

The Importance of Chrome in the Historical Context of the Turkish-German Relations between 1933 and 1945

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Abstract

This paper discusses the importance of chrome in the historical context of the Turkish-German relations between 1933 and 1945. Chrome attains its central significance due to its indispensability in the defense industry production. On the evidence of the political aim of the National Socialist government it endeavored to ensure chrome especially from Turkey because it was, in comparison to the other suppliers, the only country which was reachable by land and by sea. On the contrary, Turkey was interested in a relationship with Germany owing to the Turkish industrialization efforts as well. Germany was equipped with know-how and human capital which Turkey lacked. Both countries complemented each other economically, whereby the economic cooperation depended on stable political conditions. To understand this interaction the analysis deals with both the political and economic level. Considering this fact, the time period between 1933 and 1945 is divided in three phases which reflect the dynamic relations between Turkey and Germany based on those two levels.

Keywords: Turkish-German relations, chrome export, Turkey, South Africa, defense industry, Second World War

Tarihsel Perspektifte Türk Alman İliřkilerinde Kromun Önemi 1933-1945

Özet

Bu makale 1933-1945 arası dönemde Türk-Alman iliřkilerinde kromun yerini ve önemini irdelemektedir. Krom madeni savunma sanayisinde vazgeçilmez bir yere sahiptir. Nazi hükümeti krom ithalatını güvence altına almak zorunda olduğundan Türkiye'ye büyük bir önemi veriyordu. Çünkü diđer krom ithal edilen ülkelere kıyasla Türkiye'ye ulaşım kara ve deniz yolundan daha kolaydı. Diđer yandan Türkiye bu dönemde Almanya'nın yardımıyla sanayileşmesini gerçekleřtirmek istiyordu. Almanya teknolojik ve insan sermayesi bakımlarından yeterince birikime sahip bir ülkedydi. Ekonomik bakımdan ise iki ülke birbirini tamamlıyordu. Ancak ekonomik alandaki iliřkilerin seyri istikrarlı siyasal iliřkilere sıkı sıkıya bađlıydı. Türkiye ve Almanya arasındaki karşılıklı etkileşimleri anlayabilmek için bu çözümleme, iki ülke iliřkilerindeki siyasal ve ekonomik düzeyleri dikkate almaktadır. Bu bağlamda makale 1933-1945 yılları arasındaki iliřkileri üç döneme ayırarak incelemektedir ki bunlar Türkiye ve Almanya arasındaki siyasal ve ekonomik alanlardaki dinamik iliřkileri yansıtmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk-Alman iliřkileri, krom ithalatı, Türkiye, Güney Afrika, savunma sanayi, İkinci Dünya Savaş

The welfare of a country depends on its know-how and on its richness of several primary materials. In industrial production both factors are dependent on each other. Once one of these factors is missing in a country, it is to the detriment of the position of the country in the international context. Through international trade relations, countries try to get around

The Turkish-German relations between 1933 and 1945 are to pin down in this context. In the beginning of the 1930s, the young Republic of Turkey started with its scheduled industrialization based on the two five-year plans passed in 1933 and 1936. Thereby it distanced itself from the phase of the single projects in the 1920s. However, in Germany the NSDAP came to power in January 1933. It initiated a change of the political direction, which were not only limited to Germany, but also had repercussions on other states. It entailed political coalitions: On the one hand between Great Britain and France, on the

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other hand between Germany and Italy. Turkey played almost no role in this constellation. It concentrated on its state structure and economic development. The Turkish-German economic approximation has to be evaluated on this basis. As long as its territorial integrity was not threatened, Turkey would continue its relationship with Germany. Germany had know-how and real capital, which Turkey needed to evolve, whereas Turkey had primary capital which was important for Germany. For the National Socialist government, particularly the possession of chrome played an important role with regard to its political goals, since it was indispensable for the defense industry.

The following analysis deals with the question of the meaning of chrome in the Turkish-German relations between 1933 and 1945. To get a better understanding, the political and economic level and its interdependence in this relation will be analyzed. This will explain why Germany and Turkey resumed their relations in July 1940 after its severance shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War?

This paper consists of four chapters. It starts with the attributes of chrome and its role in the defense industry. Then it reveals the Turkish chrome export to Germany between 1933 and 1939 and how the deliveries were discontinued in the wake of the international political changes in 1939. Following that, the analysis outlines the reasons for the renewal of the relations between Turkey and Germany in 1940. The questions which are to be answered in this context are as follows: How did the chrome deliveries develop between 1940 and 1945? Why did Turkey end their chrome export to Germany? The analysis finishes with a conclusion of the results.

Chrome and its relevance

Chromite (FeCr_2O_4) has a high chrome concentration hence chromite is one of the most important metals for deriving chrome.¹ Chrome is a main alloying metal which has an important function in defense production. The usage of chrome for production of the war materials increases not only their hardness, viscosity and strength of steel but also its resistance to rust and organic acid.² Thus, chrome is very essential and irreplaceable for the arms industry.³ It is used for example for the production of armour plates and projectiles, tank manufacturing, production of tank munitions or in the aircraft construction for steel tubing.⁴

Steels viscosity and strength can be enhanced by adding nickel, vanadium or molybdenum. In the 1930s in Germany, chrome-molybdenum-steels were increasingly substituted for chrome-nickel-steels in the defense production.⁵ The reason was that the molybdenum, which the National Socialists required for the war production, was largely covered from sources in Germany in contrast to nickel which was missing in the country as well as chrome.⁶ Therefore it was important for the National Socialists to work together with states which had large chrome deposits and which were reliable partners with regard to their armament program. In historical perspective, Turkey was always a reliable partner for Germany and it had large chrome deposits at various locations on its soil.⁷ Particularly worth

¹ Ramdohr, Paul/Strunz, Hugo, Klockmanns Lehrbuch der Mineralogie, Ferdinand Enke Verlag, Stuttgart 1978, p. 507.

² Pahl, Walther, Weltkampf um Rohstoffe, Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, Leipzig 1940, p. 148.

³ Eichholtz, Dietrich, Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1939-1945 (Band II: 1941-1943), Akademie Verlag, Berlin 1985, p. 494.

⁴ Jäger, Jörg-Johannes, Die wirtschaftliche Abhängigkeit des Dritten Reiches vom Ausland dargestellt am Beispiel der Stahlindustrie, Berlin Verlag, Berlin 1969, p. 20.

⁵ Pahl, Weltkampf um Rohstoffe, p. 148.

⁶ Eichholtz, Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1939-1945, p. 494.

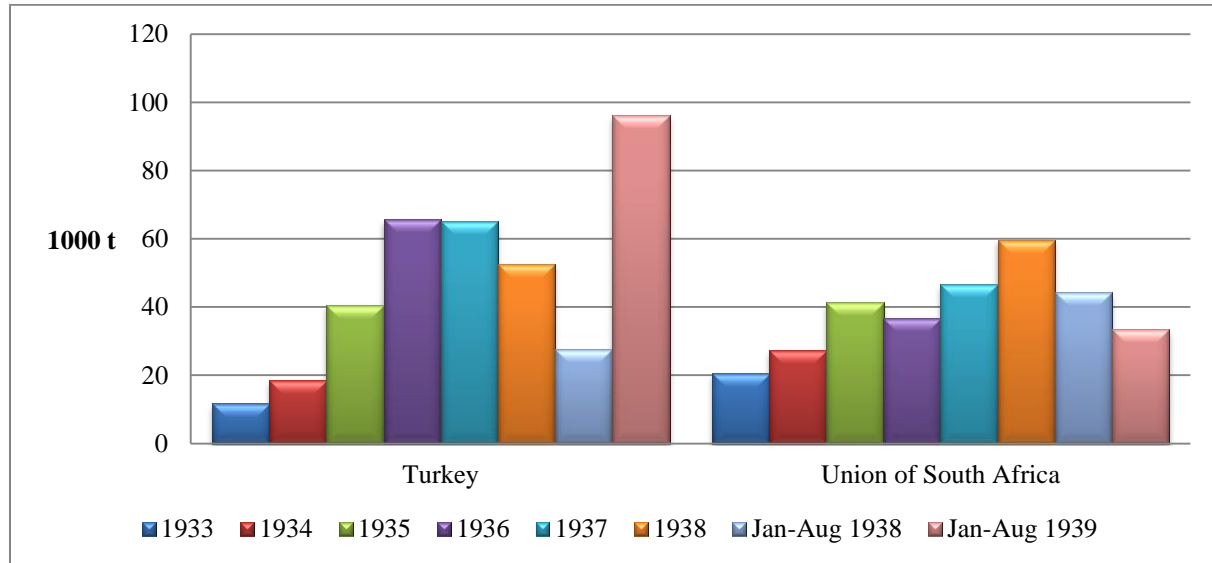
⁷ Ramdohr /Strunz, Klockmanns Lehrbuch der Mineralogie, p. 506.

mentioning are the chrome mines in Elazığ, Fethiye, Kütahya and Bursa which were exploited by state and national/foreign private⁸ companies.⁹

The Turkish chrome export to Germany between 1933 and 1939

For the National Socialists the importance of Turkey increased especially with regard to chrome. Together with the Union of South Africa Turkey was the prime contractor of chrome. The chrome delivery quantity stayed at a two-digit level between 1933 and 1939, as shown by the following graphic:

Graphic 1: The chrome deliveries to Germany from Turkey and Union of South Africa between 1933 and 1939



Source: Jäger, J.-J., Die wirtschaftliche Abhängigkeit des Dritten Reiches vom Ausland dargestellt am Beispiel der Stahlindustrie, p. 151; author's own graphic

Of particular note is that the delivery quantity increased steadily. In 1933 the Turkish chrome amount was less in comparison with South Africa. But two years later in 1935, the chrome amount from Turkey and South Africa was nearly equal: The Turkish export was 40,600 t and the export of South Africa 41,400 t. In the following years the Turkish amount of chrome increased to 65,800 t, in the meantime the South Africa chrome amount decreased to 36,800 t. Until 1938 the chrome amount of South Africa increased to 59,700 t, but taken as a whole South Africa's chrome became less important compared to Turkey. Between 1933 and 1939 Turkey could increase its amount of chrome by ninefold, but South Africa was not even able to double it. How can this development be explained?

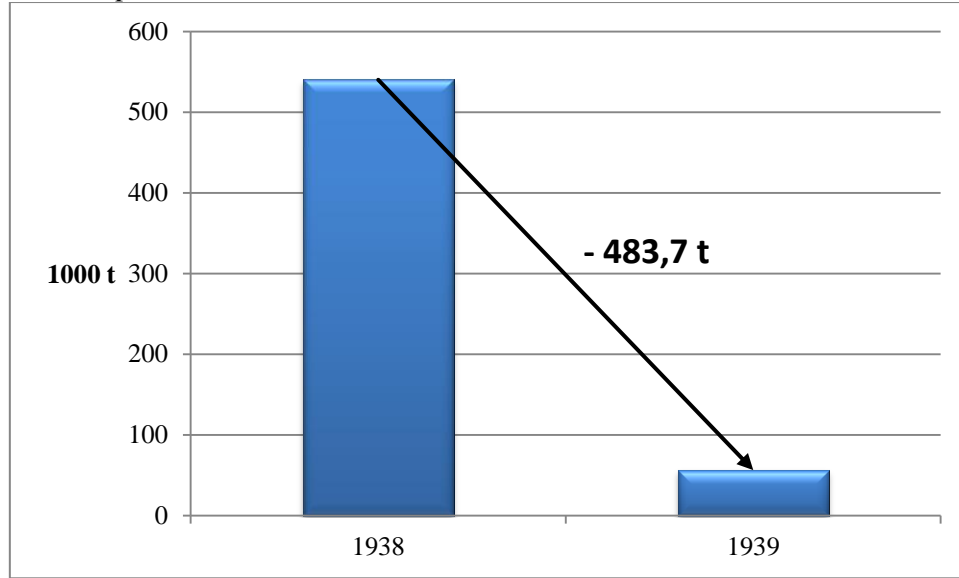
This question has to be answered in a twofold manner. On the one hand regarding the upcoming war for Germany it was important to guarantee chrome in peacetime and in wartime. Turkey got its decisive consideration in this context: Turkey played a determining role on the global market regarding qualitative high-class chrome. However this state was much more important for Germany because of its geographic location compared to South

⁸ German entrepreneurs were owners of chrome mines in Turkey as well. In this context, Alfred Palucca should be mentioned. In the 1930s the Palucca trust exploited together with the family enterprise Röchling the chrom mines in Kütahya. Half of this production went to Krupp. (Avci, Meral, Die türkisch-deutschen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen in den Jahren von 1923 bis 1945 unter Beachtung der politischen Entwicklungen, Shaker Verlag, Aachen 2014, p. 162)

⁹ Önsöy, Murat, The World war Allied Economic Warfare: The Case of Turkish Chrome Sales, available from: https://www.google.de/search?q=The+World+war+Allied+Economic+Warfare:+rhe+Case+of+Turkish+Chrome+Sales&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=pPQnVpjyDannygObhZrYAg (21/10/2009), (05.12. 2015), pp. 83, 138.

Africa.¹⁰ The experiences undergone in the First World War had shown to German political actors that they were weakened by sea blockades. Therefore, Germany strove to have good relations with Turkey. To sum up in other words: The action was only of strategic nature. Because of this fact, on the other hand the National Socialists built up chrome storage, so that the armament industry could use this in case of an emergency, particularly as the chrome import could not completely overburden the railroad. From current data only the German chrome stock for the years 1938 and 1939 is known. In 1938 it was up to 540,000 t and in 1939 it amounted to 56,300 t (see the following graphic).

Graphic 2: Development of the German chrome stock in 1938 and 1939



Source: Önsoy, M., *The World war Allied Economic Warfare*, p. 124; ; author's own graphic

Just these two figures reflect that Germany's production ran at full steam in the last year before the outbreak of the Second World War. In 1939 the chrome stock dropped from 540,000 t to 56,300 t, a difference of 483,700 t. This was due to the clearing agreements which Germany had signed with Turkey since 1933. Having said this it should also be emphasized considering the international political dynamism that Germany could not make sure that Turkey would supply its armament industry steadily. Resulting from this the final solution for Hitler was territorial expansion.

Germany was confronted with the unwillingness of Turkey to deliver chrome for the first time in 1939, shortly before the beginning of the Second World War. That was preceded by the territorial expansion of Germany and Italy. Turkey could understand the annexation of Austria ("Anschluß Österreich"), but the annexation of the rump Czechoslovakia by Germany caused distrust on the Turkish side. Turks assessed it as the practical implementation of the German living space theory ("Lebensraumtheorie"). Their trust in German policy was completely abolished by the very close Italian invasion of Albania on April 7th 1939. The German and Italian territorial expansion created a negative external impression on Turkey: From Turkey's point of view, its territorial integrity was in danger.¹¹ It suspected an Italian invasion via the Mediterranean Sea and a German invasion via the Balkans as a common action of the Axis alliance which implemented a new foreign political orientation of Turkey and the economic interests with Germany took a backseat.

¹⁰ Avcı, Die türkisch-deutschen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen in den Jahren von 1923 bis 1945 unter Beachtung der politischen Entwicklungen, p. 231.

¹¹ Sönmezoglu, Faruk, İki Savaş Sırası ve Arasında Türk Dış Politikası, DER Yayınları, İstanbul 2011, p. 411.

Germany overlooked with its Italian policy that the growing rapprochement with Italy triggered harassment on the Turkish side. Mussolini had declared at the second fascist congress in March 1934 that the Italian targets were in Africa and Asia.¹² The German-Italian rapprochement resulted in an alienation of Turkey with the effect of a Turkish-British rapprochement. It ended up in the Turkish-British-French treaty of mutual assistance after the clearance of the Hatay-Question between France and Turkey.

This development contradicted Germany's interest. Subsequently, Germany stopped the war material delivery¹³ which caused a protest note from the Turkish government. Turkey did not have a war industry; therefore it was dependent on deliveries from foreign countries. Due to the international development and the emerging war, Turkey endeavored to be well equipped. The country tried to put pressure on Germany to deliver the war material by not supplying the ordered chrome quantity. The Turkish government occasioned the rerouting of German ships to other ports while the Turkish chrome for the Krupp Company was approved and dispatched at the ports of Mersin, Antalya and on the coast of Marmara.¹⁴ The Ministry of Economic Affairs in the Third Reich evaluated the reaction of the Turkish government as a retaliatory measure. The German war industry lacked as much as 60 per cent of its total chrome requirement.¹⁵

The exertion of pressure on the Turkish government was nevertheless limited to the armament industry because the Turkish economy was also dependent on the German sales market. Turkey could sell its trade goods (agricultural products, mineral resources) only to Germany and not to the other industrial countries like Great Britain since this country obtained these goods from its colonies. For Germany the purchase of the agricultural products derived from the chrome bargaining. As a result of this, the relations between Turkey and Germany did not exist in one-way dependence but rather in bilateral dependence.

Germany exploited the economic dependence of Turkey for amending the policy line. The National Socialist government did not act arbitrarily, quite on the contrary it adhered to its principles. Emil Karl Josef Wiehl, the head of the trade policy department of the German Foreign Office, and Franz von Papen, German Ambassador in Ankara, made concrete proposals. Wiehl divided the Turkish import goods into three categories:

Table 1: Germanys import goods from Turkey divided in three categories, their values and shares

Import Goods	Value (million Reichsmark ¹⁶)	Share (%)
Category 1	32,6	29
Category 2	48,9	43
Category 3	32,1	28

Source: Koçak, Cemil, Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938-1945) (Cilt 1), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 2007, p. 435; ; author's own table

The first category was the most important among the categories. It had an import value of 32.6 million Reichsmark and amounted to 29 per cent of total import value. This

¹² Gönübol, Mehmet/ Sar, Cem, 1919 – 1939 Yılları Arasında Türk Dış Politikası, Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası (1919-1973), pp. 3 – 144, Sevinç Matbaası, Ankara 1974, p. 120.

¹³ Özgüldür, Yavuz, Türk-Alman İlişkileri (1923-1945), Genelkurmay Basımevi, Ankara 1993, p. 114.

¹⁴ Avcı, Die türkisch-deutschen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen in den Jahren von 1923 bis 1945 unter Beachtung der politischen Entwicklungen, p. 233.

¹⁵ Ackermann, Josef, Der begehrte Mann am Bosphorus – Europäische Interessenkollisionen in der Türkei (1938 – 1941), Hitler, Deutschland und die Mächte. Materialien zur Außenpolitik des Dritten Reiches, Manfred Funke (ed.), pp. 489 – 507, Droste Verlag, Düsseldorf 1978, p. 490.

¹⁶ Reichsmark was the currency in Germany at that time.

category included chrome but was not limited to it. The import goods of the second category could have been purchased from other countries. Its value totaled 48.9 million Reichsmark, a share of 43 per cent. The goods of the third category were not important. Their import value was 32.1 million Reichsmark, equaling 28 per cent. In other words: 71 per cent of the Turkish import goods were not important for the German government. They were purchased to order chrome. According to that the economic damage for Turkey was at least as high as for Germany, particularly considering the fact that Germany paid for the goods a higher price than the world market price.¹⁷

Wiehl did not explain from which category the import goods should come, but he advocated extending the expiring German-Turkish trade agreement on August 31st 1939. In contrast, von Papen claimed to stop the import goods of the third category to give a warning signal.¹⁸ They should clarify the consequence of the breakup of the trade agreement. Nevertheless, this measure should not destroy the Turkish economy. Resulting, the basis for an eventual resumption of the trade relations would not be destroyed. The Finance Minister Walther Funk had the same opinion.¹⁹

The Turkish Chrome Export to Germany between 1939 and 1945

It is unknown whose opinion finally prevailed. But it is a fact that the German-Turkish trade agreement expired by August 31st 1939. Consequently, Turkey stopped its chrome sales to Germany. So Berlin had to default to its chrome reserves at the beginning of the Second World War. However, in the literature a controversial discussion about this issue is to be found. Jörg-Johannes Jäger explains that in September 1939 Turkey was set to deliver annually 50,000 t chrome to Germany.²⁰ Yet Germany demanded 80,000 t chrome, moreover it refused to deliver war materials in the quantity required by the Turkish government. Because of this, Turkey abandoned its bid on the October 27th 1939, whereby the pressure of the British government had played an important role as well. Thus it would weaken the military power of Germany. Selim Deringil distanced himself from this explanation. He only states that Turkey strove to sell chrome to Great Britain over a long period, but the British government accepted a duration of two years.²¹

Nevertheless, the meaning of the trade agreement between Great Britain, France²² and Turkey from January 8th 1940 should not be relativized. Several reasons can be mentioned: For one thing Great Britain had the option to extend the contract period for one year²³ which points out that London would not take a risk regarding the political situation and retained the possibility extending the agreement. For another thing the British government consented to buy agricultural products which it actually imported from its colonies.²⁴ Their need of chrome therefore met the Turkish needs. Further the British government insisted on a high amount of chrome. They agreed on annual 50,000 t chrome for the next two years.²⁵

At the beginning of the Second World War, the loss of the Turkish chrome was without problems for the National Socialist government because in lieu thereof the German

¹⁷ Koçak, Cemil, Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938-1945) (Cilt 1), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 2007, p. 436.

¹⁸ Koçak, Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938-1945) (Cilt 1), p. 437.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Jäger, Die wirtschaftliche Abhängigkeit des Dritten Reiches vom Ausland dargestellt am Beispiel der Stahlindustrie, p. 244.

²¹ Deringil, Selim, Denge Oyunu. İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 1994, p. 157.

²² After the German foray 1940 France had no longer an assigned function on the agreement.

²³ Önder, Zehra, Die türkische Außenpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg, R. Oldenburg Verlag, München 1977, p. 129.

²⁴ Edwards, A. C., The Impact of the War on Turkey, International Affairs, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Jul. 1946), pp. 389-400, here p. 390.

²⁵ Weisband, Edward, Turkish Foreign Policy 1943-1945. Small State Diplomacy and Great Power Politics, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1973, p. 103.

government ensured an amount of 26,320 t of the Soviet chrome with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.²⁶ Furthermore they got chrome from Greece to a lesser extent 1420 t.²⁷ With this amount of chrome the Germans could continue their war material production.

Turkey became more significant again after the invasion of the Soviet Union by the German military in June 1941. As a result of this action, Germany invited officials to develop a better relationship with Turkey and started renegotiations for a trade agreement on September 8th 1941²⁸. Therefore one has to assume henceforth a bottleneck in the German armament industry, the more so as Germany tried to claim the Turkish chrome in different ways. Since the signing of the extra charges and payments agreement in July 1940 with a total of 42 million Reichsmark the relationship between both countries had eased and improved respectively.²⁹ The National Socialist government had strived on every occasion that they would acknowledge the boundaries of Turkey. Another reason was the inability of the Allies to buy the same amount of agricultural products as Germany due to their dominion. That factor would get worse after the capitulation of France. At the same time the Turks were impressed by the fast German victory over France.

Originally the Germans intended with the trade agreement to get access to chrome in 1942, but they gave up this intention after the clarification by Numan Menemencioğlu, Secretary General of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, about the British-Turkish chrome trade agreement. Turkey had become obliged not to exceed the annual chrome output of 250,000 t and to deliver the total amount to the British.³⁰ The situation became critical as the British government extended the chrome agreement for one year³¹ -the British government used its freedom in the contract. The Turkish government tried to arrange admittedly a small amount but the British government rejected them.³² The Turkish government attempted to obtain the French share of the chrome agreement equally unsuccessful.³³ France and Great Britain had agreed to replace the position of the other country as soon as one country dropped out.³⁴ Furthermore the German attempt to exchange the Turkish chrome for crude oil failed because deliveries to third countries were prohibited as well.³⁵

The economic relations between Germany and Turkey seemed admittedly hopeless despite the fact that the political relationship was strengthened due to several reasons: On the one hand they had to agree to a non-aggressive pact in June 1941, with which the German safeguarded the territorial unit of Turkey.³⁶ On the other hand the German invasion of the Soviet Union caused a rapprochement between the Soviets and the Allies which the Turkish government considered to be suspicious in view of the Turkish-Russian tension. The bond between Turkey and the Allies was boosted after the British declared they would deliver only the war material which they did not utilize.³⁷ Considering the German military success and its

²⁶ Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich 1941/1942, p. 302.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ See Kreckler, Lothar, *Deutschland und die Türkei im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Verlag Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1964, p. 177.

²⁹ Avcı, *Die türkisch-deutschen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen in den Jahren von 1923 bis 1945 unter Beachtung der politischen Entwicklungen*, p. 132.

³⁰ Kılıç, Sezen, *Hitler'in Gizli Dosyalarında Türkiye*, İlgü Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2012, p. 485.

³¹ Kreckler, *Deutschland und die Türkei im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, p. 177.

³² Medlicott, William N., *The Economic Blockade (Volume II)*, Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited, London/Nendeln 1978, p. 239.

³³ Kılıç, *Hitler'in Gizli Dosyalarında Türkiye*, p. 495.

³⁴ Kreckler, *Deutschland und die Türkei im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, p. 177.

³⁵ Önder, *Die türkische Außenpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, p. 137.

³⁶ Önder, *Die türkische Außenpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, pp. 123.

³⁷ Avcı, *Die türkisch-deutschen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen in den Jahren von 1923 bis 1945 unter Beachtung der politischen Entwicklungen*, p. 237.

demand for military material Turkey established a commodity and payment services agreement with Germany on October 9th 1941 till to March 31st 1943.³⁸

Originally the National Socialist government had planned a war material delivery with a value of 20 million Reichsmark³⁹; finally they agreed to a value amount of 36 million Reichsmark.⁴⁰ Germany revised its opinion after the Turkish government had emphasized that the war material delivery would be very important for them and they could only deliver chrome in exchange for war materials. Turkey declared that it would deliver 45,000 t chrome, 12,000 t copper, 7,000 t cotton and 8,000 t olive oil in return.⁴¹ Due to the obligation to the British the chrome delivery should not take place until January 15th 1943 for which reason Turkey should deliver 6,000 t more copper as compensation.⁴²

For Germany this arrangement was the Achilles heel because it could not be sure that Turkey would fulfill its obligation at the given date, especially considering that the Allies tried to influence the Turkish government via the Lend - Lease Act. Matters were complicated further by the fact that the chrome bottleneck was starting to show in the German armament industry. In May 1942 Hitler explained within the framework of his table talk that the armament industry would need 3,751 t chrome whereas the chrome stock would be high enough for five and a half month without deliveries from Turkey.⁴³ Therefore Hitler tried to accelerate the scheduled delivery date, the situation was urgent. For this reason the German government was willing to deliver everything with the exception of arms delivery due to the good relations between the Allies and Turkey.⁴⁴ Probably the own bottleneck played a part as well.

The Allies were always informed by the Turkish government about its dialogue with the National Socialist government. The territorial integrity was of utmost importance for Turkey, so it behaved politically according to that.⁴⁵ Because of that, the Turks granted the American and British demand to deliver chrome to them in the same amount that they were delivering to the Germans in both years 1943 und 1944. As already mentioned the agreement from 1941 provided a chrome amount of 45,000 t for the period between January and March 1943 although it is fact that the agreement has an additional confidential agreement for the period after March 31st 1943.⁴⁶ This included 45,000 t for the period between April 1st 1943 and December 31st 1943 and 90,000 t for the year 1944. To sum it up, Turkey should deliver 180,000 t of chrome to Germany for the years 1943 and 1944 and according to that in the same amount to the Allies.

The course of the war prevented the delivery of the total amount to Germany, so it is not known how much of the promised chrome the Allies really got hold of. But the fact is that the chrome amount to Germany was higher than the amount to the Allies because the American Ambassador Laurence Adolph Steinhardt in Ankara reported on February 1944 that the chrome delivery to the Allies would steadily decrease whereas the delivery to Germany would increase.⁴⁷ This especially affected the Bulgarian railways because the Turkish chrome deliveries were passed through on these rails. Regarding this way of transportation, the

³⁸ Esmer, Ahmet Şükrü/Sander, Oral, İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası, in: Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası (1919-1973), pp. 147 – 200, Sevinç Matbaası, Ankara 1974, p. 172.

³⁹ Kılıç, Hitler'in Gizli Dosyalarında Türkiye, p. 483.

⁴⁰ Kreckler, Deutschland und die Türkei im Zweiten Weltkrieg, p. 180.

⁴¹ Balcıoğlu, Mustafa, İkinci Dünya Savaşı ve Sonrası, in: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi II, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi (ed.), pp. 449-515, Ankara 2008, p. 456.

⁴² Kılıç, Hitler'in Gizli Dosyalarında Türkiye, p. 488.

⁴³ Picker, Henry, Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier, Propyläen Verlag, München 2009, p. 483.

⁴⁴ Önder, Die türkische Außenpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg, pp. 135.

⁴⁵ Önder, Die türkische Außenpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg, pp. 137.

⁴⁶ Kreckler, Deutschland und die Türkei im Zweiten Weltkrieg, p. 180.

⁴⁷ Koçak, Cemil, Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938-1945) (Cilt 2), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 2007, p. 238.

German-Turkish relationship had a monthly maximal available delivery capacity of 12,000 t which they exploited. They could not exceed this capacity.⁴⁸

The military success of the Allies towards the end of the Second World War forced the Turkish government to cease the chrome delivery to Germany-the Turkish government vainly tried to achieve a compromise reducing the chrome amount monthly to 4,200 t.⁴⁹ The Turkish foreign minister Numan Menemencioglu declared that they were going to stop their chrome delivery to Germany on April 21st 1944 as from 7 p.m., although they had explained on September 27th 1942 that they were going to deliver chrome to the National Socialist government after 1945 as well.⁵⁰ Probably this is the reason that on the evening of April 21st 1944 Turkey still sent 218 goods wagon with chrome over the frontier to Bulgaria.⁵¹ The memories of the German Ambassador von Papen, in his autobiography are thus distorted because he explains that the Turkish chrome delivery to Germany lasted until summer 1944.⁵²

Conclusion

This article analyzed the meaning of Turkish chrome delivery to the National Socialist government in Germany between 1933 and 1945 and the development of the Turkish chrome exports to this country in that period. For a better understanding it was important to discuss the interdependence of the political and economic factors.

Chrome is indispensable and irreplaceable to the armament industry. Germany did not have any natural chrome resources, but needed them, according to the National Socialist armament program, for their war production. Between 1933 and 1939 Turkey and South Africa were important suppliers for Germany. Turkey was, in comparison to South Africa, reachable by sea and by land. Given priority to this fact Germany tried to build up a good relation with Turkey which has been reflected in the increasing amount of chrome sales to Germany. But the good relations between Italy and Germany and the territorial expansion of the Axis powers worsened the relations between Turkey and Germany shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War. Thereby the Turkish chrome deliveries were stopped, however Germany relativized this situation in its armament industry through Russian chrome imports.

Nevertheless, the National Socialist government was anxious to reestablish the good relationship with Turkey regarding their political ambition in particular concerning the Soviet Union. A first rapprochement between Germany and Turkey took place in July 1940 after signing the extra charges and payments agreement. A short time after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Turkey and Germany subscribed to a commodity and payment services agreement. Owing to the obligation to the Allies, the chrome deliveries should start as recently as mid-January 1943. The increasing military success of the Allies led to the termination of the Turkish chrome deliveries to Germany in April 1944. Up until then the deliveries had risen significantly for Germany compared to the deliveries to the Allies.

⁴⁸ Koçak, Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938-1945) (Cilt 2), p. 240.

⁴⁹ Koçak, Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938-1945) (Cilt 2), p. 241.

⁵⁰ Kılıç, Hitler'in Gizli Dosyalarında Türkiye, p. 598.

⁵¹ Kreckler, Deutschland und die Türkei im Zweiten Weltkrieg, p. 189.

⁵² Von Papen, Franz, Der Wahrheit eine Gasse, Paul List Verlag, München 1952, p. 538.

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