

THE GREEK-TURKISH WAR OF 1919-1922
IN GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY

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Yunan Tarihyazımında 1919-1922

Yunan-Türk Savaşı

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ÖZET

Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda zafer kazanan İtilaf Devletleri tarafından da teşvik edilen Başbakan Venizelos'un liderliğindeki Yunanistan, 1919 yılının Mayıs ayında İzmir'e çıktı. Yunanlıların/Rumların bir "Büyük Yunanistan" şemsiyesi altında tek bir ulus olarak birleşmesine cevaz veren Büyük Ülkü (*Megali Idea*) doktrini böylece uygulamaya konulmuş oldu. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun sonunu getiren 1918 Mondros Mütarekesi sonrasında Türklerin ciddi bir direnç göstereceğini kimse beklemiyordu. İzmir'deki Yunan güçleri, Ankara'da örgütlenen milliyetçi Türk güçlerine karşı Anadolu içlerine doğru ilerlesin diye, özellikle Britanya Başbakanı Lloyd George tarafından bir kez daha teşvik edildi. Ancak, "Büyük Yunanistan" rüyası Ağustos 1922'de Sakarya'da yenilgiye, Eylül 1922'de ise İzmir'de felakete dönüştü. 1919-1922 Yunan-Türk savaşına ilişkin tartışmalar Yunanistan'da hala devam ediyor.

ABSTRACT

In May 1919, Greece, encouraged by the Entente, the winner of the First World War, landed its forces in Smyrna/İzmir. The *Megali Idea*, a doctrine that allowed for all the Greeks/Rums to gather under the umbrella of a "Greater Greece" was now put into practice. No one anticipated much resistance from the Turks after the Armistice at Moudros signed and sealed the fate of the Ottoman Empire in 1918. The Greek forces in Smyrna/İzmir were further encouraged, particularly by Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of Britain, to foray out of Smyrna/İzmir and into Anatolia against the nationalist Turkish forces based in Ankara. However, the dream of "Greater Greece" turned sour at Sangoria in August 1922, and then to a *Katastrofi* at Symrna/İzmir in September 1922. The Greek-Turkish war of 1919-1922 is still a hotly debated issue in Greece.

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INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I will attempt to demonstrate that the *Megali Idea* (the Great Idea), an irredentist and ideologically excessive by-product of 19th Century Greek national historiography, paved the way for the *Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi* (the Asia Minor Catastrophe), which determined and defined the present state of Greece both geographically and psychologically.

Formulated for the first time by Prime Minister Kolettis in 1844, the *Megali Idea* stipulated that the land that belonged to the Greeks/the *Rum* from the ancient times must be recovered at all costs. From the beginning of the 20th century, the state of Greece, justified and rationalized by such an irredentist ideology, moved to invade territory that belonged to the Ottoman Empire. The last of the territory taken by the Greek forces in May 1919 was Smyrna/İzmir. This signified the beginning of the end for the *Megali Idea*. War broke out between the state of Greece and the Turks now led by the nationalists centered in Ankara. The end result was described by the Greek people as *Katastrofi*, the disaster, a term still in use among the Greeks today to characterize that period.

For all intents and purposes, the major result of the *Katastrofi* was the end of the Greek/the *Rum* presence in Anatolia and Eastern Thrace. I will argue, however, that the *Megali Idea* had a real chance to succeed at the outset of the Asia Minor campaign, if not for the grave political and military mistakes committed by politicians in charge of the Greek state between 1919 and 1922. The infamous “Trial of the Six”, which resulted in the execution of the officials held responsible for the failure of the Asia Minor campaign by the general Greek public, will be cited as an example to reveal the profundity of the national collective trauma in the aftermath of the *Katastrofi*.

I will seek to lay bare the process through which the *Megali Idea*, a comprehensive Greek ideology with roots in 18th century, formulated gradually and over time by Adamantios Korais (1748–1833), Ioannis Zambelios (1787–1856), and Constantine Paparrigopoulos (1815–1891), the prominent intellectual personalities adhered to and accepted as the authorities in Greek history and literature. Finally, I will explicate and elucidate the main subject of this thesis, the war of 1919-1922 and the *Katastrofi* itself, through the writings of the Greek historiographers of the modern period.

Greece entered the First World War in November 1917. The period from 1919 to 1922 was when the *Megali Idea* was tried in practice in full force: in May 1919, Smyrna/İzmir was invaded by the Greek forces supported by the Entente. As a result of grievous strategic and tactical mistakes on the part of the Greek government and the commanders, the Greek forces in Anatolia were crushed despite an extraordinary military performance by the rank-and-file. This resulted in the *Katastrofi* of 1922 when the Greeks/the *Rum* of Smyrna/İzmir had to escape the city *en masse* before the nationalist Turkish forces arrived. This meant the beginning of the end for the Greek/the *Rum* presence in Ionia and the inner regions of Anatolia as well as the shores of the Black Sea, their home from the time immemorial. The compulsory population exchange agreement between Greece and Turkey as part of the Treaty Of Lausanne in 1923 put the finishing touch and ended a quintessentially Anatolian culture, the *Rum*, literally, overnight.

This agreement between the two countries caused widespread and lasting anguish and trauma as well as profound socio-economic hardship among populations subjected to it. It was not a matter of reuniting with the brethren in one's own country, but more like

being exiled without a chance to return. Flourished over thousands of years, decimated in a few, the following poem was written by one of them:

İsmet Paşa, Venizelos geldiler,
Trampa yapmaya karar verdiler,
Acep bunu bir ferde mi sordular?
Dünya kurulalı görülmemiştir.

Türkiye'den kaldırdılar bizleri
Kan ağlıyor hepimizin gözleri

Ismet Pasha, Venizelos came,
They decided to swap men,
Have they asked anyone?
Not seen since the beginning.

From Turkey they removed us
Blood tears from our eyes

PAPA NEOFITOS EKONOMOS¹

The aftermath of the *Katastrofi*, the Second World War, the Greek civil war and the following historical periods are not the subjects of this thesis. Suffice it to say that the Greek historiography of the later periods, particularly after the Second World War, seem to have produced historians and historiographers who were no longer content with the official historiography of the Greek past as espoused by the state of Greece. In fact, these new historians and historiographers initiated a period of coming-to-terms with the official Greek historiography and turn to an objective historical analysis of their own past. Nikos Svoronos (1911-1989), the founder of the post Second World War Marxist historiography of Greece, for instance, wrote the first unofficial history of Greece that was published in

¹ Ayhan Aktar, *Türk Milliyetçiliği, Gayrimüslimler ve Ekonomik Dönüşüm*, İletişim, 2006, p. 154, ref: Evangelia Balta, *Karamanlidika, XXe siecle: Bibliographie Analytique*. Athens: Centre D'etudes D'Asie Mineure, 1987, pp. 155-6 [Translated from Turkish by AGT]

Paris, in 1955. During this period, Greek historiography transcended itself and took on the appearance of a real academic discipline; it asked and answered historiographically determinant questions such as, “What is the real origin of the Greek nation and the Greek state?” or “What is the real story behind the Ottoman Empire?” and, “How do we come to terms with the *Megali Idea*?” In this sense, there seems to be a break from the past, particularly after 1974 following the junta regime.

This thesis follows the descriptive, thematic, and analytic approach. The ideas, thoughts, and explanations of historians and writers deemed to be significant to the subject-matter of this thesis are explicated under the themes chosen and when needed in chronological manner. Frequently, upon comprehension of their ideas; an analysis, an interpretation, or a straight forward clarification offered throughout.

There are four chapters in this thesis. The first chapter outlines some of the historical ideas concerning history, historiography, and historicity, as well as providing some definitions concerning the same. Here, I study and establish these concepts that will affect the foundations of this thesis in a fundamental manner. Within the body of the chapter, the historicity, namely, the present historical significance of the Greek-Turkish war of 1919-1922, the title of the thesis, is questioned. Since all the current signs point in that direction, the verdict is that, indeed, this war and its repercussions are still very much alive therefore presently carry historical significance in both countries.

The second chapter is a look into the Greek idea of who the Turk is and how the latter figures in the historiography of the former as “the other”. The question of “Is a Turk an Archetypal Hate Figure?” is answered in this chapter. The period following the fall of the Byzantium Empire is described as the “Ottoman yoke” by the Greek/the *Rum*

from the very beginning. In Greek official historiography, the same period is called “*Turkokratia*” when the development of the Greek people was forcefully stopped by the conquerer. This period is not considered to be of any historical value or an experience the Greek/the *Rum* should incorporate into the general history of the Greeks. It is there simply to be rejected as a disgraceful period of slavery under the Ottomans. This way, the entire tradition of the Ottoman *Rum* is denied and suppressed by the official Greek historiography. The process of “othering” continues into the 20th century, this chapter notes. The Muslim Ottomans living in the Balkans were also influenced by the ideas of nationhood of the 18th century Enlightenment, which, ultimately, led to the crystallization of the “Ottoman-Turkish” nationalism. This caused yet another “othering” process and, in my view, led to the ultimate and final military confrontation between the Greek/the *Rum* and the Ottoman-Turks (who were later transformed into the Ankara-nationalists) that ended with the showdown in Smyrna/İzmir in 1922. Later periods witnessed moments when there was a high potential of military showdown which never materialized. From the recent years onwards, it appears that both states, particularly Greece, went through a remarkable transformation debunking stereotypes about each other.

The third chapter concentrates on the historiography of the Megali Idea, probably one of the most important national doctrine/directive ever produced by a people. This chapter attempts to probe into the historical origins of this doctrine that is still debated in Greece. In order to understand this Hellenic national doctrine, first, I tried to probe into the background of the very advent of the idea of the ‘nation’, a product of the Enlightenment. Indeed, in the 18th century, a new type of ideology, one that is based on the idea of one overwhelmingly dominant ethnic group constituting the backbone of a

state, had made its entrance into the world stage in Europe. However, when this nationalism showed itself in the Balkans still ruled by the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 18th century, it became, according to Lekas, “decidedly ethnic in nature”. I argue that what really influenced the Greek national idea in the end was the fact that nationalism was a composite and not a unitary idea. Greek nationalism, which conceptualized a composite structure of the entire population of the Greeks/the *Rum* anywhere in the world found its total expression in the ideology of the *Megali Idea* which stipulated and demanded that Greeks constitute a composite unit wherever they were, under one roof: the Greater Greece. In other words, the *Megali Idea* did not ask for the Greeks/the *Rum* to return to then the state of Greece but called for the liberation of the lands where they lived. All the land liberated in this fashion would come to constitute the Greater Greece. Furthermore, the *Megali Idea* sanctioned the use of all means to achieve this aim. The result was ideological excessiveness and irredentism, which, I argue in this thesis, was the cause of the *Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi*.

The fourth chapter attempts to explain how the Greek historiographers perceived/perceive the putting-into-practice of the *Megali Idea* in the Asia Minor: the invasion of Smyrna/İzmir and the actual war of 1919-1922 itself. Its entire development and the final defeat of the Greek forces were simply but most harrowingly described by the people of the state of Greece as the *Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi*. In the aftermath of the First World War, which the Greek state entered in November 1917, first, the Entente had a beautiful reward for Greece: the city of Smyrna/İzmir. Alas, following that Athens found a mission in her hands: to crush the nationalist Turkish forces organizing in Ankara, something no one had predicted would happen, not even the Prime Minister

Eleftherios Venizelos, a man for all seasons. Athens was now stuck between a rock and a hard place: if they forayed into the inner regions of Anatolia, not-so-friendly members of the Entente, such as France and Italy would object, which they immediately did. But if they remained in Smyrna/İzmir and did nothing, it was certain that Ankara would finally strike with vengeance. The Greeks risked their fragile friendship with the said members of the Entente and mobilized their forces against the Turkish nationalists. This was called the “Asia Minor campaign”. The Greek forces were poised to recover the land, which they believed was theirs from the time immemorial, from the hands of the Turk at last. Constantinople would be next. But, nothing went as planned. The entire campaign was riddled with political and military mistakes, which, in each and every step, destroyed the chances of the rank-and-file Greek forces to win a battle, let alone the war. The members of the Entente, even Britain at the end of 1922, defected to the Turkish side, leaving the Greeks completely exposed to the Turkish fire, well supplied by the Russian Bolsheviks now in power, and even the French and the Italians, who would rather see the Turk than the Greek lording over the territories of Anatolia and Eastern Thrace. The military defeat came on August 26, 1922 at Dumlupınar. The Greek forces were decimated and made a run for their lives towards the Aegean coast and Smyrna/İzmir. Widespread massacres by both sides made the headlines of major newspapers of the world. Smyrna/İzmir awaited its fate in terror regardless of who won or lost the war. Horrific scenes were reported by journalists, objective or not, being committed by both sides from the vicinity to all the way down to the harbor of the city. The Turkish forces entered the city on September 9, 1922. The crown jewel of the Aegean, Smyrna/İzmir, was burned down to ground zero. The Greeks/the *Rum* huddled into any marine vehicle they could possibly find to escape

by sea. Many drowned in chaos. The warships of the Entente laid in the harbor immaculate and expressionless. Save for the Americans, they took no Greeks/the *Rum* on board despite being petitioned, made no attempt to save lives. This completed the *Katastrofi*. The Greeks raged against six Greek officials, including commanders and ex-prime ministers, whom they held responsible and executed them after a summary trial in Athens in late 1922. In November 2009, the Greek Supreme Court accepted a petition to re-open the case. In early 2010, the Court cleared the “Six” of the charges directed against them in 1922 and ruled in favor of acquittal. The Court contended that, given the period of time that the trial in 1922 lasted, it was impossible to gather enough evidence to charge them with any wrongdoing at all. Perhaps, with this decision of the Supreme Court of Greece, the nation, at long last, came to terms with a sad chapter in its history.

THE GREEK-TURKISH WAR OF 1919-1922

IN GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY

“These are the researches of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, which he publishes, in the hope of thereby preserving from decay the remembrance of what men have done, and of preventing the great and wonderful actions of the Greeks and the Barbarians from losing their due need of glory; and withal to put on record what were their grounds of feud.”²

HERODOTUS OF HALICARNASSUS

“... ‘being’ is merely a continual ‘has been’, a thing that lives by denying and destroying and contradicting itself...”³

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

² Herodotus of Halicarnassus, Histories, Translated with Notes by George Rawlinson With an Introduction by Tom Griffith, Wordworth Classics of World Literature, Hertfordshire, 1996, p. 3

³ Friedrich Nietzsche, The Use and Abuse of History, Cosimo, New York, 2005, p. 6

CHAPTER I

HISTORY - HISTORIOGRAPHY

“Accurate historical knowledge is essential for social sanity. Pathological systems—totalitarian regimes of whatever kind, of the left or the right—must systematically distort history in order to survive. Goebbels knew that; Stalin and his lackeys in the Soviet Writers’ Guild knew that. So did George Orwell when he assigned the hero of 1984 the task of falsifying the past. Society’s need for history, as complete and objective as possible, is obvious.”⁴

BERNARD BAILYN

“History is not the end result of a neutral process of disinterested exploration in the archive by a knowing subject who exists outside time and place. Rather, when we write the past we are doing so as part of a writer-text-reader interactive situation – within the perimeter of what Foucault calls a discursive formation. It is this discursive formation that shapes the meaning we take from the past, not the reverse. History, therefore, has no intrinsicity beyond the historian. Indeed, all we have is the-past-as-history.”⁵

ALUN MUNSLOW

“The inner meaning of history, . . . , involves speculation and an attempt to get at the truth, subtle explanation of the causes and origins of existing things, and deep knowledge of the how and why of events. History, therefore, is firmly rooted in philosophy. It deserves to be accounted a branch of it. . . No one can stand up against the authority of truth, and the evil of falsehood is to be fought with enlightening speculation.”⁶

IBN KHALDUN

Past events have significance for human beings. They are narrated and recorded for posterity, as a result of which a virtual “reality” seems to have been formed in the minds of humans so far back in time that it appears to be impossible to ascertain in a meaningful manner exactly when. Carl Becker describes it as an “artificial extension of the social memory”⁷. It is called history. Historiography, on the other hand, is interested in establishing the peculiar way in which a certain history is conceived, narrated, and

⁴ Bernard Bailyn, *On the Teaching and Writing of History: Responses to a Series of Questions*, Ed. Edward Connery Lathem, University Press of New England, 1991, p. 12

⁵ Alun Munslow, *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies*, Routledge, London, 2000, p. 109

⁶ Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, Trans. From Arabic by Franz Rosenthal, Bollingen Series/ Princeton, U.S.A., Ninth Paperback Printing 1989, p. 5

⁷ Carl Becker, quoted by Bernard Bailyn in *On the Teaching and Writing of History: Responses to a Series of Questions*, Ed. Edward Connery Lathem, University Press of New England, 1991, p. 7

written. This peculiarity is necessarily determined by the personality of the historian, the society in which he or she lives and is moulded by (*Weltanschauung*), as well as the characteristics of the time period (*Zeitgeist*) in question.

1. Historian – History – Historiography - Historicity

Is the conceiver and the writer of a certain history the same person who is also called a “historian”? Strictly speaking, the answer must be a yes. If history is a Western concept that “dates back to the Greeks of the fifth century B.C., in particular to Herodotus, and a self-conscious differentiation from myth, which was in fact constituted in the process,”⁸ then Herodotus of Halicarnassos is the first historian who conceived what is generally accepted as the first historical text of the Western world, Histories.

Events deemed to be historical may be either narrated from generation to generation or recorded but they are always located in a certain time and place which contemporary people are supposed to have experienced from their own perspective as they lived their daily lives. History, the historian, or the historical text may have nothing to do with what in fact the contemporary people or their governments perceived they experienced through the events narrated or recorded by the historian. No harm done. Moreover, therein lies the freedom of history bequeathed by the traditions of the ancient Greek historiography. In Tiananmen Square in China in 1989, history was made when a lone man was caught by television cameras standing before a tank to protest against the draconian measures taken by the Chinese government to curtail individual rights and

⁸ Jose Rabasa, Without History: Subaltern Studies, the Zapatista Insurgency, and the Specter of History, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010, p. 141.
History being a Western invention, please see:
François Hartog, “The Invention of History: From Homer to Herodotus” in Turning Point in Historiography: A Cross Cultural Perspective, Eds: Q. Edward Wang, George G. Iggers, The University of Rochester Press, USA, 2002, p. 19, 20-3

freedoms as these quintessentially Western concepts are now universalized throughout the world. The official Chinese recorders of events were barred forever from commenting about this event in any way at all, which, ironically, in and of itself, signifies the event as a *bona fide* historical phenomenon in the eyes of the West. For the Chinese government, however, it will never be counted among events that have historicity except as a lesson to prop up the security of the Chinese state. Given that they are accepted universally, the concepts of history and historicity therefore, appear to have value depending on the way in which events are perceived based on societal and even governmental parameters.

What are the determinant factors of historicity of events then? It must be the people and the passage of time: what may appear to be a historical event to a certain people in a certain time may lose its historical significance later. Conversely, what appears to be trivial then, may become an event of historical dimensions later in time. Subsequently, they are categorized by history on the basis of their attached significance. Finally, historical events are recalled at will for reasons dictated by the inner necessities of the mind or outer necessities of life situations all concerning the homo sapiens, the only known beings on earth with history, which was first perceived and conceptualized as a particular differentiation of human consciousness by the ancient Greeks.

For an event to have historicity at all, a certain tension must persist in it that is felt by the people of the contemporary world. A historical event will lose its historicity, its immediate historical significance, when this tension is no longer present. An example will help explain this point: hundreds of agreements must have been signed between the two city states of the Italian peninsula such as Genoa and Venice from the 11th century on when they were important trading, military, and political powers as well as

competitors for at least three hundred years. These agreements must have played an important role in the daily lives of the people of those city states as well as the entire Mediterranean basin. In this day and age, however, there are no apparent or visible tensions stemming from that era strong enough to make any impact in the same region. Save for purely academic reasons, historians are most likely to attempt to relate the history of contemporary Mediterranean basin from the end of Second World War onwards. For all intense and purposes, historians would no longer consider the competition between Genoa and Venice as the determinant factor in the contemporary history of the Mediterranean. To sum up, historicity is immediate and will determine the historiographical value of an event, although, the importance of Genoa-Venice agreements will remain within the body of historical knowledge.

In this sense, the historicity, namely, the historical value of the events of 1919-1922, when the state of Greece organized a military campaign in Anatolia, is very much alive. The boundaries between the two countries were determined right after the war in 1923 during the Treaty of Lausanne. Likewise, even as most of the islands in the Aegean were given to Greece, including those in extreme proximity to the Turkish borders, the issue of the continental shelf was not perceived to be an area that would turn problematic, and yet, in time, it did. This matter stands unresolved to this date. Also, while the *Rum* minority in Turkey are still entangled with bureacratic problems concerning property rights and education, the Turkish minority in Greece still face political hurdles to organize themselves on the basis of their identity as Greeks of Turkish origin; the Greek government recognize them as Muslim Greeks. In both Greeee and Turkey, it appears,

“history is not past; indeed, the past continues to live in the present”.⁹ However, for the sake of fairness, one must immediately state that the tension that was once a burning rod between the Greeks and the Turks in the aftermath of the mentioned time period is no longer there *per se*. Rather, the tension has become more than manageable lending itself to interesting and somewhat fruitful academic discussions. As well, the political relationship that took start in mid-1980s when the Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal visited Athens, notwithstanding a skirmish here and there since then, continued on to the point when Greece fully supported the Turkish application to become a member of the European Union at the beginning of 2000s. Human emotions and subjectivities based on the respective national memories of the past, however, will probably continue on to determine the Greco-Turkish relations for some time to come yet.

2. “Good” Historian

It is not possible to recall a past experience exactly as it happened; there is no such mechanism available to humans either in their brain or as an outside gadget. Therefore what is recalled on the basis of what is narrated or recorded must be “necessarily imperfect and selective reconstruction.”¹⁰ If so, then, why has history and historiography become a critically significant area of interest for humans? Bernard Bailyn answers: “[They serve] to extend and to enlarge our own personal experience and to orient contemporary issues, values, goals, and behavior.”¹¹ In such an area of human interest as history where subjectivity should necessarily reign virtually unopposed, how could one

⁹ Ş.S. Gürel, Tarihsel Boyut İçinde Türk Yunan İlişkileri, 1821-1993 (Turkish-Greek Relations in Historical Context, 1821-1993), Ümit, Ankara, 1993, p. 10

¹⁰ Bailyn, On the Teaching and Writing of History: Responses to a Series of Questions, p. 7

¹¹ Ibid

be sure at all about the facts history purportedly recalls from amongst an infinite amount of recordings? Again, here is an answer furnished by Bailyn:

The accuracy and adequacy of representation of past actualities, the verisimilitude or closeness to fact of what is written about them, remain the measure, in the end, of good history – this despite all the fashionable doubts that are raised about the attainment of absolute or perfect objectivity and accuracy (which no one pretends to anyway).¹²

Indeed, we have in hand written texts, some of which are historical, that relate such events from the time immemorial. But also the written word is written at a certain point in time and place with a *Zeitgeist* of its own - humans seem unable to be completely free of inner and outer circumstances of life. Therefore, an event, which may be recorded as historical knowledge, can only be narrated or written in such manner that will inevitably reflect the biases of the times, as well as of the agent, the historian himself. Bailyn seems to imply in the quote above that at the end we have nothing but a historian trying his best to remain loyal to the ideal of “good history”, which makes him a good historian in the eyes of posterity.

No matter how “good” a historian, attempting to remain loyal to the ideal of “good” history, the *Zeitgeist* will never leave his cite. Edward Hallet Carr writes: “When we attempt to answer the question, What is history?, our answer, consciously or unconsciously, reflect our position in time, and forms part of our answer to the broader question, what view we take of the society in which we live.”¹³

If we interpret *Zeitgeist* as “what is in the air at that time”, the historian’s “position in time (Carr)” may not be solely the *Zeitgeist* of his time and the place he lives. But the “view we take of the society (Carr)” will also be determined by the beliefs of the

¹² Bailyn, On the Teaching and Writing of History: Responses to a Series of Questions, p. 8

¹³ Edward Hallet Carr, What is History, Random House, New York, 1961, p. 5

historian, moulded by factors intrinsic to his character, background, and environment (*Weltanschauung*), as well as the *Zeitgeist*. To make this point clear; the historian is in the position to mention, for instance, the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) when writing about the Cold War (roughly 1947-1991) as part of the *Zeitgeist*. To wit, the historian cannot get away from the reality of the USSR when writing about the Cold War. It seems that Carr is drawing our attention to the ideological factor which “consciously or unconsciously (Carr)” may condition the writings of the historian. The ideologies present during the Cold War influenced the historians of the period when they historicized; it was, Carr suggests, unavoidable.

3. A Viable History

To probe into the background of a history and to lay bare the foundations of its determinant factors is the area that belongs to historiography proper.

Taking extreme care not to fall into anachronism, historiography examines how a certain history is conceived, the sources employed to mould it into historical knowledge, and the way in which it is transmitted, such as the method of transmission, as well as the means used, the style employed, and, of course, the biases exhibited by the writer(s). It reports back systematically concerning its conclusions. Historiography is needed to make a history viable.

Historiography itself is also the field of the historiographer. In this case, rather than reporting back under certain subjects outlined in the paragraph above, the historian or the historiographer will talk about the “the state of the historiography of the period”, for instance, the “age of the ancient Greece”, or, the “change in historiography of Greek national history after 1974”. It is also possible to talk more generally about, for instance,

“historiography in 18th century England” or “historiography of the New Age Movement in California”, which, in each case, indicates the way in which history was perceived in England or by the New Age Movement in California.

4. The First Historiographer

Historiography and historiographer are definitely needed to complete the picture drawn by history caused by human activity. Likewise, it is impossible to talk about a historiography when there is no historiographer; he does not just write history but critically examines the histories written by others. A historiographer could then be aptly defined as the historian of the historians and their histories. Herodotus of Halicarnassus/Bodrum (approximately 485 BCE - 425 BCE) is widely accepted as the first historiographer as well as the first historian of the Western world. The reason why Herodotus can take the title of the first historiographer as well as the first historian is his attempt to provide his historical accounts while fully presenting all of his findings to the critical reviewing of his readers in case their interpretation is different or they simply disagree.¹⁴

It is possible to generalize at this juncture that for a history to come to being at all events that are deemed to be unforgettable must be narrated, recorded, and transmitted from generation to generation after they happen by human agents. Therefore, the truth is that history is ‘made’ if and only if such process takes place, which is, by nature, *ex post facto*. In fact, the body of historical texts written by various historians concerning the

¹⁴ For “Herodotus” please see: N. Jayapalan, *Historiography*, Atlantic, New Delhi, 2008 p. 45; Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1990, p. 52; A.A. Long, “Herodotus” in *Philosophy, History and Oratory*, Ed. P.E. Easterling, The Cambridge History of Classical Literature, Cambridge University Press, Great Britain, 1989 p. 14; Thucydides, *History of the Grecian War*, Faithfully Translated from the Original by Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury [in 1634], Longman, London, 1812, Vol. I, p. xlvi

very same event augment to constitute the history of that event. One interpretation of the same historical event, as long as it submits to the ‘science’ of history, has the same value with another, although, the theoretical structures that constitute the foundation of an historical interpretation of the same event may and will differ depending on the perspective the historian adopts dealing with the event.

5. “Science” of Historiography

There must be many historical events that we have no knowledge of as they have never been narrated or recorded for posterity for reasons we will never know. These events are good-for-naught from the historical perspective: they have not made it to the history books. On the other hand, many believe that the Trojan War is a historical reality, regardless of the predominantly mythological therefore unhistorical account of Homeros. In other words, history is necessarily an interpretation and reinterpretation of past events, *ad infinitum*, for as long as there is in hand material that lends itself to even a modicum of historical investigation. If this is true, then we could even call Homeros, a historian. But we do not, for the “science” of history distinguished historian from the story-teller in that the former uses a rigorous empirical methodology buttressed by the condition of intersubjectivity, namely the scientific method – notwithstanding its shortcomings and the criticisms that have been spelled out particularly in the second half of the 20th century . Accordingly, a historian must have a hypothesis, gather the relevant facts, formulate or use an existent systematic theory to classify, and interpret their meaning in an authoritative manner. All of this must be amenable to criticism, review, and examination of other historians to satisfy the condition of intersubjectivity. Consequently, while Herodotus is accepted as the first historian for his systematic approach to history,

which included testing the accuracy of his findings to a certain degree, Homeros, the writer of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, is not, and remains, most honorably, a story-teller.

What the story-teller has in common with the historian is that he interprets *ex post facto* using his own idiosyncratic ways and means, which may even include the 'scientific' method. There has always been a pressing need to be vigilant to distinguish between the historical texts, no matter when or by whom they may possibly be written, and stories written by story-tellers.

While the body of literature which contain all the evidence that have been narrated, spoken, and written about a past event constitute the historical text; the act of critical assessment of the historical text itself is the domain of historiography.

In terms of history, it is the historiography and the historiographer who will have the last word on a historical text written by a historian as well as a body of a particular history. Ideally, historical texts will be subjected to a profound elaboration and their historiography will be laid bare, uncovering all the factors within and without that may have possibly contributed to the biases of a historical text created by a historian. The text will be deconstructed *per se*. Historiography is the "inspector general" of history: "Historiographers study the shape of evidence. Often they desire to determine how its form outlines the contour of an absence, a void, or a silence which in turn is assumed to be the ground of history."¹⁵

Historiography "manages" history, as it were, by asking questions such as: "What were the ethical considerations of the times in which Herodotus wrote?"; "Were the Persians who killed the entire population of a city they conquered alone in this act, or was

¹⁵ Tom Conley in Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1988, p. viii

this the general practice of the victors of that period?"; "What were the characteristic behaviour of the ancient Greeks when they conquered a city of the enemy?"

It is probable that despite historiographic deconstruction of a certain historical text that leads to '*aporia*' [a thoughtful state of impasse/confusion that encourages further probe, investigation] or following a major psychological fault discovered in the personality of a historian, it is still valid for it may be deemed to be employable in the service of history. An example would be a Nazi historian who documented the events of the Holocaust on a daily basis even providing facts and figures as to how many Jews, when, and where were killed, the materials used etc. His documents may actually check out against the writing of more objective historians concerning the same subject quite accurately. The account of the Nazi historian cannot, then, be rejected out of hand. As to the conclusions he reached, there may be serious and justified reservations on the part of other historians/historiographers who will scrutinize his work. The 'science' of history, then, must be rigorous enough to differentiate among manifold events and material for the sake of its own integrity.

In historical texts, the main characters develop themselves almost imperceptibly as they appear together on the stage of history being carefully observed by the historiographer. There is no extra role for anyone on that stage but the characters who belonged to the event that actually took place. Under the spot lights of historiography, the actors of the historian, who are identified by either themselves vouched by others or by witnesses who were there or participated as spectators in the event itself, finally appear as they have really been: sombre and straight forward without any pretensions, and even down to earth. Homeros's characters will not be able to stand the scrutiny of

historiography, while Herodotus is always subjected to further scrutiny by historians, historiographers as well as the archeologists and even sociologists of the ancient times.

In this chapter, I attempted to draw attention to the ideas in which history and historiography, distilled by the culture of the ancient Greece and formulated by Herodotus, are grounded. Emphasizing the significance of a clear differentiation of history from myth, I endeavored to point out how historicity of a certain historical event is evaluated by the standards of the 'science' of history. On that basis, I concluded in this chapter that historicity of the Greek-Turkish war of 1919-1922 is an incontrovertible reality even today.

The "othering" of the Turk is the subject of the next chapter. It should be emphasized at the outset that by the "Turk" the Ottoman Greeks/the *Rum* meant the masses of the Turkish peasants living in Anatolia and other places. A second reminder would be that the "othering" of the Turk by the *Rum* was not grounded in racism but was meant to demean him. Simply put, while classification and demeaning of races and peoples were quite widespread, there are no well known proofs of racism (the prejudice that one race of human beings is superior over another on the basis of certain inherent characteristics) in the Ottoman Empire. As it is well known, demeaning through "othering" was committed by the Sublime Porte as well as by the urbanized Turkish-Ottoman population. Following the First World War, a stereotypical Turk would be characterized as an inert person not capable of any dynamism or achievement. Yet, the subsequent developments in Anatolia were to prove the haste in which the Greeks passed judgement on these Turkish peasants. Led by the nationalist Turkish cadres, the stereotypical Turk pushed the Greek forces to the edges of Anatolia and beyond in 1922.

CHAPTER II

THE TURK AS THE “OTHER” IN GREEK NATIONAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

“I do not suggest to be hopeless and fall into pessimism. On the contrary, I am trying to convey the message to get involved in ‘national’ matters a little less, leave behind the tensions, find peace, look on the bright side and enjoy life. Let us cultivate our gardens, if you like. Life is short...”¹⁶

HERCULES MILLAS

The Byzantine Empire (324-1453) was the direct continuation of the Roman Empire and was, in fact, called the Eastern Roman Empire. A map of the Byzantine Empire around 565 will demonstrate that it covered the entire Mediterranean basin including southern Spain, the Italian peninsula, and North Africa, extending all the way up to Milan and Ravenna in the north, bordering its archrival, the Persian Empire in the east beyond the Euphrates and Tigris rivers; Syria and northern Egypt, along the shores of Nile and the entire north Africa all belonged to the empire. Metropolises of that period, Carthage, Alexandria (Kahire), Antioch (Antakya), Caesarea (Kayseri) as well as Chersonesus (near Sevastopol) at southwest Crimea were within its borders. The Byzantine Empire was the sole superpower of its time for a thousand years.

The Ottomans conquered the Byzantine Empire in 1453. Needless to say, the conquered had already posited an “othering” discourse for the Islamic Ottoman Turks. Cruel fighters, vulgar, barbarian, and sneaky; as well as arbitrary rule, backwardness and

¹⁶ Herkül Millas, *Daha İyi Türk Yunan İlişkileri İçin Yap Yapma Kılavuzu*, Tarih Vakfı, İstanbul, 2002, p. 69 [Translated into English by AGT]

corruption are among the common terms used by the Greek/the *Rum* to describe the Turks and *Turkokratia* even to this day.¹⁷ Later, this period was identified with the derogatory term “*Turkokratia*” (the Turkish rule) and described as the “Ottoman yoke”. For four hundred years of the *Turkokratia* the image of the stereotypical Turk did not change as the Greeks/the *Rum* “never recognised the Sultan as their legitimate ruler, notwithstanding the Orthodox Church’s subservience to him... They were temporarily camping in their lands until the inhabitants were in a position to evict them.”¹⁸

When one looks through the eyes of geography, the land mass that was called the Byzantine Empire, the Eastern Roman Empire proper, always contained the Asia Minor and Peloponnesus bequeathed to it by the Roman Empire. The Ottoman Empire came to possess most of the land that belonged to Byzantine after Mehmet II conquered it on May 29, 1453.

When Byzantium fell and, much later, the Ottomans; the Asia Minor, the Thrace and the Peloponnesus, as well as the main seas, the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean, that really constituted the core territory of these fallen empires were forcibly divided among two main peoples, the Greeks and the Turks, as late as 1922. It is true that two peoples were completely different in every aspect, most notably in religion, language, and the general way of life. Also they were separated by revolutions and wars against each other since 1821. Therefore, it was almost “normal” that they were diametrically opposed to one another until the very recent times. Özkırımlı and Sofos write: “Both countries have been historically posited as the ‘other’ in their respective nationalist

¹⁷ John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos M. Veremis, Greece the Modern Sequel: From 1831 to the Present, Hurst & Company, London, 2002, p. 260

¹⁸ Ibid

imaginaries, each being seen, from the outset, as being at the antipodes of the survival of the other.”¹⁹

This perception of the “other” was certain to influence their national historiography profoundly even from the beginning. In this chapter, our concentration will be on the Greek perception of the Turk as the “other” and how the Greek/the *Rum* who lived within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire were seen as unredeemed Christian Orthodox population, prompting an ideology, the *Megali Idea*, that espoused that their liberation from the Turkish yoke was the *sine qua non* of the Greek state established in 1832, which, at the end, cost the existence of the *Rum* in the Asia Minor.

1. “Amputation” Spells “Expansion”

According to Özkırımlı and Sofos, it is important to realize that the revolution in 1821 against the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent establishment of the Greek state was not an act that would bring about its own rewards in an automatic fashion: “In the case of Greece, secession from the Ottoman Empire meant amputation, and viability was associated with further expansion at the expense of the Ottoman territories in Europe and possibly beyond.”²⁰

In other words, the founders of the Greek state must have felt at the very outset that, although not stillborn, their country was dangerously defective. The deficiency, the founders of the Greek state believed, could only be made up by expansion into the Ottoman Empire, particularly into the land that contained the Ottoman Greeks, the *Rum*. This land they considered to be their own from time immemorial. After all, it must have

¹⁹ Umut Özkırımlı and Spyros Sofos, Tormented by History: Nationalism in Greece and Turkey, Hurst&Company, London, 1988, p. 2

²⁰ Ibid

appeared natural and normal to the Greek politicians at the time that the newly established Greek state come to reign over the Greek population, the *Rum*, of the Ottoman Empire, when the empire exhibited all the signs of decay and eventual collapse. However, the project of the new Greek state to reign over all the land of the Ottoman Empire which contained Greeks was not without a problem.

The Muslim Ottomans, living in the Balkan territories of the Ottoman Empire since the Turks crossed the Dardanelles in 1354, were also influenced by the Enlightenment, although, they had their own ideas not quite in line with that of the Greeks. Calling themselves “Turks”, once a derogatory term denoting lowly and crass, the Muslim Ottomans of the Balkans began to impose their own identity, also inspired by the nationalism hailing from Western Europe, particularly from France through the French Revolution of 1789. Already, this was adversely affecting the efforts of the Ottoman Empire – a state not based on nationalism but the regime of *millet*s expected to co-exist harmoniously with one another – to remain intact. The result was the proliferation of “various forms of Turkism,”²¹ finally bringing “Turkish nationalism into a collision course with the irredentisms of other nations including the Greek one.”²²

It would probably be within the boundaries of reason to suggest that nationalism as a new ideology was not widespread at the beginning but affecting only the elite among the Greeks as well as the Ottoman Muslims, who called themselves the “Turks” in the nationalistic and modern sense of the word, as mentioned above. On that basis, both, the Greeks and the Turks were having the same birth pangs in their respective processes of becoming nation-states. Özkırımlı and Sofos explain:

²¹ Özkırımlı and Sofos, Tormented by History: Nationalism in Greece and Turkey, p. 2

²² Ibid

Both Greek and Turkish nations had to be forged against all odds: reluctant populations not readily able to comprehend what it meant to be 'Greek' or 'Turkish', the challenges of expansionism or national consolidation, the potential divisiveness inherent in the existence of various national minorities were just a few of the problems that Greek and Turkish nation builders had to confront.²³

Whatever the circumstances and the problems that surrounded this process of nation building, the Greeks and the Ottoman Muslims, now called the Turks, were on the way to confrontation perceiving each other as "the other", the "shadow" of their self to use Jungian terms. Furthermore, what started as the "Greek vs the Turk" went through a transformation and finally emerged as "Greece vs Turkey", particularly after 1922, as Özkırmılı & Sofos point out: "... the 'Greek' or the 'Turkish' nation as the reincarnation of a perennial 'Greek' or 'Turkish' essence, which managed to preserve its character intact despite vicissitudes of history."²⁴

2. "Chosen" Concepts for Animosity

The Greeks and the Turks demarcated themselves as nations on the basis of nationalism that originated from the West but also against one another so much so that their "chosen traumas"²⁵ and "chosen glories"²⁶ belonged to their collective history, more precisely, their conquests, victories, and defeats against each other. Using the same terminology created by Volkan & Itzkowitz treating the very same subject, Thalia Dragonas explains that the chosen trauma of the Greeks was the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and the chosen glory the achievements of the classical antiquity and the War of Independence against the Ottomans in 1821 leading to the establishment of the Greek nation-state. The

²³ Özkırmılı and Sofos, *Tormented by History: Nationalism in Greece and Turkey*, p. 2

²⁴ Ibid, p. 6

²⁵ Vamik D. Volkan & Norman Itzkowitz, *Turks & Greeks: Neighbours in Conflict*, The Eothen Press, England, 1994, p. 7

²⁶ Ibid

Greek chosen trauma, she continues on, was “reactivated” in 19th century leading to the formation of the Megali Idea.²⁷

Therefore, the Greek psychological chosen trauma of the fall of Constantinople had found a political platform to express itself in and through the doctrine of the *Megali Idea*. As opposed to the commonly held belief that the Greeks were a homogenous group of people from the very beginning and all the way to 1821, Volkan & Itzkowitz suggest that “The Greeks had not made up a single nation since the Middle Ages.”²⁸ In history, however, this has never been an obstacle on the way to becoming and remaining a nation for disparate groups of people for as long as some significant common factors were shared by all the members. German principalities finally coming together to constitute a nation, or the Franks, Gasconians, and the Basque people, constituting France, are rather famous examples of this supposition. The same, Volkan and Itzkowitz believe, was the case for the Greeks. The *Rum* millet was the most important “non-Turkish element” in the Ottoman Empire. Having retained their own religion, customs, and language, the Rum had a ready foundation for the “new Greek mass consciousness and the sense of nationality... derived from the Megali Idea.”²⁹

The imperial character of the Ottoman Empire, a political entity interested in world dominance regardless of the background of its subjects for as long as they obeyed the House of the Ottomans and paid their taxes on time, was conducive to the existence of multifarious groups of people living in peace side by side with all the others. As law abiding subjects of the Sultan, they were allowed to keep their religion, customs, and

²⁷ Thalia Dragonas, University of Athens, “Mirror Representations of National Identity: Greece and Turkey”, paper presented at the 10th Biennial Conference of the International Society for Theoretical Psychology, Istanbul, June 22-27, 2003, p. 4-5

²⁸ Volkan & Itzkowitz, *Turks & Greeks: Neighbours in Conflict*, p. 84

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 85

language. In the case of the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire, the *Rum*, a dexterious and versatile people, they were able to dominate important trades and professions in the big cities of the empire particularly in Constantinople and Smyrna/İzmir. Peace and comfort afforded by the Ottoman political and military strength that lasted for hundreds of years had been translated into prosperity for other *millets* too, but particularly for the *Rum*. As Vangelis Kechriotis explains, extending beyond the borders of the Ottoman Empire, they even became international traders: “While catering the orders/needs of the famous European families, the *Rum* and the Orthodox merchants used the advantages of, particularly, the domestic networks as well as the advantages of their mobility within and without the Empire.”³⁰

As long as this was the case, there was no point in demarcating the *Rum* as opposed to the Muslims, whom the *Rum* always called derogatorily the ‘Turks’ as in ignorant and useless persons. The Muslims were the *Rum*’s exact opposite in every sense particularly in terms of religion, customs, and language. Even though the *Rum* and the Muslims in the metropolitan areas of the empire got along, it is a fact that the *Rum* and the Muslims from the countryside did not really fit together at all. Simply put: the *Rum* disliked the Turk, not as a racial bias, but viscerally.

But the time was to come when things would take a turn for the worse: having fallen behind the times and weakened as a result, particularly from 18th century onwards, every single *millet* within the empire was naturally prompted to take stock of their own situation. The so-called “chosen trauma” provided the means for a meaningful

³⁰ Vangelis Kechriotis, “İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi: İzmir’de Hıristiyanlar ve Müslümanlar Arasında Günlük İlişkiler”, Çeviren: Nilüfer İlkaya, *Toplumsal Tarih*, 184, Nisan, 2009, s. 19

demarcation from the dominant Ottoman house professing to be the descendants of a Turkish stock, speaking a version of Turkish, and practicing Islam.

3. The Megali Idea as the Turning Point

The crowning achievement of the “rebirth” and “glory” of Hellenism would be the restoration of the most Greek symbol bequeathed from the Byzantine Empire: “The dream of reconquering all the territories once inhabited by Greeks was symbolized in the resumption of the mass at the church of Hagia Sophia at the point it had stopped with the capture of Constantinople by the Turks.”³¹

From the moment of the birth of *Megali Idea*, the demarcation from the “other”, which was conceived to be the Turk, took off like in no other period before, since the conquest of the Byzantine Empire by the Ottomans in 1453: “... what is of interest for the present argument is the connection of the *Great Idea* to a most powerful strand in Neohellenic nationalist thinking, which was the view of the barbarian and decadent Turk who brought destruction to civilization wherever he encountered it.”³² To bring it all home in a single attempt, Dragonas paraphrases Kitromilides: “The revival of classical Greek ideals and learning, in the context of modern Greek civilization, became contingent to the decivilizing presence of the Turks.”³³

Ancient Greece as the “chosen glory” was juxtaposed against the fall of Constantinople as the “chosen trauma”, out of which a “Neohellenic present”³⁴ would be

³¹ Kechriotis, “İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi: İzmir’de Hristiyanlar ve Müslümanlar Arasında Günlük İlişkiler”, s. 19

³² Dragonas, “Mirror Representations of National Identity: Greece and Turkey”, p. 5

³³ Pascal Kitromilides, *The Dialectic of Intolerance: Ideological Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict, Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, 1979, pp. 6,4,5-30, quoted in Thalia Dragonas, “Mirror Representations of National Identity: Greece and Turkey”, p. 5

³⁴ Dragonas, p. 6

forged. Having superseded the Ottomans as the predominant economical, political, military, and cultural force in the Balkans, the Middle East, and North Africa; the West, furthermore, identified its cultural beginnings in the achievements of the ancient Greece. Now, the stage for the Neo-Hellenic revival was complete. To arrive at the “Neo-Hellenic present” supported by the West, however, was to be accomplished, first, in the minds of the Hellen people themselves. For this to happen, the Ottomanesque part of the Hellen was to be jettisoned. And yet, this, too, appeared to be problematic. Heavily paraphrasing Stathis Gourgouris, Dragonas explains: “Neohellenism oscillated between the Orient, with the entrenched Eastern patterns of thought and action, and Europe which, via the route of cultural lineage with ancient Hellenism, satisfied the signification link of identity to continuity [Stathis Gourgouris, *Dream Nation*, 1996, p. 275]. The figure of the Ottoman was still deeply embedded in the national memory.”³⁵

Nonetheless, what was not of the Occident had to go regardless of its form or content. In spite of an intense dislike between the Orthodox and the Catholic churches, the Greeks were Christians after all and no one in the West could deny this to them. Therefore, to become a nation under the umbrella of the West, all they needed to do was to renounce the Orient and everything that reminded the West the Orient, particularly the Ottoman. They could do this by projecting the “old and unwanted identity”³⁶ on to the Turks who, by now, fully and erroneously were identified with the Ottomans. Quintessentially Ottoman character of the *Rum* was jettisoned in favor of the one called Greek in an instant and the way to a ‘Neohellenic’ present, invented by the West, was opened. But there were still problems. Dragonas writes that the conflict between the

³⁵ Dragonas, “Mirror Representations of National Identity: Greece and Turkey”, p. 6

³⁶ Ibid

“Oriental and Western ‘other’ has marked modern Greek life ever since (Herzfeld, 1982). Greece has experienced itself as both superior and inferior to western culture, being both xenophobic and xenomaniac, believing itself to be the most privileged and the most oppressed, but in all cases ultimately as unique and unprecedented.”³⁷

As well, the “identity crisis” that the newly established Turkish Republic felt in an ever increasing manner is well known to Dragonas. It is interesting to note at this point that Dragonas applies the same projection mechanism onto the Turkish nationalists who, led by Atatürk, followed the same path to Westernization: “The Turks used other Muslims, notably the Ottomans and the Arabs, rather than the Europeans, as a reservoir of projections of their unwanted parts, causing thus problems of continuity from past to present.”³⁸

4. “Digging Out” an Identity

Both the Greeks of the state of Greece and the Turks of the newly established Turkish Republic seem to hide their resentment of the West as the “other” behind their deeply felt conviction that modernity is possible only by becoming westernized. Obviously, the Ottoman past was not just an imposition of a certain dynasty called the Ottomans or the “Turkish” way of living, or even an Orientalism of some sort, but also a way of life with its own authentic perspective on the world created and practiced for hundreds of years by every single *millet* and ethnic group who participated in the daily life of the Ottoman Empire. Now, from being quintessential Ottomans, the Greeks of the Greek state and the *Rum* were thrown into a situation in which they had to recover from a past long bygone an identity that was superseded and even forgotten not once but twice over by

³⁷ Dragonas, “Mirror Representations of National Identity: Greece and Turkey”, p. 6

³⁸ Ibid, p.7

Christianity, the Byzantium – Michael Herzfeld writes: “Like Zambelios, [Dora] d’Istra regarded the Byzantine imperium as a foreign growth on true Hellenism, but, perhaps because she felt no need to ‘justify’ Christianity, she dismissed the church as a destructive foreign influence too.”³⁹, and the Ottoman: the ancient Greek. The Greek of the state of Greece established in 1832 and the Ottoman *Rum* had to literally dig out the identity of the ancient Greek with the encouragement and, indeed, the imposition of the West, which would itself benefit from this politically and psychologically as it, too, traced its cultural beginnings back to the same root.

Concerning the Turks, however, they did not share in that most important cultural value of religion with the West. Therefore, Dragonas, paraphrasing from Pope & Pope writes that the path of Westernization through the imposition of a secular state did not necessarily win over “those entrenched in their Islamic beliefs. This is reflected in the pull between the East and the West that still troubles Turkey, in the awe of the achievements of Christian technology and culture held in check by strong attachment to the Muslim faith.”⁴⁰

Employing the terminology of Volkan & Itzkowitz, Dragonas points out to a common ground for both the Greeks and the Turks by stating that they resemble each other as both failed in mourning over the past losses and work through the chosen traumas: “Greeks have not adequately come to terms with the loss of the Byzantine Empire (and the newer traumas based on this archetypal one), and Turks still agonize over the causes of Ottoman decline. They thus both externalize and project their

³⁹ Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, Athens Printing Company, Athens, 1986, p. 57

⁴⁰ Dragonas, “Mirror Representations of National Identity: Greece and Turkey”, p. 7

unwanted elements; Greeks use the Turks as a suitable reservoir for their projections and the Turks use Ottoman Islam.”⁴¹

5. Neo-Hellenism: an Affront to the West

From an opposite angle, Stathis Gourgouris explains convincingly why Neo-Hellenism felt as “Other to all Others”⁴²:

The task of Neohellenism as a national imaginary became then to proclaim itself simultaneously both father of Western culture (by direct cultural lineage, albeit constructed retroactively by the beneficiary: Europe) and mortal enemy (by simple historical antithesis). This antithesis did not constitute an alliance with or assimilation into oriental culture because the cultural lineage of the “West”, *a priori*, prevented that possibility.⁴³

Since “the cultural lineage” was a “constructed retroactively”, in other words, *a posteriori*, Neo-Hellenism was in fact an affront to the West whose main interest was limited to the ancient Greece *per se*. However, and for that matter, it would be outright absurd to suggest that the Greek would be assimilated by the Orient, or its Ottoman derivative. Even in the case of such assimilation of the Greek by the Orient, the Ottoman Empire slowly transformed into a Hellenic state with the *Rum* running it would be more of a possibility. Historians with the calibre of Ion Dragoumis ruminated over this idea in a serious manner. Neo-Hellenism, then, did not really have any support save for its own intellectuals: “... Neo-Hellenism, in so far as it serves the demands of national culture, becomes characteristically insular... Recourse to Neo-Hellenism’s classical

⁴¹ Dragonas, “Mirror Representations of National Identity: Greece and Turkey”, p. 14

⁴² Stathis Gourgouris, Dream Nation: Enlightenment, Colonization, and the Institution of Modern Greece, Stanford University Press, 1996, p. 275

⁴³ Ibid

legacy is crucial here and always counted upon, but as origin, in effect, it is ultimately superseded.”⁴⁴

As the romantic visions of the European elite began wearing off after the establishment of the state of Greece, Gourgouris suggests, Neo-Hellenism found itself between a rock and a hard place: before the Independence in 1830, Neo-Hellenism had the Ottoman-Turk as the “other”. Europe, however, realized soon after that its Philhellenism was but a “fantasy” without connections to the present, the real Greece. Now, Neo-Hellenism “turned to its own Orient to satisfy its required signification link of identity to continuity, and its other became Europe.”⁴⁵

As mentioned before, at the point of turning to Byzantium to resolve the apparent identity crisis of both the Greeks of the Greek state and the *Rum*, activation of the “chosen trauma” was inevitable. Nevertheless, the turn back Byzantium, the Orient in a sense, satisfied the demands of Neo-Hellenism as it simultaneously afforded the view of the “otherness” of the Turk, while demarcating Neo-Hellenism from the Western civilization *per se*. While the Turk directly conquered Byzantium, the West, even before the Turk, ransacked Byzantium more than once causing it to weaken and eventually become an easy prey for the vigorous and upcoming Ottomans. The Greek had now demarcated himself from both the Orient and the Occident, re-inventing a psychologically sound identity needed for Neo-Hellenism.

6. Ottoman “Minorities” Thrown into Existential Crisis

For a Greek person born in the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the 20th century , the empire was no longer a place where he or she could feel at home. This person was to

⁴⁴ Gourgouris, *Dream Nation: Enlightenment, Colonization, and the Institution of Modern Greece*, p. 276

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 275

witness nothing but the collapse of a colossal empire, a process that would bring about economic, social and philosophical misery and poverty for all, causing ethnic and ethnic polarization, pitting *millet*s against one another, and throwing minorities into an existential crisis. One of these persons was the father of Hercules Millas, a great thinker and historian of the Greco-Turkish affairs:

My father was born in 1900. He lived through the Balkan Wars, the Greek-Turkish war of 1919-1922 and the two World Wars, where Greece and Turkey were in different military camps. He was brought up in a period when nationalism was at its peak in both Greece and Turkey and he had been educated to think in nationalistic terms... His identity and his understanding of politics were too complex to be accurately described in simple words; trapped between conflicting nationalist paradigms he reproduced several stereotypical representations of the undifferentiated Turk as the ethnic Other. In real life, however, he was forced to encounter the "Other" on a frequent basis, and he sincerely liked some of these actual, concrete people who happened to be the Others, the Turks.⁴⁶

As "irrational" as it sounds, this stereotyping of the "Turk", which found its equivalent of "the Greek" in the Turkish mind, came to represent, as spelled out before, the animosity between the two countries themselves, as well as influencing the official historiography in a very pervasive and lasting manner.

Focusing on the stereotyping of the "Turk" in Greek literature, Millas makes a distinction between unconscious and conscious usage of the image of the "Turk". In the former, "the images, ... are usually expressed in an implicit and unconscious way in the narratives..." and in the latter, "The disseminators... perceive the images and the stereotypes as 'knowledge' and as 'facts'."⁴⁷ These stereotypes are used as negative characters who play a certain role where the nationalities as Greeks and Turks are in

⁴⁶ Iraklis (Hercules) Millas, *Turkokratia: History and the Image of Turks in Greek Literature*, Opleiding Europese Studies, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Working Papers European Studies, Amsterdam 4, The Secretariat of the European Studies, 2006, p. 3

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 4

some sort of confrontation. In such cases, the Turks are “portrayed as cruel, fanatical and perverted, a source of unhappiness and danger for ‘the Greek Self’, which is here uncritically equated with the collectivity of the Greeks.”⁴⁸ It is critical to notice that this stereotyping of the “Turk” by the Greek is not concrete but psychological; rather than real, a phantastic image of the Turk is the case. Millas explains that when the Turks appear as “concrete personalities”, they may even have positive attributes. Such characters appear in Greek authors who experienced life in Ottoman lands.⁴⁹

The entire idea behind the stereotyping of the Turk is to rationalize the history of the Ottoman Greek during *Turkokratia*, depicted to be a terrible time period, which, ironically, appears to be a necessary part of nation building process particularly from 1922 onwards when the Greeks established themselves as a nation-state. While the Ottoman Greek becomes free of the Ottoman, breaking free of the yoke of the oppressor, namely, the “Turk”, something else happens: in dropping the “Ottoman” they become “Greek the inferior person” for the Turks. In the fictional narration of “Ömer Seyfettin, Halide Edip Adivar [who was rather well versed in Western history and ancient Greece] and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu – three well known Turkish ‘national’ authors,” the Greeks are portrayed as “enemies and inferior persons”⁵⁰.

7. Is a Turk an “Archetypal Hate Figure”?

Marianthe Colakis claims that, even in “Disaster” (*Katastrofi*) literature, “We rarely find... detailed study of individuals – either Turks or Greeks.”⁵¹ Namely, the characters

⁴⁸ Millas, *Turkokratia: History and the Image of Turks in Greek Literature*, p. 4

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Marianthe Colakis, “Images of the Turk in Greek Fiction of the Asia Minor Disaster”, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Volume 4, Number 2, October, 1986, p. 105

do not get a detailed description in such a way that they, in fact, do not become an archetype *per se*. They are more like figures the Greeks and the Turks can direct their hatred against although not really permanently: “Beside the torturers and murderers stand up kindly peasants and doctors; lost friends and fellow victims appear more frequently than wealthy Agas [ağalar]... like most humanity, their Turks are simultaneously guilty and innocent.”⁵² The Turk, certainly “the other”, however, is not an archetypal hate figure. He has multiple character traits that contradict each other too frequently to comply with the rule of creating an archetype who must be stereotypical and frozen in time and space forever.

8. Negative Turkokratia, a “Useful” Tool for the New State

In spite of all the literature that tells the story of ordinary people, Greeks or the Turks, reactions against a hated stereotypical person such as the “Turk” inevitably becomes one of the pillars on which the new Greek state is established: “The idea of a ‘terrible’ and overtly negative *Turkokratia* provides useful images that sustain the ideology of the Greek nation state, nurturing the values that preserve national identity.”⁵³ The ‘collective victim psychology’ seems to have worked for the process of nation building in Greece. In more recent times, although not so similar, a corresponding process took place in Great Britain where the Scottish and the Welsh people, who perceived themselves as wronged by the English for the longest time, finally decided to have at least their own parliament while keeping their right to representation at Westminster in London.

⁵² Marianthe Colakis, “Images of the Turk in Greek Fiction of the Asia Minor Disaster”, p. 105

⁵³ Millas, *Turkokratia: History and the Image of Turks in Greek Literature*, p. 9

The Greek historiography, particularly until 1974, seems to be decidedly influenced by an “extreme negative image of *Turkokratia*”⁵⁴. For Paparrigopoulos, the most prestigious Greek historian of the 19th century, *Turkokratia* was a ‘disastrous period for Hellenism’. Millas continues to paraphrase and quote from various Greek historians:

...the Greek population declined dramatically and Christians were forcibly Islamicized (Paparrigopoulos, 495)... Marxist historians portray a completely negative *Turkokratia* too. In 1957 Kordatos...: ‘When the Turks conquered Asia Minor and the Balkans they neither brought with them a high technology nor did they develop the means of production. On the contrary, they were an underdeveloped people in all aspects of social and political life’... Svoronos (1957)... : ‘[The Greek] peasant could not enjoy a single day. His life was a misery. Especially when he did not own his own land he was twice a slave. Slave of the Turkish invader and slave of the landowner’ (p. 149)⁵⁵

It is interesting to note that Kordatos, a traditional Marxist historian,⁵⁶ misses the implication of his own words in that; if the conquerer had “high technology” to offer or “develop the means of production” of the conquered, the degree of humiliation of the latter would be lessened. Likewise, he leaves himself wide open to questions when he describes the conquerer as an “underdeveloped people”, which implies that the ‘more advanced conquered’ somehow allowed the ‘less advanced conquerer’ to take over.

Obviously, although there is a serious amount of ideological differences between Paparrigopoulos, a conservative, and Kordatos and Svoronos, Marxist historians, they have a common ground in their belief that darkness reigned over the Greeks during *Turkokratia*, Millas points out. He also juxtaposes the ‘irrationality’ of the ‘dark’ side of *Turkokratia* against its ‘light’ side:

⁵⁴ Millas, *Turkokratia: History and the Image of Turks in Greek Literature*, p. 10

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ George J. Andreopoulos, “Liberalism and Formation of the Nation-State”, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Volume 7, Number 2, October 1989, p. 195

The author Griourios Paleologos (1794-1844) settled in Istanbul right after the liberation of Greece and published his novels there. In The Painter (1842) he narrates how his hero, Filaretos, who moves to Istanbul and chooses to live there permanently 'will always earn enough money to live in comfort with his beloved Hariklia (p. 296). This discourse of a real 'Turkish rule' which secures a normal and even happy life to the Greeks neither seems to cause any reactions on the part of the Greek readers, nor does it suggest a contradiction to them, which needs to be explained. The two faces of *Turkokratia* are allowed to co-exist side by side.⁵⁷

In Millas, we are asked to understand that the stereotypical "Turk" was not the case from the beginning, however, and *Turkokratia* only came to being in time when things started to turn from bad to worse: "[*Turkokratia*] is reserved only for a negatively-experienced rule. It is as if the rule that is not overtly negative cannot be called *Turkokratia*."⁵⁸

9. War is Guilty

For as long as the empire had good governance, kept the peace, and allowed for economic growth, everything seemed to be fine. When turbulence began after the 17th century, however, the tide was changed significantly in terms of the lives of ethnic groups, particularly, for those of the large ones such as the Greeks, the Armenians, and the Kurds, the ones who constituted the bulk of the ethnic populations of the Ottoman Empire. Stereotypical "Turk" was already in the making at that period in time. After the Greek Revolution in 1821, the "Turk" figured as the "other" as an ever-darkening figure, also serving as the projection of the deficiencies of those who used it as such. But all this came as a result of the worsening circumstances and the war.

It is possible to say the stereotypical images of the Greeks and the Turks are changing, particularly, after the earthquakes that hit both countries in the summer of

⁵⁷ Millas, Turkokratia: History and the Image of Turks in Greek Literature, p. 11-2

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 12

1999. The Greeks and the Turks saw each other on television screens as human beings rather than as archetypal figureheads with fantastic characteristics. The goodwill that was extended by both countries in the aftermath of the earthquakes came to be known as “the earthquake diplomacy”.

Perhaps one of the most known stereotype examples in history is the perception of the Turk by the Greeks and this chapter was allocated to that. The Turkish-Ottoman stereotyping of the Greeks/the *Rum* is not the subject of this thesis. Since the fall of the Byzantine to the Ottomans, the Turks were targeted by the Greeks/the *Rum* as a lowly people. As mentioned in this chapter, Greeks/the *Rum* did not evaluate that the Ottoman rule would be lasting and waited for the time of liberation from the “Turkish yoke”. Although they waited for four hundred years, probably much longer than anyone had expected at all, this held true. From the beginning of the Greek revolution in 1821 onwards and until the establishment of the Greek state in 1832, the stereotyping of the Turk was solidified so much so that the Turk was now described as “... the barbarian and decadent Turk who brought destruction to civilization wherever he encountered it (page 37).”

The *Megali Idea*, then, could be said to have derived an extra-strength from such wide-spread belief in an inherently lowly Turk, in that it had become more than a mission but a holy war to recapture the land of the Hellen from such vile race of people. Having created a terrible image of the Turk in their minds, the Greeks/the *Rum*, however, did not and would not plan for a Holocaust type of an eradication project for the Turks. Theirs was more of a psychological projection based on an historically traumatic event of the Polis, the Constantinopolis, captured by the Ottoman Turks in 1453. Nevertheless, the

intense feelings of rejection and disgust they felt for the Turk may have been one of the reasons for the remarkable solidarity they exhibited throughout the Turkokratia.

Although, due to unbridgeable cultural and sociological differences between the Greeks/the *Rum* and the Ottoman Turks, it appears they would never have become integrated into one another and constitute one nation even after four hundred years.

Following the establishment of the Greek state in 1832, however, a surprise awaited the Greeks: Europe was no longer really interested in the Neo-Hellenistic cultural enterprise and shut itself off from it. The new state of Greece, then, turned to Byzantium to "... resolve the apparent identity crisis of both the Greeks of the Greek state and the *Rum*... (p. 42)" This way, the "otherness" of the Turk who conquered the Byzantium would be held up; the ancient land of the Greeks within the Ottoman territories would still be subjected to the *Megali Idea*; and, of course, Neo-Hellenism would be subtly demarcated from the European civilization as the new cultural enterprise of the Greeks. The "othering" in Greek had to go a long way to suit the demands of an irredentist ideology.

To wit, the stereotyping of the Turk was really used by the state of Greece for its expansionary ideals. The end result of the war of 1919-1922, the *Katastrofi*, did not bring about an end to the "othering" of the Turk. The Greeks, as well as the Turks, used stereotyping to manipulate the baser feelings of their people for short-term political gains. Although it is no longer a hot political capital, stereotyping of the Turk continues in Greece, particularly within the context of issues concerning Cyprus.

The next chapter is allocated to an exposition of the *Megali Idea* in Greek national historiography. An irredentist ideology with a total world-view, it literally aimed to

recreate a brand new and an original Greek civilization based on but not a replica of the triad of: the ancient Greece, the Hellenic period, and the Byzantium. Some accounts indicate that the inventors of the *Megali Idea* may have had a short-term political gain in mind when they first formulated it. But, the *Megali Idea* took a life on its own right after it was uttered from the mouth of the Prime Minister Kolettis in 1844; it must have touched a chord in the soul of the Greeks of the newly established state in 1832. The *Megali Idea* was not just an ideology as in nationalism or communism but an expansion of the Greek will in the modern times, notwithstanding its shortcomings, an original move forward to re-constitute yet another unique civilization on both sides of the Aegean after a four hundred years of what most of the Greeks/the *Rum* described as slavery under the Ottoman Turks. It was so prevalent in the heart of the Greeks that they fought hard to make it come true even when their best friends, the members of the Entente, unilaterally withdrew support and left them to their own devices in Asia Minor in 1922. The *Megali Idea* was burned to ashes in Smyrna/Izmir in September of the same year.

CHAPTER III

THE “MEGALI IDEA” (THE GREAT IDEA) IN GREEK NATIONAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

“The Turkish occupation was always considered temporary and from the first years of childhood every boy and girl was taught that eventually all the Greeks will be united again and form one nation with its capital in Constantinople, or, as the Greeks usually say, with its capital in ‘Polis’. For there are many ‘cities’ in the world, Andrianopolis, Phillippopolis and Alexandropolis, but there is only one ‘Polis’, and this is ‘Constantinopolis’.”⁵⁹

“I do not forget the promise I have made you. We shall take the Polis.”

Venizelos to King Alexander⁶⁰

From the beginning of the mid-19th century, the time for multi-ethnic states such as the Ottoman and Austria-Hungarian empires was closing down. It was now the age of the states that were organized on the basis of one overwhelmingly dominant ethnic group. In such state, one language and one religion would dominate the rest, although, in principle and as a rule, democratic regimes would protect the rights of the minorities. This new political phenomenon, called nationalism, was Western in origin and it was embedded within the philosophy of the Enlightenment, an intellectual movement in 17th century Europe. At that time, nationalism was unknown in the East yet.

Calling the Enlightenment “the ideological expression of the temper of modernity”, Kitromilides believes, it “represented a new cultural configuration which

⁵⁹ Dimitri Pentzopoulos, The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact on Greece, Hurst & Company, London, 2002, p. 26

⁶⁰ Dimitri Kitsikis, Propogande et Pressions en Politique Inernationale, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1963, p. 28 n.3. quoted by Alexis Alexandris, The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918-1974, Center for Asia Minor Studies, Athens, 1983, p. 53

emerged from the intellectual and political cleavages marking European civilization in the early modern period.”⁶¹ A corresponding system of politics and ethics, Kitromilides argues, emerged in Europe simultaneously with the advent of the Enlightenment. It was called “liberalism”. This was the first time a political thought, liberalism, put the individual, the sole human being, as the “basic moral unit of the reconstructed society”⁶² as envisaged by the ideology of the Enlightenment, which was to change the world as it was known until then.

Differentiating nationalism from other forms of identity as “a culturally defined ‘peoplehood’, the bearer of sovereignty, the central object of loyalty, and the foundation of collective solidarity... that differs only from ‘other’ nations,” Lekas believes nationalism in the Balkans was decidedly ethnic in nature: “If anything, there seems to be little doubt that nationalism in the region belongs to the ‘Eastern’, ‘ethnic-genealogical’ variety. This assumption is sustained by the intensity of the ideological struggles that have accompanied attempts at defining and delimiting the nations in question, principally by force of ethnic-cultural *differentiae*.”⁶³

In any case, juxtaposed against the idea of self-governing *millet*s of a strictly centralized Ottoman Empire based on religion; “nationization”, based on the idea of self-governing and responsible individuals, must have profoundly influenced the Ottoman Greeks, the *Rum*, who were exposed to the ideas of the Enlightenment, particularly via the French Revolution since 1789. Constantine Tsoucalas, profoundly influenced by Althusserian Marxism, as well as the theories of the Greek Marxist structuralist Nicos

⁶¹ Paschalis Kitromilides, Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-eastern Europe, Ashgate Variorum, Great Britain, 1984, Chapter I, p. 51

⁶² Ibid, Chapter I, p. 52

⁶³ Padelis E. Lekas, “Nation and People: The Plasticity of a Relationship”, in *Citizenship and the Nation State in Greece and Turkey*, Eds. Faruk Birtek and Thalia Dragonas, Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 54-55

Poulantzas, believes it was the “prestige of this nascent Greek bourgeoisie, through which the new revolutionary ideas fermenting in Europe, especially after 1789, were channeled into the Balkans...”⁶⁴ Although this was not a thoroughly authentic independence movement, according to Tsoucalas, but one that was instigated by Russia in particular, finally culminating in the Greek revolution of 1821.⁶⁵

The Russian interest was based on its strategy to create a “large Balkan Greco-Slav state under her protection, to ensure her a stronghold in the Mediterranean after the breakdown of the Ottoman power.”⁶⁶ While the Russians strategized for “warm waters”, the British policy “was basically oriented towards the conservation of the Ottoman Empire,” to counterbalance Russian expansionism.⁶⁷ However, the Britons would not go as far as to prop up an ailing empire in order to pursue their own imperialistic policies, but, instead, they would favor the creation of an independent Greek state “which would, however, be politically and economically dependent on Britain.”⁶⁸ Naturally, this would fit into the larger scheme of the general strategy of Britain to rule the world from London.

1. Multiple Yokes

The ideas of “independence”, “nation”, and “nationization”, one is inclined to believe, must have felt at least to some of the Greeks as the way to finally get rid of a multiple yokes at once: the Sultan’s, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch’s, and the “yoke of their own corrupt elites.”⁶⁹ Hercules Millas explains: “With the advent of the French Revolution [in

⁶⁴ Constantine Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, Penguin Books, England, 1969, p. 17

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 17-18

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 18

⁶⁹ Kitromilides, Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-eastern Europe, Chapter I, p. 57

1789], the news of three developments began to spread: a) Political changes caused by the Enlightenment, b) societal structure that was changed by force and c) Church being downgraded to a secondary position... Demolished Bastille on one side, Sublime Porte on the other, and finally ideological conflicts looking for new directions...⁷⁰

The idea of a self-governing individual based on universal individual rights were part and parcel of the ideology of the Enlightenment from the very beginning. Subsequently, the American War of Independence (1771-83) signed, sealed, and delivered the modern and somewhat ideal concept of the nation *per se*.

Kitromilides establishes a link between the Enlightenment, liberalism that issued from it, and the American Revolution in 18th century which made an impact on both the theory and the practice of politics anywhere in the world: “Enlightenment liberalism provided the intellectual matrix for the systematic articulation and symbolic expression of the arguments and the claims drawn from the American experience against what were felt to be the arbitrary incursions of the sovereign authority.”⁷¹

Americans realizing their own nationhood and making a decisive political move to declare themselves independent of the British Empire must have profoundly influenced the potential Greek revolutionaries everywhere within the Ottoman Empire:⁷²

2. The Greek War of Independence

The Greek war of independence against the Ottomans began in 1821. It lasted nine years. It was a momentous event for the future of the Greeks who lived within the boundaries of

⁷⁰ Herkül Millas, Yunan Ulusunun Doğuşu, İletişim, İstanbul, 2006, s. 54 [Translated from Turkish by AGT]

⁷¹ Kitromilides, Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-eastern Europe, Chapter I, p. 53

⁷² Millas, Yunan Ulusunun Doğuşu, s. 61

the Ottoman Empire for the last four hundred years, after the fall of Byzantine in 1453, a period they disparagingly called *Turkokratia*, ‘the rule of the Turk’. The first National Assembly of Greece was convened one year after the breakout of the independence war, proclaiming “the new nation’s will to live free under a democratic form of government embodied in representative institutions and the separation of powers.”⁷³

The emphasis on the “democratic” was only normal for such ideas had the upper hand in the beginning as they were influenced by the Enlightenment so much so that the “first constitution of independent Greece was modelled on the French constitution of 1795 and it articulated an overall aspiration to introduce the institutions and values of liberal constitutionalism in the political culture of the country.”⁷⁴ However, by the time of the fourth National Assembly in 1828, the idea of “a democratic form of government” was shelved due to the “exigencies of the struggle for national liberation... and the fourth National Assembly of 1828 approved the special executive powers already assumed by Governor Ionnis Capodistria...”⁷⁵.

3. The Megali Idea Formulated

The constitution of March 1844 had one more element in it which transformed and catapulted it onto a historical level in and of itself. It is doubtful if anyone realized it at the time, and even then probably only a very few, until September 1922 when the *Katastrofi* struck. This historical element was hidden in the text of Ioannis Kolettis’s prime ministerial speech in the National Assembly on January 14, 1844:

⁷³ Kitromilides, Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-eastern Europe, Chapter IX, pp. 11-12

⁷⁴ Ibid, Ch. XI, p. 12

⁷⁵ Ibid

The Kingdom of Greece is not Greece; it is merely a part, the smallest, poorest part of Greece. The Greek is not only he who inhabits the Kingdom, but also he who inhabits Ioannina or Salonika or Serres or Adrianoupolis or Constantinople or Trebizond or Crete or Samos or any other region belonging to Greek history or the Greek race... There are two great centres of Hellenism. Athens is the capital of the Kingdom. Constantinople is the great capital, the City, the dream and hope of all Greeks.⁷⁶

Quoting from the same speech, Iakovos D. Michailidis captures the critical significance of the moment when the *Megali Idea* was formulated for the first time by Prime Minister Kolettis in 1844 while the debates on the constitution were still underway:

“By her geographical position Greece is the centre of Europe. Standing with the East on her right hand and the West on her left, she was predestined by her fall to enlighten the West and by her renaissance the East”. The Great Idea was in its essence profoundly unifying between the enslaved and the liberated Greeks.⁷⁷

By this irrevocable and unequivocal declaration, Prime Minister Kolettis led the newly established Greek state enter into irredentist waters no one would have possibly known to be so perilous given the poor shape the Ottoman Empire at that moment in time.

Following this speech, the character as well as the mentality of the people of the Greek state was transformed to something other than it was at its inception. Kokosalakis and Psimmenos explain: “... the whole policy of the nation from the 1840s to the early 1920s operated on the basis of an unrealistic and utopian vision of irredentism (Megali Idea), aiming to repossess what were once Greek Byzantine lands.”⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Michael Llewellyn Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922*, C. Hurst & Co., London, 1998, pp. 2-3

⁷⁷ Iakovos Michailidis, “Formation of the Greek Citizenship (19th Century)”, University of Thessaloniki, in *Citizenship in Historical Perspective*, Ed. by Steven G. Ellis, Gudmundur Haldanarson and Ann Kathreine Isaacs, Piza University Press, 2006, p. 158

⁷⁸ Nikos Kokosalakis and Iordanis Psimmenos, “Modern Greece: A Profile of Identity and Nationalism”, in *State of the Art and Historical Report*, EURONAT Project p. 2

With the advent of the *Megali Idea*, the “enslaved” Greeks, namely, the *Rum*, of the Ottoman Empire and the “liberated” Greeks of the new state of Greece had a common dream: the Greater Greece. It was to be established over the area where the Greeks lived for thousands of years and that meant the territory which belonged to the Ottoman Empire, particularly, in the Asia Minor. Kokosalakis and Psimmenos provide more reasons behind the advent of the *Megali Idea*, including corruption and severe economic problems, that completely changes the tune from a purely nationalistic one to one of a crafty political tool to cover up for the failures of the Greek government of that time led by Kolettis. It was supported by the people and then the King Otto in spite of the fact that the *Megali Idea* served a “smoke screen for corruption and the severe socio-economic problems faced by the government and as an excuse for the even greater blatant intervention of the great powers in Greek affairs.”⁷⁹

However, an imaginary picture of a place, a *topos*, including all places where Greeks lived freely under their own flag had taken a mental start with the doctrine of the *Megali Idea*; in the Greek mind, it had already brought them together as one nation. As to a physical political entity or a state on the basis of the *Megali Idea*, namely, the Greater Greece, they would wait patiently. Furthermore, “... the vision revived the historical connections between Orthodoxy and Hellenism and constituted a fusion which became in varying intensity and form the basic discourse for modern Greek identity.”⁸⁰

The road ahead to realize *Megali Idea* was an arduous one and the Greeks must have recognized it. Years later, it would be used as a justification of the presence of

⁷⁹ Kokosalakis and Psimmenos, “Modern Greece: A Profile of Identity and Nationalism”, pp. 8-9

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 9

Greek troops in Ottoman soil in May 1919, the date of the invasion of Smyrna/İzmir.⁸¹

What had begun by a political demagogue as a smokescreen for political corruption was to expire 78 years later at the shores of Symrna on September 1922, causing much anguish, indeed a *Katastrofi*, leaving behind a painful history to deal with for many generations of Greeks to come.

4. Psychological State of the Newly Established Greek State

If one seeks to fully comprehend the reasons behind the rise of the notion of *Megali Idea*, then, a comprehensive understanding of the psychological state of the people of the newly established state of Greece is a must. Indeed, dissatisfaction seems to have reigned in the aftermath of the establishment of the independent Greek state in 1832. What the Greeks had in hand was a “poor, cramped piece of Balkan territory, carved out of the sprawling Ottoman Empire by an invincible Greek nationalist spirit and a reluctant European diplomacy. The Peloponnesus, a few hundred square miles of mainland... and a handful of the Greek islands...”⁸² Right after its establishment, “the fervent desire of the newlyborn kingdom was the liberaton of the ‘unredeemed’ Hellenes and its territorial expansion over all the regions that were inhabited by them.”⁸³

Considering the environment where the Greek state was established in 1832, after a nine year long war against the Ottoman Empire, as well as the ailing state of the latter, the state of Greece must have hoped to achieve more than they already had which led them to develop an irredentist frame of mind determining, or at least seriously

⁸¹ Foti Benlisoy, “1919-1922 Savaşında Yunan Ordusunda Anadolu Rumlari: Eski Yunanistan’dan Sizi Kurtarmaya Geldik Aşağılık Köpekler!” in *Toplumsal Tarih*, 198, Haziran, 2010, s. 78 [Translated from Turkish by AGT]

⁸² Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922*, p. 1

⁸³ Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact on Greece*, p. 25

conditioning their foreign policy formulations and decisions. Inevitably, this would not come without a price tag: “This aggrandizement-oriented policy was bound to involve Greece in a series of conflict, some of which she provoked herself. (Argyropoulo, P.A., *Facteurs de la Politique étrangère en Grèce*”, Société d’Études Internationales, Bulletin 1952-1953, Athens, 1959, p. 31)”⁸⁴

At the end of the 19th century, the state of Greece “was beset with insurmountable problems,”⁸⁵ Andreopoulos writes. There were two main arguments put forward by contending political parties to keep the economy functioning: first, draw finance capital into the country at whatever cost and keep high import duties to encourage and develop domestic production; secondly, put the *Megali Idea* in practice and hit the Ottomans whatever the cost may have been.⁸⁶ For the realization of such ends, the state needed active support of the masses of Greeks. Alas, the very mechanisms that was needed to bring in the people into the political process, although formally existed, were lacking in practice. In such environment, irredentism was a must in the manipulation of popular sentiment as it touched the one nerve that mobilized people almost instantly: national survival. In fact, Andreopoulos informs, all political parties “projected the *Megali Idea* goal as the ultimate criterion of the success of their policies. Exploiting its popular appeal, they attempted to forge a link between themselves and the electorate... ”⁸⁷ through the medium of the *Megali Idea*.

Various political, military, and financial calamities hit the Greek state at the end of the 19th century: the government declared bankruptcy in 1893, and, in 1897, came the

⁸⁴ Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact on Greece*, pp. 25-6

⁸⁵ Andreopoulos, “State and Irredentism: Some Reflexions on the Case of Greece”, in *The Historical Journal*, p.950

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Ibid

crushing defeat in the war against the Ottomans. Finally, when a financial commission was imposed by the Western creditors of the state in 1898, it felt like the end.

Andreopoulos makes the interesting note that even during this unfortunate period the 'ideal' [the *Megali Idea*] remained intact for it was "ingrained in the popular mind."⁸⁸

The military coup of 1909 was a turning point both for internal politics, as well as the *Megali Idea*. The military junta was no match for the colossal socio-economic problems in hand; they called on a young politician by the name of Eleftherios Venizelos, who had successfully severed Crete from the Ottoman Empire, involving the Great Powers in the process in 1897, to begin anew the civilian political process.

The young politician was shrewd enough to comprehend that reforms were to be coupled with the dream of the *Megali Idea* in order to establish the public order. Little did he know that the dream would, at the end, turn into a terrible nightmare come September 9, 1922. Furthermore, according to Vangelis Kechriotis, the foundations for the civil war of 1946-1949 (*emfilios polemos*) were also laid at the same time period, as the military coup of 1909 deeply divided the Greek society between the royalists and the anti-royalists.⁸⁹

In terms of the attempt of the junta to return to civilian politics, the choice of Venizelos to preside over the transitional period was well-founded. Kechriotis explains: "With Venizelos, the political spectrum in Greece completely changed. Having brought

⁸⁸ Andreopoulos, "State and Irredentism: Some Reflexions on the Case of Greece", in The Historical Journal, p. 950

⁸⁹ Vangelis Kechriotis, "Vangelis Kechriotis ile Söyleşi: Yunanistan İç Savaşı ve Öncesi" by Selin Akgül, Toplumsal Tarih, 193, Ocak, 2010, s. 13 [Translated from Turkish by AGT]

in a new agenda for modernization, Venizelos soon instituted his own political cadres and formed the government in 1915. This was the beginning of a new period for Greece.”⁹⁰

According to Pentzopoulos, to discern “the fervent desire” of the newly established state of Greece to liberate the “unredeemed Hellenes” and the corresponding territorial expansion, it is critically important to understand how the Greeks felt about Byzantium and Constantinople. He states that it is Constantinople and the territory of Byzantium which felt like home for the Greeks who had perceived the *Megali Idea* as the final liberation from the “Ottoman yoke”.⁹¹ Now, the *Megali Idea*, then, was no longer a political tool employed by a political demagogue to save the day. By the end of the First World War, politicians with stature of Prime Minister Venizelos were intent on turning it into reality.

Characterized by Vangelis Calotychos as a “a quintessentially Romantic project for the 19th century”⁹², the *Megali Idea* was also a declaration that the Greek state, established after the Independence War against the Ottoman Empire and with the help of the Great Powers of Europe, left much to be desired, not only in terms of the Greek population and the land it contained, but also in terms of the psychology of the people of the Greek state. In a sense, Calotychos writes, “The process of Greekness was declared ‘unfinished’ and the missing segments of Greek earth had to be discovered and integrated into the logic of the centralized nation-state to complete an organic, self-regulated Greece

⁹⁰ Vangelis Kechriotis, “Vangelis Kechriotis ile Söyleşi: Yunanistan İç Savaşı ve Öncesi” by Selin Akgül, *Toplumsal Tarih*, 193, Ocak, 2010, s. 13

⁹¹ Henry Morgenthau, *I was sent to Athens*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1929, p. II, in Pentzopoulos, p. 26

⁹² Vangelis Calotychos, *Modern Greece: A Cultural Poetics*, Berg Publishers, New York, 2003, p. 87

as ‘incarnated artwork, art made life’⁹³. The contours of a perfected Greece would remain fairly indeterminate for the time being, and this suited a wider set of political objectives.”⁹⁴ The last part of the last sentence points out to day-to-day politics of the newly established Greek state at that time and is not within the immediate vicinity of the subject matter of this thesis. However, it is important to note that *Megali Idea*, obviously, carried elements in it that “suited” the short-term political objectives of then the Prime Minister Kolettis. Indeed, the Greek kingdom established in 1832 had not satisfied the nationalistic ideals of the Greeks now free of the *Turkokratia*. More than seventy-five percent of the Greek population was still living under the Ottoman Empire by the time of the establishment of the independent Greek state. A doctrine was urgently needed to rationalize the continuation of the endeavor to unite all the Greeks and even enlarge the boundaries. In the age of nationalism and national borders, this made sense not only for the Greeks but for the foreign powers, particularly the Great Powers of Europe, as well.

5. “Neo-Hellenism” versus “Western Hellenism” via the *Megali Idea*

Ioannis Tassopoulos quotes Kitromilides to demonstrate what happened right after the declaration of the *Megali Idea* and the call for national unity at all costs: “ ‘the appeal to national unity sanctioned a general intolerance in Greek political thought, which gradually elevated the exigencies of nationalism to the only acceptable ideological orthodoxy.’ ”⁹⁵ Put differently, euphoria had taken over the minds of the Greeks as they believed from the bottom of their hearts and minds that the time had come for the Greeks

⁹³ V. Lambropoulos, “The Aesthetic Ideology of the Greek Quest for Identity”, *Journal of Modern Hellenism* 4: 19-24

⁹⁴ Calotychos, *Modern Greece: A Cultural Poetics*, p. 87

⁹⁵ Paschalis M. Kitromilides, “Imagined Communities and the Origins of the National Questions in the Balkans,” *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 19, no. 2, April 1989, p. 168 in Tassopoulos in Anna Frangoudaki & Çağlar Keyder, p. 12

to rise again after the fashion of what they believed to be their ancestors of the ancient Greece, as well as of the Byzantine Empire: “The *Megali Idea*... relegated all other goals to subordinate roles... The fulfillment of the *Megali Idea* became the essential prerequisite for the satisfaction of all other needs, for the solution of all other problems.”⁹⁶

Interestingly, Calotychos distinguishes between “Western Hellenism and Neohellenism,”⁹⁷ which catapults the discussion on the *Megali Idea* to another level. Pointing out to the tension between “Western Hellenism” of the Great Powers and “Neo-Hellenism of Greeks” themselves, he quotes from Artemis Leontis and Stathis Gourgouris, two scholars from the diaspora, who “have made significant contributions to understanding the effects of the tension between Western Hellenism and Neohellenism.”⁹⁸

As a matter of fact, according to Leontis, “‘Neohellenism’s topographies align the physical expanse of the homeland with the discursive field of a shared heritage or, better, common ground.’”⁹⁹ The dimensions of the “Helladic space” was, however, not the concern of the Greeks alone. As Europe traced their cultural origins back to the same ancient past of the Greeks, the Great Powers, too, as well as being strategically well placed, were rather romantically engaged within the same concept of an “Helladic space”,

⁹⁶ Adamantia Pollis, *The Megali Idea: A Study of Greek Nationalism*, Ph.D. dissertation, Faculty of Philosophy of John Hopkins University, 1958, p. 130 in Vangelis Calotychos, p. 67

⁹⁷ Calotychos, *Modern Greece: A Cultural Poetics*, p. 50

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Artemis Leontis, *Topographies of Hellenism: Mapping the Homeland*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1995, p. 11

a preoccupation of what Leontis calls Western Hellenism: “Hellas [Greece] is a disputed province of Western thought.”¹⁰⁰

What Leontis called the *topos* [place] where the modern Greeks saw themselves as people was not the one established in 1832; they had developed another *topos* in their minds which corresponded to a dream they have been collectively dreaming for almost four hundred years since the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople: “In exploring these *topoi*, Leontis exposes how politics and culture are linked as is ‘Neo-Hellenism’s contrapuntal [In music, a harmonic relationship in which melodic lines retain their linear individuality. First used by Edward Said in his *Culture and Imperialism*, 1993. Calotychos p. 51] relation with Western Hellenism.”¹⁰¹

It is important to understand the ideological import of the *Megali Idea* to discern the psychological as well as the political reasons of the Greek government’s decision to invade Smyrna/Izmir in 1919. To this end, it seems appropriate to have correct understanding of ideology and what it would possibly mean for the Greeks at the beginning of the 20th century .

6. The New Greek State – Something Missing

What was coined as *Megali Idea* was an outright ideology for a people, the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire, as well as the diaspora, requiring a ‘new lease’ in life. During his debates with King Otto (1815-1867) in the wake of the promulgation of the 1844 Greek constitution, Prime Minister Ioannis Kolettis (1773-1847) Kolettis argued for the *Megali Idea* as follows: “... the Greek kingdom [the one established in 1832] is not the whole of

¹⁰⁰ Artemis Leontis, *Topographies of Hellenism: Mapping the Homeland*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1995, p. 17

¹⁰¹ Ibid

Greece but only a part, the smallest and poorest part. A native is not only someone who lives within this Kingdom but also in Ionia, Teselia, Scerres, Adrianapolis, Constantinopolis, Trebizond, Crete, Sisam and any land associated with Greek history or the Greek race.”¹⁰² And as to the Hellenic centers of the world: “There are two great centres of Hellenism. Athens is the capital of the Kingdom. Constantinople is the great capital, the city, the dream and hope of all Greeks.”¹⁰³

What transpired as Kolettis’s adumbration of the ‘new ideology of the Greeks’ must have made sense to all Greeks living anywhere in the Ottoman Empire and the diaspora. Although there was now a new Greek state established, 379 years after the fall of Byzantine, the last Greek state according to modern Greeks, *Turkokratia* was still a reality and the Greeks living within the Ottoman Empire, now a frail state, still awaited and hoped for a speedy liberation.

The decision of the Greek state to send armies to Asia Minor in 1919 was not just an expedition into the territory of a sovereign nation but what was perceived by an overwhelming amount of the Greeks as a fully justified and even a necessary act of recovering an ancient land that was once lost to a foreign power at an unfortunate moment in time. Whether they lived in the Greek state or anywhere else in the world, the Greeks all over the world fully supported the decision of Prime Minister Venizelos to land his soldiers in Smyrna/İzmir in 1919 with the exception of a few prominent generals such as Metaxas, the advisory to the King, and politicians such as Stergiadis, Venizelos’s

¹⁰² Richard Clogg, Modern Yunanistan Tarihi, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1997, s. 66 [Translated from Turkish by AGT]

¹⁰³ Spyridon Markezinis, Political History of Modern Greece, Vol. 1, Athens, p. 208, in Smith, p. 3

Greek High Commissioner of Smyrna/İzmir after the invasion in May 1919, who always believed that the decision was a mistake, Alexander Anastasius Pallis writes.¹⁰⁴

Stefanidis suggests that the modern idea of nationalism was perceived by the Greeks in such a way that they emphasized the part that postulated “the rights of nations – rather than other human collectivities – to political independence,” which was central to political culture.¹⁰⁵ There was nothing so novel about this formulation according to Stefanidis, for, the understanding of nationalism in the modern times was nothing less than political independence as such, “commonly perceived as the logical consequence of cultural difference,”¹⁰⁶ which they certainly had with the Ottoman Turks. But there was a further conclusion, Stefanidis writes:

... the boundaries of the state should coincide with the limits of the nation. In the case of Greek political discourse, a human community as ancient and unique as the Greek nation was self-evidently entitled to a territorial status at least commensurate to its glorious past and its special historical mission. As a result, the state founded in 1830 was expected to try to extend the benefits of its sovereign rule over all areas claimed by the nation.¹⁰⁷

What was needed was a systematic view of the world to integrate nationalism, a product of modernity, into the equation of the legend of the ancient Greece, the Hellenic period, and the Byzantine Orthodoxy. It became possible with advent of the *Megali Idea*, an irredentist doctrine, easily distilled out of the general culture of the Greeks living under the umbrella of the imperial Ottoman state. This doctrine spread among the Greek population all over the world at an exponential rate, needless to say, particularly in the

¹⁰⁴ Alexander Anastasius Pallis, *Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası* (Çeviren: Orhan Azizoğlu), Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul, 1994, s. 23 (Originally published by Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1937) [Translation from Turkish into English by AGT]

¹⁰⁵ Ioannis D. Stefanidis, *Stirring The Greek Nation: Political Culture, Irredentism and Anti-Americanism in Post-War Greece, 1945-1967*, Ashgate Publishing, England, 2007, p. 17

¹⁰⁶ Maurice Pearton, *Diplomacy, War, and Technology Since 1830*, University Press of Kansas, 1984, p. 162 in Stefanidis, p. 17

¹⁰⁷ Stefanidis, p. 17

Greek state. Stefanidis explains that as an inherent component of the *Megali Idea*, irredentism developed into a political and cultural orthodoxy, which the British historian Richard Clogg termed as the only ideology of the newly established state of Greece. Indeed, the Megali Idea was used as a social adhesive to hold together “a geographically, culturally and politically fragmented nation.”¹⁰⁸

The *Megali Idea* played to perfection the role that was assigned to it. Stefanidis explains: “During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, academics joined military officers, lawyers and clerics, often themselves graduates of the same institution, in forming societies which purported to bring the *Megali Idea* closer to its realization.”¹⁰⁹ The irredentist Greek doctrine had succeeded in bringing together an entire people who spoke the same language and adhered to the same religion: with the *Megali Idea* the construction of the identity of modern Greekness was now complete and successful.

7. The Raison d'être of the New State of Greece

The political and psychological investment into the *Megali Idea* was heavy, so much so that it almost became *raison d'être* of the newly established Greek state in 1832. This was destined to create problems in the face of a world that was heading in the direction of the First World War in the first decade of the 20th century. As a matter of fact, when the historical events were finally unfolded, a future very different than the one envisaged at the outbreak of the doctrine of the *Megali Idea* was gloomily revealed for Greece; it resembled not the vision of *Megali Idea* but one that left the inhabitants of the Greek state disoriented and even despairing for a long time well into the 20th century.

¹⁰⁸ Stefanidis, Stirring The Greek Nation: Political Culture, Irredentism and Anti-Americanism in Post-War Greece, 1945-1967, p. 17

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

It all began with the proud and joyful invasion of Smyrna/İzmir, an Ottoman city on the Aegean, in the spring of 1919, and grew into what was to be called by the Greek history, the Asia Minor Catastrophe (*Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi*): "...a traumatic event of national proportions that might have proved a watershed for Greek political culture."¹¹⁰ Stefanidis goes on to explain that the shock of military defeat before the Turks was one thing, but expiration of the very doctrine that held the entire Greek people as one for at least seventy-eight years was the real tragedy; the ground had disappeared under their feet. What was worse, the Greeks in 1920s had nothing to replace the *Megali Idea* to ideologically sustain themselves in the aftermath of the *Katastrofi*. Stefanidis explains: "... no radical reorientation took place. To be sure, '1922' and its bitter aftermath shook long-established convictions about the 'mission' of the nation and the tasks of its state. Bereft of their irredentist visions, political and intellectual elites were faced with a substantial 'ideological void'."¹¹¹ The political and intellectual elites were now divided as the liberals vs the traditionalists. The former supported Venizelos, the first architect of the *Katastrofi*; and the latter the monarchy. His loss of the election of November 1920 and subsequent political posture opposing further involvement in the Asia Minor had somehow redeemed Venizelos. Meanwhile, the supporters of the monarchy could quite easily blame Venizelos's previous politics and his decision to invade Smyrna/İzmir in 1919, thereby causing the *Katastrofi*. The new political faultline in Athens in the aftermath of the lost cause of the Asia Minor campaign was already quite established.

The *Megali Idea*, the subject of this chapter, was the modern Greek national formulation for its own perception of the Greek *topos*. It was a natural ideological

¹¹⁰ Stefanidis, *Stirring The Greek Nation: Political Culture, Irredentism and Anti-Americanism in Post-War Greece, 1945-1967*, p. 19

¹¹¹ *Ibid*

outcome of the yearnings of the Greeks/the *Rum* for yet another great Greek civilization, worthy of the ones in an ancient past, as well as more down-to-earth desires such as a higher standards of living; they did not believe this would have been possible by remaining within the territory allocated to them following the War of Independence in 1832, namely, the regions of Peloponnesus and the Central Greece.

These yearnings were “normal” for a people whose first and foremost historians and historiographers claimed, from 18th century on, that they were direct descendants of the most significant civilizations in this part of the world. Nothing less would be expected of the Greeks of the newly established state of Greece. To wit, the yearnings, and consequently, the *Megali Idea* were really posited by the founding historiography of modern Greek state. It may be true that this yearning for greatness was initially used by opportunistic politicians to manipulate masses of Greeks for political gains. I would argue, however, that the *Megali Idea* was in the blood stream of every Greek alive in 1844; it had to come out sometime somewhere, waiting to be formulated as a political doctrine by someone.

The *Megali Idea*, however, hidden inside as the element of irredentism, carried its own death warrant within itself. And yet, irredentism was inevitable. The doctrine was energized by this very idea inherent in it that the Greeks, wherever they were, constituted one indivisible nation, that they were a composite unit. The logical step was to conquer the territories where the Greeks lived, namely, various territories of the Ottoman Empire, and declare the Greater Greece, a potentially powerful nation expanding on both sides of the Aegean from the West to the East. Furthermore, when the entire European continent, as well as the Ottoman Empire, went to war in 1914, all the elements of any consequence

seemed to be in favor of an outcome that would pave the way for the realization of the *Megali Idea*. For a moment, it simply had a perfect chance to succeed and yet it failed.

The next chapter is an attempt to explain why the *Megali Idea* ended in a *Katastrofi* despite the seemingly favorable circumstances for its success. At the very outset, two factors come forward that determined the outcome of the Asia Minor campaign: First, incredibly deft management demonstrated by the political and administrative cadres of the state of Greece in terms of the management of the war, diplomacy, as well as the country; and second, an early desertion of some members of the Entente, such as France and Italy right after the invasion of Smyrna/İzmir in favor of the Turkish nationalists. There is a third factor, however, that comes in the form of a question: what would have happened if Venizelos had not lost the election of November 1920? Would he have conducted the affairs in such a way as to manage the Greek armed forces and the country well enough to succeed at the end? Would he have stopped in Smyrna/İzmir, consolidate, and declare that this would be the boundaries of the Greek forces in Asia Minor –until at least when a more opportune moment arrived that would be strategically more advantageous for Greece to advance? Would the nationalist Turks have accepted the loss of Smyrna/İzmir, even on the face of a very large Greek population in the city, and negotiate accordingly? We will never know.

CHAPTER IV

THE GREEK NATIONAL NARRATIVE OF “MIKRASIATIKI KATASTROFI” / ASIA MINOR CATASTROPHE

1919-1922

“Hellenism in Asia Minor, the Greek state and the entire Greek nation are descending now to a hell from which no power will be able to raise them up and save them.”

(Patriarch Meletios IV to Venizelos, 7 September 1922¹¹²)

Alexander Kitroeff notes that, “The Asia Minor campaign has received relatively little scholarly attention, even though it is recognized as a watershed in Greece’s history.”¹¹³ It started off with the idea that the Greeks, a sovereign nation since 1832, was to regain the territories that belonged to it by birth. Informed by the ideology of the *Megali Idea* (Chapter III), this irredentism included all the land (save for the diaspora) where the Greeks lived, which, of course, happened to be within the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, a new state, the Greater Greece, was to be constituted to include all the territory recovered. This, in turn, would usher in another age of a great Greek civilization in modern times, as was once the case in the ancient past.

It looked easy: the Ottoman Empire was about to collapse and die. The Great powers of Europe were determined to make sure it did. Furthermore, no one predicted a backlash by the Anatolian Turks, a predominantly peasant people demoralized and without expectations or leadership. It appeared to be a convenient moment in time for the

¹¹² Quoted in Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922*, p. 285

¹¹³ Alexander Kitroeff, “Continuity and Change in Contemporary Greek Historiography” in *European History Quarterly*, Sage, 1989, 19: 269, p. 279

realization of the *Megali Idea*. The Greeks, encouraged by the Great Powers (Great Britain, France, U.S.A, Italy, Russia), seemed to be justified in dreaming of the times when Constantinople would at last be delivered from the Ottoman Sultan and restored to its former self as the capital of the Christian Orthodox religion. Greece, led by Prime Minister Venizelos, felt that in order to become a great nation among the great nations of the West, she had to include Western Anatolia where the overwhelming amount of the Greek/the *Rum* lived for hundreds, if not thousands, of years, regardless of who reigned in Rome, Constantinople, or İstanbul. Kitroeff summarizes the Greek mood prior and after the Asia Minor campaign as follows:

The campaign began as the culmination of Greek nationalist aspirations aimed at the recapture of Constantinople and the extension of Greek borders to include areas in Anatolian Turkey. It ended with Greece's abandonment by its Western allies, military defeat at the hands of Turkish nationalists, death and destruction of the centuries-old Greek settlements in Anatolia, and the violent uprooting of about a million and a half Anatolian Greeks who had to take refuge in Greece.¹¹⁴

Everything that could possibly go wrong in a military endeavor had gone wrong in Asia Minor campaign finishing off the dream of the Greater Greece at its inception. Indeed, it was a *Katastrofi*. In Greek, the word consists of “*kata*” (down/over) and “*strophe*” (turn/turning), as in “downturn”, “overturn”, “upside down”, which denotes a disaster, either natural or inflicted.¹¹⁵ The *Katastrofi*, as the outcome of the Greek decision to campaign in Asia Minor carried both characteristics as we shall see below.

¹¹⁴ Kitroeff, “Continuity and Change in Contemporary Greek Historiography”, pp. 279-80

¹¹⁵ Babinyoti Georgiou D., *Leksiko Tis Neas Ellinikis Glossas*, (The Dictionary of Modern Greek Language), 2nd Ed., Kentro Leksilogias E.P.E., Athens, 2002, p. 863

1. Greece and the Entente Cooperate to Finish Off an Empire

In the beginning, however, the irredentism that swept the state of Greece overlapped with the desire of the Entente, the military bloc of the Great Powers (Britain, France, Italy, and the U.S.A) to finish off the Ottoman Empire. The strategy was to take Constantinople and partition the vast territory among themselves. Up to the Armistice of Moudros signed on October 30, 1918 between the victors of the First World War, the Great Powers, and the Ottoman Empire, a member of the Central Powers who lost the war, everything went according to the plan and then it began to change drastically.

The Asia Minor campaign was, Kitroeff writes, led by two different governments as Venizelos lost the general election held on November, 1920. Ironically, the royalists that replaced the Venizelist government had won on a pro-peace election platform, but chose, instead, to continue the campaign, “only to find themselves presiding over the worst military defeat in the country’s history. The government collapsed immediately afterwards.”¹¹⁶

After the Armistice of Moudros, it all seemed so sensible to the Greeks, as well as great many *Rum* that a window of opportunity had indeed opened for the realization of the Greater Greece. The Ottoman Empire seemed to have died an ungraceful death. No one was saddened much, except for the Turks. Juxtaposed to that, the state of Greece was set to create a new future for itself and looked forward to embracing all the Greek-speaking and Christian Orthodox population of the Empire – as well as other ethnic groups living within such regions if they were willing to be part of a Greater Greece. To make this picture even rosier and more realistic, Eleftherios Venizelos, the prime minister

¹¹⁶ Kitroeff, “Continuity and Change in Contemporary Greek Historiography”, p. 280

of Greece, was well respected by the Great Powers of Europe and had their full support from the very beginning. Under such circumstances, the Greeks truly believed they could win it all. It was their time to rekindle the grandeur of the ancient Greek spirit exactly where it was first flourished in such a divine manner more than two thousand years ago. And yet the worst possible scenario was to become of the Asia Minor campaign. Even at the very outset the campaign was scarred deeply by a decision process that was unthoughtful, careless, and rushed for reasons only the decision-makers will ever know. Smith writes: “The decision to send the Greeks into Asia Minor was taken suddenly, causally, and in great secrecy by the Big Three [Britain, France, the U.S.A.], with Venizelos’s encouragement but on their own initiative without serious consultations with the expert advisers or thought for the consequences.”¹¹⁷

As we shall see below, all experts, including prominent people in Greek military and politics, such as General Metaxas, the advisor of King Constantine in military affairs, and George Stergiadis, the Greek governor of Smyrna/İzmir during the Greek invasion, were against a military campaign in Asia Minor from the beginning.

2. *The First World War Broke Out in 1912*

Nikos Svoronos’s analysis of the events of 1919-1922 is conditioned by two important determinations: first, he suggests that the Balkan wars of 1912-1913 is the real beginning of the First World War; and second, he believes that the internal political affairs of the state of Greece disabled the country so much so that Athens could not formulate a meaningful foreign policy that was urgently needed for such tumultuous times.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922*, p. 81

¹¹⁸ Nikos Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, Belge Yayınları, İstanbul, s. 87

Having grouped into two blocks as the Entente (mainly, Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, the United States) and Central Powers (German Empire, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, in 1915 Bulgaria), Svoronos writes, Europe was destined to go to war, consequently the “political intrigue was in full swing.”¹¹⁹ It was inevitable, he indicates, that the Balkan states would finally begin to orientate themselves towards one or the other camp. In Greece, the situation was even more complicated as the political elite itself was divided into two camps based on where their sympathies lay in terms of the Entente and the Central Powers. Old politicians and the King supported the Central Powers – Constantine, the King, who assumed the throne following the murder of his father in Salonika in March 18, 1913, was married to the sister of Wilhelm II, the Kaiser of the German Empire. As to Prime Minister Venizelos and his supporters, they were staunch supporters of the Entente and constantly on the look out to become profitably involved in a possible war that had already showed itself over the horizon even before the end of the Balkan Wars in 1913, Svoronos explains.¹²⁰

When Austrian-Hungarian Empire, a member of the Central Powers declared war against Serbia in July 1914 following the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne, in Sarajevo by a Serbian nationalist, Greece declared general mobilization but remained neutral. Nevertheless, Venizelos made it known that he would go to war in case Bulgaria attacked Serbia, on the basis of a mutual defense agreement signed with the latter on May 19, 1913. Meanwhile, Svoronos continues to explain, the Entente was beginning to focus its attention in the Balkans which constituted a key element in its policies to surround, invade, and dismantle the now feeble Ottoman

¹¹⁹ Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, Belge Yayınları, s. 87

¹²⁰ Ibid

Empire, also one of the members of the Central Powers led by the German Empire. The Entente, with the consent of Venizelos, was concocting to lure Bulgaria into the war with the city of Kavala in uppermost Greece as a bribe. Sophia believed it was historically a Bulgarian city. If the Bulgarians had agreed, Svoronos remarks, the Entente would have secured a unity of Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, and extent its influence over the entire Balkan region thereby driving a wedge through the German and the Ottoman empires to the detriment of the rest of the Central Powers without firing a single bullet. Venizelos, on the other hand, would not miss a chance to prove himself as a worthy partner of the Entente, all the while aiming for the big prize: territory in the Asia Minor. Svoronos writes that the Entente was searching for a ground to reconcile Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria. To this end, while Venizelos would give up the city of Kavala to the Bulgarians, he would get in return territory in Asia Minor. But the Balkan Entente never materialized.¹²¹

Trying to establish an exact time frame as to when Prime Minister Venizelos began to entertain the idea of entering the war in return for Smyrna/İzmir and Western coast of Anatolia, Pallis's reading of the history of the period just at the beginning of the First World War is significant as we shall see below. But, Svoronos does not believe that Venizelos entertained the idea of expanding Greece's territory in Asia Minor to the detriment of the Ottoman Empire before the First World War, "Because, neither the political situation in the Balkans that arose as a result of the Treaty of Bucharest signed in August 12, 1913, nor the general diplomatic panorama in Europe right after 1912-1913 Balkan Wars seemed to be conducive to such plan to emerge."¹²² Moreover, the territory

¹²¹ Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 88

¹²² Pallis, *Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası*, s. 26

in Macedonia that Greece had captured at the end of the 1912-1913 Balkan Wars had to be protected against the revanchist policies of Bulgaria, an area that would demand the attention of the Greek state for years to come, he writes.¹²³

3. When Did Venizelos Decide to Get Involved?

Pallis points out to the fact that Great Powers were not happy with idea of disturbance in the status quo of the Middle East by jeopardizing the integrity of the remaining Ottoman territory by encouraging other states, such as Greece, to attack or invade the empire in the early months of 1914. He emphasizes that “Under such circumstances, it would be madness for Greece to look for, or even to think of, territory to conquer beyond the Aegean.”¹²⁴ Pallis differs from others in his analysis of Venizelos. He believes that, following 1910, Venizelos rid himself of the “megalomania” generally attributed to the Greek politicians of that period and would no longer be allured by a plan such as the *Megali Idea*.¹²⁵ Concerning the Western plans to lure Bulgaria into the ranks of the Entente, Pallis’s reading of the historical events of the period is also significant as it sheds light on Venizelos’s mind before and at the beginning of the First World War concerning concessions for Greece in Asia Minor by the Great Powers. Even after the First World War broke out and it looked certain that the Entente would win, Greece did not demand territory in Anatolia in return for entering the war on the side of the Entente, Pallis believes.¹²⁶

¹²³ Pallis, *Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası*, s. 26

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, s. 27

¹²⁵ *Ibid*

¹²⁶ *Ibid*

Clearly, Pallis states that Prime Minister Venizelos was not interested in territorial concessions in Western Anatolia at the time when the war broke out and the lines were drawn. He has a proof for it:

[Venizelos's disinterest in territorial concessions in Western Anatolia] is clearly evident in the answer he gives to a Romanian suggestion in November 1914 [about five months after the First World War breaks out] that Greece and Serbia sacrifice some territory in favor of Bulgaria to revive the Balkan bloc. Provided below, the quotation taken from that answer outlines Venizelos's thoughts concerning the territory Greece acquires in Asia Minor in return for Macedonian territory given up to Bulgaria: "... If Greece give some things, it would jeopardize the safety of all Greek peoples as well as its own self; and this would constitute a danger and a difficulty that could not be exchanged for an expansionary excuse somewhere else. Indeed, the distribution of the *Rum* [population] in Turkey does not promise to be a substitute for such losses for Greece to hope for such expansion."¹²⁷

Romania, a member of the Entente from 1916, hoped to revive the Balkan bloc so as to remain close to the Entente which also was in favor of appeasement of Bulgaria in Macedonia. If Bulgaria was sufficiently appeased it would consider the idea of joining the Entente, a blow the Central Powers. Pallis, concerning his claim that Venizelos was not interested in territory in Asia Minor in return for Greece to enter war on the side of the Entente, believes, Venizelos would not have answered the Romanians in the negative if he was interested at all: "If [Venizelos] thought he would acquire some land in Anatolia in the future, he would not have written the last sentence [in the letter to the Romanians] with such finality and in a manner as to deny such desire once and for all."¹²⁸

As the situation stood on November 1914, Pallis believes, "Venizelos would not have sacrificed a bird in his hand in Macedonia, for two birds in Anatolian bushes..."¹²⁹

He explains: "When it is taken into consideration that the *Rum* in the Turkish land were

¹²⁷ Pallis, *Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası*, s. 28

¹²⁸ Ibid

¹²⁹ Ibid

dispersed all over the place and the fact that even on the shores the *Rum* did not constitute a great majority, it would have been nothing but a fantasy to claim rights in any region in the Asiatic Turkey.”¹³⁰

Having established in his mind that this was the thinking of Venizelos concerning concessions and war towards the end of 1914, only a few months after the First World War broke out, Pallis asks a crucial question: “How did he change all of his ideas so entirely within six weeks and adopted policies that would cede Macedonian regions of Drama and Kavala to Bulgaria?”¹³¹

The dramatic change of mind came, Pallis believes, when the Ottomans decided to enter the war on the side of the Central Powers on October 1914:

... if the Entente won the war, this would be the end of the Ottoman Empire. Towards the end of 1914, a possible partitioning of Turkey was being talked about. The first echoes of such plans reached Venizelos’s ears on mid-December, 1914 via Rome. A note by the Greek Ambassador in Rome on 14/27 December concerning the ideas entertained for Asia Minor by the Italian Foreign Ministry read as follows: “In case Germany is defeated, the Italian government hopes that the time to partition Anatolia will come when Italy plans to take its chance to put a foot somewhere there.”¹³²

The Greek Ambassador in Rome continues to inform his government as to the way in which the Italians envisage on December 27, 1914, a possible plan to partition Asia Minor among the future winners of the war, namely, the countries of the Entente: the Armenian provinces would be given to Russia to leap up to Mediterranean from Cyprus. France would get Syria; the Great Britain, Arabia. There is much land for Italy to the east of the Russian region [in Asia Minor].¹³³ Here, the Greek Ambassador reports that the

¹³⁰ Pallis, Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası, s. 28

¹³¹ Ibid

¹³² Ibid

¹³³ Ibid

Italians deeply worry about a possible demand by Greece in the same region, for they believe that Athens will not be totally refused, thereby diminishing the territory that Rome may acquire. As to the status of much-coveted Smyrna and Meanders Valley, Italians rest assured that it will not be given to the Greeks.¹³⁴

It is possible, according to Pallis, that the idea of territorial concessions for Greece in return for entering the war came to its full maturation in Venizelos's mind on January 9, 1915:

That day Venizelos had a meeting with Sir Francis Elliot concerning sending in Greek soldiers to help Serbia [against Bulgaria that would finally attack Serbia on October 11, 1915, thereby entering the war on the side of the Central Powers]. Venizelos assured the English Ambassador that, in return for acquiring attractive territory, he would break the opposition of the King and the Greek Chief of Staff easily in terms of entering the war and sending in the Greek soldiers into Serbia despite the risks involved.¹³⁵

Meanwhile the internal politics of Greece was full steam ahead. Mavrogordatos explains:

Between 1910 and 1915, Venizelos and the Liberals presided over a period of internal reform and territorial expansion – the fruit of success in the Balkan Wars of 1912- 1913... For Venizelos and his supporters, the choice dictated by the vital interests of the Greek nation as a whole was obvious: the Greek state should enter the war on the side of the Entente in order to realize its irredentist mission, especially in Turkey, where large Greek populations were threatened with destruction...¹³⁶

This was the position of Prime Minister Venizelos and his supporters, according to

Mavrogordatos, which the King and the royalists did not agree:

King Constantine, however, convinced of an eventual German victory, opted for neutrality, which effectively benefited the Central Powers while increasingly exposing Greek territorial integrity and sovereignty to violations by all sides... Constantine's refusal to accept the Prime

¹³⁴ Pallis, Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası, s. 28

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ George Th. Mavrogordatos, Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922-1936, University of California Press, 1983, p. 27

Minister's policy led to the latter's resignation and to the election of May 1915, which returned an overwhelming majority for the Liberals.¹³⁷

Michalopoulos differs with Mavrogordatos concerning when King Constantine and Venizelos fell apart:

As soon as the First World War broke out, Constantine, the King of the Hellenes, and Venizelos, the Greek Prime Minister, were in perfect agreement: the country should observe a benevolent neutrality towards the Entente, for Greece was not in a position to come into conflict with a major maritime power, namely the United Kingdom... the flush of triumph which already pervaded the German Imperial Army –mainly since the 1870-1871 Franco-German conflict made problematic the outcome of the new war.¹³⁸

A policy of “benevolent neutrality”, Michalopoulos states, was considered to be appropriate enough in the eyes of the Entente. As to the Central Powers led by the Kaiser – a blood-relation of King Constantine –, it looked confident enough to win a war. Meanwhile, the politics of neutrality was embraced by the Greek populace as politically wise.¹³⁹ Notwithstanding, Venizelos did not see any harm in letting Entente troops to land in Salonica to defend Serbia, a member of the Entente, against a possible Bulgarian attack in October 1915. This was taken as an affront to King Constantine and the policy of neutrality in the face of an impending world war. Venizelos won a vote of confidence in the parliament concerning his decision in Salonica. Nonetheless, the King, not happy with the outcome of the election held in June 13, 1915 in the first place, used this opportunity and forced Venizelos out of office once again on Oct 5, 1915.¹⁴⁰ To protest the King, the Liberals led by Venizelos did not participate in the following elections that

¹³⁷ Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922-1936*, p. 27

¹³⁸ Dimitris Michalopoulos, “Republic vs Monarchy: The Greek Liberals in the Early Twentieth Century”, Centro Argentino de Estudios Internacionales, Europe Program, 2010, p. 1
Available at <http://www.caei.com.ar/es/programas/europa/08.pdf>

¹³⁹ Ibid

¹⁴⁰ Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922*, p. 57

was scheduled for December 6, 1915.¹⁴¹ This led to the “national schism” and the establishment of a provisional government by the supporters of Venizelos in Salonica in August, 1916. The reasons for King Constantine’s abdication in 1917, as well as Greece fully entering the war on the side of the Entente could also be traced back to this period.

Pallis states that the territorial concessions for Greece in Western Anatolia, that may have been mentioned in the meeting held between Prime Minister Venizelos and Sir Francis Elliot, the English Ambassador to Greece on January 9, 1915, was not spelled out by Venizelos: “But there was no doubt that Asia Minor was mentioned. Although, İstanbul or Thrace, to which Russia and Bulgaria also laid claims, were out of question.”¹⁴²

If İstanbul and the entirety of Thrace were excluded from a possible deal, surely, Pallis concludes, Smyrna/İzmir was the only major concession: “... the English government, too, must have thought that Venizelos’s ideas were concerned with Smyrna/İzmir, for, fifteen days later on December 10/23 [the first date on the basis of Julian Calendar which the Greek Orthodox faith follows, the second Gregorian], 1915, Sir Edward Grey offered Greece significant concessions in Asia Minor.”¹⁴³

It appears that Great Britain, as the super power of the time, was involved in a serious process of a planning for the aftermath of the war even prior to the war, which included partitioning of territories, particularly, of the Ottoman Empire. Also, London must have been convinced as to the outcome of the war in favor of the Entente so much so that, Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey, “in order to obtain the cooperation of Bulgaria, or at least its neutrality, if Greece and Serbia receive territorial concessions

¹⁴¹ Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922-1936*, p. 27

¹⁴² Pallis, *Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası*, s. 29

¹⁴³ *Ibid*

elsewhere, ... was suggesting territorial concessions from Serbian and Greek Macedonia,”¹⁴⁴ Pallis writes.

This was the moment, Pallis concludes concerning the way in which Venizelos must have convinced himself, that it was the right time to make a deal with the Entente to acquire territory in Western Anatolia - which the English interpreted as Smyrna/İzmir – in return for Greece joining the Entente and declaring war on the Central Powers. This was when Venizelos’s mind was set, Pallis believes:

Sir Edward Grey’s note was received in the morning of 11/24 January [1915]. The same day in the afternoon, Venizelos sent the King a secret memorandum. Venizelos’s policies to expand into Asia, to establish a greater Greece reaching beyond the seas were being expounded in detail for the first time in this memorandum. In the letter Venizelos said: “I would not hesitate to sacrifice Kavala for the aim of saving the Ottoman *Rum* and establishing a really great Greece embracing all the territory where Helenism lived for ages. (Driault, *Hist. Diplom. De la Grèce*, V 176)”¹⁴⁵

In a note from Michael Llewellyn Smith, we read that the Entente, led and dominated by Great Britain, had already decided the fate of the Asia Minor based less on facts on the ground, or the state of Greece giving up Kavala to Bulgarians in return for “the magnificent compensation”¹⁴⁶ as the prized land of Asia Minor, than romantic sensibilities hailing from what was once a great civilization that flourished on the shores of the Aegean Sea: “... Lloyd George [Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1916 to 1922] wished to send the Greeks into Asia Minor, and therefore did not wish to hear arguments to the contrary.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Pallis, *Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası*, s. 29

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁶ Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922*, p. 45

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 84

Meanwhile, political confrontation between King Constantine and Prime Minister Venizelos finally came to a head and the latter was dismissed by the King in favor of Gunaris in March 1915, who supported the policies of Constantine to remain neutral.

Greek neutrality was obviously in favor of the Central Powers as it served the interests of the Ottomans, a member of that camp, who held its own against the forces of the Entente at the Dardanelles during the very month Gunaris replaced Venizelos as prime minister. The Ottoman feat at the Dardanelles strengthened the position of the King Constantine, who, according to Svoronos, believed in the ultimate victory of the Germans.¹⁴⁸ Here, it is important to emphasize that, although Gunaris, the new prime minister, “kept refusing the petitions of the Entente, stood steadfast in terms of concessions to Bulgaria,” and “claimed Asia Minor as the right of Greece,”¹⁴⁹ Svoronos informs. To wit, Prime Minister Gunaris would not cooperate with the Entente in terms of their demands from Greece to help the war effort, but he was seeking concessions in Asia Minor from the same alliance. Obviously, both Venizelos and Gunaris were believers of a “Greater Greece” embracing the entire Aegean Sea as well as Western Anatolia. The Entente, instead, rebuffed Greece and signed an agreement with Italy in London in July 26, 1915 to reward Rome with the Dodecanese for its participation within the alliance but also with an obvious intent to punish the state of Greece for the policy of neutrality it led up to 1915, a whole year into the First World War, under King Constantine.¹⁵⁰ Politically, this could not bode well for King Constantine or the Prime Minister Gunaris. Indeed, a general election held only the previous month was a landslide victory for the former Prime Minister Venizelos who had taken over the reigns of power in August 16, 1915.

¹⁴⁸ Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 88

¹⁴⁹ Ibid

¹⁵⁰ Ibid

Now, political polarization of the country—the royalists seeking to remain neutral while secretly wishing for German victory versus the Venizelists supporting the Entente and strategizing for concessions in Asia Minor—, what was later to be called National Schism (*Ethnikos Dichasmos*), was complete. Svoronos explains: “... the supporters of Venizelos and the royalists were engaged in relentless struggle for power. Venizelos’s supporters wanted Greece to enter the war on the side of the Entente. The supporters of the King demanded neutrality be kept.”¹⁵¹

4. Why Did Venizelos Choose the Entente?

Venizelos’s idea of entering the war on the side of the Entente was undoubtedly shaped by his vision of the “Greater Greece” based on the *Megali Idea* which included first and foremost Western Anatolia. He was convinced the war would be won by the Entente. Therefore, if he entered the war on the side of the Entente his vision would stand an excellent chance of being realized. Strictly speaking, then, this was a better formulated vision than that of the former prime minister Gunaris who also wanted the Asia Minor but by his voluntary submission to the wishes of King Constantine to keep Greece from entering the war from the side of either of the camps, he was making his dream impossible to come true. It is an understatement to note that it was Venizelos who kept in touch with the political realities on the ground than his closest political adversary, Gunaris, regardless of the overall outcome of the campaign for Asia Minor and the following *Katastrofi*.

One of the critical moments of the war came when Russia, a member of the Entente, declared war against Bulgaria, and the latter attacked Serbia, also a member of

¹⁵¹ Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 88

the Entente, on October 11, 1915. This was once again an abrupt change in the political fortunes of Prime Minister Venizelos merely after three months in office as he accepted a petition by the Entente to put military force on the ground in Salonica on October 5, 1915 to help Serbia defending against the Bulgarian assault. As mentioned before, this flagrant *fait accompli* on the face of the politics of neutrality which the Greek King so desperately had sought for in the middle of all the feuding parties around his country, moved him to ask Venizelos's resignation yet once again, as well as disband the parliament. Svoronos describes the political environment as follows: "Supporters of Venizelos did not participate in the general elections of December 19, 1915. They had disagreed with the King's decision to disband the parliament and protested the elections. This meant that the political power pass into the hands of the parties supporting the Germans."¹⁵²

The Entente could not have allowed this to happen at a time when the First World War was getting even tougher with the defeat at Dardanelles in March, 1915 – the defeat had increased the strategic importance of Greece and its ports. The Entente sought for a way to turn the situation to its favor. Svoronos explains how it proceeded:

However [as a result of Venizelos's decision to allow the forces of Entente into Salonica], the arguments put forward in support of neutrality were now null and void. Bulgaria had crossed over to the enemy camp [The Central Powers]. There could be no talk of neutrality as Greece was, *de facto*, at war. Detachments attached with the Entente had formed defensive lines at Salonica, turning the entire city to a military base.¹⁵³

Here, Svoronos determines that the decision taken by Prime Minister Venizelos had, *de facto*, taken Greece, if not physically but mentally, over the red-line and into the war which immediately prompted King Constantine to ask for Venizelos's resignation. And

¹⁵² Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 89

¹⁵³ Ibid

yet it is more than possible to suggest that Venizelos let the forces of the Entente into Salonica knowing full well this would indeed be an “unofficially official” declaration of war against the Central Powers by the state of Greece now taking its place within the Entente. This would undo once and for all the politics of neutrality adhered to by the King. The Germans and the Ottomans, as well as the others within the Central Powers, would now know, if they had not already, the inclinations and possible military actions of the state of Greece under Venizelos, a charismatic leader fully supported by the Entente. Finally, forces of the Entente forming defensive lines at Salonica would charge the Great Powers with the responsibility to protect Greece in case of an attack by the Central Powers regardless of reason or origin.

Perhaps another implication of Svoronos’s explanation is that Venizelos, keeping the pulse of the Entente powers rather well, was also convinced in his heart and soul that his decision to let the Great Powers to use Salonica against a member of the Central power would pay off handsomely when the time came.

Dimitris Michalopoulos locates the critical differences of opinion between King Constantine and Prime Minister Venizelos at the very beginning of the war when the Entente moved against the Ottoman Empire by attacking Gallipoli.

... when British and French men-of-war attacked the Dardanelles, Venizelos thought that the time had come for Greece to enter the war on the side of the Entente. The corollary would be of course that the Greek Army would assist in the capture of the Gallipoli peninsula. King Constantine nevertheless dissented from the Prime Minister’s opinion here – on the ground that the interests of the country demanded that she should remain neutral; and in the face of such a clash with his Sovereign, Venizelos resigned from office.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Michalopoulos, “Republic vs Monarchy: The Greek Liberals in the Early Twentieth Century”, p. 3

This would be the first of Venizelos's resignations demanded by King Constantine in March 1915. The second one was only seven months away in October 1915 when Venizelos would let the Entente forces into Salonica.

Svoronos, coming from the Marxist tradition, is not the sort of historian who expounds on the vision of one man and his whims to write history; he bases his account of events mainly on economic activity without which, he believes, history makes little sense. Nevertheless, it would not be far from the truth at all that Venizelos may have forced Greece's hand to relinquish neutrality policies so jealously guarded by King Constantine and paved the way to enter the war on the side of the Entente by offering the use of Salonica to defend against the Bulgarian expansion in southern Balkans. In a way, by this decision, Venizelos had already opened the way for the Greek campaign for Asia Minor on May 13, 1919, and, by implication, the *Katastrofi*, that was destined to issue from it.

Venizelos's projected pay off for the Greek participation in the war seems to be the Asia Minor, the acquirement of which was a must for his vision of the "Greater Greece". Indeed, there are documents presented by Smith supporting this claim:

On 23 January 1915 the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, telegraphed to Sir Francis Elliot, the British Minister in Athens, instructing him to offer 'most important territorial compensation for Greece on the coast of Asia Minor' in return for Greek participation in the war on the side of the Entente. 'If M. Venizelos wishes for a definite promise,' added Grey, 'I believe there will be no difficulty in obtaining it.'¹⁵⁵

Pallis agrees: The beginning of Greece's Anatolian adventure that ended in disaster goes back to January 24, 1915, when, speaking on behalf of Great Britain, Sir Edward Grey

¹⁵⁵ F.O. Papers, series 371, vol.2242, Grey to Elliot, 23 Jan. 1915, cited by Michael Llewellyn Smith, Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922*, p. 35

offers Greece, “significant concessions on the shores of Asia Minor” if Greece enters the European war on the side of the Entente.”¹⁵⁶

Regardless of all speculations, Svoronos writes, the fact on the field was that Salonica, as well as “Karaburun, Korfu, Argostoli, Dava-Tepe”¹⁵⁷ were now under invasion of the Entente forces and the country was divided along the lines of Venizelists and the Royalists so decisively that it led to the creation of a pro-Venizelos provisional government in Salonica, as mentioned above. Venizelos, Admiral Kunduriotis and General Danglis were in charge of the administration.¹⁵⁸

From October 1916, then, the provisional government, headed by Venizelos, reigned in Salonica unopposed. On May 29, 1917, Venizelos arrived in Salonica, took the reign of the government and declared war against the Central Powers. This is how Svoronos summarizes the process up to Moudros Armistice on October 30, 1918, which essentially was the end for the Ottoman Empire as a political entity, and the beginning of an uncertain period for the state of Greece:

The Entente armed the supporters of Venizelos. In the end, Venizelos arrived in Athens and assumed political power with the help of the Entente forces. The King had to leave Greece. His second son Alexandros was placed in the throne (June 12, 1917). Greece sided with the Entente and participated in the general Balkan campaign on September 15, 1918. Bulgaria was forced to sign a peace agreement on September 29. This was followed by the peace agreement signed by Turkey (Moudros October 30). The Great War ended when Germany signed a ceasefire agreement.¹⁵⁹

The First World War ended in November 1918. It was won by the Entente, Britain, France, Italy, and the United States. The Central Powers, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire were defeated. Now, it was time for armistices,

¹⁵⁶ Pallis, *Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası*, s. 24

¹⁵⁷ Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 89

¹⁵⁸ Ibid

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, s. 89-90

agreements, and treaties, to effectively dismantle countries, create new ones, and revise the boundaries of others.

5. Armistice of Moudros and the “Fourteen Points”

Armistice of Moudros signed in October 30, 1918 between, the Ottoman Empire, represented by the Minister of the Navy Hüseyin Rauf (Orbay), and the Entente, represented by Admiral Somerset Arthur Gough-Calthorpe, on board the HMS *Agamemnon* in Moudros harbor on the Greek island of Lemnos, ended the hostilities between the two sides that began in 1914 when the First World War broke out. Aristos Katsis explains what it all meant for the Greeks: “The end of the First World War constituted the beginning of the adventure in Asia Minor for the Greek nation.”¹⁶⁰ The end of the war and the Armistice had catapulted the Greek state onto a level where Athens rubbed shoulders with the giants of Europe on a daily basis. Katsis describes the aftermath of the Armistice for the Greeks as a festive period when a fleet of English, French, and the Greek forces arrived in İstanbul to the cheers of the Hellenes living there as this was the first time the blue and white Greek flag showed itself at the Bosphorus.¹⁶¹ So what would befall the Ottoman Empire as a result? Katsis summarizes: “Britain, France, and Italy wanted a colonial administration; Greece, on the other hand, was interested in the fate of the Hellenes within the Ottoman Empire.”¹⁶²

It was open season on all Ottoman territories. The first thought of the Entente was to partition. Members jockeyed to grab the biggest share. The points of contention were

¹⁶⁰ Aristos Katsis, *Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi*, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), Empiria Ekdotiki, Athens, 2008, pp. 14-15 [Translated from Greek by AGT]

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p. 17

¹⁶² Ibid

the channel of Dardanelles, Musul, and Southern Caucasia (Batum-Baku)¹⁶³; the first for the strategic value, and the remaining two for rich oil resources in particular. The defunct Ottoman Empire had indeed enjoyed the possession of the most strategic and the richest territories in the world for hundreds of years. But it had lacked behind times and missed its opportunity to survive as a great empire from 1920s onwards. Now, it was Britain and the Entente who had the upper hand on all the points of contention.

London had deployed 600,000 troops in the Middle East. Lloyd George knew this force would be supported by Athens from Thrace and Western shores of the Asia Minor if/when Greece was allowed to set foot there. He estimated that, together with the armed forces of Greece, England would command over 150,000 troops just to deploy in the former Ottoman territories at Dardanelles and where oil flew near the ground, such as Musul and Basra.¹⁶⁴

The U.S. President Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) declared that he would recognize no agreements or a treaty between the Entente and the Ottoman Empire. Instead, he came up with his famous *Fourteen Points* intended to end the war on an equitable basis for all parties involved. Among the *Points* was the right to self-determination of every single nation or ethnic group, such as the Armenians or the Kurds of the Ottoman Empire. Obviously, there were many nations in the Ottoman Empire, every one of which would be more than willing to establish their own state if the Great Powers allowed them. If accepted, the *Fourteen Points* would mean a different strategy to follow for the Entente which, as expected, did not take it as seriously as they could have in another time. Katsis believes that the strong reaction of the U.S., a newcomer to the

¹⁶³ Katsis, *Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi*, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), p. 17

¹⁶⁴ Ibid

superpower league of nations led by Britain, demonstrated the American frustration in being out of the game in the Middle East while the strategically important territories of the Ottoman Empire was being partitioned.¹⁶⁵

Italian expectations following the Armistice of Moudros collided with that of Britain and Greece. Rome hoped to have, first, the territory from Dardanelles all the way down to Smyrna/İzmir. On top of this, Italians, secondly, demanded Afyonkarahisar, Konya, and Mersin as the hinterland that would complete and support the first territory. Since they already had Dodecanese, Rome would be the dominant force in the Mediterranean.

France desired a cordon of Cilicia extending from Mersin and Adana to all the way to Sivas. Paris calculated that since the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement signed in 1916 with the English would give it influence over the territory of what is now Syria, its oil and strategic interests in the Middle East would be well covered.¹⁶⁶

At Moudros, the fate of the Ottoman Empire was signed and sealed once and for all. Now a huge territory of an empire that lasted for seven hundred years was at the disposal of the Entente for partitioning as it wished. Various ethnic groups and nationalities within the now-defunct empire also moved in a hurry to acquire land for themselves with the anticipation of establishing their own states. Alexandris writes that the Armenians, the Greeks, and the Kurds put forward “lavish” territorial claims.¹⁶⁷ Although Greece was a minor member of the Entente and joined the war only a year before it finished in 1918, Athens was well positioned to benefit from the victory of the Great Powers. The reason for this was Greece’s substantial contribution to the “final

¹⁶⁵ Katsis, *Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi*, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), p. 17

¹⁶⁶ Ibid

¹⁶⁷ Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918-197*, p. 52

Allied victory on the Balkan front.”¹⁶⁸ Alexandris writes further that the “Greek Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos, was invited to the Paris Conference (1919-1920) to put forward the territorial claims of his country. It was common knowledge, moreover, that Venizelos’s ultimate vision was the unification of Hellenism in a powerful Greater Greece.”¹⁶⁹

The significance of Constantinople was well known to all the parties of the Entente. This sensitive subject was not ready to be handled just yet – right after a world war when everyone was still on edge. Accordingly, Venizelos was not forthcoming and decided to remain calm but vigilant on the issue of final settlement of İstanbul. In fact he “confined himself to expressing the view that İstanbul and the Stratis should be internationalized.”¹⁷⁰ Alexandris writes:

Evidently, Venizelos did not believe that the time was ripe for the Greek acquisition of İstanbul. He was certain, however, that once the Thracian hinterland was translated to Greece, the huge Greek minority within Constantinopolis would dominate that city. Expressing his conviction that the Ottoman capital would be conquered from within once Greece acquired Thrace and Western Anatolia, Venizeolos reassured King Alexander that: “I do not forget the promise I have made you. We shall take the City [Constantinople].” (Kitsikis, quoted by Alexandris, p. 53)¹⁷¹

As he was confident that future demographic developments in Western Anatolia and Constantinople would favor the Greeks due to their sheer numbers, Alexandris explains, Venizelos had his eyes set in the future: “In the long run the Venizelist foreign policy hoped to achieve a relatively homogenous Greek population in Western Anatolia and Thrace through voluntary intermigration of populations. The accomplishment of such a

¹⁶⁸ Alexandris, The Greek Minority of İstanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918-197, p. 52

¹⁶⁹ Ibid

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, pp. 52-3

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p. 53

plan, Venizelos believed, would bring about the fulfilment of *megali idea* and the creation of Greater Greece.”¹⁷²

Greece scored concessions at the peace conference at Neuilly, France, on November 27, 1919, as Bulgaria had to pull back all the way to Maritsa River (Meriç Nehri) leaving Western Thrace to Athens, a major gain for Prime Minister Venizelos and justification for his pro-Entente policies since the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

6. The Invasion of Smyrna / İzmir

According to Clause 7 of the Armistice of Moudros, the Entente had “the right to occupy any strategic points in the event of a situation arising which threatens the security of the Allies.”¹⁷³ This nebulous and completely one-sided formulation provided David Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of England, to take advantage of it to pave the way for the Greeks to land forces in Smyrna/İzmir. Jensen explains:

[Prime Minister Lloyd George] concocted a report that an armed uprising of Turkish guerrillas in the Smyrna area was seriously endangering the Greek and other Christian minorities. It had the desired effect upon the pious Wilson [the U.S. President]. Clemenceau [the French prime minister], who had no desire to see vast Italian holdings in Asia Minor, readily agreed that a Greek military presence would be in order. In early May 1919, the three gave their consent to a Greek occupation of Smyrna.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918-197*, p. 53

¹⁷³ Bülent Gökay, “Turkish Settlement and Caucasus, 1918-1920” in *Turkey: Identity, Democracy, Politics*, Ed. Sylvie Kedourie, Routledge, Britain, 1996, p. 51

¹⁷⁴ Dagobert von Mikusch, *Mustapha Kemal: Between Europe and Asia*, Doubleday, Doran & co., New York, 1931, p. 255, quoted in Peter Kincaid Jensen, “The Greco-Turkish War, 1920-1922”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Nov., 1979), p. 554

The Hellenic armed forces were put on the ground of Smyrna/İzmir on May 15, 1919, with the approval of the Entente, Svoronos states¹⁷⁵, writing about the Paris Peace Conference that was convened in 1918 to decide on the fate of the defeated party, the Central Powers, as well as the rewards to be distributed, Michael Llewellyne Smith agrees and relates the following critical conversation between the top men of the Entente:

The matter [the Greek armed forces landing in Smyrna/İzmir] was taken further at the meeting of the Big Three [Great Britain, France, and the United States] on 6 May... Lloyd George suddenly chipped in:
Lloyd George: "I must insist again that we do not let Italy confront us with a *fait accompli* in Asia. We must allow the Greeks to land troops at Smyrna."

...

President Wilson: "Why not tell them to land as of now? Have you any objection to that?"

Lloyd George: "None."

Clemenceau: "Nor have I..."¹⁷⁶

As quoted by Pallis, the offer of "significant concessions on the shores of Asia Minor"¹⁷⁷ was made in January 24, 1915. Now, the time had come for the Entente to make good on the offer:

The fateful meeting of the Supreme Council took place at 11 a.m. After lunch Lloyd George telephoned Venizelos and asked him to come round to the Quai d'Orsay before the afternoon session was to approve the terms of the German treaty. Venizelos arrived at 2.45 p.m. he described in his diary how Lloyd George approached him with these words:

'Do you have troops available?'

'We do. For what purpose?'

'President Wilson, M. Clemenceau and I decided today that you should occupy Smyrna.'

'We are ready.'¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ von Mikusch, Mustapha Kemal: Between Europe and Asia, p. 255

¹⁷⁶ Smith, Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922, pp. 78-9

¹⁷⁷ Pallis, Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası, s. 24

¹⁷⁸ Smith, p. 79

Pallis believes that from very early on when the offer was first made on December 24, 1915, and accepted by Prime Minister Venizelos, the idea of capturing the Greek “Promised Land”, namely Western Anatolia, became “Venizelos’s platform” as well as one of the “corner stones of internal Greek politics.”¹⁷⁹ Pallis also indicates that, “Inside the country, the acceptance or rejection of the offer of the Allies [the Entente] became a problem for the internal party politics leading to a great political confrontation that divided the Greek public into two opposing camps.”¹⁸⁰

Naturally, the idea was to reward Athens and strengthen the hand of England in Eastern Mediterranean as well as securing the communication line all the way to India, a colony of the British Empire, as was agreed upon, before Greece entered the First World War in 1917 on the side of the Entente. Needless to say, the Greek Prime Minister Venizelos had supported the Entente, politically and otherwise, every step of the way from the moment when the war broke out. Prime Minister Lloyd George thought of a friendly and convenient Greece carrying out the orders issued by the Westminster. Such a state of Greece would be well rewarded for its past and future services with territory of now the defunct Ottoman Empire.

At the beginning the Gods seemed to favor the Greeks, and yet, ironically enough, the signs of an impending catastrophe were also abound: The bickering between Greece and Italy in terms of the Dodecanese and their respective desires over territory in Anatolia in the post-Ottoman period was well known. Most of the military consultants reporting to Prime Minister Venizelos, including experienced generals like Metaxas, advised against a decision to invade Smyrna/İzmir (Smith). In the middle of Anatolia, a

¹⁷⁹ Pallis, *Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası*, s. 24

¹⁸⁰ Ibid

modern type of Turkish nationalism was brewing and it was impossible not to see it. In June 1918, well before May 13, 1919 when the Greek government gave the order to invade Smyrna/Izmir, Mustafa Kemal had already, “ordered the convocation of a conference with representatives from many parts of the Ottoman realm... The conference in Erzerum [*sic*] lasted 14 days and debated Kemal’s nationalistic programme. In September of the same year the Conference in Sivas confirmed, by an even larger participation, the demands of the nationalists.”¹⁸¹

Neither Greece nor the Entente seemed to pay any attention to a possible Turkish nationalist revival. Instead, both preferred to hear the words of Prime Minister Venizelos who believed that with the demise of the Ottoman Empire a historical era was closing down, while a brave new era was on the horizon for the Greeks as well as the Entente. As to the Turkish nationalist revival, Venizelos did not think it as a possibility at all and made plans for the “Muslim subjects” living in a Greater Greece: “... - an uprising which is extremely unlikely, since with the complete dissolution of the Ottoman state, our Muslim subjects will be excellent and law-abiding citizens.”¹⁸²

John S. Koliopoulos, and Thanos M. Veremis underline the fact that the San Remo Conference (April 19-26, 1920), a precursor of the Treaty of Sèvres, appears to be the moment when a wedge was drawn for the first time between the members of the Entente:

The Peace of San Remo in April 1920 guaranteed the interests of Great Britain in Mesopotamia and Palestine and the security of the Dardanelle Straits. Italy and France received similar guarantees for their presence in Antalya and Cilicia. Given Italy’s opposition to the mandate granted to

¹⁸¹ John S.Koliopoulos, Thanos Veremis, Modern Greece: A History Since 1821, Willey-Blackwell, United Kingdom, 2010, p. 89

¹⁸² Smith, Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922, p. 53

Greece with regard to the region of Aydın and France's gradual alienation from the project, the Greeks became wholly dependent on Great Britain.¹⁸³

The wedge was not so apparent at the beginning as there was a semblance of harmony among the Great and small powers of the Entente at the Treaty of Sèvres attended by all parties involved including the Ottoman representatives.

Certainly, the “sick man of Europe”, the Ottoman Empire, did present the Entente with problems on the basis of the aftermath of its collapse. It is possible to surmise that the Entente would be faced with a situation in which, one among them, Italy, would come forth and demand the entire Western Anatolia as its historical backyard after the war was won. But, Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the accepted leader at the Paris Peace Conference, had less sympathy for the Italians than the Greeks, but Wilson, the President of the United States, had even less than that: “[Wilson] would have put the devil into Smyrna/İzmir if that would have kept the Italians out.”¹⁸⁴

Beyond Greece, in the world outside, “Venizelos’s policy of expansion was categorically condemned by even those who admired him.”¹⁸⁵ At the beginning of his book under the chapter titled, “the Anatolian Adventure”, Pallis quotes from Winston Churchill in reference to the *Katastrofi*: “To this day, I still do not know how such prominent statesmen as Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Venizelos got involved in such a bad enterprise with such haste.”¹⁸⁶ Churchill’s friendship and rivalry with Lloyd George is well known. So, perhaps his perplexity was genuine enough. At this point,

¹⁸³ Koliopoulos & Veremis, *Modern Greece: A History Since 1821*, p. 89-90

¹⁸⁴ Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922*, p. 79

¹⁸⁵ Pallis, *Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası*, s. 24

¹⁸⁶ Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis – The Aftermath*, s. 369, quoted in Pallis, s. 23

however, Pallis sharply criticizes those who were privy to the events of the period in question, including Churchill:

A majority of those who search through the events of the Greeks at this period in time; while approving Venizelos to go into war on the side of the Allies [the Entente], unjustly condemn his invasion of Smyrna right after the war in 1919. In doing this, they turn a blind eye to the fact that these two aspects of Venizelos's politics are closely intertwined to one another. They forget that the concessions of territory in Anatolia as the only condition and reason for the Greeks to enter the war on the side of the Entente.¹⁸⁷

The idea of the Greek entry into the war was intertwined with the idea of concessions by the Entente in Western Anatolia. This was Venizelos's political platform inside Greece based on *Megali Idea*. Providing for one side of the equation automatically, namely the Greek entry into the war on the side of the Entente, brought about the reality of the other side, concessions in Western Anatolia starting with Smyrna/İzmir.

7. Pallis Deconstructs Churchill

In the same breath, Pallis deconstructs Churchill's reasoning when the latter declares he does not understand either how such great men such Lloyd George, Wilson, Clemenceau, and Venizelos took such a bad decision in favor of the Greeks to invade Western Anatolia. He questions how is it possible for Churchill not to discern two simple facts: first, the Greeks were promised Smyrna/İzmir in return for entering the First World War to support the Entente; and second when the time came, the Entente did not support the Greek military endeavor in Asia Minor.¹⁸⁸

Pallis relentlessly probes into Churchill's seemingly innocent profession of ignorance as to why the decision to land forces in Smyrna/İzmir was ever taken:

¹⁸⁷ Pallis, *Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası*, s. 25

¹⁸⁸ Ibid

This inconsistency and the tendency to turn a blind eye to the facts was, perhaps, done on purpose to avoid to descend into the depths of the responsibility for the Greek catastrophe of 1922. It is easy to say to Venizelos, "You should not have gone there." However, it is not so easy to answer the questions that would follow: "Why did you promise to give İzmir first and then pull Greece into war and then when it was time to honor your promise you balked at support? As opposed to King Constantine's "No war, no İzmir" policies, why did you choose Venizelos's "War in return for İzmir" and imposed that on the Greeks? Would not this situation charge you with the responsibility to keep your end of the promise?"¹⁸⁹

Obviously, Pallis's aim is to show that Churchill's objection to Greek invasion is nothing but a political show. Here is how Lord Kinross perceives the events of the same period:

To David Lloyd George [the prime minister], who considered Venizelos 'the greatest statesman the Greeks had thrown up since the days of Pericles,' ... [the Greek entrance into the First World War] seemed both fair and expedient. The Greeks could serve Britain's interests by replacing the Turks as the protectors of her imperial communications with India. Thus despite Lord Curzon and the Foreign Office, who preferred to compensate the Greeks in Thrace; despite doubts from the generals as to the military feasibility of Greek penetration inland; despite opposition on the very grounds of self-determination which Venizelos had invoked, despite President Wilson – despite all of these powerful factors, Lloyd George resolved to give his wholehearted support to the claims of the Greeks in Asia Minor.¹⁹⁰

Although the Greeks under Venizelos were ready and willing to start a campaign in the Asia Minor, they could not have done it without the express permission of the Prime Minister of Britain who really headed the Entente. And that permission was given on the basis of the political expediency as well as sympathy felt towards the Greeks by Lloyd George as explained above.

Not all in the Supreme Council of the Entente at Paris Peace Conference, however, agreed to the idea of Greek forces landing in Smyrna/İzmir, Svoronos

¹⁸⁹ Pallis, *Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası*, s. 25

¹⁹⁰ Lord Kinross, *Ataturk*, W. Morrow & Co., New York, 1965, pp. 164-5, quoted in Jensen, "The Greco-Turkish War, 1920-1922", p. 553

indicates.¹⁹¹ He goes on to explain that more objections were raised by the Italians and the French as the Greek armed forces forayed out of Smyrna/İzmir to attack Mustafa Kemal and capture Ankara which was declared as the new capital by the insurgent Turks. The idea was to finish off the Turkish insurgency.

8. The Treaty of Sèvres

The Treaty of Sèvres, signed on August 10, 1920 between the Ottomans and the representatives of the Entente, namely, United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Japan, however, was a different story for Greece. It was not that the Entente did not want to reward Athens for its participation in the war. A fierce competition to partition the vast land of the defunct Ottoman Empire was now on in earnest. Svoronos explains:

The demands of Greece concerning Northern Epirus, the islands, and the Asia Minor contradicted with the desires of Italian imperialism, as well as being caught up in the competition between the French and the English. With the Treaty of Sèvres the Greeks were given Eastern Thrace, Imbros (Gökçeada), Tenedos (Bozcaada), as well as recognizing sovereignty of Athens over the Aegean islands which the state of Greece had administered since 1913.¹⁹²

Actually, the rewards for Greece did not stop there: the region of Smyrna/İzmir, from the bay of Adramyttion (Edremit) to all the way to the bay of Skala Nova (Kuşadası) would be given to Greece to administer. There would be a plebiscite in the region to be held in five years, the Entente dictated, at the end of which, it would be integrated into the state of Greece. The Entente was convinced this would seal the fate of the entire region and complete its political transformation from being Ottoman lands for approximately 600

¹⁹¹ Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 90

¹⁹² Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918-197*, p. 53

years and into a territory of the state of Greece established one hundred years ago *per se*.¹⁹³

9. The Turks Say “No” to Sevres

However, after all that was said and done during the Treaty of Sèvres as well as in its immediate aftermath, it was obvious to all involved in the First World War that the facts on the ground in Anatolia clashed with the articles of the Treaty of Sèvres. It looked like Greece would have to fight to get what was given to it by the Treaty, as something unexpected had happened: an ex-Ottoman general by the name of Mustafa Kemal, known to the Entente from his extraordinarily successful defense of the Dardanelles when the Great Powers tried to force their way through to Constantinople in March 1915, had come forth once again in 1920, seemed nonchalant about the decisions arrived at by the Great Powers at Sèvres and flagrantly rejected the articles and the entire idea of the Treaty. Svoronos writes: “Signing of the Treaty of Sèvres meant that Greece would have to continue fighting against the Turks. Indeed, Mustafa Kemal declared in June 1919 that he did not recognize the Ottoman government and declared a national uprising. His aim was to protect the independence of new Turkey.”¹⁹⁴

It did not matter to the Greeks. Athens knew it was on the right both legally as it had the international law *à la* Treaty of Sèvres behind it, and morally as it was set out to build the new Greek civilization on both sides of the Aegean Sea supported by the Great Powers of the Entente. Or so it seemed. For when Athens moved to “break the Kemalist insurgency and to impose the articles of the Treaty of Sèvres, Venizelos was supported

¹⁹³ Alexandris, The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918-197, p. 53

¹⁹⁴ Ibid

only by Great Britain.”¹⁹⁵ Others, such as France, preferred to get used to or even befriend the new political and military reality in Anatolia that was fast replacing the Ottoman rule or what was left of it: the revolutionary brass led by Mustafa Kemal. For the political elite in Athens, the road ahead now looked lonely and yet they were destined to travel it completely alone to the bitter end.

From July 28, 1920 onwards, the victors of the First World War, including Greece represented by Prime Minister Venizelos, started the signing session for the clauses that would constitute the Treaty of Sèvres. On that day Venizelos signed three important documents. The first one was a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire which enabled him to acquire Eastern Thrace, Imbros/Gökçeada, and Tenedos/Bozcaada, as well as the right to administer the regions of Smyrna/İzmir and Aydın. The second document was concerned with the transfer of Western Thrace to Greece, which the allies of Greece had taken from Bulgaria 1919. And the third document stipulated that, save for the island of Rhodes, Greece possess the Dodecanese.

Having just opened the doors of their parliament on the 23rd of April, the nationalist Turks in Ankara were in no position to make declarations concerning the San Remo Conference; it was still the Ottoman government in İstanbul that represented the entire country. However, the Ankara government did reject the Treaty of Sèvres, signed later on August 10, 1920 between the Entente and the Ottoman Empire, which embodied the decisions of the San Remo Conference.

On January 11, 1921, the most unexpected happened: the Greek advance into the mainland Asia Minor to quash the fledgling nationalist Turkish forces was hindered by

¹⁹⁵ Alexandris, The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918-197, p. 53

İsmet İnönü near Eskişehir. Although it involved only one Greek division against the Turks and was only a tactical retreat in military terms, its political repercussions were considerable. Immediately, the other two powers of the Entente, France and Italy asked for a review of the Treaty of Sèvres. As a result of such developments, the government of Dimitrios Rallis resigned on 6 February, 1921, as N. Kalogeropoulos became the prime minister of Greece the same day. His minister of defense was Dimitris Gounaris, who, Nikos Psiroukis writes, favored the Central Powers therefore the anti-Venizelist bloc, felt uneasy to become the prime minister.

The suspicion of the Greeks that they were increasingly being left to their own means and fate except for the English proved right. Ankara, John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos M. Veremis write, “proved extremely competent in diplomatic maneuvers, managing to forge friendly relations with Italy and France in 1921,”¹⁹⁶ which meant that Britain was now alone in its support of Greece in the latter’s campaign in Asia Minor. All of a sudden, Greece’s role in Asia Minor campaign was reduced to “the role of a client who hopes to retain his patron’s favor by impressing him with spectacular military actions.”¹⁹⁷ Now, it was the British turn to suspect: “Greece’s optimism about the capabilities of its army to defeat the Kemalist insurgents on their own territory was given vent at the London meeting in February 1921.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Koliopoulos & Veremis, Modern Greece: A History Since 1821, p. 90

¹⁹⁷ Ibid

¹⁹⁸ Ibid

10. The London Conference

The London Conference (February 21-March 12, 1921) was convened more as a result of the French pressure to come to terms with the latest situation on the ground in Anatolia¹⁹⁹ where the Turkish nationalist cause seemed to be gathering in force; Paris wanted to reconsider the Treaty of Sèvres, an obvious sign of the French unhappiness with the Greco-Anglo design concerning the Asia Minor. This was an important meeting for the Ankara government, their first representation in such a gathering since its establishment in April 23, 1920. An Ottoman representative was also present. The entire process of the London Conference witnessed to the impossibility of ignoring the Ankara government as a factor to reckon with even in the face of the Greek forces already deployed in Smyrna/İzmir and Aydın region of the Asia Minor.

Following Venizelos's defeat in the 1920 general elections and Rallis's resignation after the retreat before İnönü, it was the new prime minister Kalogeropoulos who went to London to represent the Greek state at the London Conference. John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos M. Veremis explain that, "It was at that meeting that an initiative by the British Foreign Secretary Curzon in favor of a possible compromise with the Turkish insurgence was quashed."²⁰⁰ Apparently, the Greek politicians, as well as the military men, amongst them the Venizelist Colonel Ptolemaios Sariyannis, and Commander Anastasios Papoulas, "competed with each other in exaggerated claims to convince"²⁰¹ their English counterparts that the Greek forces would succeed in Asia

¹⁹⁹ Nikos Psiroukis, "Η Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή: Η Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή 1918 – 1923, Η Έγκλιση Ανατολικά μετά τον Πρωτοπαγκόσμιο Πόλεμο", (The Asia Minor Catastrophe: The Asia Minor Catastrophe 1918 – 1923, The Near East After the First World War), Aigaio –Koukida, Lefkosia, 4th edition, 2000, p. 207 [Translated from Greek by AGT]

²⁰⁰ Koliopoulos & Veremis, Modern Greece: A History Since 1821, p. 90

²⁰¹ Ibid, p. 90-1

Minor campaign and the will of the Greek people was intact in terms of the imposition of the Treaty of Sèvres on the Turks. Becoming more and more weary of the Greek presence in the Asia Minor, the representatives of the Entente at the London Conference, except for Britain, were not convinced by the arguments of the Greek side.²⁰² Psiroukis explains the mood at the conference as follows:

France, from the very beginning of the London Conference, was driven by its concern to consolidate its economic interests within the Ottoman Empire and wished for a speedy end to the war waged in the Asia Minor. Italian desire did not differ much from that of the French. Britain, on the other hand, considered any review of the Treaty of Sèvres as a negative development of its interest and sought for a lasting Greek presence in the Asia Minor.²⁰³

On February 10, in the absence of the Greek delegates, the representatives of the Ottoman and the Ankara government were called on to brief the conference. According to Psiroukis, while the Ottoman representative called for annulment of the Treaty of Sèvres, the representative for Ankara called for independence and the withdrawal of the Greek forces from Smyrna/İzmir and Eastern Thrace, as well as the removal of the Capitulations. The Conference, upon the insistence of the Turkish side for new statistics concerning the demographical situation on the ground in terms of the ethnic populations in regions under Greek invasion, decided to conduct another field research in the area. The Greek Prime Minister Kalogeropoulos reported the decision of the London Conference to the parliament. It was refused on the grounds that the Treaty of Sèvres had already decided the fate of Eastern Thrace as well as the invasion of Smyrna/İzmir by the

²⁰² Psiroukis, “Η Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή: Η Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή 1918 – 1923, Η Έγκλιση Ανατολίας μετά τον Πρωτο Πανγκοσμίο Πόλεμο”, (The Asia Minor Catastrophe: The Asia Minor Catastrophe 1918 – 1923, The Near East After the First World War), p. 207

²⁰³ Ibid, 209

Greek state. Accordingly, the Greek parliament decided that a new demographic research would be superfluous.²⁰⁴

Psiroukis believes that there were other reasons behind the refusal of the Greek parliament for a new demographic research: “The Greeks did not trust [the London Conference] as it was changing decisions already taken [at the Treaty of Sèvres in August 10, 1920]. Moreover, the decisions taken by the Conference would cancel the military operations and provide an opportunity for Kemal to reorganize its forces.”²⁰⁵

At the same London Conference, on February 17, the Greek delegation discovered to their chagrin that the French had negotiated a deal with the Ankara government concerning the Ottoman public debt.²⁰⁶ The French move was motivated from the concern to make sure the Ottoman debt was taken over by the nationalists in Ankara in case they succeeded in their attempt to free Anatolia and set up their own regime. Bekir Sami, the leader of the delegation assured the French the debt would be assumed by the nationalist government when all hostilities were ceased in Anatolia. Indeed, it was not only the French but the Italians were also trying to come up with ways to conclude a separate agreement with the nationalist Turkish delegation. Bekir Sami was a moderate who also “wished to settle with Britain, and wind up the war, on the right terms; but the right terms involved the withdrawal of the Greeks from Smyrna.”²⁰⁷ The English plans did not yet include a peaceful settlement with the nationalist Turks as they were still hopeful of a favorable outcome at the end of the Greek campaign in Asia

²⁰⁴ Psiroukis, “H Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi: H Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi 1918 – 1923, H Engis Anatoli meta ton Proto Pangkosmio Polemo”, (The Asia Minor Catastrophe: The Asia Minor Catastrophe 1918 – 1923, The Near East After the First World War), p. 209

²⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 210

²⁰⁶ Ibid, pp. 212-18

²⁰⁷ Smith, Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922, p. 192

Minor. Besides, the Greeks would never accept a withdrawal from Smyrna/İzmir, a point on which the Turkish government in Ankara was adamant. It was clear that a ground for a compromise that would suit the interests of the English, the Greek, and the nationalist Turkish sides simply did not exist. At the end of the London Conference, which lasted five days, “the Greek army moved forward into the attack.”²⁰⁸ Athens had taken a fateful decision despite the fact that it was becoming more and more isolated from friends and yet engaged with a foe intent on rooting it out of Asia Minor at whatever cost possible.

On February 19, the Greek Prime Minister Kalogeropoulos returned to the London Conference and declared the Greek parliament’s rejection of further work on demographical statistics in the areas of contention on the Aegean coast of the Asia Minor.²⁰⁹ The Greek Defence Minister Gounaris arrived in London on February 24 in order to support the arguments of the Greek delegation in favor of Asia Minor campaign. However, given the deteriorating conditions for Greeks of the Conference he seemed to have two real alternatives in hand. Psiroukis explains that the first alternative was to adopt Venizelos’s idea: stop military operations, leave Asia Minor except for Smyrna/İzmir and Eastern Thrace initially given to Greece by the Treaty of Sevres, and finally concentrate the Greek forces to defend the said regions. The second alternative would be to give up Smyrna/İzmir for Thrace, Imbros, and Tenedos.²¹⁰

It was a reversal in positions: Venizelos, one of the main political components of the *Megali Idea* and Greater Greece, had come to realize that the position of the Greek military in Asia Minor was untenable in political and demographical terms, regardless of

²⁰⁸ Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922*, p. 197

²⁰⁹ Psiroukis, “*H Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi: H Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi 1918 – 1923, H Engis Anatoli meta ton Proto Pangkosmio Polemo*”, (*The Asia Minor Catastrophe: The Asia Minor Catastrophe 1918 – 1923, The Near East After the First World War*), pp. 212-18

²¹⁰ *Ibid*

the support Greece kept receiving from London. On the other hand, Prime Minister Kalogeropoulos and his defense minister Gounaris, both supporters of King Constantine were of the opinion that the Asia Minor campaign should continue unabated. They were supported by the King who had initially opposed any involvement in the war and was even rumored to be inclined towards the Central Powers as he was of German descent. As a result Kalogeropoulos and Gounaris asked the Greek parliament to approve a three more terms of military mobilization. Psiroukis writes:

So, instead of soldiers coming home [from the Asia Minor campaign which the royalists had promised they would do if they were elected prior to the elections of November 1920], a three more extra waves of mobilization was declared. This was in fact a prospect to be avoided at all costs, for, even if the Greek soldiers were successful despite the absence of any perspective for military success, all they would achieve would be a deep penetration into Asia Minor where they would have to occupy predominantly Turkish regions of Anatolia. This would, in turn, further irritate Turkish nationalism causing the organization of a *cihad* by the Turkish nationalists.²¹¹

Psiroukis implies that with the Great Powers no longer acting in a political unison, and even seeking for separate political deals with the Ankara government, the military alternatives of the Greek state was necessarily narrowed down. Political and financial support from the Great Powers could no longer be taken for granted. Here, he also points out that the continuation of the Greek military operations was encouraged by Prime Minister Lloyd George for the obvious reason that this would help advance the strategic interests of England in Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. He concludes that the

²¹¹ Psiroukis, "Η Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή: Η Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή 1918 – 1923, Η Έγξις Ανατολίας μετά τον Πρωτο Πανγκοσμίο Πόλεμο", (The Asia Minor Catastrophe: The Asia Minor Catastrophe 1918 – 1923, The Near East After the First World War), pp. 212-18

London Conference ended with Greece not able to take advantage of an honorable peace with the nationalist Ankara government.²¹²

Giannis G. Mourellos suggests that the change of heart for the French was a result of Venizelos's defeat in the general elections of November 1920. Venizelos's resolute stance in favor of the Great Powers, the French thought, would now be compromised by anti-Venizelists who were also royalists with a tendency to favor the Germans.²¹³

Britain was aware of the bilateral meetings between France and the nationalist Turks during the London Conference. It was considered to be natural for as long as it concerned Cappadocia under French occupation with Ankara trying to push the French forces out of the region either militarily or diplomatically. The problem for Britain was that Paris was not willing to inform the Entente as to the content and the results of the proceedings. This was to create serious problems within the Entente during the London Conference.²¹⁴

Rome, on the other hand, viewed the situation from a different perspective, Mourellos writes. Although Italy was antagonistic towards Greece on the basis of the concessions the latter gained in Smyrna/Izmir and in the surrounding regions, it was careful to hide its frustrations. Bilateral agreements between the French and the Turkish Parliament in Ankara, however, changed the Italian stance and Rome openly moved to sign its own bilateral agreement with Mustafa Kemal even sending a delegation to

²¹² Psiroukis, "Η Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή: Η Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή 1918 – 1923, Η Έγκλιση της Ανατολής μετά τον Πρωτο Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο", (The Asia Minor Catastrophe: The Asia Minor Catastrophe 1918 – 1923, The Near East After the First World War), pp. 212-18

²¹³ Giannis G. Mourellos, "Η Γαλλοτουρκική Προσέγγιση του 1921", Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών: Αφιέρωμα στη Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή, ("The French Turkish Rapprochement of 1921" Centre for Asia Minor Studies: vol. 4. Dedicated to the Asia Minor Catastrophe) vol 4., Athens, 1983, pp. 221, 225, 243-244 [Translated from Greek by AGT]

²¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 221, 225, 243-244

Ankara. Also, Italians, although a member of the Entente, were secretly helping Ankara to check what they considered to be the expansionist policies of Greece in Asia Minor.²¹⁵

11. The Greek Forces Foray Out of Smyrna/Izmir

Notwithstanding the objections of the Italians and the French, the Greek foray out of Smyrna/Izmir did not happen overnight. In May 1920, merely a year after the Greeks landed in Smyrna/Izmir, the Turkish nationalist movement had grown in strength in and around Ankara. Mustafa Kemal seemed to be able to galvanize the nationalists into a coherent force and provide them with political leadership. The Turkish Fourteenth Army (formerly the Ninth Army) with headquarters in Erzurum under the command of Kazım Karabekir Pasha, undefeated in the Caucasus,²¹⁶ constituted the nucleus of the nationalist Turkish armed forces with irregulars joining in day by day. The French, meanwhile, were no longer as enthusiastic as before to fight against the Turks as they were busy occupying the Rhineland. In the summer of 1920, the French in Cilicia were forced to sign an armistice with the Turks.²¹⁷ The Italians, on the other hand, were not happy with the Greeks having the upper hand in in Ionia so much so that “they went as far as to sell arms to the Turks...”²¹⁸ Venizelos would not miss such a chance to advance his army.

Dagobert von Mikusch explains:

This was the moment for which the cunning and captivating Venizelos had been waiting. He had remained at his listening post in Paris, strengthening meanwhile the Greek forces in Smyrna and keeping them in marching order. Hitherto they had been strictly forbidden to cross boundaries that had been allotted to Greece by the Peace Treaty. Bu now the Greek Army was the only one that could help the Allies out of their dilemma. Venizelos declared his readiness to be used as the dagger of the Allies, and demanded

²¹⁵ Mourellos, “H Gallotourkiki Prosengisi tou 1921” (“The French Turkish Rapprochement of 1921”), pp. 221, 225, 243-244

²¹⁶ Jensen, “The Greco-Turkish War, 1920-1922”, p. 554

²¹⁷ Ibid

²¹⁸ Ibid, p. 555

only as small recompense for his services important additional slices of Anatolian territory.... The English fleet was to act in cooperation with the Greeks. The French... urged that action be taken as speedily as possible in order that their troops might be relieved from the pressure from the Turks in Cilicia.²¹⁹

It would not be so far from the truth, therefore, that it was the French and the Italians who provided ample opportunity for the Greeks to go beyond the boundaries set by the Armistice of Mudros, which von Mikusch calls the “Peace Treaty”. The Armistice stipulated that the Entente had the right to occupy any territory in case of a threat to security.

The decision of the Big Three (Great Britain, France, and the U.S.A.) in favor of Athens to land troops in Smyrna/İzmir coupled with the suspicions that the Greeks would use this opportunity to grab more land in Anatolia to the detriment of Italy, Rome decided on July 22, 1920 to unilaterally rescind the Hellenic-Italian agreement signed on July 29, 1919. Rome did not stop there and recognized the independence of Epirus (Albania), a region where the state of Greece had unresolved and active territorial claims, by signing an agreement with the said region on August 2, 1920, which guaranteed the integrity of its territorial boundaries.²²⁰ Now, for all intents and purposes, the Italians would no longer be counted among the allies of the Greeks. The road to loneliness for Athens would continue when France decided to disengage its troops from Cilicia by signing a ceasefire agreement with the revolutionary government in Ankara on May 20, 1920, less than a month after the Turkish insurgents convened under the roof of what was officially called the Grand National Assembly of Turkey that was established in April 23, 1920.²²¹

²¹⁹ von Mikusch, p. 255, quoted in Jensen, p. 555

²²⁰ Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 90

²²¹ Ibid

Svoronos writes: “Having secured the financial and the moral support of the Soviet Union (in August 1920), now Mustafa Kemal was positioned to organize a defensive war against the invading Hellenic armed forces.”²²²

12. A “Timid” Campaign and Venizelos’s Election Defeat

Describing the campaign in Asia Minor with the words “timid” and “ambivalent”, Svoronos believes that the Greek general elections of November 1920, when Prime Minister Venizelos encountered a surprising defeat against the royalists, was a turning point: “This timid and ambivalent campaign turned into an adventurous escapade finally coming to an end with the tragic ‘exodus’ of the Greeks of Asia Minor following the general elections of November 1920.”²²³ Explaining the reasons for Venizelos’s defeat, he emphasizes how the royalists steadfastly held their ground even when the Greek people believed that this prime minister would realize the Megali Idea. However, Svoronos points out, the King was popular and the repressive measures taken by the government against the opposition and the militancy of both sides, as well as the public demand to bring the war to an end played the determinant role in the election outcome.²²⁴

Venizelos was supposed to be at the height of his popularity when he lost the most critical election of his political career. After all he had just signed a treaty that seemed to be the dawn of a new era for the Greeks all over the world. The Treaty of Sèvres represented, as Pentzopoulos writes, the climax of the Megali Idea and the realization of a five-century old hellenic dream.²²⁵ As to Ionia, its integration into the state of Greece was but a matter of time and Constantinople would be next. Under such

²²² Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 90

²²³ Ibid

²²⁴ Ibid

²²⁵ Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact on Greece*, p. 38

circumstances and for a politician who signed such deal, an expected outcome of any election would be a landslide. Indeed, this was Venizelos's expectation too: "Full of glory and having carried his country 'to the highest pinnacle she has ever scaled in modern times (Churchill, *Op. Cit.*, p. 408)', Venizelos returned to Athens to present to the Parliament what his ardent supporters called the Greece of the two continents and of the five seas (Europe and Asia; the Black Sea, the Marmara Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Ionian Sea and the Mediterranean)."²²⁶

It seemed to Venizelos that if he simply made a list of all his achievements up-to-date, this would be enough to convince the parliament and his countrymen that he should continue at his post as the prime minister, which he did. Pentzopoulos explains:

Proudly, he expressed his achievements since the Balkan wars in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles; cautiously, he pointed out that the permanent redemption of the Anatolian Greeks depended on the ability of the Hellenic nation to continue the struggle and make the peace settlement durable; confidently, he asked for a renewal of his mandate and called for national elections. In a sudden change of fortune which resembled the apex of an Aeschylian tragedy, not only was his party defeated, but Venizelos himself was not even elected deputy to the new parliament.²²⁷

There could have been only one explanation to Venizelos's election defeat in November 1920: although the Greeks were happy and could not have been sad over the news of their troops landing on Smyrna/Izmir in May 1919, they were no longer interested in fighting an interminable and a costly war. Svoronos captures the psychology of the Greeks then when he points out to the fatigue the Hellen nation felt as a result of perennial warring since 1912. The opposition, on the other side, worked the masses of Greeks with the idea

²²⁶ Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact on Greece*, pp. 38-9

²²⁷ Ibid

that the war hindered the nation's socio-economic progress. People believed the opposition and voted against Venizelos.²²⁸

Reading Svoronos, it is possible to suggest that the idea was not to punish Venizelos by putting him out of office and reversing the doctrine of the *Megali Idea*. Rather, the Greek vote in November 1920 was against the war itself, not against a prime minister who gave them Smyrna/İzmir and made it look like it was possible to realize the dream of the Greater Greece. The voters wanted to make sure that the Greek gains in Western Anatolia and elsewhere be consolidated but the war stopped as soon as possible: "Eight years of continuous mobilization and fighting had taken its toll on the war-weary people."²²⁹

Obviously, the Greek electorate in 1920 no longer believed Venizelos would comply with such demand to stop the war. Tsoucalas explains why: "Foreign-policy issues dominated the 1920 general election. The Royalists, with the slogan of 'small but honourable Greece', preached demobilization and peace, while the Liberals campaigned for the new 'Greater Greece' spanning two continents and five seas."²³⁰

"Greater Greece" meant more war, while "small but honourable Greece" did not and that may have been the reason why Venizelos lost the election in 1920, at the height of his political career.

Historians Anna Triandafyllidou and Anna Paraskevopoulou believe that by 1920, the *Megali Idea* was no longer so popular among the Greeks as the initial euphoria faded away as a result of widespread interference of the Great Powers in the affairs of a country populated by a fiercely nationalistic people: "The Great Idea lost its impetus and people

²²⁸ Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 91

²²⁹ Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy*, p. 34

²³⁰ Ibid

started reconsidering their national identity, seeking to balance the irredentist overtone with the territorial and civic concept of the small but honorable Greece.”²³¹

King Constantine had always been a man of peace, in fact, a proponent of the “small but honorable Greece”, who proved himself from the very beginning by following policies of neutrality, the Greeks believed, regardless of his royal relations with the Kaiser, the ruler of the German Empire. It was time to call him back from his exile: “Once the royalists were back in power in November 1920, they organized a plebiscite and restored the king to his throne.”²³² This was the last straw and the Entente deserted Greece *en masse*:

The Great Britain did not trust political parties supporting the Germans or the King [who was related to the German Kaiser]. Accordingly, London would not continue with its support of Greece as it used to. As to France, in order to lessen the influence of the Great Britain in the East, it regarded Mustafa Kemal’s resistance movement in a positive light. Therefore, continuing the war [in Western Anatolia] despite its originally peaceful approach, the new Greek government incurred the economic sanctions of the Entente and was isolated. Furthermore, the Entente renegaded on its promise to the previous government to provide more financial credits. In spite of all this, the Hellenic armed forces kept attacking the Turkish forces that were defending their land.²³³

The results of the general election in November 1920 changed the climate that had made it possible for the Greek government led by Venizelos to entertain the vision that the Great Powers would grant them with their vision of Greater Greece if they only listened attentively and did as they were asked to do. Among the demands of the Great Powers led by Great Britain was to keep the German influence out of government at any cost and no matter what. Svoronos tells us that Venizelos understood and even appreciated it. This

²³¹ Anna Triandafyllidou and Anna Paraskevopoulou, “When is the Greek Nation? The Role of Enemies and Minorities” *Geopolitics*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Autumn 2002, p. 84

²³² Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 91

²³³ Ibid

legendary man of great power politics fully comprehended that the winner of the war would not be the Central Powers led by the German Empire supported by an ailing Ottoman Empire. Venizelos realized that the world was being reshaped by the Great Powers of the world led by Great Britain and the new comer, the United States of America. Perhaps what Venizelos seems to have failed to gauge properly - which can be gathered from a close reading of Svoronos - was the tenacity of the royalist Greeks who would not give up their ground in politically hard times but remained steadfast in their beliefs finally succeeding in winning the Greek public to their side. The royalist election platform was simple and effective: consolidate the gains of the war, but war no more. Determined to explain the social factors at work, Svoronos prods one to think that history is not made lightly even when people making history are fully conscious of what is at stake. In the case of the Greeks of 1920s, what was at stake was the *Megali Idea* itself. But, even then, instead of choosing the vision of Venizelos to realize the Greater Greece based on the *Megali Idea*, the Greeks chose their own way based on their own beliefs, not anyone else's such as the Great Powers. But the Great Powers disagreed; they would not come to terms with the election defeat of their own man: Eleftherios Venizelos. They were deeply suspicious of the pro-German King Constantine and the royalists who supported him.²³⁴

13. The Royalists in Power Continue with the War

The peaceful intentions of King Constantine and his royalist supporters, however, did not materialize into a retreat from western Anatolia like they had promised before the general elections of November 1920; they actually decided to continue with the campaign. Anna

²³⁴ Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 91

Triandafyllidou and Anna Paraskevopoulou write: "... the royalist government elected in November 1920 pursued the Asia Minor campaign. Despite the fact that the allies declared their neutrality in the Greek-Turkish conflict in April 1921, the Greek army's offensive of March 1921 led the Greek troops to the Sakarya river near Ankara."²³⁵

The Greek government that came to power after the election in November 1920 was now faced with the "problem of enforcing the Treaty of Sèvres, which had created a 'Greater Greece' at the expense of Turkey,"²³⁶ Tsoucalas explains. Furthermore, "Under the spell of the image of 'Greater Greece', the Royalists reversed their own platform and continued Venizelos's dynamic foreign policy. But – openly distrusted by the Allies whose interests had by now switched – they were left alone against the tide of the new Turkish nationalism that was irresistably rising under Mustapha Kemal's inspired leadership."²³⁷

The fact that the Allies, with the exception of the British, were having a second thought about the nationalist Turks, as well as the way in which the demise of the Ottoman Empire would be managed was ignored by Athens. The Greek establishment must have believed in and trusted, against their better judgement, the British to keep them in Asia Minor for the strategic interests of London and decided to continue its military operations against the Turkish nationalists in Ankara.

There are many descriptions and various interpretations of the battles that took place at İnönü particularly on January 11 and on April 1, 1921, respectively called First and Second İnönü Battles. Svoronos describes the Turkish military posture in the said battles as defensive retreat up until Sakarya: "The Turkish forces were retreating... The

²³⁵ Triandafyllidou & Paraskevopoulou, p. 84

²³⁶ Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy*, p. 34

²³⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 34-5

assault of the Hellenic forces were broken at Sangarios (Sakarya). Following the battle on August 23, the Hellenic army began retreating.”²³⁸ The Turkish retreat in the beginning, which took place during the summer and October offensive of the Greek forces, is described as a tactical one by Winston Churchill: “[The Greek offensive] was immediately successful. The Greek columns trailed along the country roads passing safely through many ugly defiles, and at their approach the Turks, under strong and sagacious leadership, vanished into the recesses of Anatolia.”²³⁹ An adversary technologically superior and better equipped was not immediately engaged by the nationalist Turks. The ultimate strategic objective of the Greek offensive, particularly, following the Treaty of Sèvres was to capture Ankara and put an end to the Turkish nationalist aspirations.

By December 1920, the Greek offensive continued on two separate fronts: first, around Eskişehir, and second immediately beyond Smyrna/İzmir and into its hinterland to secure the position of the Greek occupation forces on the Aegean coast. However, around Eskişehir, for the first time during the course of the offensive of 1920, the Greek forces encountered with regular Turkish forces who would no longer retreat, as they had done during the Greek summer offensive, but fought back with increasing determination. What appeared to be an unhindered excursion of the Greek forces into the mainland Asia Minor had come to an end and this was immediately considered as a set-back by the Greek chief of staff as well as the military consultants of the Great Powers, particularly Britain.

Gianni P. Kapsi explains that the Greek Commander in Chief Anastasios Papoulas instructed Venizelist Colonel Ptolemaios Sariyannis, one of the few who was not

²³⁸ Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy*, pp. 34-5

²³⁹ Winston Churchill quoted in Lord Kinross, *Atatürk: Rebirth of a Nation*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1960, p. 233

replaced when Venizelos lost the elections of November 1920, to organize a new offensive against the nationalist Turks to make amends for the negative impression the Greek forces created at the end of December 1920.²⁴⁰ Colonel Sariyannis's plan was plain but looked effective: the Greek Third Army Corps would organize a lightning attack from the direction of Bursa. This attack would be supported by the First Army Corps from the direction of Kütahya. The two forces would meet in Eskişehir to launch the finishing blow to Ankara. Colonel Sariyannis, however, prepared a second plan: a simultaneous four separate attacks would be organized, two of which would be false attacks for tactical purposes designed to deceive the enemy. The second plan was chosen.²⁴¹

The total number of Greek troops was 140,000, the nationalist Turks 40,000. Commander General Papoulas was certain he would win this war, Kapsi writes, so much so that he moved his headquarters to Bursa and replaced the Commander of the First Army Corps General Nider, a Venizelist, with General Kontoulis, a close associate of his, so that the latter would benefit from the perks that would be brought about by the final victory.

The Greek Third Army Corps failed to meet the expectations when the battles began; its attacks remained weak throughout. This provided time for General İsmet to deploy his reserves as he ordered a general attack from the entire northern front. He was then able to repulse the Greek 10th Brigade that controlled the center region and Turkish forces plunged in and divided the Greek forces. The commander of the Greek Third

²⁴⁰ Gianni P. Kapsi, "Hamenes Patrides: Apo thn Apeleftherosi sthn Katastrofi ths Smirnis", (Lost Native Lands: From the Liberation to the Catastrophe of Smyrna), Ekdotikos Organismos Livani, Athens, 3rd edition, 1989, pp. 94-96 [Translated from Greek by AGT]

²⁴¹ Ibid

Army Corps, then, ordered a retreat leaving the field to the Turkish forces to celebrate their first win against the Greek forces.²⁴² The Turks took 200 officers and 4,000 soldiers as prisoners on that day, March 19, 1921, Kapsi informs.

The loss in this real engagement with the Turkish forces led by İsmet Pasha at İnönü, Fotiadis explains, brought about the resignation of the government of Prime Minister Kalogeropoulos on March 19, 1921. Four days later, Dimitrios Gounaris, the defense minister of the last government but the real leader of the anti-Venizelis bloc, was declared the prime minister.²⁴³ The government change, however, did not transform the situation in the field in favor of the Greeks as the alternatives were still the same as they were before: either to leave the Asia Minor and keep Eastern Thrace, Imbros, and Tenedos, or to gather all Greek forces in and around Smyrna/Izmir region and brace for the developments. According to Fotiadis, Prime Minister Gounaris decided against deciding in favor of one or the other. Instead, he chose to continue on with the campaign in Asia Minor as it is – although not having the diplomatic abilities of the former prime minister Venizelos he hoped to have his luck and even transcend him.²⁴⁴

Perceiving a grave danger against the Greek forces in Asia Minor in case Gounaris remained in Anatolia to fight the Turkish nationalists, Venizelos made an effort to no avail to influence the prime minister to bring to a halt all military operations in Anatolia: Gounaris summarily dismissed the representative sent by Venizelos, Fotiadis

²⁴² Gianni P. Kapsi, “Hamenes Patrides: Apo thn Apeleftherosi sthn Katastrofi ths Smirnis”, (Lost Native Lands: From the Liberation to the Catastrophe of Smyrna), pp. 94-96

²⁴³ Dimitrios Fotiadis, “Sangarios Epopoia kai Katastrofi sth Mikra Asia”, (Sakarya River Epic and Catastrophe in Asia Minor), Fitrakis, Athens, 1974, p. 49 in Aristos Katsis, “Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi”, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), Empiria Ekdotiki, Athens, 2008, p. 251 [Translated from Greek by AGT]

²⁴⁴ Ibid

writes.²⁴⁵ On May 30, 1921, flanked by the Princes, the Prime Minister, and his political and military consultants, King Constantine visited Smyrna/İzmir where he was cheered by the *Rum* residents of the city. On June 3, 1921, a military council chaired by the King confirmed the decision to allow the Greek forces to advance into the Asia Minor with the object to reach Ankara to finish off the Turkish nationalist movement led by Mustafa Kemal Pasha.²⁴⁶

14. The Entente Changes its Mind

On the other hand, Angelomatis writes, the Entente, was now of the opinion that a “middle road” could be found to resolve the “issue of the Asia Minor”²⁴⁷ and was ready to interfere in the process. Prime Minister Gounaris left Smyrna/İzmir and returned to Athens after the meeting on June 3. Although there was no document of some kind summarizing a possible solution, the English, leading the pack, were aiming for Eastern Thrace to be kept by the Greeks, while Smyrna/İzmir would be turned into an autonomous province under a Christian administrator.²⁴⁸ Evaluating this as a positive development Venizelos made another effort to convince the Greek government but he failed once again.

On June 12, 1921, the Greek Foreign Minister G. Baltacis informed the Ambassadors of the Entente in Athens that his government would continue on with the operations in Asia Minor, rejecting any interference on the part of the allies, Katsis

²⁴⁵ Dimitrios Fotiadis, “*Sangarios Epopoia kai Katastrofi sth Mikra Asia*”, (Sakarya River Epic and Catastrophe in Asia Minor), Fitrakis, Athens, 1974, p. 49 in Aristos Katsis, “*Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi*”, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), p. 251

²⁴⁶ Hristos Angelomatis, *Hronikon Megalis Tragodias: To Epos ths Mikras Asias*, (The Period of the Great Tragedy: The Epic of Asia Minor), Estia, Athens, 2008, pp. 116-120

²⁴⁷ Ibid

²⁴⁸ Ibid

explains. Any interference, Foreign Minister Baltacis declared, would strengthen the position of the enemy, while weakening that of the Greek forces.²⁴⁹

Katsis states that the Entente was no longer happy with the Greek position concerning the campaign in Asia Minor and took a harder stance against Athens. Meanwhile, the support provided to Mustafa Kemal by some members of the Entente, such as France and Italy, was on the increase. Having realized in advance that the ideas of the Entente was being transformed in favor of the Turkish nationalists in Ankara, former prime minister Venizelos, yet once again, kept warning the Greek government that sooner or later Athens would have to pay a price for its uncompromising stance before the Entente. He was proved to be right, Katsis writes, when the Great Powers took the decision to allow Albania to take over the region of Koricha which the Greek state had possessed since 1913.²⁵⁰ This was a serious warning issued for Athens to come to terms with the changing political fortunes of the Greek state in Asia Minor. For the Prime Minister Gounaris, however, it appeared that the dice had been cast.

Fotiadis informs that it was on June 29, 1921, the Greek armed forces renewed their advance into the mainland Anatolia with: “2,500 officers, 107,000 infantry, 908 heavy machine guns and their operators, 86 artillery units and 1,500 cavalry. On the other side, Mustafa Kemal had 80,000 infantry, 7,370 cavalry, and 8,750 irregulars under his command. This was the balance of powers when the Greek military operations began in June 29, 1921.”²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Angelomatis, Hronikon Megalis Tragodias: To Epos ths Mikras Asias, (The Period of the Great Tragedy: The Epic of Asia Minor), pp. 116-120

²⁵⁰ Katsis, Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), pp. 259-60

²⁵¹ Fotiadis, “Sangarios Epopoia kai Katastrofi sth Mikra Asia”, (Sakarya River Epic and Catastrophe in Asia Minor), p. 261

According to Fotiadis, the Greek military plan was to advance to Kütahya, blockade the city, and destroy the Turkish forces defending the city. Two days later on July 1, 1921, Afyonkarahisar was taken. In June 3, the Greek army was deployed and ready to take Kütahya. İsmet Pasha ordered evacuation. The following day, the Greek forces invaded the city as the Turkish forces retreated into the countryside only to reorganize. The invasion of Eskişehir was next.²⁵²

Fotiadis continues to explain that on June 5, 1921, Greeks moved towards Eskişehir to capture the city. İsmet Pasha asked for support to defend the city. Mustafa Kemal had other plans. He believed that the war would continue longer and it was not wise to allocate valuable forces to defend Eskişehir; he simply wanted to keep his forces for later stages of the war. Instead, he instructed İsmet Pasha to retreat 300 kilometers towards Sangarios/Sakarya River. The very same day, "... the Greek forces, overjoyed with success, entered Eskişehir. Many on the Greek side were convinced that the fate of the war was already signed and sealed that they would no longer be hindered on the way to Ankara to deal the finishing blow to Mustafa Kemal."²⁵³

Fotiadis writes that, although the Turks had decided to retreat towards the shores of Sangarios/Sakarya River, they organized a counter-attack against the Greeks who were caught completely unprepared:

Following the capture of Eskişehir, the Greek troops had slackened the pace and relaxed their ways. Unexpectedly, İsmet Pasha moved swiftly to circle the Greek Third Army Corps. This Turkish counter-offensive was repulsed thanks to the Greek First Brigade and its commander Anathasios Frangos who fought bravely at the point of self-sacrifice with no regard for their own lives. Although the Turkish counter-offensive failed to meet its

²⁵² Fotiadis, "Sangarios Epopoia kai Katastrofi sth Mikra Asia", (Sakarya River Epic and Catastrophe in Asia Minor), p. 261

²⁵³ Ibid

objectives, it clearly showed that the belief that the Turkish army was in disarray and that the war was nearing an end was false.²⁵⁴

Katsis believes that the gravest mistake the Greek politicians and the military committed was that they were unable to see that, on June 1921, the war was far from being over. Furthermore, he writes, at this stage of the campaign, the Greeks did not perceive that the “the Kemalist forces were not yet beaten and a comprehensive engagement, a wide-ranging military encounter with the enemy had not yet taken place.”²⁵⁵

On July 15, 1921, the Greek Supreme War Council was convened in Kütahya. King Constantine headed the Council which was attended by: The Prime Minister Gounaris, Defense Minister Theotokis, The Chief of the General Staff Full General Papoulas, Lieutenant General Dousmanis, Staff General Pallis and a retired general X. Stratigos, Fotiadis writes.²⁵⁶ The decision was in favor of the continuation of the campaign until the capture of Ankara. Fotiadis believes, the decision, motivated by political and not by military reasons, was taken after a cursory examination of the situation in hand. He goes on to explain that if all military data were properly evaluated, the decision makers would have realized that, even if Ankara was captured, the Kemalist forces would still have a large hinterland to retreat in order to reorganize, while it would become more and more difficult for the Greeks to supply their military with the necessities in the middle of Anatolia far from Smyrna/İzmir, in the midst of an

²⁵⁴ Fotiadis, “Sangarios Epopoia kai Katastrofi sth Mikra Asia”, (Sakarya River Epic and Catastrophe in Asia Minor), p. 261

²⁵⁵ Katsis, Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), p. 265-6

²⁵⁶ Fotiadis, p. 270

overwhelmingly Turkish population with an increasing confidence in their ability to win the war.²⁵⁷

Fotiadis states that, Mustafa Kemal, on the other side, was even more concerned with fast advancing Greek forces, following his instructions to İsmet Pasha to retreat towards the Sangarios/Sakarya River.²⁵⁸ He decided to re-deploy his forces only 75 kilometers away from Ankara. Subsequently, he called on the Turkish Grand National Assembly to convene an extraordinary session of the parliament and successfully obtained from it the general command of the entire Turkish armed forces on August 5, 1921. Fotiadis writes “In order to defend against the impending danger, he assumed all military power. For the following three months, Mustafa Kemal became the new military dictator of Turkey.”²⁵⁹

Solon Grigoriadis believes that, on the part of Greeks, with the exception of Gounaris government and the King, no one would be audacious enough to go beyond Afyonkarahisar-Kütahya-Eskişehir line; there were simply too many hindrances on the way. Moreover, more expansion into Anatolia could only be the objective of only a few who dreamt the impossible dream of achieving even more than Venizelos had done when he was the prime minister of Greece.²⁶⁰

Here are some of the problems listed by Grigoriadis which the Greek army on the way to Ankara was to encounter:

1. Beyond Eskişehir, a great, dry steppe and a salty desert.

²⁵⁷ Fotiadis, “Sangarios Epopoia kai Katastrofi sth Mikra Asia”, (Sakarya River Epic and Catastrophe in Asia Minor), p. 270

²⁵⁸ Ibid

²⁵⁹ Ibid

²⁶⁰ Solon Grigoriadis, “Ellada-Tourkia-Kipros, 1830-1979”, (Greece-Turkey-Cyprus, 1830-1979), Athens: 1979, pp.182, 202 in Aristos Katsis, “Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi”, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), Empiria Ekdotiki, Athens, 2008, pp. 266-67 [Translated from Greek by AGT]

2. Following the desert, the barrier of Sangarios/Sakarya River.
3. Following the River, the mountainous Ankara region; a territory frequently divided by range of mountains that follow one another interminably with rocks scattered all around, a rugged ground.
4. Lack of sufficient transportation lines to deliver much needed military supplies to Greek troops.
5. The daily need for 115 tons of food and hundreds of tons of ammunition for the troops.
6. Lack of roads; the existent roads, very little and covered with much gravel. Ankara railroad destroyed by the retreating Turks.
7. In general: a moving front of 120,000 Greek forces; supply lines becoming ever so remote as the front advanced towards Ankara and away from Smyrna/Izmir, leaving them wide open to attacks by the robust and dynamic Turkish cavalry.²⁶¹

Despite all these drawbacks, “which everyone realized with the exception of those who participated in the meeting in Kütahya,”²⁶² on July 15, 1921 the Greek forces were allowed to advance towards Ankara.

Following the meeting in Kütahya, King Constantine returned to Athens. Kapsi writes that the Entente informed the Greek government that it was no longer willing to meet the expenses of the Greek forces campaigning in Asia Minor. Among the Great Powers only the U.S.A. did not participate in this boycott. The Greek government turned to Washington for a 33.5 million dollar payment necessary to finance its military operations in Anatolia. The American response was positive, however, they had one

²⁶¹ Grigoriadis, “Ellada-Tourkia-Kipros, 1830-1979”, (Greece-Turkey-Cyprus, 1830-1979), pp. 266-67

²⁶² Ibid

procedural condition to be met by the Greeks: the protocol that already existed between Athens and Washington, as they were both members of the Entente, was initially signed by the former King Alexandros. One of the articles of the protocol was that the Greeks had to inform the Americans officially when there were any changes concerning the throne. To wit, the Greeks had to officially inform the Americans that the new king was Constantine. However, when King Constantine found out that this was the American demand, he got upset for reasons of his own. Prime Minister Gounaris failed in his attempt to calm the King to have him comply with the procedure. Consequently, due to King's obstinacy and right around the time of the Ankara campaign, Greece, already deserted by the rest of his allies, was now deprived of a very critical line of credit for 33.5 million dollars to cover the expenses caused by the Asia Minor campaign.²⁶³ Nothing seemed to be going right for the Greeks and yet Athens was still intent to continue its operations in Anatolia.

Georgios Roussos states that the Greek armed forces completed its crossing of the Sangarios/Sakarya River on August 10, 1921. From that day onwards, the Battle of Sakarya began.²⁶⁴ On August 16, following a tough confrontation with the Turkish forces, the Greek army, under the command of General Papoula, invaded Sapanca and Kale Groto the next day. This meant that the first and the second defense lines of the Turks had collapsed on August 17 already. On August 19 Ardız Dağı and the next day Çal Dağ was captured by the Greek Third Army Corps. Roussos makes the point that “the Greek soldiers were not superhuman. Walking very long distances, not having enough

²⁶³ Grigoriadis, “*Ellada-Tourkia-Kipros, 1830-1979*”, (Greece-Turkey-Cyprus, 1830-1979), pp. 266-67

²⁶⁴ Georgios Roussos, “*Neoteri Istoría tou Ellinikou Ethnous 1826-1974*”, (The Recent History of the Greek Nation 1826-1974), vol. 6. (1915-1935), Elliniki Morfotiki Estia, Athens, 1975, pp. 205-206 quoted in Aristos Katsis, “*Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi*”, (Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), p. 274

food or water were taking their toll on the soldiers. On top of this, ammunition was not being replenished on time and basic logistics was now becoming more and more problematic.”²⁶⁵

On the other side, Mustafa Kemal, although retreating his forces twice, thereby keeping his military options open for later engagements, had not yet experienced a defeat, Fotiadis explains. As he once said it himself, if Mustafa Kemal was forced to defend at all, he would position himself near Ankara, within Ankara, or behind Ankara as the entire Anatolian hinterland was wide open for his military manoeuvres. His forces were not exposed to any debilitating military attack yet and his supply lines were intact.²⁶⁶

About this time, Fotiadis informs that General Papoulas, the Chief of the General Staff realized that capturing Ankara and finishing the Kemalist forces under such circumstances would be extremely difficult if not impossible. He sent a field report to the Defense Minister Nikolaos Theotoki on August 22, laying out the problems and his position, asking whether or not the campaign to take Ankara should be continued despite all odds. Now, this put the government of Gounaris in a position to decide for or against the campaign. Meanwhile, the Battle of Sangarios/Sakarya was fast advancing toward a critical point. At the Greek military headquarters in Bursa the military personnel did not seem to comprehend the reasons why Papoulas asked for retreat. Fotiadis suggests that “no one at the headquarters [in Bursa] knew anything or any difficulty that even the lowest ranking soldier in the field readily understood.”²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ Roussos, “Neoteri Istoría tou Ellinikou Ethnous 1826-1974”, (The Recent History of the Greek Nation 1826-1974), pp. 205-6

²⁶⁶ Fotiadis, “Sangarios Epopoia kai Katastrofi sth Mikra Asia”, (Sakarya River Epic and Catastrophe in Asia Minor), p. 289

²⁶⁷ Ibid

Fotiadis relates that for four days General Papoulas did not receive any word from Athens as to what he should do next. Finally, on August 26, 1921, he telegraphed Defense Minister Theotoki and unequivocally stated that the Greek forces no longer had the energy to advance to Ankara. Papoulas further stated in his telegraph that the Greek forces should retreat to the position it was before August 22. Fotiadis explains that Papoulas, with this telegraph, was in fact asking for political support for a possible retreat before he was defeated by the Turkish nationalists. Prime Minister Gounaris, Fotiadis believes, lacking in courage to take such a serious decision, put the ball in General Papoulas's court and asked him instead to take the decision himself.²⁶⁸ According to this, Gounaris was passing the buck to the military for the decision to retreat in the face of the Turkish defense at Sakarya. However, a retreat from such a wide front was no simple feat, Kapsi writes:

It required an unprecedented planning. Because had been sure of the victory. On August 26 they received a confirmed intelligence: the Turks would constitute a strong formation before the Third Army Corps, attack the Greeks, force them towards the salty desert-steppes, and destroy them before reaching the Sangarios/Sakarya River. Following this intelligence, General Papoulas instructed the Third Army Corps to defend to the very end, and to First and the Second Army Corps to attack the Turkish forces mercilessly when the Turkish offense began.²⁶⁹

The problems of the Greek forces appears to be even more than lack of ammunition, supplies, and fatigue, but also blatant military mistakes committed on the field by the Greek commanders. Kapsi explains:

By 28 August, the Second Army Corps was still sitting put in Kale Grato, showing no signs of advance, when it should have already completed a deep penetration into the field to circle the enemy. As a result, a wide gap

²⁶⁸ Fotiadis, "Sangarios Epopoia kai Katastrofi sth Mikra Asia", (Sakarya River Epic and Catastrophe in Asia Minor), p. 289

²⁶⁹ Kapsi, "Hamenes Patrides: Apo thn Apeleftherosi sthn Katastrofi ths Smirnis ", (Lost Native Lands: From the Liberation to the Catastrophe of Smyrna), pp. 122-3

had opened between the Second and the First Army Corps. The Turks did not take long to discover this weak point, infiltrated right through it, attacked the Greek forces along the entire front, and forced the Greek Third Army Corps to abandon strategic control points in order to rally at the gathering area. As though this was not enough, the commander of the Second Army Corps, Prince Andrea, refused to comply with the orders issued by General Papoulas and initiated his own manoeuvres.²⁷⁰

Although the Prince's behaviour was not based on a spiteful disrespect for Papoulas, it was critically harmful for the end result of the battle as it provided the Turks with the opportunity to transport reserved forces into the battle field to defend their positions, Kapsi writes. General Papoulas issued a new order and gave new instructions, however, the harm was already done.

According to Fotiadis, considered together with Mustafa Kemal's thoughts and actions, gravity of Prince Andrea's disobedience reaches major proportions:

On August 28, a few hours before the Turkish offensive, Kemal was seriously considering to instruct his forces to retreat for protection. He was hesitant to order a general offensive even after the Greek Third Army Corps inadvertently presented him with the opportunity to infiltrate through [the Greek forces]. He gave the order [for general offensive against the Greeks on all fronts] only when he found out that the Greek Second Army Corps did not advance to reinforce the position of the Third Army Corps. If the Second Army Corps had advanced, Kemal would have ordered his forces to retreat.²⁷¹

A change of fortune had occurred for the Greeks at that instant. Kapsi believes this was not totally due to the Turkish military prowess but also to flagrant mistakes the Greek commanders committed.

Kapsi indicates that the retreat of the Greek forces had begun even before Mustafa Kemal realized it. Orders to engage the Turkish forces were not being obeyed by the

²⁷⁰ Kapsi, "Hamenes Patriides: Apo thn Apeleftherosi sthn Katastrofi ths Smirnis ", (Lost Native Lands: From the Liberation to the Catastrophe of Smyrna), pp. 122-3

²⁷¹ Fotiadis, "Sangarios Epopoiia kai Katastrofi sth Mikra Asia", (Sakarya River Epic and Catastrophe in Asia Minor), p. 280

Greek rank-and-file. Troops, fatigued and demoralized as a result of long walks, bad management, and repeated guerilla-style Turkish attacks, no longer kept in accord with the plans of the Greek general staff. Escape from battlefield, too, proved to be difficult, even dramatic, Kapsis explains. Although, the general staff called it a “retreat”, the rank-and-file, even more seasoned than the high-ranking officers, knew that they were leaving the field, perhaps not defeated or victorious, but humiliated, without burrying their dead even though the Turks did not chase in the beginning, Kapsis states. With the Greek forces now living through the painful process of running for their lives, the first phase of the war began to wind down with 30,000 death and wounded behind.²⁷²

Kapsi believes that General Papoulas committed grave mistakes, the most important of which was to let Athens to steer his forces. Although an honest and a courageous soldier, he failed to demonstrate a lucid mind, prudent enough to make critical decisions, not based on political considerations but the military ones. As to Prince Andreas, Kapsi informs, when the retreat began he fled to the island of Kerkyra. In the aftermath of the *Katastrofi*, he was condemned to life-long exile by the military tribunal.

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15. The Beginning of the End for the Greeks: Sangarios

The Battle of Sangarios/Sakarya River lasted until September 13 in the vicinity of Polatli, less than one hundred kilometers west of Ankara. This was the beginning of the end for the Greek forces campaigning in Western Anatolia: “The morale and efficiency of the Army had been greatly reduced by the purges of most Venizelis elements [within the

²⁷² Kapsi, “Hamenes Patrides: Apo thn Apeleftherosi sthn Katastrofi ths Smirnis”, (Lost Native Lands: From the Liberation to the Catastrophe of Smyrna), pp. 123-5

²⁷³ Ibid

Greek armed forces], so the attempt to launch a general offensive against Kemal's stronghold in Ankara ended in disaster," writes Tsoucalas²⁷⁴.

At this point, according to Katsis, Greece would have still been able to bring to an end the Asia Minor campaign and this was what General Papoulas had in mind. However, the political authority in Athens did not pay attention.²⁷⁵ King Constantine, either ignored on purpose or simply did not have the ability to see the situation Greece was fallen into. Prime Minister Dimitris Gounaris, on the other hand, kept boasting that while with the Treaty of Sèvres Greece had 16,000 kilometer square of land in Asia Minor, during his tenure the figure had climbed to 100,000 kilometer square of land, although he did not say how he would keep it all in hand.²⁷⁶

On October 3, 1921, a Greek delegation headed by Prime Minister Gounaris, including Foreign Affairs Minister G. Baltaci, left for London and Paris to organize a conference to inform the Europeans as to the events at the Asia Minor, as well as to sign a credit deal to finance the needs of the Greek forces there. It was almost certain that the meetings in Paris would fail for the fact that the French were signing the Treaty of Ankara (October 20, 1921) with the Turkish nationalists which finished hostilities between the two sides with Paris securing some economic concessions while the Greek delegation were in Paris.²⁷⁷ Dissatisfied in the proceedings with the French, the Greek delegation left for London.

British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon suggested to the Greek prime minister a possible compromise with the Turks that, while Smyrna/İzmir be given an autonomous

²⁷⁴ Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy*, p. 35

²⁷⁵ Katsis, *Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi*, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), p. 289-92

²⁷⁶ Ibid

²⁷⁷ Ibid, 291-2

status under the reign of the Ottoman Sultan, the territory in Eastern Thrace be limited from the western part of Çatalca, a decrease in the amount of territory already given to Greece by the Treaty of Sèvres. Moreover, the British Foreign Secretary went on, the Greek forces would leave Ionia gradually, while the control of the region would be transferred into the hands of a gendarmerie commanded by foreign officers.²⁷⁸

Also, the Greek delegation signed an agreement with the British government for a credit line of up to 15 million pounds. Two strings were attached to the agreement by the British side: first, Athens had to give up some right for credits that were recognized to it in 1918; and the second was that the Greeks had to accept to pay some war debt which amounted to 6.5 million pounds. Despite the agreement signed, however, the Greeks were not able to find financial credit in London.

The compromise laid out by Lord Curzon was heavier than the one only a few months ago when Greece would keep Eastern Thrace, Imbros, and Tenedos, as well as the right to administer Smyrna/İzmir and Aydın regions. Now the space for manoeuvre for the Greeks was becoming narrower day by day. Their diplomatic isolation forced them to give a positive response to the English plan, which they did. It did not matter. Having being buoyed by the outcome of the Battle of Sakarya, Mustafa Kemal, Giannouloupoulos indicates, felt confident enough to make counter demands such as: Greeks give back Smyrna/İzmir; turn Eastern Thrace into an autonomous region; pay war

²⁷⁸ Giannis N. Giannouloupoulos, *Η Έγχεσις μάς Τίφλοσις: Εξωτερική Πολιτική και “Εθνικά Θέματα” από την Ηττα του 1897 έως τη Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή* (Our Noble Blindness: Foreign Political and “National Subjects” from the Defeat of 1897 to the Asia Minor Catastrophe), Vivliorama, Athens, 4th Edition, 2003, p. 291

reparations to Ankara. Consequently, the British solution to Asia Minor crisis ended in smoke.²⁷⁹

It is an indication of desperation on the part of the Greek delegation that, after London, they decided to pay a visit to the Italians, who frequently cooperated with the nationalist Turks from 1919 onwards to hinder the Greek advance from Smyrna/İzmir and Aydın into mainland Anatolia on the basis of their own designs for the same regions of Anatolia. Their visit was rationalized by the fact that Rome had clandestinely helped the anti-Venizelist bloc to take over political power in Athens. Gounaris was the prime ministerial candidate of the same political bloc. The Italians would help the Greeks for as long as they would accept to finish the war in Asia Minor and return home to Greece. With the Italian rebuff, the diplomatic initiative by the government of Dimitrios Gounaris to obtain political and economical support from France, Britain, and even Italy came to an end.²⁸⁰

Having been isolated from his European allies, continuation of its military campaign in Asia Minor was like a “noose around Greece’s neck.”²⁸¹ The daily financing of the Greek forces in Anatolia had reached 8 million Drahti on January 10, 1922 when General Papoulas suggested to Athens that in case they no longer had any soldiers, finances, or supplies to send over to Asia Minor, it is imperative that the Greek forces there leave for home.²⁸²

²⁷⁹ Giannouloupoulos, *H Evgenis mas Tiflosis: Eksoteriki Politiki kai “Ethnika Themata” apo thn Htta tou 1897 ews th Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi* (Our Noble Blindness: Foreign Political and “National Subjects” from the Defeat of 1897 to the Asia Minor Catastrophe), p. 300

²⁸⁰ Katsis, *Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi*, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), p. 301-2

²⁸¹ Giannouloupoulos, p. 306

²⁸² Ibid

On February 2, 1922, in a bluff to the British government, Prime Minister Gounaris notified the Foreign Office that in case they were not able to find a line of credit in England, the Greek troops in Asia Minor would be brought home in such a way that the British troops in Asia Minor would be exposed. Knowing that the political profile of Gounaris was not conducive to such an action, the British called his bluff.²⁸³ After an unfruitful wait in London, Gounaris returned home in mid February. In a message to Athens, dated February 23, 1922, the English informed the Greek government that “they had to coordinate their moves in coordination with their allies and that the situation of Greece was not as tragic as Gounaris made it out to be in his messages to the Foreign Office. As well, the British would try to organize a conference among the allies that would look into the affairs in Asia Minor.”²⁸⁴

It really is not clear at this stage exactly what are the thoughts of the British in terms of the Greek campaign in Asia Minor. Obviously, they had hoped for a speedy victory and the Greek control of the situation on the ground, particularly in Smyrna/İzmir and Aydın region. Uncertainty, however, ruled the Greek campaign against the Turkish nationalists. It appears that the British was no longer sure of the Greek victory, although, there is a sense here that London was still not sure as to the way in which they should be behaving diplomatically. Their declaration that further action had to be coordinated with the allies shows that London was trying to gain some time before deciding either for or against the Greek campaign. This also appears to be the reason why they stalled the financial aid they had already promised the Greeks with the agreement signed on

²⁸³ Giannouloupoulos, *H Evgenis mas Tiflosis: Eksoteriki Politiki kai “Ethnika Themata” apo thn Htta tou 1897 ews th Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi* (Our Noble Blindness: Foreign Political and “National Subjects” from the Defeat of 1897 to the Asia Minor Catastrophe), p. 308

²⁸⁴ Ibid

October, 1921 when the Greek delegation was in London. All this uncertainty, however, caused rifts within the government of Gounaris constituted by the anti-Venizelist block.

On February 26, 1922, after a vote of confidence at the parliament which ended 155 in favor and 165 against, the Greek government collapsed under the uncertainties causing the prime minister to resign. However, no one was able to form the new government, so the job was given to Gounaris. On March 5, 1922, in another vote of confidence at the Greek parliament, he received 164 votes in favor, 86 against, and became prime minister once again.²⁸⁵

Giannouloupoulos states that the inability of the Gounaris government to produce a solution for the Asia Minor problem brought Greece to the edge of instability and civil war.²⁸⁶ Anti-Venizelists were now wont to threaten anyone who criticized the way in which the government governed. On December 8, 1921, the anti-Venizelists attempted to assassinate Admiral Koundourioti. On February 21, 1922, Andreas Kavafakis, the owner of a daily newspaper, *Eleftheros Tipos*, who criticized the Gounaris government and opposed the decisions it took, was killed by them.²⁸⁷

The gravity of the situation forced the Liberal Party, now under the leadership of Aleksandros Papanastasiou, to declare the “Democratic Manifesto” on February 12, 1922, the main articles of which, Giannouloupoulos explains, was as follows: the return of King Constantin, who held his own interests beyond that of the interest of the nation, isolated Greece and brought about the economic embargo; Prime Minister Gounaris knew that the return of the King would enrage the Allies and cause them to move against

²⁸⁵ Katsis, *Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi*, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), p. 308

²⁸⁶ Giannouloupoulos, *H Evgenis mas Tiflosis: Eksoteriki Politiki kai “Ethnika Themata” apo thn Htta tou 1897 ews th Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi* (Our Noble Blindness: Foreign Political and “National Subjects” from the Defeat of 1897 to the Asia Minor Catastrophe), p. 309

²⁸⁷ Ibid

Greece; and the manifesto openly asked for the royalty to be abolished.²⁸⁸ The leaders who declared the manifesto were arrested on June 23, 1922 and condemned to prison for three years. All this showed how close Greece had become to brink of an internal conflict.

On March 9, 1922, in Paris, an inter-allies conference, participated by the foreign ministers of Britain, France, and Italy, was held. It aimed to produce a solution to the Asia Minor problem. Five days later the allies came up with the following general proposals, Giannouloupoulos summarizes:

1. At the Eastern Thrace, the Greek boundary is to be pulled back to Ganohoron-Midias line, which means that Redestos/Tekirdağ is given back to the Turks, while Adrianopolis/Edirne remains in the hands of Greece.
2. Following the peace agreement, İstanbul is to be given back to Turks (at that point the city was still under the control of the Entente forces)
3. The military forces of the Entente at Gallipolis is to be kept as it is.
4. General mobilization in the Turkish areas are to be gradually ended.
5. The Christian minority in the Turkish areas and the Muslim minority in Greece is to be protected.²⁸⁹

With such proposals, Greece lost Smyrna/İzmir completely. Once again, Prime Minister Gounaris was forced into the dilemma of either a retreat or an apparent disaster.

Ironically, he was relieved out of the dilemma by Mustafa Kemal when the latter declared on April 5 that he did not accept the proposals of the Entente, asking instead for complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Greek forces from the Asia Minor and Eastern

²⁸⁸ Giannouloupoulos, Η Evgenis mas Tiflosis: Eksoteriki Politiki kai “Ethnika Themata” apo thn Htta tou 1897 ews th Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi (Our Noble Blindness: Foreign Political and “National Subjects” from the Defeat of 1897 to the Asia Minor Catastrophe), p. 309

²⁸⁹ Ibid, pp. 306-14

Thrace, Giannouloupoulos writes.²⁹⁰ Gounaris government may have been out of that particular dilemma, but it was not rid of the Asia Minor problem which was to follow it persistently all the way to the bitter end.

While these developments took place, Nikolaos Stratos, jockeyed for the position of the prime minister, Katsis writes, which divided the government of Gounaris. When it was revealed on April 27, 1922, that Mihalis Goudas, right hand man of Gounaris, corresponded with Turkish members of the parliament in Thrace, and after that even with Mustafa Kemal, the anti-Venizelist bloc was struck by a political crisis. As a result, Gounaris had to resign. Stratos's government was sworn in on May 2, 1922. It lasted only two days as it could not muster the majority in the vote of confidence. Following negotiations within the anti-Venizelist block, a new government headed by Petro Protopapadakis was formed. Dimitris Gounaris became the minister of justice, while Nikolaos Stratos was given the portfolio of the interior ministry.²⁹¹

On May 23, 1922, commander of the Greek forces in Asia Minor General Papoulas resigned. He was replaced by General Georgios Hacıanestis. According to Katsis, his appointment to this position was made possible by Stratos, the minister for the interior, a relation of his. General Hacıanestis was convinced that the solution to Asia Minor problem would be possible only through occupation of İstanbul by the Greek forces.²⁹²

Kapsi states that many anti-Venizelist high ranking officers were unhappy with the appointment of Hacıanestis as the commander of the Greek forces in Asia Minor and

²⁹⁰ Giannouloupoulos, *Η Evgenis mas Tiflous: Eksoteriki Politiki kai "Ethnika Themata" apo thn Htta tou 1897 ews th Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi* (Our Noble Blindness: Foreign Political and "National Subjects" from the Defeat of 1897 to the Asia Minor Catastrophe), pp. 306-14

²⁹¹ Katsis, *Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi*, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), pp. 316-7

²⁹² Ibid, p. 326

they either asked for appointments elsewhere or early retirement.²⁹³ This did not bode well for the Greeks in Asia Minor. As a matter of fact, the first results of the confrontation following Hacıanestis's appointment between the Greek forces and the Turkish nationalists in Asia Minor indicated that the Greek lines were being broken in many places. Also, it seemed that the retreating Greek forces did not even know precisely where to go. On September 1, 1922, the Defense Minister Theotokis arrived in Smyrna/Izmir and publicly declared a new strategic objective: repulse the Turks and protect the gains so far without advancing into the inner regions of Anatolia. However, Theotokis did not tell the truth; no one knew the fact that a few hours ago, he had given a strictly secret order to the high ranking generals, instructing them to evacuate Asia Minor. Defense Minister Theotokis had asked all in attendance to keep this order secret until the very last moment possible. Aristeidis Stergiadis, appointed to the position of Governor of Smyrna by then the Prime Minister Venizelos in February 1919²⁹⁴, was also instructed to keep secret the ultimate objective of the evacuation of Greek forces from Asia Minor.²⁹⁵

Meanwhile, General Hacıanestis was totally concentrated on his plan to occupy Istanbul. Katsis believes that, blinded by his own plans, "he committed mistakes even a student in a war academy would not commit: he transferred 21,000 soldiers from various northern Greek army corps in Asia Minor to reinforce the Greek Fourth Army in Eastern

²⁹³ Katsis, *Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi*, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), p. 326

²⁹⁴ Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922*, p. 91

²⁹⁵ Kapsi, "*Hamenes Patrides: Apo thn Apeleftherosi sthn Katastrofi ths Smirnis*", (Lost Native Lands: From the Liberation to the Catastrophe of Smyrna), p. 197

Thrace. All the while, the Greek fronts in Asia Minor were being breached by the Turkish forces in many places.”²⁹⁶

On July 16, 1922, the Greek government declared publicly its decision in favor of occupying İstanbul. Even before the Greek government’s declaration, on July 14, to possess the honor of being the one to recapture İstanbul, General Hacıanestis arrived in Tekirdağ to command the Greek forces.²⁹⁷ Also on July 16, the Greek government sent a message informing the Entente that its armed forces were ordered to advance towards İstanbul and that the Greeks were instructed not to confront the allied forces already in İstanbul. Katsis states that the response of the Entente to the Greek message was astonishing and not anticipated by the Greek side. The Entente irrevocably and unequivocally notified Athens on July 31, 1922²⁹⁸ that in case Greece attempted to take over İstanbul, it would have to confront the European forces there.²⁹⁹

16. Some Incalculable Problems

Actually, in military terms, Greece would still have scored an easy victory. This part of the plan was not the problem. The point where things were bound to get complicated would be political, which, neither General Hacıanestis nor the Greek government was able to calculate. It was almost a foregone conclusion that if Greece invaded İstanbul, it would be terribly isolated by the European powers. At the end, the idea of a military invasion of İstanbul was given up even before the Greek forces ever moved. This was to reflect badly on the defense operations of the Greek armies in Asia Minor. Mustafa

²⁹⁶ Katsis, *Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi*, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), p. 328

²⁹⁷ Ibid, pp. 328-31

²⁹⁸ The New York Times, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F30A1FFE385D1A7A93C7A91783D85F468285F9>

²⁹⁹ Katsis, pp. 328-31

Kemal was now able to move even faster than he had hoped for. And the Greek idea of invading İstanbul, although never realized, put a stop to attempts of the Entente to bring about a solution to problems concerning Asia Minor.³⁰⁰ This would hurt Athens in more than one way as it still politically, militarily, economically, and diplomatically struggled in Anatolia.

Following the fiasco of invasion of İstanbul, General Hacıanestis returned to Smyrna/İzmir to rally his troops there. He sent a report to Athens. In it, he indicated that the Greek fronts were scattered in a rather wide area with big gaps in between, however, he failed to mention the absence of 21,000 troops that were transferred to Tekirdağ in accordance with his plan to invade İstanbul. He also failed to mention what would have happened in case a major arsenal, only six kilometers away from the Greek defense line at Afyonkarahisar, was captured by the enemy.³⁰¹

The conditions concerning the Greek army was deteriorating day by day. The commanders of various Greek brigades were constantly asking for money and food. Soldiers on leave were not coming back, while some simply deserted and hiding within Anatolia. Those who went to Greece on leave never returned. Angelomatis writes that the Military police in Athens discouraged the soldiers on leave to return to their units. This, in itself, was an indication of the fact that the orders for the evacuation of Asia Minor were already being executed.³⁰²

Angelomatis explains that, to this day, it is still not known whether or not the Turks decided to attack in the month of August. Although constantly supported by the

³⁰⁰ Katsis, *Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi*, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), pp. 328-31

³⁰¹ Angelomatis, *Hronikon Megalis Tragodias: To Epos ths Mikras Asias*, (The Period of the Great Tragedy: The Epic of Asia Minor), pp. 174-5

³⁰² Ibid

French, the Italians, and the Russians, Ankara was still waiting to see the end of the Greek idea of the invasion of İstanbul. Mustafa Kemal was concerned that as long as the Greek forces transferred to Tekirdağ remained there, there was a possibility that the Greeks would start the invasion of İstanbul without the consent of the Entente. Even Mustafa Kemal was in difficulties to imagine the dimensions of irresponsibility General Hacıanestis demonstrated, Angelomatis remarks.³⁰³ On the other side of the fence, no information ever flowed out of the headquarters of Mustafa Kemal. Tough security measures were put in place by the commanders of the Turkish forces to seal off the headquarters.³⁰⁴ Even on August 4, 1922, the Greek government was still busy trying to convince the Entente to the advantages of a Greek occupation of İstanbul:

Responding to the Allied Powers' note of July 31, the Greek government says it decided to occupy Constantinople in order to bring about peace by means of decisive military action against the Turkish capital.

Complaint is made that the allied decision against against such a move raises an obstacle to the proper exercise of Greece's right as a belligerent to put an end to Turkish resistance by moral and military actions of incontestable importance.

The Greek reply reiterates that continued delay in the conclusion of peace will result in fresh calamities to the Christians in Asia Minor and further aggravation of the whole Near Eastern situation.³⁰⁵

The Greek presentations in favor of their forces to occupy İstanbul had obviously fell on deaf ears on the part of the French and Italian members of the Entente as they had never been really keen on the idea of the Greeks occupying Smyrna/İzmir and basically taking over İonia, the most sought for Ottoman land during that period. However, the Greek expectation from the English must have been different and in favor of Athens expanding

³⁰³ Angelomatis, *Hronikon Megalis Tragodias: To Epos ths Mikras Asias*, (The Period of the Great Tragedy: The Epic of Asia Minor), pp. 176-7

³⁰⁴ Ibid

³⁰⁵ The New York Times, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F30A1FFE385D1A7A93C7A91783D85F468285F9>

in Anatolia, as well as taking İstanbul eventually. The fact that the English did not come true for the Greeks when Athens was notified on July 31 that occupation of İstanbul was out of discussion was a clear signal to Athens that the window of opportunity for the Greeks to occupy the former territories of the Ottoman Empire had already been closed.

The Turkish offensive began after midnight on August 26, 1922. That morning, Angelomatis writes, Mustafa Kemal was at Kocatepe together with Chief of Staff Fevzi Pasha, the Commander of the First Army Nurettin Pasha, and Commander of the Armies of the Western Front İsmet Pasha. On the day of the attack, the number of the Turkish armed forces was 120,000. Rallying of the Turkish forces were realized during night walks as they were deployed on the south of Eskişehir and southwest of Afyonkarahisar front. The objective of the Turkish chief of staff was to realize a lightning strike against the Greek targets.³⁰⁶

Angelomatis describes the Turkish offensive as fierce and decisive. Turkish officers executed on the spot their own soldiers if they attempted to escape from the battle field. While this was the degree of the Turkish decisiveness and discipline, Angelomatis explains, the situation at the Greek front was exactly the opposite.³⁰⁷ The morale of the Greek forces was down as a result of fatigue and guerilla attacks of the nationalist Turkish forces. They were not convinced of the final victory anymore. Their commanding officers was being replaced in accordance with the changing political fortunes of the political party in power: Venizelists were replaced with anti-Venizelists, which impacted negatively on the quality of chain of command leading to simple but deadly mistakes on the battlefield.

³⁰⁶ Angelomatis, *Hronikon Megalis Tragodias: To Epos ths Mikras Asias*, (The Period of the Great Tragedy: The Epic of Asia Minor), pp. 176-7

³⁰⁷ Ibid

The government in Athens was no longer convinced as to the military abilities of General Hacıanestis: every single movement he made had ended in failure. But the Greek government's sudden decision to replace him with General Trikoupi on September 4, was more of an act of desperation than coolheadedness. Kapsi explains:

The sad part [of the replacement of General Hacıanestis with General Trikoupi] was that the Greek government was unaware of the fact that General Trikoupi was actually taken prisoner by the Turks since September 2. Disorganization was at a level that no unit knew what it or another unit was planning to do. When the government realized its gaffe, it appointed General Polimenakos, former commander of the First Army Corps who had resigned in protest of the appointment of Hacıanestis, to the position of the commander-in-chief.³⁰⁸

When Polimenakos took over the command of the Greek armies in Asia Minor, the southern front had already collapsed. Greek forces were retreating *en masse*, leaving the *Rum* in such areas was exposed to danger, Kapsi remarks.³⁰⁹

Svoronos aptly summarizes the entire situation as follows: "In August 1922, the Turkish forces broke through the lines formed by the Hellenic armed forces and entered Smyrna/İzmir (September 9). On September 18, the Hellenic forces had entirely left the Asia Minor."³¹⁰ As the Greek forces were "smashed and fled in disorder"³¹¹ in August, there was nothing left to hinder the Turkish nationalist forces from reaching Smyrna/İzmir:

[The Turks] pursued the remnants [of the Greek forces] into the sea, slaughtered thousands of Greeks, and finally set fire to Smyrna in the midst of indescribable chaos. Hundreds of thousands of Greeks were forced to flee to the neighbouring islands or the Greek mainland. It was the end of

³⁰⁸ Kapsi, "Hacıanestis Patrides: Apo thn Apeleftherosi sthn Katastrofi ths Smirnis ", (Lost Native Lands: From the Liberation to the Catastrophe of Smyrna), p. 231

³⁰⁹ Ibid

³¹⁰ Svoronos, Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış, p. 91

³¹¹ Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 35

2500 years of Greek supremacy on the Aegean coast of Asia Minor – and of the ‘Great Idea’.³¹²

17. The End

The *Megali Idea*, a spectacular irony of the elections of 1920, had come to an abrupt end. Such momentous and sudden change in the fortunes of a people may cause a permanent scar in their history. In a way the Greeks caused their own downfall by changing their preferences away from Venizelos and towards the royalists. The Entente did not agree with the Greek royalist stance that favored the Germans from the very beginning. Britain remained to ally itself with Greece, however, by itself, this was not enough. In any case, the English support had begun to waver already given the ever increasing diplomatic and military strength of the Turkish nationalists based in Ankara. Yet, for the *Megali Idea* to be realized, they needed the support of the entire Entente, not just Britain, which had recognized but Venizelos as its “point-man” in Greece. In the absence of Venizelos, who lost elections in November 1920, the countries of the Entente withdrew their support one by one leaving Greece to deal with the ever-increasing threat of Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish nationalist forces which he led. What was thought to be an easy victory within an arm’s reach in the Asia Minor had turned into a defeat of great proportions for the state of Greece, costing incredible anguish, suffering, and tens of thousands of death.

At this stage, it is important to keep in mind the fact that the *Rum* and the Turks were now enemies, no longer neighbours. Whether or not supportive of the invading Greek forces, the *Rum* in Anatolia, now, had become an enemy as far as the general Turkish population in the Ottoman territory was concerned. So therefore, when the government of Greece took the decision to invade a place, such as Aydin, the Turks were

³¹² Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy*, p. 35

persecuted and the *Rum* became the main component of the new regime. Moreover, when the Greeks retreated from the same place, it was the Turkish turn to revenge. Both sides committed well documented atrocities during and after the Greek invasion of Asia Minor.

No protection plans were made for the *Rum* who were left behind when the Greek forces retreated from a place they invaded since they landed in Smyrna/İzmir in May, 1919, Kapsi explains. Following the instructions given by Defense Minister Theotokis in September 1, 1922, to evacuate the Asia Minor, the Greek retreat had become more and more widespread. The Turkish forces attacked every single ill-planned and ill-executed retreat by the Greek forces. Although not having sophisticated war plans, Mustafa Kemal hit the Greek armies whenever and wherever they made a mistake, perhaps with simple tactics but iron disciplined troops.³¹³ Atrocities committed by the attacking Turkish armies are well documented. Kapsi writes:

In Sevdiköy, there were 17,000 people, all Greeks [*Rum*]. While the Greek forces retreated, they lined up on the road and to cheer them on. However, when they saw that they did not intend to stay and fight, the residents of Sevdiköy asked the Greek soldiers to give them guns so that they could fight. When they were refused, they confiscated the Greek soldiers' guns by force and took up positions to resist. At the end, the Greek forces there, 23 officers and a thousand soldiers surrendered to the Turks just outside of Smyrna at a place called *Cennet*. Except for one, they were all beheaded. As to the residents of Sevdiköy, men, women, and children, they all fought to death.³¹⁴

When the Turkish armies entered Salihli on September 6, 1922, they surrounded the Armenian and Greek quarters. Anyone who got out was raped and killed. Armenians were the first to pay the price. They were killed *en masse* at their houses, the churches, and at the cemeteries. 300 women, 66 babies, 450 men, and tens of young women were

³¹³ Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy*, pp. 231-43

³¹⁴ Kapsi, "Hamenes Patrides: Apo thn Apeleftherosi sthn Katastrofi ths Smirnis", (Lost Native Lands: From the Liberation to the Catastrophe of Smyrna), pp. 246-8, 289

killed. Most of the young girls were raped. The Greek quarters were next. According to newspaper reporters who were there, about 5,000 people were killed and the Greek and Armenian quarters were burned down.³¹⁵

Kapsi writes that, on September 8, the Turks entered Bornova, the most beautiful suburb of Smyrna/İzmir. As soon as they arrived, starting from the mansion houses, they began a spree to pillage and plunder, as well as rape and kill. At the very hour when this was taking place, General Polimenakos and Governor General of Smyrna/İzmir Stergiadis were leaving Asia Minor as the last ships of the Greek navy departed from the city.³¹⁶ On September 9, 1922, the Turkish forces entered Smyrna/İzmir: the dream of a Smyrna/İzmir under Greek control had lasted for 39 months and 25 days.³¹⁷

Also on the same day when Smyrna/İzmir was lost, the government of Protopapadakis resigned. The King asked Kalogeropoulos to form the new government. However, the latter could not find ministers for the job and returned the task, which was then given to Nikolaos Triantafillakos who was able to form the new government.³¹⁸

The Turkish commander Nurettin Pasha was put in charge of Smyrna/İzmir when the Turks took over the city on September 9, 1922. His first target was Archbishop Chrysostomos of Smyrna/İzmir. Although he was advised by the foreign diplomats as well as the Catholic bishop to leave the city, Archbishop Chrysostomos preferred to remain behind to give courage to his community.³¹⁹

³¹⁵ Angelomatis, *Hronikon Megalis Tragodias: To Epos ths Mikras Asias*, (The Period of the Great Tragedy: The Epic of Asia Minor), pp. 246-7

³¹⁶ Kapsi, "*Hamenes Patrides: Apo thn Apeleftherosi sthn Katastrofi ths Smirnis*", (Lost Native Lands: From the Liberation to the Catastrophe of Smyrna), p. 254

³¹⁷ Katsis, *Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi*, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), p. 337

³¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 337-8

³¹⁹ Ibid

Kapsi states that Archbishop Chrysostomos was at Agia Fotini Church with his congregation when they came for him:

They took him to Nurettin who had a deadly hatred against him. Nurettin did not just want to kill but also humiliate him. According to the testimony of Rüstem Başıç, a Bosnian with the mission to execute him, while the Archbishop was descending the stairs to leave the Turkish headquarters, Nurettin came from behind, drew his gun and took a shot, not to kill him but to signal the Turkish crowd who waited at the bottom of the stairs. They began to hit him with clubs and stones. They gouged his eyes out. After a while, he had become just a heap of a person. He had a terrible death, but this did not satisfy the Turks. They tied his body behind a cart and toured the streets of the city to demonstrate to the Greeks and the Armenians what awaited them.³²⁰

The first flames that began to swallow Smyrna/İzmir were first seen on September 13, 1922 at Agios Georgios, a Greek quarter and the Armenian quarter where shots were fired. Hour by hour the shots fired increased. Angelomatis writes that the Turkish version of the events accuse Armenians, petty criminals, who congregated at the yard of Saint Stefan Armenian Church and shot at the Turkish gendarmerie that were coming to arrest them. And this was the starting point of fire. According to many foreigners who witnessed the events, however, it was the Turks who went around the Armenian quarter with patrol cans in their hands.³²¹

From September 14, 1922 onwards, writes Angelomatis, it was solely the plan of Nurettin Pasha that was put into practice. Fires were started so that they would burn where it was his desire to burn. Turkish soldiers and the local Turks demolished buildings in order to protect those areas which they did not want to be burned. This way, the Turks

³²⁰ Kapsi, "Hamenes Patrides: Apo thn Apeleftherosi sthn Katastrofi ths Smirnis ", (Lost Native Lands: From the Liberation to the Catastrophe of Smyrna), p. 265

³²¹ Angelomatis, Hronikon Megalis Tragodias: To Epos ths Mikras Asias, (The Period of the Great Tragedy: The Epic of Asia Minor), p. 247-8

saved Evangelical School and the Lycee for Girls, the big Italian school building to turn it into a school for themselves.³²²

In time and with the wind factor, the fire proceeded in three routes. Among these routes, thousands of people from Anatolia who ran away from the Turks burning their villages were also stranded. Everyone made an effort to reach the sea, for they thought the ships that belonged to the allies would take them to the islands on the basis of a Christian solidarity. They were dreaming that their lives would be saved once they reached the sea.³²³

Instead, Angelomatis informs, the Turkish brutality took place right before the eyes of the personnel of the military ships of the Entente forces, particularly the Italians and the French. While only the Americans made an attempt to help, they were afraid of the reactions of the French and the Italians and were not well organized. Residents of Smyrna/İzmir who swammed to an allied ship were arrested and transferred to the Turks who executed them.³²⁴

Finally the fire reached the sea. Human beings were running madly to escape from the flames and the Turks to reach the shores. Tens of thousands of people had now crowded into a strip of two kilometers, only thirty meters wide. Thousands of Greeks died terrible deaths in most inhuman ways. At the stadium of Panionios Club, thousands of people had gathered. Nurettin Pasha's soldiers found them there and began to rob and rape them. Anyone who resisted was killed on the spot. Some hid in cemeteries nearby when the night came. But the floodlight projectors from the military ships of the Entente

³²² Angelomatis, *Hronikon Megalis Tragodias: To Epos ths Mikras Asias*, (The Period of the Great Tragedy: The Epic of Asia Minor), p. 247-8

³²³ Ibid, pp. 254-265

³²⁴ Ibid

lit the cemeteries for the Turks to find them. Some mothers killed their babies accidentally to shush them. In order to escape rape, young girls were digging graves and burrying themselves.³²⁵

Angelomatis continues to write that the same events were repeated all over the suburbs of Smyrna/İzmir. Roads were scattered with bodies of the *Rum*, the Armenian, and the Greek soldiers who could not escape. When plundering Turks came across a Greek or an Armenian, the first word they said was: “Çıkar”. The Greek and the Armenian had to give up anything of value to, perhaps, save their lives. Frequently, for rings and bracelets that did not come out, their fingers and arms were cut off.³²⁶

Mustafa Kemal arrived in Smyrna/İzmir on September 10, 1922, in the afternoon. Kapsi believes, it was impossible for him not to know or not to understand what happened in Smyrna/İzmir; probably, he gave the orders himself.³²⁷

There were three ways to leave Smyrna/İzmir, Angelomatis explains. The first was to be included within a diplomatic mission; the second, on ships that were hired by Americans for their Greek friends and acquaintances with proper travel documents also provided by Americans; and third, on ships under the operation of Greeks to transfer the Greek forces home. Meanwhile, the Greek government’s ban on carrying people from what was still the Ottoman territory without proper travel documents was still on.³²⁸ The ban must have cost many Greeks and the *Rum* their lives.

³²⁵ Angelomatis, *Hronikon Megalis Tragodias: To Epos ths Mikras Asias*, (The Period of the Great Tragedy: The Epic of Asia Minor), pp. 254-265

³²⁶ Ibid

³²⁷ Kapsi, “*Hamenes Patrides: Apo thn Apeleftherosi sthn Katastrofi ths Smirnis*”, (Lost Native Lands: From the Liberation to the Catastrophe of Smyrna), p. 283

³²⁸ Angelomatis, p. 276

On September 17, 1922, Katsis explains, an order issued by Nurettin Pasha made it mandatory for all the *Rum* and the Armenians [presumably the Ottoman subjects] to surrender to the nationalist Turkish authorities whence they would be detained until such time when all hostilities would be over. All other Greeks and Armenians [presumably the foreign nationals] were to leave until September 30, 1922. Meanwhile, Katsis informs, Turkish brutality, plunder, and murders continued unabated until the last Greek of Asia Minor origin [the *Rum*] left the region of Ionia.³²⁹

Having vented his anger over Archbishop Chrysostomos's organizing a splendid welcoming ceremony for the Greek forces invading Smyrna/İzmir in May 1919 by killing him, Nurettin Pasha, the Commander of the First Army, Angelomatis writes, now targeted those *Rum* who served in the Greek armies. He issued an order for them to surrender with their uniforms. Nurettin Pasha was well informed about the activities of the *Rum* in İzmir; many of the Ottoman bureaucrats who remained in Smyrna/İzmir after the invasion of the Greek forces had been spies for the nationalist government in Ankara. Angelomatis continues to explain that the *Rum* and the Armenians were rounded up on the basis of information obtained as such. Many of these were executed. Only those with whom the foreign diplomats were interested in saving were able to live.³³⁰

The fateful day for Ayvalık with a population of 40,000 *Rum* was September 15, 1922. When the Turkish forces entered, they rounded up those who served in the Greek armies and executed them. Archbishop Grigorios's fate was the same as the Bishop of Smyrna/İzmir: he was briefly imprisoned together with the *Rum* notables of the city and

³²⁹ Katsis, *Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi*, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), p. 339

³³⁰ Angelomatis, *Hronikon Megalis Tragodias: To Epos ths Mikras Asias*, (The Period of the Great Tragedy: The Epic of Asia Minor), pp. 313-4, 339

then they were all summarily executed. The story was the same, Angelomatis explains, for Menemen, Bergama, Efes, Ödemiş, and all the other *Rum* centers.³³¹

Kapsi writes that on September 20, 1922, Mustafa Kemal deployed his forces to attack İstanbul channel. General Harrington, in charge of the Entente forces in İstanbul took up a defensive position to meet the Turkish attacks. However, the French interfered and convinced the Turks to wait until the signing of the Armistice of Mudanya on October 11, 1922. Meanwhile, the Greek Fourth Brigade in Eastern Thrace was disbanded. This was the force, commanded by General Hacıanestis to advance to İstanbul with the objective to occupy it. According to Kapsi, if the Fourth Brigade, that contained seasoned soldiers, would have been in the Asia Minor, when the Turkish offensive had begun, the development of events would have been different.³³²

The results of the *Katastrofi* were disastrous. Hellenism of the Asia Minor was expelled from its motherland. Psiroukis states that the amount of the murdered was in the neighbourhood of 10,000 following the retreat of the Greek forces from Anatolia. According to some, he indicates, this was a worse *Katastrofi* than when İstanbul was conquered by the Ottomans in 1453. With the Asia Minor *Katastrofi*, “Greek [*Rum*] component of the Asia Minor”³³³ disappeared forever. Psiroukis remarks that the adventures of the Greek oligarchy was “paid by the prestige and the lives of the Greek people.”³³⁴

³³¹ Angelomatis, *Hronikon Megalis Tragodias: To Epos ths Mikras Asias*, (The Period of the Great Tragedy: The Epic of Asia Minor), pp. 311-2, 320-1

³³² Kapsi, “*Hamenes Patrides: Apo thn Apeleftherosi sthn Katastrofi ths Smirnis*”, (Lost Native Lands: From the Liberation to the Catastrophe of Smyrna), p. 303

³³³ Psiroukis, “*H Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi: H Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi 1918 – 1923, H Engis Anatoli meta ton Proto Pangkosmio Polemo*”, (The Asia Minor Catastrophe: The Asia Minor Catastrophe 1918 – 1923, The Near East After the First World War), p. 242-3

³³⁴ Ibid

The *Katastrofi* created a political powder keg in Athens, ready to ignite at the first spark, Psiroukis explains. On September 24, there were military take overs in the islands Lesvos/Midilli and Hios/Sakız. Colonel N. Plastiras, Colonel S. Gonatas, and Navy Lieutenant Colonel D. Fokas headed these initiatives. When the government of Triantafillakos collapsed and King Constantine was dethroned on September 27, 1922, the reign of military began in Greece.

On October 11, the Armistice of Mudanya was signed between Britain, France, Italy, and the nationalist Ankara government. Greece was also invited. However, as Psiroukis explains, the proceedings had begun on October 1922 even before the Greek delegation, General Mazerakis, Colonel Plastiras, and Colonel Sarigiannis, arrived. Moreover, the articles of the Armistice was determined in the absence of the Greek side, against which they presented a counter offer without success.³³⁵

18. The Armistice of Mudanya

On October 11, 1922, on the day of the signing ceremony of the Armistice of Mudanya, General Mazerakis, the head of the Greek delegation informed all sides through a written statement that under the conditions where the Greek counter offer was not even considered, he would not sign the Armistice and left for Athens, Psiroukis writes. However, it was too late for any diplomatic manoeuvre. As a matter of fact, on October 14, the Greek government sent a telegram to the headquarters of the Entente and declared its acceptance of the articles of the Armistice of Mudanya which were as follows:

1. The Turks have Eastern Thrace all the way to Maritsa/Meriç River.

³³⁵ Psiroukis, "H Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi: H Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi 1918 – 1923, H Engis Anatoli meta ton Proto Pangkosmio Polemo", (The Asia Minor Catastrophe: The Asia Minor Catastrophe 1918 – 1923, The Near East After the First World War), pp. 244-6

2. The Greek forces leave Eastern Thrace in 15 days.
3. The Greek population in the region leave with the Greek forces for Greece.
4. The forces of the Entente at the Straits remain in place until the final peace agreement [at Lausanne] is signed.³³⁶

On November 1, 1922, the office of the Ottoman Sultan was abolished by the nationalist government in Ankara.³³⁷ Katsis summarizes the cost of the Greek side incurred in the aftermath of the *Katastrofi*: “The Asia Minor adventure took a heavy toll on the Greeks. According to the historical data on the Asia Minor at the Greek Chief of the General Staff Headquarters the loss was determined to be as follows: 19,362 killed, 4,878 dead, 18,905 lost, 48,880 wounded. Total: 91,215. Civilian losses was not included in this list.”³³⁸

In the conscience of those who had fought in the Asia Minor, the Greek armies were not defeated but betrayed by a group who simply quit fighting. Also they believed that they were betrayed by the Entente. Finally, they believed, they were betrayed by governments lacking in political dexterity who replaced capable fighters with those who were not.³³⁹

While the Armistice of Mudanya was signed, the situation in Athens was critical. When the forces of Gonata, Plastira, and Foka arrived in Lavrio, the former prime minister Gounaris and many of the members of his government were arrested and taken

³³⁶ Psiroukis, “H Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi: H Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi 1918 – 1923, H Engis Anatoli meta ton Proto Pangkosmio Polemo”, (The Asia Minor Catastrophe: The Asia Minor Catastrophe 1918 – 1923, The Near East After the First World War), pp. 244-6

³³⁷ Ibid

³³⁸ Katsis, Mikrasiatiki Ekstrateia kai Katastrofi, (The Asia Minor Campaign and Catastrophe), pp. 339-40

³³⁹ Ioannis Papafloratos, Periodiko “Istoria”, Papiros, No: 462, December, 2006

to the Police Headquarters of Athens. While the more hawkish members of the junta demanded their execution without delay, the moderates insisted on trials.³⁴⁰

What was the position of Great Britain, the leader of the Entente and the one and only, albeit by now a reluctant, ally of Greece in 1922? Svoronos explains: “Although Great Britain wanted to counter against Mustafa Kemal, it signed Mudanya Ceasefire agreement on October 11, 1922, as a result of the France initiatives who had already struck a deal with the government of Mustafa Kemal back in June, 1921.”³⁴¹

19. Athens in Chaos – The Trial of the Six

The *Katastrofi* hit Athens hard. Svoronos describes the general political panorama in Greece:

Pro-Venizelist officers of the Greek armed forces [the Revolutionary Committee] began preparing for a coup. An uprising led by Colonel Gonatas Plastiras took over the reigns of power [September 28, 1922]. King Constantine had to leave the country once again. As a result of Treaty of Lausanne on July 24, 1923 [signed between the Great Powers and Ismet Inonu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the newly established state of Turkey, also the member of the Grand National Assembly from Adrianople (Edirne)], Greece completely withdrew from the Asia Minor. In Thrace, Maritsa River (Meriç Nehri) was accepted as the boundary between the two states. Dodecanese was given to Italy, Northern Epirus to Albania. Italian imperialism felt free to bomb the island of Corfu to scare off a defeated Greece.³⁴²

Between September 28, 1922 and July 24, 1923, Greece had to go through yet another period of a profound political instability. On October 12, 1922, a day after the Armistice of Mudanya, a decree was announced by the junta which stipulated that a court was to be constituted to try those who were responsible for the *Katastrofi* in Asia Minor. The two

³⁴⁰ Ioannis Papafloratou, Periodiko “*Istoria*”, Papiros, No: 462, December, 2006

³⁴¹ Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, p. 91

³⁴² Ibid

investigating magistrates of the Special Military Tribunal were General Theodoros Pangalos and Alexandros Othoneos.

As a result of the infamous Trial of the Six, on 28 November, 1922, **Dimitrios Gounaris**, the former Prime Minister, who took over from Venizelos following the November elections of 1920 and continued the Asia Minor campaign until May 1922 when he almost lost a vote of confidence in the parliament and resigned as a result; **Petros Protopapadakis**, Justice Minister under Gounaris, also Prime Minister after Gounaris for a few weeks until overthrown by the coup staged by Colonel Gonatas Plastiras; **Nikolaos Stratos**, who was asked by King Constantine on May 16, 1922 to form the government following the resignation of Gounaris but later deferred to Protopapadakis; **Nikolaos Theotakis**, the Minister of Military Affairs, from April 8 to May 16, 1922 and May 22 to September 9, 1922; **Georgios Baltacis**, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1921 -1922; **General Georgios Hacinestis**, the last commander-in-chief of the Asia Minor campaign, having been found guilty of high treason for being defeated by the Turks, were all executed. Tsoucalas summarizes: "Six of the most prominent personalities including ex-Premier Gounaris, were executed after a summary trial. The 'schism' between Venizelos and Royalists had been sanctioned with blood, thus feeding fanatical controversies for two more decades."³⁴³

The detainees were isolated and hindered from reaching the necessary documents to defend themselves. Except for the former prime minister Gounaris who handed in a sixty-seven pages written testimony in his own defense, all others spoke only very briefly at the court.³⁴⁴

³⁴³ Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy*, p. 35

³⁴⁴ Papafloratou, Periodiko "Istoria", Papiros, No: 462, December, 2006

During the proceedings it was an interesting moment when former general Hacıanesti was imputed with the failure of the entire campaign by Papoulas, former general and commander of the Greek forces in Asia Minor. General Hacıanestis complained that he had only served for four months as the commander of the Asia Minor campaign whereas his predecessor served for 20 months: "It is not fair to hold me responsible because the Asia Minor campaign died in my hands," he protested. The decision taken by the court was in line with the expectations of the Greek public who wanted those most responsible to pay for the defeat with their lives.³⁴⁵

On the morning of October 15, 1922, General Pangalos, a member of the junta and the defense minister, visited Colonel Plastiras, the chief of the junta, to inform him about the impending visit of a Captain Talbot of the English Fleet on his way from Genoa to Pyre to hand in a diplomatic note concerning the executions of those who were sentenced to death, probably to ask for a stay of execution. Pangalos asked Plastiras to speed up the executions. The decision of the court was conveyed to the six prisoners by nine o'clock in the morning. They were given two hours to meet with their families for the last time. And then they were taken to "military grounds near Goudi barracks just outside Athens that afternoon and executed by firing squad. All asked not to be blindfolded while facing the firing squad." Just before he was shot to death, General Hacıanestis was stripped off his rank.³⁴⁶

According to a report filed on January 23, 2010 by Yorgo Kirbaki, the Athens correspondent of *Hürriyet* daily, the Supreme Court of Greece accepted a petition and decided in favor of reopening the case for the six on the basis that the trial was not

³⁴⁵ Papafloratou, Periodiko "Istoria", Papiros, No: 462, December, 2006

³⁴⁶ Spiros Marketos, E'Istorka, *Eleftherotipia*, No: 6, 25 November, 199, p. 18

impartial. The Supreme Court based its decision on the grounds that new evidence came to light that proves that the evidence that led to the decision of the court in 1922 was misleading. The report by Kirbaki continues to explain that it was Michalis Protopapadakis, the grandson of Petros Protopapadakis, the executed former prime minister, who petitioned the Supreme Court of Greece in 2008, claiming, “My grandfather was not a traitor.”³⁴⁷

We learn from another report by Kirbaki on October 31, 2010 that the “Supreme Court of Greece decided that five politicians and one soldier who were condemned to death on the grounds that they ‘delivered their forces to the enemy’ and ‘hindered the Greek armies to reorganize/rally’ eighty-eight years ago were to be acquitted.”³⁴⁸ The Supreme Court decided three-to-two, Kirbaki writes, to “acquit the six men, concluding that the grounds provided [in favor of acquittal] by Michalis Protopapadakis, are justified. The grandson of the former prime minister defended the position that, ‘The retreat of the Greek armies from Smyrna/İzmir began on August 30, 1922 and completed on September 5. The first trial of the six took place on October 31, 1922. It is not possible that the court gathered the necessary documents and evidence in such a short period of time sufficient enough to condemn them to death.’”³⁴⁹ Apparently, the telegramme that was sent by Eleftherios Venizelos urging the Greek government in and around October 1922, that “They were not traitors. Do not execute their sentence,” as well as a speech he gave at the Greek parliament played a role in the decision of the Greek Supreme Court to acquit the six.

³⁴⁷ Yorgo Kirbaki, *Hürriyet*, January 23, 2010

³⁴⁸ Yorgo Kirbaki, *Hürriyet*, October 10, 2010

³⁴⁹ Ibid

The execution of the six in October 31, 1922, according to Psiroukis, provided the Entente yet with another pretext to isolate Greece. Britain withdrew its Ambassador in Athens. In 1920, the rise of the anti-Venizelists had provided a ground for the members of the Entente, particularly France and Italy, to send feelers to Mustafa Kemal to establish if there would be any possibility to make a deal with the Turkish nationalists in Ankara to protect their economic interestes in the aftermath of the Ottoman Empire, which they ultimately did. Now, in 1922, the execution of the six had provided a ground for the Entente to be justified in their anger towards the Greeks when the time came for the Treaty of Lausanne where they would sacrifice Athens.³⁵⁰

Pallis produces a list of must-do's for the historians who would investigate the events of the period leading up to the *Katastrofi*:

Concerning all these tragic events the historian has the duty to go the roots of three responsibilities: the first is the responsibility of the countries of the Entente that flattered Greece, and then prodded it to war in return for İzmir. The second is the responsibility of Venizelos who threw his country into an adventure comparable with that of 1812 campaign of Napoleon into Russia by trusting in and drawing strength from the words of the Entente. And the third is the responsibility of those who continued with a campaign they should have stopped as soon as they replaced Venizelos as they were against it from the very beginning.³⁵¹

The dream of the state of Greece since its inception in 1821 to create the Greater Greece, a *bona-fide* European power at the outskirts of the continent, based on the doctrine of the *Megali Idea*, particularly symbolized by the ambition of one man, Eleftherios Venizelos, had been shattered. It was obvious that Greece would continue to exist, albeit as a small

³⁵⁰ Psiroukis, "H Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi: H Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi 1918 – 1923, H Engis Anatoli meta ton Proto Pangkosmio Polemo", (The Asia Minor Catastrophe: The Asia Minor Catastrophe 1918 – 1923, The Near East After the First World War), pp. 247-9

³⁵¹ Pallis, Yunanlıların Anadolu Macerası, s. 25

nation on one side of the Aegean sea, not determining or dictating the politics of the region but keeping an ear to the west with an eye on the east.

Citing the great increase in population and the land mass of Greece during the Balkan and the First World War, Svoronos's economic analysis of the period in question sounds rather favorable:

Population of Greece, 2,287,208 million in 1889, increased to 5,016,889 million in 1920. If we add to this those who came as immigrants from Asia Minor as well as the Balkans in 1928, we see that the population is up to 6,204,674 million. This increase made a positive impact on the Hellenic economy, also leading towards social and political developments. In terms of land gained, it was 432,000 hectare after the Balkan Wars. Following the First World War, 69,000 hectare was added on top.³⁵²

Sudden increase in the population as well as the land mass forced successive Greek governments to make adjustments in terms of the laws of the land. The newcomers were deprived of wealth and money. From 1917 onwards, the Greek governments took measures to distribute land to the growing population of Greece, which, sometimes included the land that belonged to the church. Svoronos explains: "130,000 families without a land were distributed 1,200,000 hectares of land. 637,000 hectares of this land were arable. Greek immigrants who came within the framework of compulsory population exchange were placed in the stead of the Turks and the Bulgarians who left. The total area of land distributed this way was 850,000 hectares."³⁵³

The agreement signed between Greece and Turkey concerning the compulsory population exchange contributed in a major way to the population increase in Greece enormously as the entire Ottoman Greek population (the *Rum*) of particularly Western Anatolia was forced out of the newly established Turkish Republic. As the *Rum* were,

³⁵² Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 92

³⁵³ *Ibid*

generally speaking, rather well trained and educated and as a result gainfully engaged in every walk of the Ottoman society. The reason for this was that “The Ottoman ideology, with its social divisions, maintained a disdainful attitude to mercantile activities; this enabled the Greeks, and to a lesser degree other minority groups like the Jews and the Armenians, virtually to monopolize business life.”³⁵⁴ When the Ottomans conquered the city, they did not kill off the entire Byzantine aristocracy but allowed the ones who were willing to cooperate to assist in the transition period to the Turkish rule. The Greek community in Constantinople, therefore, consisted of “... the remnants of the Byzantine aristocracy and of the emerging groups of bankers and merchants known as Phanariots, [who] rapidly gained control of the greater part of economic transactions,”³⁵⁵ during the Ottoman rule. In short, “The Greek element was... dominant in the commercial, entrepreneurial and maritime activities which grew rapidly after the middle of the eighteenth century ...”³⁵⁶ It was inevitable that such segment of the population of Constantinople and Anatolia, now fleeing or being deported to the state of Greece, would have the most positive impact on the Greek economy, if not immediately, then, a little later. Ayhan Aktar explains:

... the influx of refugees from Turkey had positive repercussions on the commercial and industrial life of Greece, and was in fact responsible for a short-term economic boom in the post-Lausanne period. As Yiannakopoulos clearly argues: ‘The urban refugee population was a source fo cheap labour as well as skilled craftsmen. The country was enriched by men of proven business competence and experience.’³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy*, p. 16

³⁵⁵ *Ibid*

³⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 17

³⁵⁷ Aktar, “Homogenising the Nation, Turkifying the Economy: The Turkish Experience of Population Exchange Reconsidered” p. 82

Needles to say, the same process would adversely affect the newly established Turkish Republic. Aktar writes:

... the [population] exchange's effect on the economy of the new state was damaging, and necessitated many years of structural modification and readjustment... drastic decline in the number of non-Muslims had severe economic consequences for Turkey... Sussnitzki presents the fact that: 'The Greeks and Armenians are preponderant almost everywhere. Neither the Arabs and Persians, who are able traders, nor by and large the Jews can compete with them' (1966: 120-21). The departure of the Greeks and Armenians from Turkey meant that the most productive elements of the population... had left the country for good.³⁵⁸

Nonetheless, the *Katastrofi* led Greece into a dire economic strait in the beginning due to sheer numbers of people who arrive in Greece who had no means to care for themselves or a place to live: "Over a million and a half Greeks were to be transferred from Anatolia to Greece. The ethnological and political map of the Near East would be greatly modified."³⁵⁹ Tsoucalas continues to explain that the ten year of continuous war led to the creation of a new Greece as the territory doubled and the population grew even more. The integration of the refugees numbering around 1.5 million people caused the most profound social and economic problem and changed the population structure completely.³⁶⁰

It was necessary to take measures to prevent a social uprising, Svoronos points out.³⁶¹ This was done, to a degree, by the Revolutionary Committee in 1922 as they were forced to, in order to bring the country to its senses after the *Katastrofi*.³⁶² They took measures to protect the national industry as well as introducing protective measures for

³⁵⁸ Aktar, "Homogenising the Nation, Turkifying the Economy: The Turkish Experience of Population Exchange Reconsidered", p. 79

³⁵⁹ Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy*, p. 35

³⁶⁰ *Ibid*

³⁶¹ Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 92

³⁶² *Ibid*, s. 93

the workers. Also they introduced laws that mediated the relations between the employees and the employers.³⁶³

Measures taken by the Greek governments as well as the Revolutionary Committee that reigned from September 28, 1922 to December 16, 1923 when the general elections were held did not prove to be sufficient as the social and economic fall out caused by the *Katastrofi* continued. Tsoucalas explains: “Fear of social revolution and mounting refugee pressure combined to hasten and reform. Venizelos in 1917, and the revolutionary government in 1923, decreed the expropriation of practically all large estates (public, private, or Church-owned) and their distribution to landless peasants.”³⁶⁴

Despite the territorial gain, the war that had actually began with the First Balkan War of 1912 ending with defeat in Anatolia had the most negative affect on the urban areas, drastically changing it for the worse. The working class, as Tsoucalas explains, was to radicalize producing two organizations that was to play significant roles in the subsequent history of Greece:

The long years of fighting, the influence of the Russian Revolution, and especially the tragic conditions of the urban refugees, led the working class to organize on a more radical basis. The General Confederation of Trade Unions was created in November 1918, and the Greek Socialist Party a week later. In 1922 [the Socialist Party] adhered to the Comintern, and two years later it became the Communist Party of Greece.³⁶⁵

Although the situation in urbanized parts of Greece seemed economically and politically conducive, the Communist Party of Greece (Kommunistiko Komma Elladas – KKE) was unable to fully capitalize on it, “and remained a marginal political force throughout the

³⁶³ Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 92

³⁶⁴ Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy*, p. 37

³⁶⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 38-9

inter-war period [1918-1938].”³⁶⁶ Tsoucalas analyses the reasons as to why KKE failed to gain a major following during that period. He believes that the “restricted appeal of the Communists must be sought in the social background” of the refugees from Anatolia, the bulk of which used to be middle classes living in the towns of Asia Minor and Bulgaria.³⁶⁷

That is to say, the conditions for a transition to socialism through a proletarian revolution, if one is to employ the Marxian terms, was not ripe yet for a very important reason: there was not enough people with proletarian consciousness, although, Tsoucalas suggests, it was on a rapid rise at the time. Even then, the KKE failed in turning the despair of the refugee masses into political capital for its dogmatic ideological approach, Tsoucalas believes. However, there is another factor, according to him, that played an important role: “[The urban Anatolian Greek population in and around Athens] were also ably manipulated by the Venizelist officials during the long years when they fruitlessly waited for reparations, housing and status.”³⁶⁸ Nonetheless, the same demographic group did not make it to the middle-class status in their new country, Greece. They had to finally come to terms with their lot and accept a new status as the working-class people. An ironic remark by Tsoucalas: “During the inter-war years of political and social upheaval the very destitution, in the midst of which they had created their little world of non-integrated petitioners, served as a brake for the social movement which their own situation had helped to create.”³⁶⁹

³⁶⁶ Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy*, pp. 38-9

³⁶⁷ Ibid

³⁶⁸ Ibid

³⁶⁹ Ibid

Here is how Tsoucalas outlines the role Colonel Plastiras, the leader of the Revolutionary Committee, played in what could be described as a transitional year of 1922: “The military revolution of 1922 saved the country from the total chaos that had resulted from the Asia Minor debacle. The radical officers who had assumed control managed to reorganize the Army and impose discipline within a very short period of time, thus discouraging the Turks from continuing an aggressive policy.”³⁷⁰

Colonel Plastiras was conscious of the fact that the country needed a constitutional regime in order to have peace among various sections of the society. To this end he moved to reconcile pro-Venizelists with the royalists. However, his efforts were preempted by and attempt by General Metaxas, supported by the royalists, to stage a coup against the Revolutionary Committee. The attempt was easily crushed by Colonel Plastiras. Svoronos describes the following developments as follows:

In the aftermath of the general elections of December 16, 1923, pro-Venizelists constituted the majority (they won 120 seats out of 200). The armed forces and the navy were in support of the liberal parties. The King and his supporters were held responsible for the Asia Minor fiasco... Following the results of the general election, the King [George II] left Greece on December 18, 1923 and Admiral Kunduriotis was declared the regent. When Papanastasiu formed the new government and the parliament officially declared the republic (March 25, 1924), Regent Kunduriotis became the first President of the country. In a plebiscite that followed, supporters of democracy were able to muster two thirds of the majority.³⁷¹

The King of Greece was to return back to Greece only much later in 1936. But before then, in the elections held on July 5, 1928, Venizelos mustered a great majority in the parliament and once again became the prime minister until 1932.³⁷²

³⁷⁰ Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy*, p. 41

³⁷¹ Svoronos, *Çağdaş Hellen Tarihine Bakış*, s. 94

³⁷² *Ibid*, s. 95

20. Venizelos Mends Relations with the new Turkish Republic

Svoronos remarks that Venizelos perceived fundamental changes concerning Turkish-Hellenic relations following the Turkish victory. He took the initiative to reassure the Ankara government that Greece had no designs on the Turkish territory. This initiative was well received by Atatürk and an agreement was signed between the two sides on June 10, 1930, concerning a wide range of issues such as the exchanged populations and the Patriarch in İstanbul, now to be involved only with religious issues. A peace treaty followed when Venizelos visited Ankara on November 25, 1930. The visit was reciprocated by İsmet İnönü, the Prime Minister in 1931, which, Svoronos states, had positive results.

The defeat, according to Anna Triandafyllidou and Anna Paraskevopoulou, was costly also in terms of the national identity of the Greeks of the state of Greece as well as the *Rum*, who were now in a state of limbo that was finally resolved with the compulsory population exchange as part of the Treaty of Lausanne signed in 1923:

[Following] the population exchange and the suspension of the Constitution by the King in August 1936 and the establishment of the Metaxas' dictatorship, Greek identity politics were characterised by a struggle to shift from the Great Idea ethnic nationalism to a civic oriented view of the nation with an emphasis on modern democratic institutions. The anti-royalist feeling of the post-1922 period gave new impetus to the democratic modernising forces in Greek society.³⁷³

Ironically, the *Katastrofi* paved the way to establishment of democratic institutions in Greece. Considering two separate periods of dictatorships, first that of Metaxas (1936-1941), and second Georgios Papadopoulos (1967-1974), however, the process of democratization was incremental, finally becoming irrevocable.

³⁷³ Triandafyllidou & Paraskevopoulou, p. 84

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the Greek historiography of the Greek-Turkish war of 1919-1922 effectively demonstrates the extent to which contemporary Greece is a product of the *Mikrasiatiki Katastrofi*. Although a gross generalization, it still appears to be within the boundaries of reason to suggest that the modern history of Greece could be divided into two parts: the first part is from 1832 (the establishment of the independent state of Greece) to 1919 (the beginning of the Asia Minor campaign); and the second from 1922 (the end of the Asia Minor campaign) to the present. The three years of absence in between is, indeed, when the Greeks of the state of Greece were lost in the wilderness of the Asia Minor.

The early historiography of Greece from the 18th century onwards intimates towards a Great Idea as in a new dawn, a hopeful new beginning, perhaps even another great civilization for the Greeks. This is finally moulded into a political format by Prime Minister Kolettis in a speech in 1844, which he termed it just that: a “Great Idea”, in Greek, the *Megali Idea*. The modern Greek history had begun.

The state of Greece, particularly, from then onwards and until 1919 was determined and even energized by this profoundly irredentist doctrine that instructed the Greeks and the Greek state to recover the land where all the Greeks/*Rum* lived for thousands of years, such as Ionia or Constantinople. What could be more natural? The end result was to be the establishment of the “Greater Greece” on both shores of the Aegean Sea. Having the *Megali Idea* at its base made this irredentism appear to be rational, justifiable, and, psychologically invincible – it must have been the waterproof quintessential Greek ideology to anyone who considered him/herself a Greek then.

The *Megali Idea* was aimed not only just for the recovery of the land – which seemed to be within reach at the end of the 19th century as the Ottoman Empire was no longer strong enough to defend itself effectively –, but also to establish a civilization that would equal or even surpass the ancient Greece. The intellectuals, the artists, and the politicians of the state of Greece since its inception were convinced and even euphoric with the idea that they would be able to bring about this new and great Greek civilization on the basis of the *Megali Idea*. Everyone believed in the dream – even most lucid minds such as Eleftherios Venizelos, the legendary Greek statesman, many times prime minister, the liberator of Crete, the architect of the present borders of Greece, and the instigator of the war of 1919-1922. And yet the *Katastrofi* followed. Later, in 1930s, it was also Venizelos, now a wiser man, who laid the foundations for the establishment of peace between Greece and Turkey.

A survey of the Greek historiographers from 18th century onwards show that the early modern Greek historians or historiographers, as well as the Great Powers of Europe, underestimated the strength of what was left over from the Ottoman Empire, particularly, after the Armistice of Moudros in 1918. Much later, the Greek historiographers began to see parallels between the Greek and the Turkish processes of constructing a nationhood from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire.

The Greek historiographers of the later period determine that the Greek politicians and military brass completely and, therefore, tragically undermined the political and intellectual prowess of the Turkish leadership in Ankara during the war of 1919-1922. By the time they realized what they were up against, the Entente had changed its mind and

some members within it had already deserted Athens in favor of Ankara, a desertion the Greeks never forget.

The Greek forces sent to Anatolia fought with all their hearts and souls despite being badly led by the government in Athens, Greek historians inform. They explain how the Greek politicians' jockeying for more and more power in Athens destroyed the chances of the Greek forces put on the ground in Asia Minor initially by Venizelos in May 1919. No historiographer or a historian could possibly suggest that Greek politicians of the period consciously desired to be defeated by the Turkish nationalist forces. However, their attitude and political strategies appear to have inflicted a serious and critical blow on the chances of the Greek forces fighting the war of 1919-1922, as some Greek historiographers suggest, much more than the attacks of the Turkish nationalist forces. Greek politicians were too certain of the final victory that they were already competing for the would-be political benefits in the aftermath. The entire war witnesses an incredible amount of politicking in Athens presenting the friends and the foe with a view of a fractured society and a fragile government, both most uncondusive to a war effort particularly when the enemy is gaining ground which was the case from the beginning of 1920 onwards.

The Greek forces were couregous on the ground and did not fear the enemy. Everyone agress on this point. However, the Greek historians and historiographers seem to think that a coherent strategy was lacking and the generals frequently acted to satisfy their own egotistical concerns. We are informed by the same historians that exactly the opposite was the case on the other side. The Turks were well disciplined, patient, and deadly upon impact; they did not take chances. Obviously, the Greek Chief of the Staff

did not anticipate a resistant and a persevering enemy. The top Greek politicians as well as the general staff thought from the very beginning that the campaign would be a swift one ending in total victory, for they believed the Turkish nationalists were simply too weak to defend themselves in an effective manner. They erred in judgement and this caused a *Katastrofi* for the entire Greek nation.

The Greek generals paid a heavy price for their mistakes during the retreat all the way to Smyrna/Izmir and then from there to the mainland Greece. In fact, the punishment did not stop there. The wrath of the Greek people in the immediate aftermath of the *Katastrofi* cost the lives of six political and military leaders who were held responsible for the entire failure. They were summarily executed one morning in 1922, mere scapegoats but also signifying towards a new age that was about to dawn in Greece.

The Greeks had to come to terms with the “new” Greece in the aftermath of the *Katastrofi* that would never include the city they loved, the Poli, Constantinople; and the land so dear to their hearts, Ionia. Indeed, one of the most tragic agreements in history, the compulsory population exchange, made sure that the *Rum* who lived in Ionia for thousands of years were uprooted from their land and, in actual fact, exiled to a foreign land, to Greece, where they also became political and sociological scapegoats and suffered for years before the rest of the population accepted them as *bona-fide* Greeks.

Finally, it is possible to say that it was the *Katastrofi* that created modern Greece, which had to accept the *Megali Idea* and its most important component irredentism as a *cul-de-sac*. Although in existence for 90 years, Greece had to start over her life in 1922, set to overcome many difficulties along the way, none more treacherous than the *Katastrofi*.

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