

HELLENISM IN SOUTHERN RUSSIA AND THE UKRAINIAN CAMPAIGN: THEIR EFFECT ON THE PONTUS QUESTION (1919)

I

*a) Hellenism of Southern Russia and Transcaucasia*¹

Greeks had been emigrating to Russia since the end of the 15th century. After the failure of the rising of Orloff and the Kutchuk Kainardji treaty of 1774, many inhabitants of the Aegean islands fled to the Kerts peninsula—the ancient Panticapaeum—at the mouth of the Azov sea, to escape Turkish reprisals. Having found the land unsuitable, most of them moved to Taganrog on the Don coast, where, in 1775, Katherine II not only gave them land to settle and farm, but also allowed them to elect their own archbishop, leaders and judges. Katherine also helped the Crimean Greeks who, in 1779, under their bishop

1. The sources for section I are the following documents from the Athens Foreign Ministry [hereafter referred to as YE ('Υπουργείον Ἐξωτερικῶν)] and from the private archives of Alexander Diomidis and Leonidas Paraskevopoulos [hereafter referred to as DPA (Diomidis - Paraskevopoulos Archives)] which are in the author's possession:

YE — A/5VI, Koupis, Bakou, to Foreign Ministry, 14 February 1918.

— A/5IV, Gryparis, Kionovion, to Foreign Ministry, report on the situation in the Ukraine, 20 November 1918.

— A/5, Central Union of Pontine Greeks, Ekaterinodar, to Foreign Ministry, lengthy report on Hellenism in Russia and measures necessary to save it, 28 January 1919.

— A/5VI, Apostolidis, Sebastopol, to Foreign Ministry, report on affairs in the Crimea from the end of 1917 to July 1918, 27 February 1919.

— A/5VI, Central Union of Pontine Greeks, Ekaterinodar, to Foreign Ministry, report on the situation of Hellenism in Russia, not dated, received on 1 April 1919.

— A/5, Representatives of Third Panhellenic Congress of Transcaucasia to Venizelos, Athens, 26 June 1919.

DPA — Marioupolis Committee to Foreign Ministry, 16 June 1919.

— N. Kazantzakis to Ministry of Health, not dated, (1919).

— Greek Consulate, Ekaterinodar, to Foreign Ministry, not dated, (1919).

— Central Union of Pontine Greeks, Ekaterinodar, report on Hellenism in Russia and

Ignatius, fled the persecution of the Moslem Tartars and the danger of being converted to Islam. They settled in vast numbers around Mariopol, west of Taganrog, where they were granted land and money, exempted from recruitment and allowed to found Greek schools and churches. At the beginning of the 19th century, surnames denoting Greek origin were not uncommon along the northern coast of the Black Sea. The great migration, however, took place at different periods from 1828 onwards, usually following Russo-Turkish conflicts and persecution of the Christians of the Ottoman Empire. During the 19th century, more than 400,000 Greeks from Pontus—the whole vilayet of Trebizond, the sandjaks of Amassia, Kara-Hissar and Tokat of the vilayet of Sivas, the sandjaks of Kastamouni and Sinope of the vilayet of Kastamouni and the sandjak of Yozgat of the vilayet of Angora—settled along the Black Sea from Odessa in the west, to Batoum in the east and across Transcaucasia as far east as Bakou on the Caspian Sea. Another 85,000 were to join them during the 1914-18 war. Most of them, however, did not forget their homeland and their wish to return one day to Pontus lay at the basis of their existence.²

its provenance, not dated, (1920).

— Georgian government to Greek government, note, 12 August 1919.

— Colonel D. Katheriotis, *Report of my Activities in Connection with the Pontus Question* 3 June 1920, submitted to the Prime Minister, the Chief of the Army, the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of War.

2. PONTINE GREEKS OF SOUTHERN RUSSIA AND TRANSCAUCASIA

Area	Number	Period of emigration
CAUCASUS		
Kars [84 villages]	70,000	1878-84
Tiflis (Tchalka) [48 villages]	50,000	1828-34, 1858-64, 1878-84
Bakou, Erivan, Elissavetopol, Dagestan	20,000	at different periods; to Bakou 1878-84, 1914-18
Batoum	25,000	1878-84, 1914-18
Koutais (Sochoum)	55,000	1878-84, 1914-18
NORTHERN CAUCASUS		
Kouban	80,000	from 1858 to 1918
Terek	10,000	" " " "
Stavropol	20,000	" " " "
BLACK SEA DIRECTORY	25,000	1858-64, 1878-84, 1914-18
DON DIRECTORY		
Mariopol [23 villages]	30,000*	in 1779 and from 1858 to 1918
Rostov, Taganrog and rest	15,000	from 1858 to 1918
CRIMEA	65,000	" " " "

The privileges granted to the first settlers were progressively restricted by succeeding generations of Russians and Greek national consciousness began to fade, the Greeks becoming more and more integrated with the local Russian population, particularly in Mariopol.* About one-third of the Greeks were involved in trade, shipping and tobacco growing, and they generally prospered. The rest were mostly farming — nine tenths of those in Transcaucasia were farmers — or producing wine, and their fate varied from place to place. The large community of Tchalka, near Tiflis, never prospered because of the infertility of their land. They spoke Turkish already before they emigrated but, nevertheless, had maintained a certain degree of Greek consciousness, customs and habits. Naturally, the process of Russianization was more rapid in the poorer and more remote areas and in some of them the Greeks vehemently denied their Greek origin. Even Greeks in areas which had not reached this advanced level of de-Hellenization, however, suffered considerably and lived in a state of constant concern for their interests.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, it had become obvious that, unless something dramatic stimulated their nationalist conscience, the Greeks of Russia and the Caucasus would soon be lost for Hellenism. About half of them still spoke Greek. The others spoke Russian, Tartar, Turkish, and a few Armenian. Russian teachers and priests were substituted for Greeks. In Transcaucasia — Kars and Tchalka in particular — only Russian was taught in 150 Greek schools, while mass was sung in Russian in 100 Greek churches. Owing to the common religion, numerous Greco-Russian marriages took place and these also contributed to the decline of the Greek language. Although the

UKRAINE (Cherson Odessa, Nikolaiev)	35,000	from 1858 to 1918
Spread all over Russia	50,000	at different periods
TOTAL	550,000	

The total number of Greeks living in Pontus in the early nineteenth century must have been about 1.000.000.

The above figures are from several sources, the most reliable of which are in the following documents: DPA - N. Kazantzakis to Ministry of Health, not dated, (1919); Central Union of Pontine Greeks, Ekaterinodar, report on Hellenism in Russia and its provenance, not dated (1920); Central Union of Pontine Greeks, Ekaterinodar, to Chief of Greek Refugee Relief Mission, 2 September 1919. YE - A/5, Central Union of Pontine Greeks, Ekaterinodar, to Foreign Ministry, 28 January 1919; A/5VI, J. Kepetris, memorandum on the fate of Hellenism in Russia and its salvation, submitted to the Foreign Ministry, not dated, (April 1919).

*About 170,000 Greeks emigrated to the Mariopol area but by 1919 only 30,000 had maintained their Greek conscience and spoke Greek. The 140,000 russianized Greeks—who are not included in this table—would bring the total number of Greeks in Russia and Transcaucasia to about 700,000.

Greeks usually organized themselves in communities with religious and administrative autonomy, they were unable to offset the pressure of the Russian authorities, who seized opportunities for encroaching on Greek rights and enriching themselves at the expense of the Greek population. Both in Russia and Turkey, the Pontine Greeks were in the same predicament. In Russia they faced a slower, more subtle perhaps, but certain extinction by assimilation, whilst their brothers across the Black Sea suffered the danger of outright extermination by the avowedly hostile Turks.

b) The Sufferings of the Pontines and their Organization During the Great War

The Greek consciousness of the Pontines was reawakened by the victorious Balkan wars of 1912-13 and the Russian revolution of 1917. The sufferings of the 1914-18 war also contributed to the intensification of Greek nationalism. In Pontus the Turks recruited Greeks and the circumstances created by war allowed them to persecute them. In November 1914 and February 1915, Trebizond was bombarded by the Russian fleet. The Russians invaded Turkey and 30,000 troops occupied Trebizond on 18 April 1916. Two days earlier, before the Turkish authorities fled, they established a provisional government under Chryssanthos, the Metropolitan of Trebizond, with the participation of three other Greeks and the Chiefs of Police and Gendarmerie, thereby emphasizing the Greek character of the Trebizond vilayet. The Russians also entrusted the Metropolitan with the administration of Trebizond and the protection of the Moslems from Armenian vindictiveness. The Greeks, however, were thrown into a new state of misery. Prices rose, hunger crept in, blackmail and black-market conditions prevailed. Shops, mostly Greek, were looted, houses burnt or requisitioned. Many lives were lost. When Tzarism fell, the ordeal became even worse. Turkish bands began roaming the area and slaughtering the country population. With the cooperation of the Russian authorities and the Metropolitan of Trebizond, arms were distributed to Greek villages, particularly those of isolated areas more exposed to looting. Greeks flocked to Trebizond where they hoped to have enough money, jewellery or goods not only to pay for the boat-crossing to Russia, but also to bribe the Russian authorities to allow them to embark. Meanwhile, the Turks had come out of hiding and killed non-Moslem Greeks and Armenians. A local Greek militia was organized to attempt to maintain some order. Trebizond was a shambles. Buildings were burning while snow covered the quays where the emigrants lay awaiting their fate.³

3. For this period, see Metropolitan Chryssanthos's 'Η Ἐκκλησία τῆς Τραπεζούντος,

The situation in Transcaucasia was equally bad. Already in 1914 the Turkish army had made an incursion to Kars and Ardahan, during which the Greeks had suffered considerably. When Tzarism fell, hopes of reorganization led the Greeks to convene the first Panhellenic Congress of Transcaucasia in Tiflis on 5 May 1917. It was decided that the Greek communities would unite under the administration of local councils, which in their turn would obey a Central National Committee elected annually by the Panhellenic Congress at Tiflis. This system was approved by the Russian government and later by the government of the Transcaucasian Republic. A similar movement was organized in southern Russia. A meeting of the Greek communities held at Taganrog in July 1917 established councils and collected funds for the relief of refugees. In October the Central Union of Pontine Greeks was founded at Ekaterinodar, with the freedom and independence of Pontus as its declared aims. Over eighty associations which held local conferences were established all over southern Russia. They decided to send delegations to Pontus, Constantinople and Athens. Pontine councils were also founded in the United States, Britain, Switzerland and France. Early in November, C. G. Constantinidis, the President of the Pontine Council in Marseilles, met Venizelos at Nice and reported to the Athens council that the Greek Prime Minister fully concurred with Pontine aims.⁴

On 23 December 1917, the Supreme War Council at Versailles decided that the Allies would assist the volunteer Russian army organized by Generals Kornilov, Alexeiev and Denikin to resist the Bolsheviks. The French sphere of action would be Bessarabia, the Ukraine and the Crimea, while the British would fight the Turks in Transcaucasia. Before any further steps were taken, however, the Turkish army pushed towards Transcaucasia, who proclaimed herself an independent republic on 22 April 1918 and set out to organize her resistance. The Greek Central National Committee set up a brigade under

(The Church of Trebizond), Athens 1936, 744 ff. and G. N. Tassoudis (ed.), Βιογραφικαὶ Ἀναμνήσεις τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀθηνῶν Χρυσάνθου τοῦ ἀπὸ Τραπεζοῦντος, (Biographical Reminiscences of the Archbishop of Athens Chrysanthos of Trebizond), Athens 1970, pp. 90-182. Chrysanthos Philippidis originated from Komotini but after his graduation from the Theological School of Chalki, in 1903, he was appointed archdeacon to the Metropolitan of Trebizond. This experience proved invaluable when in 1913 he was elected Metropolitan of Trebizond himself. He was universally respected by Christians and Moslems alike. After 1922 he took refuge in Athens and was later elected Archbishop of Athens and all Greece.

4. E.D. Pavlidis, Πῶς καὶ διατί ἐματαιώθη ἡ Δημοκρατία τοῦ Πόντου, (How and why the Republic of Pontus did not Materialize), Athens 1956, p.17. The author used C.G. Constantinidis's papers and collected interesting material, particularly in view of the total lack of works

Major-General Ananias and other Greek officers of the Russian army.⁵ Soon, however, the conflicting interests and religions of the Georgians, Armenians and Adjerbadjanis split the unity of the young republic. The Moslem population — mostly Adjerbadjanis — supported the invading Turks and the Greek brigade only with difficulty was able to save the Greek communities of Kars and Batoum from complete extinction. About thirty per cent of the Tchalkans perished. The Greeks were confronted with both the approaching invader and the hostility of the local Moslems and Armenians, relations with whom had always been strained. A massive and dramatic exodus of Greek Karsians began. Fleeing their homes with as much money and other possessions as they could carry, they took to the mountain tracks towards Tiflis, only to be robbed and decimated by local bandits. Some 50,000 reached Tiflis naked, hungry, dejected, with nowhere to look for help. Of 1,800,000 roubles granted by the Transcaucasian government for the refugees in response to a petition of the Greek Central National Committee, only 200,000 were given before the Transcaucasian Republic was dissolved on 26 May 1918 and replaced by the separate Republics of Georgia, Armenia and Adjerbadjan. Through the efforts of the Committee, 30,000 refugees were sent to Kouban. Their troubles, however, did not end there. Denikin, who on 1 August 1918 established his army headquarters at Ekaterinodar, mobilized some of them as Russian subjects. About 10,000 settled around the Greek communities in Georgia, whose government nevertheless assisted them considerably. The rest, some 10,000, perished from cold, hunger, exhaustion and epidemics.

The Greeks of Bakou suffered too from the general anarchy in 1918. Here the Armenians, uniting with the Bolsheviks, in March 1918, attacked and slaughtered many Tartars. Four months later, the Bolsheviks were expelled by the Mensheviks and the Armenians, who were assisted by 1,500 British troops stationed across the Caspian in Persia. On 2 September the Turkish army occupied Bakou and together with the Tartars massacred vast numbers of Armenians. Naturally, the Orthodox Greeks were not spared. The Greek consulate was closed down and the consul had to flee.

In the Crimean peninsula there lived 60-70,000 Greeks, half of whom had retained their Greek citizenship. Although in October 1917 armed crowds protested against the Bolsheviks, they could not prevent them from assuming

on the subject. The same applies to his other work, 'Ο 'Ελληνισμός της Ρωσίας, (Hellenism of Russia), Athens 1953.

5. On the organization of the defence of Transcaucasia, the formation of the Greek brigade and local Greek opposition to the scheme, see Pavlidis, pp. 25-7.

power in Sebastopol only a few weeks later. A Tartar government, however, continued to exist with power over the Moslems only, who in agreement with the Turkish government were planning to take over the whole peninsula. This represented a new threat to the already precarious existence of the Greeks. An attempt to organize a Greek military force met with Bolshevik resistance. In January 1918 the Bolsheviks occupied the whole Crimea and dispersed the Tartar army. Wishing to take revenge for the sufferings inflicted on them by the Tartars in the past, certain Greeks co-operated with the Bolsheviks, although the Greek authorities of Sebastopol and Symferopol did their best to prevent the chasm between Greeks and Tartars from widening further. For three months a state of anarchy prevailed during which both Tartars and Greeks were repressed by the Bolsheviks.

In the Ukraine a National Congress in Kiev elected a Central Council—the Rada—in April 1917. Its first “universal” (proclamation) declared the Ukraine an autonomous republic on 23 June 1917. In July a General Secretariat, under Vinnichenko as premier and Petlyura as war minister, assumed power and convened a freely elected Ukrainian Constituent Assembly in November. To face the reactions of the Bolsheviks who in December 1917 established a Ukrainian Soviet in Kharkov, the Rada proclaimed on 22 January 1918 a free and sovereign Ukrainian Republic. By this time, however, Russian negotiations with the Central Powers were under way in Brest-Litovsk. On 9 February the Ukrainian Republic signed a peace treaty according to which the rich Ukrainian plains were to supply wheat for the army of the Central Powers. One day earlier, the Bolsheviks had occupied Kiev and the Rada fled to Zhitomir. On 3 March the Bolsheviks signed a treaty which terminated the war with the Central Powers at the cost of Russia losing almost one-third of her population. Kiev had already fallen to the German army on the eve of the Brest-Litovsk treaty and within two months the whole of the Ukraine and the north coast of the Black Sea was in German hands. A puppet Ukrainian government under Skoropadsky was established by the Germans at Kiev. The Ukrainian nationalists, under the inspired leadership of Petlyura, began a desperate three-front fight for Ukrainian independence against the monarchist Russians, the Bolsheviks and Skoropadsky’s German-supported government. The Ukraine was soon transformed into a chaotic battlefield. Food became scarce since the bulk of the wheat production was sent to the western front. Prices rocketed and all the evils which accompany such situations followed suit.

The Greek populations suffered particularly because of German hostility. The Greek consul at Kiev was expelled in August 1918 and the protection

of Greek interests was assumed by the Vice-Consul of Spain—himself a Greek—who was expelled in his turn, thus leaving the Greeks totally unrepresented. The Greek Central Union and the local councils tried, but with little success, to minimize their sufferings which were intensified by the continuous influx of refugees from Pontus and Transcaucasia.

With the arrival of the Germans in Crimea, the Bolsheviks fled and the Tartars, on whose support the Germans counted, found the opportunity to strike at the Greeks with impunity. Before they left, the Bolsheviks tried to provoke a rising of the Greek population against the Tartars. In Yalta they publicly exhibited baskets full of noses and ears which they professed to belong to Greeks butchered by Tartars. Efforts by the Greek consular authorities to maintain order met with only partial success. In Sebastopol, Yalta and elsewhere, the Greeks were persecuted harshly, many were slaughtered, their houses and business premises burnt, their properties snatched away. A mixed German, Tartar and Greek commission failed to reestablish order. Its report, which stressed the predicament of the Greek population, was forwarded to Berlin by the military governor of the Crimea but was ignored owing to fear of losing Tartar support. In July 1918 the Greek consuls of Sebastopol and Symferopol, together with other foreign consular agents, were arrested and sent to a concentration camp in Germany, where they remained until the end of the war. Greek interests remained unprotected in this area as elsewhere.

Meanwhile the Greeks had not neglected to further the organization by which their voice would be heard at the future peace conference. On 4 February 1918 a first congress of Pontines from Europe and the United States was held in Marseilles under the presidency of C. G. Constantinidis. The Congress sent a telegram to Trotsky asking his support for the cause of an independent Pontine republic.⁶ A delegation visited the Pontus in March and April 1918 and prepared the ground for a General Congress of the representatives of Hellenism in southern Russia, Transcaucasia and the Pontus to be held in Bakou in July 1918. This Congress declared the independence of Pontus, which implied the wish of the majority of exiled Pontines to be repatriated. The Congress also elected a seven member Council, which was made responsible for the promotion of the "national questions," and all Pontine organizations were placed under its direction.

Armenophobia — the fear of absorption by the Armenians and of the loss of Greek national identity — was to have a serious effect on the Pontus question. It was by no means a general fear among the Greeks, but those who had

6, Pavlidis, pp. 19-20,

it tended to exaggerate (only five per cent of the population of the Trebizond vilayet were Armenians) and often used it as a vehicle for their personal, political or commercial, interests. The Greeks had always looked down on the Armenians, but they nevertheless had offered them their assistance whenever the Turks persecuted them. Such had been the case in 1895, when the Armenians who had fled from the interior to the coast were sheltered by the Greek population and assisted in forming local Armenian communities. But the Armenians had developed considerable commercial activity which brought them into direct conflict with the interests of the Greeks. The deeper source of friction, however, was the realization on the part of the Greeks that the Turks were supporting the Armenians in an attempt to undermine the Greek character and domination of Pontus. But this no longer held in 1918. During the war when many Greeks took refuge across the Black Sea, Turkish chauvinism had turned against the Armenians, who had been decimated. Of 10,000 in Trebizond, virtually none survived. When the war ended, Armenophobia was, in fact, an imaginary danger which lingered in the minds of certain Greeks and not a real danger to Pontine Hellenism.

On 2 November 1918, delegates from Pontine councils from all over the world met in Marseilles in a Congress under the presidency of Constantinidis. Surprisingly, the eventuality of a Ponto-Armenian agreement was approved, but a five-member National Pontine Delegation was appointed to support the claims of the Pontine Greeks at the Peace Conference.

The Pontines counted on the support of the Greek government and were confident that Pontus would be included in Venizelos's claims. Pronouncements had already been made stating the wish of the Pontines to become Greek citizens, either by the complete annexation of Pontus by Greece or by Pontine independence and self-determination. Venizelos, however, who realized the Utopian character of such schemes, kept a telling silence.

II

a) The Decision of the Allies to Intervene in Southern Russia

The situation in the Ukraine became even more chaotic when Bulgarian capitulation made it clear that the Entente would soon be victorious. Skoropadsky and the Ukrainian Government tried to ingratiate themselves with the Entente while still upholding German interests in the Ukraine. The Ukrainians, however, remained unable to organize an army, for the simple

reason that the majority of the people were either personally averse to Skoropadsky, or were Bolsheviks. Skoropadsky, fearing massive opposition, wished to form a more popular government with the participation of the Rada. But the monarchists forestalled him and established a new government which proceeded to set up an army of 8,000 men. Nevertheless, Skoropadsky, with the approval of the Monarchists and the Entente, retained his position until order was re-established.⁷ The new army, together with a volunteer army and the armies operating in the Don and Kouban, all of which were supported by the Russian monarchist parties, put themselves under the leadership of Denikin and sent representatives to lassi to propose to the Entente military and political authorities that a campaign should be undertaken against the Bolsheviks without delay and that 150,000 Allied troops should be made available to help the volunteer armies to keep the Bolsheviks out of the Ukraine.⁸ Another representation from Denikin's headquarters in Ekaterinodar visited Salonika at the end of October and reported that although some 100,000 volunteers were faced by a mere 20-30,000 Bolsheviks, they were nevertheless in dire need of ammunition.⁹

On 13 and 27 October 1918, General Franchet d'Espérey, the Commander-in-Chief of the allied armies in the East, received instructions from Clemenceau to establish a continuous front from Albania to the Black Sea and thence to the Baltic, in order to destroy Bolshevism by economic isolation. As a means to this, military intervention in Rumania was necessary, in order to reorganize her army and eventually establish contact with the anti-Bolshevik Russians, as were also the creation of an allied base in Odessa and operations in southern Russia.¹⁰ D'Espérey replied that, as there were sufficient troops only to occupy Odessa and the nearby harbours, the whole enterprise would be extremely unpopular with the French army.¹¹ In taking this attitude

7. YE - A/5VI, P. Gryparis, Kionovion, to Foreign Ministry, Athens, report on the situation in the Ukraine, 20 November 1918.

8. F. Kostiaeff, "Intervention des puissances étrangères en Russie méridionale et dans les régions du Caucase et du Turkestan de 1918 à 1920," in *Les Alliés contre la Russie, avant, pendant et après la guerre mondiale*, préface de Victor Marguerite, Paris 1926, pp. 250-1. Kostiaeff mentions as his main sources Margouliès, *Une année d'intervention* and Loukowsky, *Mémoires*. The incident is also mentioned by K. Nider, 'Η Έκστρατεία της Ουκρανίας, (The Ukrainian Campaign), quoted in Greek General Staff, Τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν Ἑκστρατευτικὸν Σῶμα εἰς Μεσημβρινὴν Ρωσίαν, (The Greek Campaign Corps in Southern Russia), Athens 1955, § 11.

9. Greek General Staff, §§ 16-24.

10. Clemenceau to d'Espérey, letter, 27 October 1918, in Kostiaeff, 285, annex 1.

11. French military discontent at the prospect of a new campaign was stressed by General Dessort in conversation with Dendramis, the Greek Chargé d'Affaires in Bucharest (YE - A

he was not alone: after the German capitulation, there were many people in high places who felt only morally obliged to intervene in Russia, and although fear of revolution in Europe was real, it was politically impossible to maintain armies to fight in distant Russia while organized labour opposed action against a 'workers' state'.

Nevertheless on 10 November an allied army under General Berthelot, who was under direct orders from Paris, crossed the Danube and began preparations for an anti-Bolshevik campaign. General Tcherbatcheff, Denikin's representative in France, went to Bucharest to meet General Berthelot and on 16 November reported to Ekaterinodar that an agreement had been reached according to which 12 divisions — French and Greek — were soon to be sent to southern Russia. Odessa was to be the main base but Sebastopol would be occupied simultaneously. Kiev and Kharkov were to be subsequently occupied and later the Don and Kouban, in order to relieve the volunteer army and enable it to pursue the Bolsheviks towards Moscow. It was hoped that plentiful supplies for the allies and the volunteers should soon reach Odessa.¹²

After the opening of the Dardanelles, an Anglo-French Military Commission had gone to Novorossisk to report on the situation. On the strength of this report, on 13 November the British Cabinet reaffirmed their obligations under the Anglo-French decision of Versailles of 23 December 1917, and on 14 November decided to give Denikin all possible help in the way of military material and to occupy the railway from Batoum to Bakou — a task accomplished before the end of November 1919. The British, however, were adamant in refusing to send troops into the areas of French responsibility.¹³

On coming to a decision to intervene in Russia the French government relied entirely on reports from the Military and Political Bureau for Ukrainian Affairs operating in the French Legation in Iassi. The political section was directed by Henno, an ex-officer whom Saint-Aulaire, the French Minister, had

/5VI, Dendramis to Athens, tel. 747, 3 December 1918). Adossidis, the Greek Governor General of Macedonia, reported to the Foreign Ministry that the French Headquarters in Salonica viewed the Ukrainian campaign with displeasure (YE - A/5VI, Adossidis to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, not dated).

12. Kostiaeff, p. 250-1. D'Espérey confirmed this in a letter to Denikin. Dendramis reported to Athens that General Berthelot had told him in a conversation that the plan was that four armies would attack the Bolsheviks simultaneously: the British from the north, the French and Polish from the west, the American and Japanese from the east, and the French with the Rumanian — and possibly the Greek — from the south, while the British would hold Transcaucasia (YE - A/5VI, Dendramis to Athens, tel. 766, 7 December 1918).

13. YE - A/5VI, Tzanetos, Ekaterinodar, to Athens, tel. 26, 5 December 1918. W. Chur-

sent early in November as Vice-Consul to Kiev to direct French policy and supply information. Rumours circulated that Henno had been bought over by the Ukrainians.¹⁴ The military section was directed by the Naval Attaché of the Legation, who had never visited Russia himself and who merely collected information from reports of Russian aristocrats or rich bourgeois fleeing from Odessa. According to these reports, the strength of the Bolsheviks was negligible, whilst the voluntary army was well organized, equipped and extremely popular. It was these reports which in particular misled the Paris government and influenced their decisions.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Ukrainian affairs were becoming more and more complicated. The Rada had been left out of the Ukrainian government and Petlyura and Vinnichenko had set up a five-member Directorate representing socialist revolutionaries and social democrats. Petlyura himself had organized a large army to the ranks of which volunteers continued to flock every day.

The first French ship entered the port of Odessa on 10 December 1918. Petlyurian troops under Grecoff occupied the city on the same day. The Bolsheviks had already occupied the whole country as far as Kiev. The Ukrainian Nationalists had engaged them in the north, and, at the same time, were fighting the Volunteers in the south. The first French troops landed on 18 December, under General Borius. Their total ignorance of the situation was reflected in Berthelot's statement to Dendramis, the Greek Chargé d'Affaires in Bucharest, that order would be re-established "within four months, at the most."¹⁶ Oblivious of the Ukrainian movement they summarily divided all Russians into traitor Bolsheviks and patriot opponents of Bolshevism. This led them to commit the tragic mistake of attacking Petlyura, which served none other but their common enemy, the Bolsheviks. With French support the Monarchists and Volunteers who had been driven out of Odessa by Grecoff re-occupied Odessa on 20 December and order was superficially reestablished.

In reality, the situation was fraught with dangers. There were in Odessa about 100,000 workers equipped with arms left behind by the 500,000 German army in the Ukraine, whose departure was stipulated by the armistice, an-

chill, *The World Crisis*, London 1929, vol. V: 'The Aftermath', pp. 163-6. On 23 November 1918 an allied squadron arrived at Novorossisk and on 27 November, French and British representatives were established at Denikin's Headquarters in Ekaterinodar.

14. YE - A/5VI, Dendramis to Athens, desp. 43, report on the Ukrainian campaign, 8 April 1919.

15. See Gryparis's report of 20 November 1918 and Dendramis's despatch, No. 43, of 8 April 1919.

16. YE - A/4I, Dendramis to Athens, tel. 766, 7 December 1918.

other faux-pas of Allied policy in Russia. There were about 40,000 armed workers in Nikolaieff and 20,000 in Cherson, all of them receiving orders from Hetman Gregorieff, the chief of the Bolshevik army in the area. As the wheat of the Ukrainian plains had been sent to Germany for the last nine months, food had become scarce and prices had rocketed. Food, money and good policing were the three prerequisites for an operation in southern Russia to stand some chance of success. Food and money would remove from the Bolsheviks the weapons of hunger and poverty of the masses, while order in the towns would impress their inhabitants and divert them from revolution, at least for some time. The failure of the French to provide any of these essentials was repeatedly pointed out by the Greek representatives.¹⁷ Worse still, the French troops were physically exhausted. Their morale was low and, consequently, they were prone to insubordination and acceptance of Bolshevik propaganda.

b) The Greek Participation in the Ukrainian Campaign

Since the southern Russian campaign was a political decision which they might one day have to account for, the French government did all they could to ensure its success. One obvious step was to enlist the cooperation of the Greek army, which had recently proved its good fighting spirit and capacity in Macedonia. Greek contribution to the final victory had been very important. D'Espérey himself told the British Military Attaché in Greece, that "without the Greek army he could not have undertaken the recent victorious operations."¹⁸ Yet, although the Greeks exaggerated the role played by their army (articles in the press lead one to believe that victory was achieved by the Greek army "with some well meant but insignificant assistance from French, British and Serian forces"¹⁹), Venizelos and his entourage, both political and military, felt that Greece's short-term participation in the war in which she suffered only 5,000 casualties, was not a firm enough basis for claims to territorial

17. Captain Yannikostas reported that policing should be undertaken by the Allies and banknotes issued under their guarantee (DPA - Yannikostas, Sebastopol, to Kakoulidis, Constantinople, tel. 21, 19 January 1919). Dendramis began his report on the Ukrainian campaign by referring to the grave omission of the French to send wheat ahead of their troops to the areas of future operations (YE - A/5VI, Dendramis to Foreign Ministry, desp. 43, 8 April 1919).

18. Foreign Office, London, (hereafter referred to as F.O.), 371/3149-175674, Brig.-Gen. Fairholme to Granville, tel. S. 7, Salonica, 10 October 1918. See also d'Espérey's letter to Venizelos summing up the role of the Greek army, in Colonel Bujac, *Les Campagnes de l'Armée Hellénique, 1918-1922*, Paris 1930, 184-5.

19. F.O. 371/3159-177564, Granville to F.O., desp. 241, 11 October 1918.

recompenses at the Peace Conference. Of this feeling the French government, and Clemenceau in particular, took full advantage.

The initial proposal to the Greek government to participate in the Ukrainian campaign was made to Romanos, the Greek Minister in Paris, shortly after Venizelos's departure for London on 8 November. Informed immediately by Romanos, Venizelos almost by intuition (he rarely reflected for long) cabled back instructions that Clemenceau should be informed that the Greek army was at the disposal of the Allies and could be "used for the common cause wherever needed."²⁰ Before Romanos saw Clemenceau, however, the French government had been informed by d'Espérey that General Milne, the Commander of the British Army in the East, had reported to him that a Greek General had declared that Greek troops would refuse to cross the Danube.²¹ Clemenceau formed the impression that Greece was reluctant to accept the French proposal. To Romanos he said: "If Greece abandons us, I too will abandon Greece." Much alarmed, Romanos hastened to inform Clemenceau of Venizelos's message, and from that very moment he became the strongest advocate of Greek participation in the Ukrainian campaign, having taken to heart Clemenceau's words.

Having returned to Paris, Venizelos, in the presence of Romanos, met Clemenceau on 27 November and repeated to him that Greece accepted the French proposal in principle. In return Clemenceau promised that France would take the initiative in achieving Greek expansion in Thrace. When Venizelos asked him what France would do in respect to the Greek claim in Smyrna, Clemenceau answered that while his government could not take the initiative with regard to Smyrna, as they would do to Thrace (he obviously had in mind French economic interests in Smyrna), France would nevertheless heart-

20. YE - A/4I, Romanos to Athens, tel. 8064, 29 November 1918.

21. F.O. 371/3149-194117, Granville to F.O., tel. 1107, 23 November 1918. This information was given by Politis, the Greek Foreign Minister, to de Billy, the French Minister in Athens, who passed it to Granville, his British colleague. The General in question was the Commander-in-Chief of the Greek army, General Danglis, who was replaced by General Paraskevopoulos as a result. Paraskevopoulos, hitherto Commander of the First Army Corps in Kavala, was informed of his appointment on 15 November and assumed his position on 21 November. L. Paraskevopoulos, *Ἀναμνήσεις, 1896-1920*, (Reminiscences, 1898-1920), Athens 1934, II, 4, does not mention the reason for Danglis's recall. Danglis together with Venizelos and Admiral Koundouriotis, had formed the Triumvirate which headed the Salonica revolutionary government in October 1916. His relations with Venizelos were already strained before the above incident. When in Athens, two weeks later, Venizelos rebuked Danglis in the presence of the Cabinet and went on to sever all relations with him (DPA - Diomidis to Paraskevopoulos, letters, 19 November 1918 and 7 January 1919).

ily support a solution favouring Greece if it were proposed by Britain or the United States.²²

Although Venizelos had not yet expressed it, he was seriously concerned with the risks involved in the Ukrainian campaign. What worried him in particular was the danger of Bolshevik troops who would eventually transfer revolutionary ideas back to Greece on their return. Before he left Paris for Athens, Venizelos drafted a telegram for Romanos to send to Athens with instructions to inform d'Espérey that fear of the contagion of revolutionary ideas made the Greek government hesitant to accept an invitation to send troops to Russia and that a final decision could not be taken until after his return from Paris: meanwhile the Greek army was at d'Espérey's disposal for any other mission.²³

When Romanos received a telegram from Repoulis, the Deputy Prime Minister, expressing much the same fears as Venizelos, he was considerably alarmed lest the French proposal would be rejected. Immediately after Venizelos's departure on 29 November, he cabled Athens warning his government that even hesitancy could have a detrimental effect on the national interests at stake, that any expression of fear of Bolshevik ideas infiltrating the troops was an affront to the Greek army, that by not going to Russia Greece would in fact be serving the purpose of those who wished her to acquire as few titles as possible (this in reference to Italy), and that no serious danger really existed since the operation would be directed by the French, who would also provide the majority of the troops.²⁴ Romanos also cabled Venizelos at Modena, informing him of the pro-Greek feelings prevailing in French government circles. In answer to this, Venizelos asked that Athens be instructed not to transmit to d'Espérey his message drafted in Paris the previous day. In actual fact, Romanos, on his own initiative, had not sent Venizelos' message to Athens at all.²⁵

Venizelos reached Athens on 2 December. Next day, not having yet heard

22. YE - A/4I, Romanos to Athens, tel. 8064, 29 November 1918.

23. YE - A/4I, Venizelos to Athens, tel. 8063, 29 November 1918.

24. YE - A/4I, Romanos to Athens, tel. 8064, 29 November 1918.

25. YE - A/4I, Romanos to Athens, tel. 8072, 30 November 1918. Venizelos' thoughts during his journey to Athens were reported by Commander G. F. Talbot, the British Naval Attaché in Athens who accompanied him: "... it was a source of real satisfaction to himself and should be to his country, to realize by this call upon the Greek army that they were treated as 'one of the Allies' in that they were being called upon to assist the general Allied cause in a sphere outside that which directly concerned Greece." F.O. 371/3599 - 168801, *Report on Greek Negotiations at the Paris Conference, 1919*, by Commander G. F. Talbot, not dated.

anything from the British, he did not disclose his discussion with Clemenceau and pretended to Granville, the British Minister, that he had only been sent a telegram from Athens announcing the proposed Greek participation just as he was leaving Paris. Granville, who had already heard about it all, if only unofficially, remained silent. Venizelos went on to say that he was quite ready to let troops go but only on condition that Allied troops went with them and that the Greeks were provided with exactly the same equipment, clothing and food as the Allies. Granville consulted de Billy, his French colleague in Athens, but neither he nor General Grammat, the Chief of the French Military Mission in Greece, knew anything.²⁶

On 5 December Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, informed Romanos that d'Espérey had just been authorized to proceed with the Ukrainian campaign and that he took it for granted that Greek troops were joining the French. Already the French press had announced the campaign without any mention of the Greeks, much to the disappointment of Romanos.²⁷ The truth was, however, that Greek participation had not yet been decided. On the evening of 2 December Venizelos had gone in haste to Salonika. Here he repeated to d'Espérey what he had said to Granville — that Greek troops would be sent to Russia only on condition that they were clothed and fed exactly like the French. In reply, d'Espérey promised not to send them without the Greek government's approval. Pending this approval a final decision had to wait.²⁸

Back in Athens, Venizelos spoke to Granville again on 7 December. This time he asked him directly whether the proposed operations in Russia were ordered by the Allies in common or by the French alone. Granville merely replied that he believed his own government must have been consulted. What he did not let on was that Derby, the British Ambassador in Paris, had been instructed to find out from the French what was happening. Venizelos, needless to say, was somewhat suspicious. He was not at all happy about the whole campaign if its conception were purely French. Moreover, he feared lest Greek participation should have a bad effect on Socialist opinion in Greece, or even that Greek troops might imbibe revolutionary ideas. These fears he expressed to Granville who fully concurred.²⁹

The French Government finally accepted Venizelos's conditions and the

26. F.O. 371/3150-198701, Granville to F.O., tel. 1130, 1 December; 200015, Granville to F.O., tel. 1137, 3 December 1918.

27. YE - A/4I, Romanos to Athens, tel. 8274, 6 December 1918.

28. YE - A/5VI, Adossidis to Diomidis, tel. 42844, not dated.

29. F.O. 371/3150-202095, Granville to F.O., tel. 1159, 7 December; 209901, Granville to F.O., desp. 296, 9 December 1918.

intended despatch of Greek troops to the Ukraine became known in Athens. Here the news gave rise to much hostile criticism. It was widely thought that the Greek army would soon be needed to occupy the territories claimed by Greece. Paraskevopoulos, the Commander-in-Chief of the Greek army, was against the adventure,³⁰ and so, in principle, was Venizelos himself. The Greek government, however, ultimately overcame their strong reservations and accepted the risk which, they all knew, had to be taken to gain the goodwill of the French. Other calculations also entered into the decision: many felt that Greece had not done or suffered as much as the other Allies during the war, and that, if the Greeks were to qualify for favourable treatment at the peace conference, they must increase their credit with the Allies.³¹

Preparations were begun on 8 December 1918 and by 4 January 1919, 42,000 Greek troops were ready to go to Russia. The French transports, however, did not arrive until 15 January. Meanwhile, in Paris, Venizelos was still trying to secure the material assistance promised by the Allies. As late as 12 January he authorized the cancellation of the expedition if the British and the French did not send the 4,500 beds they had promised in December. Finally, the British provided 1,040 beds, to which the Greeks added 1,560. Here this particular matter was allowed to drop.³² The first Greek troops, about 3,600, reached Odessa on 20 January 1919.³³

III

a) The Ukrainian Campaign, the Evacuation of Odessa and the Creation of a Pontine Refugee Problem

Description of the war in the Ukraine belongs to the field of military history. Nevertheless, it is important to relate briefly the predicament in which the Greek troops soon found themselves. The majority of the Russian population disliked the great enthusiasm with which the Greeks welcomed the Greek

30. DPA - Paraskevopoulos to Diomidis, letter, 1 April 1919. "Right from the beginning," says Paraskevopoulos, "I was shouting that this campaign should not be undertaken..."

31. See A. Mazaraki-Ainianos, *Ἀπομνημόνευμα*, (Memoirs), Athens 1948, p. 252.

32. DPA - Venizelos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 12 January 1919. Greek General Staff, § 63.

33. More were to arrive between 27 February and 11 March and a last contingent between 26 March and 1 April. Altogether, 23,351 Greek soldiers participated in the campaign. On 14 January 1919 General d'Anselme replaced General Borius as Commander of the Allied forces in southern Russia (Greek General Staff, chapters IV-VI).

troops in Odessa. The local population had not been disarmed since the departure of the Germans. The Russian police were unable or unwilling to help. The Greek troops attempted to maintain order but, from the beginning, lack of means of transportation and poor equipment and provisions impeded their task seriously. They took their orders from the French who treated them as subordinates. Their morale suffered immediately. There they were, in a totally foreign land, without any knowledge of their exact mission and with the feeling that the French themselves hardly knew what was to be done. Decisions, when taken, were summarily announced to the Greek commanders who had no alternative but to comply blindly. Communications with the contingents placed under direct French orders and sent away from Odessa were completely cut off and the French did not even bother to inform the Greek Commander, Colonel Tsolakopoulos-Rebelos, of their whereabouts and fate. Insecurity increased daily owing to shortage of money, scarcity of food and total lack of postal communication with Greece. The reinforcements, which the first contingents expected to join them within a week after they had landed, did not arrive until the end of February. Already a fortnight after they had reached Odessa, they felt abandoned and dejected. They did not know the ground they were fighting on, nor did they speak the local language. Climatic conditions were adverse too. The hostility of the local population and its fanatic support of the enemy added psychological pressure upon them.

The reports of Tsolakopoulos-Rebelos are pathetic to read. The recurring theme is the French attitude towards his troops and himself. In a subdued tone he refers to their contemptuous behaviour. The French seemed to have forgotten that without the Greek presence they would probably have been exterminated by the local population. One report ran:

"I can already say that they have destroyed my regiment and no power is left here to impose order and protect the town (Odessa). We are, at any moment, at the discretion of the Russian hordes who massacre anybody who is not a bandit or insane... The different armies and the police often surpass the criminal elements whom they support in a contemptible way. Not a single civil or military court functions. Total anarchy. Once more I protest and ask for measures to be taken for our army, which does not deserve such fate. I have reached the point where I will have to think if it is worth obeying blindly any longer the vague, dangerous and suspect orders of people who are ignorant of what they do and what they want. I will now think how those whom I was entrusted with and myself will have to die...If this is the result of a policy (which I do not believe), it is in-

famous and I will never understand it... I am fully aware of the National interests, for which I have often bled, and for this reason I have suffered this lamentable situation. But I cannot endure it any longer. If no re-inforcements are sent, I ask you to replace me for I fear I might do some harm..."³⁴

The responsibility for the rapid deterioration must primarily be attributed to the casual character, the poor strength and erratic strategy of the allied effort in general, and to the indifference and corruption of the French troops (about 15,000) in particular. The Greeks fought with great bravery but they found themselves greatly outnumbered. One can hardly acquit Venizelos and the Greek government of their responsibility for the misery and hopelessness of the troops who were sent to Russia to serve a general policy. It must be admitted however that, under the circumstances, no measure could be taken to remedy the situation without seriously endangering the image of Greece which Venizelos was building up in Paris. When informed of Tsolakopoulos-Rebelos's reports, all that Venizelos could do was to order General Nider, Commander of the First Army Corps, to go to Odessa immediately by destroyer to ensure, even to the extent of refusing Greek co-operation, that all future expeditions were undertaken by mixed Franco-Greek contingents.³⁵ General Nider, however, did not leave until a whole month later and reached Odessa only on 26 March, on the eve of the final Bolshevik attack.

All this while Venizelos and his government, owing to unreliable communications, were without accurate information. When Sariyannis, the Greek Consul in Moscow, arrived in Athens early in February 1919 bringing alarming news of the situation in Russia and the Ukraine, and when Diomidis, the Foreign Minister *ad interim*, transmitted this news to Paris, Politis, the Greek Foreign Minister, replied on 15 February saying that Venizelos had no information whatever and was eager to learn more. Why did Sariyannis not mention the Greek troops? How many had gone and where were they? What was the precise Bolshevik plan? Why did the local population support the Russians? Why does not General Nider (or if he has not yet arrived in Odessa, the Greek Commander) provide adequate information? To this questionnaire, Diomidis could only reply on 24 February by citing information coming from Psychas,

34. DPA - Tsolakopoulos-Rebelos to II Division, through Katechakis, Constantinople, report no. 30, 21 February 1919. Reports of a similar nature were also sent on 17 February, No. 21; 5 March, No. 67; 7 March, No. 69.

35. DPA - Venizelos, London, to Nider, tel. 844, 19 February 1919. This telegram is to be found also in Greek General Staff, appendix No. 36.

the Greek Minister in Bucharest, who collected his information from discussion with the French Generals Berthelot and Neyrel.³⁶

By the end of February both the Soviets and the Ukrainian nationalists had stated their position *vis-à-vis* Greece. On 20 February, Rakovski, the Chairman of the Council of Peoples' Commissars and Foreign Commissar of the Ukrainian Soviet established in Kharkov in January 1919, sent to Diomidis a strongly worded protest against Greek participation in the anti-Bolshevik campaign. It ended with a threat that members of the Greek clergy attached to the army would be considered spies and treated accordingly, and that Greek involvement in Ukrainian affairs could not remain without consequences for the Greeks living in the Ukraine.³⁷ The Ukrainian nationalist Directorate sent a delegation to Athens under Matuschefskei, who visited Diomidis and stated that his government wanted to re-establish the good relations between the two countries that had existed since the 13th century. After describing the state of political and military affairs in the Ukraine, and the ideology and aims of the Ukrainian Directorate, he assured Diomidis of the intention of his government to respect and protect foreign minorities, amongst whom the Greeks were prominent.³⁸

By this time, however, the tide of events had already turned against Petlyura's troops who had been driven out of Kiev by the Bolsheviks on 6 February. They retreated westwards to join the Ukrainian nationalists from Galicia who had been driven eastwards by the Polish army. Anarchist bands under Makhno infested the country, while the main towns fell into the hands of the Bolsheviks, who ruled in accordance with directions from Moscow through the Kharkov Soviet under Rakovski. On 10 March the Bolsheviks occupied Cherson, on 14 March Nikolaieff, on 18 March Berezovska and on 24 March Mariopol. The allied troops retreated to Odessa, which by 20 March had clearly become the next Bolshevik target. Owing to this turn of events, on 20 March d'Espérey went to Odessa and took over the command of the campaign from Berthelot. Petlyura's decision to join the anti-Bolshevik forces and to allow Ukraine's future to be decided by referendum came too late. His army was cut in two by the Bolsheviks about 200 kilometres north-west of Odessa. On 21 March d'

36. YE - A/SVI, Diomidis to Politis, tel. 880, 12 February; Politis to Diomidis, tel. 1471, 15 February; Diomidis to Politis, tel. 1064, 24 February 1919. DPA - Psychas, Bucharest, to Diomidis, tel. 369, 20 February; tel. 378, 22 February; tel. 394, 23 February 1919. General Berthelot was still optimistic and unfolded to Psychas a detailed plan for the defeat of Bolshevism.

37. DPA - Rakovski to Diomidis, tel. 1551, 20 February 1919.

38. DPA - Diomidis to Politis, autograph draft of tel. 1554, 7 March 1919.

Espérey issued a plan for the defence of Odessa and four days later, after his departure for Constantinople, a preventive plan for the evacuation of southern Russia was circulated confidentially to military commanders.³⁹ In Constantinople d'Espérey was visited by Kakoulidis, the Greek naval commander, to whom he stated that he considered it prudent to advise the evacuation of the Greek population from Odessa. He had, however, not yet decided on the military evacuation of the city.⁴⁰

On 25 March, Dendramis arrived in Odessa as a political representative of the Greek government and was followed by Nider on 26 March. That same day Dendramis and Nider saw General d'Anselme, the French commander, who advised them to evacuate the Greek population, using the lack of provisions as a pretext, in order to avoid panic. Nider wrote a report to Venizelos on the seriousness of the situation, while Dendramis asked for all ships available in Constantinople to repair to Odessa.⁴¹ On 29 March Kakoulidis arrived at Odessa on the warship *Kilkis*, ready to take command of the other ships which were to follow. On 31 March Nider, Kakoulidis and Dendramis came to the decision that the Greek army should retreat towards Bessarabia. That same day, however, d'Espérey informed Paraskevopoulos in Constantinople that the military situation in Russia did not worry him, since it should not be long before troops from Hungary arrived in the Ukraine.⁴² Nevertheless, the following day he ordered the military evacuation of Odessa. Under the threat of the guns of the French and the Greek ships, relative order was maintained in the town and the Bolsheviks agreed to allow the civil and military evacuation which began on 4 April and lasted three days. In all 10-12,000 Greeks left Odessa, and the Greek troops retreated westwards to Ackerman, the protection of those Greeks who remained being resumed by the Dutch Consulate.

The refugee problem was acute. The danger of epidemics and bolshevik ideology and the practical questions of housing and provisioning made the Greek government reluctant to accept the refugees in Salonika or elsewhere in Greece, where fugitives from Asia Minor and Thrace were still waiting to be repatriated.⁴³ The allied authorities in Constantinople refused to accept even those refugees who originated from Constantinople. Efforts were made to

39. Greek General Staff, § 236.

40. DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 27 March 1919.

41. DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis tel. unnumbered, 28 March and tel. unnumbered, 29 March 1919.

42. DPA - Paraskevopoulos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 31 March 1919.

43. YE - A/5VI, Repoulis to Venizelos, autograph draft of tel. unnumbered, 6 April 1919.

arrange for some of them to stay in Constanza, but the Rumanian government would not co-operate. The Greek government threatened to withdraw their army from Bessarabia if the allies, on whose request Greece had undertaken the campaign, refused to assist.⁴⁴ Eventually about half of the refugees were landed in Salonika where the allies promised to provide them with barracks and provisions. The whole burden, however, fell on the Greek authorities and this was only the beginning, since waves of refugees were soon to follow from other areas of southern Russia. Venizelos's main concern was that they should not bring with them bolshevik ideas, nor indeed information of the shortcomings of the conduct of the campaign, thus exposing Venizelist policy to the attacks of the opposition. He was finally obliged, however, to accept the refugees, because, as he telegraphed to Diomidis, "any other representation here (Paris) is useless, as the governments are preoccupied with more general questions."⁴⁵

b) The Evacuation of the Crimea and the Intensification of the Refugee Problem

The Crimean government, sitting in Symferopol, had asked a 4,000 strong volunteer army to step in and police the peninsula in order to protect the population from internal Bolshevik unrest. The volunteers, however, were suffering from continuous defections and, in an attempt to remedy this, their leaders tolerated a slackening of discipline and consequent oppression of the local population, particularly the Greeks. When Captain Yannikostas, who had been in Crimean waters on board the destroyer *Panther* since 26 November 1918, visited Vinaver, the Crimean Foreign Minister, to ask whether Greek support was wanted or not, he was told that the volunteer army would leave the Crimea and block the way of the Bolsheviks at the nine-kilometre-wide Perekop isthmus, the main access to the peninsula, as soon as allied troops should arrive to relieve them. Admiral Amet, himself in Sebastopol at the time, confirmed this to Yannikostas and added that he had asked for the despatch of French and Greek troops. Yannikostas advised the Greek authorities to send a regiment to occupy the coastal areas first, since the Greek communities there were more numerous, the climate milder and rescue from the sea easier.⁴⁶

44. DPA - Politis to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 8 April 1919.

45. DPA - Venizelos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 9 April 1919. Venizelos nevertheless asked d'Espérey through Kanellopoulos, the Greek High Commissioner in Constantinople, to see that the refugees were sent to Greece by installments.

46. DPA - Yannikostas, Sebastopol, to Foreign Ministry, despatch No. 60, 20 February 1919. This despatch is also in Greek General Staff, appendix 74.

When Stavridakis, the diplomatic agent of the Greek government, arrived in Sebastopol early in March, no reinforcements had yet been sent. On 19 March he informed Kanellopoulos, the Greek High Commissioner in Constantinople, that one or two Greek regiments were urgently needed to hold the Perekop isthmus. This information Kanellopoulos transmitted to d'Espérey who promised to send to Perekop the first Greek troops available. On Vinaver's advice, Stavridakis also asked for ships to be sent for the eventual evacuation of the numerous Greeks who had flocked to the Crimea.⁴⁷ On the same day he informed Diomidis that, unless reinforcements arrived within a week, Perekop was in danger of falling and the Greek population of being slaughtered.⁴⁸ On 23 March 2,000 Greek troops reached Sebastopol under the command of General Nider who was on his way to Odessa.

D'Espérey, who was returning from Odessa, saw Nider and requested that arrangements should be made for Greek civilians to be recruited to meet the needs of the allied army. Nider raised no objection. He did not, however, favour Vinaver's further request that Greek units so recruited should fight under the Greek flag. If the campaign were to continue there was no justification, in his view, for increasing the hostility of the Bolsheviks towards the Greek populations.⁴⁹ This was also the opinion of Kepetzis, a Greek journalist, who sent a report to the Greek Foreign Ministry early in April. In consultation with General Nattiev of the volunteer army in Sebastopol, he had come to the conclusion that, instead of being dispersed over the Ukraine, the Greek troops should be concentrated in the Crimea to support the volunteers in Perekop — a move which the Russians would have welcomed not only because of the prowess already manifested by the Greek troops, but also because they hoped that it would encourage Greeks from the southern Russian littoral and the Caucasus to support their compatriots. Kepetzis was certain that the Ekaterinodar area and the Crimea could provide about 5,000 volunteers each. If this plan were promoted and even if only one third of the Greeks were to come to the Crimea from the southern coast and the Caucasus, within two months there would be 200,000 of them in the peninsula.⁵⁰ But although several Greek

47. DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 19 March 1919.

48. DPA - Stavridakis to Diomidis, private letter, 19 March 1919.

49. DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 30 March 1919. See also Greek General Staff, § 292 and note 2, p. 223.

50. YE - A/SVI, memorandum by J. Kepetzis, "The fate of Hellenism in Russia and its salvation," received in Athens in April 1919. A detailed schedule followed for the transportation of Greeks to the Crimea. Kepetzis concluded by urging the Greek government to stop the activity of the Ukrainian delegation in Athens since their different pretexts "concealed the poison of Bolshevik propaganda."

deputations subsequently visited Stavridakis in Sebastopol to encourage this movement, the Greek government took no action: indeed, when the Greek army evacuated Sebastopol on 28 April, Nider's request to recruit volunteers had not been answered.⁵¹

The situation of the Greeks in southern Russia was by now very critical. The Central Union of Ekaterinodar, which attributed this situation to Greek participation in the anti-Bolshevik campaign, had vainly pleaded towards the end of January that the only way to save Hellenism of Russia was to secure ecclesiastical and educational independence, communal organization, acquisition of Greek citizenship by those who asked for it, and the restoration to their owners of bequests and ecclesiastical lands.⁵² They had also pleaded somewhat naively that the Greek government should convince the Soviet authorities of the innocence of the Greek populations. As for the refugees who had gone to Russia during the war and were a burden to the local Greeks, they had asked that these should be repatriated to Pontus.⁵³

In the Crimea the situation was likewise critical. The population had not been disarmed and Bolshevik unrest had increased within the towns. On 5 April the defence of Perekop collapsed and on 8 April the Crimean government moved from Symferopol to Kerts. Next day, the Bolshevik army reached Sebastopol. Greek ships were sent along the coast to Yalta, Theodosia and Eupatoria to be ready to evacuate the Greek population. In Constantinople Kanellopoulos visited Calthorpe and DeFrance, the British and French High Commissioners, and informed them that since, in the event of the evacuation of the Crimea, it would be preferable to send to Pontus those Greeks who originated there and who would in any case be repatriated there one day, the Greek government would appreciate the despatch of few allied troops to Trebizond as a precaution against Turkish bands. Venizelos and Politis approached the British and French officials in Paris with the same request.⁵⁴

On 9 April Paraskevopoulos cabled to Repoulis and the War Ministry that he had been asked to send further Greek troops to Sebastopol. He was opposed to this under the prevailing circumstances and requested that the matter be referred to Venizelos.⁵⁵ To this Repoulis, after consulting Diomidis and

51. Greek General Staff, p. 224.

52. YE - A/5IV, Central Union of Pontine Greeks, Ekaterinodar, to Foreign Ministry, despatch, unnumbered, 28 January 1919.

53. YE - A/5VI, F. Ktenidis on behalf of Central Union of Pontine Greeks, Ekaterinodar, to Foreign Ministry, memorandum, unnumbered, received on 14 April 1919.

54. DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 8 April 1919. YE - A/5VI, Politis to Kanellopoulos, tel. 3361, 10 April 1919.

55. DPA - Paraskevopoulos to Repoulis, tel. 734, 9 April 1919. Reports from Kakoulidis

Grivas, the Deputy Minister of War, on 12 April, agreed. He also agreed that to send more Greek troops at this stage would endanger the safety of the local Greeks. Already Repoulis, Diomidis and Grivas had received word from Venizelos to the effect that the Perekop isthmus should not be reinforced as the whole campaign was being abandoned by the French.⁵⁶ In any case, on 14 April, Romanos in Paris was told by General Alby that the Greek together with the other allied troops should occupy the right bank of the river Dniester in Bessarabia.⁵⁷ Venizelos himself cabled Paraskevopoulos authorizing him to refuse categorically the despatch of further effectives to the Russian front.⁵⁸

On 17 April, following the Bolsheviks' offer of a truce to the defenders of Sebastopol, a cease-fire was arranged and preparations were begun for the evacuation of the city. At this juncture, however, the French sailors mutinied, united with local Bolsheviks, and clashed with the Greek garrison. On 21 April four British dreadnoughts under Admiral Calthorpe arrived and assisted in restoring order. On that same day a delegation from the Bolshevik army visited Kakoulidis on board the *Kilkis* and expressed their friendly feelings towards the Greek Nation. They promised that the Greek population would not be harmed and that arrangements would be made for the safe evacuation of the Greek army. Similar promises were made to other Greek communities of the Crimea. To these approaches the Greeks responded. Stavridakis instructed, without consulting the Greek government, the Greek consular authorities to establish relations with the local Soviets.⁵⁹ Generally speaking, the Bolsheviks showed good intentions towards the Greeks and concentrated their hatred on the French.⁶⁰

indicated that the Greek military and naval participation in Allied operations had incensed the Bolsheviks against the Greek populations, without really serving any serious strategic purpose any longer (DPA - Kakoulidis to Marine Ministry, despatch No. 72, enclosing report No. 87 from Col. Gregoriadis, Sebastopol. 10 April 1919; Kakoulidis to Marine Ministry, tel. 64, enclosed in Kanellopoulos's tel. unnumbered, 14 April 1919). D'Espérey himself told Kanellopoulos that measures should be taken for the eventual evacuation of the Crimean peninsula (DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 14 April 1919).

56. YE - A/5IV, Diomidis to Venizelos, tel. 2900, 13 April 1919; A/5VI, minutes of telephonic discussion between Repoulis and Paraskevopoulos, 12 April 1919.

57. YE - A/5IV, Romanos to Venizelos, private letter, reg. No. 3533, 14 April 1919.

58. YE - A/5IV, Venizelos to Paraskevopoulos, tel. 3469, 14 April 1919. DPA - Venizelos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 15 April 1919.

59. DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 25 April 1919, transmitting Stavridakis's tel. 25, 21 April 1919.

60. DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 1 May 1919, transmitting Stav-

Sebastopol was evacuated on 28 April. Despite Bolshevik assurances that they would not be molested, many Greeks abandoned the Crimea and the coastlands of the Directorate of the Black Sea and Koutais, thus swelling the number of Greek refugees. On their behalf Kanellopoulos saw d'Espérey, who promised to arrange that the Pontines should be repatriated to Trebizond, where two battalions would be sent to maintain order.⁶¹ Owing to the confusion during their embarkation, however, many Pontines were mixed with others and found themselves making for Constantinople, Salonika and Piraeus. In Constantinople the allied authorities again refused to accept refugees.⁶² From Athens, Diomidis informed Venizelos of the great problems which faced the government. He particularly stressed the danger of a monetary crisis owing to the thousands of roubles which the refugees had brought with them.⁶³ Considerations of security and infiltration of Bolshevik agents amongst the refugees — about 1500 Russians had arrived with them — were also underlined.⁶⁴

Before Stavridakis left the Crimea, he saw Bibenko, the Commander-in-Chief of the Bolshevik army, Lenin, the Chairman of the new Crimean Soviet and brother of Vladimir Ilyich, and Petrovsky, the delegate of the Ukrainian Soviet. At a final meeting in Yalta, the three Bolsheviks handed to Stavridakis a signed declaration in which they accepted most of the demands made on behalf of the Greek populations. Greek consular rights would be respected; the lives, freedom and movable property of the Greeks would not be harmed; Greeks would neither be recruited, nor submitted to forced labour. Some reservations, however, were made in the case of immovable property and some mention was made of Greek participation in public works. But religious freedom and the independence of Greek schools, societies and other institutions would be allowed, while those Greeks who wished to return home would be permitted to do so. The Bolsheviks expressed the wish to establish good relations with Greece and asked for an assurance that no more Greek troops or ships would be sent against them. Stavridakis remained uncommitted. He pointed out, however, that Greece had only participated in the anti-Bolshevik campaign as the ally of the great powers. His personal opinion was that, apart

ridakis's tel. 21, 18 April 1919. This was also due to the German detachments serving in the Bolshevik army who were naturally inclined against the French.

61. DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 16 April 1919.

62. YE - A/5VI, Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. 2651, 28 April 1919

63. YE - A/5VI, Diomidis to Politis, tel. 3391, 27 April 1919.

64. YE - A/5VI, report of Chief of Police on Bolshevik danger, Athens, 4 May 1919. This is the first report of its kind in Greece.

from a Greek military presence in Bessarabia, the campaign was over as far as Greece was concerned. In reporting the negotiations to Athens, he stated that, although he still worried about the fate of Hellenism in Russia, he had the impression that the Bolshevik leaders would do what they could to give effect to their promises.⁶⁵

In their declaration the Bolsheviks had also included a request that the Greek government should allow a Russian commission to go to Greece in order to look after the interests of Russian soldiers who had remained in Macedonia since the end of the war. More important, however, was the suggestion of the Finance Commissar that the Greek government should send clothing and provisions to the Crimea in exchange for leather and tobacco. He proposed that a commercial agent of the Soviet — possibly a Greek — should be accepted in Greece to buy commodities for about 50,000,000 roubles in cash, with the guarantee that an exportation licence would be granted for the purchases. Stavridakis replied that the answer depended on the decisions to be taken in Paris in connection with the commerce of the Black Sea,⁶⁶ and the Greek government later informed the Bolshevik representatives in the Crimea that, although they were, in principle, prepared to accept these Russian suggestions, the conclusion of a definite agreement was precluded by the *de facto* interdiction by the allies of importation of goods into Russia.⁶⁷

After the evacuation of Sebastopol, about 100,000 Pontine Greeks had flocked along the coast as far as Batoum and here waited for transport to Pontus. On arrival they found that the situation in the town of Trebizond was satisfactory. Outside, however, the situation was different. Lawlessness prevailed, justice was miscarried, arms were distributed to Moslems with the connivance of the Turkish authorities. There were no allied troops to maintain order and there was a shortage of housing, food and money. The Greek authorities did what they could. Kakoulidis sent the destroyer *Velos* to Trebizond and soon followed there himself on the *Kilkis* with Calthorpe's authorisation.⁶⁸ Follow-

65. DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 13 May 1919, transmitting Stavridakis's tel. 35, not dated.

66. DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 15 May 1919, transmitting Stavridakis's tel. 37, not dated.

67. DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 31 May 1919. Kanellopoulos asked Calthorpe if Greece would be allowed to send to Russia provisions for the Greeks. Calthorpe replied that since the danger was great that the goods would be seized by the Bolsheviks, the whole question would have to be decided in Paris.

68. DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 4 May 1919, transmitting Stavridakis's tel. 33, not dated; Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 12 May 1919.

ing a request from Venizelos that everything should be done to facilitate the transportation of the Pontines to Pontus, Stavridakis went to Novorossisk in the hope of facilitating the repatriation of these unfortunate people.⁶⁹ Eventually most of them were embarked on Greek ships which provided a shuttle service to Trebizond.⁷⁰

c) The End of the Campaign and Greco-Rumanian Relations

After the evacuation of Odessa the task of the allied army was to prevent the Red army from crossing the Dniester (the right bank of which was occupied by Greek forces) and to maintain order in Bessarabia until the fate of that area was decided in Paris. After the German armistice, anarchy prevailed in Bessarabia. The bulk of the Rumanian army was concentrated on the Hungarian front and only very few troops were sent to Bessarabia until, on 27 March 1919, a local National Assembly declared the unification of the province with Rumania. A plan for the defence of the Dniester, drawn up by the Rumanian Defence Ministry, was approved in Paris. The Greek army, consisting of some 20,000 men, together with about 4,000 Poles was to hold the southern part of the river around its estuary, while the Rumanian army, 30,000 strong, was to defend the upper reaches of the river as far as Bender. The French troops, who were unpopular with the Greeks and the Rumanians, mutinous and likely to fraternise with the Bolsheviks, were to be kept in reserve, the French headquarters under General d'Anselme being established at Bolgrad.⁷¹ This headquarters had no control of the Greeks. Venizelos had instructed General Nider, whose own headquarters was at Galatzi, that the Greek troops were entirely under his personal command: the arrangements which had prevailed on the Macedonian front, where the allies were helping the Greeks on Greek soil, were no longer applicable.⁷² This ruling the French had to accept. The result was that the Dniester front was divided into three zones, the northern under General Neyrel, the middle one under General Nider and the southern under General Borius. Facing the three armies were the Bolsheviks, who occupied the left bank of the river, forming a front of 120 kilometres. From April to June

69. DPA - Politis to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 8 May 1919.

70. YE-A /5VI, Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. 3100, 16 May 1919, transmitting Stavridakis's tel. 9081, not dated. Some 15,000 Pontines and 5,000 other Greeks had gathered in Novorossisk alone.

71. DPA - Dendramis to Diomidis and Politis, memorandum, 22 April 1919; Nider to Diomidis, private letter, 6 May 1919. Greek General Staff, § 321.

72. DPA - Venizelos to Diomidis, for Nider, tel. unnumbered, 19 April 1919.

1919 action was confined to artillery fire across the river and to minor Bolshevik thrusts of no great consequence.

Greco-Rumanian relations, owing to the question of large Greek minorities in Rumania and to the Koutsovlach question, had for long been strained. Until the evacuation of Odessa the Rumanian government had deliberately kept the Rumanian public completely ignorant of the importance of the Greek contribution to the anti-Bolshevik campaign. Reports supplied to the press by Psychas were censored.⁷³ Difficulties were put in the way of Greek merchants and small traders. Greek bakeries, about seventy per cent of the total in Bucharest, were closed down on the pretext of combatting profiteering. With the opening, however, of the Bessarabian front and the danger of the spread of Bolshevism in Bessarabia, the Rumanian government which had to maintain fronts in Hungary and Bulgaria, changed radically its attitude towards Greece. Injuries to Greek interests were speedily redressed, and Ferekidi, the Rumanian Deputy Prime Minister, informed Psychas that the co-operation of the Greek army was vital for Rumania under the prevailing circumstances. Psychas reported to Athens that the time was ripe for pressing the Rumanian government for a diplomatic settlement of the differences between the two countries⁷⁴ and Dendramis, back in Bucharest, advised the Foreign Ministry that the mere threat of the eventual withdrawal of Greek troops from Bessarabia "could oblige the Rumanian government to accept all our demands."⁷⁵

Owing to the preoccupation of the Greek government with the more important questions at the Paris Conference, and particularly with the landing of Greek troops in Smyrna, no advantage was taken of the circumstances in Rumania. Early in June, the dispersal of the Hungarian army released the bulk of the Rumanian troops, which began to take over from the French and Greek contingents. On 10 June, General Nider left with his staff. By 17 July all the Greek troops had been transferred from the Bessarabian front to Asia Minor.⁷⁶

73. DPA - Psychas to Diomidis, tel. 736, not dated, transmitted by Adossidis, Salonica, 26 April 1919.

74. YE - A/5VI, Psychas to Venizelos, tel. unnumbered, 29 April 1919; DPA - Psychas to Diomidis, tel. 741, not dated, transmitted by Adossidis, Salonica, 26 April 1919.

75. DPA - Dendramis to Diomidis and Politis, memorandum, 22 April 1919.

76. The Greek losses during the whole Ukrainian campaign amounted to only 1055 men (4.5%). Greek General Staff, § 335.

IV

a) Venizelos's Pontine Policy and the Reaction of the Pontines

When the decision to send Greek troops against the Bolsheviks had become known in Russia, the Greek communities there had come under severe pressure. The Greek consuls at Petrograd and Moscow had informed the Greek legation in Stockholm that measures should be taken for their safety.⁷⁷ The communities themselves had sent representatives to a congress at Rostov to discuss the problems facing them. This congress had asked for the assistance of the Greek government and the despatch of a Greek diplomatic agent to the Black Sea. Venizelos had answered that this task should be undertaken by the Greek consul in Ekaterinodar.⁷⁸ Diomidis, however, had thought that, since this consul had always ignored official Greek policy,⁷⁹ it would be preferable to send Stavridakis, an experienced diplomat, on a special mission to guide the local Greek authorities, and to despatch another Greek agent to Batoum to assist in the repatriation of the Pontines.⁸⁰

On 14 January 1919, before the government had made its decision, Venizelos gave an interview to the London Times. He stated that the Armenian provinces in Eastern Anatolia together with Russian Armenia should form a separate state, which should be organized by a great power under a mandate of the League of Nations. He added that "to this Armenian State might be attached the vilayets Trebizond and Adana." The effect of this revelation was considerable in Pontine circles, mainly because it conflicted with their wishful thinking. Venizelos had not informed his Cabinet of his intentions. Even Diomidis and Repoulis only learned of his interview to the London Times from the Greek press. They immediately got in touch with Paris and asked for confirmation of the statement on Trebizond and Adana.⁸¹ Politis replied that Greece could not claim these areas which included many Armenians. Venize-

77. YE - A/4I, Argyropoulos, Stockholm, to Diomidis, tel. unnumbered, 22 December 1918.

78. DPA - Diomidis to Venizelos, tel. 12403, 27 December 1919; YE - A/5XII, Venizelos to Diomidis, tel. 169, 30 December 1918.

79. The Greek consular service in Russia had become almost totally isolated and often disintegrated owing to the circumstances prevailing in 1917-18.

80. YE - A/5XII, Diomidis to Venizelos, tel. 288, 24 January 1919. J. Stavridakis, first Secretary at the Paris Legation, was accompanied by Lt. A. Raphael, who spoke Russian, as his secretary.

81. YE - A/5VI, Diomidis to Politis, tel. 103, 17 January 1919.

los's aim was to promote Armenian independence and if the new Armenian State was to include areas with Greek population, such as Trebizond and Adana, the two elements should co-operate successfully and be grateful to have escaped from Turkish domination. Needless to say, to this scheme the Pontine Greeks were strongly opposed.⁸²

Petitions from all over the world flooded the Foreign Ministry in Athens and the Secretariat of the Peace Conference in Paris. Local meetings were held which expressed the disappointment of the Pontines and their opposition to Venizelos's policy. The recurring theme of their protests was a refusal to submit to the Armenians, whom they considered largely responsible for the hardship they had suffered in the hands of the Turks. Armenophobia was still strong amongst the Pontines. Fear of Moslem domination, however, also influenced their feelings: an Armenian State consisting of the six Armenian vilayets, Russian Armenia and Pontus, would still include a large Moslem majority. If the idea of an independent Republic of Pontus was unattainable, then Pontus should become part of the future international State of Constantinople and the Straits, or should form a confederation with Georgia.⁸³

On 30 January 1919 the Central Union of Pontines of Ekaterinodar addressed a protest to the governments of Greece, France, Britain and the United States, asking for military and naval protection of the Greeks in Pontus, assistance for the repatriation of Pontines from southern Russia, and political rehabilitation of Pontus by unification to the Greek Kingdom. Representatives of the Union were despatched to Paris, Constantinople and Athens.⁸⁴ On receiving the deputation to Athens, Diomidis warned Venizelos that if the Greek delegation in Paris ignored these demands the consequences might be serious.⁸⁵ Venizelos replied that he did not wish to impose a solution against the wishes of the Pontines. He had, however, reached the conclusion that the creation of an independent Pontine state had no chance of approval by the Peace Conference. Exaggerated figures recently submitted by the Pontines in support of their claims had created an adverse effect. There were only two alternatives: Pontus should either remain a part of Turkey or it should be included in an Armenian State. The first alternative he ruled out because the reduced Turkish

82. YE - A/5VI, Politis to Diomidis, tel. 679, 21 January 1919.

83. YE - A/5, protest of the Society "Greek Pontus," Salonika, 27 January 1919.

84. DPA - Central Union of Pontine Greeks, Ekaterinodar, to Committee of Pontines in Greece, report no. 82, 20 February 1919.

85. YE - A/5, Diomidis to Venizelos, tel. 288, 24 January 1919. While awaiting instructions, Diomidis was postponing the mission of Stavridakis and the despatch of financial assistance to Chryssanthos.

State was bound to pursue a strictly nationalistic policy which would result in the extermination of minorities. The second alternative was preferable: the Armenian State would have a mixed population, the Armenians themselves being a minority, and the appointment of a foreign mandatory would so ensure the protection of Greek rights that Hellenism might soon acquire preponderance in it. In the meantime, Stavridakis should report on the exact situation prevailing in southern Russia and Transcaucasia and money should be sent to Chryssanthos, the Metropolitan of Trebizond.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, Venizelos kept in mind the possibility of promoting other solutions. Late in December 1918 he had instructed Kanellopoulos to collect information from the Pontines of Russia and of Pontus as to the advisability of proclaiming a Pontine Republic either in Pontus, or in southern Russia or Transcaucasia. For these possibilities, however, there was evidently little local support because of the fear of Turkish reprisals.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, a rapprochement between the Greeks and the Armenians was taking place in Constantinople. On 29 December 1918, the president of the National Council of the Armenian Patriarchate met a member of the Greek National Council and agreed on the principle of close collaboration of Greeks and Armenians for their emancipation from Turkey and the repatriation of their co-nationals. The Greek Patriarchate had already mentioned the Armenian rights in a memorandum submitted to the Peace Conference on 27 December 1918, and it was agreed that the Armenian Patriarchate should also submit a memorandum expressing the wish of the Armenian Nation that Turkish sovereignty should be abolished in Constantinople and Smyrna where the Greek element was predominant. It was also agreed that the Councils of the two Patriarchates should each appoint two members of a commission which would draw up plans for common action.⁸⁸

This commission began to draft a memorandum intended for submission to the great powers. The delegates agreed that Pontus and Armenia should be left to their autochthonous populations.⁸⁹ The Armenian delegates, however, insisted on including their claim for an exit not only to the Mediterranean through Adana, but also to the Black Sea, east of Trebizond. In return they were ready to concede that the Armenian populations of Thrace, Constantinople, Ismid, Broussa and Aidin "would be happy to live under a Greek regime

86. DPA - Venizelos to Diomidis, tel. 997, 2 February 1919.

87. DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, for Politis, tel. unnumbered, 4 February 1919.

88. YE - A/5XII, Kanellopoulos to Paris Legation, tel. 223, 31 December 1918.

89. DPA - Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, for Politis, tel. 159, 25 January 1919.

and to see these areas incorporated with Greece.”⁹⁰ This draft memorandum the two Patriarchates accepted, subject to the approval of Venizelos and Noubar Pasha, head of the Armenian delegation in Paris. Noubar, however, refused to accept it: both he and the Armenian Committee in Paris had already claimed an exit on the Black Sea through the town of Trebizond. This refusal was not unwelcome to Venizelos, who had no wish to allow the question of Pontus to disturb his good relations with the Allied Powers.⁹¹

Already on 4 February, in speaking of Greek claims at the Conference, Venizelos had stated, in answer to Wilson’s enquiry, that although the Pontines wished to form a republic, he did not favour this proposal: it was undesirable to create small states, and, in any case, the countryside around Trebizond “comprised a very large number of Turks.” Trebizond should form part of the Armenian State.⁹² On 16 February Venizelos cabled Kanellopoulos asking him to explain to the Patriarchate and the representatives of the Greek population of Asia Minor the thoughts which had led him to formulate this policy. He stressed that the offer of the Armenians to support the Greek claims in areas where more than 200,000 Armenians lived should not be overlooked and that the co-operation of the two nations should be promoted.⁹³ This message Kanellopoulos transmitted to Pappas, the Patriarchate’s counsellor, who got in touch with the Armenians. Early in March 1919 the two Patriarchates agreed that in the proposed memorandum to the Peace Conference a demand should be made for the establishment of a great Armenia with exits to the Mediterranean and to the Black Sea without, however, specific mention of the town of Trebizond.⁹⁴

90. YE - A/5XII, Diomidis to Politis, tel. 771, 11 February 1919, transmitting Kanellopoulos’s tel. 461, not dated.

91. YE - A/5XII, Venizelos to Kanellopoulos, tel. 1510, 16 February 1919.

92. Cabinet Papers, London, 28/6 - I.C. 132, Secretary’s notes of a Conversation in M. Pichon’s Room at the Quai d’Orsay, on Monday, February 3, 1919, at 11 a.m.

93. YE - A/5XII, Venizelos to Kanellopoulos, tel. 1508, 16 February 1919. In two parts of the draft of the telegram which Venizelos later crossed out with his own hand, he advised the Greeks to accept Noubar Pasha’s claim to an exit on the Black Sea through Trebizond. He considered such a commercial outlet “not only not dangerous, but most advantageous” for the local Greeks.

94. YE - A/5XII, Kanellopoulos to Politis, tel. 895, 26 February 1919 and tel. unnumbered, 3 March 1919. Zaven, the Armenian Patriarch, expressed personally to Kanellopoulos the wish for close collaboration between the two nations. When the Turkish government came forward with suggestions for Turco-Armenian co-operation, he rejected the offer with indignation and assured Kanellopoulos that he would always inform the Greek Patriarchate of further proposals the Turks might make (YE - A/5XII, Kanellopoulos to Politis, tel. 1423, 18 March 1919).

In February 1919 the Pontine Greeks in Constantinople voted a resolution asking for the right of self-determination, their aim being the ultimate incorporation of Pontus with Greece, or, failing this, the creation of an independent Greek Republic of Pontus. This resolution they submitted in a Memorandum to d'Espérey and the High Commissioners of the great powers. Eight Greek bishops of Pontus, representing the twenty-three most important communities, likewise in defiance of Venizelos drew up a similar memorandum, with the additional proposition that a Greek Commissioner, appointed by the Greek government, should become the head of an eventual autonomous Greek State.⁹⁵ On 5 March, the second General Congress of representatives of Hellenism in southern Russia, Transcaucasia and Pontus met in Batoum and elected a seven-member Council. This council immediately recognized the self-appointed Pontine delegation in Paris, and it requested the Greek government to send troops to occupy Pontus. Rumours circulated that the General Congress intended to declare the independence of Pontus and to establish a provisional government in Batoum or Sochoum.⁹⁶

b) The Ukrainian Campaign and its Effects on the Initial Stages of the Diplomacy of the Pontus Question

As we have seen, Greece had undertaken the Ukrainian campaign chiefly with the aim of ingratiating herself with the great powers and of reaping territorial awards at the Paris Conference. Despite the failure of the enterprise, a distinctly philhellenic climate had been created in certain French political circles and the importance of the Greek contribution had been recognized with enthusiasm in the French Parliament. What is more, the exodus of the Greeks from Russia had in no way prejudiced the question of Pontus. On the contrary, the repatriation of the Pontines which was precipitated by the repercussions of the Greek participation in the Ukrainian campaign had made an independent Pontus a greater possibility. In spite their wish to remain uninvolved the Greek government had done its utmost to transport thousands of Pontines from Russia to Pontus, thereby increasing the percentage of the Greek population of Pontus. It could be said that the repatriation of the Pontines was forced upon Greece—as were forced the successive waves of refugees who came to Greece—and the Greek government could no longer maintain the policy of total non-involvement in the fate of the *δμογενεῖς* (co-nationals) of Pontus.

95. YE - A/5XII, Kanellopoulos to Politis, tel. 1242, 11 March 1919.

96. YE - A/5VI, Kanellopoulos to Diomidis, tel. 2886, 25 April 1919.

But neither French goodwill nor the concentration of the Pontines in their homeland was sufficient to achieve the union of Pontus with the Greek Kingdom or indeed Pontine autonomy. At no time was Venizelos in a position to propose with any hope of success the union of an outlying province like Pontus with the Greek motherland and the alternative idea of a Greek Pontine Republic never gathered support except from the Pontines themselves, under the leadership of Chryssanthos. Neither the Greek government nor the great powers at Paris gave any serious thought to this alternative idea, and even had Venizelos pressed the case of the Pontines, it is difficult to believe that the result would have been any different. The most that can be said is that by not supporting Pontine autonomy, Venizelos merely delivered the *coup de grâce* to a non-viable cause. When endless Pontine petitions flooded the Peace Conference Secretariat and delegations, asking for either union with Greece or independence, the invariable reply was: "Venizelos has not asked for either";⁹⁷ or: "Venizelos is obviously right in recommending that they (the Pontines) should join Armenia. They may be seven times as numerous as other Christians in the Trebizond vilayet (i. e. as the Armenians there) but they are less than a third of the total population."⁹⁸ In any case, it was pointed out that most of the Pontine Greeks were scattered along the coast, that no territory could be delimited with a Greek majority, and that the only effect of creating an independent Pontine State would be to cut off Armenia and large parts of Turkey from the Black Sea.

To Chryssanthos who arrived in Paris on 28 April 1919, accompanied by A. Pappas, the Patriarchal counsellor, Venizelos put these arguments, unwelcome though they may have been, and as the allies had failed to send troops to Trebizond, the Metropolitan had to agree with Venizelos on a middle course: Pontus should become neither totally autonomous nor a part of the Armenian State; they would both aim at the creation of a federal State, in which Pontus and Armenia would retain a large degree of independence. This agreement figures in a memorandum which Chryssanthos drew up on 2 and 3 May with the assistance of Pappas. In this memorandum Pontus was defined as the area from Rizikon to Sinope — an area covering the whole vilayet of Trebizond, a portion of the vilayet of Sivas and a small part of the vilayet of Kastamouni. The Greek population in this area was estimated to be 850,000, including 250,000 Pontines who had emigrated to Russia after 1880 and who were now returning home. The Moslems were reckoned to be about the same,

97. F. O. 608/82 - 2581, minute by Sir Louis Mallet, 22 February 1919.

98. F. O. 608/89 - 5647, minute by Arnold Toynbee, 30 March 1919.

including at least 300,000 forcibly islamized Christians who would probably revert to their old religion. Of about 80,000 Armenians who had lived in Pontus before the war, only very few had survived Turkish persecution.⁹⁹

On 9 May Chryssanthos visited Jules Cambon, the Chairman of the Commission on Greek Affairs, and explained his ideas verbally before handing the memorandum to him. Asked whether he had seen Venizelos on these matters, Chryssanthos replied that Venizelos had authorized him to state that he, Venizelos, fully approved of the contents of the memorandum. Cambon promised to bring the memorandum to the attention of the Greek Commission. He advised Chryssanthos, however, to prepare the ground by pressing his views upon the British and the American representatives.¹⁰⁰ This Chryssanthos did. On 16 May, together with Venizelos they agreed on the line to be adopted by the Metropolitan in his interview with Wilson which took place in the afternoon of the same day. After a general *exposé*, Chryssanthos encouraged the idea of an American mandate over Pontus. To Wilson's doubts whether this could be achieved, the Metropolitan suggested a Greek mandate as an alternative. Wilson promised his support and so did Tardieu, whom Chryssanthos saw next. Clemenceau told Romanos that if Wilson supported the Pontine Greeks he would do the same. Chryssanthos contacted the British through Nicolson.¹⁰¹

Meanwhile, the Greek delegates had been unofficially negotiating with the Armenians in Paris in the hope that this compromise would be accepted. The Armenians, however, insisted on their original proposal that Trebizond should be incorporated in an Armenian State, which would grant autonomy to the Greek population. On learning of this, the Pontine delegates in Paris who had never been happy with Chryssanthos's compromise, submitted their own memorandum to the Conference on 14 May. They requested the recog-

99. F. O. 608/82 - 10317, memorandum by the Metropolitan of Trebizond, 9 May 1919. E. Forbes Adam, of the Political Section of the British delegation, minuted: "... The Archbishop makes it quite a strong case and it is true that the Greeks of Trebizond are now being reinforced by the return of Greek refugees from Southern Russia..." The text of the memorandum, together with the attached documents, is in G. Tassoudis, Βιογραφικαὶ Ἀναμνήσεις τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀθηνῶν Χρυσάνθου τοῦ ἀπὸ Τραπεζοῦντος, Athens 1970, pp. 326-342.

100. DPA - Minutes of the discussion in the autograph draft of a telegram of Chryssanthos to Kanellopoulos, 3 June 1919. Chryssanthos asked for the contents of his memorandum to be transmitted to the Pontines of Trebizond, Amissos and Constantinople by the Greek delegation through Kanellopoulos. See also Tassoudis, pp. 193-6.

101. On this period of Chryssanthos's negotiations, see Ion Dragoumis, "Τὸ ζήτημα τοῦ Πόντου," (The Pontus Question), Ἑλληνικὴ Ἐπιθεώρησης, 17 July 1920. Also Tassoudis, pp. 109-209 and 345-354, where the minutes of Chryssanthos's interview with Wilson are published.

dition of an independent Pontine republic which should be placed under the protection of Greece or, failing this, under a mandate of the United States, similar to that which, as it was rumoured, the United States were disposed to accept for Armenia.¹⁰² These proposals fell on deaf ears and even the compromise solution put forward by Chryssanthos and Venizelos was received with suspicion by the British and American representatives, who had already decided that of the four sandjaks of the Trebizond vilayet, those of Trebizond and Gumush Khane should be included in an Armenian State, while those of Samsoun and Lazistan should go to Turkey and Georgia respectively. The question, however, whether the United States would accept the Armenian mandate, was still open. Much depended upon it: the two sandjaks of the Trebizond vilayet to form part of Armenia included only a small Armenian minority and both Greeks and Armenians would need considerable protection of their religious, educational and commercial interests. Indeed, the whole idea of a large Armenian State was based upon unrealities, and those who held it were either misled by historical arguments of doubtful value or by an excessive humanitarianism to repair past sufferings. As for the inclusion of Trebizond in the Armenian State, the main argument put forward by the British and American specialists was that "Trebizond offered the best and most easily accessible port on the Black Sea in territory assignable to Armenia."¹⁰³

In a conversation with Balfour on 25 May, Koromilas, a senior member of the Greek delegation, urged the desirability of giving Trebizond a special status within the new Armenian State. Balfour understood Koromilas's idea to be that Trebizond "should be united to Armenia by some kind of federal bond, rather than form an integral part of it, in view of its 'Greek' character."¹⁰⁴ This overture on behalf of the Greek government in support of Chryssanthos's memorandum was examined by Forbes Adam, a member of the Political Section of the British delegation. Although usually sympathetic towards Greek interests, Forbes Adam nevertheless concluded, in a long minute of 27 May, that neither the Greek minority in the sandjak nor the small majority in the town of Trebizond were sufficiently important to warrant a special status. If special status were granted to them, not only would the Greeks continue to demand to be attached to their mother country, but a dangerous precedent would be created for other racial minorities in the Armenian State.¹⁰⁵

102. F. O. 608/82 - 10093, memorandum by Mr. Oeconomou, President of the National League of Pontus Euxine, 14 May 1919.

103. F. O. 608/82 - 11392, minute by E. Forbes Adam, 27 May 1919.

104. F. O. 608/82 - 11392, letter from Lord Eustace Percy to Sir Louis Mallet, 27 May 1919.

105. F. O. 608/82 - 11392, minute by Forbes Adam, 27 May 1919. The conclusion of this

Aware of the difficulties lying ahead, Chryssanthos decided to stay on in Paris and to visit London in order to plead his cause. At the same time, the Pontines conceived the idea of organizing a small military force to become the nucleus of a Pontine army which would enable them to support their claims for independence with greater effect. This plan, Chryssanthos (who always remained faithful to the idea of Pontine independence, in spite of the compromises which he was obliged to accept) submitted to Venizelos late in April 1919, asking for his cooperation and assistance. From that point, a new phase of the Pontus question began, in which the Greek government could no longer refuse to participate. Official or semi-official Greek involvement may have ultimately failed to produce any lasting effects. It can, nevertheless, be said that without the Greek participation in the Ukrainian campaign and its consequences, the Greek government under Venizelos would have refrained from getting involved in the Pontus question, at least until the other territorial questions at stake in 1919-1920 were solved satisfactorily for Greece.¹⁰⁶

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minute was approved by Mallet and Hardinge, the latter, however, fancifully added that "there are as many Greeks in Odessa as in Trebizond, and they certainly have no privileged position..."

106. The main source for this new phase is Colonel D. Katheriotis's *Report of my Activities in Connection with the Pontus Question*, 3 June 1920, submitted to the Prime Minister, the Chief of the Army, the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of War.

APPENDIX

GREEK FINANCES AND MILITARY SUPPLIES, SEPTEMBER 1918 - MAY 1919

Although Greece participated in the 1914-1918 war only during the final sixteen months, the military and other expenditure incurred reached no less than £ 150,000,000 — a sum far too great for Greece in view of her precarious financial situation.¹ Financial assistance from the Entente amounted to only one-fifth of that sum. Most of it was in the form of book credit against which the Greek government issued notes,² an agreement having been reached on 3 December 1916, and signed in Paris on 10 February 1918, whereby France, Great Britain and the United States promised Greece advances of up to £30,000,000³ and the supply of military equipment, subject to the approval of the International Financial Commission in Athens.⁴

By August 1918, the International Financial Commission had approved advances of £ 21,000,000 but by the time the war approached its end, the three governments had only opened credits for £ 10,500,000. Meanwhile the great cost of the war had been met by the Greek government by the issue of bank notes by the National Bank under the cover of a Law of 1910.⁵ This proce-

1. A. Andréades, *Les Effets Economiques et Sociaux de la Guerre en Grèce*, Paris 1928, 17 - 48; A. Diomidis, *Tà oikonomikà tēs 'Elláδος prò kai metá tēn 1ēn Noεμβρίου 1920*, Athens, 1922, pp. 5 - 44.

2. Of a total of £ 14,000,000 granted by Great Britain, more than £ 12,000,000 were in the form of a book credit (F. O. 608/225 - 9984, Treasury to F. O., letter, 21 March 1919).

3. 750,000,000 drachmas. The pound sterling was then equal to a fraction less than 25 drachmas.

4. The International Financial Commission was established in 1897 within the framework of a Law of Control imposed by the Powers following Greece's bankruptcy. The actual revenues were collected by a Greek Joint - Stock Company, the Régie, the employees of which were Greek. The International Financial Commission exercised a general supervision with regard to the enforcement of the Law of Control, the receipt of money due and its remittance to the banks for payment to the bondholders.

5. The Law of Control forbade the issue of currency without cover. Law Γ ΧΜΒ of 1910 however, entitled the National Bank of Greece to issue notes covered by gold or by foreign

ture was not strictly illegal since the Bank issued currency in advance of the already secured loan which only awaited the formality – or so it was thought – of the decision of the International Financial Commission being sanctioned by the Allied governments. It was, nevertheless, liable to place both the Greek government and the National Bank in a very awkward situation if, indeed, it became publicly known that the war was actually being run on paper credit in the hopes that the Entente would win the war and so be able to honour their financial obligations.

On 25 September 1918, Venizelos, who was considerably concerned about the financial situation, read to the British and French Ministers and the United States Chargé d'Affaires an aide-mémoire in which he informed them that the National Bank of Greece was already uncovered for about £ 6,000,000 and warned them of the danger this represented not only to his government but also to Allied interests in Greece. De Billy suggested – and the others agreed – that the problem should be left to a conference in London. But in reply to Venizelos's protest that this procedure would merely cause further delay, they all undertook to suggest to their governments that the necessary credits be opened without awaiting the decision of the conference, having accepted the Greek argument that the Allies already knew what forces had been mobilized and roughly what sums were required. This suggestion the Allied governments accepted and in October and November 1918, credits of £ 5,500,000 were opened in equal shares by the British, French and United States governments.⁶

On 9 October 1918, Venizelos left Athens for Paris and London, accompanied by Negropontes, the Minister of Finance, and Broumis, the Greek delegate to the International Financial Commission. He intended to discuss with the Allies problems of finance, military provisioning and transport. He was prepared to place the Greek Army entirely at the disposal of the Allies until the end of the war.⁷ Already, however, on 19 September, the French government had suggested that a conference in London should decide on the ques-

currency which the Bank should pay on demand. This enabled Greece to build up a strong foreign currency reserve — which in 1918 amounted to about £ 24,000,000 — and at the same time to meet her needs in cash without inflationary effects. Delay in advancing the Allied loan in 1918 meant that the notes issued by the National Bank could not be paid on demand.

6. F. O. 371/3143 - 163271, Granville to F. O., tel. 886, 26 September; 168082, *Aide - Mémoire sur la Situation Financière du Gouvernement Hellénique*, 24 September; 169334, note from Treasury to F. O., 8 October 1918.

7. If, however, Greek divisions were to be sent to Turkey or to the western front, Venizelos considered many preparations and management of Greek public opinion necessary. (F.O. 371/3143 - 167641, Granville to F. O., tel. 920, 5 October 1918).

tion of Greek military supplies, as the existing financial agreement expired at the end of 1918. The British Treasury concurred but thought it desirable that financial discussions should precede considerations of supply. Although the two matters were interdependent, co-ordination was difficult because the question of military supplies lay in the province of the Supreme War Council in Paris. At a conference held in London on 24 October 1918, Negropontes asked for £4,000,000 which sum the Greek Government was prepared to consider a settlement of Greek civil and military costs up to the end of 1918. To this request the three Allied governments agreed.⁸ At a further conference held at the War Cabinet Office in London on 19 November under the presidency of Lord Milner, Secretary of State for War, the immediate despatch of clothing for the Greek army was approved.⁹ At this conference, however, the British Treasury representative, Maynard Keynes, proposed that advances for Greek internal purchases should cease as soon as the £ 30,000,000 promised in February 1918 had been exhausted, and that advances for Greek purchases abroad, under the control of the Inter-Allied Financial and Military Commissioners in Athens, should become definite loans from 1 January 1919 and cease on 31 March 1919, unless renewed following a successful Greek application to the Allied governments. On this issue no decision was reached as information concerning the probable date of demobilization of the Greek army was not forthcoming.¹⁰ With this situation the Greek representatives Broumis, Frantzis and Mazarakis, were extremely perturbed, but Venizelos let it unofficially be known to the British government that he would accept the Allied terms subject to minor modifications.¹¹ Before these could be discussed, however, the French government came forward with the proposal that Greek troops be sent to southern Russia to cooperate with the French in suppressing Bolshevism.

8. F. O. 371/3143 - 165618 and 170573; 3144 - 191453, Treasury to F. O., *Questions Helleniques*, note, 24 October 1918.

9. This conference was to be held in London on 12 November 1918. The Army Council, however, suggested that the conference should be postponed indefinitely in view of the changing situation on the eastern front and the need to decide first as to the uses to which the Greek army was to be put. This the British and French governments accepted but the urgent need of the Greek army for clothing necessitated the meeting of 19 November.

10. Bonar Law, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had said that the sole interest of the Treasury was to achieve the demobilization of the Greek army as rapidly as possible.

11. F. O. 371/3144 - 184706, War Office to F. O., note, 6 November; 192920, Nixon to Oliphant, letter, 20 November; War Office to F. O., note, 21 November; 198331, Treasury to Crosby, letter, 30 November; 204159, Derby to F. O., tel. 1738, 10 December 1918. Venizelos arrived in London on 8 November 1918.

The Ukrainian campaign created a new situation concerning the question of supplying the Greek army. In accepting Venizelos's conditions for Greek participation the French government informed Derby, the British Ambassador in Paris, that they expected the British government to continue to supply the material promised.¹² The British Treasury, however, had decided to withhold supplies to the Greek army for 1919 until a new agreement had been reached. In any case the British attitude to Russia differed from that of France. While Great Britain was ready to assist the "loyal elements" in Russia, she was opposed to the despatch of allied troops.¹³

On 6 January 1919, Bonar Law, the Chancellor of the British Exchequer, circulated a memorandum asking whether the Greek army should be demobilized as rapidly as possible, or whether British interests required that a substantial part of this army should be "kept in being for a period of a good many months yet."¹⁴ At a War Cabinet meeting of 10 January, Milner stated that General Milne on his own initiative, had promised to the Greek detachment going to Odessa food for ten days and forage for twenty. He asked whether supplies should continue. Curzon took the line that the French alone should be responsible, but Churchill proposed that Great Britain should continue to supply the Greek army until general policy had been established. This proposal was accepted, it being stipulated that when the question of Allied policy in Russia came up for discussion in Paris, the Greek aspect should be taken into consideration.¹⁵

When on 12 February the War Cabinet met again, no decision had been taken in Paris. At this meeting Bonar Law supported Curzon. He stated that already a month ago he had given instructions that payments to Greece should cease, and even when Curzon pointed out that the Greeks had already landed at Odessa, he insisted that the Greek army should be demobilized as soon as possible and that the British government should only finance it during the transitional period. But Churchill, recently appointed Secretary of State for War, argued that, although Great Britain was demobilizing, she still needed 175,000 men in the Mediterranean and in Russia. "Was it wise," he asked, "to limit the number of Greek troops in this area, who could relieve our own men

12. F. O. 371/3150 - 208361, Derby to F. O., tel. 1812, 18 December 1918.

13. F. O. 371/3579 - 1804, War Office to F. O., note, 3 January 1919; F. O. answer, note, 11 January 1919.

14. F. O. 371/3586 - 14738, memorandum circulated by Bonar Law to the War Cabinet, 6 January 1919. The British Treasury had sent Keynes to Paris early in January to discuss with the French.

15. CAB 23/9 - WC 515, 10 January 1919.

while our policy was still undecided?" The final decision was a compromise: the instructions issued by Bonar Law "should hold good" until allied policy in Russia was settled.¹⁶ Greece was now committed to serve her Allies, who, unable to formulate a definite policy, discontinued their financial and material aid.

Not until 26 May 1919 did the Allies decide to intervene in Russia.¹⁷ By that time the Ukrainian campaign was over and Greece had yet received no help.¹⁸ On 25 February, the British War Cabinet had authorized the Chancellor of the Exchequer to offer Venizelos final payments "in anticipation of the gradual demobilization of the Greek army within limited time."¹⁹ On 1 March Bonar Law had drawn up a draft agreement which provided for the opening by Great Britain and France of a new credit of £ 6,000,000 to Greece for the first six months of 1919. Venizelos accepted the agreement in principle on 12 March, but asked for a supplementary sum on account of delays in demobilization. This demand the Allies refused, whereupon Venizelos, in a letter to Keynes on 26 April, was obliged to accept the agreement and requested its speedy signature. Delay in demobilization, Venizelos wrote, was imposed not only in the interests of Greece but more generally in those of the Allied cause. The Greek government was facing a total cost of £ 18,000,000 for 1919. It would, consequently, be necessary to reopen the discussion again later on with regard to the outstanding £ 12,000,000. If Great Britain and France refused to assist Greece further, they should set her free from the obligation (in the 1918 agreement) not to contract loans in other foreign markets.²⁰ The agreement was signed in Paris on 19 May 1919. On the same day, the French government undertook to advance the expenses of the transport and maintenance of the Greek troops in southern Russia, the Greek government agreeing to repay the sum in biannual installments in francs at 5% interest, within two years of the signing of the Peace Treaties with Bulgaria and Turkey.²¹

16. CAB 23/9 - WC 531, 12 February 1919.

17. In the meantime, the failures of the Prinkipo Islands proposal, the Churchill proposal the Bullit mission and lengthy negotiations had allowed the Bolsheviks to gain considerable ground.

18. Only Balfour explicitly expressed the opinion that until it was decided to evacuate all Allied troops from Russia, it would be "politically disadvantageous for His Majesty's Government to discontinue their share in this assistance" (F. O. 371/3586 - 39364, Balfour to Curzon, desp. 213, 11 March 1919).

19. CAB 23/15, 25 February 1919.

20. F. O. 608/225 - 9984, Keynes to Venizelos, letter, 31 March; Venizelos to Keynes, letter, 26 April 1919.

21. DPA - Financial Agreements with Greece, Agreement II, Greek troops despatched in Southern Russia, signed by Romanos and Klotz, Paris, 19 May 1919.

