficult problem which will arise in June, I should like to make it clear that while it might, if feasible, be a simple way out to persuade the Turkish Government to give foreigners who were born here an immediate right of opting for Turkish nationality, such a solution would have undesirable aspects, and to compel the local Maltese to accept it on pain of starvation might be asking too much of human nature.

6. At this stage I may mention that the Italian and Greek colonies are confronted with the same problem, as they have a large element of working-class population similar to the Maltese colony. To the best of my belief, their respective governments are treating the situation as a refugee problem. The workless Greeks are, I understand, to be sent back to Greece. The Italians I believe are partly to be repatriated to Italy and partly to the Dodecanese.

7. I have already pointed out that the Maltese have lost their connection with Malta, and are therefore not very suitable material for being assisted to that island: -even less so than the Greeks, who although may never have seen Greece have at least kept the tie of language. It must be supposed also that an influx of several hundred refugees might somewhat tax the administrative resources of that Colony.

8. Nevertheless I feel that however difficult the working out of detail may be, it will be necessary to make some arrangement of a similar kind. The situation seems to be incapable of satisfactory resolution by local resources. I should like also to emphasize that the local Maltese population, although definitely Levantinised, is on the whole excellent material: -well-behaved, intelligent, and hardworking and taking well to skilled trades. It would to that extent be an asset to any country which would allow it ingress. I should like to suggest that the burden be divided between Malta, Cyprus, and Palestine, and that possibly friendly neighbouring countries, such as Egypt and Syria (possibly Greece) be asked in the exceptional circumstances to make a special exception to their immigration regulations and admit up to a certain number.

It is necessary to add that assistance would be necessary to enable many of the Maltese to make the journey, as there has already been a great deal of unemployment and hardship. Possibly His Majesty's Fleet might be able to render assistance.<sup>55</sup>

After this report the British Ambassador of Ankara, George R. Clerk, would send a long report to Sir John Simon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs:

1. For various reasons it has proved difficult for His Majesty's Consular Officers in Turkey to obtain precise information such as is desired. Many British subjects fail to register themselves at the Consulates, many of those who do so change their address and fail to notify the new one, and since the advent of the Turkish Republic the conditions of life for foreigners, especially those of the working and small-trading class, have become increasingly difficult, with the result that the British Colony in Turkey has been steadily disintegrating and it has proved impossible to establish its numbers and conditions with accuracy. But the new law comes into force on June 16 next and I must therefore base a report on such data as I possess in order that the various Departments concerned may have time to consider the situation of His Majesty's Government.

2. Broadly speaking, while the new law will not hurt British interests to any great extent, since the British nationals affected are mostly British only in name, it does make it impossible for a foreigner to earn his living in Turkey except as a merchant or shipping agent or as a recognized specialist engaged for some specific work. For instance, highly-skilled professions such as electrical and motor engineering, and specialized occupations such as green-keeping or landscape-gardening will still be open to foreigners as few, if any, Turks are as yet capable of such work. But to all intents and purposes it can be taken that from June 16<sup>th</sup> next the British subject in Turkey will, under Turkish law, no longer be able to earn his livelihood.

55 National Archives (UK), FO 371/16984/E587/587/44 dated January 24, 1933.



3. So far as I have been able to ascertain, the number of British subjects in Turkey, including wives and families, amounts to about 3,500 individuals. Of this number about 1,500 are of United Kingdom birth or descent, 1,700 are Maltese, 150 Cypriots, and 150 miscellaneous, and His Majesty's Consuls-General in Constantinople and Smyrna estimate that about 1,100 people, taking English and Maltese together, will be deprived of their livelihood on June 16. In existing circumstances the obvious solution of repatriation offers serious difficulties. Neither His Majesty's Government nor the Maltese Government will welcome at the present time an influx of indigent workers, many of them with foreign wives and young families, the majority of whom must inevitably become, for some time at all events, an additional burden on the public funds. On the other hand, the drastic restrictions on immigration both in foreign countries and in the Dominions make it almost certain that it will not be possible to use that means of absorbing these refugees. Furthermore, in many, I should think in the majority, of cases these people are to all intents and purposes natives of Turkey. They are the children, and the grandchildren, of people who settled here and married locally, many of them know no language except Greek and possibly Turkish, and they have completely lost all ties and connexion with their own country. They will therefore be refugees in the fullest sense of the term.

4. I have consequently been giving much thought as to how to deal with the problem, and the first step I have taken has been to try to ascertain from those of my colleagues who are similarly affected, how they propose to meet the situation. Unfortunately, though not unexpectedly, I have not found any noticeable disposition to work together. The fact is that the problem differs for each country. The two countries which have the largest number of subjects in Turkey are Italy and Greece. As regards the Italians, who, I am informed, number some 8,000 to 10,000 my Italian colleague hopes that Signor Mussolini will establish them

in the colonies that are being created in the Pontine Marshes.<sup>56</sup> Signor Lojacono said that it was just the sort of thing that the Duce would delight to do with a stroke of the pen. As for the Greeks, who number some 25,000 the question is so big that it will probably have to form the subject of special negotiations between the two Governments. The Greek Minister realizes that such negotiations will not be easy, if merely for the reason that the Turkish Government will be reluctant to make any concessions to the Greeks for fear of similar concessions being claimed by other nationalities. But Monsieur Sakellaropoulo said that, if the worst came to the worst, his Government was by now well trained in the technique of dealing with large numbers of refugees and he seemed to think that it would not prove impossible to absorb these extra thousands from Turkey.

5. There are comparatively few French citizens in Turkey, and those there are mostly in positions which are not affected by the law. The Germans in Turkey are mainly 'specialists', and the natives of other countries are few and far between, except for Persians, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Yugoslavs (mostly Montenegrin), Albanians, and Austrians. My Hungarian colleague is quite happy about the law, for his nationals are nearly all employed in the building trade as foremen and so on and will therefore be entered as 'specialists' and allowed to remain, while those of lower grades have already found life in Turkey too difficult and have gone, or are going, in large numbers to Persia, where, for reasons best known to themselves, they imagine that they will find good and lucrative employment. The Austrians, who are comparative-

56 "The Pontine Marshes, termed in Latin Pomptinus Ager by Titus Livius, Pomptina Palus (singular) and Pomptinae Paludes (plural) by Pliny the elder, today the Agro Pontino in Italian, is an approximately quadrangular area of former marshland in the Lazio Region of Central Italy, extending along the coast southeast of Rome about 45 (28mi) from just east of Anzio to Terracina (ancient Tarracina), varying in distance inland between the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Volscian Mountains (the Monti Lepini in the North, the Monti Ausoni in the center and the Monti Aurunci in the South) from 15 km (9.3 mi) to 25 km (16 mi). Source: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontine\\_Marshes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontine_Marshes)

ly few, are mostly waiters and musicians and I surmise that their utility in the process of 'westernising' Turkey will be recognized by the authorities and that they will be left unmolested. As for the Bulgarians, Montenegrins, Albanians, and Persians, they are already so near to the Turkish masses that I imagine they will be able, in the majority of cases, to arrange for their continued existence and eventual absorption in this country.

6. It thus seems that we must deal with the question of our nationals independently of other countries. Two courses suggest themselves, to let the law take its course and to deal with cases of repatriation as and when they arise, or to make an effort to persuade the Turkish Government to allow at last those workers who have been here all their lives and are in fact, though not in name, natives of the country, to remain. I have already drawn attention to the inconvenience and heavy cost of repatriation, but none the less my own opinion is that it will prove to be the course which will eventually have to be taken. On the other hand, it is just possible that repatriation may prove to be neither so tiresome nor so costly as I fear. Of the 1,100 people whom it is estimated will lose their living on June 16<sup>th</sup> about 500 may be taken as the actual wage earners. The majority of these people are employees whose services are of value to their masters and it is quite likely that ways and means will be found whereby the law can be evaded in many cases. For one thing, Turkey is still Turkey, and for another, if the law is rigorously enforced on the sixteenth of June it will lead to such confusion and dislocation of business that in many cases breaches of its enactments will be winked at. It is therefore possible that such repatriation as may prove necessary will be spread over a certain time and will not be so expensive as the figures that I have given would suggest.

7. The other course, to try to persuade the Turkish Government to let the established workers remain offers so slender a hope of success that my own inclination would be to face the burden of repatriation. And if it is to be tried, it must be borne in mind that the mere fact of making any representations is as likely as

not to stiffen the Turkish attitude, for the Turks would fear that any concessions given to us would be claimed by other countries and our action would probably make evasions of the law, such as I have intimated above, much less feasible. If, however, it is decided that the burden and inconvenience of repatriation will be such that every effort must be made to avoid it, then it seems to me that the following would be the best line of approach to the Turkish Government. That Government could be reminded that throughout the negotiations for the Anglo-Turkish Commercial Treaty we consistently called attention to the future position of British subjects once the Treaty of Lausanne ceased to operate, and that it was only on the reiterated pleas of the Turkish negotiators and their assurance that we could rely on Turkish good faith that we did not insist on including in the Commercial Treaty specific safeguards for our nationals. There is therefore a moral obligation on the Turkish Government in this respect. The Turks may be trusted to reply that their intentions were, and remain, genuine, and indeed that they sought to give effect to them whilst the law was being drafted, but that the Sovereign National Assembly would have none of it, and now the law unfortunately is the law and cannot be altered, least of all in so constitutionally-minded a state as modern Turkey, but a line of argument such as I have indicated might still have some effect, if it were followed up by pointing out that the majority of these British subjects are so only in name. Most of them have been born and bred in Turkey and know no other home and to all intents and purposes they form as much an integral part of the Turkish State as any villager in Anatolia. Not only are they a part of Turkey but also a part of Turkey's economic wealth. Every bit of work they do is Turkish and every piaster they earn is spent in Turkey and helps to increase the prosperity of the country. In fact it is as uneconomic to force such people to leave the country as it would be to turn out a similar number of purely Turkish families. I should no doubt have to admit that my statement that these people are to all intents and purposes part of the Turkish State is not completely true, since they have hitherto not fulfilled all the obligations of



a Turkish citizen, particularly in that, owing to their foreign nationality, they have escaped military service. But, I should add, how would it be if they were allowed to be naturalized as Turkish citizens? Turkey could only gain by this formal inclusion of a body of industrious and law-abiding workers who are already native to the soil.

8. I cannot give any idea of how far, if at all, my arguments and suggestions would appeal to the not very receptive mentality of the Turkish authorities, though to try them seems to offer the only hope, but I can, unfortunately, foresee certain difficulties, even if the Turkish Government were to be favourable in principle. The first difficulty comes from the Turkish side, for even though the principle were accepted, I am informed that, curious though it seems in this blatantly laic state, in practice a condition of naturalization is acceptance of the Moslem religion. Possibly this would not be an insuperable obstacle with the English families, most of whom have nothing English about them except their surnames, and many not even that, and whose particular form of religion I should judge in any case to weigh lightly upon them. What, I think, may be more likely to make the English worker hesitate would be the obligation to do military service. His Majesty's Consul-General has, in his dispatch to me No.2 of January 24 last, of which he has sent a copy to the Foreign Office, pointed out how unpleasant this might be. But in the case of the Maltese I think that any suggestion of accepting the Moslem religion would make naturalization impossible for them. They are all Roman Catholics and it is almost certain that they will prefer expatriation and the chance of something very like starvation to risking the wrath of the Church by abjuring their faith. A further practical difficulty in the way of naturalization is that the British subject who seeks to become a Turkish citizen in order to preserve his livelihood may meet with all sorts of local obstruction from the native Turk who wants to get his job, and I foresee every device of bribery, chicanery, and blackmail being put in the way of these unfortunate people. Mr. Hough, in his dispatch referred to above, also observes that there is the argument of reciprocity,



but I agree with him that the conditions in the two countries are so different that reciprocity in this connection is little more than an academic expression. I shall in any discussions with the Turkish Government make what use I can of his argument, but such slender chance of success as there may be lies in the appeal to Turkish self-interest- that the country stands to lose rather than to gain by expelling good workers.

9. To sum up, my suggestions for dealing with this very difficult question are that I should approach the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the sense I have indicated, but that meantime the appropriate Departments of His Majesty's Government should start to work out what steps can, if it becomes necessary, be taken for the repatriation of these victims of Turkish nationalism.<sup>57</sup>

### **Petition by the British Nationals**

Early February 1933, 64 British nationals, of which six were of Maltese origin, sent a petition to the Majesty's Principal Secretary for Foreign Affairs which read as follows:

As you are already aware the Turkish Law which prohibits to aliens the exercise of practically all trades and callings comes into force next June. By then we shall have to face three alternatives, the adoption of Turkish nationality, emigration or starvation.

The first involves the renunciation of a nationality that has come to us from ancestors born within His Majesty's dominions of which we have ever been proud. Be it observed, however, that even if we were to bring ourselves to surrender our birthright and adopt Turkish nationality, we should always remain aliens in the eyes of the Turks who can see no fellow-countryman outside Moslems. In a modified and veiled form, our disabilities would endure.

Under present world economic conditions the emigration of labour into foreign countries is held up on all sides. We can quote

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<sup>57</sup> National Archives (UK), FO 371/16984/E826/587/44, dated February 3, 1933.

instances where workmen of British nationality have been forbidden access even to British Colonies.

The third alternative, starvation, speaks for itself.

In a word, we are told that, whether there be work for us or not, all foreign labour must cease as from June next, and that we must seek our livelihood elsewhere.

We understand that Article 4 of the Chapter headed "Conditions of Residence and Business" of the Lausanne Treaty provides that "pending the conclusion of a separate Convention between Turkey and the High Contracting Powers in regard to the admission in Turkey of the nationals of such Powers to the different forms of commerce, professions and industry, the status quo as on the 1<sup>st</sup>. January, 1925, will be maintained, and that if any much Convention has not been concluded at the end of the said period of twelve months each of the Contracting Powers concerned will recover its freedom of action, "subject to the rights acquired by individuals before the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1923. being respected".

Not only have our rights been acquired before the 1<sup>st</sup>. January, 1923, but they have come down to us as natives of this country from the time of the settlement of our ancestors in Turkey.

We cannot believe that these rights which affect workmen and their dependents so vitally were only secured for the brief duration of a treaty, nor does the reading of the article quoted lend itself to so narrow and improvident a construction.

As wage-earners, most of us with wives and dependents, who have hitherto honestly earned our livelihood in the country of our birth and who are about to be deprived of our means of subsistence because of our British nationality, we must beg of you to bring this our humble petition for protection to the knowledge of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies and the British Delegate at the International Labour Office at Geneva who, in their joint solicitude for the welfare of the overseas people of the British Empire, will assuredly find means of shield-

ing us from the cruel doom to which an inhospitable country is about to condemn us.<sup>58</sup>

Ambassador George R. Clerk would make the following comments on this petition in his dispatch to Sir John Simon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs:

It will be observed that the British Maltese subjects who associate themselves with the petition, a copy of which is enclosed in Mr. Greig's dispatch, do not favour the adoption of Turkish nationality as a remedy for the imminent evil of unemployment on the ground, which unfortunately cannot be refuted, that as Christians they would always be at a disadvantage in competition with Moslem Turks, and would find it difficult, if not impossible, to shake off the stigma of "alienism" on account of their religion.<sup>59</sup>

### Report on Conversation with Şükrü Kaya

Shortly before the postponement date of the application of the law British Ambassador Sir George Clerk reported to Sir John Simon his conversation with Şükrü Kaya, Minister of the Interior:

Şükrü Kaya Bey, who is also the Minister of the Interior, and, as such, directly interested in the working of the law, told me that he had been considering the problem and that he hoped that in practice the situation would not prove so difficult as I and those of my colleagues who had nationals living and working in this country naturally feared. In the first place, the Turkish Government recognized that it had a certain duty to humanity and had no desire to plunge several thousand deserving people into misery. Further, to do so would not add to the reputation of the Government abroad. Again, he admitted to the force of an observation which I had made, namely, that to turn all these people out of their jobs on one given date would be an actual economic loss

58 National Archives (UK), FO 371/16984/E1254/587/44 dated March 2nd, 1933.

59 National Archives (UK), FO 371/16984/E1055/587/44, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1933.

to Turkey. The Minister said that consequently the Government were seeking to apply the law with the minimum of disturbance and hardship. The Government had intended to make the law much narrower, but the Assembly had rather taken the bit between its teeth and had very greatly enlarged its scope. None the less, there were useful ambiguities in the wording – for instance, the Turkish word for “workman” was very elastic and its meaning could be enlarged or restricted, while the ‘bootmaker’ and ‘tailor’ whose work was ended on June 16 was the manufacturer, M. Bata or Messrs. Austin Reed, the cobbler and the cutter could continue. Thus the Minister thought that a great number of those who now feared the loss of their livelihood would find that they could creep through the loopholes which the Turkish Government would provide.

3. Another solution that Şükrü Kaya Bey said he was considering very closely was to allow respectable workmen and others to accept Turkish nationality. If this is sincerely carried out, it should go far towards solving the difficulties, though his Majesty’s Consuls-General in Constantinople and Smyrna both seem to think that British subjects will be reluctant to become Turkish citizens. It remains to be seen what will happen when the choice has to be made between naturalization or starvation.

4. Lastly Şükrü Kaya Bey said he was particularly anxious to make things easy for those who had been born in the country and were to all intents and purposes native to it and had no links outside.

5. While there is apt to be a marked difference between Turkish good intentions and performance, this conversation with Şükrü Kaya Bey shows that the Turkish Government is alive to the complexities of the situation and gives some hope that it will be dealt with more or less reasonably.<sup>60</sup>

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60 National Archives (UK), FO 371/16984/E/1281/587/44 March 2nd, 1933.

## Minutes of the Meeting at the Foreign Office

The problem was also the subject of a meeting at the Foreign Office. The participants were: Sir George William Rendel, (1889-1979) head of the Eastern Department;<sup>61</sup> Messrs. D.J. Scott, Dunbar, Sherwood and Helm from the Foreign Office; Messrs O.G.R. Williams and Dawe from the Colonial Office; Woods from Treasury; S.L. Holmes from the Dominions Office; W.H. Turner from the India Office. Minutes of the meetings were as follows:

Mr. Rendel briefly explained the circumstances in which the meeting had been called. Copies of the relevant despatches from His Majesty's Ambassador in Turkey had been circulated to the interested departments. These despatches showed that out of a British colony in Turkey of 3,500 persons, a large percentage would probably lose their employment in June, 1933. It might be possible for them to retain their employment. This solution must, however, for obvious reasons be dismissed as impracticable, at any rate in the case of non-Moslem British subjects, and would in any case be unlikely to prove successful. It was possible that a small number of the people likely to be affected might in practice be able to retain their occupations, at least for a time; but, granted this underlying Turkish policy, which was to drive all foreigners in Turkey out of employment, this would not of itself provide a solution. It seemed to Mr. Rendel, therefore, that the only alternatives available were (a) to allow these unfortunate people, estimated by Sir George Clark at some 1,100, to starve, (b) to relieve them locally for an indefinite period and at great expense, or (c) to remove them from Turkey. The first alternative was clearly ruled out, the second would afford no solution, and the issue therefore became one of removal. It appeared that the great majority of the persons likely to be affected were Maltese, and Mr. Rendel accordingly enquired whether the Colonial Office had any solutions to suggest.

61 "George William Rendel", [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/george\\_william\\_Rendel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_William_Rendel)



Mr. Dawe replied that in the case of the Maltese, transfer to Malta offered to be the obvious remedy. It would, however, give rise to considerable difficulties in practice. Malta was already over populated, there was the unemployment question, and an additional difficulty arose from the fact of the existence of the Maltese Constitution by reason of which the Government of Malta could not be compelled to maintain the workless from Turkey. The same difficulty had arisen after the Smyrna fire in 1922, when His Majesty's Treasury had agreed, exceptionally, to contribute towards the maintenance of the Maltese refugees from Smyrna. In reply to Mr. Scott's enquiry whether the Government of Malta could in fact keep the Turkish Maltese out, Mr. Dawe said that they could not actually prevent their landing, as immigration was one of the points reserved by His Majesty's Government, but that merely to dump these people on the quayside at Malta would hardly offer a satisfactory solution.

Mr. Rendel enquired whether the Government of Malta might not become more accommodating if faced with a threat to dump the Maltese from Turkey in Malta. Further, these Maltese were industrious and thrifty, and could probably be quickly absorbed. A census could perhaps be prepared in advance with a view to ascertaining the various occupations of the people concerned and this census might be useful in any scheme for settlement.

Mr. Dawe was opposed to any threat to the Government of Malta of dumping. In reply to an enquiry by Mr. Rendel whether he could suggest any alternative to Malta, he said that Cyprus suggested itself, but in Cyprus there already existed a serious unemployment problem, and Mr. Dawe feared that, since the local Government had rejected such proposals in the past, they would probably do so again. He held out no hope of the Cypriote authorities agreeing to accept any but Cypriotes.

Mr. Rendel said he believed that the Government of Cyprus aimed at offsetting the Greek population to some extent and thought that the immigration of a number of Maltese might have helped in this direction. In face of Mr. Dawe's opinion, howev-

er, there seemed nothing to be done. Mr. Rendel then enquired whether it would be possible to accommodate some of the Maltese in Palestine, where economic conditions seemed exceptionally favourable.

Mr. Williams explained that while there was at present no serious unemployment problem in Palestine, there would be serious economic and political objections to the admission of any considerable number of these Maltese. The principle governing immigration was the economic capacity of the country to absorb new arrivals, and the regulations applying this principle were already regarded by the Jews as unduly restrictive. The admission of any appreciable number of non - Jews would be regarded as involving a further restriction of the number of Jews who could be admitted. This would cause an outcry among the Jews who would represent our action as contrary to the spirit of the Balfour Declaration. He therefore considered that Palestine could offer no solution, especially at the present time when the Colonial Office was already being pressed to secure special facilities for the admission into Palestine of numbers of persecuted German Jews. At the suggestion of Mr. Woods, Syria, Egypt and Greece were also considered, but the removal of the Maltese from Turkey into any of these countries had for various reasons to be dismissed as impracticable.

Mr. Holmes and Mr. Woods then strongly took up the question of the possibility of getting the Turks to refrain from applying the law, or of otherwise resisting their threatened action. They presumed that in any case every possible effort would be made to induce the Turks to mitigate the effects of the law. In reply Mr. Hendel pointed out that the law violated no treaty engagement and could not be objected to on international grounds. The Turks were in fact legally entirely within their rights in pressing it, and it represented a strong popular movement in Turkey, which even if it had originally been fostered by the Government, was none the less a force which it would be impossible for a foreign government to resist. Moreover, the Turks could not relax the law in



favour of British nationals without doing so in the case of other nationals. Such relaxation would amount to undoing the whole purpose of the law, and Mr. Rendel considered that there was no hope whatever of securing any material change in the Turkish attitude.

Mr. Holmes then enquired whether it would not be possible to denounce the Anglo-Turkish Commercial Treaty of 1930 and then endeavour to negotiate a new treaty in which provision would be made for proper treatment for British nationals. It was explained to Mr. Holmes that such a course would do more harm to British than to Turkish interests, and would not achieve the desired result, since we should be in no better position to secure favourable treatment for our nationals after the denunciation of the Treaty than before. In any case the Treaty could not be denounced until 1935 by when it would be too late to do anything. This form of pressure would, therefore, be ineffective.

The suggestion was then discussed that reprisals should be taken against Turkish nationals in Cyprus or elsewhere. The result of the discussion was to show that the weapon of reprisals would be one of doubtful value, because on the side of His Majesty's Government it would probably not be used with all the rigour required, and because it would stir up anti-British feeling in Turkey and so make conditions more or less intolerable not only for the 1,100 persons now likely to be affected but for the remaining 2,400 British subjects in Turkey as well. Moreover, the number of Turkish nationals in Cyprus was probably much smaller than the 1,100 British subjects now under consideration.

It was generally agreed that the discussion had shown that the transfer to Malta of the Maltese in Turkey who would lose their occupations under the law appeared to offer the only possible remedy. Mr. Rendel pointed out that this course was likely to prove inevitable sooner or later, and that the sooner it could be taken the more effective it was likely to be. In connexion with a suggestion made by Mr. Dawe that the Malta Government would receive them more favourably if assisted to settle them, he en-

quired whether it would be possible for the Treasury to make a small capital grant towards their initial maintenance and settlement in Malta.

Mr. Woods replied that he did not rule out the possibility of assistance from the exchequer, but considered that further information would need to be made available before Treasury Ministers who would have to be consulted could consider such a grant. He felt that in any case the suggestion for a Treasury grant could not emanate from this end but rather from Malta, and also that in the meantime efforts should be made on grounds of humanity or otherwise to induce the Turks to postpone the application of the law or to do their utmost to mitigate its worst effect in so far as British subjects were concerned.

It was agreed that the best course would be to put the whole question up to the Governor of Malta, to whom copies of Sir George Clerk's despatches had already been sent, and to ask for his observations. Mr. Dawe said that before the Colonial Office wrote in this sense to Malta, however, they would like to have as much information as possible regarding the various occupations of the people concerned, and in this connexion it was suggested that the information contained in Sir George Clerk's despatch No. 348 of October 29th, 1932 (E 5775/811/44) should be amplified and brought up to date. Mr. Rendel suggested that in the meantime the Treasury might consider the question of a per capita grant. Mr. Woods adhered to his view that the Colonial Office, in writing to Malta, should say nothing about the possibility of such a grant.

As regards workless British nationals of United Kingdom origin, who, it was presumed, would be small in number, it was agreed that their cases should be treated individually on their merits as those of ordinary distressed British subjects.

Mr. Holmes pointed out that considerable difficulties might arise in connexion with workless British subjects of Dominion origin unless they had been actually Dominion born. The meeting considered, however, that the number of these was likely to be very



small indeed, and that it would be sufficient to deal with these cases also on their merits as they arose.

Mr. Turner pointed out that it appeared from the information available that the number of Indians involved would be very small. Moreover, if they were Moslems, they might decide to assume Turkish nationality. There should be no difficulty about their repatriation to India, if they wanted it and if they were destitute and unable to earn a living. He would, however be glad to know whether the Indians affected were Moslems or Hindus. He assumed that if, as was possible, any British Indian expressed a preference for accompanying the Maltese or other British subjects to a Levantine territory, there would be no chances of the acceptance of such a proposal by the administration concerned, even if India bore the charges. It was agreed that this would undoubtedly be the case.

Mr. Rendel summed up the discussion as saying that the Maltese problem was the really important one, that the views of the Government of Malta must certainly be obtained, but that time was a most important factor. And that there were very serious objections to the problem being allowed to drag on, or not being frankly faced in good time. It might prove far more difficult to take effective action after the law had taken effect, when the people affected would probably have already begun to spend their savings and sell up their belongings, than now, when the problem could be tackled before it had actually become acute.

It was finally agreed

- a) that the Foreign Office should telegraph to his Majesty's Embassy in Turkey asking for as complete an estimate as possible, with classification of occupations, of the various classes of British subjects likely to be affected. In the case of Indians, the Embassy would be asked to differentiate between Moslems and Hindus;
  - b) that a despatch should be sent to His Majesty's Representative in Turkey instructing him to endeavour on humanitarian grounds and on whatever other basis he considered likely to
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be most effective, to secure some mitigation of the application of the law. He would also be asked to ascertain and report what action was being taken by the representatives of the other countries chiefly concerned;

- c) that the Colonial Office should obtain as soon as possible the views of the Governor of Malta on the whole problem in so far as it affected the Maltese likely to be thrown out of work in Turkey and whom it is proposed to transfer to Malta.<sup>62</sup>

### Foreign Office's Report to the British Embassy in Ankara

After the meeting Rendel made the following report to James Morgan, Chargé d'Affaires at the British Embassy in Ankara:

1. It has now been agreed that, if, in spite of any efforts which it may prove practicable to make to secure either the suspension or at least the mitigation of the law, any considerable numbers of British subjects are in fact rendered workless, as a result of the strict enforcement of the law, endeavours will have to be made as far as possible to repatriate them to the parts of the British Commonwealth with which they are most closely connected. With a view to preparing for that eventuality, I addressed to you my telegram No. 18 of March 30th.
2. You will, however, realise that His Majesty's Government are reluctant to assume responsibility for the repatriation of these British subjects to territories with which they have little practical connexion, and where the unemployment problem is already extremely serious, and to inflict upon them the hardships which such transfer would involve, unless it should become unavoidable. As you are aware from my despatch No. 289 of July 14th, 1932, the Turkish law does not, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government actually violate any treaty provisions, and exception cannot therefore be taken to its provisions on strictly legal grounds. Its strict enforcement must, however, inevitably operate widespread suffering for thou-

<sup>62</sup> National Archives (UK), F0371/16985/E1787/587/44 dated April 3rd, 1933.

sands of foreign nationals in Turkey and it seems possible that representations to the Turkish Government on humanitarian grounds might induce them at least to mitigate the worst effects of the law. Moreover, the lot of these unfortunate individuals can hardly fail to arouse the sympathy of public opinion in other countries or to evoke a general condemnation of the Turkish Government's policy, feelings to which that Government can hardly remain indifferent. It is probable indeed that the Turkish Government will forfeit, as a result of the application of this undoubtedly harsh, inhumane and inopportune measure much of the sympathy which it has recently won in this country.

3. On the other hand, I recognize that there may well be some danger that representations on these lines might, by arousing the resentment of the Turkish Government, produce results directly contrary to those which it is desired to obtain, and thus render the position of the British subjects concerned even worse than it would be if the law were allowed to take its course. Whether this danger is such as to outweigh the possible advantages to be gained from representations to the Turkish Government on humanitarian grounds is a matter which can only be estimated in the light of local knowledge and experience. I shall, therefore, be glad if, in the light of that knowledge, and provided that, after a review of all the circumstances, you are satisfied that the danger of arousing Turkish resentment is not a serious one, you will approach the Turkish Government in whatever manner you consider likely to be most effective, with a view to securing a mitigation, or if possible a postponement, of the application of the relevant provisions of the law to British subjects.
4. In his despatch No. 42 (11/8/33) of February 3rd, His Majesty's Ambassador reported that the diplomatic representatives of the other countries most interested in the application of the law were not disposed to work together and were somewhat uncertain as to the measures which their various governments were likely to take to meet the situation in so far as their



nationals in Turkey are concerned. I shall be glad if you will ascertain and report as soon as possible whether since that despatch was written the attitude of your colleagues has undergone any modification and whether they have yet framed plans to deal with the situation. In particular, it is most desirable to know whether any progress has been made with the Greco-Turkish negotiations foreshadowed in paragraph of Sir George Clerk's despatch No. 42. It might indeed, in certain circumstances, be possible for His Majesty's Government to invite the Turkish Government to extend to British subjects any arrangement which they might conclude with another government whereby the latter's nationals would be permitted to continue their occupations in Turkey, even if only on certain conditions or for a limited period of time.<sup>63</sup>

J.C. Sterndale Bennett from the Foreign Office sent the following comments to the Consular and the Chief Clerk's departments:

It goes against the grain to allow these British subjects to be thrown out without any sort of official protest or appeal, especially as the Turkish Government have broken a moral obligation to us in regard to "acquired rights". Moreover, we shall probably be exposed to some criticism in this country when it is discovered that no official representations have been made. But Mr. Morgan is definitely against further representations and it is very difficult to suggest the line on which any representations can safely be made without making the position worse not only for those British subjects threatened by the law of June 16, 1932, but also for those who are not immediately affected by it. In the circumstances we must presumably be content to give up the idea of formal representations, and our defence to criticism will presumably be that His Majesty's Government were satisfied that no useful purpose would be served by a formal protest for which legal grounds were in any case lacking, but that semi-official representations were several times made with the object of securing mitigation of hardship.

63 National Archives (UK), F0371/16985/E1787/587/44 dated April 3rd, 1933.



Our only immediate course seems to be to complete as soon as possible our plans for dealing with the British subjects who may be thrown out of employment after June 16 next. We can do nothing more until we receive a reply from Angora to our telegram No. 13 of March 30 (E 1663 and we might perhaps now ask Angora by telegram how soon we may expect this reply. When we get it, we can urge the Colonial Office to press the Governor of Malta for his views (see despatch to Malta in E 1771).<sup>64</sup>

### **The View From the British Embassy in Ankara**

James Morgan the Chargé d'Affaires from the British Embassy in Ankara sent also a detailed report of the situation to Sir John Simon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs which read as follows:

1. The law is not an isolated and exceptional piece of legislation suddenly rendered necessary by the repercussions in Turkey of the world crisis, although Turkish officials are not slow to use the argument that economic necessity drives them, as it does other nations, to restrict the employment of aliens. The economic necessity is not evident, for there is less unemployment or stark poverty among Moslem Turks – the only class for which the Turkish Government exhibits concern – than in most European countries. Never before – allowance being made for the post-war diminution of Turkish territories – have so many Moslem Turks been employed in Turkey in administration, defence, trade, industry, commerce, teaching, agriculture etc. as now. No recent cause, then, has resulted in this law. It is the culmination of years of steady work on a plan of making Turkey a land fit for Turks only, and of eliminating the foreigner – save the temporary foreign specialist who will teach Turks better how to dispense with foreigners the sooner. Beginning at Lausanne in 1923 with the reservation of coastal shipping and maritime avocations to Turkish citizens, following this up by forbidding foreigners to inhabit

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<sup>64</sup> National Archives (UK), FO371/16985/E2052/587/44 dated April 15th 1933.

the countryside, and driving them into the towns by the law on villages, forcing concessionary and public utility companies, and large banking, industrial and commercial undertakings to employ only Moslems and dismiss the foreigner, the Turkish Government has steadily pursued its aim of weeding out the more highly paid foreign employee, and of replacing him – without great apparent loss of efficiency – by a Turkish citizen, and is now on the eve of driving out the foreign rank and file. The policy is clear, consistent, and unrelenting. The driving force of this xenophobia is partly fanaticism, inspired by the old rooted antagonism of Islam for Christianity, partly militarism which feels that the country is safer when foreigners are few and confined to the large cities, partly nationalism which is convinced that all activities in Turkey should be Turkish, and that Turks are as capable in any branch as foreigners, and partly greed, whetted already by the seizure of the proceeds of Greek and Armenian energy in Asia Minor, and ready now to step into the shoes of the foreigner, and enjoy what was his. Add to this a burning desire to drive out the large foreign colonies which grew up in all parts of Turkey under the favouring cover of the Capitulations, and which though somewhat diminished remain to remind Turks of the hated capitulatory regime, and the privileges foreigners once enjoyed and sometimes abused. The Turk has a long memory for the abuses – real or imaginary – and is pleased to take his revenge now.

2. There is not the slightest chance of a postponement of the application of the law nor of its being mitigated. All classes of Turks are hot for it : the Popular Party – the controlling force in the life of the nation; the deputies in the Grand National Assembly – the Popular Party's mouthpiece; the local officials and the small workman or tradesman already choosing which particular foreigner he will be heir to. The plea of humanitarianism will not change the resolution of the Turkish people, nor will that of the economic damage which will be caused by the departure of the foreigner be more successful. Neither of these pleas sufficed, ten years ago, to stave off the expulsion of the large Christian population from Turkey, nor will either suffice to save a few thousand

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foreigners now. They have not sufficed to save a large part of the Maltese colony who were turned out of employment on railways and in the ports, five, six, or seven years ago, and have been living in dire poverty as casual labourers ever since. Their pitiable condition has not saved them from being taxed or thrown into prison for inability to pay taxes, and now the possibility of even casual labour is to be taken from them.

3. There remains the question of the advisability or practicability of foreign representations to the Turkish Government. None of the foreign missions likely to be in an important degree affected by the passage of the law has failed to make repeated representations, and give counsels of moderation to the Turkish Government ever since it was first learnt, in 1929, that the law was in preparation. Even in that year foreign missions were being assured that they need not be too uneasy about the effects of the Bill. To induce the British delegation during the negotiations leading up to the Anglo – Turkish Commercial Treaty to renounce its intention of exacting a new Turkish undertaking in respect of “acquired rights” on the expiry of the Residence Convention, a copy of the Bill, bearing signatures of the Turkish Cabinet Ministers, and reserving “acquired rights” was shown at a committee meeting. The British delegation was satisfied and renounced its intention. The clause reserving “acquired rights” remained in the bill until the eve of its becoming law when it quietly disappeared. During all this time foreign missions were being told by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that it was exercising a moderating influence in favour of foreigners. When the law was passed, the Ministry, in reply to reproaches, explained that the deputies had taken the bit in their teeth, and the Ministry had been powerless to restrain their nationalistic zeal.

4. Since the passage of the law the foreign missions and notably this mission, and the Italian, Greek and Hungarian missions have made frequent representations to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs with the object of mitigating the effect of the law and of obtaining exemptions for foreign nationals. Shortly before his departure on leave in March, His Majesty's Ambassador spoke

to the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs who is also Minister of the Interior, and I myself both before and after that interview have spoken to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs urging that the Turkish Government should apply the law with moderation. I have compared the result of these talks with those obtained by the Italian Ambassador and Greek Minister. The results are identical. In all cases the representatives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs have deprecated any foreign uneasiness, and promised a liberal interpretation of the law. They have held out no hope of a postponement of the application of the law, and have in fact said that any attempt to induce the Grand National Assembly to mitigate the effects of the law, or interpret generously any doubtful phrases or words would probably result in a stricter and harsher interpretation. The Ministry have asked us all to trust them, but their record in the matter of "acquired rights" and previous to the passage of the law does not inspire confidence. As recently as April 11<sup>th</sup> I saw the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and communicated to him my fears regarding the effect of the law. He replied with soothing words as to generous interpretations, but when I pointed out that I had received a complaint from Constantinople that police officials were already visiting British offices to draw up lists of persons affected by the law, and were including those who, by no stretch of imagination, could be brought under its scope, he referred to over-zealousness of subordinate officials – a convenient excuse. He went on to say that a commission was shortly being formed to draw up rules for the application of the law, and that two officials of the Ministry would be members, and would exercise a moderating influence. This implies that the other members will need moderating.

5. Fast experience makes me chary of placing any hopes on the fair words of the Ministry. Either it has influence with the Grand National Assembly (and it no doubt could have were it not for the fact that the Ministry approves the law) in which case it could have arranged either that the law should not have been voted, or at least that it should have been voted in a less harsh form, and should have contained a clause about acquired



rights, or it has no influence with the Grand National Assembly (which I incline to doubt, in spite of the allegation that the deputies are prone to take the bit in their teeth) in which case its promises of liberal interpretation are of little value. Moreover the realisation of the promise of liberal interpretation means very little. It signifies that where the designation of any trade in a law is obscure, the Ministry will contrive that it is given an interpretation favourable to foreigners. There are, however, not many obscurities, and, even on a liberal interpretation of them, few foreigners will benefit. The Italian Ambassador was only able to extract a promise that hat maker will mean – probably – a maker of men's hats, and not a designer of women's bonnets. He places little faith in the assurances given him. The Greek Minister, whom I saw yesterday, also places little faith in the assurances of the Ministry. He informed me, in reply to my question, that there were no negotiations between the Governments about the Hellenes affected by the law. He had merely spoken to the Ministry as other missions had done, and received the same soothing assurances. After speaking with representatives of other missions, I am of opinion that nothing further can now usefully be added to the numerous representations already made by the British and other missions here, and that the situation must be faced that the law will enter into force and be applied in June next. I am ready to be agreeably surprised if the Ministry for Foreign Affairs obtains some mitigation of the application of the law, but I do not anticipate that more than a few foreigners will thereby be saved. The rest must be prepared for the worst. In view of the determination of the Turkish Government to secure that all lucrative positions in Turkey fall ultimately to Moslem citizens, it may well be that the foreigner who is allowed to continue to work in Turkey because he is a bonnet-maker may come in time to regret that he did not follow the hat – making foreigner into lands where a less narrow nationalism prevails.<sup>65</sup>

65 National Archives (UK), FO371/16985/E2052/587/44 dated April 15th 1933.

James Morgan sent also a letter marked "private and confidential" to George W. Rendel where he wrote as follows:

I have an uneasy feeling that the despatch I am sending to-day about the law on Reserved Professions is perhaps too outspoken, and too condemnatory of the Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and that you will judge that I have been perhaps more indiscreet than is advisable in a paper which is to be circulated to other departments. To be on the safe side to some extent, I labelled it confidential. Should be glad to know your frank opinion.

Although the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is very categorical in stating that we all (British and other foreigners) should not be too uneasy, I cannot bring myself to trust these assurances wholeheartedly. Local zeal has a way of outrunning central discretion, and is with difficulty repaired. The Wagons-Lits incident<sup>66</sup> is a good example. It ended in the foreigner being driven out, and even prosecuted for his effort to secure discipline. Again how many foreigners will be saved by the promised loop-holes? Few, I think.

As I say in the despatch I am willing to be agreeably surprised in June, but I am not counting on it.<sup>67</sup>

66 In 1933 the French Director of the Wagons-Lits Company would inform an employee who spoke Turkish that the company's official language was French and impose a fine of 25 kuroush and 15-day suspension from work. When the local press learned of this event the students from Istanbul University and the National Union of Turkish Students would occupy the company's headquarters on Istiklal Boulevard in Pera and trash it. They then took the hung photographs Mustafa Kemal from the walls and marched to the company's office in Karaköy. They took down the photographs of Mustafa Kemal that they found their as well and destroyed this Office as well. The students would subsequently protest before the Istanbul Provincial Governor's Office, hand the photographs over to the local People's House and then disperse. In the face of these events, the suspended employee would be returned to work by the directors of Wagon-Lits. Additionally, a great number of restaurants, cinemas, and shops on Istiklal Boulevard would subsequently turkify the names of their businesses.

67 National Archives (UK), FO371/16985/E2052/587/44 dated April 15th 1933.

to which Rendel replied as follows:

Your despatch, to which you refer, was far from being too outspoken and was indeed just on the lines we wanted. You have had enough experiences of the general attitude of other Departments here towards questions of this kind to realise how difficult it would have been for us to get any change out of them unless the case had been stated pretty strongly. Moreover, it is almost axiomatic with Government Departments never to answer hypothetical questions, and the more they were able to say that there was still a chance of the law not being fully applied in June, the less likely they would have been to face the situation and take some practical decision.

In these circumstances you need not feel that your despatch was in any way too strongly worded, and the second paragraph of your letter, with which I entirely agree, confirms me in my view that nothing would be gained at this stage by anticipating the possibility of the Turks behaving generously and allowing any considerable proportion of the British subjects affected to carry on their professions or occupations for a further period without interference. If by any chance, however, such a solution should come about, no harm would have been done, and I feel sure that the British subjects concerned would be only too glad to stay in Turkey after all instead of going as unwanted refugees to already over-crowded portions of the Empire.<sup>68</sup>

### **Professions and Numbers of the British Maltese Subjects**

After receiving the report from his Chargé d'Affaires in Ankara Sir John Simon requested a classification of the professions of the British nationals who were affected by the law. To this request James Morgan sent the following list:

On receipt of your telegram No. 13 of the 30th March last I requested His Majesty's Consular Officers in Constantinople, Smyrna and Mersin to furnish me with up-to-date returns

<sup>68</sup> National Archives (UK), F0371/16985/E2142/587/44 dated April 18th 1933.

showing the classification by professions and occupations of the various categories of British subjects who are likely to be affected by the entry into force, on the 16th June next, of the law for the reservation of certain specified avocations to Turkish citizens. I have the honour to submit below the complete set of statistics arranged according to the Consular district to which they relate and sub-divided into categories indicating the origin of the persons concerned.

### Constantinople.

British Maltese subjects:-

Metal workers	17
Mechanics, including electricians	33
Wood workers	18
Clothing trades	25
Domestic (porters, messengers, waiters etc.)	19
Building trades, including plumbers & painters	20
Maritime (Divers, pilots, shipwrights, Stevedores, tally clerks)	18
Printers and typographers	18
Photographers	2
Hairdressers	2
Chauffeurs	8
Commercial	4
Musicians	4
Telegraphists and telephonists	4
Miscellaneous	1
<u>Unclassified or unknown (mostly unskilled labourers )</u>	<u>144</u>
Total .....	337

### Cypriots :-

Unspecified Smyrna.	12
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British Maltese subjects: -

Hairdresser	1
Blacksmiths	2
Bricklayers	4
Carpenters	8
Compositors	2
Dressmakers	5
Foreman	1
Jewellers	2
Labourers	3
Mechanics	2
Monopoly produce vendor	1
House painters	4
Plumbers or tinsmiths	3
Shoemarkers	3
Railway hands :-	
Boilermaker	1
Coach-builder	1
Fitters	6
Foremen	2
Painter	1
Pier-master	1
Store-keeper	1
<u>Upholsterer</u>	<u>1</u>

Total ..... 55

Natives, of United Kingdom : -

Hairdreser	1
Ship-broker	1
Carpenter	1

Cashiers	2
Dressmarkers	2
Fitter	1
Foreman	1
Mechanic	1
Boilermaker on railway	1
Coach-builder on railway	1
Railway fitter	1
<u>Tailor</u>	<u>1</u>
Total .....	14

Cypriots : -

Itinerant dealer	1
<u>Hairdresser</u>	<u>1</u>
Total .....	2

## Mersin.

## British Maltese subjects: -

Waiter	1
<u>Jeweller</u>	<u>1</u>
Total .....	2

British Indians (Moslem)

Commission Agent	1
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2. It will be seen that the total number of British subjects who are faced with the prospect of losing their employment in consequence of the enforcement of the abovementioned law amounts to four hundred and twenty-four. With the addition of their dependants, the total number of British subjects likely to be affected may be assumed to be in the neighbourhood of a thousand.<sup>69</sup>

69 National Archives (UK), F0371/16985/E2142/587/44 dated April 18,1933.

## Negative Answers From Cyprus and Malta.

In the meantime the Cyprus Governor responded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies of the Foreign Office negatively:

I wish to make it clear from the outset that Cyprus cannot be regarded as a suitable place to which Maltese or other British settlers who lose their means of livelihood should be encouraged to resort for work. Apart from other considerations such as racial jealousy there is widespread unemployment in the Colony and any appreciable influx of skilled or unskilled labour would intensify political discontent.<sup>70</sup>

A similar negative answer also arrived from the governor of Malta who would inform the Secretary of State for the Colonies that he would not accept "about 1000 Levantinised Maltese without connections here and unable to speak Maltese".<sup>71</sup>

In mid-May 1933 Ambassador Sir George Clerk sent another report to the Foreign Office:

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs told me last night that application of law would be general. It was not yet definitely settled whether stages of application would be by professions or by individuals e.g. whether chauffeurs would go first, then hair cutters and then bricklayers and so on, or whether the first category would be young men with no dependants, then married men with no children etc., but in any case law would be applied over two years as considerably as possible. One good point if observed is that execution of law will be in the hands of the Governors of Provinces and towns and not entrusted to minor officials and I gather that all foreigners affected will be able to put any case they may have for relief from law direct to Governor. This should give some protection against undue harsh and unfair application of the law by minor officials.

I do not consider that any action here by us at this stage would do any good. The law will be applied but representations made by

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70 National Archives (UK), F0371/16985/E2488/587/44 dated May 11, 1933.

71 National Archives (UK), FO371/E2860/587/44 dated May 30, 1933.

Foreign missions have made Turkish Government realise that it should be applied with some humanitarian consideration. This is about as much as we can hope for.<sup>72</sup>

C.H. Greig, The British Consul-General of Smyrna, sent also a list of the British nationals affected by the law in Izmir to Ambassador Sir George R. Clerk in Ankara:

1. The 55 British subjects of Maltese origin constituting List 1 in the despatch under reference are believed to have 103 dependents;

The 16 other British subjects constituting List 2 are believed to have 25 dependents (all originating from the United Kingdom).

2. The total number of individuals directly or indirectly affected would therefore amount to approximately 200 persons.

3. This total does not include those British Subjects who, independently of Law 2007, have already been deprived of normal employment in consequence of the monopolisation of the Turkish Port Services, or by operation of the Law limiting the proportion of aliens employable on the staffs of Companies, or by means of pressure exercised on employers from official Turkish quarters.<sup>73</sup>

## Further Searches

The repatriations of the British nationals of Maltese origin would occupy the Foreign Office for a certain time. The governor of Malta's refusal to accept them obliged the Foreign Office to look for other possibilities. In a report sent to the Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, the following was suggested:

Sir John Simon realises that the position of the Government of Malta in this matter is one of peculiar difficulty. While, therefore, he considers that renewed and early efforts should be made to induce that Government to receive the Maltese thrown out of em-

72 National Archives (UK), F0371/16985/E2599/587/44 dated May 17, 1933.

73 National Archives (UK), F0371/16985/E2502/587/44 dated May 8, 1933.



ployment in Turkey, he is inclined to revert to the proposal which was tentatively put forward at the interdepartmental meeting that a per capita settlement grant signs he made to the Maltese from Imperial funds. By the payment of a grant of this nature the Government of Malta might the more readily be induced to receive the workless Maltese; and I am accordingly to suggest, for the consideration of Sir Philip Canliffe-Lister, the desirability of exploring further, in contribution with Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, the possibility of getting from Imperial funds a per capita settlement grant to the Maltese in question.<sup>74</sup>

In another report, this time sent to the Secretary of the Treasury the Foreign Office argued as follows:

With regard to the general background of this problem, it will be realised that Maltese who are settled in Turkey are virtually foreigners in the eyes of the native-born Maltese. They are, as Ministers pointed out in the message contained in the Governor's telegram of the 27 th May, without connections in the Island and unable to speak Maltese. The Island is overpopulated, and its resources are limited. The descendants of the Maltese who have in the past been forced to emigrate from the Island to seek a living along the Mediterranean littoral are regarded locally as having severed their connection with Malta, and the Island Government has always been reluctant to accept responsibility with regard to them.

The destitution problem which may be created by the application of the Turkish law is obviously of a different character from the normal cases of individual destitution abroad with regard to which the Maltese Government accept responsibility for relief and repatriation. The Maltese Government in this instance have not refused responsibility, but seek to confine it only to the settlement outside Malta of the persons in question: and, in all the circumstances, this must be regarded as a relatively favourable response to the representations made to them. It will be recol-

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74 National Archives (UK), FO 371/16985/E2860/587/44 dated May 30th 1933.

lected that at the time of the evacuation of the Maltese from Smyrna in 1922 it became necessary for His Majesty's Government to accept full financial responsibility for the removal of the refugees to Malta, and for their maintenance there in some cases for a considerable period. In this connection I am to invite reference to the letter from this Department No. 43408/23 of the 15th September, 1923, and the subsequent correspondence.<sup>75</sup>

A year after this dispatch Philip Cunliff-Lister, Secretary of State for the Colonies, would write to the governor of Malta and state that "The only practical solution will be to send these people to the part of the Empire from which they derived their British nationality, that is, Malta."<sup>76</sup>

From the documents in hand it is not very clear the final outcome of the British nationals of Maltese origin. It is probably logically to assume that they were reinstalled in Malta or in other parts of the British Empire.

### Concluding Remarks of British Consul General

Finally the best conclusion was reached by British Consul General W. Hough, who wrote that the law was a manifestation of the deeply entrenched xenophobia of the Turks:

My colleague's deduction was that the motive for the law was rank and unadulterated xenophobia, and that it was just another manoeuvre in the Turkish plan of campaign to drive the foreigner out of the country altogether.

It is impossible for me not to agree with this conclusion. When I first arrived here and observed the strength of anti-foreign feeling, it seemed to me possible that the ombers of war had not yet finished smouldering, but that they might die out naturally in due course. After two years' experience I am driven to think that Turkish hatred of the foreigner has almost insane depths which

75 National Archives (UK), F0371/16985/E3364/587/44 dated June 22, 1933.

76 National Archives (UK), F0371/17966/E4218/3605/44 dated June 27, 1934.

have neither been plumbed nor suspected, that it applies to all foreigners alike, and that the rulers of Turkey will not remain satisfied till they have either driven every foreigner out, or reduced the few whose continued presence they choose to tolerate to the most cringing subjection.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>77</sup> National Archives (UK), FO 371/16984/E/1279/587/44 dated March 2nd, 1933.

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## THE CASE OF THE SHIPPING AGENCIES

In late December 1934 the British Embassy of Ankara would report that the Turkish Government intended to adopt a legislation in the near future which would exclude non-Turkish nationals from the vocation of Shipping Agent. The German Ambassador asked Şükrü Kaya, Minister of the Interior, whether there was any truth on these rumors and Kaya replied that "the proposal was favoured by a certain number of deputies on the ground that its adoption was necessary for the security of the nation".<sup>78</sup>

Another report by Ambassador Percy Loraine to Sir John Simon would state the following:

The Commercial Secretary to His Majesty's Embassy has, under my authority, made known to Mr. R. Whittall of the British Chamber of Commerce in Constantinople, the fact that certain influential Turks favour the idea of reserving the profession of shipping agents to Turkish nationals, but that the matter has not progressed any further than this for the present. It was also suggested to Mr. Whittall that, if it were definitely ascertained that the idea was gathering support and strength in Turkey, some international shipping organisation might usefully take steps to dissuade the Turkish Government from transforming the idea into action.

78 National Archives (UK), FO371/17966/E7723/3605/44 dated December 22, 1934.



2. Mr. Whittall told the Commercial Secretary that a commission had been sitting in Angora studying matters relating to shipping generally. The commission had discussed the question of reserving the profession of shipping agencies a Government monopoly. Certain members of the commission had raised objections to these proposals on the following grounds:

1. The policy would very probably give rise to energetic protests on the part of foreign Governments.
  2. It would be detrimental to the development of Turkish exports.
  3. There was a lack of Turks with sufficient knowledge of shipping to take over the work.
3. The matter would seem, therefore, to be in abeyance for the time being. Mr. Whittall is informed, however, that Directors of Commerce in the ports of Constantinople and Smyrna are to be instructed forthwith to prevail upon foreign shipping agents to employ more Turks in their offices."<sup>79</sup>

A letter by the Levant Conference to the Liverpool Steamship Owners' Association would conclude as follows:

The Members of the Maritime Chambers at Izmir and Istanbul conferred, and it was ascertained that although the matter had apparently been considered by a Commission sitting at Angora, it had been decided the whole question be left in a abeyance following the objections which were raised by certain Members of the Commission. This confirms the information conveyed to you by Mr. Weston [of the Board of Trade], and whilst the Agents think it would be advisable for some International Shipping Organization to seriously consider the possibility of the profession of shipping Agents being reserved for Turkish Nationals, so that a definite line of action would be ready, and enable immediate action to be taken if the question arose, at the same time the Agents consider it is very necessary that the matter should be left dormant, and the Turk-

79 National Archives (UK), FO371/19035/E235/235/44 dated January 4, 1935.

ish Government should not be aware of the fact that Shipping Companies or their Agents are in any way perturbed by the legislation which was contemplated, as this would certainly be interpreted by the Authorities as a sign of weakness, and it might lead to the whole question being reconsidered, which is what both the Steamship Lines and their Agents are anxious to avoid.<sup>80</sup>

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