

You loved your last book...but what
are you going to read next?

Using our unique guidance tools, Love**reading** will help you find new
books to keep you inspired and entertained.

Opening Extract from...

Gallipoli

Written by Alan Moorehead

Published by Aurum Press Ltd

All text is copyright © of the author

This Opening Extract is exclusive to Love**reading**.
Please print off and read at your leisure.

This edition first published 2015
by Aurum Press Ltd
74–77 White Lion Street
London N1 9PF
www.aurumpress.co.uk

Originally published in 2007 by Aurum Press Ltd
First published in the UK by Hamish Hamilton Ltd in 1956.

Copyright © 1956 by Alan Moorehead
Introduction copyright © Sir Max Hastings 2015

The moral right of Alan Moorehead to be identified as the author
of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the
Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or
utilised in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical,
including photocopying, recording or by any information storage
and retrieval system, without permission in writing from
Aurum Press Ltd.

A catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library.

Hardback ISBN 978 1 78131 406 7
Paperback ISBN 978 1 78131 464 7
ebook ISBN 978 1 78131 485 2

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2
2015 2017 2019 2018 2016

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

CHAPTER ONE

'Essentially the great question remains: Who will hold Constantinople?'—NAPOLEON

EVEN as late as August 1914 it was by no means certain that Turkey would come into the first world war on the German side. There was no need for her to go to war, nobody seriously threatened her, and in fact at that time it was the policy of the Allies and the Central Powers alike to keep her neutral if they could. Certainly the country was in no condition to fight. In the five years that had elapsed since the Young Turks had first come to power the Ottoman Empire had very largely disintegrated: Bulgaria was independent, Salonika, Crete and the Ægean islands had gone to Greece, Italy had seized Tripoli and the Dodecanese, and Britain had formally proclaimed the protectorate of Egypt and the annexation of Cyprus.

Since the previous year the German Military Mission had made great improvements in the Turkish army, but the long series of defeats in the Balkan wars had done enormous harm. At many places the soldiers had gone unpaid for months, and morale had sunk almost to the point of mutiny. Except in a few *corps d'élite* they were ragged, hungry and short of nearly every kind of weapon required for a modern war. The fleet too was hopelessly out of date, and the garrison at the Dardanelles was far too weak, its guns too obsolete, to stand a chance against a determined attack from any one of the great powers.

Politically the situation was chaotic. The Young Turks with their Committee of Union and Progress had begun well enough when they had deposed the Sultan in 1909, and their democratic ideas had had the support of all liberal-minded and progressive people everywhere. But five years of wars and internal troubles

had been too much for them. The ramshackle government of the empire had run down too far to be revived in another and a better way, and inevitably the energies of the Young Turks had become swallowed up in the simple and desperate struggle for their own political survival. Now there was no longer any talk of democratic elections and the freedom and equality of all races and creeds under the Crescent. The bloom had long since worn off the Committee: it was revealed as a ruthless party machine which was almost as sinister and a good deal more reckless than anything Abdul the Damned had contrived. Financially the Government was bankrupt. Morally it had reverted to the old system of force and corruption; there were Committee cells in every sizeable town in what was left of the empire in Asia, and no political appointment could be obtained without their support. Local government at the outlying centres like Baghdad and Damascus was in an appalling state, and Constantinople had so little hold over them that it was always possible that some local chieftain might set himself up in yet another independent state.

It was this very helplessness both abroad and at home that made Turkey turn to the outside world for allies, and in effect it came down to a choice between Germany and Britain. The German alliance was, tactically, the obvious one, since the Kaiser was eager for it and was in a position to put the Turkish army back on its feet. But the Germans were not liked. Lewis Einstein, the special minister at the American Embassy in Constantinople, was probably right when he said that the Turks preferred the English to all other foreigners—and this despite the fact that the British officials in Turkey tended to regard as 'good' Turks only those who prayed five times a day and turned to the English for advice. England had the money, she had command of the seas, and she had France and Russia on her side. The presence of Russia in the alliance was, of course, an embarrassment, since Russia was the traditional enemy of Turkey, yet even this might not have been too much for the Young Turks to have accepted had the English been enthusiastic. But they were not. They did not think at all highly of this government of young revolutionaries, and suspected

that it might be put out of office at any moment. When the Young Turks came to London with a proposal for an Anglo-Turkish alliance they were politely turned aside.

And so by August 1914 things had drifted into a compromise that was rather weighted on the German side. The British Naval Mission continued to serve at Constantinople, but it was counter-balanced—perhaps over-balanced—by the German Military Mission which was actively filtrating through the Turkish army; and while the British and the French continued to give their tacit support to the older more conservative politicians in Constantinople, the Kaiser firmly nobbled the younger and more aggressive leaders of the Committee. It was, then, very largely a question of which side had backed the right horse: if the Young Turks were turned out the Allies could count on a friendly neutral government in Constantinople and the end of the German threat in the Near East. If on the other hand the Young Turks remained in office then the British and the French would be in the uncomfortable position of having to switch, of being obliged to try and get their money on the winner before the race was over.

It was a situation which had extreme attractions for the oriental mind, and the Young Turks made the most of it. Moreover the setting could hardly have been better for the complicated intrigues that now began: the foreign ambassadors, installed like robber barons in their enormous embassies along the Bosphorus, the Young Turks in the Yilditch Palace and the Sublime Porte, and everywhere through the sprawling decaying beautiful capital itself that hushed and conspiratorial air which seems to overtake all neutral cities on the edge of war. It was the atmosphere of the high table in the gambling casino very late at night when every move takes on a kind of fated self-importance, when everyone, the players and the watchers together, is engrossed, and when for the moment the whole world seems to hang on some chance caprice, some special act of daring, the turning of a card. In Constantinople this false and artificial excitement was all the more intense since no one really knew the rules of the game, and in the uncertain jigsaw of ideas which is created by any meeting between the East

and the West no one could ever look more than a move or two ahead.

But it was the personalities of the protagonists that counted, above all the personalities of the Young Turks. Even in a place with so lurid a reputation as Constantinople it would be hard to imagine a stranger group of men. There is a dramatic quality about the Young Turks, a wild and dated theatricality, which is familiar and yet quite unreal. One tends to see them in the terms of a gangster movie, half documentary and half extravagant make-believe, and it would be very easy to dismiss them to that convenient limbo that envelops most political adventurers had they not, just for this instant, had such power over so many millions of men.

Sir Harold Nicolson, who was then a junior secretary in the British Embassy, remembers them all coming to dinner at his house one day. 'There was Enver,' he wrote, 'in his neat little uniform, his hands resting patiently upon his sword-hilt, his little hairdresser face perked patiently above his Prussian collar. There was Djemal, his white teeth flashing tigerish against his black beard: there was Talaat with his large gypsy eyes and his russet gypsy cheeks: there was little Djavid who spoke French fluently, and who hopped about, being polite.'

The odd thing, of course, was that they should have been there at all, that power should ever have reached them in a world which still knew nothing of Nazis and Fascists in uniform, of communist officials at a banquet.

Talaat was an extraordinary man: yet there is a certain earthiness about him that makes him rather easier to understand than any of the others. He is the party boss, gross, hard and good-tempered, who has his tendrils everywhere, and in place of faith possesses an instinctive understanding of the weaknesses of human nature. He began life as a post office telegraphist, and he never really made much of an outward show of being anything more. Even now when he was Minister of the Interior, a post for which he might have been designed by nature, and virtually controller of the Committee machine, he still had his telegraphist's keyboard on

his desk, and, with his enormous wrists on the table, he liked to tap out messages to his colleagues on it. Long after the others, with their uniforms and their bodyguards, had moved into splendid villas along the Bosphorus, Talaat continued to live in a rickety three-storied wooden house in one of the poorer districts of Constantinople. Henry Morgenthau, the American Ambassador, called upon him there unexpectedly one afternoon, and found him in thick grey pyjamas with a fez on his head. He was surrounded by cheap furniture, bright prints on the walls, worn rugs on the floor; and his Turkish wife kept peeping nervously at the two men through a latticed window while they talked.

Most of those foreigners who knew Talaat during this summer regarded him highly and even with some liking. Morgenthau always found it possible to make him laugh, and then the animal craftiness would subside, the dark gypsy face would relax, and he would talk with great frankness and intelligence. He had, Aubrey Herbert says, 'strength, hardness and an almost brutal bonhomie, and a light in his eyes rarely seen in men, but sometimes in animals at dusk'. Yet Talaat with all his sagacity and his powers of unemotional concentration seems to have felt the need of men of action like Enver.

Enver was the prodigy of the group, the terrible child who shocked and bewildered them all. He was distinguished by the kind of dark and composed good looks that never seem to age or reveal the mind beneath; and indeed, if Talaat is represented by Wallace Beery of the silent films, then Enver most certainly, for all his pertness, is Rudolph Valentino.

He was born at Adano on the Black Sea coast, the son of a Turkish father who was a bridge-keeper and an Albanian mother who followed one of the lowest occupations of the country—that of laying out the dead. It is possible that the boy's exceptional good looks descended to him from a Circassian grandmother, but his other qualities seem to have been peculiarly his own, and were in a state of remarkable balance with each other. He was extremely vain, but it was a special kind of vanity which was overlaid by an air of shyness and modesty, and his reckless bravery in action was

offset by an appearance so cool, so calm and unhurried, that one might have thought him half asleep. In office he exhibited this same quiet distinction of manner, so that no disaster ever appeared to flurry him, and no decision, however important, caused him more than a few moments' hesitation. Even his ambition was disguised by a certain ease with which he moved among people who belonged to a much more cultivated society than his own. With this fluency and this charm it was no wonder that he was made so much of by the hostesses of the time; here was the young *beau sabreur* in real life, an unassuming young hero. All this was a most effective cover for the innate cruelty, the shallowness and the squalor of the megalomania that lay beneath.

From the age of twenty-five or so, when he had graduated from the military staff college in Constantinople, Enver's career had been tumultuous. His speciality was the overturning of governments by physical violence, the sudden armed raid on cabinet offices. In later wars he would have made an admirable commando leader. In 1908 he was one of the small band of revolutionaries who marched on Constantinople and forced Abdul Hamid to restore the constitution, and a year later when Abdul had defaulted in his promises, Enver was back again in the capital, storming the barricades in a torn uniform, with a four days' growth of beard and a bullet wound on his cheek; and this time Enver and his friends disposed of Abdul forever.

Then in the following years, when half the countries of Eastern Europe were demolishing the carcase of the Ottoman Empire, there was no front, however remote, at which Enver did not appear, dramatically and suddenly, to lead the counter-attack. From his post of military attaché in Berlin he rushed to the Libyan desert to fight the Italians outside Benghazi. Then in 1912 he was back on the Continent again holding the Bulgars off Constantinople. Nothing dismayed him, no defeat exhausted his endless energy. At the end of the first Balkan war in 1913, when everything was lost and Constantinople itself in danger of falling, Enver was the one man who would not accept an armistice. He led a band of two hundred followers into the capital, burst in

upon the peace-making cabinet at their deliberations, shot dead the Minister for War, and then, having established a new government which was more to his liking, he returned to the front again. Finally he emerged gloriously at the end of the second Balkan war leading the tattered Turkish battalions back into Adrianople.

As an administrator his methods were very similar. In the summer of 1913, when he was at the Ministry of War, he dismissed 1200 officers from the Turkish army in a single day, among them no fewer than 150 generals and colonels. In Enver's view they were politically unsound.

There were other leaders among the Young Turks who were probably just as able as Enver: Mahmad Shevket, who led the 1900 march on Constantinople, Djavid, the Jewish financier from Salonika, Djemal, the Minister for Marine, and several others; but none could compete with Enver's peculiar brand of political audacity. He out-manceuvred them by doing the outrageous, the impossible thing. By the summer of 1914, when he was thirty-four and looking as youthful and composed as ever, he had reached a position of great power in Constantinople. He had married a princess and was settled in a palace with a personal bodyguard and a retinue of attendants. He was Minister for War and Commander-in-Chief of the army. In cabinet and in the Committee of Union and Progress not even Talaat cared to oppose him, and it was becoming increasingly evident that he had even larger designs for his own future. Foreign ambassadors coming to call on the young minister in his office would find him sitting there in his uniform, very spruce and smiling. On the wall behind his desk there were portraits of Frederick the Great and Napoleon.

There was one name, more important than all the rest, that is missing from the list of guests at Harold Nicolson's dinner party. Indeed, it could hardly have occurred to the British Embassy to have invited Mustafa Kemal, for he was still unknown in Turkey. Yet there is a striking parallel in Kemal's and Enver's lives, and it can only have been by accident—the accident of Kemal's solitary and introverted mind—that he was not already a member of the

group. The two men were of the same age; Kemal like Enver had been born in a poor family, had entered the army, had joined the revolutionary movement, and had been in all the wars. But a uniform greyness hangs over this early part of Kemal's career. He had none of Enver's flair, his quickness and spontaneity. A private rage against life seemed to possess him, and he had no talent for compromise or negotiation. Being contemptuous of other people's opinions and impatient of all authority he seems somehow to have been trapped within his own mind. He waited in a resentful claustrophobia for the opportunity that never came, and while he waited the others so easily outstripped him.

From 1909 onwards Kemal had been constantly in Enver's shadow; he took part in the revolutionary march on the capital that year, but was in the rear planning the administration of the army while Enver was rushing over the barricades. He served under Enver in the Tripoli campaign and again in the Balkan wars. He was even present at Enver's triumph at Adrianople. At every stage the two men quarrelled, as they were inevitably bound to do; for while Kemal was a military commander of genius, Enver must surely be judged as one of the most inept and disastrous generals who ever lived. It is not evident that Enver ever learned the first principles of warfare or ever profited by the experience of any of the appalling disasters which he so confidently planned. Through all these chaotic years it was Kemal's galling fate to take orders from this man.

By 1913 Kemal had reached the low point in his career; he was an unemployed lieutenant-colonel in Constantinople, and Enver had gone far above his head. As yet there was no sign whatever of the strange reversal which was shortly to take place in their fortunes; and no one in his wildest dreams would have imagined that half a century later Kemal's name would be revered all over Turkey, that every child at school would know by heart the gaunt lines of his face, the grim mouth and the washed eyes, while his spectacular rival would be all but forgotten. Indeed it is even remarkable that either of them should have survived the five years that lay immediately ahead.

The Young Turks were surrounded by hatred. They were hated by the older politicians of the Abdul Hamid régime whom they had displaced. They were hated by the army officers whom Enver had expelled; and, beyond anything, they were hated and feared by the foreign minority groups in Constantinople, the Armenians, the Greeks and to some extent the Jews. Any one of these factions would have done anything, would have accepted any foreign domination in Turkey, in order to have got the Young Turks out of office.

For the moment, however, Talaat and Enver and their friends had control and they were determined to keep it by any kind of ruthlessness, by any kind of bargaining.

These then were the young men who in August 1914 were putting Turkey up to auction, and they were opposed—perhaps abetted is an apter word—by the group of professional western diplomats who were making the bidding. Unlike the Young Turks, the men at the foreign embassies in Constantinople were not strange at all. Here everything was perfectly distinct and familiar. One knows at sight the Ambassador, the Dragoman (the political adviser), the Military Attaché, the head of Chancery, and the swarm of secretaries, just as one knows the pieces in chess and what moves they are capable of making. All is in order and the different nationalities are as easily distinguished as red is from black.

Yet in one respect at least the Ambassador of 1914 differed from his counterpart of the present time: he had more authority, much more freedom of action. It was not often that he was overshadowed by the sort of international conferences which now occur every other week, nor was his work being constantly over-looked by cabinet ministers and politicians coming out from home. His brief may have been prepared for him, but he interpreted it in his own way. It was a long journey from Western Europe to Turkey, and the approaching war had made Constantinople doubly remote. It really was possible for an ambassador by some gesture, by some decision taken on his own authority, to

alter the balance of things, perhaps even to retard or to accelerate Turkey on the path to war. Then too the 'eastern-ness' of the Ottoman Empire, its differences of every kind in religion and in manners and culture, were much more exaggerated then than they are now. The Embassy became an outpost, a stronghold, the one really solid physical symbol of a nation's place in the world. It had to be large—larger if possible than the other rival embassies—and the ambassador must have the presence of an important man. He must have his flag, his servants in livery, his yacht in the Golden Horn, and his summer embassy at Therapia in addition to his more formal palace in Constantinople. All this tended to set the diplomats in Constantinople very much apart from Turkey, and no doubt they felt more at home with one another than they did with the Turks. The ambassadors and their staffs, indeed, were often to be seen together at the international club: and the attitudes which they took towards the Turks were much as one would have expected.

'Sir Louis Mallet, the British Ambassador,' says Morgenthau, 'was a high-minded and cultivated English gentleman: Bompard, the French Ambassador, was a singularly charming honourable Frenchman, and both were constitutionally disqualified from participating in the murderous intrigues which then comprised Turkish politics. Giers, the Russian Ambassador, was a proud and scornful diplomat of the old régime. . . . It was apparent that the three ambassadors of the Entente did not regard the Talaat and Enver régime as permanent, or as particularly worth their while to cultivate.'

There was one other man who was extremely influential in the Allied camp. This was Fitzmaurice, the Dragoman of the British Embassy. T. E. Lawrence had met Fitzmaurice in Constantinople before the war and wrote the following note about him:¹

'The Ambassadors were Lowther² (an utter dud) and Louis Mallet who was pretty good and gave fair warning of the trend of feeling. I blame much of our ineffectiveness upon Fitzmaurice,

¹ Published in *T. E. Lawrence to his Biographer—Liddell Hart*.

² Sir Gerard Lowther, who preceded Mallet.

the Dragoman, an eagle-mind and a personality of iron vigour. Fitzmaurice had lived half a lifetime in Turkey and was the Embassy's official go-between and native authority. He knew everything and was feared from end to end of Turkey. Unfortunately he was a rabid R.C. and hated Freemasons and Jews with a religious hatred. The Young Turk movement was fifty per cent crypto-Jew and ninety-five per cent Freemason. So he regarded it as the devil and threw the whole influence of England over to the unfashionable Sultan and his effete palace clique. Fitzm. was really rabid . . . and his prejudices completely blinded his judgment. His prestige, however, was enormous and our Ambassadors and the F.O. staff went down before him like nine-pins. Thanks to him, we rebuffed every friendly advance the Young Turks made.'

With Baron von Wangenheim, the German Ambassador, however, it was quite different. After two world wars it is becoming a little difficult to focus this powerful man, for he was the prototype of a small group of Junkers which has almost vanished now. He was a huge man, well over six feet in height, with a round cannonball of a head and staring arrogant eyes, and his belief in the Kaiser was absolute. He was not a Prussian, but his character and attitudes were almost a caricature of what foreigners imagine a Prussian aristocrat to be: an utter ruthlessness, an ironclad and noisy confidence in himself and his caste, a contempt for weakness and, underneath the heavy dignity, a childish excitement with his own affairs. He spoke several languages with fluency, and was possessed of a certain gargantuan good humour. He was a man at once dangerous, accomplished and ridiculous: the animal in a tight sheath of manners.

Wangenheim stood very high in the Wilhelmstrasse. He had more than once been to stay with the Kaiser in his villa at Corfu, and he could speak for Germany with some authority. It was now his mission so to cajole, flatter and bewitch the Young Turks that they could see nothing in the political horizon but the vast technical might of the German army. Wangenheim's argument seems to have run as follows: Russia was the immemorial enemy of

Turkey, and since Russia was the ally of Britain and France there was no question of their coming down on that side of the fence. Moreover, Germany was bound to win the war. The British might control the seas, but this was to be a land battle, and if there were to be a revolution in Russia—a thing that might easily happen—then France alone could never withstand the concentrated weight of the Wehrmacht. Turkey's only hope of regaining her lost provinces—of recovering Egypt and Cyprus from the British, Salonika and Crete from the Greeks, Tripoli from the Italians, of subduing Bulgaria and driving back the Serbs—was to join Germany now when she was about to show her strength.

Wangenheim's trump card was the German Military Mission. In the summer of 1913 the Young Turks had asked for this mission, and by the beginning of 1914 it had arrived in overwhelming measure. German officers, technicians and instructors began to appear at first in scores and then in hundreds. They took over control of the munitions factory in Constantinople, they manned the guns along the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and they reorganized the tactics and the training of the infantry. By August 1914 the Mission had already been able to produce a sample of what it could do: a regiment of Turkish soldiers, newly equipped with uniforms and rifles, went goose-stepping across a parade ground before an admiring group of the Sultan's court, the Young Turkish cabinet, and such foreign ambassadors as did not find it embarrassing to be present.

Liman von Sanders, the head of the Mission and the author of these drastic changes, was an inspired choice for the Germans to have made in sending a general to Turkey. He was a calm and steady man with all the impressive authority of an intelligent soldier who has the trained habit of command. The army was his life, and he did not look beyond it; not being distracted by politics he was genuinely absorbed in the technique of tactics and strategy. He might not have been considered brilliant, but he was not easily to be upset, and by holding fast to his excellent training he was not likely to make mistakes. Watching him at work it is not surprising that the Young Turks were more than ever convinced that if war