DISTANT TIES

Germany, the Ottoman Empire, and the Construction of the Aghdad Railway

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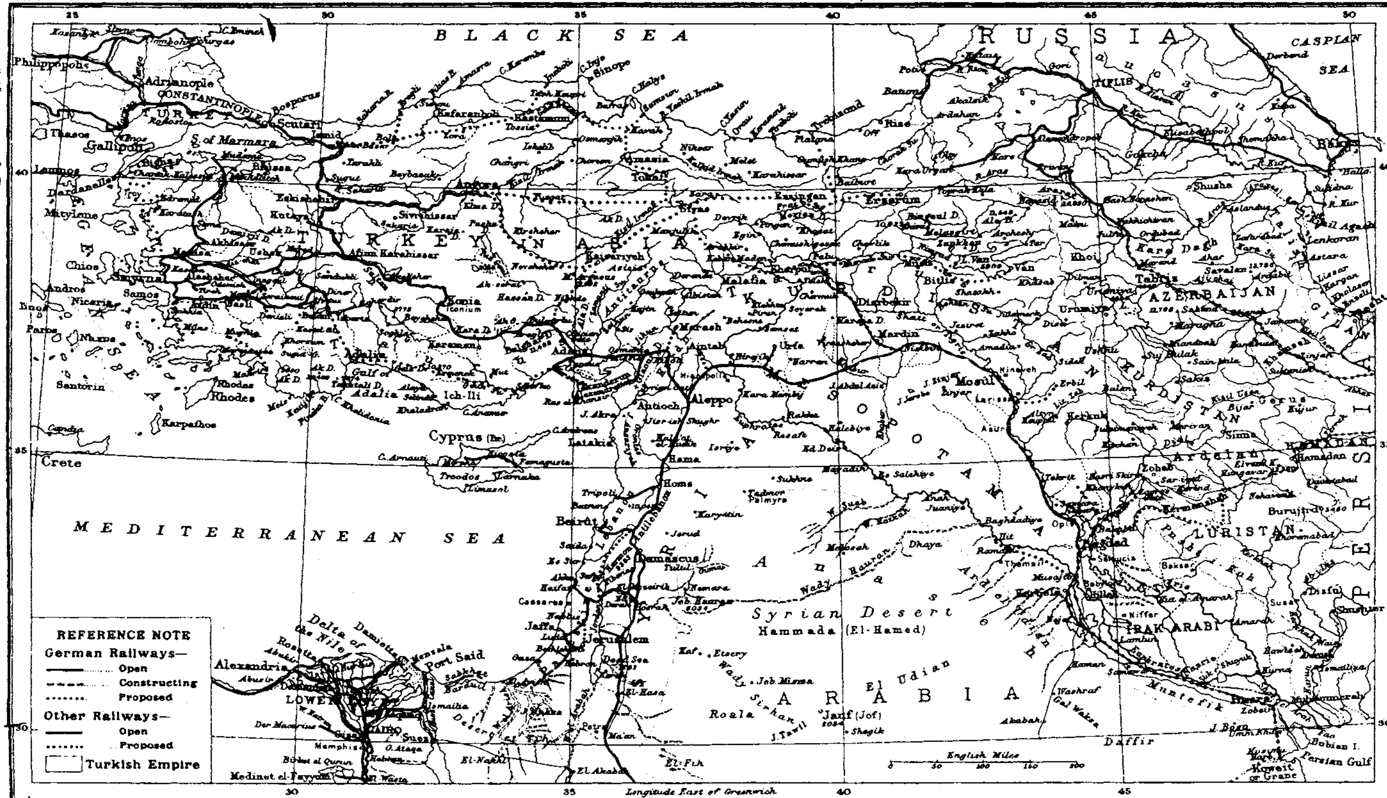
To Yelda

RAILWAY SCHEMES IN ASIATIC TURKEY, 1916



The Edinburgh Geographical Institute | J.G.Bartholomew

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Preface

I first encountered the Baghdad Railway nearly a decade ago while traveling in the cramped quarters of an otherwise affordable wagon across the Turkish plains. At the time, the railway's complex history was the furthest thing from my mind; I was far more concerned with the fact that the slow-moving "express" train had failed to live up to its name. By the time I reached my destination, I vowed to forego the train on my return journey home and take the bus instead.

I later came across a simple, century-old photograph that sparked my interest in the railway's history. The photo showed a crowd posed politely behind lamb carcasses that had been strewn conspicuously across a lonely pair of rails. This diverse crowd of onlookers—distinguishable by their varied headgear of turbans, fezzes, and felt top hats—melded seamlessly together in celebration of the grand opening of the Baghdad Railway's first section. Although the photo's caption described the "Berlin–Baghdad" railway as a stunning achievement of German imperialism, the crowd in the photograph (and my personal experiences in the countries involved in its construction) alerted me that a fascinating story of the railway's construction had yet to be told.

The greatest challenge I faced in completing this book was the task of locating sources that detailed the construction process. The secondary sources that I reviewed offered little or no description of the railway's construction. Most discussions of the railway ended abruptly once the railway concession was granted, leaving the reader to assume that the railway somehow miraculously appeared shortly thereafter. Convinced that scholars had not yet captured the true essence of this massive intercultural and technological undertaking, I followed the footnote trail back through the secondary sources to the archival document collections cited. I hoped that my efforts would help determine what, if any, information regarding the railway's construction could be gleaned from these collections. To my delight, the documents of the Deutsche Bank, the German Foreign Office's Trade Division, and the Imperial Press Archive, located in the German State Archives in Berlin, provided a treasure trove plentiful enough to serve as a foundation for further inquiry. Next, I sought out the private papers

of Wilhelm von Pressel, chief engineer of the Turkish railways, in the Austrian State Archives in Vienna. Pressel's trail led to a second collection of his private papers stored in the Lower Saxony State Archive in Wolfenbüttel, where I also discovered the private papers of Ernst Mackensen, the chief engineer of the Ottoman railway construction efforts between 1894 and 1909. Finally, I delved into the collections of the *Staatsbibliothek* in Berlin, where I compared the archival material with hundreds of reports, periodicals, and pamphlets published contemporaneously with the railway's construction. These exercises helped me determine what the German government and the German public knew of the events taking place on the railway's eastern frontier and their stake in the railway's progress. Eventually, my analysis unveiled a major discrepancy between the anticipated worth and actual value of the Baghdad Railway enterprise. It was there that this book had its genesis.

I have used the terms "Ottoman" and "Turk" (or derivatives thereof) interchangeably throughout this book as many writers contemporary to the Baghdad Railway did. Then, like now, it was difficult to distinguish between the two. The Ottoman Empire arguably had the most ethnically diverse populace of its age, but it remained the Turks' prerogative—as the dominant group and the ruling class—to attend to the needs of the empire's many minorities.

This book is the product of several years of work. Completing it would not have been possible without the generous support and assistance of others. I would, therefore, like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to the people who supported me and believed in my ability to bring this project to fruition. Thanks to the Fulbright Commission in Bonn and the American Research Institute in Turkey for their generous support of my research abroad. I extend a special thanks to my gracious and demanding dissertation advisor, Gaines Post, Jr., and my dissertation committee members, William D. Jones and Lora Wildenthal for their support and friendship. My express gratitude goes out to Dennis Showalter, who played a critical role in recommending this work for publication and to my editors, for guiding me through my first publication. And finally, a million thanks to my chief advisor and wonderful wife Yelda, whose boundless love, patience, and support have truly blessed my life.

Abbreviations

AAHP	Auswärtiges Amt—Handelspolitisches Abteilung
ARC	Anatolian Railway Company
BA	Bundesarchiv (Berlin–Lichterfelde)
BHStA	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (Munich)
BRC	Baghdad Railway Company
CCRT	Company for the Construction of Railways in Turkey
CUP	Committee for Union and Progress
DB	Deutsche Bank
DM	Deutsches Museum (Munich)
FI	Microfiche
ÖStA	Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (Vienna)
NL	Nachlaß
NStA	Niedersächsische Staatsarchiv

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Introduction

Departing from the usual analysis of the Baghdad Railway as a symbol of German imperialism, this book revisits the railway's construction sites on the Ottoman frontier to document the important Ottoman contribution to the enterprise and reveal the dynamics of a developing Turco-German partnership that came into being during the railway's construction. By analyzing the railway as a joint Turco-German enterprise and not as the sole product of German ingenuity and capital, this study provides the first balanced historical account of the railway's construction and its cultural implications.

As the focal point of a shared Turco-German imperial strategy, the Baghdad Railway was instrumental in forging a lasting Turco-German partnership. The railway's construction sites served as experiments in intercultural living and as the proving ground for emerging Turco-German relations. Far removed from the centers of state power, railway personnel grew more attentive to regional concerns than to Great Power policies. German railway planners, forced to revise their plans to compensate for the harsh construction environment, grew increasingly dependent on Ottoman hospitality, security, and labor, and their ability to compromise in the face of adversity.

The Baghdad Railway did not force the Ottoman Empire into German orbit. On the contrary, the railway helped to restore the Ottoman Empire to health and allowed German imperial demands to be redirected to satisfy Ottoman domestic needs. Although German personnel actively participated in each phase of the railway's planning and construction, the Ottomans maintained control over the railway's pace, route, and progress. Far from being a nail in the "Sick Man's" coffin, the Baghdad Railway gave the Ottoman Empire a new lease on life, strengthening its ability to counter German economic and political expansion. The Ottoman leadership used the Baghdad Railway project to play off Great Power rivalries and safeguard its status as a sovereign state.

Scholars have continually measured the historical importance of the Baghdad Railway against the backdrop of German imperial fitness, viewing the railway as a unilateral instrument of German expansion. Reframing the German involvement in the Baghdad Railway enterprise vis-à-vis Germany's dynamic

relationship with the Ottoman Empire, this book brings to life a fascinating intercultural dimension of the railway by analyzing the railway's rich human legacy. As a cooperative enterprise, the railway not only shaped the fledgling Turco-German relationship, it had a significant impact on the lives of tens of thousands of Ottoman subjects living in its path. A close analysis reveals how the railway construction process set the parameters for future Turco-German interaction.

This book examines the Turco-German relationship using the unpublished private papers of the Baghdad Railway's founders and engineers; the document collections of the Baghdad Railway Company, the Deutsche Bank, the German Foreign Service Trade Division; as well as selected German consular reports, extensive essays, press releases, pamphlets, articles, and propaganda. Chapter 1 explores the Turco-German relations before the Baghdad Railway by recounting the factors that led Germany to discover the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. By profiling several key individuals personally involved in the successive waves of German military, economic, political, and cultural penetration in that region, it reveals how individual effort put German interests in position to receive the 1899 preliminary Baghdad Railway concession. Chapter 2 recounts the details of the first official German exploration of the railway's proposed route, examines the stipulations of the official 1903 concession, describes the construction of the first section of the railway, and analyzes factors that led to a moratorium on construction until 1908. Chapter 3 examines how the Young Turks' insurrection diminished German influence at the Porte, placing the railway's completion in jeopardy. The chapter also provides a comprehensive analysis of the construction undertaken between the years 1911 and 1914. Chapter 4 analyzes the 1914 formal Turco-German alliance as the critical turning point in Turco-German relations and describes the effect that the First World War had on both the railway's construction and the fate of Turco-German interaction.

How did the Germans interpret the Baghdad Railway's importance? The answers to this question are both varied and complex. Few technological endeavors fueled the entrepreneurial spirit and imperial imagination in the early twentieth century more than the construction of the Baghdad Railway. Decreed by Sultan Abdulhamid II in 1903, the commission to construct the railway fell into the hands of a German-led syndicate. The bilateral agreement laid the groundwork for building an unprecedented overland express route slicing 2,500 kilometers from Konya across Mesopotamia to Baghdad and on to Basra on the Persian Gulf. When the railway was complete it would form a direct link between the Ottoman Empire's eastern provinces and trade centers to Istanbul and the capitals of Europe. Equipped with the latest high-speed German locomotives, the Baghdad Railway would effectively reduce the travel time between London and Bombay by an estimated three days, thereby superseding the Suez Canal as the most direct route between Europe and India.[1] As the engineer of this "shortcut to India," Germany hoped to secure the lucrative Indian mail service as well as the needed resources to fuel its rapidly expanding industrial empire.

In securing the Baghdad Railway concession, Germany gained a more prominent position on the stage of world affairs. Following the great East-West caravan route once transporting Mithradites, Alexander the Great, Frederick "Barbarossa," and Napoleon Bonaparte, the railway promised to achieve what others had not: the cultural re-awakening of the Anatolian and Mesopotamian plains from centuries of no productivity. The railway's developers anticipated that it would resuscitate the once fertile crescent, allowing the region to flourish once more as the "world's breadbasket."

For many of its European contemporaries, the Baghdad Railway represented only the initial wave of German conquest in the Ottoman Empire. Even before the railway's blueprints were dry, plans were drawn to establish German agrarian colonies in the fertile, sparsely populated regions along the route of the proposed railway.[2] German scholars, scientists, and travelers ventured eastward to decipher the unknown Orient for the world. German schools and hospitals were planned along the railway to ensure a permanent German cultural presence in the Ottoman Empire. As projections of the railway's dividends rose sharply on paper, German leaders positioned themselves to collect the inevitable rewards once the railway became fully operative. But successfully completing the railway, on which many German imperial dreams grew increasingly dependent, proved to be anything but a foregone conclusion.

A brief review of the literature on the Baghdad Railway reveals that historians have not explored the issues raised here. Since the end of the First World War, scholars have depicted the railway as an instrument of German financial and political exploitation of the Ottoman Empire, neglecting the contributions made by the other empire involved in the railway's construction: the Ottoman Empire. Beguiled by the widely disseminated image of the Turk on his deathbed, historians have portrayed the Ottoman Empire as a terminally ill patient dependent on German life-support, uninvolved in the project's development. Yet, by ignoring the internal dynamics of the Ottoman Empire in their analyses, these scholars failed to produce a balanced account of the Baghdad Railway construction.

Only two scholarly works to date have hinted at the details of the railway's construction. The more valuable of these is the recent collaborative work by Jürgen Lodemann and Manfred Pohl.[3] Pohl, the director of the Deutsche Bank's historical archives, offers a historical survey of the Deutsche Bank's involvement in the enterprise. He believes it was the promise of unlimited natural resources that motivated German investors to support the railway venture. The stop-and-go process of the railway construction, he states, stemmed from the bankers' unwillingness to risk further capital without guarantees from the Ottoman state that the terms of their investments would be met. Pohl points out that, in spite of the heated public rhetoric surrounding the railway's completion, it was German financiers, not politicians, who determined when, where, and how the railway would be built. Though his coverage of the construction itself is cursory, Pohl illustrates the hardships that developers faced and the painstaking labor (provided mostly by Ottoman subjects) required to see the project through.

More intimate details of the railway's construction appeared in Hans Meyer-Heinrich's study commemorating the centennial celebration of the railway's chief building contractor: the Philipp Holzmann Corporation.[4] In a section devoted to the railway construction, Meyer-Heinrich offers a glimpse into the daily activity along the route. Though he makes no mention of the Ottoman contribution in his analysis, Meyer-Heinrich suggests that the railway will be remembered as more than a diplomatic bargaining chip. He states that the railway should be assessed in terms of the labor expended by devoted German engineers, whose "ironclad sense of duty" inspired them to leave their comfortable homes to work on the dusty, disease-ridden construction sites. The railway, he claims, needs to be understood as an accomplishment of the Germans who designed it, not the German diplomats who betrayed it.

In spite of these two studies, most of the details of the Baghdad Railway construction remain unknown. The historiographical debate surrounding the Baghdad Railway and its role in the development of the Turco-German relations continues to revolve around the question of German intent during the Age of Empire. Did Germany seek out the railway project to exploit the Ottoman Empire both politically and economically? Or were German interests shaped by an earnest desire to mold the Ottoman Empire into a valuable trading partner, one that would in time learn to function on its own? Although important in its own right, this narrowly defined debate has sidetracked the issue of the railway's construction, creating instead a historiographical main line preoccupied with symbolic interpretation.

Historians have often fingered the Baghdad Railway as one of the more likely causes of the First World War. The railway's dependence on international funding, its ostensible importance to German expansion, and the conflict surrounding its proposed route all challenged the status quo that had prevailed in the Ottoman Empire since the Crimean War. As tension among the Great Powers mounted, the railway took on a life of its own, its perceived importance overshadowing its actual value. By the end of the First World War, it appeared that the railway had not only failed to westernize the Ottoman Empire; it had, in effect, precipitated that empire's internal collapse.

Several German historians have interpreted the Baghdad Railway as a product of German friendship and goodwill, and provided an exception to this trend. They maintained that Germany's involvement in the Baghdad Railway enterprise stemmed from a genuine desire to help the Ottoman Empire develop its much needed transportation infrastructure, allowing the Ottomans to help themselves. Former Kaiserreich insider Karl Helfferich claimed the railway had never been central to German foreign policy.[5] He argued that the public outpouring of German support for the railway, generated most vociferously by Pan-German organizations, had no effect whatsoever in the "politically and financially responsible" German circles. Furthermore, he characterized Germany's Baghdad Railway policy as "steadily peaceful and compromise-ready" and thus concluded that it could not have been responsible for the outbreak of the First World War.

Carl Mühlmann also saw the railway as the sole product of Turco-German friendship.[6] In an effort to compensate for its late arrival to the colonization of the world, Germany had set out to establish independent trade zones for free trade activity in the lands not yet colonized, according to Mühlmann. Preferring indirect over direct forms of empire, the German government offered verbal support to private investors willing to risk investment in the Ottoman infrastructure. The railway developers, subject to Ottoman law, walked a fine line, assuaging the distrust of the Ottomans on one side and the Great Powers' fears of unbridled German expansion on the other. Germany's mistake, Mühlmann found, was its extreme commitment to promoting economic growth in the region where the backwardness was so pronounced. Poor planning and the lack of enforcement, he believed, had caused the railway's shift from an investment opportunity to a financial and political liability.

During the Second World War, Friedrich Bode and Reinhard Hüber each published studies supporting the "friendship mission" thesis.[7] They claimed that the railway had been designed to benefit the Ottomans. German railway developers, they found, had never argued that the railway was German national property; instead they consistently tried to acquire international financial support to fund the railway enterprise.

The vast majority of scholars, however, have viewed the Baghdad Railway and the nature of Turco-German relations in a much different light. For them, the railway represented the preeminent tool of German imperialism designed to enslave the Ottomans, rob them of their sovereignty, and exploit their labor and resources. First promulgated by the British historian Edwin Meade Earle in the 1920s, the "evil empire" thesis stated that Pan-German chauvinism, not friendship, propelled Germany's eastward expansion. Unable to stave off the German advances, the weakened Ottoman state allegedly became a German satellite.[8] In Earle's view, German involvement in the Baghdad Railway construction not only upset the regional balance; it transformed a frontier railway into a catalyst for war.

Earle further contended that the railway construction offered Germany a win-win proposition. Economically, the railway insured immediate returns for German industry and German personnel and promised to return a handsome profit for its operators by opening new markets in the Near East and establishing a land-based trade route with Europe. Politically, the railway presented a direct challenge to Britain's dominance of the seas, starting a tug of war between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. By threatening the political stability in the region, the railway forced Britain to form tighter bonds with its Entente partners, France and Russia, in order to stave off German expansion. Earle concluded that by 1914 the Anglo-German antagonism generated by the Baghdad Railway question inevitably led to war.

Earle's diplomatic model set the standard for many future studies of the railway. Although certain tenets of his argument would later be challenged once primary documents on the topic became available, his general premise remained intact. For instance, John Wolf contended that the railway, only one of many sources of friction between Germany and the other Great Powers, could not

alone be blamed for the outbreak of the First World War.[9] Wolf pointed out that the major Anglo-German conflicts surfaced well after many sections of the railway became operational. It was only when the workings of German capitalists finally caught the interests of the Great Powers, Wolf concluded, that the Baghdad Railway become a pawn in the Great Power game of high politics.

Bekir Sitki saw the Baghdad Railway as a catalyst for mass material exploitation that hastened the inevitable collapse of the Ottoman Empire.[10] The Germans, he claimed, sought raw materials and profits that could only be gained through the exploitation of the Turkish people. Under the cover of the Baghdad Railway, the German government transformed the Ottoman Empire into a quasi-colony—a state pressed to obey its German capitalist masters. Subverting the Ottoman political will through its Baghdad Railway policy Germany had led the Ottomans into a series of international political conflicts that had only further exacerbated the Ottoman condition, according to Sitki.

Paul Butterfield, however, found that the railway served both German and Ottoman interests.[11] In his view, the railway allowed Germany to tap the unexploited natural resources on the Ottoman frontier, while providing the Ottoman leadership a means of quelling internal rebellion through rapid troop deployment. Germany's primary interest in the Ottoman Empire, he claimed, lay in the development of a durable Ottoman infrastructure to meet both Ottoman and German needs. Closely examining the actions of the Baghdad Railway Company, Butterfield concluded that the group did not operate as an enforcement agency for German imperial hegemony, but instead remained surprisingly patient and methodical in its approach, promising to continue the construction only when the necessary funds became available. Butterfield concluded that, although Germany set its collective eye on the profits it hoped the railway would provide, this did not preclude the Ottomans, too, from benefiting from the railway's construction.

After the Second World War, the scholarly interpretation of the railway withdrew from the area of diplomacy to explore other facets of the railway. In a 1948 study, Maybelle Chapman reinterpreted the Anglo-German relationship in terms of its effect on the Baghdad Railway.[12] She revealed that although the railway was "indubitably . . . a source of friction between Britain and Germany. . . . It was one of the few subjects on which Anglo-German agreement was attained." Despite the fiery rhetoric surrounding the railway's construction, the Baghdad Railway question was not a major problem in the prewar years, nor was it a cause of the First World War, according to Chapman.

East German historian Lothar Rathmann radically altered the historical interpretation of the Baghdad Railway.[13] Employing Marxist rhetoric, Rathmann castigated his predecessors' handling of the railway either as a symbol of dueling nationalist politics or friendship. Each interpretation, he claimed, promulgated lies. Shifting his focus from the German diplomacy to the inner workings of the Baghdad Railway Company, Rathmann stressed the railway's financial importance as a vehicle of monopoly capitalism. Using documentary evidence gathered in East German archives, Rathmann believed that Germany sought to enslave the Ottomans, not by force, but through the employment of indirect

methods designed to transform the land into an object of exploitation. He concluded that Germany's powerful economy and military strength made Germany better equipped to control the Ottoman Empire than its European competitors.

Turkish historian, Hakki Keskin, echoed Rathmann's condemnation of the Great Power capitalists. Keskin saw the railway as a model example of the premeditated domination of the Ottoman Empire—the "Trojan horse" of the Great Powers. The rise in annual German exports to the Ottoman Empire brought on by the railway construction spoke for itself.[14] He also claimed that the discovery of resources along the railway's route fueled competition among the Great Powers.

Scholars later began to analyze the motives of high government and high finance separately. West German historian, Helmut Mejcher, found that the Baghdad Railway Company and the German government did not always see eye to eye.[15] Mejcher believed the railway served more as a speculative object of finance imperialism than a vehicle of official German *Weltpolitik*. In fact, when viewed as an object of speculation from German high finance and money markets, the railway seemed more dependent on the ups and downs of the free-market economy than the whims of German politicians.

Friedrich Kochwasser echoed Mejcher's sentiment.[16] Comparing Germany's "peaceful penetration" of the Near East to that of England, France, and Russia, he discovered that Germany did not stick out as a renegade or an aggressor. The Great Powers had failed to guarantee the independence and sovereignty of Near Eastern peoples chiefly because colonial policies consistently treated native populations more as objects than partners. In spite of its apparent failings, Kochwasser contended, the German Foreign Office proved to be remarkably sensitive to the wants and needs of local Ottoman populations. Rather than being influenced by omnipresent Pan-German rhetoric, officials found themselves forced to censor the counterproductive, utopian demands of Pan-German factions in order to maintain a stable working relationship with the Ottomans.

Like Kochwasser, Gregor Schöllgen found that the public perception of Germany's involvement in the Ottoman Empire had little impact on the development of German foreign policy.[17] Public support for the railway followed five recurring themes: (1) the region had rich natural resources to exploit; (2) it could serve as a market for German industrial products; (3) a completed railway would open the region for trade; (4) it would allow further German cultural establishments like schools and hospitals to be built; and (5) the railway would open the region for German colonization. Yet, Schöllgen reveals, these public motivations had no direct effect on the Ottomans or their policies. All Turkey required was for Germany to remain active and not participate in its territorial dismemberment. In conclusion, Schöllgen found that German inexperience and critical foreign policy errors regarding the Baghdad Railway led the Anglo-German relationship to disintegrate, making war inevitable.

Johann Manzenreiter suggested that the border between capitalism and imperialism could only be clarified once the relationship between German market development and official policy in the Ottoman Empire was known.[18] According to Manzenreiter, Western involvement in the Ottoman Empire followed a three-

step pattern. First, private European banks made initial speculations. As these ventures showed profits, larger state banks then assumed the operations through mergers or buyouts. Finally, to protect the viability of these ventures, the state apparatus then incorporated them into official government policy in the region. Germany's involvement in the Baghdad Railway was a combination of both private and public. Manzenreiter concludes by saying that the transfer of power from private speculation to the state mechanism was never an automatic transaction.

Analysis of interstate trade figures further challenged the evil empire thesis. While trade statistics showed that exports between the two countries grew exponentially during the railway construction, M. L. Flaningham discovered that, other than the railway and harbor improvements, German exports to the Ottoman Empire did not enhance Ottoman economic development. The diversity of German goods shipped to the Ottoman Empire changed little during the period of German involvement. Flaningham surmised that the actual commerce between the two empires did not reveal that the Germans "met the needs and opportunities which the Ottoman Empire offered."[19] All Germany could have hoped for from the Baghdad Railway was an increase in its share of the Ottoman market. A complete German conquest of the Ottoman economy, Flaningham noted, "needed to harness German technology and Turkish resources."[20] His study revealed, however, that the total volume of Turco-German trade remained quite small in relationship to the total foreign trade of both empires. Given the mass volume of trade between Turkey and the rival Great Powers, Flaningham found that "the position of the other powers, engaged in trade with the Ottoman Empire, was not seriously jeopardized by the apparent rapidity in the rise of the German export trade."[21] In light of these findings, Flaningham concluded: "Germany's trade with the Ottoman Empire was a contributory factor to rather than a source of the political tensions among the European powers in the Middle East."[22]

In many ways, Ulrich Trumpener's findings paralleled Flaningham's. Trumpener found that the majority of German exports to the Ottoman Empire during the railway construction stemmed from the transport of railway materials alone. Although the railway helped establish important trade outlets for certain German industries, its overall impact on the German economy remained minimal. Trumpener challenged the assumption that an increase in German trade necessarily signaled a German conquest of the Ottoman Empire. Trade with the Ottoman Empire, he pointed out, remained a mere fraction of Germany's global commercial activities.[23] On the cultural front, things appeared even bleaker for German interests. Despite building several German schools and establishing student exchange programs, French, not German, remained the official second language of the Ottoman Empire. The Baghdad Railway, Trumpener concluded, could never have become the bastion of German culture as many had hoped.

Considering the inner workings of the Ottoman Porte, Immo Sievers revealed how internal Ottoman policies also affected the Great Powers. Free to choose from a selection of aid offers, the Ottoman leadership, much to the chagrin of the Powers themselves, continued the practice of accepting competitive

bids from all sources. As a result, Sievers points out, although the quantity of German exports to Turkey grew exponentially in the period from 1890 to 1914, Germany never came close to holding a monopoly on Ottoman trade. In fact, until the war, German exports remained third behind those of England and France.[24] Germany's intentions, Sievers believed, were twofold. First, the German government hoped to inundate the regions adjacent to the railway with German exports; then German settlers would secure these areas through the establishment of permanent colonies. Yet, Germany's efforts were often foiled by an Ottoman state unwilling to place its fate in German hands alone.

As this historiographical review indicates, we can no longer generalize about the Baghdad Railway as a catalyst for German expansion or Ottoman decline. For seven decades, historians have deconstructed the railway without fully comprehending its construction. Although indicators point to the fact that the railway was an imperial enterprise, until the details of the Turco-German relationship are known, it is unclear which imperial strategy the railway served.

This book is the first to explore the cultural ramifications of the railway's construction. In doing so it fills a void in the historiography of the Baghdad Railway. Bringing to light the indispensable Ottoman contribution to the railway, it reveals the complex Turco-German relationship as it developed on the Ottoman frontier. It argues that the Ottoman Empire, far from being a pawn in Germany's power games, capitalized on its close ties with Germany to strengthen its sovereignty and national identity.

The Baghdad Railway construction sites stood at the crossroads of culture, ideology, class, and faith. In the midst of this intercultural mélange, a fascinating Turco-German partnership formed. Far removed from the cutthroat diplomacy, the project required courage, compromise, and cooperation to lay the rails through the desolate and often uninhabited regions of the Ottoman Empire. The railway's construction affected thousands of lives, bringing together complete cultural strangers in the pursuit of a common goal, while laying the foundations of modern Turco-German relations.

A thorough historical analysis of Turco-German relations is long overdue. The Baghdad Railway's functional importance as a bridge between Europe and Asia, Occident and Orient, and Christianity and Islam has been neglected. This book reevaluates the history of the railway and the late Ottoman period within the framework of European history to contribute historical depth to the current debate concerning the future of Turco-German interaction.

NOTES

1. Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde (BA), 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank, #8113, 7, 2–3 (12 April 1900). Georg von Siemens, Director of the Deutsche Bank, compared a journey from London to India via ship (347 hours) to the combination of London–Kuwait via the Baghdad Railway at 60km/h average speed (137 hours) and then via ship to Bombay (107 hours). Travel time saved by using the Baghdad Railway was calculated at 3 days and 7 hours.

2. Although Abdulhamid answered the question of German colonization (advanced mostly by Sigismund Schneider and the Pan-German League) with a resounding "no," the concept maintained currency in the ongoing German discussion of the Baghdad Railway up until 1914 despite the concerted efforts of Paul Rohrbach, Arthur von Gwinner, the Stemrich expedition, and others to write off the idea as unfeasible given the hostility of the climate and the indigenous populations.

3. Jürgen Lodemann and Manfred Pohl, *Die Bagdadbahn: Geschichte und Gegenwart einer berühmten Eisenbahnlinie* (Mainz: von Hase und Kohler, 1988).

4. Hans Meyer-Heinrich, *Philipp Holzmann Aktiengesellschaft, 1849-1949* (Frankfurt am Main: Umschau Verlag, 1949), 249–64. A private German company, Philipp Holzmann A.G., was responsible for planning the railway, maintaining its supply lines, and hiring, feeding, compensating and protecting the hired labor force. The largest German contractor in Europe to date, Philipp Holzmann A.G. is involved in every aspect of construction from bridges to Berlin's new city center. Unfortunately, the documents detailing the work completed on the individual Baghdad Railway sections have been destroyed. (See also Herbert Pönicke, *Die Welt als Geschichte* 16, no. 3–4 (1956): 96–210.

5. Karl Helfferich, *Die deutschen Türkenpolitik* (Berlin: Voss, 1921). Helfferich (1872–1924) served as the director of the Anatolian Railway Society in Istanbul, 1906–1908; he was on the board of directors of the Deutsche Bank, 1908–1915; and as the German secretary of state and interim German chancellor, 1915–1917. His father in law, Dr. Georg von Siemens, served as director of the Deutsche Bank at the turn of the twentieth century.

6. Carl Mühlmann, "Deutschland und die Türkei 1913–1914," *Politische Wissenschaft* 7 (1929): 365.

7. See Friedrich Heinz. Bode, "Der Kampf um die Bagdadbahn, 1903–1914. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutsch-englischen Beziehungen" (Ph.D. diss., Breslau, 1941); Reinhard Hüber, *Die Bagdadbahn* (Berlin: Junker & Dünnhaupt, 1943).

8. Edward M. Earle, *Turkey, the Great Powers, and the Baghdad Railway* (New York: Macmillan, 1923), 17–18.

9. John W. Wolf, "The Diplomatic History of the Baghdad Railroad" *University of Missouri Studies Quarterly* 11, no. 2 (1936): 5.

10. Bekir Sitki, *Das Baghdad-Bahn-Problem, 1890–1903* (Freiburg i. Breisgau: R. Goldschagg, 1935).

11. Paul K. Butterfield, "The Diplomacy of the Baghdad Railway, 1890–1914" (Ph.D. diss., Göttingen, 1932).

12. Maybelle K. Chapman, *Great Britain and the Baghdad Railway* (Menasha, Wis.: G. Banta & Company, 1948).

13. See Lothar Rathmann, *Berlin–Baghdad: Die Imperialistische Nahostpolitik des kaiserlichen Deutschlands* (Berlin: Dietz, 1962); *Stoßrichtung Naheost, 1914–1918* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1963); and "Zur Legende vom 'antikolonialen' Charakter der Bagdadbahnpolitik in der wilhelminischen Aera des deutschen Monopolkapitalismus," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* Sonderheft 9 (1961): 246–70. Rathmann was the first scholar to use the Imperial German Foreign Office's documents pertaining to the railway then stored in the *Deutsche Zentralarchiv* in the East German city of Potsdam. Today, in reunified Germany, the documents have been moved to the new *Bundesarchiv* in Berlin–Lichterfelde.

14. Hakki Keskin, *Die Türkei vom Osmanischen Reich zum Nationalstaat: Werdegang einer Unterentwicklung* (Berlin, Olle & Wolter, 1978), 32–35. Keskin, a socialist scholar who was deported from Germany, polemicizes German involvement in the Ottoman Empire. He reports that between 1889 and 1913, German exports to the Ottoman Empire rose 145-fold while the quantity of Ottoman imports in Germany rose 32-fold.

15. Helmut Mejcher, "Die Bagdadbahn als Instrument deutschen wirtschaftlichen Einflusses im Osmanischen Reich," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 1 (1975): 447–81.

16. Friedrich H. Kochwasser,"Das Deutsche Reich und der Bau der Baghdad-Bahn." In *Araber und Deutsche* edited by Hans Roemer and Friedrich Kochwasser (Tübingen/Basel, 1974), 294. For a further outline of Kochwasser's perspective, see Friedrich H. Kochwasser, "Der Bau der Baghdad-Bahn und die deutsche Orientpolitik," *Mitteilungen der deutsch-türkischen Gesellschaft* 94 (1975): 1–5.

17. See Gregor Schöllgen,"Die deutsch-englische Orientpolitik der Vorkriegsjahre 1908 bis 1914" *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 30, no. 10 (1979); "'Dann müssen wir uns aber Mesopotamien sichern!'—Motive deutscher Türkenpolitik zur Zeit Wilhelms II in zeitgenössischen Darstellung," *Saeculum* 32, no. 2 (1981): 130–45; and *Imperialism und Gleichgewicht: Deutschland, England und die orientalische Frage, 1871–1914* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1984).

18. Johann Manzenreiter, Die Bagdadbahn als Beispiel für die Entstehung des Finanzimperialismus in Europa, 1872–1903 (Bochum: N. Brockmeyer, 1982).

19. M. L. Flaningham, "German Eastward Expansion, Fact and Fiction: A Study in German-Ottoman Trade Relations 1890–1914," *Journal of Central European Affairs* 14, no. 4 (1955): 325–26.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., 331.

22. Ibid., 332.

23. Ulrich Trumpener, "Germany and the End of the Ottoman Empire" in *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, edited by Marian Kent (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984), 118. See also *Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 1914–1918* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968); and "Turkey's Entry into World War I," *Journal of Modern History* 34, no. 4 (1962): 369–80. Trumpener writes that in 1912 only 1.3 percent of all German exports went to Turkey and only 0.7 percent of German imports were Turkish.

24. Immo Sievers, *Der europäische Einfluß auf die türkischen Bahnbauten bis 1914* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus Verlag, 1991). Between 1890 and 1914, Germany's exports rose from 3.4 million marks to 95.6 million. England's exports declined from 196.5 million to 166 million marks in 1914. France's share of the market increased from 57.5 million to 73 million marks.

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1

The German Discovery of the Ottoman Empire

> The tracks of Alexander the Great and Mithradites have been obliterated by us, but the tracks of those who build this railway for us will remain.
>
> —Cemal Pasha, Governor of Adana

Turco-German relations were in their infancy when the construction of the Baghdad Railway got underway in 1903. After decades of limited contact, both sides took a bold step forward, entering into a tentative agreement to pursue mutually beneficial enterprises. The first of these collaborative projects, the Baghdad Railway, would serve as the proving ground for their fledgling alliance.

This chapter charts the early development of Turco-German relations from its amorphous beginnings to the signing of the preliminary railway concession in 1899. Documenting Germany's rapid transformation from an unknown entity to the chief ally of the Ottoman government (or the Porte), the chapter profiles the lives of several key German individuals who established working relationships with the Ottomans, and helped lay the groundwork for further German involvement in the Ottoman Empire. It then reveals how these individuals' intercultural experience helped influence the German government to reconsider its policy of nonengagement.

In the European capitals of the late nineteenth century, few things appeared as certain as the eventual collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Since mid-century, the weakened Ottoman state had been in a quandary: its finances depleted, its military in disarray, its ethnic separations uncontainable. To stave off imminent collapse, successive waves of military, economic, and diplomatic advisors arrived in Istanbul to guide the empire back on course. By century's end, European "guest workers" managed everything from the Ottoman financial establishments to its military academies. However, growing tensions among Europe's imperial powers continually frustrated efforts to reform Ottoman institutions along Western lines. Entangled in a web of ceaseless controversy and intrigue, weak Ottoman leaders grew increasingly dependent on the European admini-

stration of the empire's daily affairs. To many observers, the Ottoman Empire appeared to be on its last legs, awaiting the certainty of death.

While many Europeans were content to let fate run its course, German personnel arriving in Istanbul took steps to reverse the decline. Sensing the vitality still present in the Ottoman Empire, these newcomers launched personal crusades to have the Ottoman death sentence rescinded. Viewed as uncompromised outsiders, the Germans were well received at the Porte. As a result, individuals like Wilhelm von Pressel and Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz forged close ties with the Ottoman leadership. Surrendering their civil service commissions at home to work in Ottoman service, Pressel and Goltz devoted their lives to the development of closer Turco-German cultural ties. Their work behind the scenes helped ensure German backing for the Baghdad Railway enterprise.

As relations between nonaligned German civilians and Ottoman officials grew increasingly more cordial, German foreign policy evolved to reflect this change. By the 1890s, Germany had scrapped its policy of detachment to pursue a more active engagement in Ottoman affairs. Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II and his ambassador to the Porte, Adolf Freiherr Marschall von Bieberstein, took ties between the two countries to new heights. Compelled by their firsthand experiences in the Ottoman Empire, each remained strongly committed to making the Baghdad Railway one of the central tenets of German foreign policy. Their willingness to reconsider Germany's position vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire helped bring the two countries together on a common course. When the bidding war for the preliminary railway concession got underway, Germany found itself in the best position to win.

The nineteenth century was a period of cultural discovery for Germans and Turks alike. The increased presence of German personnel at the Porte did not signal the loss of Ottoman domestic control in the late nineteenth century. Instead, by supporting Ottoman projects of renewal, the Germans were able to make the Baghdad Railway the cornerstone of the emerging Turco-German cultural partnership. By detailing the origins of Turco-German relations, this chapter reveals that the Baghdad Railway came into being, not as an outgrowth of German expansionist will, but rather as the culmination of decades of dedicated service and instructive intercultural encounters.

Relations between the Ottomans and the West were slow to develop following the 1453 Ottoman conquest of Istanbul. Aside from their own involvements in Eastern Europe, the Ottomans had little interest in the rest of the continent. As part of the *Dar-al-Harb* (House of War), Europe was seen as a place to invade or avoid. The differences between the two regions were so pronounced, as one sixteenth-century Muslim scholar noted: "The Franks no more resemble the Turks than night resembles day. . . . If you turned a Turk upside down you got a Frank."[1]

In the eighteenth century, expanding global trade made contact between East and West unavoidable. Bridging the Europe and Asia, the geographically blessed Ottoman Empire stood at the crossroads of land and sea trade. This prime location was envied by many of its less fortunate neighbors. Russia, for example, grew weary of asking permission to pass through the Turkish Bospho-

rus straits to reach ports beyond the Black Sea. Conflicts with Russia over its southern shipping lanes became a recurring nightmare for the Ottomans. The ensuing wars with Russia handed the Ottomans a series of defeats. In an effort to stave off further encroachment by their northern neighbor, Ottoman sultans looked west for assistance, sensing their military was no longer capable of defending the empire's boundaries. Envoys established formal relations between capitals, forming the first Ottoman-European partnerships.

Ottoman interests in the West lay chiefly in the West's modern weaponry and military tactics. Ottoman ambassadors were sent abroad to gather intelligence. As a result, early personnel exchanges between Turkey and the West were often characterized more by suspicion and intrigue than diplomatic collaboration.[2] Proximity to the host culture only further deepened the level of repulsion the Ottomans felt toward their hosts.

The genesis of Enlightenment thought in the eighteenth century further exacerbated the perceived differences between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. As reason, science, and technology slowly replaced entrenched confessionalism, Europe was transformed into a center of enlightened self-generating, rational, and progressive thinking. On the other hand, the Ottomans, subjected to despotic and autocratic rule, appeared to be interminably bound to an ancient static Islamic tradition and therefore incapable of initiating change.

The Turks' alleged backwardness, however, did not preclude them from having commendable qualities. When European kings found themselves in need of military assistance, there was no hesitation to elicit help from the reputable Turkish military. Seasoned by centuries of battle experience, Turkish soldiers, despite their apparent deficiencies in weaponry, had a reputation for being among the world's bravest and most reliable warriors. In 1761, for example, King Frederick II of Prussia recognized the advantage in forming a military alliance with the Turks to ward off Austrian advances in the Seven Years War. Although Frederick's sudden interest in the Ottoman Empire stemmed from his immediate needs, his efforts nonetheless opened the door to further Ottoman-Prussian interaction.[3]

The Turkish military was not infallible, however. A mutinous spirit among the sultan's elite officer corps—the janissaries—hindered implementation of military reforms. Tired of a weak sultanate, the janissaries swore allegiance to their commanding officers, effectively stonewalling the sultan's reform measures by refusing to enforce them. The janissary insurrection was brought to an abrupt end in 1826, when modern forces—loyal to Sultan Mahmud II and covertly trained by French military advisors—murdered the janissaries in their sleep, ending their centuries-long position as the sultan's trusted guard.

The defeat of the janissaries by Mahmud's new forces rang in the era of Ottoman reformism, a time when Western methods and institutions were popularly adopted in an effort to form a modern and secular Ottoman state. For the next decade, the number of foreign advisory personnel increased as the Porte strove to imitate the European nation-state.

The Ottoman Empire's most pressing need in the 1820s was the maintenance of its military. Although the new forces dealt the janissaries a resounding defeat, they remained small, poorly trained, and unable to protect the Ottoman imperial boundaries. In order to secure additional weapons and tactical training, Mahmud turned to the West to acquire high-caliber military advisors and materiel.

Impressed by the Prussian sympathy shown for the Porte during the signing of the 1829 Peace of Adrianople, the sultan invited a Prussian delegation of military advisors to Istanbul in 1833. Helmuth von Moltke—hero of the later wars of German unification—led the group that arrived in November 1835. Although Moltke expected to find the Turkish forces in disarray, he was not prepared for the severity of their condition.

Motlke reported that the army was disease-ridden and unfit. The lack of food, medicine, uniforms, and interpreters all presented major obstacles to the success of his training mission.[4] The army's level of morale could hardly have been lower. Fearing death, recruits deserted by the hundreds only to be rounded up and executed upon recapture. To remedy the high attrition rate, new recruits were pulled forcibly at gunpoint from local villages and brought in chains to serve their duty. Throughout their tenure, soldiers fortunate enough to survive the adverse conditions of their service lived as prisoners.

The newly "prussianized" Imperial Ottoman army proved to be no match for superior Russian forces. In June 1839, Russia soundly defeated the Ottoman army at Nissibin. The Prussian mission was disbanded and sent home. Moltke's efforts to reform the Ottoman army had only uncovered a host of additional Ottoman deficiencies. He claimed that the Turkish field commander had refused to follow his professional advice, relying instead on the soothsayers in his camp. The Ottoman leadership, on the other hand, blamed the defeat on the Prussian delegation's poor techniques. After receiving assurances that their names would be vindicated, members of the Prussian delegation resigned their Turkish commissions and despondently returned to Prussia. Although short-lived, ill-fated, and the last of its kind for roughly three decades, the Moltke mission nevertheless demonstrated Prussian loyalty to the Porte and kept open the lines of communication between Prussia and the Ottoman Empire.

While the majority of scholars claim the Crimean War of 1850 spelled the beginning of the end for the Ottoman Empire, others view the war as the catalyst for a series of internal Ottoman reforms.[5] In the decades after 1850, the Ottoman Empire underwent a series of changes, including an indigenous Young Ottoman nationalist movement, the establishment of a parliament, and the ratification of a state constitution—the first of its kind in a Muslim state and more democratic than some of its contemporary European models. By the mid-1870s, the Young Ottoman reform movement had taken great strides toward achieving its objective—an Ottoman nation-state.[6]

In 1876, Abdulhamid II was named the new Ottoman sultan when his deranged brother Murat V was forcibly deposed. His assumption of the throne, however, coincided with a host of internal uncertainties that jeopardized the emerging reforms. In 1875, the Ottoman state declared bankruptcy. Fearing the

complete dissolution of his empire, Abdulhamid took drastic steps to consolidate his power. In March 1877, he disbanded parliament. In February 1878, he suspended the constitution. The brutal suppression of ethnic clashes in Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Herzogovina brought the Ottomans into yet another war with Russia that they lost in 1878. Further draconian measures forced reform efforts underground where they remained for the next 30 years.

By 1878, Abdulhamid had become the sole arbiter of the Ottoman state. He had two major problems facing his empire. First, his bankrupt nation needed a stable financial base. Second, the Ottoman military found itself in desperate need of Western guidance. Abdulhamid believed that a partnership with Germany would remedy both afflictions. Abdulhamid gambled that Germany could become the sympathetic and uncompromised ally needed to get the Ottoman Empire back on track.[7]

Sultan Abdulhamid's usurpation of power had a positive effect on the development of Turco-German relations. Having achieved power by default on the heels of murder and intrigue, Abdulhamid knew he could trust neither his own Turkish advisors nor the British and French officials who incessantly meddled in his affairs. Germany, on the other hand, was a powerful, wealthy, and fiercely independent nation. Abdulhamid held Germany up as a model state on which he could fashion his beleaguered empire. With Germany's help, he hoped to protect his land's sovereignty.

Unlike his predecessors, Sultan Abdulhamid took an intense personal interest in developing closer ties with Germany. He consulted directly with German personnel throughout his reign, at times revealing his innermost hopes and fears. Among the Germans working in the Ottoman Empire he found sympathetic allies. His close relationships with German officials served as the foundation of the Turco-German partnership and the cornerstone of the Baghdad Railway construction.

Like Abdulhamid, German officials Wilhelm von Pressel and Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz devoted much of their lives to establishing closer Turco-German ties. Yet, neither Pressel (a distinguished railway engineer) nor Goltz (a military advisor) arrived in Istanbul expecting to promote Turco-German collaboration. Only after spending ample time interacting with the empire's variety of peoples, learning their customs, and seeing their lands firsthand did Pressel and Goltz make the improvement of Turco-German relations one of their top priorities. Believing the Ottoman Empire was quite capable of caring for itself, they worked hard to persuade Europeans that the Ottoman Empire remained vital. They believed that Germany's assistance would not only benefit the Ottoman Empire, but also the rising German nation. For this reason, both men worked tirelessly to acquire additional German support for the Ottoman economic revival.

As the most influential individual in acquiring German support to build a railway across the Ottoman Empire's eastern girth, Wilhelm von Pressel has often been called the "Father of the Baghdad Railway." A Swabian railway engineer, Pressel had built railways across Europe and the Balkans. A world traveler and self-proclaimed global citizen, Pressel spent the final four decades of

his life in Ottoman service, first as a construction director under Baron Hirsch, and later, after 1872, as the general director of the Turkish railways.[8]

Pressel arrived in Istanbul when the railway's plans were in their infancy. Although a few railways had been built in Thrace and the Aegean, no efforts had been made to link Istanbul to the Anatolian heartland. In 1871, Ottoman Grand Viceroy, Midhat Pasha, publicly proposed Sultan Abdulmecid's wish to build a railway to Baghdad and the Persian Gulf.[9] Intrigued by the idea, Pressel offered a plan to construct a railway linking Istanbul, Ankara, and Baghdad to the Persian Gulf port of Basra. His proposal was well received by the Porte. Unfortunately, the costs for this "Baghdad Railway" extended well beyond what the Ottoman treasury alone could afford. A railway of such immense magnitude, he surmised, would require the assistance of outside expertise and financing.

Pressel was enthralled with the prospect of building a modern railway through Anatolia and Mesopotamia, yet he knew that any attempt to attract the necessary European investment would require additional research on the lands and people living in the regions adjacent to the railway. Until the Europeans invested in Ottoman ventures with confidence, progress could only be made in small increments. In 1872, Pressel helped build the first railway along Istanbul's Asian shore. Connecting Istanbul to the Marmara Sea port of Izmit, this railway demonstrated Pressel's serious devotion to the task of modernizing the empire's antiquated transportation network.

The lack of available capital continually plagued Ottoman railway construction. Construction on the Izmit railway had to be halted several times due to financial difficulties. Although many at the Porte knew a functioning railway would boost the slumping Ottoman economy, no outside power, including Germany, dared to offer loan guarantees at such a volatile time. On October 2, 1875, the Ottoman treasury declared bankruptcy, postponing its plans for further railway construction. Despite the turbulence ushering in Abdulhamid's reign, Pressel remained in his position, aware that new leadership in no way diminished the empire's dire need to acquire additional means of transportation.

When the dust settled, Pressel approached Abdulhamid to persuade him of the proposed railway's value to the empire. The sultan was pleased with Pressel's explanation that a railway connecting the capital and distant provinces would strengthen his authority over the empire. The humiliating Russian defeat of Ottoman forces in 1877–1878 further solidified the sultan's resolve. As a result, Abdulhamid quickly approved Pressel's plan. The Baghdad Railway had to be built, he believed, and Pressel had the expertise required to build it.

Pressel was not a complicated man. His unpublished papers reveal him to be a private man who thoroughly enjoyed his lifestyle and friends in Turkey. Pressel could not understand why the topic of the Baghdad Railway had become an object of general preoccupation in the Ottoman Empire and in Europe.[10] For him, the railway was "an ordinary transaction" and "a simple affair."[11] He believed that the railway would obviously benefit both the Ottoman Empire and the nation that built it. Pressel called on German industrial interests to take advantage of the bountiful resources in the Ottoman Empire.

Like many European visitors in the Ottoman Empire, Pressel was apprehensive about what he might encounter in this unknown land. His head was filled with tales of torture, barbarism, and oppression. The best litmus test for determining the feasibility of the Turco-German alliance, he believed, was to examine the treatment of the Ottoman Christian minority already living there. As he traveled about the Ottoman territories inspecting potential railway sites, he conducted a careful census of the number of Christian inhabitants living in the villages he passed. The Christians he met often feared him, not for who he was, but because he was accompanied by the unpopular Turkish guards.[12] When he had the opportunity arose for Pressel to converse with the Christians in private, he heard testimony of horrible mistreatment and oppression. The numerous allegations of rape and kidnapping were especially heart-rending. Although the Christians had filed their complaints with the local Turkish officials, their pleas for justice apparently fell on deaf ears, for these officials were often the perpetrators.

Pressel gained an understanding of the Ottoman population through a slow and gradual process. In the early days of his tenure in the Ottoman Empire, he feared all Muslims and despised the officials assigned to protect him. Over time, however, he learned to differentiate between the classes of Muslim Ottoman subjects. While in Bosnia and Herzogovina, Pressel outlined the different strata of the Muslim majority. He described the Turkish official as "a foreigner in the land, a mirror image of his contemporaries in the official hierarchy in the capital and the other provinces of empire. Hated by all, despised by the nobility." Pressel also suspected that a fanaticism lay dormant in the Muslim population. With only limited knowledge of the land and its customs, he grew especially ill at ease when cut off from the vestiges of civilization. Despite his dislike for Turkish officials, Pressel's experience taught him that the majority of the Turks were honest and brave and treated their fellow Christian citizens "with mildness and friendliness, as long as their religious fanaticism is not urged on, which by the way very rarely occurs."[13] Although Pressel's irrational fear plagued him from time to time when he was distant from the vestiges of civilization, strangers' acts of kindness and charity taught him to override these fears.[14]

The multiethnic complexion of Porte officials perplexed many Europeans. Pressel discovered that religious tolerance had little to do with the overwhelming presence of Christians in the ministries at the Porte. Daoud Pasha, an Armenian serving as the Ottoman Minister of Public Works, explained why Ottoman theocracy allowed itself to be dominated by Christians:

> [The Muslims employ minorities] because they have to have us. They do it, in order to give Europe the appearance of a tolerant and liberal way of thinking. In reality, we are simple objects of demonstration, nothing else. The decisions concerning the matters of state do not succeed in the councils of ministers or state institutions, introduced like all the rest, to further the farce of the adoption of European forms of government, but rather in the palace or in the intimate circles of the Grand Viceroy, from which we Rajahs, like myself, are excluded and in which all of the feelings of contempt for all non-Turks, Rajahs and Europeans alike, can freely circulate.[15]

Religious tolerance was imitated, but not truly integrated, into the Ottoman state apparatus.

Pressel warned Western observers not to judge Ottoman officials as "Western friendly" simply on the basis of their European education. These officials, he claimed, were in fact the most dangerous and fanatical. Caught between the modern and traditional, they were hypocrites, trying to please both sides while destroying their own moral integrity. Pressel explained:

> In spite of all the appearances of civilization in the highest circles, there reigns a boundless hatred (nourished especially by the women) for everything foreign, and those [officials] returning from Europe . . . have no choice other than to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of the actual fanatical clique exercising power by playing the fanatic and ultranationalist to clear any suspicion that they had acquired any European perspectives. . . . The worst is that these people must always play the role of the hypocrite and therefore become morally bankrupt. When among the Turks they present themselves as fanatic Muslims and indulge themselves in the most unflattering curses of European customs and institutions, [yet] when among diplomats and foreigners they are full of accolades of praise for European education and institutions and often go so far to make fun of the customs of their ancestors.[16]

The Janus-face of the modern Turkish officialdom disgusted Pressel. He understood the frustration felt by his European colleagues whose limited exposure to the Ottoman culture left them to conclude that the Turks, although polite, were inherently dishonest and lazy.

Throughout his travels, Pressel encountered many regions he deemed unfit for European settlement. The presence of disease, intense heat, and the paucity of supplies made the prospect of a German (or any other) colony seem farfetched. Given the harsh realities of daily life in the remote regions of the Ottoman Empire, Pressel thought it would be best to encourage the Ottomans to build the railway themselves by teaching them the needed skills. Although it would take considerable effort, Pressel believed strongly that the Ottomans were able to better themselves. Pressel also noted that the process of regeneration had to be managed through the Ottoman state apparatus. Only by adopting modern forms of government and rejecting the deceptively attractive European offers of assistance which continued to draw the country deeper into debt, could Abdulhamid establish a completely autonomous government, bestowing profits on the land rather than on foreign banking institutions.[17]

In the late 1870s, Pressel applied additional pressure in both Istanbul and Berlin to proceed with the Baghdad Railway's construction. German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, who showed no interest in involving Germany in internal Ottoman affairs, scorned Pressel's zeal: "We have our envoys in Istanbul, from whom I learn nothing, and this simple Swabian engineer tells me what to do!"[18] Believing Bismarck's hesitation stemmed from a general German ignorance of the Ottoman Empire, Pressel launched a one-man crusade to educate the German public on the possibilities the Ottoman Empire held for German enterprise. He hoped that at least this way he could get his pet project—the Baghdad Railway—off the drawing board.

In an 1888 publication, Pressel appealed directly to would-be supporters of the railway, praising the richness of Anatolia.[19] Hoping to dispel myths that the region was a jungle filled with savages, Pressel detailed his own experiences there to showcase the treasures the Ottoman Empire had to offer to the West.[20] He wrote that the region's natural resources and vibrant population made the construction of a railway particularly attractive. When complete, the railway would mostly benefit the land it traversed, raising the land's economic production and increasing its inhabitants' ability to consume. The apparent lack of productivity, Pressel claimed, stemmed from the absence of an internal means of transportation, not laziness. What farmer would plant more than he could consume, if there were no market for his surplus goods? With one quick stroke, the proposed railway would increase the acreage of land being cultivated, thereby improving the quantity and diversity of the crop harvest. For Pressel, the railway held the key to open up the uncultivated lands of the Anatolian, Cilician, and Mesopotamian plains. An increased harvest yield would lead to additional rail traffic naturally benefiting all whose investments had made the railway possible.[21]

Pressel also assuaged the fears of Europeans, who considered the Turks to be inherently lazy. He stressed that "the Anatolian was no less hard-working than the Italian."[22] Moreover, Anatolia could easily produce its own workforce. In the areas adjacent to the railway, the local population could deliver a considerable portion of the labor. If necessary, he assured that the Black Sea populations would willingly work since these people "liked to seek earnings outside their homeland."[23]

Despite the railway's obvious appeal to capital investors, locating financial support for his project proved more difficult than Pressel anticipated. He tried numerous times to attract the interest of German, French, English, and Italian financial institutions. In 1883 and 1887, Pressel accumulated enough financial support to make formal bids for the railway concession. The sultan summarily rejected Pressel's bids due to the hybrid (i.e., multinational) sources of the capital. Pressel quickly realized his project's only hope lay in obtaining the needed capital directly from an independent and uncompromised source. After an exhaustive search, Pressel found what he was looking for—an investor willing to finance the project.

By 1888, German financial aid had begun to trickle into the Ottoman Empire. Abdulhamid made explicit his wish to establish further contacts with German companies. As Maybelle Chapman later explained in her work on the Baghdad Railway:

> The Sultan believed he had a friend [in Germany]. Here was a Power who had no territorial or cultural ambitions demanding fulfillment at Turkey's expense. No Moslem people were her subjects, and, most important of all, her bankers and engineers were willing to construct railways for the Sultan where he wanted them, from the capital to the periphery of his empire.[24]

A German envoy to the Porte, Dr. Busch, wrote Bismarck that he had received the sultan's assurances that German capital investments would be particularly well received. The sultan still preferred giving the Anatolian railway network to a German company (rather than a French or English one), since the Germans apparently had no political plans in Asia Minor.[25]

Sultan Abdulhamid sent Pressel to Germany to muster support among bankers there. Yet, in spite of Pressel's best efforts, prospective investors still considered his proposal too risky. A despondent Pressel returned to Istanbul.

Pressel's disappointment did not last. He soon met Alfred Kaulla, the director of the private Württemburger Vereinsbank, who lived in Istanbul where he managed the weapons shipments for the manufacturer Mäuser & Löwe.[26] Kaulla was impressed with Pressel's planned railway and promised to use his connections to finance it. Returning to Germany, Kaulla presented the "Pressel Project" to Georg von Siemens, the director of the Deutsche Bank. Enticed by the project, Siemens immediately agreed to join forces with Kaulla to lead the campaign to acquire the railway concession.

Siemens, a well-known insider in German financial circles, knew his ability to conjure up funds for a distant railway would be limited by public opinion and investor confidence. If the stockholders showed interest in the project, the banks could readily invest. If not, his efforts would be as unfruitful as Pressel's had been. Gauging the anti-colonial mood prevalent in Germany in 1888, Siemens wrote: "There was no chance for the Pressel Project at the present time."[27] Yet, given Siemen's obvious enthusiasm for the project, it was unclear whether it was the railway, or Pressel, that Siemens believed had no chance.

When the youthful Kaiser Wilhelm II assumed the Prussian Hohenzollern throne in 1888, Siemens showed heightened interest in financing the Baghdad Railway project, as Wilhelm's desires to expand German influence abroad were well known. Yet, Siemens cautioned Pressel that financing such an undertaking lay beyond the Deutsche Bank's regular function. Given the cautious German political climate, he felt he could not commit the bank to a long-term endeavor unless its profitability were assured.[28] Shortly thereafter, Kaulla and Siemens appealed directly to the German Foreign Office to support the Anatolian Railway concession. A few weeks later the bankers received their answer from none other than Bismarck himself, who stated that, although he personally supported the railway, the German government could not guarantee any undertakings in foreign countries.[29]

Bismarck's refusal of official backing for the railway had little effect on the determined financiers. On October 4, 1888, Kaulla and Siemens submitted their bid for the railway to Abdulhamid. It was immediately accepted. In November, the German ambassador to Istanbul, H. von Radowitz, reminded Kaulla that "a German state interest in German economic endeavors in the Orient was completely unthinkable."[30] Nonetheless, the Deutsche Bank formed the Anatolian Railway Company on March 4, 1889, to manage the construction of the railway to Baghdad. Kaulla was later rewarded for his dedication when, at Abdulhamid's suggestion, he was nobilized by the King of Württemburg.[31]

Within a period of weeks, Pressel's Baghdad Railway project had progressed from its conceptual stage to pending reality. Yet, Wilhelm von Pressel, the father of the railway, was mysteriously absent from the rash negotiations taking place in late 1888. After years of dedicated work planning the railway project, Pressel watched from the sidelines as Georg von Siemens and the powerful investors at the Deutsche Bank circumvented his life's work.

Pressel felt that both Kaulla and Siemens had betrayed his trust. While telling Pressel the project had no chance of success, Siemens had secretly assumed its leadership. Even Abdulhamid's deep personal trust in Pressel had not deterred Siemens from taking away Pressel's coveted prize.

Siemens despised Pressel for his humanitarian desire to build the railway for the sake of the Ottoman Empire. Unlike Pressel, Siemens wanted to make the railway a purely German undertaking that employed German workers, used German materials, and benefited German investors. After Abdulhamid granted the Deutsche Bank the concession to build the railway's first section, Siemens chose the Philipp Holzmann Company in Frankfurt to administer the project under the direction of Kaulla's friend, Otto von Kapp.[32] The Deutsche Bank was clearly interested only in the railway's financial viability, its rapid returns and minimized losses—a perspective far removed from Pressel's good intentions.

Pressel knew the arrival of the Deutsche Bank in the Ottoman Empire would lead it to become increasingly dependent on foreign capital. He continued to wage a public battle to bring the railway under complete Ottoman control, so the Ottomans could use it as a springboard to recovery. His attempts to pool new sources of capital to outbid the Deutsche Bank were publicly scorned by Siemens and his close associates.

In his eighties, Pressel made a decision to live out the remainder of his life in the Ottoman Empire. He felt betrayed by his native Germany; a land he believed had changed beyond recognition, no longer recognizing the labor of its citizens. Pressel's sadness was evident. Writing shortly before his death in 1902, he stressed his resolve to fight to the end: "I have decided to fight for my project against the superior strength of my opponents as long as God gives me the strength, until my last breath, like a lioness for her cubs. Because I have the right to call the Anatolian Railway my child."[33]

Pressel relished his four decades in Turkey. He died alone yet content that he had lived well. In his final diary entry, Pressel wrote of his adopted homeland: "I withdraw from this life without any bitterness against this land that I have grown to love, and I wish it strength to tolerate the pernicious consequences."[34] He hoped that the next wave of German infiltration would not lead the Ottoman Empire to ruin.

Pressel continued to be dishonored in death. Although he had been pioneer of German railway projects and one of the Germany's more productive citizens, the official German dispatch bureau did not see fit to dignify him with a customary obituary notice.[35] Even in death, Pressel's opponents continued to attack his reputation in the German press. His son, Konrad, undertook a valiant campaign to restore his father's dignity as a man of character: honest, committed, responsible and caring to those around him.[36]

Despite the difficulties that Pressel encountered in his final years, his legacy was an important one. In his travels and writings, Pressel dispelled many of the cultural misconceptions that left many Germans hesitant to involve themselves in the Ottoman Empire. And by pursuing the Baghdad Railway with such determination, Pressel narrowed the gap between the cultures, allowing the German leadership to reconsider its future in the Ottoman Empire.

In the mid-1870s, the German and Ottoman empires appeared to be on increasingly divergent paths. The young Prussian-led German nation boasted the best-trained military on the European continent and a rapidly growing industrial sector. The Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, had reached its nadir; its economy and military were in shambles and its existence as a sovereign nation was under constant threat. Germany's recent wars of unification had won that nation a reputation for its efficient and well-trained modern military. Sultan Abdulhamid, who had been particularly impressed by Germany's ability to apply technology in war, was one of Germany's greatest admirers. His own military in shambles, Abdulhamid propositioned Germany to lend a helping hand.

When Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm I approved Abdulhamid's urgent request for German guidance in restructuring the Ottoman military in the early 1880s, German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck agreed with the decision, saying such a military mission would be very instructive for its members, providing Germany with "influence and informants."[37] In 1882, the first officers reported to Istanbul to begin training the Ottoman army in accordance with the famed Prussian standard. In 1883, General Colmar von der Goltz joined them, taking a position as subdirector of the military academies and later became a member of the Turkish general staff.[38]

In his memoirs, Goltz admitted that, like Pressel, he had approached his new commission with a certain hesitancy and caution. His mission was to take up residence in Istanbul and begin reforming the military academies. Fully aware of the hardships Moltke had faced 50 years earlier, Goltz knew his task would not be easy. To get a feel for the land and prepare himself mentally for the job, Goltz took a three-month sojourn to Turkey to acquaint himself with the country's many peoples and customs. On June 15, 1883, he settled into his office in the Ottoman Ministry of War to begin the daunting task of reform.

Goltz arrived with many preconceptions regarding the outcome of his mission. During the first few days of his stay in Istanbul, he wrote that the transformation of Turkey into a modern state was highly unlikely:

> The decay of the state has already progressed too far for the planned army reform to breathe new life into it. Missing are virtually all the prerequisites for a useful activity of the German officers. Even if it were successful in the end to bring the Turkish army in order in some fashion, it remains doubtful, whether it would be used according to German wishes in a European war.[39]

Goltz was particularly skeptical of Turkish military strategists who still held as their primary military objective a renewed march on the regions adjacent to the Danube River. Such a plan would never work, Goltz claimed, because Europe would never allow the Christian peoples freed from Turkish control to

be subject to it once again. His suggested the Turks focus their efforts on developing Anatolia, the historical source of their strength and resilience.

Goltz quickly got to the business at hand. Before he could tackle the project of restructuring the military, he first had to determine why the existing officer training schools were failing. Goltz initiated an exhaustive review of the policies and procedures being used at the academies. The findings of his review spoke volumes about the dilapidated state of the Turkish military apparatus. Military schools provided cadets no practical experience or training. Outdated French war manuals were being used to train cadets in spite of the fact that the cadets had no working knowledge of the French language and learned only via rote memorization. The cadets' physical and mental performance was weakened by the lack of proper nourishment. There were neither medical facilities nor periodic health examinations for cadets and sickness ran rampant.[40]

Goltz laid the blame for the grim state of affairs on the sultan's style of governance. He wrote: "As long as Abdulhamid and today's ruling classes remain on the rudder, the deliverance of Turkey is inconceivable."[41] The Turkish military's woes throughout the nineteenth century, he felt, could be blamed on the Ottomans' inability to govern in accordance with a modern changing world.

Goltz did not let his frustration with the Ottoman bureaucracy keep him from exploring life outside bureaucratic circles. Goltz soon learned to differentiate between Ottoman subjects. His position in the War Ministry allowed him to meet people from all walks of life; from blind beggars to ice cream salesmen to war widows seeking their husbands' pensions. He came to realize that the Turkish people were, in their hearts, competent, brave, modest, simple, and willing.[42] He wrote that the "wonderful climate, the amazing wonderful landscape, the *laissez faire-laissez aller* of the Turks, the bright easy-living, always pleasurable society, all works on me like a fountain of youth."[43] Despite his vocal criticism of the inefficient government, he thoroughly enjoyed the years he spent in Ottoman service.

In the markedly un-Prussian atmosphere of the Ministry of War, Goltz found room to praise Turkish principles, virtues, and talents. He found the Turks to be among some of the most gifted people he had ever known. Their hospitality was endless and Goltz greatly admired and appreciated their linguistic talents.[44] The Turks' social behavior was also worthy of emulation. As Goltz put it, they had "two characteristics, which we nervous Europeans mostly lack (a deficiency which clearly limits our effectiveness in the Orient), that we can no doubt learn from them: politeness and patience."[45] Although an outsider, Goltz felt at home in his surroundings.

The Porte's chief powerbrokers continually undermined the effectiveness of the Goltz's mission. His tedious assessment of the Ottoman military had little impact since Ottoman officials rarely acted upon his reports. Although he had come to Turkey at the sultan's request to serve as his counselor, Goltz soon found himself subjected to the whims of his employer. In spite of his misgivings, Goltz nonetheless stayed the course and continued to participate dutifully in the sultan's charade of military reform.

Trying hard to keep up appearances, Goltz knew that he was not accomplishing what he had been sent to do. He regretted the fact that his mission, like Moltke's, was failing. Also like Moltke, he refused to let himself become a scapegoat. He wrote:

> When we were sent here it was believed in Germany that Abdulhamid really wanted to remodel his army according to modern ideas. But that is not so! The case is as follows: Once upon a time the Effendis were so bored that they brought out one of the countless army reform projects and discussed it with the German reformers in the commission meeting. That was entertaining for a while. Then it was once more laid to the side. In reality we are nothing more than "His Majesty's Military Court Jesters." My only serious competitor here is a court dwarf who can throw his voice, walk on his hands and turn somersaults—all of which I cannot do.[46]

Goltz soon realized that Abdulhamid was only interested in promulgating the myth of security to attract further capital investments from the Great Powers. After a decade of service, Goltz elected not to extend his contract and returned to Germany in the autumn of 1895.

Although his cynicism ran deep, Goltz did not let his disgust for the antics of the Porte cloud his overall impression of the Turks. His firsthand interaction with Turks from all walks of life led him to praise their worthiness as partners. When he returned home, he made a personal quest to correct others' misconceptions about the Ottoman Empire. He was astounded by how little fellow Germans knew about the Ottoman Empire. The Germans that he met were consistently shocked by his news that Ottoman and German offices functioned in very much the same way.[47] Goltz hoped to promote further German involvement in the Ottoman Empire by dispelling some of the prevailing myths about the region. Istanbul, he claimed, was not "an oasis in the desert, but more an entrance gate to a beautiful and, in places, not an unfamiliar world."[48] In his memoirs, Goltz referred to his decade in Istanbul as the best ten years of his life.

Goltz believed that the Ottoman Empire's problems stemmed from the lack of population needed to develop the empire's immense area, not from its inability to modernize.[49] Goltz also believed that the Ottoman Empire was capable of initiating changes on its own without becoming a satellite of the West. The key to an Ottoman revival lay in its fertile land:

> The people and the government [of Turkey] have to strive for an Islamic culture-state that no longer sees its reason for existence and as new conquests or in the obstinate holding of older territorial gains, but rather in the prosperity of the earth where the Ottomans have the undisputed predominance and right of possession. Also, in its new form, Turkey, as the supreme power of Islam, would continue to have a meaningful political role while her distance from the European trade could only do her good.[50]

Throughout his tenure, Goltz developed an extensive network of connections between the Porte and German companies. His appointment to the Ottoman War Ministry provided lucrative inroads for a host of German contractors. He had arranged sales of large quantities of cannons and other weapons from the manufacturers Krupp, Schichau, and Mäuser & Löwe.[51] Rearming the Ottoman

army with German-made weapons, Goltz served the interests of both countries and helped establish the foundation for further bilateral trade. By the time Goltz resigned his commission, German commodities like glassware, knives, razors, plows, textiles, leather goods, and musical instruments had begun to trickle onto the Turkish market.

German political activity in the Ottoman Empire developed more cautiously than its commercial counterpart. Speaking before the Reichstag in 1876, Bismarck declared that Germany would not interfere in the Near East. The region, he claimed, held no German interests "worth the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier."[52] He felt that the region was too unstable to risk formal political involvement with the Ottomans. He also frowned on private investors who continued the unwise practice of investing in a bankrupt country. Bismarck adhered to a strict official policy of nonengagement in the Ottoman Empire.

Bismarck's hesitation was legitimate. Why should his fledgling Germany get involved in such an obvious gamble? Neither history nor geography called on her to play a role in Ottoman politics. German trade with Turkey remained insignificant, and the Turkish securities in Germany had been invested exclusively in non-German enterprises. Furthermore, few Germans lived in the Ottoman Empire, and no German cultural or missionary activity could be found anywhere in the Near East at the time.

Historians have generally accepted Bismarck's claim of disinterest in the Ottoman Empire at face value.[53] Bismarck is said to have preferred focusing his efforts on the consolidation of the empire at home rather than expanding German interests abroad.[54] Bismarck once claimed that he never read the correspondence sent to him from his ambassador in Istanbul.[55] After all, why get involved in risky ventures in an unknown land when it would only succeed in raising suspicion among the more established powers?

Bismarck refused to sponsor any private undertakings in the Ottoman Empire. He notified entrepreneurs that they would have to pursue their ventures without any securities of the German government. Of course, he never intended to discourage German investment in Ottoman enterprises, he simply recognized that difficulties would arise if Germany meddled politically in a land already so compromised by the expansionist schemes of the other Great Powers. "Turkey," he wrote, "could never become dangerous for us, but her enemies could possibly become our enemies."[56]

Despite Bismarck's warnings, interstate trade between the regions continued to grow. While Bismarck publicly denied any interest in the Ottoman Empire, documents found in the Foreign Office files reveal that, in private, Bismarck expended tremendous personal effort to keep abreast of the changing Ottoman landscape and the growing German influence there.[57]

Unlike his British and French counterparts, Bismarck did not view the "Oriental Question" as a question of war.[58] He realized that Germany could gain a distinct advantage by appearing to be the party least interested in Ottoman affairs. He was convinced that the longer Germany stayed out of the fray and followed a course of inaction, the greater its advantage in future Near Eastern

trade—even if this advantage resulted only in a short-term extension of peace in that region.[59]

Although he had supported the Goltz mission for the sake of military intelligence, Bismarck demanded that all German personnel living in the Ottoman Empire pledge an oath of allegiance to the Ottoman state. His wait-and-see attitude frustrated many German military officers, who felt their efforts to bridge the cultures were consistently undermined by the German embassy in Istanbul. Bismarck's inaction, they felt, frustrated their best efforts to modernize the Ottoman Empire and furthered the decline of German influence at the Porte.[60]

With the ascension of Wilhelm II to the Hohenzollern throne in 1888, the German political landscape was permanently transformed. Wilhelm openly criticized Bismarck's isolationist policies while publicly expressing his own expansionist longings. Since Germany had become a booming industrial nation sporting unprecedented population growth, Wilhelm insisted that Germany look beyond its borders to acquire additional resources. Not only did the Ottoman Empire appear to contain an endless supply of these resources, its ruler—Sultan Abdulhamid—had already developed a strong predilection for German assistance.

Wilhelm traveled to Istanbul in November 1889 to take a firsthand look at the Ottoman Empire's offerings. The hospitable Abdulhamid rolled out the red carpet, giving him a reception worthy of a prophet. Wilhelm was somewhat overwhelmed by the gifts his host bestowed on him. Wilhelm received a prime piece of real estate in Therapia on the Bosphorus, which later served as the German ambassador's summer residence. By the time he returned home, Wilhelm was convinced that he had found in Turkey an important friend and political ally. From that point on, Wilhelm took it upon himself to pressure Bismarck to pursue active German involvement in the Ottoman Empire.

The rifts that developed between Bismarck and Wilhelm, which eventually led to Bismarck's resignation in 1890, have been well documented. Bismarck's successor, Count Leo von Caprivi, placed his full support behind Wilhelm's expansionist policies, drafting laws that revitalized trade and other restrictions between the two partners. Germany negotiated a new commercial treaty recognizing the Ottoman's right to regulate their own commerce—a sign of confidence no other power had been willing to show the Ottoman regime.[61] By the end of that year, Germany stood poised to offer assistance in the Ottoman Empire to any German exporter requiring it.

The Anatolian Railway Company (ARC), headed by Siemens and Kaulla, moved ahead with its work confident that its actions would receive the support of both chancellor and emperor.[62] The ARC immediately initiated construction on the Istanbul–Ankara route. Although the builders encountered obstacles along the way (e.g., labor shortages, influenza, dengue fever, and robbers), the railway was in full operation by December 1892.[63] Having met all the terms of the contract agreement, the Anatolian Railway bolstered the sultan's confidence in German workmanship.

While the Anatolian Railway was being built, Abdulhamid rallied for support to extend the railway to Baghdad. Aware that the ARC management was

wary of the railway's continuation, Abdulhamid telegraphed his ambassador in Berlin, Tewfik Pasha, to gain Wilhelm's support for a Baghdad extension.[64] Wilhelm responded favorably to the sultan's wish, pledging German support for the enterprise.

Since no preliminary study existed detailing the technical difficulties or the possible prospects for profit of the Ankara–Sivas–Baghdad route, Kaulla requested that the ARC be allowed to do so. An eager Abdulhamid consented to the survey, agreeing to cover its expenses. Without saying a word, the sultan all but guaranteed he would favor a German bid for the concession. Unfortunately, the commission advised against asking for the concession, finding that the geographical difficulties of the proposed route outweighed its potential profits.[65] To appease the sultan, the ARC proposed a more lucrative route branching southward from Eskisehir to Konya—a city situated in the heart of the fertile Anatolian plain. The sultan approved the route, the concessions were signed, and the completed railway opened in July 1896.

The successful and timely completion of the Anatolian Railway served as a blueprint for future Turco-German collaboration in the Baghdad Railway. It met the financial and political aspirations of its sponsors, turning a tremendous profit in its first year of operation.[66] In spite of the difficulties that the developers encountered en route, they met their contractual obligations and opened the sections on time. In its 1897 annual shareholders' report, the ARC claimed that Germany's prestige in the Ottoman Empire had grown, and described the company's relations with the Imperial Ottoman Government, the local authorities, and all classes of people as "more cordial than ever."[67]

The Anatolian Railway also served another important function. In the spring of 1897, when ethnic Greeks living on the island of Crete demanded that their island be recognized as part of Greece, the Ottoman Empire used the Anatolian Railway to mobilize its forces against Greece and transport soldiers quickly to the front. Within two weeks, the war ended with a resounding Ottoman victory.[68] The railway's success reinforced Abdulhamid's belief that a well-placed railway would help consolidate and control of his empire's distant provinces.[69] Efforts to market his Baghdad Railway resumed with renewed vigor.

The Deutsche Bank alerted the Foreign Office to its readiness to build the Anatolian Railway when the German ambassador in Istanbul requested it and lent his support.[70] Von Radolin, however, suspected that any renewed construction along the route would only raise ire among the British and French already suspicious of Germany's motives. As the sultan's confidant, von Radolin knew the toll that the constant intrigue had waged on the sultan's mental health. The sultan admitted the unrelenting stress often brought him to tears.[71] Yet, he feared showing too much favoritism to Germany, believing his empire ran the risk of losing far more than it gained.

Von Radolin did not share Wilhelm's vision of an active collaborative Turco-German partnership. In November 1897, Baron Adolf Freiherr Marschall von Bieberstein—Germany's former foreign secretary—replaced him. Although some considered Marschall's acceptance of this post a demotion, he brought to

the office a willingness to acquire political support for German financial undertakings in the Ottoman Empire.[72]

The frequent recipient of letters from von Radolin expressing his sorrow and compassion for the sultan's welfare, Marschall was well prepared for the task that lay before him. He vowed to improve his office's relations with the sultan. He developed close personal ties with Abdulhamid, publicly praising his intelligence, demeanor, and fair sense of justice while chastising the other powers for their despicable treatment of the sultan.[73]

Under Marschall's leadership, German economic interests in Turkey took a decidedly aggressive turn. He set out to separate Germany from the pack, lashing out against the behavior of France and Britain. He claimed that German capital built up the lands it exploited, and scolded those who robbed the land and gave nothing in return.[74] He maintained that German capital and German intelligence should be used to develop the Ottoman Empire to benefit the Germans and the Turks. In a dispatch to German Chancellor, Prince Chlodwig von Hohenlohe, Marschall suggested that the German government take into consideration the countless profitable opportunities at its disposal in the Ottoman Empire:

> [There is] plenty of scope for useful future expansion [and] for solid enterprises employing German capital and German industry. There are, quite apart from special services for the army, railways, ports, and bridges to build, electrical works to erect for lighting, tramways, etc. and the really wretched conditions of most of the steamers that ply regularly here offer good chances for German competition. We shall naturally not be left alone to do all this and certain concessions will be granted to others. But one thing we must claim for ourselves and that is linking the present sphere of interests of the Anatolian railways with the river districts of the Tigris and Euphrates, and so on to the Persian Gulf.[75]

For Marschall, Germany's future in the Ottoman Empire hinged on the construction of the Baghdad Railway by a German company. In an April 9, 1898, report to Hohenlohe, Marschall suggested that the time had come to pursue the Baghdad Railway as a purely German enterprise. He warned against efforts to solicit foreign capital for the project since it would likely spawn growing mistrust on the part of the sultan. In order to secure the concession and the sultan's confidence, he believed Germany needed to take a proactive stance, showing its dedication by beginning certain preparations along the route.[76] Marschall assured von Hohenlohe that the sultan would be impressed by such a display of conviction.

In the following month, fearing the window of opportunity was beginning to close, Marschall again filed an urgent request for the German government to act swiftly. He claimed that the political service that the Germans had provided the sultan had led to an infinite respect for the Kaiser and a great sympathy for all things German even in the most remote regions of the empire. Yet, he warned, these sympathetic feelings could easily turn to hatred if Germany failed to act responsibly, leaving the Ottomans to fend for themselves.[77]

While Marschall turned up the heat on his superiors, the representatives of France and Britain pressured the sultan to grant them the Baghdad Railway con-

cession. Marschall appealed to the sultan to counter their bullying tactics and show that he alone, as the leader of the land, decided the fate of Turkish policy.[78] Abdulhamid, however, chose not to follow his advice.

Privy to the events unfolding in Istanbul, Wilhelm decided it was an opportune time to get involved. In October 1898, Wilhelm and his wife arrived in Istanbul and began a lengthy tour of the empire's larger cities. Wilhelm hoped that his visit would alleviate the sultan's fears and place the Baghdad Railway negotiations back on track.

Abdulhamid received his respected friend with panache, orchestrating a huge welcome parade in Wilhelm's honor at his Yildiz Palace. He escorted Wilhelm to the spot in the city walls where Sultan Mehmet II had broken through in 1453. Wilhelm then took a special train to Hereke (between Istanbul and Izmit) where he was greeted with great fanfare.

After a whirlwind tour in and around Istanbul, Wilhelm traveled on to Jerusalem where he visited the Omar Mosque and dedicated a Protestant and Catholic church. From there, he went to Damascus where, while visiting Saladin's tomb, he proclaimed his friendship and vowed to protect the world's 300 million Muslims.[79] Although Wilhelm's words resonated throughout the Ottoman Empire, Abdulhamid was most grateful for Wilhelm's pledge. By the time Wilhelm returned home, he and the sultan had signed a host of friendship, trade, and shipping treaties. However, the most desirous prize—the Baghdad Railway concession—was not forthcoming.

Despite the adamant personal crusades of Wilhelm and Marschall to mold the Baghdad Railway into a tool of German foreign policy, not all Germans involved in the discussion shared the euphoria surrounding the railway's prospects. Georg von Siemens, director of the Deutsche Bank, remained skeptical of the railway's viability. He pointed to the recent crop failures in Anatolia that had taken their toll on the ARC's annual profits. He also speculated that the German economy currently lacked the strength to serve as the railway's sole support.[80] Siemens contended that Germany needed to consider broadening the railway's financial base, to reduce the risk of the railway enterprise.

Abdulhamid was keen not to be forced into making a decision he might later regret. He played devil's advocate in the negotiations, examining each offer from top to bottom, exploring every possible angle in the hope of flushing out an ulterior motive. Marschall's patience soon wore thin. After all of the magnificent works the Germans had accomplished in the Ottoman Empire, Marschall wondered how Abdulhamid could have doubts as to their intentions? Marschall soon recognized that the waiting game was part of the sultan's strategy. He concluded that in Turkey one had to think and behave differently than in the rest of the world because "the geometric maxim that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line is not known in business affairs."[81] The waiting game wore on.

A disgusted Siemens quickly grew tired of waiting for the sultan's final approval. Frustrated by the sultan's tedious process of review, Siemens could not contain his anger: "I don't give a damn about the concession or the whole Baghdad Railway!"[82] He considered dropping out of the negotiations entirely, al-

though he feared such action on his part might cost Marschall his job. Writing from Istanbul, Siemens' desperation was evident: "Everything here appears doubtful. . . . Today it is immaterial whether the contract is signed or not, for the signature is [only] a formality."[83]

The major setbacks were disagreements over the route and French and British counterproposals. Abdulhamid continued to stress that the railway should be built from Ankara toward Baghdad. The Germans suggested that a line from Konya would be wiser for it would keep the Russians from feeling threatened. Abdulhamid promised that once he reached his preliminary decision, he would then fund a commission to study both options before the final contract was signed.

In May 1899, the Deutsche Bank signed an agreement with the French controlled Imperial Ottoman Bank to fund the Baghdad Railway.[84] In October 1899, the level of intrigue surrounding the railway subsided when the British withdrew from the negotiations to pursue the more pressing matter of the Boer insurrection in South Africa. The sultan used the distraction to declare changes in the railway transactions. The railway would remain the property and expense of the Ottoman state, funded both by government loans and operations contracts with the ARC.

Finally, in December 1899, after the Deutsche Bank deposited 200,000 Turkish lira in the Ottoman treasury, the preliminary railway concession was granted to the ARC. The contract gave the ARC eight years to build a railway extending from Konya to Baghdad and Basra. It further stipulated that the Ottoman government reserved the right to purchase the railway back from the ARC at any time. Siemens was not pleased with the sultan's last minute revelation or the terms of the concession, and he felt that the sultan's decision was both risky and premature. Siemens still maintained that the railway, to be profitable, had to remain a private enterprise funded by international finance capital. "The so-called Baghdad Railway concession is only a piece of paper," he quipped sarcastically, "for which I paid 200,000 Turkish lira!"[85]

After years of negotiations, the patience of the German delegation finally paid off. The proposed railway, to be built by German interests for the Ottoman state, bore a strong resemblance to the model envisioned by Pressel three decades earlier. Construction could commence immediately after the survey was completed. By 1908, if all went according to plan, the railway would connect Istanbul to the Persian Gulf.

Unlike their competitors, the Germans working in Istanbul chose to interact with the Ottomans to help place the empire back on its feet. Of course, their efforts would have amounted to nothing had they not encountered a receptive Ottoman populace. By overcoming their initial fears and stereotypes, influential Germans discovered that the Ottomans were worthy of respect and emulation.

As the true architect of the Turco-German relationship, Sultan Abdulhamid was instrumental in forging a bilateral partnership. Throughout the three decades of his reign, he took great strides to establish extensive personal contacts with the German representatives. His experience allowed him to develop a deep respect for German efficiency, culture, and workmanship. When the time came to

decide the Baghdad Railway matter, it was no coincidence that Abdulhamid granted his coveted railway concession to a German company.

In the final days of the nineteenth century, the Turco-German partnership—practically nonexistent decades before—stood prominently at the center of both the Ottoman and German imperial strategies. After decades of increased intercultural awareness, the two nations stood on the brink of establishing a formal partnership. Although German diplomatic, financial, commercial, and cultural interests appeared not to be on the same page in 1899, by the time construction of the Baghdad Railway began in 1903, all parties concurred that the railway had become a matter of German national interest. The Turks, however, had other plans for their railway. As the railway took shape on the Ottoman frontier, the dynamics of the Turco-German partnership would drastically change.

NOTES

1. M. E. Yapp, "Europe in the Turkish Mirror," *Past and Present* 37 (1992): 139. The *Dar–al–Harb* (literally "House of War") comprised the unflattering area subdivided along religious lines. The *Dar–al–Harb* encompassed the Orthodox Christian world of *Rüm* (Rome) and the Latin world of *Firangistan* (Land of the Franks). Yapp quotes Muslim historian, Ibn Khaldün and the cadi of Toledo, Sa'id ibn Ahmad, who responded, when asked about Europe and its inhabitants: "God knows what goes on there" and "there was nothing to be learned from the northern barbarians. . . . They were more like beasts than men."

2. Fatma M. Göçek, *East Encounters West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

3. In 1780, Friedrich II attempted to convince Catherine to draw Turkey into the Russo-Prussian alliance in order to build a more formidable defense against Austria. Despite Catherine's resounding refusal to include a long-term enemy in a short-term conflict with Austria, Prussia nonetheless seized the opportunity to strengthen its military ties with Turkey.

4. Jehuda Wallach, Anatomie einer Militärhilfe: Die preußisch-deutsche Militärmissionen in der Türkei, 1835–1919 (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1976), 17–25.

5. See Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1964), and Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961). With the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1856, the Black Sea was declared neutral and, the territories of Moldavia and Wallachia independent. The Danube River was opened for navigation. Russia agreed to resign its protectorate over the Orthodox Church in Turkey in return for the granting of privileges to Christian Ottoman subjects.

6. For more on the Young Ottoman movement, see Serif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962); Robert Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963); and Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963).

7. Schöllgen (1984), 32.

8. This study is the first to look in depth at Pressel's years of service in the Ottoman Empire. German historian Johann Manzenreiter mentioned Pressel briefly in his mono-

graph on finance imperialism and the Baghdad Railway construction, but only took into account Pressel's official role in the railway. See Johann Manzenreiter, *Die Bagdadbahn als Beispiel für die Entstehung des Finanzimperialismus in Europa, 1872–1903* (Bochum: N. Brockmeyer, 1982). Baron Hirsch, whose French company built railways across Thrace in the late 1870s, had helped further depleted the Ottoman treasury. By 1874, the Ottoman Empire had run up a debt of more than 182,000 pounds sterling.

9. J. A. Zahm, *From Berlin to Bagdad to Babylon* (London: D. Appleton & Company, 1922), 152. Midhat based his plan on an elaborate survey of the Euphrates River valley made by Britain's Colonel Chesney in 1835–1837. Even at that early stage, Chesney had alerted the Ottoman leadership of the benefits of building such a railway. The primary object was to shorten the journey from England to India, which was then made across the Isthmus of Suez, or around the Cape of Good Hope.

10. DM, NL13, Wilhelm von Pressel, Korrespondenzen 1900–1902.

11. DM, NL13, Wilhelm von Pressel. Pressel 1875.

12. ÖStA-AV. Teilnachlaß Wilhelms von Pressel. Wilhelm von Pressel, "Situation in der Türkei, 1876, Charakteristiken und Aphorismen" (Vienna, 1876), 1.

13. Ibid., 14.

14. ÖstA-AV. Teilnachlaß Wilhelms von Pressel, Ausschnitte 1940.

15. Pressel (1876), 18.

16. Ibid. Pressel clearly doubted the quality of "education" these students had received. "If you can call the approximation of European colloquial forms and a completely surface understanding such."

17. Ibid., 28–29.

18. ÖStA-AV, Teilnachlaß Wilhelms von Pressel, Ausschnitte 1940.

19. Wilhelm von Pressel. "Das Anatolische Eisenbahnnetz," *Zeitschrift für Eisenbahnen und Dampfschiffahrt der Östereichisch-ungarischen Monarchie* 5 and 6 (1888). [Copy of article located in DM-NL13 #41]

20. Ibid. Pressel writes "Anatolia is no Congoland and its inhabitants are no savages, and, based on their tradition, they are prone—like all civilized people—to a rapid rise in their extravagance for pleasure and even luxury."

21. Pressel, "Das Anatolische Eisenbahnnetz," 2–7. Pressel stressed that although Anatolian arability may have rescinded, it was not exhausted; the land may have become impoverished, but it was not poor. The preconditions and forces required to create new profitable activity were already in place. All investors needed to do was capitalize on these preconditions to bring these dormant forces to life.

22. Ibid. "Die Anatolier sind nicht weniger arbeitsam wie die Italiener, welche man ehedem bei uns allgemein für träge gehalten hat, bis man durch den Augenschein eines Besseren belehrt wurde."

23. Ibid., 10.

24. Chapman, 18–19.

25. Hajo Holborn, "Deutschland und die Türkei, 1878–1890," *Einzelschriften zur Politik und Geschichte*, 13 (1926): 84.

26. Manzenreiter, 47.

27. Ibid., 49–50. Letter from Georg von Siemens to Dr. C. Theo. Coch (23 March 1888).

28. Schöllgen (1984), 39. Excerpt from a letter from Georg von Siemens to Wilhelm von Pressel. Siemens wrote: "einerseits die Finanzierung derartiger Unternehmungen außerhalb des Bereichs der regelmäßigen Tätigkeit der Deutschen Bank liege, andererseits auch die augenblicklich obwaltenden politischen Verhältnisse es nicht rätlich erschienen ließen, sich auf weitaussehende Unternehmungen einzulassen, selbst wenn mit Gewißheit auf eine Rentabilität gerechnet werden dürfe."

29. Earle, 41. "German entrepreneurs assume a risk in capital investments in railway construction in Anatolia—a risk which lies, first, in the difficulties encountered in the enforcement of the law in the East, and, second, in the increase of such difficulties through war or other complications. The danger involved therein for German entrepreneurs must be assumed exclusively by the entrepreneurs, and the latter must not count upon the protection of the German Empire against eventualities connected with precarious enterprises in foreign countries."

30. Holborn, 101.

31. Manzenreiter, 96.

32. Lodemann and Pohl, 20.

33. Franz Kreuter, *Wilhelm Pressel, 1821–1902* (Würzburg: H. Stürtz, 1902), 22. Copy located in ÖStA-AV, Teilnachlaß Wilhelms von Pressel.

34. Ibid., 24.

35. See "Ein Opfer der Hochfinanz," *Ostdeutsche Rundschau* 174 (26 June 1902).

36. ÖstA-AV. Teilnachlaß Wilhelms von Pressel. Korrespondenzen 1900–1902. Briefe. Bagdadbahn. Konrad Pressel an Prof. Dr. Ing. Birk in Prague (11 June 1902). Pressel's son, Konrad, was deeply insulted that his father's opponents continued to slander Pressel posthumously. He asks Professor Birk, a close acquaintance of Wilhelm von Pressel, to help clear his father's name.

37. Wallach (1976), 27. Bismarck's remarks made this famous comment on July 19, 1880.

38. Sievers, 14–15. Goltz was promoted to the Ottoman General Staff in 1876.

39. Friedrich Freiherr von der Goltz, *Colmar von der Goltz: Denkwürdigkeiten*, 113–32.

40. Ibid., 113.

41. Ibid., 121.

42. Ibid., 132.

43. Ibid., 124.

44. Ibid., 183. "What a talent for foreign languages in each Oriental so to speak [as if it were] a gift inherited from the gods, of which we have obtained in recent times multiple examples. Turkish officers, who lived only a few years in Germany, enter with success as military scribes in the German language, while we Germans after many years of work have hardly learned to cope with the rudiments of the Turkish language."

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid., 134.

47. Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz, "Türkische Bureaustunden," *Velhagen und Klasings Monatshefte* 18, no. 2 (1903): 179.

48. See Karl Kannenberg, *Kleinasiens Naturschätze: Seine wichtigsten Tiere, Kulturpflanzen und Mineralschätze vom wirtschaftlichen und Kulturgeschichtlichen Standpunkt* (Berlin: Gebrüder Borntraeger, 1897), xii.

49. F. Goltz, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 132.

50. Ibid., 133.

51. Schöllgen (1984), 35–37. Much has been written about the delivery of Krupp cannons to the Ottomans as a sign of Germany's desire to arm the Ottoman Empire to the hilt for the benefit of German industry. Schöllgen points out that although the purchase of German weapons did increase during Goltz's mission, the numbers of deliveries did not remain consistent throughout. The first Krupp deliveries under Goltz were made in 1885 and continued through 1886 when Krupp produced 440 cannons for the sultan. After these initial installments, deliveries ceased for seven year period until 1893 when a further 78 cannons were delivered to Turkey.

52. Wolf, 7.

53. Wallach (1976), 25–29. Wallach chastises historians who accept Bismarck's 1876 speech at face value. Discussing the Pomeranian grenadier thesis, Wallach states: "I would suggest that the time has come to regard the theory as obsolete, to transfer it to its proper place in the sphere of legend, and to adjust historiography to the facts revealed by thorough research" (28).

54. Schöllgen (1984), 15. "Über das primäre Ziel der Außenpolitik Otto von Bismarcks. . . kann es kaum einen Zweifel geben: Sein Bemühen galt der Sicherung der jungen Nation in der Mitte des europäischen Kontinents."

55. Butterfield, 76.

56. Ibid., 33.

57. Ibid., 28.

58. Karl Helfferich, "Die deutsche Türkenpolitik," *Im Neuen Deutschland* 11 (1921): 1–2. See also Paul Dehn, Deutschland und die Orientbahnen (Munich: J. Roth, 1883), 3.

59. Schöllgen (1984), 15. Quotes Bismarck saying, "Deutschland werde . . . in zukünftigen orientalischen Händeln, wenn es sich zurückzuhalten weiß, den Vortheil, daß es die in orientalischen Fragen am wenigsten interessirte Macht ist, um so sicherer werthen können, je länger es seinen Einsatz zurückhält, auch wenn dieser Vortheil nur in längerem Genusse des Friedens bestände."

60. Ibid., 36–37. Schöllgen found the following unsigned letter dated December 21, 1891, in a memorandum sent to the Krupp Corporation in Essen. He assumes from the context that the author was a distraught German officer working in Istanbul.

When we came here the sultan . . . was looking for Germany's complete support. He demonstrated this by requesting that German officials be placed in all branches of administration. The Chancellor [Bismarck] was of the opinion that one could not yet count on the Turks, that they were unreliable and, especially for that reason, one could not allow oneself to be compromised with respect to the Russians. In order not to avoid this situation, The Embassy continuously tries to document that we are here only as Turkish instructors and that our military endeavors were never supported. As a result, our position has been organizationally and militarily impeded; we never found the backing or energy of our embassy . . . many of us, who, in our positions at the Porte had won the special trust of the sultan, were intentionally alienated from the sultan by the embassy, so that [our relationship] would not be considered something political. By doing this, the ambassador achieved his goal and our influence is exactly nil. . . .We see the influence Germany once had continue to fade while the French [influence] grows.

61. Wolf, 9. The treaty was signed on August 26, 1890.

62. Manzenreiter, 83.

63. Lodemann and Pohl, 20.

64. Butterfield, 12. Both Siemens and Kaulla considered the proposed continuation of the current line to Baghdad a very bad investment.

65. Wolf, 15.

66. See graphs in M. von Hecker, "Die Eisenbahnen der asiatischen Türkei," *Archiv für Eisenbahnwesen* 37, nos. 1 and 2 (1914): 744; 1057; 1283; 1539. In 1896 alone, the Anatolian Railway's kilometric earnings literally doubled from 5,100 to 10, 200 francs.

67. Earle, 35.

68. Sievers, 33.

69. Between 1895 and 1897, a considerable amount of unrest erupted involving the Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire. Wanting to contain the rebellion as soon as possible, Abdulhamid, proposed an additional railway to extend to Diyarbekir and Erzurum. There were no immediate takers.

70. Manzenreiter, 102.

71. GP #3970. Von Radolin an Marschall (9 January 1893).

72. Erich Lindow, *Freiherr Marschall von Bieberstein als Botschafter in Konstantinopel, 1897–1912* (Danzig: U.W. Kafemann, 1934), 13. In 1894 Wilhelm had stated: "it was impossible to govern with [Marschall] any longer," claiming that his behavior was "un-Prussian." Marschall served in Istanbul as German ambassador for fifteen years (1897–1912).

73. Ibid., 36. Lindow writes that from a distance, Marschall, like all European politicians, thought the Turks were bloodthirsty fanatics, for whom Christians were unprotected victims. Proximity taught him that things were much different.

74. Wolf, 19.

75. Flaningham, 320.

76. Manzenreiter, 111.

77. GP #3367. Marschall an Hohenlohe (28 May 1898).

78. Lindow, 61.

79. "May the sultan and may the three hundred million Muslims living scattered on this earth who respect him as their caliph, rest assured that the German Emperor will always be their friend."

80. Lodemann and Pohl, 46. Excerpt from a letter sent by German Foreign Secretary B. Graf Furst von Bülow to Kaiser Wilhelm (17 March 1899).

81. GP #3992. Marschall an Hohenlohe (27 November 1899).

82. Lindow, 49.

83. Ibid., 63.

84. Butterfield, 16. The Deutsche Bank provided 60 percent of the needed capital. The Imperial Ottoman Bank provided the remaining 40 percent.

85. Lodemann and Pohl, 49–51.

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2

Early Trials and Conventional Wisdom, 1899–1908

> The new Alexander will have to come from Germany or at least be German-inspired.
>
> —Paul Dehn, 1883

In the final days of the nineteenth century, the director of the Deutsche Bank, Georg von Siemens and the Ottoman Minister of Public Works, Zihni Pasha, signed the preliminary Baghdad Railway Concession, opening a new era in Turco-German cooperation. The railway project embodied a new spirit of intercultural collaboration that had only recently come to the fore. The Anatolian Railway Company, a subsidiary of the Deutsche Bank, agreed to build a railway from Konya to Baghdad to Basra within an eight-year time span. The convention led the parties to assume with optimism that the railway would serve the interests of both empires, placing the Ottoman Empire back on its feet while providing Germany its fair share in the developing Ottoman markets.

However, eight years later, the railway stood less than 10 percent complete; its construction stalled due to the lack of finances, common vision, and the means to overcome obstacles on the construction sites. Rather than solidifying the Turco-German partnership as expected, the arrival of German financiers and railway engineers in the Ottoman Empire further magnified the differences that existed between the two imperial visions of the railway.

This chapter examines several critical turning points in the Turco-German relationship between 1899 and 1908. It begins with a detailed account of the first official German exploration of the proposed route and shows how the expedition's findings led to changes in Germany's overall railway strategy. It then examines the terms of the 1903 Baghdad Railway Concession and reveals how it served both Ottoman and German interests. Next, the chapter documents the construction of the railway's first section and explores how its completion influenced the Turco-German relationship and the economic renewal of Anatolia. The chapter concludes with a critical analysis of a series of events that led to a moratorium on construction, placing the railway's completion in jeopardy.

With the signing of the 1899 agreement, the future of Turco-German intercultural cooperation seemed assured. The terms of the concession gave all involved parties cause for celebration. For the German government, the concession represented a great political victory over its competitors. The railway, serving as the main arm of German expansion, would provide the fastest transportation means between Europe and the Persian Gulf, breaking England's monopoly on the East-West trade. For the financiers in the Deutsche Bank, on the other hand, the railway promised to tap the Ottoman Empire's extraordinarily rich agricultural and mineral resources, providing fuel for German industry and food for its tables. The railway would play an important part in the Ottoman imperial strategy as well. Providing access to the empire's outlying reaches, it would consolidate the sultan's power, facilitating the rapid deployment of troops to enforce compliance with the sultan's will. In reaching agreement with the German parties, Abdulhamid assured that his coveted railway, planned for more than two decades, would be designed by German engineers—the best in the railway business.

The parties in the agreement owed a special debt of gratitude to Baron Adolf Freiherr Marschall von Bieberstein—Germany's stalwart ambassador to the Porte. His masterful two-front crusade—to convince the German government to make the railway a central component of its expansionist policy while persuading Abdulhamid to trust his strategic railway to capable German firms, had ended in triumph. By making the Baghdad Railway his top priority, Marschall single-handedly elevated Germany's position in the Ottoman Empire, paving the way for further intercultural collaboration.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Germany had the highest birthrate, the fastest growing industry, and one of the strongest militaries among Europe's Great Powers. This trend toward urbanization and industrialization, however, was laden with consequences. If Germany remained on the Bismarckian path of self-containment insulated from world affairs, the country ran the risk of becoming overpopulated, underfed, and subject to a collapsed industrial sector. Fears of insufficient resources to maintain its industrial growth and inadequate foodstuffs to feed its population led many German officials to agree that German expansion was necessary. Although the Orient Express already linked Berlin to Istanbul, the Baghdad Railway promised to open the rich mineral deposits and agriculture of Anatolia, Cilicia, and Mesopotamia to German exploitation while serving as the principal artery of Germany's eastward expansion.

The Baghdad Railway frequently appears in the historiographical debate as a product and symptom of German expansionist will. Historians have characterized the Deutsche Bank and its subsidiaries as a logical extension of German *Weltpolitik*, working within the strict parameters set by the German government. As chief director and choreographer of this expansion Wilhelm II is depicted as a great manipulator, making calculated moves to incorporate divergent German interests into this one overarching stratagem. As one of the more prominent of these foreign interests, the Baghdad Railway is understood to be little more than a pawn in Wilhelm's quest for empire.[1]

This chapter challenges the popular hegemonic characterization of German imperial expansion, revealing deep rifts in opinion between the railway's political, financial, and cultural advocates. Although these factions each actively supported the proliferation of German interests into the Ottoman Empire, they rarely agreed on how the railway could best accomplish this feat. The German Foreign Office—the chief proponent of Wilhelmine *Weltpolitik*—maintained that the railway's greatest strength lay in its strategic value once it became fully operational. Linking Berlin to the Persian Gulf, the railway would create the most direct route between Europe and the Indian subcontinent, challenging England's dominance of the seas by providing an alternate route than the Suez Canal. Furthermore, the railway would serve as a vehicle of German political, financial, and cultural expansion. The German Foreign Office insisted that the railway remain an all-German enterprise: designed by Germans, funded by German capital, built by German engineers using German materials, and serving German political ends. Marschall would become the plan's most avid and vocal supporter.

Abdulhamid, however, was likely to summarily reject any offer of foreign aid that had a chance of being misconstrued as foreign encroachment on Ottoman domestic affairs. In light of this, the German Foreign Office continued to claim that the railway was purely a commercial enterprise, run by an unaffiliated international company under German leadership. The Foreign Office's role, therefore, was to lobby the Porte in support of German proprietary claims in the region. Yet, behind the scenes, the Foreign Office exerted a great deal of effort to shape the Baghdad Railway into an instrument of German *Weltpolitik*. In time, it became woefully apparent that the German government had little concern for the economic revival of the Ottoman Empire. Instead the region represented one of many regions in the world where Germany stood the chance of expanding its political might.

Although appreciative of political support, the members of the financial consortium backing the Baghdad Railway construction did not support the German government's end-game strategy. They believed instead that the railway's true strength lay in its ability to resuscitate the stagnant Ottoman economy. Passing through previously inaccessible territory, the railway promised to open new markets, increasing regional production and company profits at the same time. Furthermore, the construction process alone would increase the demand for German goods and services. German steel manufacturers, machine works, and shipping companies would all make a healthy profit from the railway. The more developed the interior regions of the Ottoman Empire became, the more profits the railway's shareholders stood to gain. In short, financiers hoped the railway would do nothing less than facilitate the modernization of the Ottoman Empire: the rate of this metamorphosis, however, hinged on the willingness of the Ottoman population to support the railway enterprise.

Wilhelm von Pressel never wavered in his belief that the railway needed to remain an Ottoman enterprise to be of any utility. The Deutsche Bank, once strongly opposed to Pressel's position, eventually reached the same conclusion. For the railway to become a permanent fixture in the Ottoman Empire, the Ot-

tomans needed to play an active role in the railway's development and operations. Any attempt by a foreign government to politicize the railway would be counterproductive, as it would thrust the railway back into the spotlight of political contention, diminishing the chances of realizing its long-term commercial potential. The Deutsche Bank feared that Marschall's plan, to make the Baghdad Railway a German national enterprise at any cost, had the potential to backfire, leaving the shareholders footing the bill.[2]

The most vocal support for the Baghdad Railway project came from its cultural advocates, groups and individuals who viewed the railway as the quintessential pioneering work of German culture and civilization. For many of these self-proclaimed missionaries of German culture, the railway embodied the best of German culture, serving as a tool of "Germanization" by spreading German values throughout the Ottoman Empire. Stemming from diverse parts of the German population, these Pan-German advocates saw the railway simply as the opening act of a much grander cultural mission in the Near East— one that would make Anatolia and Mesopotamia susceptible to unfettered colonization, exploration, modernization, and exploitation. A tool of Germanization, the railway would carry the German cultural pioneers (i.e., doctors, farmers, teachers) whose presence would instigate the gradual process of restoring civilization to Mesopotamia. In many ways, they hoped that the railway and the endless opportunities it offered represented a reprieve from the concurrent socioeconomic crises plaguing German society—problems that left many longing for better days.

As powerful as these German political, financial, and cultural advocacy groups may have been, Abdulhamid, the railway's true architect, never wavered from his position that it first serve Ottoman interests. A witness to his empire's precipitous decline and successive territorial losses, the sultan needed the railway to unify his empire and further consolidate his power. A strategically placed railway would offer a military extension of his power, providing troops access to hostile regions where the sultan's popularity had steadily waned. Abdulhamid showed little interest in the railway's potential to be a catalyst for economic renewal. His railway strategy was simple and carried a clear-cut objective—to keep him in power and prevent further erosion of the empire's territorial boundaries.

At the turn of the twentieth century, German and Ottoman officials knew surprisingly little about the lands in the proposed railway's path or the people living there. The highly speculative preliminary estimates of the railway's profitability were based solely on travelers' observations or a handful of unofficial regional surveys. Even these reports were conflicting; some described the region as a Garden of Eden, while others claimed the region was nothing more than "wasteland, desert, and emptiness."[3] This ambiguity was not lost on members of the Anatolian Railway Company (ARC) who set out to get to know the region firsthand.

Although Georg von Siemens signed the preliminary railwayconcession, he was wary of finalizing the Deutsche Bank's commitment to the railway until its risks were known. He did not share Marschall's sense of urgency that the win-

dow of German opportunity in the Ottoman Empire would soon close. Marschall, however, continued to pressure Siemens to act. He stressed that if the sultan detected any signs of hesitation on the side of the Deutsche Bank, Germany stood to lose the railway to its political competitors. Siemens eventually caved in to Marschall's pressure. After transferring the requisite 7 percent down payment into the Imperial Ottoman Treasury, he formalized the agreement. With no firsthand verification of the region's viability, Siemens committed the ARC (and its chief benefactor, the Deutsche Bank) to what promised to be an expensive and risky undertaking. He hoped that the exploratory commission sent out to examine the route's viability would verify that he had made the right choice.

The ARC made a successful bid for the Konya–Baghdad railway in May 1899. Before making a more formal commitment to build the railway, the ARC demanded a thorough survey of the route to assess the railway's overall construction and operations costs. To ease the ARC's investment fears, Abdulhamid agreed to allow an immediate detailed inspection of the route. The ARC quickly assembled a panel of experts to explore the railway's proposed route, the populations living along it, and the region's prospects for profitability.

Formed in the summer of 1899, the Stemrich expedition (named for its leader, German Consul General Stemrich) had two contingents: one technical and one commercial. Each group was comprised of several architects, financial advisors, engineers, soldiers, bureaucrats, and government officials. Accompanying Stemrich on the expedition were notable persons such as Ernst Mackensen, director of the Prussian State Railways; Otto von Kapp, surveyor for the State Railways of Württemberg; government architect Habich; Major Morgen, a German military attaché; Dr. Aghassia, leader of the ARC trade division and representatives of the Ottoman Ministry of Public Works.

At the first briefing, Siemens stressed the need for the group's findings to contain a thorough and detailed analysis of the region. The expedition's official report would provide the ARC with its first detailed technical and commercial analysis of the railway route.[4] He suggested that members take all the time necessary to assess the regions properly. To maintain a certain level of comfort, Siemens allotted 10,000 francs to cover the expedition's monthly expenses. He also arranged monthly stipends for the expedition's leaders: Stemrich, Mackensen, and von Kapp.[5]

The Stemrich group met for its first plenary session on August 22, 1899. The members agreed to travel along the proposed railway route from its western terminus in Konya to Baghdad, and on to Basra in an effort to determine the feasibility of the proposed Baghdad Railway project. The journey would take six months to complete and cover more than 5,000 kilometers. Along the way, members would estimate the railway's construction and operations costs, its security risks, and the population density of the regions adjacent to the route. In the end, they hoped to find the shortest and least expensive route to Basra and to determine the region's potential for turning a profit for the ARC.

On September 14, 1899, the Stemrich expedition that assembled in Eskisehir prepared to embark on a six-month odyssey to the sites of future depots on the Baghdad Railway: Konya, Eregli, Adana, Mersin, Aleppo, Diyarbakir, Mo-

sul, Baghdad, and Basra. For the first leg of the journey, the expedition rode in comfort on the Anatolian Railway to Konya, and duly praised Mackensen's accomplishments. For the rest of the journey, however, the group would rely on horses, camels, and river barges as its principal means of transportation.

The expedition encountered numerous obstacles from the outset, which frustrated its efforts to complete the assigned tasks. Their fact-finding mission was continually hampered by the lack of reliable data. Accurate statistics on interregional relations and trade were simply not available. Ottoman officials were also unable to provide them with any useful information. As a last resort, the commission referred to available German, English, and French consular reports for import and export figures for the Mediterranean port cities. Trade statistics for the rest of Anatolia, however, did not exist. For these, the commission had to rely on its own reckoning and useful information gleaned from the local populations.

The expedition soon found itself in a quandary. It could not trust the information provided by locals at face value. Stemrich noted: "The Oriental is inclined to disguise his ignorance and will always give some, though often false, information."[6] The official Ottoman state figures used to calculate population and tax revenues were equally unreliable; their accuracy varied according to the presiding official's degree of corruption. With no reliable foundation on which to base their assessment, the members of the expedition were left no choice but to start their assessments anew.

In the city of Konya, the terminus of the Anatolian Railway situated in the heart of Anatolia, the commission toured the urban landscape that would soon become the gateway of the Baghdad Railway. With more than 1 million residents, Konya served as a thriving commercial center, complete with an active bazaar wedged between its standing Selçuk structures. Stemrich was surprised by the city's cleanliness, especially the stone houses in the city's large Christian quarter that reportedly bore an almost stately appearance. Believing the railway's future might depend on the Christian population's willingness to participate in the construction, Stemrich conducted an unofficial census of Christians living in each region through which he passed.

From Konya, the high Anatolian plains extend more than 200 kilometers eastward to the foot of the Taurus Mountains. As the commission passed through this region on horseback, its members were astounded by the expanses of fertile land and the region's potential for rapid growth. Stemrich estimated that between Konya and Eregli less than 10 percent of arable land was under cultivation. He wrote that one could "often ride for hours without seeing a single cultivated field."[7] Stemrich was stymied by the fact that, in spite of the quantity of arable land, the region's inhabitants lived under conditions of abject poverty. He surmised that the region's population was simply too sparse to profit from the land's bounty.[8] Although Stemrich recognized the land's potential to once again become the "breadbasket for the world," he warned that it would take a considerable commitment of time and effort to exploit fully the land's richness.

As the expedition crossed the jagged Taurus Mountains, it became rather obvious that the region's difficult terrain had the potential to pose tremendous

problems for railway construction crews.[9] With rapid changes in elevation over short distances (1,500 vertical meters per 100 kilometers) and winding canyons, the ARC would have to erect expensive trestles, bridges, and tunnels in the Taurus region, increasing the railway's construction costs considerably and placing further restrictions on the already tight Ottoman railway budget.

Continuing along the historic path of Alexander the Great on to the Cilician plains, the group, like Alexander, marveled at the region's fertility. Stemrich surmised that if the land were fully developed with modern agriculture, it could easily become the "treasure chest" of the Ottoman Empire. The area's climate was also conducive to year-round agriculture. After a visit to the Mediterranean port cities of Mersin and Adana, the group crossed the craggy peaks of the Amanus Mountains and entered Aleppo.

For centuries, Aleppo had served as a valuable trade center for goods from the Orient and Occident. Although recent earthquakes had destroyed nearly all of the landmarks from Aleppo's past, the city still remained an important trade center. The activity and industry of the city's 830,000 residents were prominently displayed on every street corner. The bazaars were rich with European goods and offered a wide variety of products. Stemrich concluded that it would take very little effort to transform Aleppo into a valuable regional commercial hub of the Baghdad Railway.[10]

The expedition next crossed the Euphrates River, making its way northeast to the city of Diyarbakir located on the banks of the Tigris River. Unlike the cities of Konya, Adana, and Aleppo, the beleaguered city of Diyarbakir left much to be desired. With roughly 400,000 residents, it presented the expedition with far more hazards than the previous regions combined. The entire population of the region was afflicted with fever from which hundreds perished daily. Moreover, the region offered no security: robbers ran rampant and terrorized residents by night. Although the most important stretch of the trade route from Severik to Diyarbakir was reportedly secure, bands of robbers continually plundered caravans approaching the city from other directions.[11]

Diyarbakir's geographical position on the border of predominantly Kurdish and Arab provinces may have contributed to the absence of security in the region. With Kurds to the north, Arabs to the south, nomads from the east, and hard-line Turkish governors from the west, the city and its environs were consistently riddled with fear and distrust. Stemrich noted:

> The lack of security in the land is due in a small part to the Arab nomads . . . greater still is the level of disquiet caused by the Kurds.... Worse than the Arabs and the Kurds, and the creators of the state of affairs in recent years, are the Hamidian regiments [Turkish soldiers], which were called into being roughly ten years before.[12]

Stemrich witnessed the ruthlessness of these renegade Ottoman soldiers firsthand. As his caravan passed south from Diyarbakir towards Mosul, he encountered a band of local soldiers obedient to Mustafa, the local pasha. As his horse drew near, Stemrich noticed soldiers busily unloading the entire cargo of a stopped caravan. The plundering soldiers made no attempt to disguise their mo-

tives—the seizure of goods for personal use or further resale. However, when the would-be thieves recognized the uniformed Ottoman soldiers accompanying the Stemrich caravan, they immediately aborted their mission of plunder and sent the fortunate caravan on its way.

Other caravans were not so lucky, nor were the people living in the regions under Mustafa's jurisdiction. While on his way from Nissibin over Faysabur to Mosul, Ernst Mackensen also witnessed the work of Mustafa's brigade. Signs of destruction were everywhere. Passing through a village plundered and burned by soldiers only five days before, he encountered a group of farmers who, after losing everything in the violence, were leaving their villages in search of a new place to settle. Based on his observations, Mackensen concluded that Mustafa wanted not only to decimate the region's agriculture, but its entire population as well.[13]

The region's lawlessness also posed a major threat to the railway's future. The members of the expedition knew the region could only turn a profit for the ARC if it produced a steadily bountiful grain harvest. Without security, neither the harvest nor the delivery of the grain to distribution centers could be guaranteed. Of course, each of these scenarios assumed the presence of a local population willing to work the land.

The region's sparse population presented an even greater problem to railway developers. In spite of the mélange of cultures in Mesopotamia, none was ideal to evolve into a new farming class. Stemrich wrote that the pugnacious Kurds, who made up the majority of the population, might be of service in wartime, but they hardly had the aptitude to become careful and industrious farmers. The Ottomans and Christians, on the other hand, might be good farmers, but their numbers were too small, and the Armenians, who were most inclined to do the most honest intensive farming, had been decimated by their neighbors in purges in 1895. Stemrich concluded that, without the introduction of new elements such as immigrants from other provinces, the region would never be able to sustain a high level of grain production. Since the railway's future profits depended entirely on the volume of transported goods, a missing agrarian class had the potential to restrict the railway's effectiveness in the region.[14]

As the expedition wound southwest across the Kurdish Mountains to the city of Mosul on the Tigris, Stemrich was relieved to find the lowlands increasingly secure. He saw no apparent danger in the lands from Kerkuk to the city of Baghdad due, in part, to recent concerted efforts by area troops to curb lawlessness in the region. With the arrests of more than 100 Kurds, the troops had temporarily curbed the frequency of robberies. Yet, despite this apparent short-term victory, Stemrich felt it safe to assume that regional security would not last.[15]

The Mesopotamian plain, once breadbasket to the world and the heart of civilization, lay in ruins. Centuries of neglect and ensuing lawlessness had transformed the land, once admired for its hanging gardens and the ancient metropolis of Nineveh, into a barren, eroded landscape. Areas historically covered by lush fields and fed by massive irrigation channels had been reduced to blowing sand. Once the population center of the world, the region now stood empty, nomads being its chief inhabitants. Once home to the Abbasid caliph Harun-al

Rashid, the city of Baghdad had a permanent population of only 267,000, and served as a stopover for more than 1 million nomads each year. In comparison, the terminal city of Basra maintained a permanent population of 935,000 and an additional 600,000 nomad visitors each year.

The high percentage of nomads raised serious questions whether a railway would benefit the region. Although many visitors to the region swore that one only needed to scratch the earth's dusty surface for it to bloom, the lack of permanent populations to work the fields posed a major problem for railway developers. Irrigation alone would not bring the land back to its former state, nor could a workforce be forged out of the region's existing cultural groups, who appeared to be in a perpetual state of war. Offering a ray of hope, Stemrich pointed to the example of the Mediterranean coast where commercial contact with the West had reduced regional hatred and fanaticism. He suggested the same metamorphosis would take place in the barren wastelands of Mesopotamia once the nomads could be enticed to settle down; only then would the railway succeed in bringing stability and civilization to the region.

Stemrich and company reached Baghdad on the same day Siemens signed the concession in Istanbul. They found the dry winter heat bearable. South of Baghdad, however, the swampy landscape and persistent humidity ruled out European settlement, making the transformation of the nomadic tribes into agricultural collectives an even greater priority.[16]

The expedition reached Basra, the southern terminus of the proposed Baghdad Railway, on January 5, 1900. A thriving port city situated 200 kilometers north of the Persian Gulf on the Shatt-al-Arab, Basra provided direct access to the shipping lanes of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. In Basra, the members of the commission met to discuss their findings and to calculate the railway's construction and operations costs.

After seven weeks in Basra comparing their notes, on February 26, the members of the expedition set out on a return trip to Istanbul. Having come down the Tigris, they elected to follow the Euphrates River northward to determine whether the valley offered a more feasible route for the railway to follow. In the end, the commission found much of the Euphrates region impassable due to the high cliffs and meandering canyons. Security was another problem; bands of violent robbers lay in wait in caves lining the riverbanks. Faced with these two obstacles the group collectively determined that the Euphrates River valley held no commercial value.[17] By the time the commission reached the familiar environs of Aleppo, the group unanimously agreed that the railway should follow the west bank of the Tigris to Baghdad.

On April 5, 1900, Stemrich handed his report to an eager Georg von Siemens in his Istanbul office. A product of months of dedicated work, the report illuminated several important factors for the ARC's consideration. The technical section of the report estimated that it would cost the ARC approximately 500 million francs to build a normal gauge railway (width = 1.4 meters) extending 2,500 kilometers from Konya along the west bank of the Tigris to Baghdad and on to the port of Basra. It also noted that, given the sparse population and difficult terrain along the route, the railway's construction would likely

take the full eight years to build. Naturally, if the ARC chose to hire skilled workers from other regions or nations, the railway would be finished sooner, but overhead costs would likely double, since foreign workers typically demanded higher wages than the Ottomans. The report also alerted the ARC to certain regional security issues, suggesting that sufficient funds be earmarked to ensure the safety of the crews charged with the railway's construction and operation.

The report's commercial section warned that the immediate future of the region held little potential for profit. Substantial profits would only appear after Anatolia and Mesopotamia once again reached the peak of production. This gradual process would require considerable time and effort on the part of the ARC, and its success would largely depend on the Ottomans' willingness to settle quickly into their prescribed agrarian roles and to begin producing harvests on a modern scale. The report suggested the ARC start investing in other facets of the Ottoman infrastructure to make the railway a more profitable enterprise. For investors seeking rapid returns, the ARC could readily count on profits earned from increased European exports to the coastal regions where these goods were already being consumed. Yet, the report warned that efforts to market Western goods would fail in the wild interior, since no immediate need or demand for European articles existed there.[18]

After a grueling six-month odyssey, the Stemrich expedition achieved its goal in providing the ARC its first glimpse of the sheer magnitude of the project that lay before it. The Stemrich report warned the ARC to pay special attention to the region's lack of security, its insufficient population, and its overwhelming geographical obstacles before making any formal commitment to the railway. These findings forced the ARC to rethink its railway strategy so as not to spread its investments too thin, and awakened the ARC to the need for additional guarantees from the Ottoman government.

In the months following the report's release, a debate ensued over the railway's proposed route. For strategic reasons, Sultan Abdulhamid was unwilling to comply with the route recommended by the Stemrich expedition. He preferred an Ankara-Sivas-Diyarbakir-Baghdad line, which traversed regions where violent clashes with Armenians continued unabated. Moreover, he demanded that the railway stay at least half a day's journey from the Mediterranean coast to avoid sabotage by enemy ships. When British ships barred Turkish troops from landing in Kuwait in August 1901, the sultan quickly withdrew his objections to the Stemrich route. From that point on, his only concern was for the ARC to extend the railway to the Persian Gulf as soon as possible.

For Siemens, the Stemrich report confirmed his suspicions that the railway was simply too risky and expensive an enterprise for the Deutsche Bank to fund alone. He rebuked the sultan's paranoid request to keep the railway away from the more developed Mediterranean coastline. The route, Siemens claimed, "was not a purely Turkish question, but a question on which the whole existence of the railway depended." Given the depleted state of the Ottoman treasury, Siemens remained convinced that the "correct route would have to be the cheapest one."[19] He hoped to avoid involving the Deutsche Bank in an undertaking that might later be blamed for endangering German interests.[20] To make it easier

for the Ottomans to manage the railway's staggering costs, Siemens devised a plan to build the railway in 11 sections of 200 kilometers in length each. Rather than work on the entire line, the ARC would build one section at a time, as requisite guarantees were made available.

Siemens tried to remain faithful to the German Foreign Office's policy to keep the Baghdad Railway in German hands, but, he failed to get backing from German bank.[21] Siemens, therefore, had no other option than to try to establish a private railway company with German, English, and French capital.[22] Unfortunately, like their German counterparts, English and French banks balked at the offer, not wanting to commit their funds to what they believed was a pet project of the German Foreign Office. In December 1900, Siemens traveled to England to gain support for the railway only to find the British Foreign Office and London banks unwilling to take the political risk of getting involved in the Baghdad Railway project.

When ailing health forced Siemens to resign his ARC commission on December 31, 1900, his successor—director of the Deutsche Bank, Arthur von Gwinner—continued to push for the implementation of Siemens' plan.[23] In his first year with the ARC, Gwinner worked exhaustively to obtain external sources of capital to make the railway an international undertaking. Although political changes hampered his progress, Gwinner was more successful than Siemens. By including the staggering profits from the ARC's recently opened Eskisehir–Konya line to his portfolio, Gwinner provided potential investors with reliable projections of what a faster and longer Baghdad Railway might yield.[24]

The ARC's progress was not only hampered by the lack of interested investors, but also the actions of the German Foreign Office. Although Gwinner eventually won the financial support of English banks, a sudden downturn in Anglo-German relations led the German Foreign Office to renew its protest against English participation in the railway. Similarly, the Russians withdrew their support after a vigorous domestic press campaign in Russia convinced leaders that any eastbound Turkish railway represented a real threat to Russian national security. Wanting no part in rebuilding its archenemy's economy and military capabilities, Russia made every attempt to postpone the railway's construction.[25] It was reported that the mantra, "Russia wants our nation to decay, our only salvation is the Baghdad Railway!" was commonly heard in Istanbul in 1901.[26] A frustrated Marschall, tired of having his plans foiled by Russian delay tactics, remarked that he "never failed to find a Russian track behind each and every intrigue against the Baghdad Railway."[27]

Despite the growing resistance to the railway on the political front, the ARC worked behind the scenes to acquire the capital needed to finalize its railway concession. While the German Foreign Office made a concerted effort to keep the railway German, the ARC maintained that the railway's future depended on international collaboration, not confrontation. The Stemrich report had advised the ARC that the railway's future hinged on the Germans' ability to cooperate with local authorities and populations. To survive the political maelstrom, the railway would have to rely on Turkish guarantees and the funding of interna-

tional investors. Its success would be measured by its profit margins and not its political expediency.

The official Baghdad Railway Concession, signed on March 5, 1903, echoed the ARC's recent considerations. Often hailed as the shining example of German imperialism, the concession's formulaic financial guarantees and mineral rights acquisitions were interpreted by some to represent the one-sided German plunder of the Ottoman treasury and the empire's natural resources. This interpretation, however, is not supported by the text of the concession itself. A closer look reveals that this concession, like most bilateral concessions, envisaged mutual advantages.

The agreement paved the way for construction of a single rail line to begin along a specific route from Konya to Basra as well as several branch lines prescribed by the Imperial Ottoman Government.[28] The construction of the entire line, including several branch lines, was to be completed in eight years. Any delays caused by the failure to make payments or *vis major* (e.g., war between the European powers) would be added on at the end of the eight-year term. The agreement would remain binding for 99 years, though the Ottoman government reserved the right, at any time, to purchase any section of the railway back from the German-led company.

The newly formed Baghdad Railway Company (BRC), a subsidiary of the ARC, would finance the railway construction[29] As a joint Ottoman stock company, the BRC was subject to Ottoman law and remained under the jurisdiction of the Imperial Ottoman Ministry of Public Works. Ottoman courts would handle all disputes involving the company or its affiliates. Similarly, all correspondence between the BRC and the Ottoman state agencies had to be conducted in the Turkish language.

The BRC was responsible for all construction and operation costs. The Imperial Ottoman Government promised the BRC annual guarantees worth 11,000 francs per kilometer of operative railway and 4,500 francs for each kilometer under construction.[30] The BRC promised, at its own expense, to build railway depots, post offices, police stations and telegraph lines along the route.[31] Similarly, the company would foot the bill for building several branch supply lines and offered to fortify the tracks of the existing Anatolian Railway from Istanbul to Konya to accommodate the latest express trains.[32] As a sign of good faith, the BRC agreed to deposit 30,000 Turkish lira in the Ottoman treasury and to build the first 200-kilometer section from Konya to Bulgurlu without any Ottoman guarantees.

The concession held a considerable number of advantages for the Ottoman state.[33] It gave the Ottomans a risk-free guarantee; all work completed on the railway would be subject to Ottoman approval before any funds would be transferred to the BRC. It demanded that the BRC hire Ottoman subjects whenever possible to help build the railway. It declared that all machinery and works—such as tile, brick, gravel, coal, or timber—either used or developed along the railway would convey to the Ottoman state after five years. Similarly, the railway was to be run entirely by Turkish subjects after five years of operation. To avoid the theft of the empire's archaeological treasures, the concession

required that any works of art excavated along the route had to be turned over to Ottoman authorities for safekeeping. Finally, the concession required the BRC to make annual payments of 500 Turkish lira to the poorhouse in compliance with Islamic charity laws.

In view of the demands it placed on the BRC, the concession obviously had to offer some advantages in return. Since the BRC was chiefly concerned with the financial bottom line, its members were pleased with the provision allowing the company to exploit any raw materials needed for the railway (e.g., gravel, timber, coal, and iron ore) found within 20 kilometers on either side of the railway route. The Ottoman government also provided the land for the railway, security forces, and electricity without cost. Hiring Ottoman subjects to do the bulk of the unskilled labor further reduced the company's costs. All machinery imports for the railway and private vehicles entering the Ottoman Empire would be exempt from customs duty. The BRC was permitted to build harbors, piers, and other improvements in Baghdad and Basra to help with the unloading of supplies for the railway's eastern flank.

The signing of the Baghdad Railway Concession made headlines around the world. In Germany, the action was heralded as a major victory for Germany and the prelude of a peaceful German conquest of the Ottoman Empire.[34] The concession, however, told a different story. Its wording revealed Abdulhamid's desire to balance his empire's immediate needs with the unwanted presence of foreigners. His decision to choose the German syndicate over its rivals had more to do with Germany's proven track record as a friend to the empire than the tenets of German *Weltpolitik*. After carefully weighing the options at his disposal for more than two years, the sultan finally concluded that Germany, a latecomer on the imperial stage, had little interest in the sultan's own domestic objectives. With German sights set exclusively on the railway, the sultan seized the opportunity to use Germany's expansionist zeal to further his own agenda of consolidation.

By limiting the railway's construction to eight years and making sure that Turks would eventually run the railway, the sultan had found a winning formula. Since the terms of the concession limited the BRC's exploitation of resources to railway-specific operations, future company profits rested on annual kilometric guarantees from the Porte. In an effort to curb any abuse of the guarantees (e.g., building short unconnected sections of the railway in order to increase the length of completed rails), Article 26 of the concession dictated that the railway be built one section at a time, proceeding from west to east.[35] To prevent other abuses by the BRC, the plans for each railway section had to be presented to the Imperial Ottoman Ministry of Public Works for approval before implementation. Similarly, shipments of railway materials, vehicles, and supplies, although free of customs duties, were subject to rigorous inspection by the Ottoman customs authorities.

By 1903, the future of the Turco-German partnership rested squarely on the railway's construction. The chief interests of the ARC, BRC, and Deutsche Bank lay in the railway's commercial value, not its possible political repercussions. By signing the 1903 concession, the German financiers had implicitly

entered into a noninterference pact with the sultan. The financiers' wish to pursue the commercial exploitation of the regions encompassing the railway in no way interfered with the sultan's desire to use the railway for military purposes to consolidate his power.

Often described as the torchbearer of German imperialism in the Ottoman Empire, the Baghdad Railway Company is said to have used the railway to advance German political will in the region. A closer look at the company's structure, however, quickly reveals that this was not the case. On April 13, 1903, the BRC was founded on the initial capital base of 15 million francs, divided into 30,000 shares at 500 francs apiece. The Imperial Ottoman Government and the ARC each purchased 10 percent of the shares. A financial conglomerate comprised of German, French, Austrian, Swiss, Italian, and Ottoman banks bought the remaining 80 percent.[36] Of this shared capital, the Deutsche Bank and the Ottoman Bank each held 27 percent, the Vienna Bank Union and the Swiss Credit Bank each held 4 percent, and several private German, Italian, and Ottoman companies shared the remaining 15 percent.

On the floor of the Reichstag in 1906, German Foreign Secretary von Schoen described the Baghdad Railway as "an Ottoman undertaking that had an international character under German leadership."[37] Indeed, the railway's administration was as multinational as the capital it controlled. Austrians, French, Swiss, Italians, and Turks worked alongside the German BRC directors. Though not a majority, a German group—comprised of eight Deutsche Bank and three ARC appointees—controlled the greatest block of votes, guaranteeing it considerable influence on the board's decisions. Yet, as an Ottoman stock company, the Imperial Ottoman Government continued to have the highest authority over the BRC and made certain that the law of the land was obeyed.

On November 23, 1903, the Imperial Ottoman Government took out its first loan on the Baghdad Railway for the amount of 54 million francs with 4-percent interest payable in 98 years.[38] The funds were earmarked to pay the kilometric guarantees once the railway became operational. Two days later, the BRC formed the "Company for the Construction of the Konya–Eregli–Bulgurlu Railway," charging it to proceed with the construction of the railway's first section in accordance with the terms of the concession.[39] The Philipp Holzmann Company, the extraordinarily successful German construction magnate, was chosen to administer the many aspects of the construction including the location and delivery of materials, the creation of a workforce, and building station houses, bridges, and trestles.[40]

The requisite capital had to be raised before construction on the Konya–Eregli–Bulgurlu section could begin, and the BRC found no shortage of willing contributors. A conglomerate of financial institutions easily accumulated the 3 million francs needed to get construction efforts off the ground. Of this amount, the German finance group contributed 42 percent (1,250,000 francs); the French group 18 percent (540,000 francs); the International Property Company and the directors of the BRC 15 percent apiece (450,000 francs); and the ARC 10 percent (300,000 francs). The so-called German group, a loose confederation of German and Austrian banks, also received capital contributions from sources

outside German business circles. The Italian Banca Commericale, for example, contributed 36,000 francs. Arthur von Gwinner and Alfred von Kaulla made individual investments of 9,000 francs; ARC board members, Otto von Kühlmann and Kurt Zander each contributed 4,500 francs. Moreover, Gwinner's tireless efforts to internationalize the railway helped win the support of many small credit unions and philanthropists interested in promoting the railway.[41] In the end, the English contingent, though keen on the prospects of the enterprise, was encouraged by the British Foreign Office to withdraw its support for the railway, leaving England no representation in the BRC administration.

Aside from laying the rails, the new company was charged with building necessary quarters to house those in the company's employ, and installing wooden telegraph poles at 65-meter intervals along the railway's route.[42] Construction costs for the first 200-kilometer section were set at 192,000 francs per kilometer, and included a reimbursement for the cost of the Stemrich expedition and the interest on the 4-percent loan. The company let it be known, however, that if the Porte chose to purchase the section upon completion, it would only ask for 133,000 francs per kilometer or 26.6 million francs for the entire section. The BRC agreed to absorb the remainder of the costs.[43]

The long anticipated construction on the Konya–Eregli–Bulgurlu section began on July 26, 1903, under the direction of the Philipp Holzmann Company. Supplies that were locally unavailable were shipped from Germany to Konya via the Anatolian Railway. Having suffered revenue losses in 1903 due to severe drought and a poor grain harvest, the ARC welcomed the boost in profits brought on by the transport of railway materials.

The terrain between Konya and the Taurus Mountains presented minimal difficulties for construction crews. The greatest single elevation gain was only slightly over 100 meters. Nevertheless, there were plenty of man-made obstacles to overcome. The Ottoman government was slow to acquire the land necessary for the railway. In spite of the concession's terms, which clearly stated that the Ottoman state was responsible for land acquisition, local officials sought a gratuity (or baksheesh) from railway administrators before completing their assigned tasks. At first, the Germans were offended by what they considered conspicuous bribes. Later, after realizing the cultural significance of baksheesh, they learned to increase their estimated construction costs to account for these expected gratuities.

The payment of baksheesh was only one of the many lessons that the BRC would learn during the Baghdad Railway's construction. In a lengthy journal article, Dr. Heinrich von Heeser, who had helped plan the Anatolian Railway, warned the BRC of the difficulties it soon might face. On the Eskisehir–Konya line, sickness had been prevalent in the marshy swamps where crews had built bridge pilings. A doctor would travel the length of the line each week, dispersing more than 100 doses of quinine to stabilize workers' fevers. To avoid contracting fever, von Heeser suggested that workers eat as little meat as possible, consuming instead the region's plentiful fruits and vegetables. For evening relaxation, he recommended that the workers try the local land wine, staying as far away as possible from the beer. The dangers of fever, however, paled in com-

parison to the frequent outbreaks of cholera and pox both of which were highly contagious and, without quarantine, could easily spread unabated throughout the countryside, affecting all in its path.

According to von Heeser, the ARC had imported all of its manufactured iron, lime, roofing tiles, and lumber from Germany. Although the concession allowed for the exploitation of minerals, stone, and lumber within 20 kilometers of the route, finding the materials and delivering them to the construction sites proved to be no easy task in a land without roads or population. What often seemed feasible on paper had a tendency to become a nightmare in the field.

Von Heeser warned the BRC not to depend on using any part of the collapsed Ottoman infrastructure. Where roads existed, there were often no bridges to cross the waterways, making it impossible to use any form of wagon for transport. The only way to move materials under these conditions was by horseback. A railway that depended on horses for the delivery of supplies, he noted, could only develop slowly.

Nature, too, offered its share of difficulties for the ARC. The days had been unbearably hot; nights were bitter cold. Between Christmas 1895 and Easter 1896, snow fell without pause, and nightly temperatures had plummeted down to minus 15 degrees Celsius.[44] In spring, the melting snow pack caused severe flooding, further impeding the railway's progress.

Despite von Heeser's warnings, the BRC was determined to build the Konya–Eregli–Bulgurlu section in record time to demonstrate its commitment to the sultan. The group set a regimented work schedule to ensure the section's completion. Traveling through the region to observe the construction efforts, the *Times* Istanbul correspondent described the scene:

> The Germans, it is said . . . bind all their employees by sets of elaborate and stringent regulations, from which no deviation is permitted, even where it would obviously be to the interest of the company. The masters of important stations have to refer to the head office before giving their decisions on any of the petty questions which are constantly arising, and the general tendency is to make the personnel a machine, which is worked entirely from the centre and in which no right of independent initiative is left to the individual members.[45]

In Eregli, the reporter was surprised by the multinational composition of the construction crews. Although many engineers were German, several Englishmen, Austrians, and members of other nationalities worked alongside them. The masons and skilled workmen tended to be Italians while most of the rough work (stone removal, brush cutting, etc.) was left to unskilled Kurdish workers. Whenever possible, the BRC made efforts to train Ottoman subjects along the line, rather than Germans or other Europeans, since caring for foreigners was certainly more expensive though not necessarily more efficient. In fact, the Ottomans showed no inclination of wanting to favor German trade at the expense of its rivals or to further the Pan-German aims. After all, he remarked, the official language of the railway was French, not German, and the percentage of German railway employees was steadily declining.

Exploring the length of the proposed line, another English traveler, David Fraser, was surprised by the nonpolitical character of German involvement in the railway construction project:

All the police are Turkish, all the minor officials Turks, Greeks, and Armenians, while the only languages used are French and Turkish. Throughout the whole of three days' journey I saw only a single German, the engineer for the Baghdad section. The system is Prussian as regards the permanent way, and most of the rolling stock comes from Germany. But the fact is that the people who run the line, though German, care first for their own pockets and next for Germany. They buy or employ what is cheapest or most suitable, and do not care a finger-snap for the origin of an article or a servant. True, much material must be of Germany manufacture in order that they may retain the political and diplomatic support essential to their welfare in the future. But that support secured, in the case of most German enterprises in Turkey, and schemes fairly afloat, patriotism occupies a small place in the calculations of the promoters. . . . The master impulse in every German engaged in business in Turkey, as in businessmen of every other nationality, is to make money for himself as quickly as possible."[46]

Fraser's findings only confirmed what the BRC, the Imperial Ottoman Government, and the German Foreign Office had said all along: the railway was indeed an Ottoman commercial venture being built under the guidance of a German-led consortium. It was not, as many claimed, an instrument of German foreign policy.

Of all the individuals involved in the railway enterprise, the revelation of the railway's international character likely dealt Marschall the hardest blow. From his first days in office as Germany's ambassador to the Porte, Marschall had worked tirelessly to make the railway the pride of Germany, a tool of German *Weltpolitik*. Gazing into the future, Marschall had envisioned a railway built by German engineers, made from German materials, delivered by German ships, connecting the heart of Germany to its East Asian possessions, and serving as a warning to foreign lands seeking involvement in the Orient. He held onto his conviction that the innocuous commercial enterprise would eventually develop into Germany's primary means of eastward expansion into the uncolonized regions of the Asian continent.[47]

The terms of the concession and the BRC laissez faire approach led Marschall to scrap his all-German campaign for one more compatible with the commercial efforts underway in the Ottoman Empire. To prevent further loss of prestige at the Porte, Germany had to lead by example, exhibiting its cultural fortitudes for others to emulate. Marschall was convinced that German influence in the Ottoman Empire had waned because Germany had made little effort to establish a cultural presence there. Unlike France and England, Germany had failed to develop a network of cultural institutions to promote its language and values. Marschall saw the situation as desperate:

With the beginning of the Baghdad Railway construction, it has become an urgent and virtually unavoidable task, to blaze the trail for Germanness, especially the German language, in the regions through which that railway will pass.[48]

Marschall further stated that even the lowest classes of the Ottoman population recognized the need to learn a foreign language. By largely ignoring the Ottoman population in the pursuit of its strategic objectives, Germany had failed to recognize the fact that the region's diverse nationalities and existing trade relations made learning a foreign language an economic necessity. He warned that Germany would make no material gains in the region unless it provided an alternative to French and English instruction. He was convinced that the construction of German schools, hospitals, and hospices along the railway was an essential first step toward establishing a greater German presence in the Ottoman Empire.

Propelled by his sense of *Realpolitik,* Marschall adapted his views to accept many of the tenets of the railway's cultural advocacy groups. He had no doubt that the railway would eventually facilitate the Germanization of the Ottoman Empire, it would simply take longer than he had originally expected. Without losing sight of his long-term goal, Marschall was willing to compromise Germany's short-term foreign policy goals to meet the terms of the Baghdad Railway concession. In an effort not to jeopardize this long-term agenda, Marschall warned his colleagues to avoid using the term "Germanization" in public since it would likely upset the sultan and possibly lead to an unfavorable shift in the region's balance of power.

On October 25, 1904, in commemoration of Sultan Abdulhamid's birthday, the first 200-kilometer section of the Baghdad Railway opened with great fanfare in Eregli. Sacrificial lambs were strewn across the rails to bring good fortune to the empire's latest technological addition. Members of the BRC and the Ottoman Ministry of Public Works, riding the rails from Konya to Bulgurlu, were impressed by the smooth ride, finding it noticeably more comfortable than the lighter gauge Anatolian Railway.[49] Along the way, the train passed ten completed stations each sporting a brightly painted nameplate written in Ottoman and French. Although the stations were built in the middle of the plain and had no roads or paths connecting to the nearest village, onlookers came from miles around to catch their first glimpse of the *kara vapur* (black ferry). The rails passed Bulgurlu—the last station on the line—and continued an additional two kilometers east towards the mountains thereby fulfilling the section's 200-kilometer requirement. There, the rails ended abruptly in the middle of a desolate plain, their tips dangling in midair.

Wilhelm welcomed the news of the section's opening. In a telegram to Gwinner, he mentioned his pleasure that this "meaningful endeavor of German enterprise and German engineering had been successful, in spite of the many opposing difficulties, in completing this important segment [of the railway]."[50] Abdulhamid also used the occasion to send his greetings to Wilhelm and express his hope that the relationship sealed under the reign of Wilhelm I and formed into a tight bond between the two lands would continue to grow in the future.[51]

In many ways, the Konya–Bulgurlu section was an overnight success. Due to the unchallenging terrain and the railway's timely completion, the BRC pocketed 3.6 million francs of the estimated costs, allowing the group to profit more than 1.1 million francs. In its first year of operation alone, traffic on the section

rose from 28,150 to 157,070 kilometers while the number of kilometers traveled by passengers increased from 754,631 to 3,238,587. Having easily beaten the deadline imposed by the concession, the BRC eagerly awaited the promised bounty of annual guarantees, capital that would allow the extension of the rails to the more fertile Cilician and Mesopotamian plains. As a sign of his appreciation, Abdulhamid awarded Kurt Zander, director of the ARC, the rare jeweled star of the Mecidiye Order to commemorate his years of outstanding service in the Ottoman Empire.[52]

As the celebration surrounding the Konya–Bulgurlu section waned, the BRC patiently waited for the new railway to work the same magic that the Anatolian Railway had. This time, however, the expected bounty never materialized. While the Konya–Bulgurlu section was under construction, the BRC had profited from the transport of railway-specific materials like iron, locomotives, and tools, which the Porte had paid. As the shipments of grain harvested in the Konya region gradually replaced railway materials as the chief cargo, the overall tonnage of goods transported on the line dropped from 454,222 tons in 1904 to 27,668 tons in 1905.[53] The loss in revenue devastated the BRC.

Although the Konya–Bulgurlu section held promise as part of a longer trunk line from Istanbul to the Persian Gulf, alone it proved to be of little utility. The BRC had gambled that the railway would become the preferred means of transporting goods throughout Anatolia. Preliminary trade figures, however, revealed that regional traders had no immediate preference for the railway over the caravan. The German deputy vice consul in Konya wrote that the recently opened section "had brought no noticeable change in the trade traffic, because the hinterland of the Baghdad Railway lay too distant from the north and too close to the southern ports."[54] In fact, the costs of shipping freights via camel caravan to and from the Mediterranean ports remained so low that the railway simply could not compete. Furthermore, the railway costs could not be sustained on passenger travel alone, since the majority of passengers paid pittance to ride in third-class carriages.

The yields of the Konya–Bulgurlu section of the Baghdad Railway continued to disappoint the BRC. The income earned per kilometer dropped steadily throughout its first two years of operation. With its rails literally leading nowhere, the Konya extension of the Anatolian Railway did little to regenerate the agriculture of the fertile plains surrounding Konya. One English traveler in the region mused:

> Man and railways have a trick of reacting upon each other, to their mutual benefit. . . . If certain elements are not favourable man may be brought to a railway, or a railway brought to man, without there ensuing any material gain in prosperity. These elements are two: natural resources in the country experimented upon, and the power in man to multiply himself.[55]

In 1904, it appeared that both manpower and resources were in short supply in Anatolia.

The BRC found itself in an embarrassing situation. In order to meet the terms of the 1903 concession, BRC director Gwinner pushed ahead with the construction. He did not heed the warnings of his ARC colleague, Edouard Huguenin, who had suggested "the continuation of the railway from Konya towards the mountains is pointless, [and is] more likely [to be] detrimental to the Anatolian Railway. [Otto] Kapp and his gang would be forced to pay immense bribes to the Turks if we begin. Therefore, take it slow!"[56] Similarly, ARC director Kurt Zander had warned Gwinner not to be distracted by Marschall's exaggerated sense of urgency.[57] One contemporary writer described the dilemma, saying "the Baghdad Railway is surely a cultural work, but not all [such] works yield interest and [it] is therefore recommended that the financial side of things be considered with no illusions."[58] However, in the end, Gwinner, like Siemens before him, chased these illusions rather than focusing on the railway's actual commercial value for the BRC.

By 1905, it appeared, as one journalist put it, that "the grandiose luxury train of the Baghdad Railway wound up all too soon at a dead end."[59] The BRC's administrators decided that the best course of action would be the suspension of operations until proper guarantees were available. Only then could the group proceed with caution, exploring every possible angle before making further commitments. Their caution was warranted. The Stemrich report had warned that the next section of the railway over the Taurus would be the most expensive to build and the least profitable of the entire route. Even Marschall conceded that the construction of the Taurus section of the railway was "financially a very bad business."[60] The BRC notified Abdulhamid that work on the railway would continue only if he allowed the next two sections to be built simultaneously, whereby the group would be guaranteed more tangible profits from the agriculturally developed Cilician Plain.[61]

Backed into a corner, Abdulhamid's options were limited, though not exhausted. Accustomed to the financial difficulties of his empire, the sultan's primary concern remained the protection of his empire from foreign domination. He wanted to make sure that the only foreign presence in his empire was there by his invitation and under his strict supervision. He also rejected several external proposals designed to ease the Ottoman Empire's financial burden while filling pockets abroad.[62]

Eager for work on the line to resume, Abdulhamid decided in 1905 that the best way to raise the necessary revenues for the railway was to increase customs duties on all imports coming into the Ottoman Empire from 8 percent to 11 percent. The change would not affect the railway's progress since the concession had waived tariffs for all railway materials. It would, however, adversely affect the Ottomans' most active European trading partners: England and France.

The question of increased customs duties thrust the Baghdad Railway back into the political spotlight. England, Russia, and France all vehemently opposed the attempt to raise tariffs, fearing their lost revenues would be converted directly into Germany's gain. While the BRC waited patiently for the guarantees, the German Foreign Office redoubled its efforts to protect Germany's claim on the railway, working to nullify English attempts to sidetrack the project. Theo-

retically, the German government had hoped to have more of the railway in operation to show England that the Baghdad Railway was a fait accompli.[63] Yet, the delays surrounding guarantee question had given England ample opportunity to impede further progress. Perturbed by the fact that Germany had forged ahead with the railway construction over its objections, England spun webs of intrigue at the Porte to impede the railway's eastward progress.[64] Seeing England's sudden interest in the railway as nothing more than an unnecessary annoyance, Marschall summed up the English position the following way: "It would be best if [the railway] were not built, [but] since this is happening anyway, then [England] must be involved."[65] Despite the objections, the powers of the Triple Entente agreed in 1907 to the increase in customs duties on the condition that the Ottomans enact a series of reforms in the Macedonian province.

The wave of protest against the German management of the Baghdad Railway alerted the BRC and the German government that, in order to reap the benefits of their involvement in the East, all German interests needed to be prepared to make a long-term commitment to the process of Ottoman modernization. The Konya–Bulgurlu section had demonstrated that a railway alone could not rejuvenate the lands surrounding it. The region needed better equipment, schools, hospitals, and hygiene to realize its potential. It was clear that it would take time until the new line would be in the position to exercise any meaningful influence on the Indo-European traffic.[66]

The change in attitude—inspired by the guarantee problem and English intervention—led Germans to rethink their relationship with the Ottoman Empire and consider new long-term strategies to secure German interests there. Wilhelm II, feeling his domain was vulnerable to the threat of the Triple Entente, stated his belief that "[Germany's] last trump is Islam and the Muslim world."[67] Others feared that Germany's future in the Ottoman Empire had grown too dependent on maintaining close ties with the unpredictable Abdulhamid, regardless of the schemes he might employ to stabilize his nation. It was evident that not all of the sultan's subjects shared his German leanings. In 1906, Herr von Bodman, the German chargé d'affaires in Istanbul, warned:

> It would be self-deceiving to believe that we still have many sincere friends in Turkey. There are signs of an undeniable gradual decline in the sympathies shown for us by the Turks. . . . The majority of the Turkish ministers and the high palace officials make no secret that they view our Turk-friendliness only as a means to egotistically exploit Turkey and to get out of [it] as many financial and other advantages as possible.[68]

To avoid creating unnecessary friction between the two cultures, the Foreign Office asked all Germans working in the Ottoman government to keep a low profile until the railway question was settled.[69]

While German officials held their tongues, the international press erupted in scathing critiques of the current stalemate in the Turco-German railway construction. Several writers blamed the railway's lack of progress on the inherently backward Ottoman style of rule. One suggested that the Turkish government scrap its medieval economic policy of mismanagement and clear the way for

those parties applying for concessions to exploit the land's rich natural treasures. To expedite this transformation, he suggested that the sultan call an end to the payment of baksheesh, accept the fact that steam-driven machines and railways are products of the modern age, and adopt the Gregorian calendar, writing the date as 1907 instead of 1323. Only by taking such drastic progressive measures would the rest of the world take the Ottoman efforts at modernization seriously.[70]

Still others found fault in Germany's stiff business-only approach to the Baghdad Railway enterprise. Hugo Grothe, director of the German-Anatolian Society, wrote that Germany's future in the Orient depended entirely on the Baghdad Railway's completion. He stressed that the regions encompassing the Anatolian and Baghdad railways had to remain reserved for Germany as a field of national interest for the development of German trade.[71] Grothe criticized the German entrepreneurs who naively hoped the railway would revitalize the region while taking no initiative to invest in efforts beyond the railway itself.

In order to convince the Ottoman leadership of German sincerity, Grothe felt that groups like the BRC needed to think beyond the material profits of the railway and begin the task of restructuring the Ottoman Empire from within. He pointed out that Germany, when compared with the other nations active in the Ottoman Empire, had done surprisingly little on a humanitarian level to improve the lot of the average Ottoman subject. During his trip to Turkey in 1906, Grothe discovered that the highly publicized claims made in the press regarding the success of Germany's "civilizing mission" in the Ottoman Empire were grossly overstated. Between Istanbul and Baghdad, Grothe encountered fewer than 200 Germans working along the railway route.[72] With such a minimal presence, he wondered, how could anyone pretend that Germany had any influence in the Ottoman Empire? He wrote:

> What's the point, if German scientific development of the land leads to increased German trade and railways built with German money, yet an intimate contact with the people, which can only be acquired through education and instruction, fails to materialize?[73]

Like Wilhelm von Pressel, Grothe considered Turco-German interaction the most important element in the railway's success. The obvious sticking point was the two cultures' inability to communicate. To win the hearts of the Turks, Grothe believed, Germany needed to build schools teaching German language and culture, hospitals to heal the sick, and administrative facilities to bring order to the wilderness.[74]

Another school of thought belabored the fact that the Turco-German relationship had grown stale and suggested that Germany take immediate steps to fortify its relationship with Turkey by establishing a formal Turco-German alliance. One German orientalist, Gustav Herlt, viewed England's interference as an omen of things to come. He claimed that Germany should not underestimate Turkey's position of power. With its industrious and patient population, its fertility and rich mineral treasures, and its modest, tough, and brave soldiers, Turkey would certainly prove a valuable ally, if war ever broke out between Eng-

land and Germany. To prepare itself for this role, Turkey only needed to get its house in order, arranging its finances and maximizing its commercial strengths. With a progressive, long-term foreign policy, German leadership could prove instrumental in bringing this process to fruition.[75]

One major obstacle to economic prosperity still existed in the region that no external force could change—its sparse population. Permanent settlements were needed along the railway, not only throughout the duration of construction, but to maintain the fields once the railway became fully operational. Pan-German groups led vocal campaigns calling for German colonization in the regions adjacent to the railway. They claimed that German farmers sent to Anatolia could build settlements and teach mass agriculture to the peasants living there. Such a program would not only ease Germany's overcrowded condition, it would also increase Germany's food supply and access to natural resources.

There were many reasons why such dreams of colonization could never be realized. First, Abdulhamid had maintained from the beginning that no European power would ever colonize any part of Anatolia. Second, all Europeans who had spent any time in the Ottoman Empire agreed that the injection of a large Christian population into the heart of Islam was simply inconceivable. Finally, the region's climate was considered too harsh for any European to bear over an extended period of time.

Pan-German support for colonization did little to boost the sultan's level of confidence that Germany held his best interests at heart. Marschall and Gwinner both complained that they spent an inordinate amount of time consoling the sultan and assuring him that the Pan-Germans' calls for colonization, which appeared daily in the German press, were no reflection of official German policy. Marschall lashed out at German correspondents in Istanbul, accusing them not only of lack of support, but downright sabotage. He complained to Chancellor von Bülow that German reports on Turkey had the tendency to be ill informed and unnecessarily negative. By offering negative portrayals of the current impasse in the Baghdad Railway negotiations, the journalists managed to discourage interest and investment in the enterprise.[76] Furthermore, Marschall complained that the correspondents exhibited no national loyalty. If German papers rejected the stories, the journalists simply forwarded their scathing reviews to British and Austrian newspapers for publication. In the end, they succeeded only in creating unnecessary friction in the Turco-German relationship.[77]

By 1908, few Turks were convinced that the railway would ever be completed given the fact that Germany had accomplished little in the five years since the concession. While underway in the Ottoman Empire, Hugo Grothe detected a shift in Turks' attitude toward the railway. Many of the locals treated the story of the future railway like a mythical fairy tale. Even when Grothe described the details of the railway construction in earnest, he was often met with smiles of disbelief on the Turks' faces. They teased him, saying that when it came to the completion of the promised railway, the Germans had given new meaning to the Turkish expression "*yavas yavas*" (slowly, slowly).[78] Showing a growing skepticism toward German promises, the Turks said they would believe the railway when they saw it and not before.

In 1908, the long sought-after agreement on the financial guarantees was finally met. Arthur von Gwinner, who had consolidated the Ottoman debt in 1903, arranged for the Ottoman treasury to earn interest on its debt. As a result, the Ottoman government was able to transfer its share of the mortgage-earning surplus to be used for the continued construction. In return, the BRC agreed to grant the Ottoman Bank three separate advances for the sum of 650,000 Turkish lira.[79]

On June 2, 1908, the Imperial Ottoman Government and the co-directors of the Anatolian Railway Company, Edouard Huguenin and Karl Helfferich, signed a supplementary concession detailing the technical and financial arrangements for the eastward expansion of the railway from Bulgurlu to Tel-Helif. This 840-kilometer section promised to be full of challenges, most notably, crossing the Taurus and Amanus mountain ranges and bridging the mighty Euphrates River. Bypassing Article 26 of the 1903 concession, the supplementary concession gave the BRC permission to begin working on multiple sights simultaneously to ensure the timely completion of the railway.

The events that unfolded between 1899 and 1908 helped mold the Turco-German partnership into a mutually beneficial alliance. In spite of the delays and intrigue that continually plagued the Porte, the German Foreign Office and the BRC never wavered in their support for the sultan. With renewed respect for German workmanship, diplomacy, and friendship, Abdulhamid cleared the way for the railway construction to resume. After nearly a decade of testing the cultural waters, by 1908, Abdulhamid was convinced that Germany would build the railway without interfering in Ottoman domestic affairs. The Turco-German partnership, once thought of as a necessity, had evolved into a marriage of convenience.

Between 1899 and 1908, the Turco-German relationship underwent a series of critical changes and adjustments. Although the era did not yield a finished railway as expected, the construction lulls taught valuable lessons to both sides. Although the Germans envisioned themselves as cultural pioneers coming to transform a desolate wilderness, their subsequent contact with the Ottoman populations taught them that the task of completing the railway was not theirs alone. The Stemrich expedition—Germany's first foray into the Ottoman frontier—revealed that the railway's successful completion hinged on Turco-German cultural collaboration. Instead of granting a license to pillage, the 1903 concession unveiled Abdulhamid's talent to capitalize on the German zeal to build the railway to serve his own interests and further prevent the collapse of his own beleaguered empire. The German government, far from being the beneficiary of the railway's kilometric guarantees, placed its expansionist plans on hold until the necessary financial guarantees were raised. The ensuing wait not only demonstrated the Foreign Office's commitment to the railway, but its willingness to adopt a timetable that was, at least in part, dictated by changing Ottoman priorities and domestic needs.

The BRC ran a calculated risk when it built the Konya–Eregli–Bulgurlu section without guarantees. The failure of the section to live up to the company's expectations made it clear that the railway alone could not induce an Ottoman

economic revival. To ensure the railway's lasting value, Germany needed to redouble its efforts to improve the deteriorating Ottoman domestic situation. Rather than serving as a front for Germany's political expansionist aims, the BRC—an Ottoman organization concerned foremost with the railway's commercial viability—used its growing awareness of Ottoman domestic affairs to influence direct changes in German foreign policy surrounding the Baghdad Railway.[80]

For more than three decades, Abdulhamid dictated the terms of the emerging Turco-German partnership. By 1908, Germany was confident that its favored status in the Ottoman Empire would be secure as long as Abdulhamid remained in power. Although the BRC, the German Foreign Office, and the sultan had each entered the decade pursuing different objectives for the railway's construction, in 1908, their motives were surprisingly complementary. By allowing German participation in the railway, the sultan gained a powerful ally and increased the authority of his empire. Paradoxically, the more Germany got involved with Abdulhamid's empire, the more independent his empire became. The construction of the Bulgurlu–Tel-Helif section of the railway, laid out in the 1908 concession, promised to further strengthen the Ottoman Empire.

NOTES

1. Woodruff Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 174–79. Smith notes that the term *Weltpolitik* is generally used to refer "to the content of policy rather than to the style of diplomacy" (175). *Weltpolitik* was primarily a form of economic imperialism, aimed at the acquisition of natural resources and products from foreign markets. Smith points out that, in the German case, advocates of formal colonialism tending to oppose the more informal form of economic imperialism.

2. Lindow, 47. German Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow warned Marschall not to become so intensely focused on the Baghdad Railway that he forget Germany's overall mission in the Ottoman Empire. The railway was just one aspect of Germany's strategy there. Germans were also building harbors, ports, and schools, as well as training the Ottoman military. In spite of Marschall's enthusiasm for the sultan, Von Bülow remained skeptical of the Turks and had his doubts that their empire would ever become strong or productive. Von Bülow suspected that the sultan was not truly interested in being Germany's friend. Instead, Abdulhamid was simply tolerating the Germans while they rebuilt his crumbling empire.

3. Georg Schiele, "Was ist uns Anatolien?" *Die Grenzboten* 57, no. 38 (1898): 529–38.

4. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank, #8113 [FI 28 A-11, Doc. 8]. In the ARC meeting minutes from June 29, 1899, Siemens extended monthly salaries to Stemrich at 6000 francs and Mackensen and Kapp at 5000 francs apiece. These salaries remained in effect for the duration of the expedition.

5. Niedersächsisches Archiv, NL VIII, Hs Nr. 64, Nachlaß Ernst Mackensen.

6. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank, #8110 [FI 19 A-8].

7. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank, #8110 [FI 19B-1].

8. See David Fraser, *A Short-cut to India* (London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1909). Fraser's graphs indicate a population density of less than ten per square mile throughout Anatolia.

9. NStA, NL VIII, Hs Nr. 64 Nachlaß Ernst Mackensen. Bagdad-Bahn Projekt, 106.

10. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank, #8119 [FI 19 C-3, 23].

11. Ibid. [FI 19 D-8, 40].

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid. [FI D-4, 36].

14. Ibid. [FI 19 D-8 41].

15. Ibid. [FI 19 D-9 43].

16. Ibid. [FI 20 B-4 71].

17. Max Schlagintweit, "Verkehrswege und Verkehrsprojekte in Vorderasien," *Schriften der Deutsch-Asiatischen Gesellschaft* 2 (1906): 778.

18. Manzenreiter, 126.

19. Mejcher, 454.

20. Ibid., 453.

21. Lodemann and Pohl, 52. The Preußische Staatsbank and the Reichsbank told Siemens that although the railway may be in the Kaiser's best interest, this was not sufficient cause for their institution to deviate from its stated principles. Rather than risking his good relationship with the banks, Siemens withdrew his request and began to pursue other avenues.

22. Karl Helfferich, *Georg von Siemens: Ein Lebensbild aus Deutschlands großer* Zeit, vol. 3 (Berlin: J. Springer, 1923), 102.

23. Siemens died on October 23, 1901, only months after his resignation.

24. Schlagintweit (1906), 9. The grain exports from the 434 km Eskisehir–Konya section of the Anatolian Railway alone had jumped from 54.9 million kilograms in 1900 to 122.2 million kilograms in 1902. Many believed that a lengthier Baghdad Railway would reflect this success on a much grander scale.

25. *Die Zukunft*, 1903, 237.

26. Quoted in Manzenreiter, 165. Marschall to the German Foreign Office. Telegram #108 (4 April 1900).

27. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank, 8119F.

28. The route finally agreed upon by Abdulhamid extended from Konya to Baghdad and on to Basra, passing through, or as near as possible to the towns of Karaman, Eregli, Kardash-Beli, Adana, Hamidiye, Osmaniye, Bahçe, Kazanali, Killis, Tel-Habesh, Harran, Ras-ul-Ain, Nissibin, Avniat, Mosul, Tekrit, Sadice, Baghdad, Kerbela, Nedjef, and Zobeir.

29. A separate Baghdad Railway Company was established for a number of reasons. First, Abdulhamid wanted to keep tabs on the new company and demanded that it have an Ottoman base and be subject to Ottoman law. The Anatolian Railway Company wanted to separate the risky Baghdad Railway venture from the established, profitable Anatolian Railway. That way, any failure of the Baghdad section would not jeopardize the entire German railway establishment in Turkey.

30. In 1903, the currency exchange rate was 1 Turkish lira = 18.54 marks = 22.73 francs.

31. Although Article 31 of the concession permitted the BRC to install telegraph lines, it prohibited the use of these lines for private correspondence or other nonrailway related use.

32. The branch lines included ones from Tel-Habesh to Aleppo, from the main line to Urfa, from Sadice to Khanikin, from Zobeir to the Persian Gulf. In addition, the concession mentioned several further branch lines still under consideration including Mersin

to Tripoli (Syria), Hamidiye to Kostambul, and one from the mainline to Diyarbakir and Karput.

33. For an abbreviated version of the articles of the concession see Louis L. Snyder, ed., *The Imperialism Reader* (Princeton, NJ: von Nostrand, 1962), 348–57. A full text of the concession is located in Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1911, Baghdad Railway No. 1, cmd. 5635, 37–48.

34. Kochwasser, 3. Kochwasser states that German publicists treated the signing of the Baghdad Railway concession as euphorically as the completion of other great works like the American transcontinental railway, the Suez Canal, and the Trans-Siberian railway.

35. Arthur von Gwinner, "The Baghdad Railway and the Question of British Cooperation," *The Nineteenth Century* 338 (1909): 1083–94. Gwinner later regretted having signed the article, stating it would have been far more profitable and beneficial for both sides had construction begun at the ends and worked toward the more difficult sections in the middle of the route.

36. Schlagintweit (1906), 17.

37. Schöllgen (1984), 163.

38. At the time, 54 million francs was the equivalent of 44,064,000 reichsmarks, 2,160,000 pounds sterling, 25,920,000 Dutch guilder, and 2,376,000 Turkish lira.

39. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank, #8168, 72.

40. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank, #7948, 43. Statuten der Gesellschaft für den Bau von Eisenbahnen in der Türkei. Zurich, 1903.

41. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank, #8111 [FI 21 B-2].

42. In its inaugural contract, the new construction company agreed to construct a host of buildings including: 20 living quarters for the railway workers (93 m^2) equipped with iron doors and windows covered by iron bars; 30 attendants' quarters (32 m^2); 2 two-story houses for the railway engineers; (each story 130 m^2) with a special cellar; 2 living quarters for station masters at Konya and Eregli (5 rooms and a kitchen) as well as a small workshop and storeroom at Eregli; 5 one-story (80 m^2) homes would be constructed for the railway board; 2 one-story buildings (116 m^2) to be built in Karaman and Eregli to house the postal employees and police; and living quarters in Karaman and Eregli to house eighteen porters. All buildings had ground floor windows covered with iron bars to prevent theft.

43. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank, [FI 21 B-8]. The BRC was more interested in the future profits than pinching pennies in the early stages. This agreement signaled the group's willingness to get started.

44. Heinrich von Heeser, "Die anatolischen Eisenbahnen und ihre Fortsetzung bis Regierungs- und zum persischen Golf," *Archiv für Eisenbahnwesen* 1 (Jan./Feb. 1903): 75–88.

45. "The Land of the Anatolian Railway," *Times* [London] (20 September 1905) in BA, R 901, Auswärtiges Amt—Handelspolitische Abteilung, #9070, 18.

46. Fraser, 16–17.

47. Marschall an Hohenlohe (9 January 1899). Quoted in Schöllgen (1984), 130.

48. BA, R901, AAHP, #15069, 103–107. Freiherr Marschall von Bieberstein (9 January 1904).

49. BA, R901, AAHP, #15071, 22. Since the Baghdad Railway was to be used for heavy express trains, the rails used on this section were each twelve meters in length and weighed 37 kilograms per meter.

50. BA, R901, AAHP, #15070, 33. Kaiser Wilhelm II to Arthur von Gwinner. Telegram. (26 October 1904).

51. BA, R901, AAHP, #15070, 34.

52. Berliner Börsen-Courier #302 (30 June 1905) in BA, R8034 II, Reichslandbund-Pressearchiv, #8903/3.

53. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank, #7947, 187 [FI 10 A-11]. Bagdad-Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft. Bericht des Verwaltungsrates über das dritte Geschäftsjahr. (1905).

54. BA, R901, AAHP, #15071, 50. Dr. Loytved, Verweser des Kaiserliches Deutsches Konsulat, Konya (16 June 1907).

55. Fraser, 296.

56. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank, #8111, 43. [FI 22-E-1]. Edouard Huguenin an Arthur von Gwinner (2 March 1902

57. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank, #8111, 43. [FI 22- E-1]. Kurt Zander to Arthur von Gwinner (2 April 1902).

58. Plutus, "Die Bagdad-Bahn," *Die Zukunft* 11, no. 32 (9 May 1903): 238.

59. BA, R8034 II, Reichslandbund-Pressearchiv, #8903/3. Rhein. *Westfälische Zeitung* 652 (2 July 1905).

60. GP #8633. Marschall an Reichskanzler von Bülow (27 May 1906).

61. BA, R 901, AAHP, #9070, 17. "The Land of the Anatolian Railway," *Times* [London] (20 September 1905). In 1906, Germany had received permission to take over the French-built Mersin–Adana line that linked the commerce center of Adana to the Mediterranean Sea. England was angered by the change of leadership, sensing that German interests would soon overlap with its own.

62. Fraser, 81–82. Fraser mentions that Abdulhamid outright rejected the German proposal to build a sugar beet farm, due to the group's insistence on having a monopoly. Several English syndicates' farming proposals were abandoned after Ottoman officials began to obstruct their efforts as a means of acquiring baksheesh. A French proposal to drain a lake near Tarsus was rejected, as were numerous offers to mine the region's coal, iron, copper, lead, and chrome deposits.

63. Paul Rohrbach, "Bagdadbahn," *Preußische Jahrbücher* 112 (1903): 380.

64. England had just recently declared itself protectorate of Kuwait and had long been in charge of the shipping lanes of the Shatt-al-Arab. By delaying Germany's attempt to circumvent England's dominance of the seas, England was in the position to keep the entire region from Baghdad to Basra out of German hands.

65. GP #8633. Marschall an Reichskanzler von Bülow (27 May 1906).

66. Deipenhorst, "Die Bagdadbahn," *Der Türmer* 3 (December 1905): 355.

67. GP #7566. Quoted in Schöllgen (1984), 199.

68. GP # 8641. Geschäftsträger von und zu Bodman an Reichskanzler von Bülow (6 July 1906).

69. Hugo Grothe, *Meine Vorderasienexpedition 1906 und 1907* (Leipzig: K. W. Hiersemann, 1913), 36.

70. R.U. Koerning, "Der Ausbau der türkischen Eisenbahnen," *Die Grenzboten* 66, no. 6 (1907): 281–83.

71. Hugo Grothe, Die Bagdadbahn und das schwäbische Bauernelement in Transkaukasien und Palästina (Munich: J. F. Lehman, 1902), 3–4.

72. Grothe (1913), 40.

73. Ibid.

74. Of course, nothing prevented Germans from learning the Turkish language.

75. Gustav Herlt, "Die Türkei als Bundesgenosse," *Der Deutsche* 4, no. 26, (29 September 1906): 813.

76. The constant barrage of Pan-German propaganda printed in the European dailies especially annoyed Marschall. Although many of the essayists simply adopted Marschall's old vision of German expansion via the Baghdad Railway, by 1908 it was clear

that Marschall had not only realized the infeasibility of this claim but its detrimental impact on Turco-German relations as well.

77. Frank Weber, *Eagles on the Crescent* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 9.

78. Grothe (1913), 36.

79. Lodemann and Pohl, 64. Outside observers later viewed these advances as nothing more than blatant bribery on the behalf of the BRC.

80. Had the BRC served as a front for German *Weltpolitik*, the railway construction would have likely proceeded to the Persian Gulf with or without the Ottoman guarantees.

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3

The Young Turks and the Baghdad Railway, 1908–1914

> The dream of a "German Baghdad Railway" to the Gulf is finished.
> —ARC director, Karl Helfferich, 1908

> We reiterate that we have absolutely no intention of taking advantage of the dilemma in which the Turks find themselves to extort special favors for ourselves.
> —BRC director, Arthur von Gwinner, 1912

Between 1908 and 1914, the Ottoman Empire found itself in the throes of a series of international crises and domestic disputes. Paradoxically, during this same turbulent period, the long-anticipated Baghdad Railway finally began to take shape. While the Ottoman Empire suffered territorial and population losses in its European provinces as a result of successive wars, the railway construction efforts on the empire's eastern frontier made significant headway. Although Ottoman efforts to protect its borders generally proved unsuccessful, by playing one Great Power off another, the empire managed to achieve greater autonomy from the Western powers despite its losses. The Baghdad Railway (and the dynamic Turco-German partnership that developed around it) proved instrumental in elevating the Ottoman Empire to contender status at the table of Great Power diplomacy.

The Turco-German partnership underwent a series of dramatic changes in this era that affected (and even threatened) the Baghdad Railway's progress. The revolutionary Young Turks, who seized power in 1908, did not share Abdulhamid's pro-German leanings. The new regime demanded that Germany realign its railway strategy in accord with Turkish domestic interests. To protect its involvement in the railway, Germany had to put its strategic agenda on hold, devoting its energy instead to exploiting the railway's commercial potential. Although the railway remained a joint Turco-German enterprise, the development of a strong Turkish nationalist consciousness began to chip away at the veneer of German paternalism, revealing Germany's vulnerability and growing dependence on the Ottomans to see the project through.

This chapter explores the history of the railway construction from the signing of the Bulgurlu–Tel-Helif convention in 1908 to the eve of the First World War. It describes the turbulent events of the summer of 1908 that threatened to terminate Germany's long-standing presence there by placing the railway's construction on permanent hold. Next, it analyzes changes in the partnership between 1908 and 1911 that allowed Germany, despite its tarnished reputation, to regain the trust of the Turkish leadership. It then examines the nature of the Turco-German relationship on the construction sites between 1911 and 1914, highlighting the importance of intercultural collaboration and interdependence to the railway's progress. It finds that the Turco-German relationship prior to the First World War was neither static nor scripted, but like all relationships, adapted to the many challenges it faced.

The summer of 1908 was a season of extremes for the Baghdad Railway developers. In early June, Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid signed a convention with the Baghdad Railway Company to begin the largest construction effort on the railway's eastern frontier yet—a segment extending 840 kilometers from Bulgurlu to Tel-Helif. After nearly a decade of intermittent progress plagued by persistent Ottoman financial crises, political obfuscation, and diplomatic intrigue, in 1908 all signs indicated a bright future for the railway and the Turco-German partnership.

The Baghdad Railway Company, an Ottoman stock company under German leadership, showed great patience by waiting for the guarantees needed to resume the railway's construction. The group's apolitical stance, its close ties to the sultan, and its proven track record for solid railway construction encouraged Sultan Abdulhamid to transcend the intrigues spun by the railway's English and Russian opponents to favor his "disinterested" German friends in the railway's continuation.

Baron Marschall von Bieberstein—Germany's stalwart ambassador to the Porte since 1897—heralded the new convention as a victory for German strategic interests. He believed that the sooner the railway reached the Persian Gulf, the sooner it would challenge England's dominance in the region. Although negotiations over the route's details had been tense, Marschall felt confident that the last major hurdle had been cleared. Once the Bulgurlu–Tel-Helif section was finished, he believed, the remaining 635 kilometers from Tel-Helif to Baghdad could be completed without further difficulty or delay.[1] After nearly a decade of waiting, the German government remained committed to its promise to complete the railway as soon as possible.

The BRC was also pleased with the terms of the 1908 convention. The Porte not only promised the BRC long-term funding, but promised to back these guarantees with an emergency livestock tax, which would be implemented, when necessary, in the regions of Konya, Aleppo, and Adana.[2] For its part, the BRC was obliged to break ground on the section within three months. The BRC immediately dispersed its engineers, technical advisors, and architects along the railway route to begin to plan the requisite supply lines, distribution centers, and construction sites.

Just one day after the convention was signed, the first brigade of engineers arrived in Istanbul to attend the plenary BRC strategy session.[3] Within three weeks, a crowd of engineers was seen passing through Konya to Eregli, the site of the future regional headquarters for the Taurus section (kilometer 200–312). Similarly, a group of 26 German engineers, arriving by ship in Mersin, made its way toward Adana, the future headquarters for the railway's second section (kilometer 312–508).

The seasoned railway architect—Ernst Mackensen—spearheaded the construction efforts. Known for his work on the Anatolian Railway and the Konya–Bulgurlu section of the Baghdad Railway, Mackensen held the status of folk hero throughout much of Anatolia. On July 10, 1908, as the train carrying his entourage pulled into the Konya terminal, the platform swelled with the cheers of hundreds of locals, who had assembled there to welcome him. Yet, misery lingered just beyond the festivities. Mackensen was surprised at how much the region had deteriorated in his absence. Since his departure from the region in 1904 after the completion of the Konya–Bulgurlu section, consecutive failed grain harvests had brought considerable hardship to the region. Economic distress was vividly apparent. Without any emergency assistance from the Ottoman government, the region's population had fallen into dire poverty. Most people spent their days searching for mere sustenance. Many of them hoped that Mackensen's return signaled the renewal of the railway's construction, which would ease their desperation by providing well-paying jobs for thousands.[4] The suffering that Mackensen witnessed that day reminded him of the immense importance of the project that lay before him. After a brief meeting with local authorities in Konya, he immediately embarked on a seven-week journey to Aleppo, where he would establish a third regional headquarters for the last subsection (kilometer 508–840). Once Mackensen put the rudiments in place and surveyed the line, he could order materials and begin working on the railway.[5]

Preliminary construction efforts got underway within a month of the convention signing. With an assurance of funding, a population desperate for work, and qualified personnel placed strategically along the route, it appeared that the moment had arrived to break new ground. The BRC was unprepared for what happened next.

The poverty that Mackensen witnessed in Konya represented only the tip of the iceberg. In townships throughout the Ottoman Empire, it was painfully evident that Abdulhamid had grown out of touch with his subjects. Abdulhamid had accomplished little during his reign to benefit the lives of average Ottomans. He had instead focused his efforts on securing his own political survival by keeping one step ahead of his Great Power debtors. Preoccupied with the endless Great Power challenges to his power, the sultan had failed to make internal improvements to his empire. Instead he devoted his energies to expensive pet projects like the Baghdad Railway, though he seemed to care less about the railway's potential to increase domestic production, economic growth, and trade.

Abdulhamid envisioned the railway as a strategic military enterprise, designed to protect the integrity of the empire's eastern borders. A strategically placed railway, he believed, would facilitate the rapid dispatch troops to trou-

bled areas in order to quell rebellions before they spread. He ignored the fact that the impetus for many of these insurrections was his own failure to address important domestic issues. With neither welfare benefits nor security protection, the majority of Ottomans were left to fend for themselves against disasters like harvest failure, drought, flood, and disease. Under Abdulhamid's reign, banditry, thievery, anarchy, and a widening gap between the haves and the have-nots became the hallmarks of Ottoman society. Eventually, the sultan's neglect would bear its untimely bitter fruit.

In July 1908, just one month after the celebrated convention signing, an insurrection shook the foundations of the Ottoman system, stripping Abdulhamid of his power and placing the Turco-German relationship in jeopardy. The revolution—led by an exiled group of political liberals calling themselves the Committee for Union and Progress Party (CUP)—called for the immediate restoration of the 1876 constitution to combat the growing injustice and inequality. Factions of the Ottoman army legitimized the uprising. Unpaid for months, the soldiers refused to quash the mutiny. After several of the sultan's special envoys sent to restore order were assassinated, Abdulhamid conceded to the "Young Turks" demands, issuing a proclamation on July 24 calling for parliamentary elections.[6]

The insurrection's success was met with great public celebration. For many, it was as though the empire had finally awakened to join the modern age. The Young Turks' calls for unity, equality, and prosperity excited a population that had known only the oppressive regime of Abdulhamid. Like their forbearers in the Young Ottoman movement of the 1870s, the Young Turks sought to remove the Islamic *seriyat* as the law of the land. In its place, they put a liberal constitution that ended all special privileges and treated the empire's diverse ethnicities and religious groups equally and fairly.[7]

The Young Turks' platform consisted of numerous reforms aimed at modernization. Its ultimate goal was to remove government restrictions to allow better living conditions to develop. To accomplish this goal, the governmental bureaucracy—both central and regional—needed to be completely overhauled. To prevent waste, government spending was strictly regulated. Ottoman officials were held accountable for their expenditures and had to adhere to an annual budget. The new regime outlawed the payment of baksheesh, and severely punished thieves and murderers. In addition, the Young Turks relaxed censorship laws, granted the freedoms to travel and to assemble, and passed laws promoting education and scientific training. The Young Turks wanted nothing more than to welcome the Ottoman Empire into the twentieth century.

In spite of their popular appeal, the Young Turks' programs did not enjoy universal support. In fact, dissension was rife even within the CUP party structure. In the first month alone, three separate elections yielded three Grand Viceroys. Yet, more damaging to the empire's security were the violent pockets of resistance that began appearing in regions far from Istanbul, where populations had a greater tendency to resist rapid change. After centuries of Islamic rule, more pious groups opposed any rash move towards modernization, feeling it posed a serious threat to their way of life. In Mosul, the removal of the *seriyat*

led to a series of bloody counterattacks by Islamists intent on keeping the Koran as the ultimate authority. Similarly, Kurdish and Arab leaders opposed the Turkish nationalist platform, fearing the CUP's calls for unity would end the established *millet* system (which had granted Greek, Jewish, Kurdish, Arab, and Armenian minorities special privileges in the empire) and lead to the widespread discrimination and oppression of non-Turks.[8]

The Young Turks' revolution also had a noticeable effect on the empire's international relations. The Young Turks' elite—mainly comprised of liberals educated in England and France—showed little sympathy for the sultan or his German friends.[9] They held Germany at least partially responsible for creating the circumstances that had made the revolution necessary. Germany's continued support for Abdulhamid's oppressive regime, its insistence on kilometric guarantees for the railway, and its readiness to loan the Ottoman Empire into bankruptcy, they believed, all helped to push the empire to the brink of collapse. Unable to dissociate Germany from the sultan, the Young Turks strove to diminish Germany's involvement in Ottoman domestic affairs. As a result, Germany's prestige at the Porte dissipated overnight. The Baghdad Railway's future, certain only a month before, was subjected to renewed scrutiny and debate.

The Young Turks instigated swift and radical changes to the Ottoman political landscape. Having experienced the benefits of liberalism firsthand, the party leadership was eager to imitate European parliamentary systems of government and apply Western-style reforms to stabilize the Ottoman Empire. Although Abdulhamid remained sultan, he became little more than a religious figurehead. From 1908 onward, the Ottoman parliament would dictate the empire's affairs. After more than 30 years of oppressive autocratic rule, the Hamidian regime had become, as one historian put it, "a victim of social and political change it had failed to control."[10]

Abdulhamid was not the only one caught off-guard by the success of the Young Turks, the rapid turn of events also baffled his most ardent German supporters. Initial reports out of Istanbul, however, played down the insurrection. Richard von Kiderlen, Germany's deputy ambassador to Istanbul, suggested to Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow that he ignore the disturbances: "I hardly believe that these zealots are very numerous, [and] even less, that they are directly dangerous."[11] After all, he claimed, the Young Turks were the kind of people who "filled with West European concepts without any deeper understanding, dreamt of bringing 'reformation' to their fatherland through the introduction of parliamentary institutions modeled loosely after some European template." The movement would only gain a footing in Turkey, he claimed, if the general population were given sufficient grounds for personal dissatisfaction.

By the end of July, Kiderlen changed his tune, realizing that the Young Turks posed a real threat to German interests:

> There reigns here an unmistakable discord against Germany, partly due to our previous good relations with the sultan and the palace, partly due to the fact that any Turk, who can speak any foreign language at all, understands only French and . . . the French papers here [are] doing everything possible to incite [hostility] against us. This will all be recon-

ciled, when the people . . . are reminded that German policy alone was altruistic, and how much Turkey owes us both spiritually and in the areas of trade.[12]

Relaying Kiderlen's observations to the Kaiser, von Bülow suggested the press reports, although devastating, did not offer true representations of the facts:

The Anti-German foreign press is attempting to portray the recent drastic change in Turkey as an English victory and a German defeat. English papers are insinuating that we set the sultan up for the speedy revocation of the constitution. . . . [ARC Director Karl] Helfferich has alerted me that all of Islam, all respectable Turks, [and] especially the well-disposed officers, view the recent turn of events instigated by the sultan [i.e., the reinstatement of the parliament and the constitution] as perhaps the last possibility for the preservation of Turkey, which under the previous state of affairs nearly perished.[13]

According to von Bülow, Helfferich perceived the profound changes taking place in Istanbul as little more than a necessary internal political corrective. Furthermore, Helfferich found it highly unlikely that the Baghdad Railway or any other German commercial enterprise would be affected, especially when the BRC had shown in the past that it had no interest in joining political discussions.

Yet, warming relations between England and the Young Turk administration openly threatened the Baghdad Railway. England saw the revolution as a golden opportunity to reestablish its ties with the Ottoman government, and wanted to capitalize on its apparent favor at the Ottoman parliament to renegotiate the railway's end section to secure its interests in the Persian Gulf.

England's advances did not go unnoticed by Germany. Germany's ambassador to London noted sarcastically: "Since the Young Turks' victories, England has suddenly remembered that it was never actually anti-Turk, only anti-Abdulhamid."[14] The German government feared that closer Anglo-Turkish cooperation would further damage Germany's standing in the Ottoman Empire, causing German political and commercial interests to lose ground that had taken decades to gain. As the summer of 1908 progressed, Germany's fears appeared to be justified. As its bond with England grew stronger, the Young Turks' government began questioning the presence of German officials in Ottoman political and financial institutions. In the months that followed, the Turco-German relationship increasingly came under fire.

The abrupt change in the Turkish government's demeanor upset many German officials. How could the Young Turks be so ungrateful after all Germany had done for the Ottoman Empire? How could they turn their backs on Germany to embrace England and France, two countries that had wanted nothing less than the empire's dissolution?

In an effort to assuage German fears, Grand Viceroy Kemal Pasha denied that the empire's new direction was "anti-German" in any way. He acknowledged that Turkey owed Germany a debt of gratitude, since Germany's friendship alone had kept Turkey from being dismembered by the onslaught of other powers. Sensing that recent pro-England speeches had touched a nerve, Kemal warned his cabinet members to tone down their rhetorical attacks on Germany.[15]

Not all Ottoman subjects shared Kemal's sense of gratitude toward Germany. On the Anatolian Railway lines, workers complained of the low wages, poor treatment, and inhumane punishments received at the hands of the German management. They wrote to the Deutsche Bank in Berlin demanding that the will of the masses be obeyed or a general strike would ensue. The workers received no response to their appeal.

On September 2, an indigenous workers' movement launched the first general strike in the history of the Turkish railways. Although the group was not well organized, its calls for better pay and more humane treatment resonated loud and clear with the German management. More impressive than the strike itself, however, was how quickly the group developed a social consciousness and the courage to assemble freely and protest loudly against injustice. An assembly of this kind would not have been tolerated under Abdulhamid's oppressive reign. The Young Turks' reforms had not only resonated in the Ottoman Empire, they were also felt in Berlin.

The group's grievances were also unique. Besides demands for better wages, they also requested that the German management be taught to distinguish workers by their places of origin, their separate traditions, and their special cultural needs. They found particularly offensive the Germans' refusal to pay baksheesh—a time-honored custom of significant cultural and economic importance.[16]

Taken aback by the strikers' demands, the German railway companies appealed to the Deutsche Bank for mediation and resolution. The bank's board of directors agreed to provide slight pay increases for the company's full-time workers, and made the pay raises retroactive to September 1908. However, the Deutsche Bank reserved judgment on the cultural insensitivity issues, and offered the BRC no instruction on how it should accommodate the workforce's various cultural needs.[17] Nonetheless, the strike alerted the BRC that the rising social consciousness among the Turkish population posed a potential threat to the Baghdad Railway's completion. From 1908 on, the BRC would have to rethink its policies, making concessions to accommodate an increasingly self-aware population.

Kaiser Wilhelm was convinced that the Turco-German relationship remained as strong as ever. He believed that Turco-German relations would remain secure as long as Abdulhamid remained sultan. The Young Turks' exaggerated preference for England, he felt, was only an overblown creation of the sensationalist press. After all, he claimed:

> The revolution was not led by the "Young Turks" out of Paris and London, but rather by the army alone, and naturally by the so-called "German Officers" trained in Germany: a pure military revolution. These officers are at the helm and are absolutely on Germany's side.[18]

In September 1908, Marschall returned to his ambassadorial post in Istanbul where he experienced firsthand the sultan's limited power. He quickly alerted Berlin:

The violent change has no predecessor in history. The sultan today has no say whatsoever in his land. That is the absolute truth without the slightest exaggeration.[19]

Nevertheless, Marschall supported Wilhelm's claim that the military, the spine of the Young Turk operation, remained true to Germany:

The talk about an anti-German mood has been disproved by the fact that in the most recent movement all competent officers—who served in Germany [and] who were wild about the German army and determined to implement the reorganization of the Turkish army after its pattern—have been raised to the highest and most influential command positions.[20]

Marschall played down the Young Turks' alleged pro-English leanings, passing their fascination with England off as one of the childhood diseases of liberal constitutionalism. He claimed that, even among German liberals, the terms "liberal" and "pro-England" had often been used interchangeably. He predicted that the Young Turks would meet the same fate as the Young Ottoman forbearers. If voting didn't work to bring about the desired results, the sultan could always appoint the parliamentary deputies himself as he had in 1878.[21]

Marschall returned to his post with far less prestige than he had previously enjoyed. The turn of events left him vulnerable and forced him to adopt a more flexible outlook. In light of the contemporaneous situation, he felt that Germany's best move would be to relax its opposition to England's involvement in the Baghdad Railway project. After all, he stated, "There was no earthly reason why Germany and England could not simultaneously be friends of Turkey without having to cross political paths." Moreover, he claimed, in the economic realm, "if the principles of the open door and free market were successful in their implementation, there would be room in the massive empire for all."[22] Once one of England's most vehement opponents, Marschall showed a willingness to compromise with Germany's rival, if it helped secure the future of German enterprise in the Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman Empire suffered a series of humiliating defeats in the span of a few days in October 1908. Seizing the opportunity that the outbreak of the Young Turks' revolution offered, several European powers took action to resolve what they believed to be political anomalies. On October 5, Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria declared Bulgarian independence. The next day, Austria-Hungary annexed the Ottoman provinces of Bosnia and Herzogovina. On October 7, Crete announced its intent to unite with Greece. Each of these affronts violated the terms of the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, which had declared these territories would forever remain the property of the sovereign Ottoman state.

The Ottoman government could not sit idly by and allow these flagrant violations of international law to go unpunished. Yet, bankrupt and disorganized, it had little chance of launching a successful military campaign in retaliation. After Kemal Pasha's failed attempts to conjure up enough support to call a European congress to discuss the aggressions, the Young Turks used the only remaining weapon in their arsenal—aggressive diplomacy. The widespread boycotts of Austrian, Bulgarian, and Cretan goods proved highly effective. After

months of discomfort and lost trade, the Austrians and Bulgarians reached separate peace deals with the Young Turks, who demanded each country to pay large sums of money for the territories that they had conquered.

The Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzogovina had an especially detrimental impact on German interests at the Porte. In fact, it left Marschall fighting for his political career. Given Marschall's close ties to Austria and his earlier promise that Austria would never threaten Ottoman sovereignty, the Young Turks had reason to suspect the ambassador had ulterior motives. Germany's long-standing powerbroker at the Porte lost all credibility overnight, leaving Germany practically no political clout in the management of Ottoman affairs.

Marschall's fall from grace had a devastating effect on many German commercial endeavors in the Ottoman Empire, including the Baghdad Railway. With no support on the political front, German railway companies had to handle the delicate situation on their own. In a letter to BRC Director Arthur von Gwinner, Helfferich suggested that the group develop a new strategy to appease the Turkish opposition and protect the railway from further delays:

> We have a difficult task ahead of us. It is my impression from all I hear and see that we virtually have to begin rebuilding our position here in important ways. . . . We have undoubtedly overestimated our position with the old regime. Many who appeared to be our decent friends, did so only because the sultan was a declared friend of Germany. Now, under the new regime, they stand on the other side. There exists bitterness against Austria—against us partly indifference, partly mistrust.[23]

Helfferich understood that the limited scope of the Turco-German relationship was at least partly responsible for worsening relations between the established German interests and the new regime:

> It is essential today that we investigate how it reached the point that we fell so completely under bad terms. Undoubtedly, a lot of it has to do with the personal mark of the Turco-German friendship, which represented itself to the wide masses as a friendship between Kaiser and sultan. We felt too secure in our local position. . . and did too little to anchor ourselves against the changing trends outside of the circle of the ruling clique.[24]

Helfferich suggested that the railway companies branch out in an effort to establish better connections with local Ottoman populations. Marschall's demise had demonstrated that the railway's future could no longer depend solely on the backing of the German government. Helfferich described Marschall's predicament:

> It is sad to see how Marschall's position changed under the unfavorable relations, earlier he was omnipotent. . . today he is powerless. The German ambassador today has no weight to throw onto the scales in Istanbul; he was laid completely flat by his Austrian friendship. His greatest fear is a German-Austrian boycott.[25]

Marschall also feared the Young Turks would levy a punitive action against the Baghdad Railway. This fear was heightened by the fact that in September 1908 the Turkish parliament had open discussions on a possible annulment of

the 1908 convention or a potential buyback of the 1903 concession, and even considered granting a concession to England to build a direct railway between Aleppo and Baghdad along the Euphrates River. Each of these proposals posed a serious threat to the future of German involvement in the Baghdad Railway.[26]

Helfferich saw only one way to resolve the problem—accept the current situation and find an exit strategy. "As I see it," Helfferich wrote, "we must find some possible way to cover our backs by uniting with the English. The dream of a German Baghdad Railway to the Gulf is finished."[27] Although the BRC had always openly sought English participation in the railway enterprise, the political environment in 1908 made this union even more likely.

Germany's foreign secretary, von Schoen, agreed with Helfferich that the prevailing mood in Turkey was undoubtedly disadvantageous for the Deutsche Bank's commercial endeavors. Yet, he claimed, the BRC had to accept at least partial blame for the rapid turn of events. After all, the BRC had only won its 1908 convention only after making huge payments of baksheesh to Abdulhamid's inner circle. The Young Turks, who were vehemently opposed to the baksheesh tradition, hoped to make an example out of Germany by showing that antiquated traditions, such as the payment of baksheesh, had no place in the new Turkey. Von Schoen also reported that the Turkish parliament had referred to these payments as a "good enough reason to get rid of the 'German business practice.'" Von Schoen quipped that in the upside-down world of 1908, Germany appeared to have become "more Turkish than the Turks."[28]

In less than five months, Germany's position at the Porte plummeted. By the end of 1908, Germany's close ties with the Ottoman Empire appeared to be a thing of the past. Germany's alliance with Austria-Hungary had tarnished its reputation at the Porte and placed the railway in real danger. The Young Turks' leadership openly expressed a mounting hostility toward Germany, leading many Germans to fear that the Baghdad Railway would either wind up in England's hands or be scrapped altogether.

In February 1909, Austria-Hungary struck a deal with the Ottoman government and agreed to pay for its recently annexed territories. In April, the Turks reached a similar agreement with Bulgaria. Since the Ottoman Empire still had 74 outstanding reparations payments to Russia for its losses in the 1877–1878 Russo-Turkish War, Russia and Bulgaria agreed to transfer the Bulgarian property payments earmarked for the Turks directly to the Russian treasury, leaving the Ottoman Empire entirely out of the exchange. The issue of Crete was left on the table to be discussed at a future date.

Kemal Pasha's willingness to compromise Ottoman territorial integrity angered many in the Islamist opposition. They were further perturbed by the fact that the CUP had won a more substantial majority of the parliamentary seats in the parliamentary elections held in November–December 1908.[29] Kemal's confidence was boosted by the CUP's strong showing, and he took steps in February 1909 to assume all of the sultan's remaining powers, including the appointment of the ministers of war and marine. Fearing that Kemal's abuse of power as Grand Viceroy might cause a backlash among the sultan's supporters, the CUP removed Kemal from office, replacing him with Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha.

This changing of the guard, however, did little to pacify the opposition's anger over Kemal's blatant attempt to undermine the sultan.

By April 13, 1909, the pro-Islamist factions had gathered enough support to launch a successful military coup against the Young Turk regime. Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha adopted a conciliatory approach, and his cabinet resigned. In the weeks that followed, terror reigned throughout the empire as Islamist factions worked to reverse all of the CUP's programs. Educated CUP ministers were assassinated, their offices ransacked, and their newspaper presses destroyed. The *seriyat* again replaced the constitution. On April 14, killing sprees were reported in the Anatolian cities of Erzincan, Erzurum, and Adana. In Adana alone, the number of dead mounted to an estimated 15,000 to 20,000, most of whom were reportedly Armenian. Outbursts of violence against Christians also broke out in Damascus, Aleppo, Mosul, and Beirut as Bedouins, Arabs, and Kurds took up arms against their religious foes.

While the sultan's faithful took drastic measures to reverse the CUP policies they detested, a group of officers sympathetic to the Young Turks assembled in the Macedonian province.[30] Led by the German-trained officers Enver Pasha, Taalat Bey, and the young Mustafa Kemal, the small group calling itself "Action Army" (Hareket Ordusu) assembled in the Aegean port of Salonika. It refused to accept Abdulhamid's assumption of power and demanded that the "unconstitutional cabinet" be dismissed. On April 24, the Action Army stormed Istanbul and, after five hours of bloody street fighting, occupied the city and the seats of government.

The Action Army's first order of business was to take emergency measures to restore order. Martial law was imposed. Islamist rebels were rounded up, executed, and hanged along the city streets as warnings. There were mass arrests of all the members of pro-Islamist and pro-sultan parties. On April 27, the CUP removed Abdulhamid from power. His brother, Mehmet V, was named sultan, upon agreement that his role in government would be purely ceremonial. On May 5, the Action Army reinstated the cabinet of Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha, heralding a new era.

The April insurrection created several major setbacks for the Young Turks. Most importantly, the new government had an economy desperate for capital. The derelict Baghdad Railway now appeared to offer the best means of acquiring it. While the majority of the Young Turks never doubted that the development of Anatolia was in their best interests, what they had questioned was which of the Great Powers could be trusted to build the enterprise according to their specifications.[31] The desperate circumstances in 1909 gave the railway a second chance. However, this time, the Young Turks expected the railway to serve the empire's economic needs first.

While the political maelstrom swirled in Istanbul, Ernst Mackensen and his crews continued their work unabated, preparing detailed plans for the railway. In the summer of 1909, the surveys of the Bulgurlu–Tel-Helif section were completed. Mackensen's study commission then handed the plans over to the Ottoman Ministry of Public Works for inspection.[32] The group's work had been painstakingly slow. With no dependable maps of the region, the commission

divided into several individual brigades to map out the entire line. Each brigade consisted of three to four engineers, two or three sketch artists and technicians, one cook, a forager, a government sentry, and a requisite number of horses, mules, and poultry. The crews faithfully set out each day to create detailed sketches of the entire route, shading in the proposed bridges, trestles, and tunnels.

One engineer described his experience, albeit difficult, as truly invigorating. He met a variety of interesting people in the course of his work, paying close attention to their individual differences. The experience taught him that the Germans' fear of the Muslims was entirely unjustified. He warned that the European tendency to sympathize with the Ottoman Christian populations would have certain negative consequences. Although the Ottoman Christians (Greeks, Armenians, and Maronites) seemed more intelligent and industrious at first, he claimed that in the long run they tended to be less honest, reliable, and dependable than the Ottoman Muslims (Turks, Kurds, and Arabs). He further noted that despite the mixed cultural background of the expedition support crews, the diverse groups had worked in concert and seemed content with the BRC's allotment of wages, room, board, and clothing.[33]

The Ottoman Ministry of Public Works kept Mackensen's sketches under review for several months. Still suspect of BRC's motives, the ministers scrutinized every detail of the plan to determine its legitimacy. Given the vulnerability of the Ottoman economy, the government could only afford to pay the bare minimum to get the railway built. The wait was excruciating for the Germans in the BRC, who had spent months in less than comfortable surroundings to accomplish their task. Tired of the waiting, they pleaded with the inspectors to allow work on the railway to begin without further delay.

The Ottoman Minister of Public Works, Gabriel Noradunghian, assured the German chargé d'affaires in Istanbul that he was doing everything in his power to get the construction approved. He claimed the sticking point was the parliamentary opposition to the railway's construction on the grounds that the undertaking would be too heavy a burden on a land with practically no capital reserves. Nevertheless, Noradunghian continued to press for immediate construction, since the railway would be useful only when it was complete.[34]

In September 1909, with the blessing of the Great Powers, the Turkish government raised the Turkish import duty tax from 11 to 15 percent in an effort to generate more capital for the railway.[35] For the BRC and the German Foreign Office, this signaled that construction would soon get underway. Still hoping to conjure up English support for the railway, BRC Director Arthur von Gwinner traveled to England in October 1909 to broker an Anglo-German compromise on the railway issue. Since the bulk of the dispute between the two powers hinged on the railway's eastern terminus, Gwinner proposed that the BRC would concede the Baghdad–Basra section to an international company comprised of 25 percent German, French, English, and Turkish capital. Although the English banks appreciated the offer, the English government rejected it forthright, sensing it was just another a German trick.

In October 1909, Marschall made one last-ditch effort to get the Baghdad Railway back on track. Hoping to convince the Young Turks of the quality of German workmanship, he invited the Ottoman Finance Minister, Djavid Bey, and the Ottoman Interior Minister, Taalat Bey, to ride the rails with him from Istanbul to Konya, Eregli, and Ankara. According to Marschall, the two influential ministers were impressed by the condition of the Konya–Eregli section, on which their train reached sustained speeds of 120 kilometers per hour. Marschall pressured his guests to allow the immediate continuation of the railway. To his surprise, the ministers appeared willing to entertain the idea. Relieved that he still had some influence, Marschall wrote to his superiors:

> This very favorable mood, stemming from the two influential ministers, strengthens my conviction that it is urgent that the railway proceed from Adana. . . . All of this carrying on will end as soon as the first groundbreaking in Adana is carried out.[36]

Within the week, the Ottoman government extended its tentative approval for the BRC continued construction of the railway's Taurus and Amanus sections. Leaders promised that a final formalized agreement would follow once financial arrangements had been made.

Although the political challenges to the railway were far from over, the BRC wasted no time setting its gears in motion. The group decided to take the Ottomans at their word and proceed with the railway construction at its own expense. They hoped that by showing their obvious enthusiasm for the railway, they would help assuage the parliamentary opposition, making it easier to acquire the necessary funding. The BRC formed a construction company to take care of delivering supplies, hiring a workforce, and running the day-to-day operations. In an effort to downplay the "Germanness" of the railway, the BRC founded its new construction company—the Company for the Construction of Railways in Turkey (CCRT)—in the neutral location of Glarus, Switzerland.[37] Although the Philipp Holzmann Company ultimately managed the CCRT, it was funded by capital from German, French, Italian, Austrian, and Swiss sources.[38] The railway's on-site operations would be choreographed at three regional headquarters located in Eregli, Adana, and Aleppo.[39]

Despite the lengthy stoppage in construction, the BRC soon found itself in position to begin laying the rails. The political turmoil in the capital in 1908 and 1909 had thankfully not interfered with the Philipp Holzmann Company's supply deliveries to the railway sites. As a result, work on the Eregli and Adana sections got underway in January 1910.

Renewed construction brought with it the need to attract a large number of skilled and unskilled personnel. BRC and Ottoman officials launched simultaneous recruiting campaigns in late 1909 to attract a sizeable workforce. Pamphlets circulated in Germany enticed Germans seeking adventure to seize the opportunity that lay before them. The brochures stressed the railway's cultural mission, proclaiming the time had come for Germans to join forces in resurrecting Mesopotamia in one of the world's greatest acts of peace. German pioneers in the east needed to know that the public's sympathy, support, and national consciousness

were behind them. German diplomacy, spirit, and capital—all worth millions—were at stake. The pamphlet pleaded for ordinary Germans to take an active stance in influencing German foreign policy in the Ottoman Empire. Germany's future, the pamphlet claimed, depended on it.[40]

The jingoistic appeals did little to disguise the group's true aim: to raise as much capital as possible to ensure the railway's completion. Other sources offered more legitimate appeals. For example, one professional trade journal printed the following advertisement to attract engineers:

> Wanted: German engineers for Turkish service. The Turkish Ministry of Public Works is seeking engineers to build railroads in the year 1911. Required are knowledge of the French language and practical training. The monthly salary of 2,500 to 3,500 piasters (460–640 marks) is being offered. Turkish citizenship is not required. Contact the Administration for Bridges and Streets in the Ministry of Public Works in Istanbul.[41]

By March 1910, 500 new workers were hard at work on the Eregli section. Since the preliminary work had been completed east of Bulgurlu, crews there immediately began laying the rails. For the other sections, construction materials had to be transported partly by rail and partly on the backs of camels, and the materials frequently took days to reach the more remote sites. Given a camel's weight limitations, large equipment had to be dismantled at the port before being transported in pieces to the local sites. As a result, one of the biggest tasks facing workers on-site was the arduous reassembly of machinery, parts, and materials. At least fuel could be gathered locally. The forests, where present, served as the main source of railway ties and fuel for the working locomotives.[42] By April, the number of employees on the Eregli section had nearly tripled. By the end of 1910, the BRC employed more than 6,000 workers on the first two sections. For the first time in decades, the BRC could proudly report that tangible progress had been made.

The railway's route was still not set in stone. In January 1910, Turkish legislators had suggested several changes to the route. Many delegates agreed that for the railway to be profitable, it needed to pass through the Mediterranean port of Iskenderun (Alexandrette) on its way to Aleppo, rather than cross the sterile and unproductive Amanus mountain range. After lengthy consideration, the Ministry for Public Works refused to alter the route, sticking with Abdulhamid's earlier argument that a line between Adana and Iskenderun ran too great a risk of being destroyed by enemy ships. Although the Young Turks were clearly interested in the railway's commercial value, they were not willing to let commerce eclipse the railway's strategic significance. On May 17, 1910, the Ministry of Public Works approved BRC plans for the third section from Islahiye to Tel-Helif.

With each of the three subsections from Bulgurlu–Tel-Helif approved, the perennial question remained: Who would finance the railway? Since the railway's passage over the Taurus and Amanus ranges would require numerous expensive bridges, viaducts, and tunnels, the BRC knew it would be unable to continue this pace indefinitely without Ottoman support.

The 1910 Ottoman budget leveled a blow at the BRC. The Ottoman Finance Ministry announced that the government would no longer grant railway concessions carrying guarantees. The regime assured the BRC that its decision was not meant to punish them; it was simply designed to preserve Ottoman self-interest by avoiding any traps that might force them to become increasingly dependent on foreign powers.

The chief author of the budget, Ottoman Finance Minister Djavid Bey knew the 1903 railway concession had to be revised to address the issues of the compromised Ottoman finance and security. Although he firmly believed in the railway, he denounced proposals seeking to repudiate the concession altogether as a means of washing their hands, once and for all, of Abdulhamid's crooked dealings: "We must accept the Baghdad Railway contract, because there should exist a continuity and a solidarity between generations and governments."[43] The 1910 budget served as a warning to the BRC and the Great Powers that the Ottoman government would only proceed on a loan-by-loan basis. The loans would come from any power interested in making a long-term investment in the empire's future.

Since the French had administered the Ottoman debt for decades, the Young Turks first approached French banks to obtain loans for the railway. The French abstained, feeling the risky railway enterprise would adversely affect the Parisian market. Next, they appealed to the English, who also abstained, once more revealing that their only concern was keeping the Germans from building the railway.

As the third runner-up, Germany seized the opportunity to make one last attempt to gain the Young Turks' blessing. In December 1910, ARC Director Helfferich approached the Imperial Ottoman Government with an offer it could not refuse. Armed with investments drawn entirely from German and Austrian banks, Helfferich proposed a 4 percent Imperial Ottoman loan for the amount of 160 million francs (or about 8.8 million marks) to be paid back over a 98-year span. By early 1911, the Deutsche Bank and a consortium of German and Austrian bankers had approved the loan. The Young Turks accepted Helfferich's offer and the loan.

German efforts once again managed to salvage the Ottoman railway. The new loans guaranteed the railway would serve primarily German and Ottoman interests, not the remaining Great Powers'. Helfferich's actions also gave the Young Turks a renewed respect for Germany. They realized that perhaps Abdulhamid had not befriended the Germans for merely sentimental reasons after all, but rather for the German's financial support and willingness to come to the aid of his ailing empire.

Germany's unilateral action caught the English and French off-guard. Embittered by the turn of events, which had allowed Germany through its background deals to regain favor in Istanbul, they pressured on the Porte to even the score. The French demanded a concession to build a rival railway to Baghdad from Iskenderun through Syria and down the Euphrates. The Young Turks responded by granting France the right to extend its existing railways in Syria. The English, on the other hand, renewed their protests over the railway's southern

terminus. Taking Gwinner's earlier offer to heart, they demanded that the German railway terminate in Baghdad. They further requested that the Baghdad–Basra section be exclusively granted to an English company, since the section clearly lay in England's zone of strategic influence.[44]

On March 21, 1911, the Ottoman government and the BRC signed a second supplementary Baghdad Railway convention. The concession permitted the BRC to proceed with its construction of the sections from Tel-Helif to Baghdad without any additional commitments from the Imperial Ottoman Treasury. In an effort to assuage English fears, the BRC agreed to renounce its right to build the section beyond Baghdad.[45] To facilitate the delivery of railway materials, the BRC was instructed to build a branch railway from Iskenderun to Osmaniye (on the main Baghdad Railway line) as well as a sheltered harbor in Iskenderun.[46]

The 1911 concession left developers with mixed emotions. As the party most concerned with railway's commercial viability, the BRC had never shown a great deal of interest in the swampy Baghdad–Basra section of the railway.[47] England's opposition had managed to make the section even less attractive to investors. Whereas the BRC had managed to keep the Baghdad–Basra section out of English hands, some Germans felt the BRC had acted too swiftly to preserve its financial stake in the railway at the expense of the German government's strategic interests.

Although Marschall had been willing to strike a compromise with England to save the Baghdad Railway in 1908, by 1911, he was fed up with London's incessant intervention. Since 1897 he had pursued the construction of an all-German railway to the Persian Gulf that would bypass England's dominance of the seas and establish the fastest route between Europe and Asia. Never in his wildest dreams had Marschall entertained the possibility that the BRC would renounce any part of the 1903 concession he had worked so hard to attain.

Marschall renewed his vigorous campaign to keep the railway out of English hands. When the BRC Director Gwinner traveled to England and offered to forego the railway's final section, Marschall wrote in protest:

> The moment that we stop in Baghdad and let the Turks work south from there, the character of the Baghdad Railway will be completely changed. [The railway] was once thought of as a trend-setting "World Railway," devised by German enterprise and distinguished German capital. It was supposed to connect the Mediterranean Sea and the heart of Europe to the Persian Gulf by means of a first-class railway. The Baghdad Railway would only redeem this character, if it were to find its end in Basra.[48]

Yet, by 1911, compromising the Baghdad-Basra section appeared to be the only means of building the railway at all.

The 1911 concession highlighted the differences between the railway's commercial and political supporters. Rather than serving as an active participant in the German *Weltpolitik* strategy, the BRC had actually closed the door on Germany's chance to achieve its strategic goals in the Persian Gulf region.

The Young Turks revolution dramatically affected the overall Turkish railway strategy. Unlike Abdulhamid, who had seen the railway as a tool of suppression, the Young Turk regime, faced daily with the prospect of financial col-

lapse, viewed it as a tool of progress. The railway promised to serve as the backbone of the empire, increasing its agricultural and industrial capacity as well as its population's mobility. In 1911, the BRC and the Young Turks appeared to be on the same page, each interested in the railway's commercial potential and enthusiastic to proceed with immediate construction.

In 1911, the German Foreign Office—once the railway's chief promoter—stood on the sidelines of the Baghdad Railway negotiations—a victim of circumstances beyond its control. Having lost prestige with the Ottoman government and the BRC, the Foreign Office's well-defined plans had to yield to the railway's main attraction, its commercial potential. The Foreign Office would have minimal influence on future railway negotiations, voicing its general support for situations that were likely to benefit German commercial interests in the Ottoman Empire. Germany's newly appointed foreign secretary, Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter, expressed his hope that the renewed railway construction would instigate a rebirth of German enterprise in the Ottoman Empire:

> The agreement over the Baghdad Railway secures the construction of this powerful work by means of German head and German hands. . . . [The contract] means a great triumph for the spirit of German enterprise and German policy. The main objective of the whole enterprise, Baghdad, will be reached in only a few years. [49]

Kiderlen-Wächter made no attempt to disguise his sense of resignation. The supplementary convention of March 1911 allowed the railway to become what the German Foreign Office had always publicly insisted it was—a purely economic enterprise.

The 1911 convention effectively ended much of Great Power speculation and intrigue that had surrounded the railway since its inception. The railway once again became a purely commercial enterprise. Although changing circumstances threatened to derail the project, the Baghdad Railway construction continued without pause until the outbreak of the First World War. On the construction sites far from the centers of state power, members of the BRC and the CCRT quickly became the new bearers of the German interest, striking important deals with local Turkish officials and populations to make headway on the project.

Between the signing of the 1911 convention and the eve of the First World War, the Baghdad Railway witnessed its most productive era yet. Freed from the political entanglements that had hindered the railway's progress since 1903, railway developers stood ready to start their construction efforts in earnest. The group estimated that if all went according to plan, the railway would reach Baghdad in approximately six years.

As the railway made the gradual transition from the theoretical realm to the practical, the focus of the Turco-German partnership shifted from the centers of state power to the railway's construction sites on the Ottoman frontier where Germans and Turks worked side by side to complete the coveted railway. There, the process of modernization, which the Young Turks had pledged, would take root. There, the railway would breathe new life into a dormant Ottoman land-

scape, increasing the region's agricultural and industrial capacities. Using Mackensen's plans as its guide and its own funds as collateral, the BRC was eager to leave difficult times behind and proceed with the railway construction. The process of building the joint Turco-German enterprise soon got underway.

Yet, as the construction efforts progressed, it became apparent that the railway's future was anything but certain. The often hostile and volatile environment of the construction sites left work crews vulnerable to a host of afflictions. The BRC engineers—sent to bring order and civility to the Anatolian wilderness—soon found themselves at its mercy, swept up in chaotic situations beyond their control. In the face of adversity, the BRC's administration was forced to compromise its objectives to address the needs of the local population, on whom the railway's success depended. The local Ottoman population would also play an increasingly powerful role in determining the pace of the railway's progress.

The Turco-German relationship emerged from the political maelstrom of 1908–1911 bruised yet intact. In the years that followed, however, the relationship would be tested by new challenges on the railway's construction sites. Plagued by adverse weather, ethnic unrest, disease epidemics, and insufficient security, the railway construction efforts soon revealed growing fractures between the German managers and their predominantly Ottoman subordinates. A series of local and international conflicts would further isolate the German railway developers, making them increasingly dependent on the local labor force to complete the project.

Returning to the railway's construction sites, the remainder of this chapter examines how the Baghdad Railway shaped the Turco-German partnership between 1911 and 1914. Piecing together the annual reports of the BRC, the CCRT, and the German consulate in Aleppo and selected first-person narratives, it brings the chaotic, dangerous, and ever changing environment surrounding the Baghdad Railway construction to life. Far removed from the realm of diplomacy, the railway developers relied on their own best judgment to move the project ahead. The railway's success, more often than not, depended on the ability of German officials and Ottoman laborers to work in concert

Before delving into the details of the day-to-day construction, an overview is in order. The proposed railway was divided into four unequal sections: Section I from Bulgurlu to Durak (headquartered in Eregli); Section II from Durak to Islahiye (headquartered in Adana); Section III from Islahiye to Tel-Helif (headquartered in Aleppo); and Section IV from Tel-Helif to Baghdad (headquartered in Baghdad). Each section worked independently, with a BRC management staff to handle its business affairs. The staffs assigned to each section included one chief engineer, one deputy engineer, 3 to 8 section engineers, 20 to 40 lesser engineers, architects, and architect assistants, 18 to 60 bureaucrats and businessmen, and 10 to 50 special technical advisors.

Between 1910 and 1914, the BRC kept a total staff of roughly 300 to 400 skilled workers on the line, including tradesmen, carpenters, pyrotechnics experts, masons, mechanics, bridge workers, and tunnel borers, among others. The workforce tended to be quite multinational, boasting Germans, Austrians, Italians, Slavs, Greeks, and Armenians in its ranks.

The bulk of the work, however, fell on the shoulders of an army of unskilled workers, who were recruited mostly from the areas surrounding the construction sites. Their work included the loading and unloading of materials, transporting goods (including explosives), stone and earth removal, brush clearing, tree chopping, and the use of heavy tools. The workforce was mostly comprised of Turks, Kurds, Albanians, and Arabs—the actual demographics varying regionally. In March 1910, the first group of 500 workers was hired on Section I. By April 1912, the total number of unskilled workers working the line had reached 15,700.

The CCRT had a sliding pay scale to match the different levels of skill. Yet, as one traveler to the construction sites noted, differences in pay seemed to depend more on a worker's nationality than on his skill. For example, Italian miners earned a monthly salary of 35 to 45 piasters (1 piaster = 18 pfennig) while Turkish miners received 18 to 30 piasters for the same work. Turkish porters received 12 to 17 piasters; and simple workers received only 8 to 12 piasters. When travelers confronted the BRC with these apparent pay discrepancies, the company's representative justified paying Europeans higher wages, arguing that a European, who was used to higher standards of living, would not work for less.[50]

The CCRT management also kept ethnic groups separate on the work detail. Turks were sent to one job, Kurds to another. Each group had its own overseer of the same ethnicity who served as the group's liaison to the CCRT staff and the chief disciplinarian. Overseers were loosely regulated and often took extreme measures to keep their crews in line.

Supply delivery methods varied by section, depending on a site's proximity to a seaside port. The CCRT subcontracted the Deutschen Levante-Linie of Hamburg and the Atlas Steamship Line of Bremen to deliver the railway materials. Steamships unloaded supplies at the ports of Istanbul, Beirut, Iskenderun, and Mersin in two-, five-, or nine-month rations. From there, trains, horses, mules, or camels transported them to the remote railway construction sites.[51] The materials themselves were exclusively of German manufacture: the rails, ties and plates came from the steelworks of Düsseldorf; the bolts for the rail plates from the firm of Funcke & Hueck in Hagen; the bolt plates from the Georg-Marien Mining and Iron Works in Osnabrück; and the clamps from the Hamborn Barrelworks in Bruckhausen.[52] In 1910–1911, the CCRT shipped 77,466 tons of supplies to the railway sites. In 1911–1912, the volume rose to 85,921 tons, and included 26,500 tons of lime, 10,900 tons of cement, and 314,000 kilograms of explosives, 3,460 tons of narrow-gauge rail, and 1,874 tents.[53]

The terms of the concession obliged the BRC to provide workers with the necessary food, water, clothing, and shelter. The workers on the construction sites typically lived in canvas tents, although from time to time the general staff had the luxury of sleeping in collapsible barracks. Sixteen men occupied each worker tent. Engineers and overseers each obtained a smaller, individual tent.[54] In mountainous regions, where early snows and cold temperatures made living in tents impractical, the CCRT erected small cabins to house personnel. When

construction began in Mesopotamia on the eastern side of the Euphrates River, special security issues required all railway personnel to live in fortified train stations. In the Amanus Mountains and Euphrates River basin, where a long-term commitment was necessary, small working towns emerged complete with coffeehouses, beer taverns, gramophones, and even cinemas.

The CCRT was also concerned with the workers' hygiene. In its first year of operations, the company witnessed a cholera epidemic that nearly depleted its entire workforce. Knowing the railway's future depended on a strong and healthy workforce, the CCRT asked the BRC to establish a permanent health service along the railway to care for the workers. The BRC complied with the request, erecting hospitals in Eregli, Tossun-Ali, Adana, Bahçe, Aleppo, and in 1912, in Baghdad. The BRC also established numerous field hospitals at intervals along the route and staffed them with trained German medical personnel. [55]

The railway companies continued to face several recurring problems. Natural disasters, including floods, blizzards, and droughts, continuously hampered construction efforts. In several sections, outbreaks of contagious disease occurred on an annual basis. Certain regions offered railway crews practically no security. Robberies and murders occurred frequently. However, the two biggest problems hampering the companies' progress were the process of securing land grants and the dearth of qualified workers.

Whether motivated by a sense of adventure or duty, the German engineers arriving in the Ottoman Empire for the first time knew surprisingly little about the land that would soon become their home. It was the assignment, not the location, which lured many of the engineers into Ottoman service. Heralded in the press as German pioneers, these engineers felt honored to be selected to participate in such an important undertaking. Thirsting to learn more about the closed regions of the Ottoman Empire, German scientists and scholars implored BRC engineers to carefully document any ancient ruins they encountered. Moreover, engineers were asked to collect samples of the region's flora and fauna to ship back to Germany for scientific study. The BRC agreed that the opportunity to make a valuable contribution to scientific knowledge should not be wasted.[56] After a few weeks on the construction sites, however, the engineers found themselves too busy with regional concerns to make any scientific contributions.

The first full construction year proved to be quite a learning experience for all of the parties involved in the Baghdad Railway. Unfavorable working conditions, severe weather, disease, and difficulty obtaining the necessary property titles were only some of the roadblocks the CCRT faced. Nonetheless, by June 1911, the end of the business year, the CCRT counted 205 skilled and 8,890 unskilled workers employed on Section I and Section II.[57] After a shaky start, the railway efforts appeared to be on the right track.

Attaching to the existing rails at Bulgurlu, Section I of the railway extended 146 kilometers over the looming Taurus Mountain range to the village of Durak. The section's headquarters, managed by Philipp Holzmann Company's chief engineer Dr. Ing. Mavrogordato, was established in the city of Eregli. The section began the year with a sharp rise in the number of new recruits working on its construction sites. In June 1910, however, nearly 1,000 workers left the Tau-

rus Mountain sites to return to their farms on the Konya plains where the summer crops needed harvesting. The rapid depletion of the work force left the CCRT severely understaffed. As the number of workers on the sites dwindled, the remaining workers threatened to strike unless they received pay raises. Although the CCRT had its suspicions that the local governor stood behind the protest, it was left no choice but to comply with worker demands. By October, the number of workers had returned to normal. The arrival of early snows, however, postponed construction efforts until spring.[58]

Section II of the railway—stretching196 kilometers from Durak in the Taurus Mountains across the Cilician Plains to Islahiye in the Amanus Mountains—gave the CCRT the greatest difficulties. The European developers found the region's natural conditions, worker relations, intense summer heat and humidity less than welcoming. Although the section's chief engineer Dr. Ing. Winkler, hoped to make substantial progress, he achieved little due to circumstances well beyond his control. The snows—resulting from the extraordinarily harsh winter that had gripped Anatolia—spelled disaster when spring arrived. When the abnormal volume of snow melted, the Seyhan and Ceyhan rivers quickly overran their banks, spilling over onto the flat Cilician Plain. Long after the floodwaters receded, large pools of stagnant water on the marshy plains served as breeding grounds for mosquitoes and disease.

In early June 1911, disease spread like wildfire throughout the region, ravaging the railway construction sites. Afflicted railway personnel soon overwhelmed the new medical facilities with hundreds of cases of malaria, typhus, and dysentery. Some workers, fearing for their lives, fled the sites to avoid contracting disease. As a result of this exodus, construction efforts had to be postponed until the epidemics dissipated.

By late summer, the epidemics had finally subsided. To salvage the remainder of the summer, Winkler moved operations from the disease-ridden plains up into the eastern Taurus, where the high mountain passes and the Haciciri Gorge presented recovering work crews plenty of challenges. For a train to cross the Taurus Mountains, engineers would have to bore nearly 18 kilometers of tunnels—a project the CCRT developers expected to take years to complete. To prepare for the inevitable, work crews spent the remainder of the summer in Akköpru near Bozanti in the eastern Taurus, building a village of cabins to house the future engineers and supervisory staff.

Section III of the railway extended 340 kilometers from Islahiye in the Amanus across the Euphrates River to Tel-Helif. Dr. Ing. Meißner Pasha, the respected engineer whose dedicated service on the Hijaz Railway made him a household name throughout the Ottoman Empire, managed the section from the headquarters in Aleppo. Although materials and work crews stood ready to begin construction, Meißner continued to be bogged down by the process of securing land titles for the future railway stations and repair yards. At his request, an Ottoman commissioner was sent from Istanbul to expedite the land acquisitions.[59]

The regions surrounding Aleppo offered no security for the railway developers and local populations. Furthermore, the poverty conditions made life mis-

erable for all who lived there. The German Consul in Aleppo, Dr. Rößler, reported that two years of Young Turks' reforms had made no positive impact on the region's standard of living. For example, the entire city of Urfa (northeast of Aleppo) barely secured enough food to sustain its population of 40,000. Many of the region's inhabitants counted on the Baghdad Railway to bring their suffering to an end. The railway promised not only to improve the region's productivity, it would also help safeguard the region against the attacks of roaming Bedouin bandits.[60]

After signing the 1911 agreement, the BRC made preparations to begin the fourth and final section of the railway. Meißner Pasha moved to Baghdad where he set up the headquarters for Section IV. Dr. Ing. Schroeder, an Alsatian with a limited knowledge of German, assumed Meißner's position in Aleppo. Rößler took steps to assure the German Foreign Office that Schroeder was the best man for the position and that the placement of a foreigner at the helm would in no way hinder the railway's progress.

Although the CCRT made no measurable progress in its first construction year, the company learned many valuable lessons that would help them overcome future adversity. The eventful year sobered developers who had secretly hoped the railway would be built overnight. To reach Baghdad, it would require the immense efforts of both German and Ottoman workers. The railway's eastward extension would depend on how well the two groups catered to the other's needs.

The second construction year began on a positive note. On July 1, 1911, the CCRT celebrated the opening of a new 38-kilometer stretch from Bulgurlu to Ulukisla. For the first time since 1904, the Baghdad Railway had grown a new link. The new section made it possible to travel from Istanbul to Ulukisla in little more than two days.[61] For the Greek-born, Austrian engineer Mavrogordato, frequently targeted in the German press as a threat to the railway's German character, the new addition proved once and for all that German citizenship was not a prerequisite for achieving greatness.[62]

Throughout the summer of 1911, railway developers enjoyed a favorable growth in the size of the work force and the quantity of supplies reaching the sites. Preliminary work got underway in Bahçe where work crews faced the dreadful task of boring a tunnel five kilometers in length through the Amanus Mountains. To aid the delivery of supplies the CCRT built a narrow-gauge service railway to the tunnel site. In addition, crews constructed cabins to house the hundreds of workers needed to see the project through.

The lack of adequate security became a growing concern for work crews in the mountains. The handful of Ottoman soldiers provided by the government proved incapable of guaranteeing the safety of the workers and materials. Supplies frequently disappeared overnight as marauding robbers struck at will. The Ottoman soldiers resented repeated CCRT requests for them to improve their job performance. For them, it appeared that security detail only required their presence and nothing more.

In a report to the BRC Board of Directors, Winkler pointed out several problems that had caused delays in Section II. He complained that construction

efforts had been plagued by laziness, unsatisfactory performance by the workers in the higher elevations, unfavorable health conditions, a series of devastating floods, a lack of compliance from regional Ottoman officials, and a series of clumsy accidents by the unskilled workers. It would take Winkler, and his staff of 105, until April 1912 to place the section's first 115-kilometer installment between Durak and Yenice and between Adana and Mamure in service.

Construction resumed in Section III on the 227-kilometer stretch from Meydan to Akbes. Although no new stretches were placed in service in the 1911–1912 fiscal year, German General Consul Rößler reported that crews working on Section III had been quite active. With Dr. Ing. Foellner at the helm of a staff of 123 CCRT personnel and 3,270 local employees, work got underway in the first week of July 1911.[63] At a site 108 kilometers northwest of Aleppo, engineers had begun boring a tunnel through the mountain dividing the villages of Radcu and Akbes; a job projected to take at least two years to complete. Construction efforts were in full acceleration northeast of Aleppo, progressing at a rate of roughly 1,200 meters per day. The difficulties surrounding the acquisition of land rights had subsided significantly from the previous year. The CCRT hoped to have the rails laid to Katma by the end of December, to Çobanbey by February 1912, to Radcu by the middle of May 1912, and to Cerablus by the middle of July 1912.[64] Unfortunately, despite the favorable prognosis, a severe cholera outbreak incapacitated the workforce, bringing work efforts to a crawl.[65]

Rößler reported that security conditions in Section III had taken a turn for the worse, and indicated that the number of reported uprisings against employers and engineers and attacks on the local police and soldiers had risen significantly. Factional conflicts and interethnic feuds occurred almost daily. Although these conflicts did not generally target the engineers, Rößler feared that they soon would, unless some form of intervention was forthcoming. Rößler noted that, in the past, one policeman had sufficed to keep a village in order. In 1911, however, local populations constantly harassed soldiers, humiliating them by stealing their ammunition belts and tearing their uniforms to shreds. Still the government in Istanbul did not intervene. By the end of the 1911–1912 fiscal year, the lack of regional security had grown so intolerable that the BRC held formal meetings with the Young Turks to discuss possible solutions.

Section IV was still in its plenary stage in the autumn of 1911. Meißner Pasha spent months to develop blueprints of the section to submit to the Ministry of Public Works for approval. The Baghdad headquarters also served as the starting point for construction. Meißner planned to build up the Tigris River toward Mosul. For the time being, he only needed a skeletal crew of 47 to handle affairs. Most of these engineers arrived in Baghdad after a long voyage from Germany around the Arabian Peninsula, up the Persian Gulf, the Schatt-al-Arab, and the Tigris. It was their hope that their contributions to the Baghdad Railway would significantly reduce their travel time back to Berlin when it came time for them to leave.

Eventually, Meißner, too, ran into problems. Generally, German ships supplied the Baghdad section, transporting materials from Europe to the Persian

Gulf region. England's monopoly on the shipping lanes of the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers, however, required all supplies bound for the construction sites to be unloaded in Basra, pending shipment via English steamer up the river to Baghdad. The materials had a tendency to pile up on the Basra docks until the English lines decided to make the delivery. As Anglo-German debate on the railway's terminus grew more hotly contested, the costs associated with transporting German materials up the Tigris steadily rose. Rößler feared that if these price hikes went unchecked, the BRC would end up paying more per ton for the ride up the Tigris than had the goods been unloaded in Iskenderun and transported over land to Baghdad via rail or caravan. Sensing the situation's volatility, Rößler suggested that the BRC drag its feet its negotiations on the Baghdad-Basra section to avoid further revenue losses.[66]

Despite their remoteness, the railway construction sites still experienced shock waves created by international events. The Tripolitanian War in 1911–1912 and the ensuing wars in the Balkans in 1912 and 1913 wreaked further havoc on the construction efforts, causing workers to be conscripted, interrupting supply lines, and changing the demeanor of the work crews. The events also forced the CCRT and the BRC to reconfigure their construction strategies to accommodate the changing circumstances.

The Tripolitanian War began when Italy, a latecomer to the colonial scene, set out to establish a colony in Libya, which lay entirely within sovereign Ottoman territory. The Italian offensive centered on the city of Tripoli, which had served as an important Ottoman stronghold for centuries. The Ottoman army had just scaled back its military presence there, transferring its troops to suppress a recent outbreak of rebellions in Yemen. When Italian ships surrounded Tripoli on September 28, 1911, the Ottomans were caught completely off-guard.

Though clearly at a disadvantage, the Ottomans refused to surrender to the superior Italian forces. Ignoring the Italian ultimatums to surrender, the Ottoman forces kept the Italians at bay long enough to transfer heavy weaponry from Tripoli into the interior, where loyal Arabs prepared to launch a counteroffensive. On October 5, Italian forces occupied Tripoli, and in the following weeks, took control of the cities of Derna and Tobruk.

Since the Ottoman army was too weak to launch a full-blown counterattack, it launched several smaller campaigns to make the Italians uncomfortable. The patient Ottomans knew that the longer they waited to surrender, the better the terms of the peace agreement would be. A long stalemate ensued. In an effort to force the Ottomans to surrender, Italian warships shelled Aqaba, and later, Beirut. On April 18, 1912, the Italian fleet moved north on the Aegean Seas and attacked Turkish fortresses guarding the Dardanelles, closing the straits for five weeks. Still, the Ottomans did not surrender, nor did the Italian occupation of the Dodecanese islands in the Aegean Sea bring compliance. When war broke out in the Balkans in October 1912, the Ottomans agreed to end the conflict with Italy and allow the Italian occupation of Tripoli. Ottoman resistance movements, however, remained strong there for decades to come.

The protracted war with Italy had a measurable impact on the railway's construction. As far as the railway companies were concerned, the war's greatest

casualty was the departure of highly skilled Italian laborers from the Baghdad Railway's construction sites. Known for their expert masonry skills, the workers were sorely missed by the railway managers when the workers were called into Italian service. The CCRT found it difficult to find replacement workers with comparable skills.

Although it is unclear how many Italian workers left the construction sites, the number was substantial enough for the CCRT to launch a new campaign to recruit replacements from the local population. The new recruits, mostly Turks drawn chiefly from surrounding areas, left much to be desired. The CCRT operations staff complained bitterly that the lack of skilled labor threatened to halt construction efforts altogether. Sensing the CCRT's growing dependence on the local workers to meet its objectives, the newly assembled workforce became more brazen in its demands for higher wages, better security, and improved living conditions. With its back against the wall, the CCRT made what concessions it could to appease the complainants.

The Tripolitanian War also brought supply shipments arriving in the Mediterranean ports of Mersin and Iskenderun to a crawl. Explosives bound for the mountain tunnels, and other materials that fell under the Ottoman definition of war contraband, were subject to a full port inspection by the Ottoman military authorities, causing considerable delays. Deprived of materials and workers, the CCRT had little choice but to wait until the situation improved.

The Ottoman Empire had little rest. The end of one conflict led to the beginning of another. In October 1912, the Balkan League declared war on the Ottoman Empire, hoping to take advantage of the empire's weakened state. The League's objective was to remove the Turks once and for all from European soil. Within weeks, the war led to a mass exodus of sick, wounded, and impoverished Turkish refugees. Thousands of uprooted Muslims made their way eastward to seek protection in Istanbul. Hundreds perished en route, many others died once they reached Istanbul's refugee camps where typhoid and cholera went unchecked. In an effort to improve the situation, the Ottoman government used the Anatolian Railway to transport as many refugees it could to the less populated regions of the empire, including many of the areas where the Baghdad Railway was currently under construction.[67]

Kemal Pasha's attempt to sign an armistice agreement was foiled when the CUP leader, Enver Pasha, led a successful *coup d'etat* on January 23, 1913. Had the armistice been signed, it would have required the surrender of all Ottoman European territory. The so-called "Baba Ali" coup was seen as a last defiant stand to protect the empire's integrity. The CUP was determined to hold out for better terms. The party harkened back to its platform of unity, calling the empire's minorities to join the Committee of National Defense to defend the empire's sovereignty. Instead, chaos reigned, as assassinations, mass arrests, and curfews became the currency of the day. The empire once more appeared to be coming undone.

On May 30, 1913, the Balkan conflict ended with the signing of the Treaty of London. The wars left indelible scars on the Ottoman Empire. In less than a year, according to one estimate, the empire had lost 83 percent of its European

territory and 69 percent of the empire's total population.[68] Moreover, public morale had reached an all time low. Violent demonstrations erupted in Istanbul over the overcrowded conditions caused by homeless Balkan refugees. Trying to make sense of recent events, many Turks blamed Germany for failing to keep its pledge to transform the Ottoman army into a modern fighting force. Others took their frustrations out on the empire's minority populations, who, they believed, had turned their backs on the empire in its time of greatest need.

While the Balkan Wars wreaked havoc on the empire's European possessions, the Asiatic parts of the Ottoman Empire emerged from the period relatively unscathed. True, the war had led to higher freight costs, less passenger travel, and a slight reduction in overall trade. In areas like Adana and Aleppo, the government had conscripted thousands of reservists, established price controls, and partially limited the freedoms of movement and expression. Yet, these actions had a minimal effect on everyday life in Asiatic Turkey. In Anatolia and Mesopotamia, business continued as usual. The region's self-sufficient agricultural sector remained surprisingly unaffected. Some areas even reported an increase in trade as a result of the war in the West.[69]

The wars, however, did affect the daily operations of the Baghdad Railway, forcing the BRC to revamp its railway strategy. With many Turkish and non-Turk workers deserting the construction sites to enlist in their respective armies, the CCRT had no other option but to assemble a workforce out of the men who had been deemed unfit for military service. The CCRT's inability to recruit quality workers, however, soon led the company to cut back its own skilled personnel.

With the wars in the Balkans, the BRC faced a series of serious setbacks on the business end of the railway operations. Growing tensions strained the world's currency market and kept investor confidence low. To make matters worse, the CCRT reported a deficit of 93,693 francs, the first negative balance in the railway's history. The BRC took immediate steps to insulate its shareholders from further losses.[70] The company's board of directors voted to cut back on the railway's continuing construction efforts, limiting the funds to only those projects it deemed absolutely necessary.[71]

The BRC annual report for 1911–1912 fiscal year revealed several setbacks that the construction crews faced.[72] Ground shifts forced the closure of one 18-kilometer section near Durak; a close inspection revealed that the entire section would have to be rebuilt. Moreover, the company found countless mistakes on the existing line between Mamure and Islahiye that also required replacement. Before making the prescribed changes, the CCRT first turned over its planned route changes to the Ottoman Ministry of Public Works for approval. After a close inspection of the incline and curvature of the new route, the plans were approved.

During the Balkan conflict, the BRC reduced the number of its personnel working on the line from 406 to 309. The CCRT ceased its operations on Section I, knowing that the Taurus tunnel was still years from completion.[73] The company focused its efforts instead on completing the Bahçe tunnel in the

Amanus and the Euphrates bridge in Cerablus: two works on which the entire future of the Baghdad Railway rested.

The Bahçe tunnel remained the only active construction site in Section II. With a stockpile of supplies and a handful of workers, drilling on the mountain continued nonstop while war raged in the Balkans. But the work crews soon discovered that the mountain was intent on waging a war of its own. The route chosen by Stemrich and mapped out by Mackensen led straight through Giauer Dag (Gold Mountain), a mountain composed of the hardest quartz on record. The hardness of the stone severely limited the progress made on the tunnel. Eventually, the best workers left the sites to find work elsewhere. The defections left the company in a bind. The regions surrounding the high altitude work site were sparsely populated, making it next to impossible to locate enough replacement workers to continue the grueling work of tunnel boring. Left no other choice, the CCRT postponed its Bahçe operations until the situation improved.[74]

Section III offered a ray of hope in an otherwise dismal picture. On December 15, 1912, well ahead of schedule, the CCRT opened an additional 200 kilometers of the route, including the sections from Radcu to Aleppo and Aleppo to Cerablus.[75] Although the new sections were quite an accomplishment given the prevailing circumstances, the German Consul in Aleppo doubted they would have any immediate commercial effect on the region, especially since the mountain tunnels were nowhere near completion.[76]

For the citizens of Aleppo, however, the new railway offered mobility and possibility. The new railway clearly served local interests first, providing a modern means of transportation for passengers, livestock, goods, and supplies. Moreover, the new extension to Cerablus reduced the total travel time between Iskenderun and Baghdad by more than half.[77] A German passenger on board the first passenger train traveling between Aleppo and Cerablus reported that the wagons were filled with brightly dressed and curious locals, who marveled at the landscape as it passed them at speeds reaching 30 kilometers per hour.[78]

Cerablus was the final stop on the line. Once a tiny village on the banks of the Euphrates, Cerablus had evolved into a large city of transients complete with a vibrant bazaar. The arrival of the railway crews had breathed new life into the town. A German observer new to town described the town's vitality. First, he passed the CCRT offices in charge of building the bridge across the Euphrates. Next, he crossed through a massive lot filled with hundreds of tents used to house bridge workers. Cerablus also had a large hospital and a new railway terminal. In the town proper, coffeehouses had sprung up to provide refreshment to the workers. There were even several gramophones and a small cinema to keep the workers from becoming homesick. The observer, however, was puzzled and then perturbed by the prevalent usage of the French language on the construction sites. No matter where he looked, he could find no visible signs of a German presence. Perhaps, he mused, the historical French influence in the Levant had stifled the Germany's efforts to establish a cultural presence in the region. He was neither the first nor the last to point out the non-German character of the Baghdad Railway construction sites.

In March 1913, Cerablus reached another important milestone. The CCRT opened its new provisional wooden bridge across the Euphrates River, clearing the way for construction to commence from its eastern bank across the obstruction-free Mesopotamian landscape. By May 1913, a full-scale construction effort was underway. The bridge's low weight threshold limited progress and the quantity of supplies that reached the other side. The bridge's wooden supports would eventually be replaced with steel girders, allowing boundless goods to cross its girth. The CCRT estimated that the new bridge would not be ready until 1915.[79]

Section IV was not spared the BRC-imposed spending limits. Meißner Pasha and crews worked primarily in the Tigris River valley between Baghdad and Mosul, an area known for its rich deposits of naphtha and crude oil. Problems with the delivery of materials hampered his efforts. The first work locomotive arrived in Baghdad via ship in October 1912. European who witnessed the unveiling noted the boundless curiosity on Baghdad residents' faces as they observed the steam locomotive. The CCRT was optimistic that the engine was only the first of many to pass through Baghdad. However, by June 1913, an increasing number of people began to wonder if the promised railway would ever be built at all.

The Balkan wars had their greatest impact on the areas of government, leadership, and ideology. Having suffered humiliation at the hands of its former allies, the Ottoman policies took a radical turn away from the earlier cosmopolitan principles of Ottomanism. In June 1913, the triumvirate of Enver, Taalat, and Cemal Pasha created an absolute state based on emerging tenets of Turkish nationalism. Following their acquisition of power, they pressed ahead with their party's three-pronged reform program to modernize, westernize, and secularize Ottoman society. The programs required the strengthening provincial governments, reducing the rights of minorities, reforming the tax system, improving education and the legal system, and requiring all citizens to speak Ottoman Turkish. Coinciding with the social reforms, Enver Pasha invited a German military mission led by General Liman von Sanders to modernize the Ottoman military, so the mistakes made in the Balkan Wars would never be repeated.

The new government had its share of detractors, especially among the minority opposition groups who felt left out of the pro-Turkish agenda. One of these groups was especially active in the regions encompassing the Baghdad Railway. As railway developers moved further into Mesopotamia, they encountered a new Arab nationalism. Sayyid Talib al-Naqib, a warlord from Basra, served as the movement's inspiration. In March 1913, Sayyid Talib called for the autonomy of Iraq from the Ottoman state. The CUP, with all the power of the police and military at its disposal, launched an unsuccessful attempt to eliminate him. Part martyr and part local hero, Sayyid Talip called on Arabs to draw their swords against the government to compel its compliance with Iraqi demands. After several failed assassination attempts, the CUP and Sayyid Talib agreed to work together. His followers, however, continued to frustrate the construction of an Ottoman railway across their homeland.[80]

The end of the Balkan conflicts freed the Turkish government to focus on its pressing national reform agenda. The war had a devastating impact on the country and public morale. Although many still perceived the Baghdad Railway to be a tool of modernization, growing discontent on the construction sites hampered its eastward expansion. The workforce was depleted. Turkish soldiers lucky enough to return from the war showed little interest in devoting their labor to breaking rocks for the railway. The CCRT still faced serious shortages of material and personnel, making the full-scale continuation of the construction impossible.[81]

In light of these circumstances, the company pledged to make as much progress as possible, concentrating all of its means and strength on the completion of the easier segments east of the Euphrates River. If gains were to be made, they would have to be made in Mesopotamia.

The BRC annual report for fiscal year 1913–1914 reveals that, despite the obvious limitations the war placed on the company, it exhibited a certain amount of ingenuity. To cut overhead costs, the BRC combined Sections I and II (kilometer 200–521), extended Section III from Islahiye to Ras-ul-Ain (kilometer 521–1003), and stretched Section IV to encompass the area from Ras-ul-Ain to Baghdad (kilometer 1539–1716). The total number of BRC personnel for the year stood at 369: Winkler had a staff of 152 in Adana; Foellner had 138 in Aleppo; and Meißner Pasha had 55 in Baghdad. The number of unskilled workers also rose steadily as the year passed, reaching as high as 6,058 in Adana; 7,530 in Aleppo; 13,520 in Section III; and 1,952 in Section IV.[82]

In 1913–1914, Turkish ports received 93,020 tons of railway materials. The Mersin harbor had to be enlarged to accommodate the increased volume of materials. The shipments included rails, steel beams for the Euphrates bridge, lime, cement, explosives, tents, and locomotives and other wagons.[83]

As the construction year progressed, CCRT leaders noted a measurable change in the unskilled workers' demeanor. Ethnic groups appeared to have grown more divisive, hostile, and demanding. As a result, the CCRT was forced to develop new strategies to contain this open hostility. The days when workers earned their wages without complaint had vanished. The Turks often refused to obey orders, especially if they came from the mouth of a foreigner. The Turks openly asserted their opinion that the railway belonged to them and not the foreign powers hired to build it.

Karl Figdor, a correspondent for the *Vossische Zeitung*, provided a rare glimpse into the workings of the Baghdad Railway construction sites in a serialized account of his travels in the Ottoman Empire in 1914.[84] Like many new arrivals in the Ottoman Empire, Figdor had high expectations and was eager to learn more about the legendary Baghdad Railway. He expected the construction sites would be the paragon of order, a well-oiled machine operating flawlessly under the watchful gaze of the German leadership. What he and most other travelers discovered when they reached the Ottoman interior was that chaos, not order, ruled on the famed German railway construction sites.

Following his arrival in Mersin, Figdor headed first to Bahçe, where tunnel boring was in full swing. To reach Bahçe, he first boarded a train to Toprakkale.

He then traveled several hours on horseback to Ayran—the operations center for the Bahçe site. In Ayran, he noted multiple tracks, massive material stockpiles, and a large city comprised entirely of collapsible barracks and canvas tents.

Turks, Kurds, Armenians, and Greeks carried the heavy railway materials by hand. He noted that the workers appeared to be malnourished, a condition he blamed on the insensitivity of the Ottoman government. It did not take long for him to deduce that much of the apparent suffering was exaggerated, a charade to win the sympathy of the CCRT managers. For example, he watched ten Turks lift a stone that two could easily have handled alone. He saw 20 men moaning and groaning next to a piece of machinery that, in fact, required no effort to operate. The Turks' preference for manual over mechanized labor was well known. CCRT's staff alleged that the Turks took years to master even the simplest drilling tools.

Figdor readily discarded the Turkish stunt as a lazy man's way to get through the day, ignoring other possible explanations for their behavior. The Turkish economy had been devastated by the war and unemployment was high, especially in rural areas. The Turkish day laborer, earning the least of the CCRT employees, clearly did not want to risk injury, nor was he willing to do more work than should be done at such a wage.[85] By teaming up with family members to do the jobs that one might have done alone, the Turks had not only secured their future employment, but also increased the household income with their relatives' earnings.

The real problem in Bahçe, however, was the mountain itself. Figdor reported that the quartz was hard enough to cut glass. Drill bits on the boring machines were ruined and replaced after one rotation in the stone face. Figdor noted that, in an eight-hour shift, the north side alone required 800 drill bits. Crews worked around the clock on the tunnel, using an average of 2,400 drill bits each day. A hole 7.2 meters deep required 680 bits. The work was painstakingly slow.

The monotony and frustration of the round-the-clock tunnel drilling did little to improve the morale of the Bahçe workers. Even the skilled European laborers appeared to be at their wit's end. The whole environment was surreal, an air of chaos blanketed the scene. The site reported one disaster after another, including robberies, murders, explosions, and fatal accidents.

In April 1914, Bahçe was the site of a mysterious shooting.[86] A German newspaper reported that a Swiss engineer named Rettich shot and killed a German engineer named Axt. The shooting was declared an act of self-defense. Axt was said to have gone insane. Witnesses, however, swore that Axt had been drunk, driven insane by the madness that surrounded the Baghdad Railway construction.[87]

Chaos and disorder plagued all the construction sites. The chain of command had clearly broken down. Although all CCRT engineers were degreed professionals, few had any training in mediating conflicts between irate workers. Their inability to communicate with the feuding parties continually frustrated efforts to reduce the on-site tensions. Furthermore, they had come to Bahçe to build the railway, not adjudicate justice. As a result, means of punishment were

often left up to the discretion of the offender's own ethnic group. In one instance, when a German engineer complained of worker misconduct to an Albanian overseer, the Albanian pulled out his revolver and shot the worker dead on the spot. On another occasion, when a Kurdish worker barricaded himself in the station and shot at anyone who drew near, the engineers took up arms and stormed the station taking it by force.[88]

In May 1914, Figdor resumed his journey along the route to Aleppo where he noted that French schools outnumbered German ones 50 to 1. For him, Aleppo served as a symbol of contemporary Turkey: rich possibilities, many opportunities to work, yet something always standing in the way of realizing its potential. Traveling to Cerablus, he saw the first sign of a renewed Turco-German collaboration: a train station ceremoniously adorned in Turkish and German flags. Although he did not mention the prevalence of spoken French, one can imagine that he, too, was disappointed by Germany's failure to establish a cultural presence in the region.

Once across the Euphrates River, Figdor noted a dramatic change in the architecture of the train stations. The stations west of Cerablus all resembled stations found in small Swabian towns: two-story stone structures with iron bars on the downstairs windows. East of the Euphrates, however, the stations were heavy fortifications designed to defend against Bedouin robbers and Arab guerrillas.[89] A continuous barbed wire fence encircled the compounds, which consisted of several concrete buildings laid out in a rectangle. Each compound had two interior courtyards, offices, coal depots, an iron water tower, an enclosed fountain, residences, and a police station. Only the windows and doors facing the protected interior courtyard could be opened. Access to the outside world could only be gained through the front door on the train platform or the rear exit of the compound. Figdor also noted that every ornament in the compound—from the cement to the wood flooring—had been delivered by train, since the lands surrounding the stations lay completely barren.

The stations situated in the most dangerous areas had no windows at all, only angled slits in the walls to protect the station against Bedouin bullets. Houses for the railway workers were also no longer erected on the construction sites. Given the region's perilous conditions, workers lived in the garrisons and were escorted daily to the sites under armed guard. Sensing the climate of fear that pervaded Mesopotamia, Figdor expressed his hope that the arrival of the railroad would eventually entice the Bedouin to trade in their rifles for farming tools.

At the end of his three-month journey, Figdor summarized the lessons he had learned about Germany's future in Mesopotamia.[90] Experience led him to believe that however logical Pan-German calls for the Germanization of Mesopotamia may sound, they stood no chance of practical implementation. The same could be said about the Baghdad Railway's potential as a tool of German cultural imperialism. Rather than bringing order to the land, the German railway had itself been consumed by the reigning chaos there. Not only was the frequency of attacks on the rise, Turkish officials appeared powerless to prevent them. Figdor warned future travelers not to trust a Turkish official's promise of

protection. The state of affairs in Mesopotamia had worsened to the point that the government no longer exercised any power over the actions of individuals. While in Baghdad, Figdor heard reports that the Bedouins had robbed the Baghdad–Aleppo post and even attacked a soldier battalion in the Syrian desert near the Euphrates.

How would Mesopotamia re-emerge as a center of civilization? According to Figdor, the region needed farmers instead of reckless and hostile nomads. To succeed, these farmers needed land and peace. Unfortunately, history had forced the Mesopotamian farmer to sacrifice both. As a result, the land that had once the most fertile place on earth lacked three essential elements: water, peace, and a land-based population. The railway's completion alone could not bring about a regional agricultural revival, unless the region were first repopulated with people willing to settle down and work the land. Figdor believed that Germany could make significant gains in the region, yet it would take an immense commitment and considerable time to acquire it.

Although Figdor never fully let go of the antiquated vision of the German Baghdad Railway, his growing disillusionment with the railway project was obvious. He was disappointed that the railway had lost all semblance of a German enterprise. Unless Germany redoubled its efforts to establish a permanent cultural presence in the region, he believed that the railway would never become German, assuming it was ever completed at all.

Figdor's series of reports relayed a story of the Baghdad Railway that many Germans did not want to hear. They were already angered by the scalebacks on the Baghdad Railway construction sites, feeling that Germany's trump card ran the risk of falling into non-German hands. "What has Germany acquired?" one writer asked. "It alone provided the money for the Baghdad Railway, this railway, of which the General Director is Swiss, the Chief Engineer an Austrian subject with a nice sounding name, and a large part of the remaining personnel is identical!"[91] A former BRC official, speaking at a Pan-German luncheon, claimed that the fanaticism and fatalism of the Turkish people, which he had found difficult to grow accustomed to, was one thing impeding the railway's progressive development. The best way for Germany to combat this mentality, he stated, was for it to strengthen its influence in Turkey by founding more German schools.[92]

Others saw the railway as purely a commercial venture. They realized the German *Kulturwerk* thesis was a product of a bygone era. As one essayist noted, the Germans had always played a minor role in the operation of the Turkish railways:

> The Baghdad Railway is, from top to bottom, a Turkish company, of which only the majority of the directors and building contractors are German. It is being built as a Turkish railway with the proceeds of a Turkish loan, the 4-percent Baghdad Railway Loan, which was brought on the market by a German financial group. The management is mainly German, although (like the Anatolian Railway) the personnel is comprised exclusively of Turks, Greeks, and Armenians for the simple reason that such a number of Germans knowledgeable of the languages used in the Levant was not at all to be found.[93]

Other editorials blamed the Turks for throwing the railway off kilter. How else could one explain the failure of the railway to materialize?

> The Turk thinks he is completely sly. He knows that railways have to be built. They are so unavoidably necessary for his land; they are like his daily bread. However, he does not want to allow the foreigners any profits. He doesn't want the money to flow out of his pockets into those of another. Resentment and envy are the main Turkish attributes, combined with laziness and the religious dogma and the whole state and the people become what they are today: a helpless and inexperienced child.[94]

Still other journalists, fed up with the endless speculation, approached the CCRT, hoping to access the company's annual reports to make a proper assessment of the facts. The company's response to their queries was curt and simple: "The Company for the Construction of the Turkish Railways does not publish any business reports. You can glean the essential [facts] about the construction progress from the enclosed newspaper cuttings." Whether the CCRT refusal stemmed from policy, secrecy, or the fear of embarrassment, the company clearly had no intention to fuel the flames of speculation.

On June 15, 1914, the English and German governments signed an agreement, effectively laying to rest all speculation about Germany's future in Mesopotamia. In the works for more than a year, the agreement was fair and balanced to all involved parties. The German government accomplished its main objective, ending England's lasting objection to the Baghdad Railway enterprise. The treaty further stipulated that Germany could build the railway without fearing the development of competitive lines; that the system could be financed to completion; and that the main line would go as far as the port of Basra, where ocean-going vessels could unload goods without discrimination.

For its part, England would keep the Germans away from the shores of the Persian Gulf. In addition, England earned the right to appoint two English representatives to the BRC board of directors, to protect against discriminatory treatment of English goods on the Baghdad Railway, and had its monopoly on river transportation in Mesopotamia recognized.

The 250-page Anglo-German agreement regarding the Baghdad Railway was signed just months before the outbreak of the First World War. After decades of squabbling over the railway, England and Germany reached the point where, without a compromise on the Baghdad Railway issue, neither side stood to make any headway in the Persian Gulf region. Although the German Foreign Office earlier feared that the railway's failure to reach the Gulf would transform the "world's thoroughfare into a dead-end street," it was apparent in 1914 that diplomacy and compromise offered the only viable way out of the Baghdad Railway dilemma.[95]

The agreement eased some of the tension surrounding the two European superpowers by halting the disputes over the railway and paving the way for the construction of the remaining sections to proceed. In June 1914, after nearly six years of construction, the rails between Bulgurlu and Tel-Helif were mostly open for business. Of the remaining 623 kilometers of the railway from Tel-

Helif to Baghdad, 61 kilometers were in operation, 95 kilometers were under construction, and 467 kilometers still had to be built.[96] Barring unforeseen circumstances, developers expected the entire line to be operational in two years time.

Between 1908 and 1914, the Turco-German relationship underwent a series of dramatic changes. The arrival of the Young Turks forced Germany to reconfigure its long-held railway strategy and conform its position to accommodate the needs of an increasingly self-conscious Turkish populace. As official Turkish interest in the railway shifted from strategic to economic concerns, the Germans followed suit, placing its political agenda on the shelf to pursue the railway's commercial prospects. The Young Turks permanently transformed the Turco-German relationship, which had bee a sacred bond between the autocrats Wilhelm and Abdulhamid. Having lost favor at the Porte for their close ties with the sultan, the Germans won back the hearts of the Turkish regime by securing German loans to fund the resumption of the Baghdad Railway construction. The Young Turks elected to tolerate the Germans since they alone had the money, interest, and ability to build the Baghdad Railway. No attempt was made to disguise the fact that the relationship had become a partnership of convenience.

Arriving on the construction sites, the German railway developers came face to face with the difficulties of putting theory into practice. Natural forces, social factors, and growing local and international unrest continually hampered their best efforts. When recruitment efforts failed to attract a sizeable work force, the Germans compromised several objectives to meet the diverse needs of the project's multiethnic workforce. As the years passed, it became clear that the railway could only be built with the blessing and help of the Ottoman population. The Germans' ability to adapt to local conditions and make concessions with their work force allowed the railway construction, in spite of the many delays, to make its most significant progress to date.

By 1914, the Baghdad Railway appeared to have lost its utility for German strategic aims. Aside from its anticipated commercial value and the quantity of railway supplies exported from German factories, Germany stood to gain little from the railway's completion. The Anglo-German agreement brought all of the German Foreign Office's dreams of securing a foothold in the Persian Gulf to an end. Rather than bringing civilization to the region, the railway had instead wreaked havoc on Germany's expansionist plans. Although during the First World War the railway would once again become a central fixture in Germany's military strategic plans, the Turco-German relationship—on which the railway had come to depend—would undergo further dramatic changes.

NOTES

1. GP #8680. Telegram. Marschall to the German Foreign Office (2 June 1908).
2. Earle, 96.
3. *Frankfurter Zeitung* 163 (13 June 1908).
4. "Der Weiterbau der Bagdadbahn und die Notlage der Bevölkerung" *Hamburger Nachrichten* 507 (25 July 1908).

5. The BRC hoped the railway would offer local populations more than just a short-term reprieve from poverty. In order to unlock the region's dormant potential, the railway required the long-term commitment of local populations. The railway would permanently change the lives of local Anatolians, delivering new means of production, new agricultural methods, increased earnings, and greater regional security.

6. See Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics,1908–1914.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969). Ahmad contends that the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 was not a *coup d'etat* by CUP leaders, but rather "primarily a political operation with only marginal military overtones." The former secret society had developed its networks abroad waiting for its chance to emerge in 1908 as an agent of the general will. For more on the Young Turk rebellion see Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish Nationalist Movement, 1905–1926* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984); Carter V. Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); and Donald Quataert, *Social Disintegration and Popular Resistance in the Ottoman Empire, 1881–1908* (New York: New York University Press, 1983).

7. The Young Ottoman movement successfully established a parliament and constitution in 1876; the same year Abdulhamid became sultan. Using disturbances in his empire as an excuse, Abdulhamid had suspended the constitution and shut parliament down after only one session. The movement was forced into exile until opportunity knocked in 1908.

8. Requiring all Ottoman subjects to learn to speak Ottoman Turkish was one of the Young Turks' education reforms.

9. Niyazi Berkes has accepted a different view of the origins and purpose of the revolution. He writes: "The liberal constitutional ideas originated in Turkey and came as a response not to the question of a European guarantee of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but to the question of economical and political independence from European domination and interference. The Hamidian era was filled with dreams of Islamic unity, but ended up imperiling the religion by making the state omnipotent."

10. Donald Quataert, *Social Disintegration and Popular Resistance*, 154.

11. GP #8875. Deputy German Ambassador Richard von Kiderlen to German Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow (10 July 1908).

12. GP #8881. Kiderlen-Wächter to Bülow (27 July 1908).

13. GP #8887. Von Bülow to Wilhelm (28 July 1908).

14. GP#8906. Metternich. London Botschafter en route (14 August 1908).

15. Ibid.

16. *Schwäbischer Merkblatt* 417 (7 September 1908).

17. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #8003, 76. Schreiben der Direktion vom 8. Mai 1909, No. 311 A.C. Gehalts- und Lohnaufbesserungen infolge der Streikbewegung An den Verwaltungsrat der Orientalischen Eisenbahnen, Wien. Workers with more than ten years of service received an additional two piasters per day; if they had worked less than ten years, they received half that amount. Pay rates for seasonal and daily hires remained the same.

18. GP #8906. Wilhelm's response is written directly on Metternich's report.

19. GP #8910. Marschall to von Bülow (3 September 1908).

20. Ibid.

21. GP #8911. Marschall to von Bülow (4 September 1908).

22. Ibid.

23. GP #9958. Karl Helfferich to Arthur von Gwinner. Attached to report from German Foreign Secretary von Schoen (8 December 1908).

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. A. L. Macfie. *The End of the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1923* (New York: Longman, 1998), 44. The CUP delegation also reflected the empire's ethnic diversity. Its 281 deputies included 53 Arabs, 27 Albanians, 22 Greeks, 14 Armenians, 10 Slavs, and 4 Jews.

28. See GP #2582. Von Schoen to Kaiser Wilhelm (17 April 1909). The uprising was not confined to Istanbul. German Foreign Secretary von Schoen notified Kaiser Wilhelm of incidents of arson and rioting in Adana that threatened the lives of Germans living there. Marschall, after speaking with the Admiral Corps, elected to send the ship *Loreley* to Mersin to protect German lives. Wilhelm was not pleased with this unilateral decision, fearing that England might perceive the warship's arrival as a threat.

29. See "Die Bagdadbahn," *Berliner Tageblatt* 569 (7 November 1908). The article states: "Although there is certainly one chauvinist wing of the Young Turk party that wishes to reserve everything for the Ottomans, the current government has modern perspectives and sees the construction of means of transportation as one of the main needs of the land. . . . Those in power today have every interest in accelerating the railway construction as much as possible."

30. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #7990, 1. Erster Gesellschaftsbericht der Verwaltungsrat der Gesellschaft für den Bau der Eisenbahnen in der Türkei (19 August 1910).

31. Stutz, "Erlebnisse beim Bau der Bagdadbahn," *Schweizerische Bauzeitung* 59, no. 10 (9 March 1912): 141-2.

32. GP #9963. *Chargé d'affaires* Miquel to the German Foreign Office. (20 July 1909).

33. GP #9965. German Deputy Foreign Secretary Stemrich to Marschall (20 September 1909). The permission of the Great Powers was necessary since each of them had a stake in the administration of the Ottoman debt and the higher import taxes would directly affect their shares of this debt.

34. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #8111, 43. Marschall to the German Foreign Office (23 October 1909).

35. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #7991, 212.

36. Karl H. Müller, *Die wirtschaftliche Bedeutung der Bagdadbahn* (Hamburg: Boysen & Maasch, 1917), 61. The BRC wisely selected a neutral location knowing that it would likely ease the Ottoman fears while attracting foreign investment capital. They were right on both counts.

37. Eregli was selected as the headquarters for the Bulgurlu—Durak stretch; Adana for the Durak—Islahiye stretch; and Aleppo for the Islahiye—Tel-Helif stretch.

38. AAHP# 6667, 123. Copy of W. Plenske, *Aufruf. Deutsche Männer! Deutsche Frauen! Wahret Eure Interessen im Orient!* (Berlin: A. Pulvermacher, 1909), 1.

39. *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung* 31, no. 7 (21 January 1911): 51.

40. Lodemann and Pohl, 71.

41. Earle, 220.

42. England had dominated the Persian Gulf region for some time. In 1901, the English named themselves protector of Kuwait. England controlled the shipping lanes both on the Persian Gulf and the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Furthermore, England had applied for and received concessions to exploit the oil reserves throughout the region.

43. Lodemann and Pohl, 67. Soon after the convention was signed, the German side alerted the Ottoman government that it was willingly surrender its claim to the Baghdad–Basra section, if the section were built by a company based on 25 percent German, English, French, and Turkish capital.

44. Earle, 112.

45. GP #10006. *Chargé d'affaires* Miquel to German Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg (5 July 1910).

46. GP #10015. Marschall to Bethmann-Hollweg (10 October 1910).

47. GP #10038. German Foreign Secretary von Kiderlen-Wächter to German Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg (24 March 1911).

48. Karl Figdor, "Der Tunnel von Bagdsche," *Vossische Zeitung* 244 (15 May 1914).

49. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #7990, 11. Zweiter Bericht an die Generalversammlung der Aktionäre vom 23. September 1911. Gesellschaft für den Bau der Eisenbahnen in der Türkei.

50. Ibid., 10.

51. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #8302 [FI 22 A-8]. Bericht Über den Fortgang und den Stand der Bauausführung der Strecke Bulgurlu—Tel-Helif und Tel-Helif–Baghdad für die Zeit vom 30. Juni 1911 bis 30. Juni 1912.

52. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #7990, 11. Gesellschaft für den Bau der Eisenbahnen in der Türkei. Zweiter Bericht an die Generalversammlung der Aktionäre vom 23. September 1911.

53. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #8302 [FI 21 D-9] Bericht über den Fortgang und den Stand der Bauausführung der Strecke Burgulu—Tel-Helif für die Zeit vom 1. Januar 1910 bis zum 30. Juni 1911.

54. Dr. Wiegand of the Berlin Archaeological Society distributed pamphlets to the BRC engineers, mentioning Germany's leading role in discovering the ancient past. The German engineers had discovered the Pergamon altar and the royal graves on Nemrut Dag (not to mention Heinrich Schliemann's discovery of the ancient city of Troy). The Botanical Society requested that samples be collected from the construction zones for further study. The Zoological Society admitted that Europeans knew very little about the wildlife found in Anatolia and even less that in Mesopotamia. Anything the engineers could observe as they went about their business would be a great scientific contribution. [See BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank # 8115 [FI 26 C-7] (7 November 1911)].

55. Preliminary work began on Section I (Bulgurlu–Durak km. 200-310) and Section II (Durak—Islahiye km. 310–540) in January 1910. Work on Section III (Islahiye–Tel-Helif km. 540-840) began in May 1911. The final section of the railway, Section IV (Tel-Helif—Baghdad), a result of the 1911 convention, would get underway in late 1912.

56. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #8302, 21.

57. Ibid., 18.

58. Ibid., 3.

59. The journey required so much time because the Ottoman government forbade trains to travel during the night for security reasons. Train travelers had to spend one night in Eskisehir and one night in Konya before they reached the Taurus.

60. Mavrogordato was an ethnic Greek. He served as an Austrian government engineer before transferring to the BRC. Of the four chief engineers in charge of the railway's respective sections, Mavrogordato was paid noticeably less than his German counterparts. (30,000 francs versus 40,000 francs granted Meißner, Winkler, and Foellner).

61. Foellner had been the deputy engineer of Section II under Winkler in the previous year. With the allowance of construction to Baghdad, Meißner had left his post in Aleppo and, left his deputy, the Alsatian engineer Schroeder, in charge of the Aleppo section. Schroeder eventually went to Baghdad with Meißner, allowing Foellner took over his position as chief engineer in Section III.

62. AAHP #15073, 67–70. Consulate Rößler in Aleppo to German Foreign Office (24 June 1911).

63. This time the cholera outbreak did not catch the BRC medical staff by surprise. In Section III they reacted quickly, imposing a strict quarantine. Although some workers once again deserted the construction camps fled to the hills in fear, the danger of contracting the disease was minimized. Not everyone was pleased with the achievement; some disgruntled workers blamed the medical staff for holding them prisoner while their crops ruined.

64. AAHP #6668, 96. Consul Rößler in Aleppo (22 September 1911).

65. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #8120 [FI 20 B-7] Yearly report to the delegates of the Baghdad Railway Board of Directors. (12 January 1912) from Winkler, Vorstand der II. Bauabteilung. Winkler reports that many of the lands vacant in and around Adana had been reoccupied by the *muhadjir* (Balkan immigrants), who in most cases held no title to the land and had no idea who had occupied the property before them.

66. Macfie, 76. Macfie writes that the 69 percent lost population were the 4 million or so Christians who remained in the Balkans after the Ottomans were forced to withdraw.

67. Ibid., 77.

68. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #7990 Gesellschaft für den Bau der Eisenbahnen in der Türkei. Vierter Geschäftsbericht. (20 September 1913).

69. Ibid., 5.

70. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #8302, 34, 1–22. Baghdad Eisenbahn Gesellschaft. Jahresbericht, 1912–1913.

71. See Lodemann and Pohl, 70–71. The Taurus section required more than just one tunnel. The railway reached its highest elevation at Ulukisla (1,467 meters). It then rapid descended to Karapunar, the entrance of the Çakir Gorge renowned for its high cliff walls rising up 1,000 meters on either side. At the end of the valley lay Haciciri, the site of a huge viaduct. To build the railway through this difficult terrain, the CCRT needed to build 12 small tunnels with a combined length of 11,762 meters. Given the tight financial parameters in which the company operated, it seemed wise to forego the completion of this section until there were sufficient revenues to continue.

72. Ibid., 14–15.

73. Zeitung für den Bau der Eisenbahnen in der Türkei 98 (18 December 1912), 1555.

74. AAHP #6692, 222. Handelsbericht 1912. Aleppo.

75. Richard Hennig, "Vom Mittelmeer nach Baghdad in 8 1/2 Tagen," *Technik und Wirtschaft* 6, no. 5 (May/August 1913): 319. Hennig estimates that by rail one can reach Baghdad in eight and one-half days. It was normal for a caravan to take 40 days, although Hennig admitted that a faster traveler could make it in 17 days.

76. Reichspressearchiv #8391. *Vossische Zeitung* 86 (17 February 1913).

77. C. Delliehausen, "Bagdadbahn," *Technik und Wirtschaft* 6, no. 5 (May/August 1913).

78. E. Tauber, "Sayyid Talib and the Young Turks in Basra," *Middle Eastern Studies* 25 (1989). For more on the Arab Revolt, see E. Karsh and I. Karsh, "Myth in the Desert, or Not the Great Arab Revolt," *Middle Eastern Studies* 33, no. 2 (1997); and C. E. Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1973).

79. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #7990, 9, 1–10. Gesellschaft für den Bau der Eisenbahnen in der Türkei. Fünfter Geschäftsbericht (5 November 1914).

80. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #8302, 35. Baghdad Eisenbahn Gesellschaft. Jahresbericht 1913–1914.

81. Ibid.

82. Karl Figdor, "Der Kampf mit dem Berg," *Vossische Zeitung* 244–45 (15–16 May 1914).

83. Simple workers earned a monthly salary of 8 to 12 piasters (1.4 to 2.2 marks).

84. *Zeitung für den Bau der Eisenbahnen in der Türkei* 77 (4 October 1913): 1200. On the night of September 31, a giant explosion ripped through the tunnel leaving 22 workers dead and 11 seriously injured. Although the site directors promised to investigate the cause of the accident, work resumed on the site the very next morning.

85. Ad. Zimmermann, "Aus der Bauzone der Bagdadbahn," *Daheim* 50, no. 30 (25 April 1914): 2–3.

86. Ibid. Zimmermann blames the Turkish government for the trouble. Its insincerity toward the Germans, he felt, was endless. After all Germany tried to do for the Turks, they were still being harassed on a daily basis. The soldiers sent to protect them could hardly fend for themselves. Indeed, the Amanus Mountains were a version of the Wild West where robbers, shepherds, and farmers did what they pleased without punishment.

87. Karl Figdor, "Kurdische Räuber an der Bagdadbahn," *Vossische Zeitung* 154 (25 March 1914).

88. Karl Figdor, "Die Brücke über den Euphrat," *Vossische Zeitung* 263 (20 May 1914).

89. Karl Figdor, "Die deutsche Zukunft in Mesopotamien," *Vossische Zeitung* 311 (22 June 1914).

90. *Hamburger Nachrichten* 539 (16 November 1913).

91. *Deutsche Zeitung* 219 (1 May 1914).

92. Paul Krause, *Der Tag* 284 (4 December 1913).

93. "Das Abkommen der Baghdad-Eisenbahn mit der türkischen Regierung," *Export* 25, no. 12 (1903): 152.

94. GP #14721. Deutsche Bank Board of Directors to the German Foreign Office (17 March 1913).

95. There were, of course, two major exceptions. Work continued in the mountain passes between Karapunar and Durak in the Taurus Mountains and between Mamure and Radcu in the Amanus Mountains.

96. BA, 80 Ba 2, Deutsche Bank #7990 Geschäftsberichte. Gesellschaft für den Bau von Eisenbahnen in der Türkei (CCRT), 6.

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4

The First World War and the Baghdad Railway, 1914–1918

> It is unfortunately clear that our company is losing tons of money through the operation of the Baghdad [Railway] stretches.
>
> —Arthur von Gwinner, 1916

> The prestige of the German Empire demands that the Baghdad enterprise may not fall and therefore the empire must provide it the help that it cannot acquire from the Turkish government.
>
> —Deutsche Bank, 1917

Existing literature on the Baghdad Railway has failed to address the fate of the railway during the First World War, creating the impression that once the war began, the railway slipped into oblivion, a remnant of failed German expansionist policy. Scholars have also overlooked the profound changes in the Turco-German relationship as a result of the countries' wartime collaboration on the railway project. Typically, the Turco-German alliance is described in the historiography as the final triumph of German hegemony over the Ottoman Empire, sealing the two empires' fates and leading them down the slippery slope toward imperial ruin. A closer examination of the relationship, however, reveals this was not the case.

The First World War proved to be a critical turning point for the Turco-German partnership and the Baghdad Railway. The formal alliance signed on August 2, 1914, placed the countries on equal footing for the first time in history, bringing an era of Great Power dominance in the Ottoman Empire to an end. As the war progressed, the Porte learned to exploit its equal status, using the German interest in the Baghdad Railway to support its own imperial goals, implement internal reform programs, and make increasing demands on its Great Power allies. By the end of the war, the Ottoman government used German ties to reclaim lands lost in earlier wars, help rid the empire of enemies both foreign and domestic, and develop a renewed sense of national awareness that later served as the foundation of a new Turkish nation-state.[1]

This chapter recounts the untold history of the Baghdad Railway construction during the First World War, highlighting several important factors that

changed the nature of the Turco-German partnership. It argues that the Turco-German alliance embodied the final stage in the Turks' gradual ascension to attain equal status among Europe's Great Powers and was the apogee of Turco-German relations. It reveals that the war, in spite of its obvious limitations, liberated the Ottoman Empire from the demands of its Great Power guardians, allowing the Turks to pursue their nationalist agenda unimpeded. As the war dragged on and military objectives changed, the power balance in the partnership shifted away from executing Germany's ill-fated war strategies to favoring Turkish self-interest.

The annual reports of the Baghdad Railway Company show that the railway's construction sites remained active throughout the war, making the period one of the most productive in the railway's history. However, as the war progressed, the changing status of Turco-German partnership fired a new salvo of challenges at the BRC. Rifts soon developed between the Turks and Germans, and between the BRC and the German Military High Command. In the end, the German government deserted the BRC, leaving the company alone to face Turkish ridicule and exploitation. Rather than bringing the two cultures together, the railway enterprise created fractures in the Turco-German relationship. With the end of the war was marked by the end of an era of Turco-German cooperation, and the Baghdad Railway—four decades in the making—remained unfinished.

In the summer of 1914, the Ottoman Empire's future rested heavily on the completion of the Baghdad Railway. Deep in debt as a result of the Balkan wars, the Porte saw the railway as the best available means to guide the empire back on course. The recent Anglo-German agreement on the railway's Persian Gulf section had eased the international tension that had surrounded the enterprise for decades. The pact allowed railway construction to continue freely without obstruction, its completed sections opening new markets for Ottoman exports. All the signs indicated the dawning of an era of exceptional commercial and industrial activity in the Ottoman Empire. Railway developers estimated they would need approximately two more years, or until 1916, to get the entire line up and running.

The Ottoman Empire, however, was not the only party hoping for an economic miracle. The Balkan wars had also wreaked havoc on the BRC. Having suffered financial losses for two consecutive years, the BRC appealed for the support of German banks to keep the construction efforts going. Unfortunately, the company's backward slide in recent years led many German investors to lose confidence in the railway enterprise. Attempts made by German banks to sell 119 million marks in Ottoman government railway bonds fell short of their goal, placing the railway's future in jeopardy.

The lack of financial support was just the latest in a series of signs that German interest in the railway project had waned. After the Young Turks assumed power in 1908, the German government had de-emphasized its political railway strategy to protect German commercial endeavors in the region. After 1911, the Baghdad Railway became strictly a commercial enterprise, benefiting German industry and shipping companies, while serving no overarching German

strategic purpose. The BRC replaced the German Foreign Office as the chief proponent of German interests in the region, forcing the German Foreign Office to adopt a supporting role, offering the BRC whatever assistance it could. Although the First World War reawakened Germany's desire to use the railway for strategic military purposes, the Germans' lack of basic knowledge of the region became woefully apparent. Inadequate preparation, along with the truncated condition of the railway, restricted the German government's ability to launch an effective military offensive.[2]

One would think that mounting BRC debts would have caused uproar in Germany, leading perhaps even to a complete German withdrawal from the Baghdad Railway enterprise. Although a certain degree of bickering had always accompanied the 15 years of delays and disappointments, public support for the railway never waned. The vision of a German railway returning civilization to the Ottoman Empire, bringing new life to the once fertile Mesopotamia continued to mesmerize much of the German public. The 1914 Anglo-German agreement, which had ended England's long-standing opposition to the railway, fueled this general optimism. As a sign of the times, the first German-Turkish Society was founded in Berlin in 1914 to nurture the Turco-German friendship through education, medical advances, and propaganda.[3]

Given the nations' history of collaboration, it seemed logical to assume that the Ottoman Empire would support Germany in any major conflict. However, the Turco-German alliance was not as natural as many scholars have since implied. Although the Ottoman Empire showed an increasing willingness to collaborate with Germany, it nevertheless maintained close ties with England, France, and Russia right up until the outbreak of the war.[4]

After the assassination of Austrian Crown Prince Ferdinand in Sarajevo in July 1914, the Ottoman cabinet, sensing the likelihood of war, convened to develop a course of action. The Young Turks had three options at their disposal: (1) they could either choose to enter the war on the side of the Entente or the Central Powers; (2) they could offer material and moral support to both sides simultaneously, remaining neutral until the outcome was known; or (3) they could remain truly neutral and wait for the conflict to subside.[5] As was customary, the Young Turks carefully weighed each option's pros and cons before reaching their decision. Aware of the growing hostility on the European continent, the leaders decided to launch an aggressive campaign to ally the Ottoman Empire with one of the Great Powers. The difficult question was deciding which one to choose. Enver Pasha and Taalat Bey had a clear preference for Germany, but other members on the cabinet believed that an alliance with France, England, or Russia would better serve the interests of the empire.[6]

Despite the Turks' apparent willingness to commit themselves to one of the European powers, none of the powers jumped at the opportunity to sign an accord with the Ottoman Empire. The devastating Balkan Wars had left the empire in shambles, little more than damaged goods. Foreign diplomatic corps in Istanbul made no effort to hide their conviction that the Ottoman Empire was incapable of fighting a war.

German officials had assumed that, when push came to shove, the Ottoman Empire would side with the Central Powers. Yet, many questioned whether an alliance with the Turks was desirable at all. The Austrian allies, however, demanded it. Having no influence of their own at the Porte, the Austrians begged German officials to pressure the Turks to join the Central Powers. Austria feared that if the Turks joined the Entente, Germany and Austria would be surrounded on all sides by hostile powers.

Willing to concede the validity of Austrian claims, Germany still feared that an alliance with Turkey might become a liability. The Ottoman Empire was in no condition to fight a war: the Ottoman Treasury had only 92,000 lira in cash reserves, the Ottoman national debt (171 million francs in August 1914) showed no sign of improvement, and the Turkish military was in complete disarray.

The poor state of the Turkish military shocked the German general staff. In March 1914, German General Field Marshall Helmuth von Moltke, who opposed the alliance, relayed his fears to his Austrian counterpart:

> Turkey is militarily spent. The reports of our military mission state it is frankly hopeless. The army is in a state that defies description. When one spoke earlier of Turkey as the 'sick man,' one now has to speak of him as the dead [one]. [Turkey] has no power to live anymore and finds no way out of the situation of agony. Our military mission resembles a staff of doctors standing at the deathbed of a terminally ill patient.[7]

In Moltke's opinion, the Turkish military was worthless. He could not fathom how officers continued to serve the state faithfully without weapons, ammunition, and clothes, while their wives were left no other choice than to beg on the streets to sustain themselves and their children.

With an eye on Turkish developments, Wilhelm admitted the situation had indeed become grim. Reports crossing his desk all concurred that the Ottoman army was unsalvageable and utterly hopeless. Yet, he felt Germany could ill afford to lose the Turks to any one of the other candidates on the Ottoman docket. Ottoman ministers Taalat Bey and Izzet Bey met with Tsar Nicholas of Russia at his Black Sea retreat to propose a Turco-Russian alliance. Similarly, Cemal Pasha, the Ottoman Minister of the Navy, traveled to France to conjure up French naval support to help the Turks regain control of the Aegean islands that Greece acquired in the second Balkan war. Although these attempts had ended in failure, it was clear that the Ottoman ministers were not too concerned with past allegiances; their quest for an alliance was a quest for equality.[8]

Enver Pasha was the true architect of the alliance. He saw in the pending war a perfect opportunity to preserve and where possible, to restore the political, economic, and social independence of the Ottoman Empire. He saw no advantage to remaining neutral in the conflict. On the other hand, no option was risk-free. Enver feared that supporting the Entente Powers might lead to the immediate dissolution of the empire: Russia would demand control over of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles to secure its shipping lanes, England would encroach on Mesopotamia to secure further oil fields, and France would dominate Syria. On the other hand, support for the Central Powers might permit the Turks to recover the Aegean islands, parts of the Balkans, western Thrace, parts of Eastern Ana-

tolia and the Caucasus (taken in the 1877–1878 Russo-Turkish War), and even Egypt and Tripoli. Since Germany was clearly the strongest and most threatening of the Great Powers in 1914, an alliance with Germany offered the Turks a far greater chance of surviving the war intact.[9]

On July 22, 1914, while his colleagues were abroad wooing the Entente Powers, Enver Pasha met secretly with the German ambassador Hans von Wangenheim to pitch his proposal for a Turco-German alliance. Enver insisted that Germany needed the Turks to close the straits, isolate Russia, and threaten England's control of the Suez Canal. Wangenheim rejected the proposal outright, pointing to the dilapidated state of the Turkish military as the cause. In Wangenheim's opinion, even if Bulgaria and Turkey joined as a block, the alliance would still be costly and useless.[10] Although the Kaiser agreed with Wangenheim in theory, he feared that the rejected Turks might turn around and to join the Franco-Russian group threatening Austria. He ordered Wangenheim to reverse his decision and respond affirmatively to Enver's offer, welcoming the Turks into the alliance.

On August 2, 1914, just one day after Germany declared war on Russia, the Turkish and German governments signed a secret alliance. The parties agreed to come to Austria's aid if Russia launched an offensive against Austrian positions in Serbia. Furthermore, the parties agreed to respect each other's sovereignty and preserve the existing boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. The agreement also stipulated that the German general, Liman von Sanders, would be granted "effective influence" on the general direction of the Ottoman army. Although the Germans interpreted this phrase to mean that the Ottoman army would fall under their command, they soon discovered that the Turkish definition of "effective influence" differed widely from their own.[11]

The Turco-German alliance was not the product of a well thought out long-term German strategy, but was instead haphazard, rushed, and largely spontaneous. The Kaiser, though fully cognizant of the sad state of Ottoman affairs, nevertheless contravened the advice of his experienced staff to seal the deal. The main impetus for the alliance, however, was the Turks themselves. After exhausting their other options, the Turks elected to join the Central Powers for the sake of self-preservation.

The most important aspect of the alliance was that it placed the two powers on an equal footing. After decades of striving to be treated as an equal among the European powers, the Ottoman Empire suddenly found it had attained its goal. Whatever advantages Germany had enjoyed in its past involvement in the Ottoman Empire, ended with the signing of the Turco-German alliance in August 1914.

German leaders expected the Ottoman army to join the war immediately, tying down as many Allied troops as possible. The Young Turks, however, had other plans. Knowing the military needed time and funding to recover its strength, the Turks delayed their entry into the war, hoping to acquire additional pledges of support. Taking advantage of the mounting tensions in Central Europe, they put their new alliance to the test, implementing several groundbreaking domestic changes.

Since the Crimean War, a capitulatory system had been in place that granted special privileges and exceptions to the Great Powers. These special favors had threatened Turkish sovereignty, hampering efforts to realize domestic reforms. The Great Powers treated the Ottoman government as a stepchild, second-guessing each of the Porte's decisions. Before laws could be passed, European embassies first had to give their stamp of approval. Unsurprisingly, their decisions typically led to the preservation of the status quo. Wanting to take advantage of the distracted powers, the Young Turks notified all foreign embassies on September 9, 1914, that all of the capitulation agreements would be null and void as of October 1, 1914. No longer would any power receive special privileges at the Porte or have any say over Ottoman policy. In addition, all war debts and retribution payments were halted.

Although a wave of protest followed the announcement, the escalating war kept the powers from taking punitive action. The German government, once one of the chief beneficiaries of the capitulatory system, grudgingly endorsed the new program. Knowing that Germany may soon have to rely on Ottoman military sup, the German government wanted to avoid any action that might offend the Porte.

The Ottoman military was unprepared to enter the war. The British and French ambassadors, thinking the Turco-German alliance might be a ruse, renewed their efforts to convince the Turks to remain neutral. The Turks, however, were more concerned with ascertaining Bulgaria's position. After a trip to Sofia, the Ottoman cabinet ministers returned with assurances that the Bulgarians would not interfere in Ottoman advances on the Serbian front.

The Ottoman finance minister, Djavid Bey, warned the cabinet that an early entry into the war would deplete the remaining treasury's cash reserves. Enver Pasha, who was eager to wage war, suggested that Djavid approach the Germans to attain possible credits. The Ottoman minister approached the German representatives, asking for 5 million Turkish lira in gold. The German government parted with 2 million of its gold reserves on the condition that the Turks would immediately enter the war. In the third week of October 1914, two trainloads of gold bullion reached Istanbul, filling the empty Ottoman war chest. On October 28, the Ottoman navy—comprised mainly of two German warships, the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, German Admiral Souchon and his German crews—launched an unprovoked attack against the Russian Black Sea ports of Odessa and Sevastopol. By the first week of November, the Entente Powers had all declared war on the Ottoman Empire.

The Turks' decision to enter a voluntary alliance with Germany undoubtedly stemmed from their desire for self-preservation. With no major stake in the Great Power conflicts being waged in Europe, Ottoman leaders hoped to use the war to restructure the empire and protect it from further invasion. With social structures coming apart at the seams, they were fully aware that the empire might not emerge from the conflict intact. The best they could hope for was to use the war, and their newly acquired status as Germany's equal, to reinforce Ottoman sovereignty. Germany's willingness to fund the Ottoman war effort provided a perfect window of opportunity.

The Turkish military, however, proved to be more valuable than anyone expected. Under Enver Pasha's leadership, the army fought on five separate fronts—the Balkans, the Dardanelles, the Trans-Caucasus region, Palestine, and Mesopotamia—tying up many Entente troops that might otherwise have been deployed to fight Germany on the western front. Turkish troops helped the Austrians defeat Serbia, kept Anglo-French troops from establishing a beachhead in Salonika, protected the Dardanelles, tied down Russian troops in eastern Anatolia, and kept English troops engaged in Palestine, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. Inspired by his army's successes, Enver soon took the offensive, using Turkish troops to reclaim the empire's former boundaries.[12]

While the rest of the world closely watched the events unfolding in Europe, crews on the Baghdad Railway construction sites were oblivious to the changes occurring on the continent. They had their own battles to wage with the tunnels in the Taurus and Amanus mountains, the steel bridge over the Euphrates River, and hundreds of kilometers of unlaid track between Aleppo and Baghdad. As German troops followed the Schlieffen Plan through Belgium toward Paris, work on the Baghdad Railway continued without interruption.

The BRC reported a successful year in 1914. With the help of a French loan, work had resumed on the sites in early summer. In the ensuing months, the BRC opened an additional 200 kilometers of the railway including the 100 kilometer stretch from Cerablus to Tel Abiad (July 10, 1914), 38 kilometers between Sumike and Istabulat (August 27), and the 21 kilometers between Istabulat to Samarra (October 7).[13] Work continued on the Bahçe tunnel, the Euphrates bridge, and the unfinished Mesopotamian sections of the railway. The BRC forecast that the rails would reach as far east as Ras-ul-Ain by the end of the business year, adding 110 km to the length of the track.[14] By the end of 1914, the BRC had passed the halfway mark, placing in service 1,104 kilometers of the total 2,190 kilometer distance between Konya and Basra.[15]

BRC contacts with the Ottoman Ministry of War were surprisingly few at the outset of the war.[16] As a private Ottoman company, the BRC's chief concern lay with the financial matters of the railway. Yet, the effects of the war would eventually make themselves known on the construction sites. Germany's general mobilization forced a significant number of top BRC personnel to leave the sites either to return home to Germany or be transferred to an area of strategic importance in the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman workers were also required to leave the sites to join the military.

The railway's completion was clearly not at the top of Germany's wartime agenda. Although the mobilization did not halt BRC operations, it created a gaping hole in its multinational workforce. On the Adana and Aleppo sections, the number of personnel dropped from 11,796 in August 1914 to 1,651 in September 1914. The dramatic reduction in the workforce led the BRC to scale back its operations until the situation improved. No one expected the war to last very long.

1915 brought with it a number of changes both in the Central Powers' war strategy and the continuation of the Baghdad Railway. After four months of stalemate on the western front, the German Military High Command recognized

that the Schlieffen Plan had failed. With its forces bogged down in eastern France, the German general staff began to entertain alternative strategies to defeat the Entente. The German fleet—the pride of the fatherland—sat moored in the harbor at Wilhelmshafen, yet to be tested in battle. Its ground and sea options limited, the German Military High Command looked beyond the European theater for a ways around the current impasse. Their gaze rested on the Baghdad Railway. The railway's proximity to two of England's important strongholds—the Suez Canal and the Persian Gulf—appeared to offer a possible solution to end the current stalemate.[17]

Between January and April 1915, the German General Staff and the Deutsche Bank directors held high-level discussions to determine how the Baghdad Railway could best serve German strategic interests. They invited Dr. Ernst Jäckh, an Orientalist scholar and founder of the German-Turkish Union, to interpret the value of the Levant and Mesopotamia for the German war effort. Using his personal maps and journals as illustrations, Jäckh demonstrated how the construction of a railway between Syria and the Sinai Peninsula could gravely threaten England's regional interests, forcing them to the negotiating table. To build this railway, however, crews would have to depend on the delivery of German supplies through Anatolia. To expedite this process, Jäckh suggested that the German government find ways to complete the Baghdad Railway, especially the Taurus and Amanus tunnels, as soon as possible. The Kaiser thanked Jäckh for his advice and promised that work on the line would pick up immediately regardless of the cost.[18] By April 15, the General Staff had approved the intensive tunneling of the Taurus and Amanus sections, demanding that the work be resumed at once at an accelerated pace.[19]

Meißner Pasha—the chief BRC engineer on the Baghdad section—warned the Deutsche Bank that construction should only commence if certain conditions were met: if German supply transports could successfully reach Karapunar (Taurus), if officials and workers in Baghdad were transferred to the sites, and if there were enough capital to pay the workers' wages and make the necessary security arrangements. He feared leaders in Berlin might set unrealistic goals without taking into account the many known obstacles standing in their path.[20]

The European financial market was too strained by the war to support a further Baghdad Railway loan. Therefore, any railway funding had to come exclusively from the Central Powers. However, the Austrian government wanted no part of the railway enterprise. The German government promised to subsidize the construction efforts, but only if the Turks matched its contribution. Ottoman Finance Minister Djavid told the German ambassador that the Turkish government would only match the German subsidy if the tunnels in the Taurus and Amanus were finished within six months. Given the exigencies of war, he could not guarantee anything beyond that.[21]

Djavid met with the BRC director, Arthur von Gwinner, in Istanbul to discuss matters further. Raising the stakes, he assured Gwinner that Turkey would match the costs (roughly 40 million marks), but only if Germany agreed to pay all freight charges for equipment shipped on the line thereafter. He also re-

quested that Germany pay an additional subsidy of 250,000 lira to replace the funds allocated for the railroad.

Djavid's impossible demands infuriated Gwinner. Citing the 1903 Baghdad Railway concession, he reminded Djavid that Germany had never paid freight charges on the Turkish railways. The idea was especially ludicrous when one considered that the bulk of the cargo in question was rail material bound for the construction sites. Gwinner reminded Djavid that most of the equipment transported on the line in the future would likely belong to the Ottoman army; the passengers would likely be Turkish troops. Gwinner was puzzled why Djavid would even suggest that the German government pay for these. Djavid stood his ground, aware that the German war effort hinged on the railway's completion, and insisted that his conditions be met.[22]

Since 1911, the German government had maintained a loose affiliation with the BRC. The war changed the relationship, forcing the BRC to become a full participant in the fulfillment of state objectives. Sensing the brewing tension between the financial representatives, the German Foreign Office asked the Kaiser to intercede and agree to the Turkish demands. In the Office's opinion, the railway had simply become too strategically important to squabble over its funding. The railway still represented Germany's last remaining trump card, whether or not an attack on the Suez took place in the future. The Kaiser wholeheartedly agreed with the Foreign Office's position and overrode Gwinner's objections to the Turkish terms.

Within days, German chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg ordered Deutsche Bank director Karl Helfferich to be more accommodating to the Turkish demands. He reminded Helfferich that the Baghdad Railway question was not, and never had been, simply a financial one. To protect German strategic interests, the Chancellor recommended that the Deutsche Bank offer the Turks approved subsidies at low interest rates, or be prepared to renounce the sums advanced forever. In short, the German Foreign Office ordered German banks to assume the entire cost of the railway construction.[23]

Although the Porte pledged to provide a sizeable workforce to expedite the railway's construction, the workers failed to materialize. In fact, the Ottoman offensives further reduced the size of the workforce. In January 1915, at the beginning of Enver's campaign in East Anatolia, Russian forces crushed the Third Ottoman army at Sarakamis. Believing that the region's Armenian population had sabotaged Turkish defenses by collaborating with Russian troops, the Ottoman regime took draconian measures to guarantee it would not happen again. The Turkish parliament passed a bill of deportation, demanding an immediate removal of all Armenians from the border regions with Russia. The bill called for the deportation of the Armenian population to the "safer" desert regions on the Arabian Peninsula. Troops used the Baghdad Railway and Hijaz Railway to deport the refugees.[24] Witnesses in the region reported that men, women, and children had been stuffed into freight cars, many dying of hunger, thirst, or disease before reaching their destination. Other reports claimed that thousands more had been forced on long marches or slaughtered indiscriminately in their villages. The skilled Armenian workers on the Baghdad Railway construction

sites were not spared. The number of workers, who were forcibly removed from the sites, rose steadily throughout the 1915–1916 campaign.[25]

Although the German government was well aware of the events unfolding in Eastern Anatolia, it took no steps to curb the mass killings. Regional consulates sent urgent letters to the German Foreign Office, describing the horrors. Germany kept its silence, neither condoning nor chastising its ally's actions. The railway was simply too important to get mixed up in what officials considered to be an Ottoman domestic affair. Conversely, the French and English, who had always come to the protection of the Ottoman Christian populations, were outraged.

The war not only led to a decline in the number of workers, it also severely limited the quantity of supplies reaching the railway construction sites. The BRC reported receiving only 186,696 tons of cargo in the 1914 fiscal year. Entente troops confiscated many of the shipments bound for the railway sent just prior to the war. The Entente's blockade of all Mediterranean shipping interrupted the shipments of materials to the ports of Mersin and Iskenderun, forcing the BRC to devise a land-based supply route to attain the needed materials.[26] Small items like medicines and instruments usually found their way to their destination in short order, but larger cargo shipments (like the drill bits urgently needed for the Bahçe tunnel) took as many as five months to arrive. Moreover, as the war dragged on, these deliveries grew increasingly expensive and infrequent.[27]

In June 1915, the number of BRC officials reached an all-time low. Of the remaining 150 employees, 75 were in Adana, 74 in Aleppo, and 1 in Baghdad. Although quadrupling its unskilled workforce since September, it remained far below the number needed to see the project through.

Despite the difficulties caused by the war, the BRC made considerable progress in 1915. On January 8, workers finally broke through one of the stubborn Taurus tunnels, the 1.8 km tunnel at Bilmedik. In June, after years of boring around the clock and using tens of thousands of drill bits, the Bahçe tunnel followed suit. An additional 62-kilometer section in Mesopotamia between Tel-Abiad and Tuan was opened in June. By the end of 1915, only three sections remained unfinished: the 37 kilometers from Karapunar to Durak in the Taurus; the 54 kilometer stretch between Mamure and Islahiye in the Amanus; and the 588 kilometers between Ras-ul-Ain and Samarra in Mesopotamia. The war had put the Baghdad–Basra section completely out of reach.

In the summer of 1915, the Baghdad Railway became a central component of both the German and Turkish war efforts. As Germany grew increasingly dependent on the railway to challenge England in the Sinai and Mesopotamia, the Ottoman leadership grew increasingly fond of the German subsidies pouring in to fund the railway's construction. It did not take the Ottoman leaders long to realize that a policy of obstruction, not collaboration, served their interests best. In the following years, the Ottomans would create inventive ways to elicit German subsidies to strengthen the empire. Moreover, the Turkish bureaucracy would play an increasingly pivotal role in the Turks' quest for autonomy.

An example of this new obstructionism came to the fore in March 1915, when the Porte passed a law establishing new visa regulations for visitors, in-

cluding German officers and civilians working on the railway. The law required all foreigners to take their passports to the nearest Turkish consulate to be tested for authenticity, for which they paid a fee of 20 piasters. Travelers wishing to travel within the Ottoman Empire were required to purchase a travel permit. Furthermore, citizens of nations that were causing difficulties for Turkish passport holders living abroad, were subject to retaliation. The new laws added additional expense and restrictions to BRC personnel, who had grown accustomed to moving freely about the empire.[28]

The German subsidies soon began to turn the Turkish economy around, helping to fuel the Ottoman military campaigns. The end of capitulations gave the regime the freedom to improve the domestic economy. The Turks appeared to be healing themselves much faster than anyone expected, spending less on their war effort while funneling the savings to promote internal development.[29]

In June 1915, after a failed Turkish attack on the Suez Canal, the German and Turkish leadership decided to build a strategic branch railway from the Hijaz line in Syria west toward the Sinai Peninsula. Whereas the Germans were mainly interested in capturing the Suez Canal, the Turks hoped to press further west, forcing the foreign invaders out of Egypt and Tripoli, if possible. They selected Meißner Pasha to lead the project. German and Turkish hopes were high that the special troops building the railway would finish by late autumn, facilitating a joint attack on the Suez Canal, thereby closing down one of England's chief supply routes from India and the Antipodes.[30]

The exodus of engineers to the Sinai left the BRC once again with a shortage of qualified skilled personnel. The German War Ministry, which was charged with the task of locating suitable replacements, distributed flyers that advertised jobs in Turkey. The applications soon poured into the ministry from hundreds of soldiers and civilians eager to escape the European continent. The sheer quantity of applications overwhelmed the staff and slowed the selection process.

Although the demand for positions in Turkey was high, not every applicant was given a job. Selected applicants first had to meet several criteria. They needed to have some knowledge of at least one of the regional languages, be fit enough to work in a tropical environment and disease-free, and be in good health. In some cases, specialized skills like snowshoe training were a prerequisite for job placement. The bulk of applications received by the War Ministry did not meet these requirements. They did, however, indicate the number of desperate soldiers hoping to distance themselves from the trenches in France.[31]

Since railway construction fell under the definition of war costs, the German government had to reach a separate contract with the BRC. To expedite the railway construction efforts in the Sinai, the BRC and the German Foreign Office reached an agreement regarding the Taurus and Amanus stretches on November 6, 1915. The BRC promised to do everything in its power to ensure military transports passage through the Taurus section before the end of 1916. The company also committed itself to prepare the Taurus tunnels for immediate provisional military use, boring them at least 3.3 meters wide by 3.8 meters high to allow normal-gauge freight cars to pass. Furthermore, the BRC promised to

build provisional bridges and viaducts in the Haciciri Gorge for immediate use and a provisional narrow-gauge railway between Durak and Haciciri. To cover company expenses, the German government promised to pay 12 monthly payments of 250,000 marks followed by an additional ten payments of 200,000 marks each. The BRC expected all work on the sections to be completed by the end of 1916.[32]

The BRC agreed to lengthen the existing narrow-gauge railway in the Amanus Mountains between Entilli to Islahiye, and to add more crossings. Next, it would fortify the line to meet the Turkish military's minimum payload requirement of 250 tons per day. As soon as they were ready, the sections would transport German and Turkish troops. These transports would take priority over all other shipments. Finally, as an Ottoman company, the BRC was obliged to follow the directives of the Turkish military command.[33]

A sharp rise in the number of workers on the construction sites followed the signing of the agreement. Hundreds of letters again poured into government agencies from German officers requesting transfer. To handle the growing number of applications it received, the German embassy in Istanbul recommended the Ottoman army accept only the bare minimum of German officers, since the German army continued to face increasing difficulties trying to recruit officers to serve on the European front.[34]

The promise of new construction led to a flurry of activity on the construction sites. In December 1915, the BRC had less than 10,000 workers on the line. By January 1916, the number had risen to above 13,000. The number of BRC staff on the line also rose: 111 worked the Taurus section, 98 the Amanus section, and 62 the Aleppo section. The railway's immediate future appeared to be secure.

The Turco-German relationship, however, did not fare as well. Russian troops stormed the Anatolian city of Erzurum in February 1916, defeating Turkish troops and frustrating the Turkish military command. The Turkish Military High Command blamed the defeat on the poor leadership of General Liman von Sanders, who had allegedly delayed his counterattack on Russian positions. With the level of distrust for the German military leaders on the rise, Enver Pasha took steps to limit German control over Turkish military operations. He reminded the German commander that the German military mission had been created in peacetime for the sole purpose of educating and organizing the Turkish military. Therefore, the war should have reduced the German officers' sphere of influence, placing the German leaders squarely under the jurisdiction of the Turkish Military High Command, not vice versa. In Enver's opinion, the Germans had overstepped their boundaries, taking their interpretation of the phrase "effective influence" too far.[35]

While the German leaders were being rebuked, the BRC faced a different kind of problem. The war had interrupted communications between the construction sites and the BRC headquarters in Frankfurt, causing months of unnecessary delays. To remedy this situation, the BRC established a temporary headquarters in Istanbul to expedite communication with the Turkish military command over issues concerning the acquisition of workers and foodstuffs.[36] The

BRC also divided the Taurus section into two independent subsections: Section I from Karapunar to Kilometer 311 and Section II from Kilometer 311 to Durak. The Amanus section stayed the same, stretching from Mamure to Islahiye. The Aleppo section handled construction efforts between Cerablus to Ras-ul-Ain.

The war also interrupted the delivery of materials to the construction sites. The few materials that managed to arrive in the Ottoman Empire had to be distributed through a variety of means. Goods bound for the first Taurus section reached Bilmedik by rail and were then carried by animal transports to the construction sites. Goods for Section II were delivered on horseback from Karapunar to Bozanti and from there over a 70 km rough road from Bozanti–Çamalan to the Gulek station on the Mersin railway. To accelerate the tedious delivery process, the German Military High Command loaned the BRC its convoy of twenty 20-ton trucks to navigate the rough mountain terrain. Goods bound for Section III had to be transported on the Amanus narrow-gauge track to Bahçe, where they were transferred onto the full-gauge Baghdad Railway wagons and carried to points in the east.

Despite the growing number of workers and the company's well-laid plans, work relations on the construction sites were anything but smooth. Turkish authorities consistently hampered BRC efforts to assemble a qualified workforce. As the need for soldiers increased during the lengthy Dardanelles campaign of 1915, the Imperial Ottoman army routinely rounded up workers on the sites and took them to the nearest recruiting office where officers determined whether the men had faithfully completed their military service. The worst setback, however, occurred on the Amanus section in June 1916, when, according to BRC reports, Turkish troops forcibly removed 4,200 Armenian workers from the site. A further 1,200 Turkish workers deserted the site out of fear, not wanting to witness the brutal consequences. BRC pleas for the Armenian workers' return went unanswered. The Turkish authorities instead sent military officers and prisoners of war to serve as replacements. The increased number of Ottoman soldiers on the sites further slowed operations, since the officers reportedly did little to earn their daily keep. The BRC noticed that the new soldiers' arrival to work on the railway sites typically coincided with times when the Ottoman army was between battles. This way the troops could be fed and sheltered at the BRC's expense.

While the BRC struggled to keep a qualified workforce on the construction sites, the German embassy in Istanbul was busily rejecting applications from hundreds of qualified German applicants. Overwhelmed by the number of applications, the consular staff stopped responding to individual letters. The consul noted that the majority of applicants seemed convinced that Turkey was a "land of milk and honey" where they could earn larger salaries while still serving the fatherland. In the consul's opinion, they had been sorely misinformed.[37]

In September 1914, just one month after the declaration of war, the English had sent an expeditionary force from it outposts in India to Mesopotamia to control the oil fields and refineries located there. On April 29, 1916, just four months after the English suffered defeat at the Dardanelles, the Ottoman army, led by German General Colmar von der Goltz, soundly defeated the English

expeditionary force at Kut-al-Amara, a town on the Tigris roughly 40 kilometers southeast of Baghdad. The victory greatly boosted the morale of the Ottoman military command. Forcing the English to surrender the city, the Ottomans proved once more that their capability to lead a successful military offensive. The Kut-al-Amara victory also rang in a new era of Ottoman self-confidence, the impact of which was soon felt on the Baghdad Railway construction sites.

The Ottoman victory in Mesopotamia exposed the pressing need for the Baghdad Railway. With sufficient supplies the Ottoman army may have been able to drive the English forces from the Persian Gulf region completely, reclaiming the territory that had, until recently, belonged to the Ottoman Empire. Instead they found themselves in a vulnerable position, waiting for reinforcements that might never arrive. Sensing the danger, the Ottoman Foreign Minister Halil Bey ordered the BRC to begin work at once on the unfinished Mesopotamian section of the railway between Ras-ul-Ain and Nissibin. He warned the Germans that if they were unable to fulfill their promise to complete the section, the Turks would do it themselves. Nevertheless, as a sign of good faith between allies, Halil insisted that the Germans assume half of the construction costs as "war expenses."[38]

The Kut-al-Amara victory also helped solve the labor shortage problem that had plagued the railway sites for years. The Ottoman army had captured 13,380 prisoners in the course of the battle. Ignoring pleas for the prisoners' immediate release, the Turks transported them to Anatolia instead where the prisoners worked (without compensation) on the Taurus and Amanus railway sections.[39]

The rise in the nonvoluntary worker population led to a sharp drop in the number of new German workers being accepted to work on the railway.[40] It also created an organizational nightmare for the BRC. The hybrid mix of workers—comprised of German and Ottoman soldiers and volunteers as well as prisoners of war—made it increasingly challenging for the BRC to orchestrate its construction efforts efficiently. The group feared that its volunteer workers might quit if they saw the prisoners doing equal tasks. Tighter Ottoman conscription laws threatened to take away the few good remaining workers. In October 1916, the Turkish Military Command solved the problem, making the railway work equivalent to military service. From that point on, all Ottoman subjects working on the sites were treated as soldiers. Placed in work troops, they answered to a general staff officer with the title work troop inspector. The BRC was pleased to report that the new military organization of the work crews had brought a restored sense of unity and purpose to the construction efforts, ending a pattern of disturbance that had created serious setbacks in the previous year.

In June 1916, Arab revolts in Mecca, Transjordan, and Iraq presented new threats to the Ottoman army. The English-inspired revolts' only real successes, however, came in the Hijaz, where T. E. Lawrence led forces of Arab guerrillas against regional Ottoman outposts, the Hijaz Railway, and the main Red Sea ports of Rabegh, Yanbo, Jeddah, and Akaba. Although Lawrence hoped the revolt would spark an internal Ottoman revolution, it had little effect on the overall Ottoman war effort. Many Arabs seemed content living under Ottoman rule.

In the course of the revolt, no Arab battalions changed sides, nor were the rival groups able to oust the Turks from their Medina stronghold.

In August 1916, the Turks launched a second unsuccessful attack on the Suez Canal. The English troops fought hard, forcing the Turks to withdraw back into Palestine. The Turkish retreat allowed the English to advance its positions in the Sinai, where Entente forces waited for the next opportunity to attack.

By late summer 1916, the German presence on the railway construction sites had dwindled beyond recognition. Since the war severely hampered efforts to acquire the needed construction materials from Germany, the Ottomans had little choice but to promote the local production of materials. Turkish industrial firms soon began receiving contracts that had once belonged exclusively to German firms. The war also limited the number of German railway officials hired by the BRC. Ottoman subjects consistently replaced foreign workers on the sites. The complexion of the Baghdad Railway continued to change, looking more Turkish every day.

In October 1916, BRC Director Arthur von Gwinner—distraught over the growing "Turkification" of the railway—urged the Deutsche Bank to cut its losses and turn the entire operation over to the Turks. He suggested that an immediate change of the guard might save German prestige while giving the Ottoman Empire the lifeline it so desperately needed. Gwinner saw no other way to protect the Baghdad Railway from further deterioration.[41] The company's losses had risen steadily throughout the war due to rising shipping costs, growing numbers of workers in its care, and the lack of significant progress on the railway.[42]

The BRC report for the 1916 fiscal year indicates the degree of difficulty facing the railway developers' efforts to keep the railway enterprise afloat.[43] Although the construction sites boasted their highest number of workers ever, they still lacked the basic materials needed to make progress.[44] For example, the cement factory in Eskihisar, the railway's only approved supplier, could not keep up with BRC demands, bringing some parts of the construction to a halt.

The BRC's worst problem, however, was the difficulty it had acquiring enough combustible material to fuel its machinery. Although the company had ordered several shipments from the coal-rich Black Sea region, the Turkish government had denied the loads passage through the Bosphorus straits. Crews in the regions east of the Taurus were hit hardest by the shortage, and had to scramble to collect enough wood to fuel the work locomotives.[45]

In many regions, however, even wood was in short supply. Since previous crews had already leveled the majority of the forests adjacent to the railway line, using the timber for ties, bridges, tunnel supports, warmth, and cooking, wartime work crews traveled great distances to locate the next source of fuel. In the Amanus and Taurus sections, long animal caravans were established to keep the wood supply flowing from the forests to locations on the line where it was most needed. In the Amanus Mountains, the BRC went as far as to build a 10.4 kilometer full-gauge railway off the main line near Islahiye to reach a local forest. Similarly, the company built a nine kilometer narrow-gauge railway east of Ras-

ul-Ain to provide the wood needed to keep the Mesopotamian construction efforts in full operation.

The winter of 1916 hit the BRC exceptionally hard in the Taurus and Amanus sections. Given the intense pressure to complete the sections, the BRC worked nonstop throughout the winter despite the frequent subzero temperatures in the alpine regions. Unfortunately, neither the Turkish workers nor the prisoners of war were equipped to survive the harsh winter. Although the work troops fell under military control, the Turkish Military High Command had no way of providing for the workers' basic needs. It fell on the BRC to provide winter clothing, sufficient housing, food, and medical care for the all of the 29,000 workers. Unable to find local producers of winter clothing, the BRC ordered items from German manufacturers. Unfortunately, shipping delays caused the clothing to arrive long after the winter had passed.

The BRC also reported a critical shortage of adequate shelter. The Ottoman government had provided military-issue tents, but they were too few. Given the desperate shortage of wood, building wooden shelters was clearly out of the question. In the end, the German government came to the rescue, providing enough surplus materials to the BRC to build several wooden barracks and tents to keep workers from sleeping in the snow.

Food, too, was scarce on the construction sites. Not only did the tens of thousands of workers need to be fed, but thousands of horses, mules, oxen, and camels also required care. The wartime economy made the acquisition of large quantities of grain next to impossible. Those who had surplus grain tended to accept only hard currency, which was in short supply. Furthermore, delivery prices to the construction sites were exorbitantly high. The donation of a German military truck convoy in the Taurus helped the company avoid certain disaster. Using the trucks, the BRC purchased sufficient foodstuffs from the villages around Konya and deliver them directly to the construction sites. The process, however, was costly. The BRC reported spending an average of 70,000 Turkish lira per month to purchase and deliver foodstuffs in the Taurus and Amanus sections alone. The Porte's recent passage of new stringent export laws was at least partly to blame for mounting BRC costs.[46]

To make matters worse, the lack of adequate nourishment, shelter, and clothing ushered in several epidemics in the winter of 1916. The BRC reported that on many sites the number of sick workers reached 80 percent of the total work population. The numbers began to decline after the BRC initiated a preventative health program that included the delousing, disinfestation, and vaccination of each new arrival on the construction sites.

While work crews shivered in the mountain regions, the Mesopotamian front heated up once again. The arrival of Entente reinforcements in Kuwait gravely threatened the Turkish positions around Baghdad. Ottoman officials scrambled to develop an emergency plan to protect the city. The immediate eastern extension of the Baghdad Railway seemed to be their best hope. On January 10, the Ottoman government contracted the BRC to concentrate its immediate efforts on extending the line from Ras-ul-Ain east to Nissibin. For the next three months, crews worked around the clock to expedite the flow of sup-

plies and reinforcements to Baghdad. In February 1917, the city of Basra—the disputed endpoint of the Baghdad Railway—fell back into English hands. As Entente troops pushed northward, the Ottoman army retreated from Kut-al-Amara to Baghdad—the next stop on the English itinerary.

For decades, the city of Baghdad had served as the centerpiece of the Baghdad Railway in German political, military, and commercial circles. Many felt that the fall of Baghdad would not only doom the railway enterprise bearing its name, but also the joint Turco-German war effort in Mesopotamia. The directors of the Deutsche Bank, finding themselves already 40 million francs in debt on the railway, knew that the railway's future depended on the city's protection. Just days before the attack began, the bank published a report urging the German Military Command to do its utmost to spare the enterprise, reminding the German government that railway developers had always acted in concert with the German Foreign Office and the German embassy in Istanbul. The report also stressed the validity of Marshall's earlier claim that the Ottoman railways served as the foundation of Germany's political position in Turkey. In the director's opinion, Germany was obliged to help the Turks defend Baghdad. By doing so, they would also spare the coveted railway.[47]

English and Arab forces overran Baghdad in March 1917. The defeated Ottoman army retreated to the north where it began developing its next line of defense. Clearly, efforts to retake Baghdad depended heavily on the railway's ability to carry reinforcements to the front. Within a month of the fall of Baghdad, the BRC renewed its construction efforts on the line between Ras-ul-Ain and Derbesiye. The new Tarsus field railway helped accelerate the transport of goods to the construction sites.[48] The amount of goods transported on the Baghdad Railway increased significantly from zero tons in January 1917 to 72,000 tons by the end of July. The number of passengers followed a similar upward trend, reaching 46,000 in a little over three months.[49]

Entente troops failed twice in March and April 1917 to penetrate the Turco-German defenses on the Gaza-Beersheba front in Palestine. Interpreting these losses as a sign of a weakened English resolve, Enver Pasha developed a new plan to launch a rapid full-scale attack against the English troops in Mesopotamia. Although the majority of his cabinet—including Cemal, Mustafa Kemal, and Taalat—disagreed with his strategy and feared the vulnerability of Palestine if all attention was focused on Mesopotamia, Enver nevertheless began to assemble his *Yildirim* (lightning) forces in Syria. According to Enver's plan, German General Falkenhayn would march these special forces down the Euphrates and liberate Baghdad. The German government strongly approved the action, hoping the campaign would tire English troops into submission.

While the Turkish and German forces jointly planned their strategy to reclaim Mesopotamia, the BRC prepared to abort the railway enterprise altogether. Whereas the 1917 fiscal year was one of the more active years in the BRC's history, the company failed to turn a profit. The BRC directors grew increasingly frustrated as they watched the war erase decades of work. As the German Military High Command assumed nearly dictatorial powers in Berlin, the BRC metamorphosed from being an independent advocate of German commercialism

to becoming an involuntary surrogate of German militarism. Although the BRC continued to play the charade, the war had taken a devastating toll on the company. By 1917, no one in the company had any illusions that the railway would ever reach its destination.

Gwinner's displeasure underscored a letter he wrote to the German Foreign Office, in which he claimed the German government should accept the fact that the BRC had become "heavily in debt and insolvent," and warned that the company could "no longer be responsible for disguising this regrettable situation in its upcoming report."[50] Gwinner also refused to conceal the fact that the company's debts were double its available capital. Furthermore, Gwinner complained that the Turks' wish to build the railway from Ras-ul-Ain eastward completely contradicted the company's interests and threatened to speed up the company's demise. Unless the German government intervened to ensure the delivery of needed construction materials, the BRC would be unable to fulfill its obligations. Although the Stemrich expedition and others had predicted that the Mesopotamian sections of the railway would be the cheapest to build, the lack of available materials and workers during the war increased the section costs exponentially. To fuel its engines, the company had to rely on intermittent shipments of coal from Germany. The paucity of materials forced crews to salvage rails and ties from the former French railways in Syria and other German branch railways. Military transports heading to the front frequently interrupted the supply shipments. With only a single row of tracks, the railway could not handle the incessant flow of troop transports and special trains carrying commanders heading east. The unavailability of skilled workers, the climate, and the prevalence of disease made it all but impossible for the company to conduct business in an orderly fashion. Gwinner warned that the company could simply no longer continue on the same self-destructive course.

The new Deutsche Bank director, Dr. Günther, relayed a similar message to Falkenhayn, saying that the Baghdad Railway was already broken on the inside and that its external collapse was only a matter of time.[51] Had the BRC been subject to German law, he claimed, it would have been forced to declare bankruptcy years before and its leaders held accountable. In the 1916 fiscal year alone, the company suffered great losses while the Turkish government stashed 10 million francs of profits into its coffers. Günther estimated that, in the first two years of the war, the Turks had pocketed nearly 20 million francs from transport costs alone, while the BRC fell deeper into debt. Although the company's collapse appeared to be imminent, Günther stressed that, for the sake of appearances, it should be delayed until after the war.

Gwinner and Günther's pleas yielded immediate results. On May 21, the German Foreign Office notified the BRC directors that the Ottoman Treasury Secretary agreed: (1) to accept the construction costs associated with the Nissibin–Mosul stretch of the railway, and (2) to pay the guarantees required in the 1911 convention for the entire section from Ras-ul-Ain eastward after the cessation of hostilities.[52] Enver Pasha promised the BRC that the Porte would cover the BRC's operations costs for the railway south of the Taurus.[53]

With the financial question settled for the moment, BRC crews worked 16-hour days to complete the strategic railway in time to support a Mesopotamian offensive. Herculean efforts also continued on the two mountain passes, sites that had come to represent the frustration of the whole enterprise. The BRC continued to face many of the same problems on the construction sites as before: insufficient quantities of mortar, clothing, food, and combustibles to fuel the machinery. It also became painfully apparent that the company could not cover the railway's operating costs. The purchase of lignite and wood from local sources to fuel the locomotives exceeded the entire operations budget.[54] To meet the constant demand for fuel in the Aleppo section, the BRC formed wood crews comprised of 2,000 men each. By January 1918, the fuel situation had grown so desperate that BRC crews working in the remote valleys of the Taurus dug up tree roots to fuel the trains carrying Turkish and German military personnel to the front.[55]

The launch of Enver's *Yildirim* campaign in the autumn of 1917 helped emphasize just how impractical the Baghdad Railway had become. Transports leaving Istanbul's Haydarpasa train terminal followed the Anatolian Railway to Konya and then turned east to the foot of the Taurus. In the Taurus men and materials were transferred on to narrow-gauge wagons and transported through the provisional tunnel at Bilmedik. Once on the other side, the cargo was transferred back onto wider-gauge wagons and transported through Aleppo to the foot of the Amanus where the same unloading-loading procedure was performed at the Bahçe tunnel. From the eastern end of the Bahçe tunnel, the train continued nonstop to Cerablus where the supplies were again unloaded on the bank of the Euphrates. For the remaining 800 kilometers to Baghdad, commanders had the choice of either marching their troops across the desert or floating them down the Euphrates on local *keleks*—wooden platforms affixed to inflated goatskins. Such was the state of the Ottoman Empire in 1917 that the one of the world's most technologically advanced armies had no other choice than to use medieval methods of transportation to advance its troops to the front.[56]

The *Yildirim* offensive short-circuited before it got underway. With the bulk of the Ottoman army assembled in Mesopotamia, English troops easily overran Turkish strongholds in Palestine, and then conquered Jerusalem in December 1917. The Turkish leadership once again blamed the German general staff for the defeat. They accused Falkenhayn of sabotaging the campaign by staying out of the battle until it was certain that Jerusalem would fall into Christian hands. The accusation ruined Falkenhayn's reputation at the Porte, and soured the Turco-German partnership for the remainder of the war.[57]

The *Yildirim* campaign also exposed significant differences between Turkish and German soldiers. The Turks frequently complained that the German officers showed great disrespect towards Turkish troops in their command. The Germans appeared to have a predisposition against Turkish customs, measuring Turks against their stereotypical biases and paying little attention to their unique sensitivities. The German military staff also frequently subjected the Turks to frequent public humiliation and ridicule. The insensitivities grew so burdensome

that the German High Military Command issued an express order to its officers, telling them not to refer to the Turks as "simpletons."[58]

The humiliation adversely affected the Turks' willingness to cooperate with German forces. At one point in the battle, Mustafa Kemal refused to obey the German officers' orders. In a letter to Enver Pasha on September 20, 1917, he explained his reasons. He reiterated his conviction that not a single Turk should be sacrificed for a foreign government nor should the standing Imperial Ottoman army be placed in danger to entertain Falkenhayn's personal ambition. Risking charges of insubordination and a possible court martial, Mustafa Kemal demanded that no German be given direct control over the lives of hundreds of thousands of Turks and that steps be taken to ensure that Germany did not prolong the war in an effort to transform Turkey into its hidden colony. Clearly, Kemal had learned all he wanted to know about German leadership skills.[59]

The last great Ottoman campaign of the war exposed further fissures in the Turco-German alliance. Taking advantage of the recent changes in Russia brought on by the revolutions of March and October 1917, Enver Pasha launched an offensive in February 1918 across the Caucasus Mountains to the Caspian Sea. His goal was to reclaim the Trans-Caucasus region (i.e., present-day Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan); a region the Russians had taken as war spoils at the end of the 1877–1878 Turco-Russian War. Turkish troops had also hoped to protect the region's Muslim heritage by establishing a cultural bridge between Ottoman Turkey and its ancestral home, the land of Turkestan located on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea.

The Turks' unilateral offensive in the Trans-Caucasus region caught the German Military High Command by surprise. The audacity of the Turkish generals, who struck independent deals with delegations representing the provisional Georgian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani governments, especially outraged the Germans. Erich Ludendorff, the Quartermaster General of the German Military High Command, called for an immediate halt to the Turkish advances and alerted the Porte that Germany would not hold the recent treaties as valid. Enver's new chief of staff, Hans von Seekt, warned that all German officers would resign from the Ottoman army unless Turkish forces withdrew immediately from the Caucasus region.

Why were the Germans so insistent? In a special clause in the Brest-Litovsk treaty—a secret Russo-German peace agreement signed on December 15, 1917—Germany promised the Russians that neither Germany nor any other third party would occupy the Caspian port of Baku. In return, the Bolsheviks promised to supply Germany with an unspecified quantity of crude oil from the Caspian oil fields. Germany feared that Turkey's unprecedented advance to the Caspian Sea would void the agreement. Undaunted by German threats, the Ottoman army stormed Baku on September 14, 1918, forcing the complete withdrawal of all Entente troops stationed there.[60]

At the time of the Baku conquest, the forces in the Caucasus represented roughly half of the standing Ottoman army. The expensive Trans-Caucasus campaign quickly drained valuable resources and manpower away from the

Mesopotamian and Palestinian fronts, leaving these areas vulnerable to attack. In September 1918, Entente troops defeated the Turks in Damascus and Aleppo.

Later, after the signing of the Armistice of Mudros on October 20, 1918, Entente troops occupied the Iraqi city of Mosul. In an effort to halt the enemy's westward advance across Mesopotamia, Turkish leaders ordered the demolition of several strategically located bridges on the Baghdad Railway, including the brand new two kilometer steel bridge that spanned the Euphrates River at Cerablus.

Germany's refusal to back Turkish troops in the Caucasus angered the Turkish leadership. Germany had shown its true colors and the limitations of the alliance. In its final year of operations, the BRC experienced detrimental side effects of the growing Ottoman distaste for the Germans. Company leaders began to doubt whether the Turks would ever pay their promised guarantees. The BRC—once again in the middle of a heated controversy not of its making—wound up paying for the incompetence of the German government out of its pockets. Writing to the new German State Secretary Richard von Kühlmann, the BRC conceded that the company had reached the end of the line. With neither cash nor credit at its disposal, the group could no longer fund the railway without government subsidy. It could also not be held accountable for the consequences of the war.[61] The BRC warned that unless help arrived soon, the company would be forced to call a halt to the entire operation. To avoid this seemingly inevitable collapse, the BRC requested that Ottoman officials make retroactive payments back to 1916 for monthly deposits of three million marks, and pay 5 million marks for each month since January 1917.[62] The Turkish Finance Minister agreed to pay a lump sum of 5 million marks to the BRC on the condition that Germany match the contribution, honoring its agreement to share the costs of the war.[63]

By January 1918, it was no secret that the Baghdad Railway had failed to serve to the German war effort. The BRC reported losses of ten million francs in 1917, the majority of which wound up in the Ottoman treasury. By 1918, construction costs alone consumed more than three-quarters of the company's raw income. The BRC pleaded with the German government to fulfill its promise to keep, protect, and save the Baghdad Railway enterprise.[64]

The new German ambassador to Istanbul reassured Gwinner and his BRC colleagues that German officials in Istanbul and Berlin were unanimous in their support of the railway. The only remaining point of contention was which method would be employed to salvage the railway.[65] Hoping to smooth ties with the government officials, the Deutsche Bank assured the German Foreign Office that it did not plan to seek additional compensation from the government. It only sought government protection from the threats of the Turkish leadership. The bank's interests continued to parallel those of the German government.[66]

From the beginning of 1918 to the signing of the armistice agreements, the Turks played games with the BRC, adding conditions to existing agreements and withdrawing promised guarantees. The financially strapped BRC soon played a few tricks of its own tricks to avoid bankruptcy. Breaking the terms of the 1903 concession, the group secretly turned Baghdad Railway operations over to the

more solvent Anatolian Railway Company. For the sake of self-preservation, the exchange took place in secrecy in the hope of avoiding further tricks and chicanery by the Turkish regime.[67]

The Porte, however, was not the only party guilty of breaking its promises to the BRC. Months passed and still the BRC received no help from Berlin. The company's complaints of overexerted locomotives and wagons fell on deaf ears at the German Foreign Office.[68] Reports of constant ridicule by the Turks and pleas for German intervention also yielded few results.[69] In fact, the German government's silence invited further Turkish manipulation. In May 1918, the Ottoman State Secretary unilaterally withdrew his previous offer to guarantee the construction and operations costs for the line from Nissibin to Mosul.[70]

By the summer of 1918, Gwinner had seen enough. The German government's inability to save the railway enterprise was too much for him to bear. Angered by rumors that German government officials had accused the BRC of profit gouging, Gwinner wrote that the allegations were unfounded:

> We cannot even comprehend that the [German] government, our only benefactor (in the amount of 96 million marks), wants to facilitate the collapse of our enterprise. . . . The financial collapse of our company would bring pleasure to no one except Germany's enemies and the Turks.[71]

The Porte's decision to raise tariffs on imports in August 1918 further debilitated the railway company. The BRC accused the Porte of ill will, calling once more for German intervention. The Porte assumed full control over the Mesopotamian sections of the railway to use for military purposes. For the BRC, this action represented yet another blatant example of the "rape and plunder" of their company.[72]

Rather than coming to the aid of the BRC, the German Foreign Office instead delivered the final fatal blow. The Foreign Office disagreed with the company's appraisal of the railway's current financial situation. It denied BRC requests for compensation, claiming that the reported losses were not the sole responsibility of the German government. Playing the same hand that the Turks had played, the Foreign Office claimed that the damages fell under the category of war damages, meaning that the Porte was obliged to pay half.[73] Rather than accepting responsibility for the BRC's desperate situation, the German government chose to desert the enterprise, leaving it vacillating between the two powers.

The railway, however, was not a bust for all of the parties involved in its construction. Germany's interest in the railway had filtered more than 5 billion marks into the Ottoman treasury, 1 billion of which was hard currency. The Porte received an additional 616 million marks in duties for the delivery of German war machinery and a further 850 million marks for troop transports. Germany also purchased more than 300 million marks of raw materials from Turkey over the course the war, including oil, fat, wool, leather, and raw metals.[74]

Between 1914 and 1918, the Ottoman Empire received 250 million Turkish lira in German railway subsidies. Although Djavid Bey committed the Turks to match German contributions, by the end of the war, the promised sum had grown from 40 million to 360 million marks, and there was no sign that the debt would be repaid any time soon. Overall the Turks paid only one installment to the railway enterprise—a 41,000 Turkish lira contribution drawn primarily from other low-interest German loans.[75] Aside from that, the Turks' greatest contribution to the railway was their own obstructionism.

Despite the bounty of German capital pouring into the Ottoman Empire, the war left behind its share of scars. The empire's debt had tripled.[76] Since the Entente powers had driven much of the prewar Ottoman economy, stock markets and shipping agencies had been closed since 1914. As a result, steady price hikes led to high inflation and currency devaluation. By 1918, the Turkish lira had lost roughly half its prewar value against the Swiss franc.[77]

The war had its human cost as well. More than 325,000 Ottoman enlisted men died in battle; an additional 240,000 died of disease. The decimation of the Armenian population in the pogroms of 1915–1916 wiped out an estimated 500,000 to one million people. Countless others died from hunger and widespread epidemics.

Despite the best intentions of the German General Staff, in the end, the Baghdad Railway proved to be of minimal intrinsic strategic value. The war impeded construction nearly as much as the railway's unfinished sections impeded the war. The German Military High Command's desire to use the railway to defeat England at any cost left the BRC vulnerable to Turkish exploitation. When German personnel withdrew from the Ottoman Empire in compliance with the armistice treaties, they left little behind to commemorate nearly four decades of devoted service to the Baghdad Railway enterprise.

The victors designed the Armistice of Mudros to punish the Turks for their wartime behavior. The Turkish army was demobilized, and Entente forces occupied forts along the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus straits. All communications systems, heavy equipment, armaments, and munitions were removed from Turkish hands. Turkish troops were forced to withdraw from Persia and the Caucasus to comply with the prewar borders. The Entente also reserved the right to send in troops to quell in any disturbances that might arise in the Armenian provinces.[78]

The Turks proved resilient despite these obvious setbacks. Four years of relative independence had unified the core of empire under a set of nationalist principles. The Turco-German alliance had provided the Turks a freedom they had not experienced since the early nineteenth century. Using the war to establish a unified front, the Turks put the rudiments of a Turkish nation-state in place. While the Entente powers preoccupied themselves with the division of Ottoman spoils, Mustafa Kemal used the forgotten railways to transport weapons, ammunition, and raw materials to central Anatolia. From the Turkish heartland, he would later launch a great offensive, realizing the dream of a sovereign Turkish republic.

The war built few bridges between the German and Turkish cultures. The Turco-German partnership and the Baghdad Railway both emerged from the war with significant damage. The unfinished railway, with its missing bridges and torn-up tracks, exemplified the state of Turco-German relations in the postwar era. Instead of bringing victory and unity, the railway brought chaos and hardship, ruining its chance to realize its commercial potential in the post-war era. Similarly, the Turco-German alliance, which had evolved in an atmosphere of mutual cooperation, wound up marred by disillusionment and betrayal. Instead of bringing the cultures closer together, the alliance and the railway highlighted the irreconcilable differences that existed between them.

NOTES

1. For more on the Turco-German relationship during the First World War, see Ulrich Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 1914–1918* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968); Ahmad Emin, *Turkey in the World War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1930); and Ahmad Feroz, "War and Society under the Young Turks," in *The Modern Middle East*, edited by A. Hourani (New York: I. B. Taurus, 1993).

2. Weber, 136–37. "There were very long breaks all along the line, and the road segments, of questionable military utility at best, were so bad that not even civilian traffic was possible upon them. The trip from Baghdad to Constantinople took at least twenty-two days under these conditions, and unless German engineering could correct them, supply and conveyance to the Syrian and Mesopotamian theaters would remain minimal."

3. Carl A. Schäfer, "Deutsch-türkische Freundschaft" in *Der deutsche Krieg. Politische Flugschriften* 13, edited by Ernst Jäckh (Berlin: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, 1914). Schäfer describes the recent founding of the German-Turkish Union and its objectives. The group hoped to nurture the Turco-German friendship through the establishment of exchange programs, the teaching of German in newly built schools around the Ottoman Empire, the development of a network of hospitals and hospices, and the use of cinema to offer Turkish illiterates visual examples of a civilized culture.

4. The fact that British admirals, as well as German, actively trained the Turkish navy is generally overlooked. Furthermore, in spite of the rift between the German and English fleets, the Porte purchased ships from both nations. When the war broke out, Turkey was still waiting for the shipment of two battleships from English shipyards.

5. Macfie, 120.

6. Corrigan, 145. In April 1914, the French government had secured a loan for 35 million Turkish lira, saving the Ottoman Treasury from imminent bankruptcy. Djavid Bey, the Ottoman Minister of Finance, made no effort to hide his preference for France. He had told the German Ambassador to Istanbul, Wangenheim, that Germany should not expect to be treated the same as France, since France had saved Turkey from a desperate situation, while Germany, the Great Power on which Turkey had rested all its hopes, had failed both financially and politically to provide the needed support.

7. Letters from Moltke to his Austrian colleague General Conrad von Höxtendorff. Quoted in Wallach, *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe*, 150.

8. Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, 157.

9. Macfie, 121–22.

10. Trumpener (1984), 124.

11. Ibid., 126.

12. Macfie, 129.

13. *Zeitung des Vereins Deutscher Eisenbahnverwaltungen* 54 and 68 (1914); *Vossische Zeitung* 512 (8 October 1914).

14. "Das Fortschreiten der Bagdadbahn," *Vossische Zeitung* 454 (7 September 1914).

15. "Die deutschen Bahnbauten in der asiatischen Türkei" *Kolonie und Heimat* (Kriegsnummer). Organ des Frauenbundes der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft 8, no. 48 (1914–1915): 6–7.

16. Mühlmann (1926), 397.

17. *Frankfurter Zeitung* 352 (20 December 1914).

18. Weber, 138–39.

19. Ibid., 140.

20. Pönicke, 208. Found in a German Consulate report from Baghdad (27 November 1914).

21. Weber, 141.

22. Ibid., 142.

23. Ibid., 143.

24. Sievers, 56.

25. Witnesses of the massacres reported that the railway played a central role in facilitating the deportations and murders of much of the Ottoman-Armenian population. The Germans used many of the same methods, albeit on a grander scale, to achieve similar results in the Second World War.

26. During the early phases of the war, English ships bombarded trains traveling on the branch line from Iskenderun to Toprakkale. Although the damage to the railway was slight, the incident proved the wisdom of Abdulhamid, who had always insisted that the railway run at least half a day's distance from the sea to avoid sabotage.

27. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8303, 2, 7-12. Jahresbericht, 1914-1915. Baghdad-Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft.

28. *Deutsche Reichsanzeiger* 161 (12 July 1915). This maxim holds true in the Turkish Republic today. American citizens pay high fees for entry visas that most other countries get for free.

29. "Türkische Bahnen im Kriege," *Berliner Tageblatt* 314 (22 June 1915).

30. Richard Hennig, *Der Tag* 157 (8 June 1915). The Ottomans launched two separate campaigns (January 1915 and August 1916) to try to close the Suez Canal and expel the English from Egypt. Although these campaigns proved ineffective, they managed to tie up the English troops in the region.

31. See BHSA-M. Kr. 1953, #96621, #102072, and #102074.

32. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8169, 149. Vertrag zwischen dem Auswärtigen Amt und der Bagdad–Eisenbahn–Gesellschaft betreffend Taurus–Amanus. (6 November 1915).

33. Ibid., 154.

34. AAHP# 16600. Bericht der Konstantinopeler Botschaft-Militär Attache von Lossow (15 January 1916).

35. Wallach (1976), 180.

36. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8303, 7, 1-27. Bagdadbahn-Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft. Jahresbericht 1916.

37. BHSA—Kriegsarchiv M.Kr # 224-#36608/16. Kaiserliches Deutsches General Konsulat in Konstantinopel an dem Reichskanzler Herrn Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg (17 February 1916).

38. Weber, 197. (Excerpt from AA Turkei #152. Bd. 86, #A8992, Metternich).

39. Dr. Fritz Frech, *Schlesische Zeitung* 319 (7 May 1916). Also see Macfie, 140. Macfie writes that Aubrey Herbert and T. E. Lawrence offered the Ottomans two million

pounds to release the prisoners, saving them from certain death under Turkish care. The offer was declined.

40. See BHSA—Kriegsarchiv M.Kr 224, #117856. Kaiserliche Deutsche Botschaft Konstantinopel an das Königliches Bayrisches Kriegsministerium (25 October 1916). A rumor circulating in Germany at the time led many to believe that the Ottoman government was interested in hiring a massive number of German workers for the railway. The German embassy in Istanbul hoped to set the record straight: "The Turkish government does not seek nor has it sought to employ a great number of German officials. On the contrary, the nationalist trend that has appeared since the outbreak of the war has had the consequence, that all open positions whenever possible, were being occupied by Turks."

41. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB #8111, 13. Gwinner an die Direktion (21 October 1916).

42. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8165, 116. Gwinner an den AEG Verwaltungsrat an der Generaldirektion. Berlin (13 December 1916).

43. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB#8303, 14, 1–33. Bagdad–Eisenbahn–Gesellschaft. Jahresbericht. 1917.

44. The German government, wanting to support the BRC, sent three companies of German soldiers (30 officers and 76 enlisted men) to help complete the Taurus and Amanus sections. Each troop had a field commander in charge of the group. The operations headquarters for the troops was located in Bilmedik.

45. Before the war, the BRC had begun using local crude oil to fuel its field locomotives. The war put an end to the oil supply, making the rich petroleum deposits around Mosul and Kerkuk unreachable.

46. See BHSA—Kriegsarchiv M.Kr. 224, #148135. Kriegsministerium an das Kaiserliche Stellvertretene General Kommando I.II.III. (8 January 1917). The German embassy in Istanbul reported that new laws prohibited the German purchasing organization there to retain its export license.

47. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8111. [FI 22: B-7, 9-11.] Bagdadbahn, März 1917.

48. The Tarsus Railway was built for the sole purpose of circumventing the difficult Taurus section to expedite the delivery of war supplies. The narrow-gauge railway connected the Baghdad Railway to the Mersin–Adana Railway on the Mediterranean coast. Although the shifting rail gauges required the loading and unloading of materials, the Tarsus railway was a great improvement over animal caravans.

49. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB#8303, 14, 1-33. Bagdad–Eisenbahn–Gesellschaft. Jahresbericht. 1917.

50. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB#8305, 30, 1-6. Gwinner an das Auswärtige Amt (22 May 1917).

51. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB#8305, 40, 1. Generaldirektor Günther an Falkenhayn (14 May 1917).

52. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB#8305, 36. Auswärtiges Amt an den Verwaltungsrat der K. O. Bagdad–Eisenbahn–Gesellschaft (21 May 1917).

53. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB#8305, 45. Enver Pasha an den Kaiserlich Deutschen Militärbevollmächtigten Herrn General von Lossow (11 June 1917).

54. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB#8305, 57. Von der K. O. Bagdad–Eisenbahn–Gesellschaft to Herrn Oberst Freiherrn von Oldershausen, Grosses Hauptquartier (5 July 1917).

55. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB#8305, 85, 7. Deutsche Bank an das Auswärtige Amt (25 January 1918).

56. Wallach (1976), 212.

57. Ibid., 216–17.

58. Ibid., 228.

59. Emin, *Turkey in the World War*, 262–63.

60. Macfie, 153–60.

61. The German and Turkish governments refused to pay for the sections of the railway that had fallen under English control, although the BRC had funded the construction efforts all the same.

62. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8305, 63. K.O.Bagdad–Eisenbahn–Gesellschaft an Staatssekretär Richard von Kühlmann (16 November 1917).

63. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8305, 74. December 1917.

64. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8305, 75. An Herr Graf (27 December 1917).

65. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8305, 76. Deutscher Botschafter Bemstorff an Gwinner (1 January 1918).

66. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8305, 85, 7. Deutsche Bank an das Auswärtige Amt (25 January 1918).

67. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8165, 142. Gwinner an Geheimrat Günther (9 February 1918).

68. *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 39 (25 January 1921). Reports stated that of the 96 locomotives used on the railway, only 37 remained in operation.

69. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8305, 89, 5–6. K.O. BEG Verwaltungsrat an Auswärtige Amt (21 March 1918).

70. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8305, 90. Auswärtiges Amt an Verwaltung der K.O. Bagdad–Eisenbahn–Gesellschaft (17 May 1918) [AA Nr. A 17147/ 69481].

71. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8305, 4. Gwinner. Geheimbrief an K.O. Bagdad–Eisenbahn–Gesellschaft (1 June 1918).

72. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8305, 104. Abschrift re: Tariferhöhung auf den deutschen Bahnen in der Türkei.

73. BA, 80 Ba 2, DB# 8305, 3. Auswärtiges Amt. Brief an den Verwaltungsrat der K.O. Bagdad–Eisenbahn–Gesellschaft (3 August 1918).

74. Wallach (1976), 238–39.

75. Weber, 143.

76. Emin, 163. The Ottoman national debt was reportedly 170.6 million Turkish lira in 1914 and 465.7 million at the end of the war.

77. Emin, 145. 1 TL = 23.125 Sfr (January 1916); 1 TL = 12.125 Sfr (December 1918).

78. Macfie, 173–74.

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Conclusion

Unlike the German and Ottoman empires, the Baghdad Railway emerged from the First World War bearing some semblance of its original form. Construction on the railway continued until 1940, when the first train made history by traveling nonstop between Baghdad and Istanbul. By then, the railway had become the property of the new independent states of Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. The first locomotive rolling into Istanbul's lavish German-built rail terminal in Haydarpasa met with little fanfare or celebration. The era of the great Baghdad Railway had passed.

Germany's repeated attempts to transform the railway into a new international trade route ended in failure. The railway never assumed a central role in international commerce; the bulk of its earnings came instead from the transport of local passengers and local goods just as Abdulhamid had predicted.

As this book shows, the Baghdad Railway never became a German enterprise. Instead the railway remained a joint Turco-German undertaking with the Turks clearly at the helm. By strictly controlling each stage of the construction process, the Turks manipulated the Great Powers to ensure the railway served Ottoman interests first. Eventually, the railway met all of its sponsors' objectives: it connected Basra to Istanbul and points in Europe, it increased the political security of Anatolia, it inspired economic development in rural regions, and it helped elevate Turkey to a position where it could proclaim its national sovereignty.

Given the state of Ottoman affairs in the late nineteenth century, the Porte could not have accomplished these magnanimous achievements on its own. A growing sense of cooperation between Turkey and Germany provided an essential component in the Baghdad Railway's development and proved to be the key to its success. German financing, materials, and workers all played an indispensable part in the railway's expansion. The personal relationship, which the Germans forged with their Turkish counterparts, served as the foundation of the cultural partnership. On the railway's multiethnic construction sites, the need for cooperation and compromise to facilitate the railway's progress overshadowed the incessant wrangling in the capital by the Great Powers' diplomatic corps.

Germany's zeal to complete the railway to meet its strategic and commercial aims, however, frequently raised suspicions among their Ottoman hosts, creating further delays. As guest workers in a foreign land, the Germans in the Ottoman Empire gained little leverage in the railway's decision-making process, and grew increasingly dependent on Ottoman governance, hospitality, security, and labor to see the project through. The best they could hope for was to adapt their strategies to comply with changing Ottoman circumstances and demands.

Germany became increasingly dependent on a railway it could not control. The dream of the much discussed "Berlin to Baghdad Railway"—the link intended to bring German civilization to the desolate plains of Anatolia and Mesopotamia—was never realized. Nevertheless, the promise of completing this great cultural work was enough to inspire many Germans to devote their lives to bringing the railway project to fruition.

The end of the war marked the end of an era of Turco-German cultural interaction. As part of the war spoils, the railway fell into England's possession in 1919. English financiers scrambled to fill the administrative positions left vacant by the departing Germans forced to comply with the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. Ironically, the first passenger train making the journey between Ras-ul-Ain to Istanbul was not used to celebrate a new era of Turco-German interaction, but to evacuate the families of German engineers from the construction sites. After two decades devoted to the railway's construction, all the railway could offer its German benefactors was a slow ride home.

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