RECLAIMING THE UNREDEEMED: IRREDENSTISM AND THE NATIONAL SCHISM IN GREECE'S FIRST WORLD WAR

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ABSTRACT

CHRISTOPHER KINLEY. Reclaiming the Unredeemed: Irredentism and the National Schism in Greece's First World War. (Under the direction of DR. HEATHER PERRY)

Greece's role in the First World War, although short, was characterized by political and social tumult that tore the small country in half, splitting it into two political camps both with their own public supporters. This divide is known as the National Schism and is characterized by a feud between the Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos, and the King, Constantine, over the question of Greek intervention in the First World War. Present within the Greek world was an irredentist ideology, the *Megali Idea*, which was the widely held belief that all Greeks living outside of the country's current boundaries should be reincorporated into the state, and thus, increasing Greece's territory and reviving the country to its former Byzantine glory. After promises of territory were offered to the Greek state by the Entente should Greece intervene on the Allies' side, Venizelos saw the opportunity to fuel national aspirations and realize the *Megali Idea*. Constantine, however, was not so keen on intervention. He and his supporters stood firm in their stance on neutrality, Whereas Venizelos and his supporters negotiated intervention.

This schism was not limited to politics. Some Greeks supported Venizelos and his pursuit of the *Megali Idea*, while others supported the King and neutrality. The First World War was not the first conflict that Greece used to realize national aspirations, it was another conflagration in nearly two decades of warfare in the name of the *Megali Idea*. Using political documents, state archives, memoirs, newspapers, and secondary literature, this thesis examines Greece's long road to the First World War to suggest that

the *Megali Idea* was not just a political feud based on the question of intervention as is argued by other modern Greek historians, but rather there was a cultural aspect associate with the National Schism that was complicated by the transfer of the *Megali Idea's* symbolism form one leader to another. In essence, after Constantine's military success in the Balkan Wars, he emerged as the embodiment of Greece's national aspirations. However, when the First World War erupted, he refused to involve Greece in another war. This meant that for the portion of Greeks who wished to see the *Megali Idea* realized, they had to shift national aspirations to another leader, and during the First World War Venizelos was championing Greek irredentism. Therefore, the National Schism is also a cultural crisis in which the public's national aspirations had to be transferred from Constantine to Venizelos, further fueling the divide.

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INTRODUCTION

On 2 July 1917 Greece declared war on the Central Powers. Greece's intervention in the First World War came at a time when a number of previously neutral states shifted the possible outcome of the war in favor of the Allied powers. With Bulgaria making advances against the Allies, Greece helped the Allies to regain losses on the Macedonian Front. For Greece, the war was short and the country became a victorious belligerent. Although Greece's role was brief and successful, the road to war was characterized by political turmoil and the development of a national schism that pitted the King and Prime Minister against each other as well as Greek society.

Only one year separated the conclusion of the Balkan Wars from the outbreak of the First World War, which once again saw the Balkan countries involved in a conflict in which they competed against each other to reclaim old territories and expand national borders. What fueled Greece through these conflicts was a cultural and political obsession with the *Megali Idea* (Great Idea). Rooted in national tradition and harkening back to Byzantine glory, the *Megali Idea* was an irredentist concept that was grounded in the belief that Greece had rightful claims to the lands that once constituted the Byzantine Empire. Therefore, the Greek state was destined to create a Greater Greece.

The *Megali Idea* was not a new concept that emerged at the beginning of the Balkan Wars. Rather, it developed shortly after the creation of the Greek state in 1832. The new Greek state, whose borders were determined by Britain, France and Russia, and was believed by many Greeks to be truncated. In the late nineteenth century stories that Ottoman authorities were mistreating ethnic Greeks who lived outside the state's boundaries stirred national feelings among the Greek people, and the vision of redeeming

Greek people and historic lands became engrained in Greek culture. By 1897 a portion of the Greek public championed the *Megali Idea* so much that it pressured the leadership to go to war with the Ottomans. The 1897 war against the Ottoman Empire proved disastrous but it was only a matter of time before Greece went to war again under the banner of its irredentist vision.

In 1912, with a new charismatic Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos, Greece joined with its allies against the Ottoman Empire in the First Balkan War with the hopes of reclaiming Greeks in Macedonia and Epirus, and to include portions of those regions into its borders. Greece was successful, and under the command of the Crown Prince Constantine, the army liberated the city of Salonika, reaching it just days before the Bulgarian forces. Greece gained large swaths of new territory; however, it was territory that the Bulgarians desired as well. Immediately after the end of the First Balkan War, Bulgaria attacked its former ally for control over Salonika.

The Second Balkan War was swift. Bulgaria faced a war on all fronts and was defeated by its neighboring states and the Ottomans, leading to further tensions in the region. Greece was once again victorious and the newly crowned King, Constantine, was heralded as the destined leader to achieve the *Megali Idea*. Within a year, the First World War erupted and the region was thrown into chaos yet again. This time, however, Constantine refused to participate in another war. The Greek public, which was primarily agrarian and unlettered, was now faced with a problem. The new conflict mirrored that of the Balkan Wars in which Greece was successful, and Constantine who had become the embodiment of the *Megali Idea* championed a neutral policy. Venizelos on the other

hand still believed that the vision of a Greater Greece was possible. The result was the *Ethnikos Dichasmos* (The National Schism).

The National Schism developed out of the strained relationship between the two Greek leaders. The Entente offered land in Asia Minor to entice Greece to declare war. Venizelos saw the chance to use the Entente to ensure victory and to realize the *Megali Idea*, but Constantine stood firm in his stance on neutrality. The National Schism split the Greek government and people into two camps: those who sided with Constantine and opposed intervention, known as the Royalists; and those who supported Venizelos and championed the *Megali Idea*, known as the Venizelists. Historians of Greece argue that the National Schism was fueled by the question of neutrality versus intervention in the First World War and the political maneuverings of the two Greek leaders. However, this argument fails to acknowledge the cultural nature of Greek irredentism and its role in deepening the schism.[1] After the Entente forced the abdication of King Constantine in 1917, it cleared the path for Venizelos to involve Greece in the First World War.

For Greece, war did not end in 1918 with the armistice. Instead, Venizelos continued to pursue the *Megali Idea* and Greece went to war with the Ottoman Empire in order to gain control of the Asia Minor littoral. However, by 1920 the Greek public had grown weary of war and the *Megali Idea*. This resulted in Venizelos's fall from power and Constantine's return as King. Even with Venizelos no longer in charge, the Greek government ignored warnings from Britain and France and continued the Campaign in

[1]See Michael Llewellyn Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor, 1919-1922* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973); George B. Leon, *Greece and the Great Powers, 1914-1917* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1974); George B. Leon, *Greece and the First World War: From Neutrality to Intervention, 1917-1918* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1990); Elli Lemonidou, "Propaganda and Mobilization in Greece during the First World War," in *World War I and Propaganda*, ed. Troy R. E. Paddock (Leiden: Brill, 2014):273-291.

Asia Minor. The war ended in a disgraceful defeat for Greece and solidified the end of the *Megali Idea.*

This thesis examines the cultural dimensions of Greek irredentism beginning in 1897, well before the Balkan Wars, to argue that after the Balkan Wars Constantine became the symbolic embodiment of the *Megali Idea*. When the First World War erupted, a vast majority of the Greek public was disconnected from world affairs and the new conflict appeared to many as another Balkan War; wars in which Greece was so successful in achieving irredentist aspirations. Therefore, for many Greeks it was not a question of intervening in a European war, but rather, intervening in another Balkan conflict. Moreover, with Constantine refusing to pursue the *Megali Idea*, the Greek people had to find another leader to create a Greater Greece, and that was Venizelos. As suggested by other historians, the National Schism was political in nature, but this thesis argues it was cultural as well. The National Schism also represented a shift in the personification of the *Megali Idea* from Constantine to Venizelos. When Britain and France dethroned Constantine in 1917, it became apparent to the Greek public that the war was a global conflict, but regardless, Venizelos intervened in the name of the *Megali Idea*. This thesis also suggests that by 1920 the Greek public had grown weary of war and when Venizelos left the country during that same year, the Greek fascination with the *Megali Idea* ceased to exist, instead of ending in 1922 with Greece's defeat in the Greco-Turkish War.

This thesis will complicate the historiography of Greece and the First World War as well as the First World War, more generally. To gain a better understanding of the First World War, examinations of all involved belligerents in necessary. Though its role

was minor, Greece was, nonetheless, involved in the massive conflagration. The case study of Greece paints a picture of how the question of intervention can tear at the very fabric of society. Although there were several countries that remained neutral at the outbreak of the First World War, it is in the case of Greece that a severe schism developed. This schism was fueled by irredentism and resulted in the constant reorganization of the government and even the Entente forcing the Greek King to abdicate. By examining Greek politics, socioeconomics, and the culture behind irredentist aspirations, we gain a better understanding of the various effects war has on society, and more specifically, a society divided by the question of intervention.

With the recent centennial of the massive conflict, there is a new revival in First World War studies, yet surprisingly, there is little scholarship about the Balkan states, especially Greece. Most works have focused on the larger European Powers, the US, and Australia, which has marginalized the Greek case. Except for Serbia, all the Balkan states were neutral at the beginning of the war. Although as the conflagration progressed, they slowly intervened when European Powers promised territory as compensation. The European Powers promised lands they knew individual Balkan states desired, which stemmed from the inconclusive nature of the Balkan Wars. It was in the Balkan Wars that former allies turned on one another in the hopes that they would expand their borders. This topic has more recently become an aspect in the study of First World War origins.

Some historians have suggested that the Balkan conflicts were a trigger for the First World War, and in essence, that the First World War was a continuation of the Balkan Wars because the Treaty of Bucharest (1913), which reorganized state border

within the Balkans, failed to end the tensions in the region. The Balkan states still desired more territory that was not ceded to them in the treaty, and for Bulgaria, which was the aggressor in the Second Balkan War, the treaty resulted in territorial concessions. The First World War became an opportunity for the Balkan states to continue their territorial aspirations through alliances with the Great Powers.[2] These Balkan origins works have added to debates about why neutral states intervened in the First World War and provide a better understanding of the ideologies that fueled the Balkan Wars. However, historians, such as Hall and Stevenson, have placed so much emphasis on the Balkan Wars being a "prelude" to the First World War that they fail to actually pinpoint origins. Certainly national aspirations for territory did not emerge at the onset of the Balkan Wars. Therefore, to understand how the Balkan conflicts were a precursor to the First World War, one must take the story back even further to when these states began to incorporate nationalist and irredentist ideologies into government policies, leading to the outbreak of the Balkan Wars.

Although scholarship about Greece and the First World War is limited, historians have produced several influential works that have provided knowledge about the small state and its intervention in the conflict. The first major work, *Greece and the Allies, 1914-1922,* by George Abbott, was written at the conclusion of the Greco-Turkish War, and was a diplomatic history that examined the influence of Allied policy in Greece to argue that England and France controlled Greek affairs during the war.[3] Abbott's work spawned sixty years of diplomatic histories. From the 1970s to 1990, scholarship about

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[2]Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War* (New York: Routledge, 2000); David Stevenson, "From Balkan Conflict to Global Conflict: The Spread of the First World War, 1914-1918," *Foreign Policy Analysis,* vol. 7, no. 2 (April 2011): 169-182.

[3]George Abbott, *Greece and the Allies, 1914-1922* (London: Methuen & Co., 1922).

the topic was dominated by diplomatic histories. These works all examined Entente and Allied policies in Greece. As a result, they were usually polemical in nature, often portraying Greece as a victim and Britain and France as aggressors that used the Greek state to advance their own interests in the region. Historian George Leon argued that the Allied Powers behaved irresponsibly in Greece, and as a result, the Greek government and people suffered the consequences, whereas Alexander Mitrakos argued that France risked its relationship with Britain in order to use Greece as a steppingstone in an attempt to gain the most influence in the Near East.[4] Naturally, when historians rely heavily on diplomatic and political archives, they produce diplomatic histories that lack any cultural perspectives. Moreover, the authors primarily used French and British archival material, ignoring Greek sources in order to produce narratives about Entente policies. When historians use minimal Greek sources it limits our understanding of the Greek experience, and does not take into account that the Greek government was using its relationships with the Allied Powers to advance its own agendas.

In 1990 George Leon challenged the historiography by arguing that Greece did in fact use the Allied Powers to pursue its irredentist policy, but in the process the National Schism was created because Greece was not a powerful enough state to achieve the *Megali Idea*.[5] Although his monograph was meant to provide a Greek perspective, Leon's narrative was dominated by the Allied Powers actions in Greece and his sources were still predominately British and French. Additionally, the *Megali Idea* was meant to be a major component of Leon's argument, but he only examines, in-depth, a one-year

[4]Leon, *Greece and the Great Powers*; Alexander S. Mitrakos, *France in Greece during World War I: A Study in the Politics of Power* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1982).

[5]Leon, *Greece and the First World War*.

period and does not discuss the development nor the evolution of Greece's irredentist concept.

More recently there were two works produced that address Greece and the First World War from the Greek perspective. Both Georgia Eglezou and Elli Lemonidou use Greek newspapers to shed light on public reaction to the National Schism and the First World War. Lemonidou extensively researched propaganda published by Royalist and Venizelist papers to conclude that both sides were distributing propaganda equally. As a result, Greece did intervene in the war, not due to successful dissemination of propaganda, but because Greece was forced into the war by the Allies.[6] Eglezou examines the press war between the Royalist and Venizelists to argue that Venizelos won the press war and gained popular support to bring Greece into the Greco-Turkish War.[7] Read together, both of these works offer insight into what the Greek press was publishing about the war, but they also demonstrate the limitations of using only Greek sources. To understand the entire picture, a mixture of various types of sources is necessary.

One thing that can be understood by examining the historiography is the tendency of historians who study Greece and the First World War to place their histories into rigid timeframes, which obscures Greek origins for the First World War. This thesis will add to the historiography by combining diplomatic archives, memoirs, and newspapers to provide a narrative that examines Entente policy, Greek policy, and the cultural nature of Greek irredentism to produce a broader understanding of Greece in the First World War. This thesis will suggest Greek origins were rooted in irredentism that began in the late

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[6]Elli Lemonidou, "Propaganda and Mobilization in Greece during the First World War."

[7]Georgia Eglezou, *The Greek Media in World War I and its Aftermath: The Athenian Press on the Asia Minor Crisis* (New York: Tauris, 2009).

nineteenth century and propelled Greece through war until 1922. This thesis will also create a broader understanding of the First World War by providing a narrative about one of the most understudied belligerents, and how irredentism and territorial aspirations can fuel war and divide society. It is in the case study of Greece that we can better understand how external and internal forces can coalesce to magnify disunity, especially during wartime. Greece can also provide insight into how irredentism can be political and cultural in nature and act to create national divides. The political nature of Greek irredentism cannot be ignored, it is part and parcel to diplomatic policy. However, this thesis will suggest that irredentism, especially in the case of Greece, also has a cultural component that can fuel social division during the wartime.

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http://fai.org.ru/forum/topic/30826-ri-kartyi/?page=5

CHAPTER ONE: CONSTANTINE AS THE SYMBOL OF THE MEGALI IDEA

The gradual decline of the Ottoman Empire seemed inevitable as the people in the Balkans revolted against their foreign oppressor during the nineteenth century. As the moribund nature of the Porte became apparent to the Great Powers of Europe, the Eastern Question was born. From the nineteenth century to the outbreak of the First World War, the major European Powers competed with one another within the Balkans to secure dominance within the region. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, the people of the Balkans began to declare their independence from the Ottoman Porte. Following the example of Greece, national fervor spread throughout the Balkans with Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria all gaining autonomous states. Although these states did get freedom from the Ottoman yoke that they desired, every single movement in the region was aided by one or more of the European Powers. The geopolitics at play in the Balkans during the nineteenth and early twentieth century created symbiotic relationships that allowed Great Power roles in regional politics in exchange for territorial gains. Nowhere is this more exemplified than in the case of Greece, where the government used its relationship with the Great Powers to double its boundaries and population on the eve of the First World War.

After the Battle of Navarino in 1827, which was fought by British, French, Russian, and Greek forces and ensured Greek victory over the Ottomans, the Duke of Wellington penned an ominous warning about the Eastern Question and the future of the

Balkan region. "The recomposition of it [The Ottoman Empire] as an independent state would be a work scarcely within the reach of human integrity and skill," Wellington wrote. Moreover, Wellington believed that "a final adjustment would not take place till after a series of troubles and disasters, which the greatest benefits that could be supposed to arise from it could not for many years afford a sufficient compensation."[8] Wellington's suggestion of what would happen to the Balkan region, once under Ottoman rule, proved prophetic.

The Balkans were characterized by a mosaic of identity. Numerous nationalities lived within a small region, and as these states gained independence, their boundaries were often times determined by the Great Powers. By the end of the nineteenth century after the region was carved up, many people found themselves in areas outside the borders of the state to which they ethnically belonged. Furthermore, the leaders of these new Balkan states believed they were robbed of territory which they perceived as rightfully theirs. The problem of national boundaries and territorial claims erupted into a regional war against the Ottomans in 1912 and then evolved into a war in which the Balkan states fought against their former Ally: Bulgaria. Although the fighting ceased in 1913 with diplomatic intervention by the Great Powers, Balkan aspirations for territory once again emerged as an underlying cause for intervention in the First World War.

Recently, First World War historians, such as Richard C. Hall, have produced works that attempt to place the origins of the First World War within the context of the Balkan Wars. The scholarship that does argue for Balkan origins has shown that the ideology and national aspirations that fueled the Balkan conflicts continued into the First

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[8]Quoted in R. W. Seton-Watson, *Britain in Europe, 1789-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1938), 126.

World War for those states.[9] However, these works do not take into consideration that national aspirations did not suddenly materialize at the onset of the Balkan Wars. To understand what led to the outbreak of the Balkan Wars, especially in the case of Greece, we must trace the story back even further and study the rise of national policies and territorial aspirations that ultimately led to the Balkan conflicts. This chapter examines the development of the *Megali Idea* at the turn of the nineteenth century and the onset of the Balkan conflicts to show how Greek irredentism created a path for Greece that steered the nation into the Balkan Wars. Through the Balkan Wars, Greece developed a relationship with the Great Powers that ensured success in gaining more unredeemed territory, although that relationship became characterized by Greek reliance on the Great Powers. Moreover, using memoirs and news sources this chapter will also suggest that by the end of the Balkan Wars, King Constantine became the symbol of Greek irredentism. For the Greek people, the realization of the *Megli Idea* became the future of the Greek world, and Constantine, who led the Greek Army to victory during the Balkan Wars, emerged as the embodiment of a Greater Greece.

Greek Society, the Megali Idea, and the Greco-Turkish War of 1897

By the late nineteenth century, Greece was a state trying to integrate itself into the larger sphere of the European world. The capital of Greece, Athens, was hardly a bustling Metropolis, but it was the country's only connection to the rest of Europe. A majority of the Greek population lived an agrarian life isolated in the countryside miles away from the capital. In their comparative study, sociologists Richard and Eva Blum observed that the disparities between those in Athens and their fellow countrymen were

[9]Hall, *The Balkan Wars.*

large. While Athens lacked a well-defined middle class, it was the only city where the upper echelon of Greek society was evident, and secondary and post-secondary education were accessible. This meant that the Greeks who lived in the countryside were typically illiterate as unlettered and bound by subsistence living; they lived a life that remained largely unchanged since the decline of the Byzantine Empire.[10] Those in Athens had access to street markets that sold numerous newspapers, both national and international, which provided a connection to the world beyond Greece. Though the Greeks outside Athens were not afforded the same access to education and news sources, there were small lines of communication that allowed minimal dissemination of national affairs to trickle in, but these Greeks did, however, remain aloof form most international affairs. Through the large regional conflicts that led Greece to the First World War, the large disconnect in Greek society produced a mythologized role for Constantine as a liberator while at the same time stifling the Greeks' understanding the complexity of world affairs.

To understand how Greek aspiration for territory catapulted it into the center of a Balkan conflict and eventual involvement in the First World War, an understanding of the how the *Megali Idea* functioned within Greek politics and culture is necessary. The *Megali Idea* was conceived in the 1840s by the Greek Prime Minister, Ioannis Kolletis, and developed into a nationalist irredentist policy that emerged from the Greek desire to create *enosis*. *Enosis* was a concept that there were many ethnic Greeks who lived in areas historically inhabited by Greeks, but now belonged to another state: e.g.: southern Macedonia, Bulgaria, and parts of the Aegean Coast of Turkey. *Enosis* meant these Greeks and the territory they lived in should be incorporated into the Greek state. The

[10] Richard Blum and Eva Blum, *Health and Healing in Rural Greece, a Study of Three Communities* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1965).

Megali Idea became a type of foreign policy rooted in irredentism: "its proponents…aspired to unite within the bounds of a single state…all the areas of Greek settlement in the Near East."[11] In essence, the *Megali Idea* was an irredentist policy with the ultimate goal of redeeming all ethnic Greeks and recreating the former Byzantine Empire.

Although it was conceived shortly after the birth of the Greek state, this Greek irredentist policy did not become a major focus in Greek politics until the second Greek King, George I, ascended to the thrown in 1863. Unlike his deposed predecessor, King Otho, the Danish-born George quickly gained the favor of the Greek public. One way George won the affection of the Greek people and ignited a push for reclaiming unredeemed Greeks in the borderlands and Asia Minor, was by changing his title. Otho was "King of Greece," whereas George became "King of Hellenes." This significance in George's change in title is that the new king "appeared to embody the political existence and national aspirations of all Greeks."[12] Thus, King George reigned over more than just the Greeks within the borders of the state; he was also king to all the ethnic Greeks living outside the confines of what many thought to be a truncated state. With the *Megali Idea* moving to the forefront of Greek politics, the Greek government focused on the most ethnically populated territory still under Ottoman rule, the island of Crete.

The Greek state had always desired to incorporate the "Big Island," or Crete, ever since the Kingdom of Greece was created. The island's majority was unanimously

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[11]For a more detailed discussion of the emergence of the Megali idea and how it evolved over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries see Deniz Bölükbaşı, *Turkey and Greece: The Aegean Disputes* (London: Routledge Cavendish, 2004).

[12]Theodore G. Tatsios, *The Megali Idea and the Greek Turkish War of 1897: The Impact of the Cretan Problem on Greek Irredentism, 1866-1897* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1984), 29.

Greek, but it remained under the control of the Porte, governed locally by an Ottoman Pasha (governor). Greek desire for incorporation was not one-sided. King George and the *Megali Idea* sparked Cretan aspirations for unification with Greece. In 1866, the Cretans started a series of revolts against the Ottoman Empire that created rising tensions between Greece and the Ottomans and sparked a military buildup on both sides of the Aegean. Writing about the revolts in Crete, a German Staff Officer who was in Asia Minor training the Ottoman forces, stated that the situation in Crete "quickly reawakened the ill-feeling between Turkey and Greece," and for those living within the Greek state, the revolts "roused afresh the national…fervor."[13] With their fellow Greeks in Crete taking up arms against the Ottomans in the name of *enosis*, the Greek public pressured the King and Prime Minister, Theodoros Deliyiannis, to aid the "Big Island" in its revolt against the Porte.

Deliyiannis started a heavy military buildup in preparation to aid the Greeks of Crete, but with the balance of power at stake in the region, the Great Powers soon intervened. If Greece declared war against the Ottoman Empire, it would mean possible military involvement by the European Powers. With the experience of the Crimean War recently behind them, these powers were not eager to create another regional conflict. So, on 26 April 1886 the Great Powers sent an "ultimatum" to Deliyiannis demanding disarmament within eight days.[14] With the support of King George, and believing he had the backing of the Greek people, Deliyiannis refused to accept to the Great Powers' demands. However, just three weeks later the Great Powers blockaded the Athenian port,

[13]German Staff Officer, *The Greco-Turkish War of 1897*, trans. Frederica Bottom (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1898), 14-20.

[14]German Staff Officer, 18.

Piraeus, and forced Deliyiannis to resign. He was replaced by Charilaos Trikoupis, a politician who was opposed to King George's support of irredentist policy and was willing to bend to the will of the Great Powers.[15] This forced change in Greek leadership was just once incident of others to come in which the Great Powers were able to subvert Greek internal politics and substantiate their hegemonic nature in the region.

Trikoupis spent the next few years appeasing the Great Powers and disarming Greece, but his already fragile popularity waned as the Greek people still longed for action in Crete. Upset by Trikoupis's unwillingness to act, many Greeks formed pro-nationalist groups and staged demonstrations in the streets. The most prominent of these pro-nationalist groups was the *Ethniki Etereia* (Nationalist Society). Formed in 1894 by "disgruntled army officers," the *Ethniki Etereia's* purpose was to combat Bulgarian aggression in Macedonia and to raise Greek morale while "supporting initiatives to free the 'enslaved' Greeks of the Ottoman Empire."[16] The *Ethniki Etereia* garnered massive support within Greece over the next year and even gained political influence. As nationalist fervor grew within the Greek state, public protests against Trikoupis became commonplace. In 1895, with poor health and facing hostility from the Greek public, Trikoupis resigned. The desire for unifying Crete with Greece became the dominant aspect of Greek politics, and after Trikoupis's resignation, Deliyiannis was once again elected Prime Minister.

The Greek world looked at the re-established relationship between Deliyiannis and King George as a means to finally free the Cretans from Ottoman rule. It was

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[15]German Staff Officer, 18-19.

[16]Thomas W. Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1768 to 1913: The Long Nineteenth Century* (Edinburg University Press, 2015), 289-293.

apparent that King George was gearing the country for war in pursuit of the *Megali Idea*. He had recently corresponded with other Balkan governments and declared that Greece would not stop until the Porte fulfilled the Treaty of Berlin (1878), which called for Epirus to be ceded to Greece.[17] Stemming from the recent change in government toward a leadership sympathetic to the cause, the Cretans once again revolted in 1896. Under new leadership, the Greek people pushed for intervention to aid the unredeemed Greeks of Crete. Knowing that involvement in the conflict was inevitable, "public feeling in Greece was in the highest state of excitement," and with the monetary support of wealthy notables, the *Ethniki Etereia* began shipping weapons to Crete.[18] The desire for war reached fever pitch and the public applied pressure to the government to act, which proved to be too much for any further idleness by Deliyiannis.

Fearing backlash from the public, Deliyiannis sent troops to Crete on 25 January 1897 to aid the rebellion there. The Greeks had unified together under the cause of the *Megali Idea*, and the government was compelled to act regardless of the warnings expressed by the Great Powers.[19] The international community acknowledged that Deliyiannis acted as a result of being pressured by his government and public protests. *The Times* reported that "the destinies of Greece are now in the hands neither of the Government nor of the King, but of a violently excited democracy."[20] The royal family was able to substantiate itself as a monarchy for the people by rallying for the war cause and highlighting Crown Prince Constantine's role as the leader of the Greek army.

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[17]German Staff Officer, 33.

[18]German Staff Officer, 23.

[19]Édouard Driault, *La Grande idée: La renaissance de l'Hellénisme* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1920), 163.

[20]*The Times* (London), 2 March 1897, 5.

Constantine was next in line to the throne, and unlike is father, he was born in Greece, earning him further adoration from the Greek people. The government spent the next month funneling military power into Crete, against the wishes of the Great Powers. Soon after, the government shifted its military focus towards the northern borders of Greece, where the Ottoman forces were weakened by local revolts.

On 24 March Greek troops crossed the border into southern Macedonia and incited a local revolt against the Ottoman leaders there. The early success of the Greek troops excited the Greek people, while it angered the Porte to the point of war. The Ottoman diplomat in Athens cut ties between the Porte and Greece, and on 18 April war was officially declared by the Ottomans. All military engagements took place along the northern borders of Greece in Macedonia, Epirus, and Thessaly—territory the Greek state hoped to acquire. Fighting was short and intense; the Greeks were outmanned and outgunned by the Ottoman forces.[21] The war lasted only one month before Greece pleaded to the Great Powers to intervene. For this reason, the Greco-Turkish war of 1897 became known as the Thirty Days War, or the *Mavro* '97 (Black '97) for the Greeks. The Great Powers did intervene in the conflict, but it was to end the war before the Ottomans could make any further advancements, not to aid the Greek cause. From the beginning of their intervention, the Great Powers made it clear that they would not take the actions of Greece lightly. One of the rules established by the Great Powers at the onset of the looming armistice was that "the aggressor would not be allowed to obtain any advantage from the conflict."[22] The disastrous defeat caused panic among the Greek

[21]For more detail on specific troop numbers and military engagements, see "Chapter V," in Tatsios.

[22]"Odysseus," *Turkey in Europe* (London: Edward Arnold, 1900), 342-343.

people and politicians. Faced with international embarrassment, many Greeks accused government officials and military leaders of treason.[23] It was not just the government and military that the public scrutinized, they also accused the *Ethniki Etereia* of blindly leading Greece to war, and Constantine became the scapegoat for the defeat.[24] Greece was now at the mercy of the Great Powers and the stipulations they put forward to reach a peace agreement.

Early in May the six Great Powers (Britain, France, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy) insisted that they would mediate a peace agreement that would appease the public and save Greece from embarrassment. However, in order to ensure this, the Greek government must "accept without reserve the recommendations of the Powers."[25] Greece still had troops in Crete and was insistent that the island become unified with Greece, but Germany, which had strong ties with the Porte, insisted it would not negotiate unless Greece recalled its troops from Crete and accepted autonomy for the island. Faced with no other choice, on 10 May Greece submitted a written statement agreeing to the German demands for an autonomous Crete.[26] The Great Powers notified the Porte of Greece's willingness to negotiate and on 20 May an armistice was concluded.

The Greek government accepted that its fate was in the hands of the Great powers. The conference, which was held in Constantinople, was not between Greece and the Ottoman Empire, but rather, it was between the Ottoman Empire and the Great

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[23]Tatsios, 115.

[24]Douglas Dakin, *The Unification of Greece, 1770-1923* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 153.

[25]Italy, Commissione per la pubblicazione dei documenti diplomatici, *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, vol. II, 1 May 1897-23 April 1897 (Rome, 1958), no. 14.

[26]*I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, vol. II, nos. 17 and 18.

Powers as representatives of Greece. The terms of peace stipulated that Greece was to accept guilt for the war and pay a heavy war indemnity to the Porte.[27] Moreover, the bankrupt Greece could not afford to pay for reparations and the country's economy was placed under international financial control. Not only had the Great Powers forced Greece out of peace negotiations, but now they had full control of the Greek economy. When the Greek state learned that it would be forced to cede territory to the Ottoman Empire, King George threatened abdication, which as historian Douglas Dakin has suggested, "might have thrown the whole Near East into turmoil."[28] Knowing that a possible abdication by George would cause an international crisis to unfold, the Great powers agreed that aside from paying reparations, Greece would retain most of its territory.[29] This political maneuver by the Greek King was clever. He was able to use Greece's relationship with the Great Powers to ensure Greece did not cede further lands to the Ottoman Empire.

Greece suffered a humiliating defeat in the Greco-Turkish War of 1897 and this led to the Greek public distrusting the government. King George was able to assuage the Greek public's disdain by forcing Deliyiannis to resign. However, Deliyiannis kept favor among some in the government, which allowed him to keep a representative position for the next eight years. Deliyannis was never able to rid himself of the public's dissatisfaction, and in 1905, he was assassinated in Athens.[30] The Greek government was plagued with discord for several years after the war, but one thing remained certain:

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[27]For more details on the peace treaty terms see Erick J. Zurcher, *Turkey, A Modern History* (New York: Tauris, 2004), 83.

[28]Dakin, 153-154.

[29]For full details on the Treaty of Constantinople (1897) see Zurcher, 80-85.

[30]"Murder of the Greek Premier," *The Times* (London, June 14, 1905), 5.

although Greece entered a war it was ill-prepared for by pursuing the *Megali Idea*, irredentist aspirations never faded from the forefront.

The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913

After the assassination of Deliyannis, Greek politics underwent a time of rapid change. New conservative parties splintered from the vestiges of Deliyannis's supporters, such as the "Japanese Party." The "Japanese Party" earned its namesake from its highly conservative ideologies that mirrored the Meiji Period of Japan. At the same time, new leftist parties were gaining popularity among the Greek people as they grew more dissatisfied with what was conceived as a conservative government uninterested in reforming a financially ruined country. Tired of the leadership in the government, a contingent of 1,300 military officers staged a military coup. This event became known as the Goudi Coup and established the premiership of the most liberal statesman Greece had yet seen.

In September 1909 Greek army officers organized popular demonstrations in the streets of Athens. Under the supervision of the officers, the Greek public demanded immediate reforms from the government. Learning from a similar experience that caused the abdication of his predecessor, Otho, King George agreed to the demands of the people and replaced the Prime Minister, Dimitrios Rallis, with the more liberal Kyriakoulis Mavromichalis.[31] Mavromichalis held the office of Prime Minister for only a few months when he resigned due to his inability to appease the military leadership, and likewise, the Greek public. Fast reforms were what the military leadership wanted to bring Greece out

[31]For more details on the Goudi Coup see Charles Personnaz, *Venizélos. Le fondateur de la Grèce modern* (Paris: Bernard Giovanangeli Éditeur, 2008), 76; Marc Terrades, *Le drame de l'hellénisme: Ion Dragoumis (1878-1920) et la question nationale en Grèce au début du XXe siècle* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2005), 237.

of its economic slump.[32] In search of a leader they believed would bring Greece out of dark times, the coup organizers looked to the Prime Minister of the newly autonomous Crete, Eleftherios Venizelos.

Venizelos had served in the Cretan revolutionary forces during the uprising of 1896. He soon found a place among the political circles on the island and gained fame throughout Greece for his desire to unite Crete with the Greek state. In 1910 the coup leaders invited Venizelos to Athens were he quickly garnered support for the new Liberal Party. In the November elections the Liberal party won a vast majority of seats (260 out of 346) and he became the most supported Prime Minister ever elected to office. The coup leaders' invitation for Venizelos to lead Athens was not just due to his popularity, it was also symbolic of the *enosis* of Crete with Greece. When Venizelos assumed the premiership he wanted to assure the King that his Liberal Party was not against the monarchy. In an act of good faith, Venizelos reinstated Constantine as the commander of the Greek army and proclaimed to King George: "Your majesty, in five years I will regenerate Greece."[33] This statement foreshadowed what was to come under Venizelos's leadership.

Venizelos quickly put into action liberal reforms and gained the admiration of the Greek people, as he ushered in a new "Golden Age" for Greece.[34] The Venizelos government concentrated on internal affairs and enacted rapid reforms, but once again nationalistic feelings were roused as violent incidents against ethnic Greeks erupted in

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[32]Apostolos Vakalopoulos and Pierre Dieudonné, *Histoire de la Grèce modern* (Roanne: Horvath, 1975), 207-210.

[33]Qouted in Kenneth Young, *The Greek Passion: A study in People and Politics* (London: Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1969), 183.

[34]The first 5 years of Venizelos's rule as Prime Minister is deemed "The Golden Age," because of how fast he was able to enact reforms. For more details on Venizelos's ascendance see Gallant, 312-315.

southern Macedonia. As Sectarian groups gained momentum and support in Macedonia, stories of burned villages and violent mass killings made their way back to the Greek public. It was not just ethnic Greeks who were victims of separatist violence, Serbia and Bulgaria also experienced violence against their ethnic communities. The growing situation in Macedonia created a need for Balkan unity against a common oppressor: the Ottoman Empire, which still had influence in the region.

The Balkan states, all of which had claims to territory in Macedonia, put their national aspirations for larger states aside to form a fragile alliance system to combat sectarian groups and quell Ottoman influence. The alliances between the Balkan states were fragile because each government competed for territory the others desired, and this could only lead to further problems if the Ottoman Empire was forced out of Europe. Nonetheless, for the time being these states entered a period of diplomatic negotiation because they knew that, in order to "transcend the Balkan Peninsula," they must first "secure their interests with and against each other."[35] As a result, in 1910 each Balkan State began a military buildup in preparation for war.

The first states to enter negotiations were Serbia and Macedonia. Because they both had strong ties with Russia and pan-Slavism was on the rise, both Bulgaria and Serbia saw the necessity of forming an alliance without the presence of Greece. For Bulgaria, Macedonia was of the highest priority and Serbia had interests in eastern Macedonia and Epirus as well. If both states were secretly allied and the Ottomans were pushed out of the Balkans, then Bulgaria and Serbia could divide the spoils of Macedonia without including the Greek state. Under the supervision of Russia, Bulgaria and Serbia

[35]Hall, *The Balkan Wars*, 10.

took nearly a year to finalize an agreement. Now the two allies just needed to wait for the perfect time to strike. In late summer of 1911 the moment came for Bulgaria and Serbia to act. For the purpose of colonial aggrandizement, Italy went to war with the Ottoman Empire on 29 September 1911, and Bulgaria and Serbia seized the opportunity.[36]

The Italo-Turkish War put a drain on Ottoman finances and military power. The Balkan states, especially Bulgaria and Serbia, saw a window of opportunity to push a weakened Ottoman Empire out of the Balkans. In early March 1912 Bulgaria and Serbia finally came to an agreement. This agreement stipulated military cooperation against Austria-Hungary, and most importantly, it created a plan for Macedonia. If Macedonia did not recieve autonomy, then Bulgaria and Serbia would partition the territory for themselves.[37] The negotiations between Bulgaria and Serbia, although secretive, did not go unnoticed by Greece. Greece had tried to negotiate treaties with Bulgaria ever since 1909, when another revolt broke out in Crete just before the Goudi Coup. Why Bulgaria refused to answer Greek calls for negotiations is uncertain, but the common interests in Macedonia and the Goudi Coup in Athens more than likely were factors. However, in 1911 while also negotiating with Serbia and looking to protect the state in every possible angle, Bulgarian officials finally decided to negotiate with Greece. The two states came to an agreement in May of 1912. This alliance between Greece and Bulgaria did not establish any territorial claims. Instead, both countries agreed to aid the other in case of

[36]C. M. Woodhouse, "Diplomatic Development in Nineteenth Century and Twentieth Century Greece, in *Greece in Transition*: *Essays in the History of Modern Greece*, ed. John Koumoulides (London: Zeno Publishers, 1977), 110.

[37]George Young, *Nationalism and War in the Near East* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1915), 387-389.

an Ottoman attack.[38] The language of the alliance made it clear that, since Bulgaria had already negotiated the partitioning of Macedonia with Serbia, it was in her best interest to avoid territorial negotiations with Greece.

As Venizelos and his Liberal party's reforms slowly brought Greece out of an economic depression, the Greek leaders began to look at the growing diplomatic game as a way to incorporate more territory into the state; thus the *Megali Idea* once again gained momentum. In the summer of 1912 Greece ramped up diplomatic negotiations with its Balkan neighbors and "gentlemen's agreements" were made with Serbia and Montenegro.[39] Greek leaders then pursued a military agreement with Bulgaria, but it did not go as planned. Greece had hoped to establish a full military alliance with Bulgaria and secure the city of Salonika. However, the final agreement reached stipulated that Greece must provide Bulgaria with naval protection because the Bulgarian leaders knew Greece had a weak army, but strong navy, and they wanted Salonika as well.[40] Although the alliances made were in many cases weak and backhanded, Greece and its Balkan neighbors prepared for a war against the Ottoman Empire.

Greece had the best navy out of all the Balkan states—primarily because it was the only state with large swaths of direct access to the sea—but its army weaker than that of Bulgaria and Serbia. The Balkan alliances formed made the Greek government and people feel assured that they could rid the region of the Ottomans, gain the city of Salonika, and most importantly, achieve the liberation of the Greeks in Macedonia while

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[38]For full details of the Alliance (in French) see Young, 398-399.

[39]Katrin Boeckh, *Von der Balkankriegen zum Ersten Weltkrieg: Kleinstaatenpolitik und ethnische Selbstbestimmung auf dem Balkan* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1996), 29; Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913*, 12.

[40]Hall, *The Balkan Wars*, 15.

gaining more territory there. In September 1912 Greece prepared for war against the Ottoman Empire. The Balkan coalition appeared aggressive to the Porte, and on 24 September, the Ottomans mobilized their European forces. The same day that the Porte mobilized its army, Bulgarian forces launched an attack in Thrace where they received little opposition from an Ottoman contingent that was caught off guard.[41] The Bulgarian campaign signaled the beginning of the First Balkan War.

After the success of the Bulgarians, Prince Constantine prepared the Greek army and people for war. In an address from the city of Larisa, Constantine proclaimed:

> The integrity of the homeland is threatened, our brothers are enslaved, and our very existence is threatened...I lead men determined to protect what is rightfully ours and we have equipped them with the finest weapons. We will preserve to the end the Megali Idea through our weapons and will. We will impose order and there will be no obstacle…we will persist to the end with iron discipline.[42]

The first Greek campaign against Ottoman forces began in Thessaly. Success in Thessaly was definitely a main goal for Greece. However, Venizelos made it clear that the prime objective for the Greek army in this war was to secure control of Salonika; a city that was comprised of a large Greek population and the most prosperous city in Macedonia.[43] With Salonika becoming the main goal for the Greek army, Greek forces pushed through the Thessalian front and the first major confrontation with Ottoman forces occurred on 22 October at the Sarantaporos Pass. There, the Greek contingents humiliated the Ottoman forces causing them to retreat north.[44] Early success fueled Greek jubilation back in Athens, and Constantine joyfully telegraphed the capital that at Sarantaporos, "twenty-

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[41]Major P. Howell, *The Campaign in Thrace* (London: Hugh Rees Ltd., 1913), 33.

[42] Prince Constantine, "Diaggelma tou Diadoxou pros ton Straton epi ti. Enarxei ton Polemikon Epicheiriseon tou 1912," 2 October 1912 (Julian Calendar), Greek Royal Family Archives.

[43]Eleftherios Prevelakis, *Eleftherios Venizelos and the Balkan Wars* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1966), 372.

[44]Kleanthes Nikoliades, *Greichenlands anteil an den Balkankrieg, 1912/1913* (Vienna: A. Hölder, 1914), 55.

two Ottoman contingents and six artilleries have been defeated by an onslaught from our forces. They have left their positions and retreated towards Serbia."[45] The Greek army routed Ottoman forces away from the path directly to Salonika, leaving no resistance as they marched to the city.

Greek forces surrounded the City of Salonika on 7 November, and most importantly, they had reached the city before the Bulgarian troops who were marching south to claim it. The Greek forces entered the city with little resistance and the local Pasha, Taxim, signed a protocol with the Greek contingents allowing their forces to occupy the city. The Bulgarians learned of the protocol signed between the Greeks and Taxim, and tried desperately to convince the Pasha to sign a similar protocol allowing Bulgarian forces to occupy the city. However, Taxim Pasha responded that "this was impossible, as he was already prisoner to the Greeks and had no right to do so."[46] Bulgarian forces reached Salonika just a few days later to find Greek forces encamped in the city. The Bulgarian general, Petroff, appealed to Captain Mazarakis, the Greek leader, to allow his troops to enter the city as well. General Petroff reminded Captain Mazarakis of the alliance, and asserted that his troops could no longer stay in "the open under rain, especially since he had the Royal Princes with him."[47] Mazarakis agreed and the Bulgarian troops entered the city where they stayed side by side with Greek troops—not without some small instances of violence—until the Ottomans surrendered.

Completely demoralized by heavy defeats, the Ottoman forces began to negotiate terms of surrender with the Balkan states. In late November the Ottoman leaders entered

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[45]Prince Constantine, "Ta Prota Nikitiria Tilegrafimata," 10 October 1912 (Julian Calendar), Greek Royal Family Archives.

[46]Demetrius John Cassavetti, *Hellas and the Balkan Wars* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1914), 104.

[47]Cassavetti, 106.

terms of capitulation with the Greeks and the Bulgarians over the city of Salonika. In the end, the Greeks offered more favorable terms than Bulgaria and the Porte agreed to surrender the city to Greece.[48] The Greeks had achieved the main goal of Salonika before its ally and biggest competitor for territory did: Bulgaria. Salonika ignited the Greek public's faith in the *Megali Idea*, although it made its most powerful ally its new enemy. In a private letter, Constantine wrote that upon his entry into Salonika, "there was frantic applause of the Greeks whom we had liberated, and who kissed my boots and the edge of my great-coat."[49] Back in Athens, when word that Constantine had liberated Salonika reached the city, cries of joy were heard in the streets as people celebrated the momentous occasion achieved by their beloved Crown Prince.[50] By working together, the Balkan states made major advancements, which were impossible to achieve individually, and they were successful at the one common goal of minimizing Ottoman influence in the region.

In early December an armistice was underway to stop the fighting in the Balkans. Aware of their positions in the region, the Great Powers intervened and demanded peace talks between the belligerents be held in London under their supervision. This diplomatic move ensured the Great Powers that they could protect their interests in the region. The Balkan states asserted their stance that all Ottoman territory should be ceded to the victors. Greece put forth requirements that all Aegean islands be reunited with the Greek state. The Porte, however, was not so willing to give up all its territory and stalled the

[48]Hellenic Army Directorate, Army General Headquarters, "Hellenic Army Operations during the Balkan Wars," in eds. Bela Kiraly and Dimitrije Djordejevich, *East Central European Society and the Balkan Wars* (Boulder, CO: Social Sciences Monographs, 1987), 99-110.

[49]King Constantine, *A King's Private Letters* (London: Eveleigh Nash & Grayson, 1925). 88.

[50]Cassavetti, 181-183.

peace talks as long as it was possible.[51] While the Ottomans prolonged the conference, the Greek and Bulgarians turned their attention to the control of Salonika. The debate over Salonika created a diplomatic fissure between Greece and Bulgaria. A member of the Greek delegation stated that if control of Salonika was not obtained, then "we cannot return to Athens."[52] Both Bulgaria and Greece were unwilling to relinquish claims to Salonika.

The Treaty of London was signed on 30 May 1913, and the Great Powers had decided which territories would be redrawn and which lands the Ottomans must cede. The main stipulations of the treaty were: the lines of Ottoman territory in Europe were redrawn to the east of Enos (current Turkish border); the Porte must relinquish the Aegean islands (except the Italian occupied Dodecanese), including Crete, to the Great powers who would decide their fate at a later date; the borders of an autonomous Albania would be decided by the Great Powers; and lastly, Greece would retain control of Salonika.[53] Although the Balkan states did the fighting during the war, they had to submit to the will of the Great Powers in determining the outcome. Moreover, the treaty failed to address the territorial claims and rising tensions within the Balkan states. While the Greeks were delighted that Salonika was now theirs, they were also filled with disappointment. King George was assassinated in March, bringing Constantine to the throne, and although Salonika was now Greek, it was a Hellenic pocket remaining within Bulgarian territory. None of the Balkan states achieved their full demands of territory and

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[51]Feroz Ahmed, *The Young Turks* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 115.

[52]Édourad Driault and Michel Lhéritier, *Histoire diplomatique de la Grèce de 1821 à nos jours* (Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1926), 85.

[53]All articles of the treaty are available through PSM-DATA at http://www.zum.de/psm/div/tuerkei/mowat120.php; see also Ernst Christian Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), 331.

this pushed the alliance beyond the edge of lasting peace. The Balkan states now began sowing the seeds of their fragile alliances. Bulgaria saw the peace talks as shorthanded and unfair. The peace did not last long as Bulgaria launched an attack on its allies to gain control of more territory.

On June 29 1913 the Balkan League dissolved and Bulgaria launched a dual attack against Serbia and Greece. Bulgaria now became a belligerent against its former allies as it challenged Serbia for greater Macedonia and Greece for Salonika. Bulgaria attacked Greek forces in Salonika under the pretense that the city was rightfully within Bulgarian territory.[54] In just one night, Greek forces in Salonika defeated the Bulgarian troops there while sustaining minimal casualties. The Greeks reveled in their ability to keep Salonika, and the Bulgarians retreated from the city. Over the next weeks, Romania and the Ottoman Empire joined in the war. Bulgaria was now in the worse possible position as it faced battles with Greece from the South, Romania from the North, Serbia from the West, and the Ottomans from the East. A multi-front war quickly weakened the army, and by the mid-July, Bulgaria surrendered. The Bulgarian defeat meant that Salonika and Macedonia were both lost. Bulgaria lost large amounts of existing territory, and its desired territories to its Balkan neighbors when the newest peace terms were concluded.

Peace negotiations began in Bucharest on 30 July 1913. This time the Balkan states conducted negotiations under the supervision of the Great Powers, and the Porte was prohibited from participating in the negotiations since it was deemed exclusively a

[54]Richard C. Hall, *Bulgaria's Road to the First World War* (Boulder, CO: Eastern European Monographs, 1996), 196.

Balkan matter.[55] The first talks took place between Romania and Bulgarian. The negotiations granted Romania a portion of the Dobruja region, which expanded its borders while decreasing Bulgaria's. Bulgaria lost its claims in Macedonia to Serbia and Greece. The largest bone of contention between Greece and Bulgaria was now the city of Kavala. If Bulgaria lost Kavala to Greece, it no longer had access to the Aegean.[56] When a Bulgarian representative approached Venizelos about the necessity of keeping Kavala, Venizelos responded that before the outbreak of the Second Balkan War, Greece was afraid of Bulgaria and "willing to offer Seres, Drama, and Kavala," but now Greece is a victor, and "we…will take care of our interest only."[57]

Alliances failed, but Greece proved to be one of the biggest victors of the conflicts. Greece managed to assert dominance in Macedonia and gain control of the most important city in Macedonia, Salonika. Greece and Serbia effectively restricted any Bulgarian hopes at territorial gains. Unsatisfied with the outcome determined by the Great Powers in London after the First Balkan War concluded, Bulgaria believed it could easily defeat Serbia and Greece in battle to assert dominance in the region while gaining Macedonia, and Salonika. The Bulgarians did not count on Romania and the Ottoman Empire intervening and creating a four-front war. Although on the surface the Second Balkan War appeared to settle the territorial disputes in the Balkans, this was far from reality. Serbian and Greek nationalism was on the rise, which only acted to fuel aspirations for more territory. Fighting under the banner of the *Megali Idea*, Greece had

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[55]Andrew Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans. Inter-Balkan Rivalries and Russian Foreign Policy, 1908-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 197.

[56]During the negotiations, Austria and Russia had interests in Bulgaria keeping an Aegean port and preferred for Bulgaria to have Kavala. However, Germany stepped in on the side of Greece. The outcome was that Bulgaria received the small underdeveloped Aegean port of Dedeagach. See Hall, *The Balkan War,* 124.

[57]Quoted in Boeckh, 64-65.

come even closer to its irredentist goals, but there was still more land to gain in Macedonia, Epirus, and Asia Minor. Bulgaria was angered by its truncated borders and the outcome of the peace treaties and vowed to destroy the terms of the peace agreement.[58] Now Bulgaria had to contend with a Greece made stronger by the victories of its new King Constantine.

Leading the Greek army to victory, Constantine became the symbol of the *Megali Idea*. Upon Constantine's return to Athens, the Greek people chanted: "A Constantine founded it [the Byzantine Empire]; a Constantine lost it; and a Constantine will get it back."[59] Moreover, Constantine roused national faith in the *Megali Idea* because a traditional Greek prophecy suggested that Palaeologus, who lost the city of Constantinople in 1453, was never killed by the Ottomans, but rather hidden away by angels until a new Constantine liberated the city.[60] Constantine had now become a legend; a prophetic fulfilment of a new Byzantine era. After the Balkan Wars, Constantine was the embodiment of the *Megali Idea* as told by tradition. It was the Greek King who became the face of Greek irredentist aspirations.

Conclusions

For the second half of the nineteenth century, Greece found itself struggling with internal factionalism as it tried to establish itself as influential nation-state in the European world. The first Greek king was deposed after he failed to create any cohesion, but the new "King of Hellenes" learned from the mistakes of his predecessor and saw promise in the burgeoning *Megali Idea*. Knowing that their fellow ethnic Greeks who

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[58]Hall, *The Balkan Wars*, 125.

[59]Quoted in Gallant, 325.

[60]John Mavrokordatos, "Greece, Constantine, and Venizelos," *The Edinburgh Review*, vol. 233, no. 475 (January 1921), 149.

were excluded from the state boundaries created by the Great Powers in 1832 were facing oppression from the Ottoman Empire, the Greek people created nationalist organizations and staged popular protests to pressure the government to act quickly, especially since they saw the Cretan Revolts as a way to wage war against the Porte. Deliyannis and King George acted together to prepare Greece for war, but the Great Powers intervened with an ultimatum, challenging Greek aspirations. After a period of inactivity, the Greek people rallied behind nationalist organizations and pressured the Greek government to declare war on the Ottoman Empire. The King seized the opportunity to become the champion of the *Megali Idea*, and with the crown Prince in charge of the army, the royal family played into national aspirations.

Greece went to war with the Ottoman Empire in 1897, but the army's small size and lack of preparation only hindered the state's objectives, proving disastrous for Greece. Blaming nationalist groups and politicians for defeat, the Greek army and society turned against their leaders. After the Goudi Coup in 1909, the Greeks found their champion in Eleftherios Venizelos. Venizelos was able to enact fast reforms, and improve the bankrupt economy. In only a year, the Liberal Party gained a massive majority, and during the new Greek "Golden Age," a prominent middle class started to emerge.

When the Greeks learned of violence being committed against their unredeemed countrymen in the borderlands and the Ottoman Empire, they once again looked to the government for action. The *Megali Idea* became the driving force for Greek unity. Venizelos and King George both championed the *Megali Idea* and used it as a pretense to enter the Balkan Wars. Although it came at the cost of its Bulgarian neighbor, Greece

was a major victor of the war. King George and Venizelos were praised for their ability to work with one another and make Greece victorious. The Balkan Wars also created two new leaders the people adored. Venizelos had improved Greece's economy, and as a result of the Balkan Wars, he also increased Greek territory by sixty-eight per cent and the population increased by 2 million; although this would later create further economic strains on the country.[61] The Balkan Wars proved to be a time where Greece could fulfill its destiny of uniting all ethnic Greeks.

Salonika was now Greek, but Epirus and the Aegean coast of Asia Minor were still under Ottoman control. Greece experienced a level of unity not seen before and that was attributed to the *Megali Idea*. Greece emerged from the Balkan Wars a more prosperous and unified country. However, all this was soon to be tested. With the outbreak of the First World War, Venizelos and Constantine faced pressures that tested their ability to work together effectively. The new Greek King was unwilling to engage in a another war. The leader who became the personification of Greek irredentism was now opposing what the public believed to be his and the country's destiny, which was reclaiming all Greeks in the region and creating a Greater Greece.

[61]Gallant, 323.

CHAPTER TWO: VENIZELOS, THE NATIONAL SCHISM, AND GREEK NEUTRALITY

After the conclusion of the Balkan Wars, Greece emerged victorious. Venizelos's diplomatic skills and leadership helped to increase Greece's territory nearly three-fold. Since his ascension in 1910, Venizelos and his Liberal Party had managed to reshape the Greek economy through numerous progressive reforms. The Venizelos government helped rebuild infrastructure and brought jobs and education to the millions of Greeks beyond Athens. Venizelos reformed the taxation system and revived the productivity of the country. He also created a new ministry that promoted trade, irrigation systems in the agricultural lands outside of the capital city, and created more national wealth, which saw the rise of a Greek industrial class.[62] Moreover, historians credit Venizelos with the creation of a middle class, earning him the title among Greek historians as the "Father of the Greek Bourgeoisie."[63] Venizelos gained the favor of the Greeks in the lower rungs of society because he revolutionized the notoriously bankrupt country while improving standards of living for those who lived in the rural areas of Greece. Although Venizelos slowly eliminated the disparities between Athenians and the majority of the Greek population, he had yet to create uniformity in education and living standards throughout Greece.

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[62]For more information of Venizelos's reforms and achievements see Helen Gardikas-Katsiadakis, "Venizelos' Advent in Greek Politics, 1909-12," in Paschalis Kitromilides, ed., *Eleftherios Venizelos: The Trials of Statesmanship* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006): 87-114.

[63]See Mark Mazower, "The Messiah and the Bourgeoisie: Venizelos and Politics in Greece, 1912-1913," *The Historical Journal*, vol. 35, no. 4 (Dec., 1992): 885-904.

Both Venizelos and Constantine put Greece one step closer to realizing the *Megali Idea* through the Balkan Wars. While Venizelos used diplomatic skill and internal reforms acquire more territory after Greece's victory and to improve Greece economically, Constantine had commanded the Greek forces to victory and his name became synonymous with Greek folklore and the embodiment of irredentist aspirations. The two leaders' ability to work together to make Greece a successful small state did not last long as internal political divisions surfaced after the conclusion of the Balkan Wars. Venizelos's achievements were recognized by the liberal portion of the Greek body politic, but the ideologies he espoused were seen as a direct threat to the King. Venizelos was constantly challenged by traditional conservatives who believed Constantine was the supreme leader in Greek politics. When there was no war to create cohesion in the Greek government, factionalism became rampant.

As European tensions were teetering on explosive during the July Crisis (the period of political and diplomatic chaos after Archduke Franz Ferdinand's assassination), it became apparent that the continent was unraveling diplomatically and the Great Powers were mobilizing for war. Greece had a long-standing relationship with the Great Powers, especially Britain, France, and Russia, but the Greek Royal Family created a strong relationship with Germany. When the First World War erupted, it pitted Greece's western allies against one another. In Venizelos's line of reasoning, siding with the Entente could help Greece achieve more military success and further the realization of the *Megali Idea*. Constantine, however, believed the best path for Greece was neutrality. What ensued because of these divergent beliefs became known as the National Schism.

The National Schism pitted two factions of the Greek government in a political battle over foreign policy and entry into the war. The two political factions involved in the National Schism became known, respectively, as the Venizelists and the Royalists. The Venizelists supported the policies of Venizelos, whereas the Royalists supported Constantine. During the period before official Greek entry into the war in July1917, Venizelos championed the *Megali Idea* as the reason why Greece should intervene, but Constantine, who emerged from the Balkan Wars as the symbol of Greek irredentism, stood unwavering in his stance of neutrality. With Constantine adhering to neutrality and unwilling to work with Venizelos to pursue Greek territorial aspirations, the National Schism expanded. Further, the Greek world had to now accept that the personification of the *Megali Idea*, Constantine, refused to seize the opportunity to expand Greece's borders and reclaim the Greeks who were still unredeemed.

For many Greeks who were less connected to international affairs than those in Athens, the outbreak of the First World War resembled a continuation of the Balkan Conflicts. On the surface, the war began from an assassination committed in the Balkans by a separatist group, and Greece's largest Balkan ally, Serbia, was engaged in military campaigns taking place around Greece's borders and in territory desired by the Greeks. The First World War appeared as an opportunity for Greece to once again be victorious by aiding her allies and procuring more territory. This vision of Greek success through intervention only fueled the National Schism

Historically, the National Schism is defined as the political division of the Greek government and people over the question of neutrality versus intervention propelled by

Entente policy within Greece.[64] While this definition holds true, it suggests that the National Schism was solely political and fails to address how Greek culture created the emblematic nature of the *Megali Idea*, which also shaped the divide. This chapter examines factionalism within Greece before intervention to argue that, more than just a question of intervention, the National Schism is also a byproduct of the cultural process in which the personification of the *Megali Idea* is transferred from Constantine to Venizelos. Furthermore, the Balkan Front of the First World War had many aspects mirroring the Balkan Wars, and for a Greek society still subordinate in many respects to Western Europe, the question of intervention appears to be a question of intervening in a third Balkan conflict.

The Outbreak of the First World War

At the beginning of the Balkan Wars, many nationalist and separatist groups in the region engaged in mass violence against different ethnic groups who lived within highly contested territories. The violent actions committed by these groups magnified territorial aspirations and ignited a regional conflict. When the Balkan Wars were over, nationalist and separatist groups still garnered influence within the borderlands, and newly drawn boundaries meant that many ethnic groups were now incorporated into different states; states characterized by national religions and languages. Macedonia was still a hotbed of regional tension with Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria vying for dominant influence while facing resistance from the Macedonian nationalist group: the Internal Macedonian Revolution Organization (IMRO).

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[64]See Leon, *Greece and the First World War*; Leon, *Greece and the Great Powers, 1914-1917*; Mitrakos; Llewellyn Smith.

Founded before the Balkan Wars, the IMRO had aided Bulgaria by fighting against Greek and Serbian influence. The IMRO was an organization that sought to create an autonomous Macedonia comprised of "ethnic Macedonians," which could be achieved with Bulgarian help.[65] Bulgaria's weakened influence in Macedonia after the Balkan Wars only acted to fan the flames of nationalist uprisings. Moreover, for Bulgaria, its loss of influence and territory gave the state a reason to use the First World War as a means to challenge the outcome of the Balkan Wars.[66]

It was not just in Macedonia where nationalist movements were growing. Pan-Slavism was on the rise, and the Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia in 1908 had created organizations that desired a liberated Bosnia. These Balkan nationalist movements created tension in the region, and on 28 June 1914, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a pro-Slavic organization, the Black Hand, sent the region, as well as the European continent, into a downward spiral towards war. Although the assassination of Franz Ferdinand was not the definitive reason for the outbreak of war, as the British officer Charles à Court Repington suggested, it was the "ostensible cause" for war, especially since it resulted in an "Austrian ultimatum to Serbia of the most rigorous and exacting character."[67] Shortly after the assassination, the July Crisis ensued, pushing Europe into a massive conflagration on a scale never before seen. Similar to the Balkan Wars, the actions of nationalist and separatist groups were igniting regional conflict once more.

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[65]Viktor Meier, *Yugoslavia: A History of Demise* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 179.

[66]Rumen Daskalov and Tchavdar Marinov, *Entangled Histories of the Balkans: National Ideologies and Language Policies*, vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 300-303.

[67]Charles à Court Repington, *The First World War, 1914-1918*, vol. I (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), 17.

With no choice, Serbia was forced into a war with Austria-Hungary. Initially, other Balkan states remained neutral at the outbreak of the First World War. It was only a year since the Balkan Wars ended and the Balkan states were recovering from the economic and military drains created by those conflicts. What remained constant during the brief period between the Balkan Wars and the First World War was the Balkan states' aspirations for more territory. For Greece, the desire was to gain Epirus, and the coast of Asia Minor as embodied in the *Megali Idea*. For Bulgaria, reclamation of Salonika and land in Macedonia was of key importance. Playing into these aspirations, the Great Powers—now divided into the Entente and Central Powers—courted the Balkan states with promises of land in return for assistance. As suggested by George B. Leon, England and France, as well as Germany, were offering similar territory to Greece and Italy. Simultaneously, Germany was also offering Greece and Bulgaria territory in Macedonia. As a result, these policies and tactics regarding Greece and the Balkans created "uncertainty, confusion, and frustration" among the Balkan states. Moreover, the incoherent policies of the Great Powers led to "political blunders" as well as "mutual fears and suspicions" amongst the Balkan states.[68] These suspicions and fears created uncertainty as the war unfolded in the Balkans.

The Development of the National Schism

When the First World War erupted in 1914, Constantine declared neutrality, but not everyone in the government desired this. Venizelos viewed the war as an opportunity to realize the *Megali Idea*, especially since England and France were offering territory to make it possible. This disagreement over Greek intervention is what led to the National

[68]Leon, *Greece and the First World War*, 5.

Schism. Due to uncertainty, and possibly because of Constantines's royal ties to Germany, the King and his Royalist supporters wanted to keep Greece neutral, while on the other hand, Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos and his supporters wanted to join the war on the side of the Entente Powers to ensure more territory for Greece.

At the root of Venizelos's desire for intervention was the *Megali Idea*, which was championed by the Greek world during the Greco-Turkish War of 1897 and the Balkan Wars. The Greek aspirations for claiming unredeemed Greeks were reinforced during the Balkan Wars, and Constantine had commanded the army to victory, becoming the anthropomorphic manifestation of a national ideology. Now, however, Greece had the opportunity to gain more territory from its Balkan neighbors, and Constantine refused to do so. Because Constantine refused to allow Greece to enter the war, this meant that the prior prophetic champion of the *Megali Idea* was failing in his supposed role. On the other hand, Venizelos was eager to continue Greece on her destined path, and this created a dilemma in which members of the Greek government and society had to choose between loyalty to the Crown or loyalty to the *Megali Idea*. A developing conflict in Albania caused Greece to assume a small regional role in the continental conflict, and this acted to solidify the National Schism.

The 1908 annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina created fears among the Great Powers and the Balkan States of other annexations, and the instability in Albania justified these fears. The outbreak of the First World War caused disorder in Albania. Only two months prior to the war, the Protocol of Corfu (June 1914) mandated that Albania recognize the southern region of Epirus as an autonomous self-governing state. Nationalist groups that desired an autonomous Albania saw the protocol as an obstruction

to their aspirations, and two months later, both regions of Albania were involved in violent skirmishes against each other.[69] The southern region of Albania, Epirus, was comprised of a large Greek population. The violence being committed against ethnic Greeks gave Venizelos and his supporters an opportunity to demand Greece's intervention in the War. If Albania was to gain autonomy, it meant that Greece would lose Epirus, one of the main territories needed to achieve the *Megali Idea*. Ignoring the concerns of the Royalist faction of the government to maintain neutrality, Venizelos appealed to the Entente on the grounds that the crisis in Albania violated the Corfu Protocol, and he received their approval to send troops to Epirus.

In October 1914 Greek troops occupied southern Albania. During their occupation, Greek forces also coordinated with Serbian forces occupying the north of Albania. Unhappy with the developments in Albania and Greece's growing influence in the region, Italy sent in its own troops to occupy the Albanian islands in the Adriatic. The Italian government acted to counter what it saw as a Greek attempt to secure territory Italy had claims to, creating tensions between two irredentist ideologies.[70] After several months of occupation, the conservative portion of the Greek government successfully voted to end Greek involvement in Epirus. For the Greeks, the events in Epirus resembled those of the Balkan Wars, and Greek control of Epirus was part of the *Megali Idea*. Now Constantine had acted to halt Venizelos's attempts at gaining territory, and this only created further tensions within the Greek world. The occupation in Epirus started a period of heightened tension between Constantine and Venizelos. These

[69]Leon, *Greece and the Great Powers*, 323.

[70]"Italy Occupies Saseno," *New York Times* (November 1, 1914), 1; "Italy notifies the Powers Albania Shall Not Join the War," *New-York Tribune* (December, 28, 1914), 1.

tensions were soon to boil over when Venizelos began further negotiations with the Entente to create terms for Greek intervention.

King Constantine, whose wife Sophia was the sister of the German Kaiser, challenged Venizelos's every move to avoid joining a war the Royalist faction thought was destined for German victory. The Entente was aware of Constantine's unwavering stance on neutrality and Venizelos's desire for intervention. In an attempt to cater to the Venizelists and give them more power to negotiate with Constantine, the Entente presented the Greek government with a strong promise of territory. In early 1915 Sir Edward Grey made an offer to the Greek government. It was an offer "made with the assent of the British, French, and Russian governments," and that was to give Greece the Ottoman port city of Smyrna and territory on the eastern shore of the Aegean as compensation for supporting the Entente.[71] This territorial promise was aimed at reigniting Greek aspirations and unifying the Greek government.

The proposed territory in Asia Minor put Greece one step closer to Constantinople and the fulfillment of the *Megali Idea*. Even with the promise of territory, Constantine did not desire to involve his country in a war it might lose. Therefore, he and his advisors politically blocked the Venizelists' every move, promoting a "small but modest Greece."[72] As suggested by the Greek historian A.A. Pallis, "the acceptance or rejection of the Entente's offer of Smyrna became, from 1915 onwards, a party question and gave rise to the most acute political controversy, dividing Greek public opinion into two

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[71]A.A. Pallis, *Greece's Anatolian Venture—and After: A Survey of the Diplomatic and Political Aspects of the Greek Expedition to Asia Minor (1915-1922)* (London: Methuen & Co, 1937), 8.

[72]For more details on the actions undertaken by the Royalist faction see Eleftherios Venizelos et al., *The Vindication of Greek National Policy, 1912-1917, A Report of Speeches Delivered in the Greek Chamber, August 23 to 26, 1917* (London, G. Allen & Unwin, 1918), 52.

opposing camps."[73] It is at this moment in January 1915 that the Greek world became even more divided by the issue of neutrality or intervention. Thus, the National Schism officially became a question of whether or not to fulfill Greek national aspirations. Venizelos was now the individual who could realize the *Megali Idea*, whereas Constantine was the one hindering it.

The National Schism pitted politicians against one another and divided Greek society as well. The question of neutrality or intervention split Greece down the middle, as intervention became the chance to redeem the Greek populations of Asia Minor and realize the goal of the *Megali Idea*. Although Greece had achieved success during the Balkan Wars, reflecting on the emergence of the National Schism, Pallis wrote: "The unity of purpose and effort so happily achieved during the Balkan Wars, which had seemed destined to carry Greece forward to even higher achievements in the near future, was destroyed."[74] Greece gained harmony and purpose as a result of the Balkan Wars, but all that was about to be tested by "two contending factions competing with each other with a deadly hatred and bent on mutual extermination."[75] The concept of creating a Greater Greece espoused by the *Megali Idea*, which once unified Greece, now tore the country apart.

Aware that he faced growing opposition from Constantine and conservative statesmen, in January 1915 Venizelos penned a note to Constantine in an attempt to gain his support. Venizelos cited the "enosis of Greeks" as a reason to go to war, writing that *enosis* included "all provinces where Hellenism flourished during the many centuries of

[73]Pallis, 9.
[74]Pallis, 4-5.
[75]Pallis, 5.

its existence."[76] The only way for Greece to redeem the land and people Greeks believed rightfully theirs was to join the war on the side of the Entente, which promised the territory required for a Greater Greece. Unable to convince Constantine to support the Entente, Venizelos began negotiations with England and France behind the King's back in late January. A Greek political struggle that saw the government reorganized twice in a two year period ensued thereafter.

Although *enosis* inspired many politicians and Greek citizens to back Venizelos and the Liberal Party, Constantine continued to garner support from the conservatives and the military. Within Greece, the National Schism was growing wider; however, those in the diaspora—especially in the Ottoman Empire—were unanimous supporters of the Prime Minister because of the violence they faced from the Young Turks. By early 1915 it became well known that the Young Turks were persecuting populations of Greeks in the Ottoman Empire. One eyewitness account from a Frenchman told of Turkish soldiers invading a village and opening gunfire: "Cries of terror mingled with the sound of firing…the panic was so great that a woman with her child drowned in 60cm of water."[77] Naturally, the Greeks of Asia Minor supported Venizelos and hoped to escape persecution by reuniting with Greece.

For these unredeemed Greeks, Venizelos was their answer to liberation, if he convinced Constantine to allow Greece to intervene in the war. Because the desire to liberate the Greeks of Asia Minor was embodied in Greek irredentist aspirations,

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[76]Eleftherios Venizelos, *Greece in her True Light: Her Position in the World-Wide War* (New York, 1916), 26-32.

[77]Quoted in George Horton, *The Blight of Asia: An Account of the Systematic Extermination of Christian Populations by Mohammedans and of the Culpability of Certain Great Powers; with a True Story of the Burning of Smyrna* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1926), 47-8.

Venizelos was now becoming the Symbol of the *Megali Idea* to those who lived in Asia Minor. Stories of Greeks forced to evacuate their homes without their belongings and being relocated into camps by Turkish troops made their way back to the Greek mainland.[78] Just like during the Balkan Wars, ethnic Greeks were being persecuted. It was through the Greek government pursuing the *Megali Idea* that ethnic Greeks were saved and incorporated into a victorious Greece after the Balkan conflicts. Greeks now had to accept that Constantine was not going to be the great liberator he once seemed. Venizelos, on the other hand, hoped to liberate ethnic Greeks and realize the *Megali Idea* through war. Even with the stories coming from Asia Minor, Constantine refused to consider intervention, and tensions between the two factions erupted into a power struggle.

When Venizelos was approached by the Entente to aid in the forthcoming Gallipoli Campaign, he saw it as an opportunity for Greece to gain control of the eastern littoral of Asia Minor and redeem the persecuted Greeks. This enthusiasm for Greek involvement in Gallipoli was not shared by Constantine. One of Constantine's trusted advisors, General Ioannis Metaxas, had served in the military with the King during the Balkan Wars. The two formed a close friendship and Constantine always looked to Metaxas for guidance. Metaxas strongly disliked Venizelos and was opposed to entering the war. The General continually advised the King that intervening in the war with the Entente would be disastrous for Greece because Germany would win the war.[79]

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[78]Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey: A study in the Contact of Civilisations* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1922), 140.

[79]Ioannis Metaxas, *To Prosopiko tou Imerologio*, vol. II (Athens, 1952), 340.

Metaxas and Venizelos became bitter rivals, and in one incident, the two argued about intervention in which Venizelos discussed the willingness to give up some territory in northern Greece in order to gain more in Asia Minor. Venizelos tried to convince Metaxas why it was necessary to join with the Entente, but Metaxas sternly replied that "neither he [Venizelos] or anyone else had the right to make Greek concessions of territory." Further, in regards to acquiring territory in Asia Minor, Metaxas advised Venizelos that, "the essence of the Greek Kingdom would be perceptibly changed by our establishment there, which would be desirable only long after preparatory work…the Greek state is not ready for the government and exploitation of so extensive a territory."[80] Metaxas warned Venizelos that Greece was ill-prepared for another war and more territory. Greece's military was still recovering from the Balkan Wars and the 2 million people in the new territories were beginning to drain the economy. Feeling that he and Constantine were at an impasse, Venizelos resigned as prime minister in February of 1915.

Venizelos's resignation sent shockwaves through the Greek world, and the person appointed Prime Minister, Dimitrios Gounaris, was the leader of the People's Party, an anti-Venizelist, and a purported German sympathizer.[81] Although Venizelos was no longer in power, the government remained split into the two factions of Venizelists and Royalists. The Venizelists remained in their positions, and since many speculated the new Prime Minister was pro-German, Liberal Party influence grew. Gounaris attempted to rid the government of Venizelists by dissolving the parliament and calling for new

[80]Metaxas, 391-2.

[81]Richard Clogg, *A Short History of Modern Greece* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 107.

elections. On the eve of the elections, it was reported that Gounaris supporters had taken to the streets in Athens, warning voters that "every vote given to a Venizelist candidate was a ball aimed at the King."[82] Gounaris's plan backfired. On 13 June 1915 elections were held and the Liberal Party won the majority, which meant Venizelos was now Prime Minister, again.

Venizelos returned to his position in August and continued to push for Greek intervention in the war. When Bulgaria mobilized against Serbia in September 1915, it was like the beginning of a Third Balkan War for the Greek people. Venizelos reminded Greek leaders of the Treaty of Bucharest (1913), which stipulated Greece must aid Serbia in the case of Bulgarian aggression. Anti-Venizelists disputed the obligations of the treaty by claiming it pertained to a solely Balkan conflict.[83] In a speech made to the Greek Parliament in October 1915, Venizelos stressed the need to work with the Entente to advance a Greater Greece. He believed that Greco-Entente relations could be used to the advantage of the Greeks and stated: "The new Hellenic conception fully understands that we cannot accept foreigners to be friends of Greece. What we must do is to succeed in finding co-workers and friends in arms…in which there is a better adjustment of our own interests."[84] When Bulgaria mobilized and attacked Serbia, its actions created the necessity for the Entente to balance the power in the region.[85] The Entente saw the city of Salonika as the best strategic point to send troops in order to aid Serbia. Two opportunities had now presented themselves to enable Greece to enter the war, yet

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[82]George M. Melas, *Ex-King Constantine and the War* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1920), 176.

[83]Llewellyn Smith, 56.

[84]This speech was given by Venizelos on 21 October, 1915 and was published in Eleftherios Venizelos, *Greece in her True Light*, 180.

[85]See Cyril Falls and Archibald Becke, *Military operations: Macedonia from the Outbreak of War to the Spring of 1917* (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1933), 1-22

Constantine refused, and he and his supporters seized the opportunity to halt Venizelos's plans to negotiate with the Entente.

According to the constitution, the King of Hellenes could dissolve the Chamber of Deputies (a portion of the Greek Parliament) if he deemed it necessary. However, it was understood that "dissolution should be resorted to in order to bring Parliament into harmony with the will of the nation rather than as a way of advocating or promoting policies of the monarch."[86] Using this power, Constantine forced Venizelos to resign in October 1915 and dissolved his cabinet. The King's action purged all Venizelists from office. After receiving criticism from the public and ousted Venizleists, Constantine justified his actions by proclaiming: "Concerning national issues, if I have the understanding that something is right or not, I am obliged to insist on what will not happen, because I am responsible before God."[87] This move by the King suggests that he thought it was his divine right to depose Venizelos. Furthermore, by forcing Venizelos to resign, Constantine was opposing the *Megali Idea*, alienating the Greeks who believed it to be a national responsibility.

Soon after he resigned, Venizelos left Athens for Salonika where he and his supporters, along with contingents of the Greek army who had defected, began to build a base for their own government. The internal situation in Greece now reached a point of two men both claiming to represent the interests of the Greek nation. It was then that the National Schism completely ruptured the Greek world. Greece was represented by two separate entities: one led by Venizelos, who desired to realize the *Megali Idea*, and the

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[86]Nicholas Kaltchas, *Introduction to the Constitutional History of Modern Greece* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 141-42.

[87]John Mavrokordatos, "The End of the Greek Monarchy," *The Edinburgh Review*, 225, no. 475 (January 1917), 31.

other led by Constantine, who now desired to maintain a small and modest Greece. Constantine was no longer the symbol of the *Megali Idea*, nor did he plan to redeem ethnic Greeks. Venizelos now assumed this symbolic role, and for some Greek people, the military conflict along the borders between Serbia and Bulgaria was suggestive of another Balkan crisis, one which Greece was obligated to join to aid Serbia.

Although Constantine acted fast to depose Venizelos, it did not prevent the Entente from "Gardening in Salonika."[88] The Royalist government insisted on neutrality and strayed far from any negotiations with other European powers. Venizelos began intense negotiations with the Entente in Salonika. It was in Salonika where British and French troops retreated after the failed Gallipoli Campaign, and consequently, the two Great Powers planned future campaigns along the Macedonian Front.[89] Venizelos's representatives sent a memo to the Entente informing them that it would mobilize its army to support the Entente in order "to check the balance of power in the Balkans," only if "the Entente would allow the people of Cyprus and the Dodecanese Islands (currently under Italian occupation) to vote on whether or not to become a part of Greece."[90] Venizelos knew that the people of Cyprus and the Dodecanese identified as ethnically Greek, and this plan played directly into Greek irredentist policy. The Entente did not respond the way Venizelos had hoped. The British representatives responded that with Constantine still controlling the government in Athens, they were unwilling to recognize

[88]Arnold Palmer, *The Gardeners of Salonika* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1965).

[89]For more information on the British and French retreat to Salonika after Gallipoli and how it affected Greek neutrality in the First World War, see Alan Palmer, *The Gardeners of Salonika: The Macedonian Campaign, 1915-1918* (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 2009); Jenny Macleod, *Gallipoli* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[90]Benaki Museum, Collection: Venizelos Papers, File 13, 9/9/1916 (Julian Calendar).

what they considered a "rogue faction." France and Russia both rejected the Greek proposal as well.[91]

Another reason why the three governments rejected the proposal was because those powers had just lured Italy into the war on the side of the Entente. Now there were Italian claims to some of the territory the Venizelos was requesting. Greek and Italian irredentist policies were often in direct competition with each other throughout the war, and the Entente desired to prevent these tensions from erupting into a diplomatic crisis. Ironically, while the Entente was attempting to avoid diplomatic crises, they were promising land all throughout Europe and the Middle East. When the Italian government learned of the Venizelists' proposal for intervention, it immediately rejected any notion of giving up the Dodecanese, or "relinquishing" any claims to territory.[92] Although the Greek proposal was rejected, Venizelos continued to negotiate intervention and territorial claims. These negotiations became an opportunity for the Entente to gain more influence in Greek politics. If the Entente allowed Venizelos to intervene with his small but growing army while the government in Athens declared neutrality, it could create a diplomatic issue. The British and French needed to convince the Royalist government to intervene as well, no matter the costs.

Constantine's Dethronement

As the war progressed, the British and French governments became more involved in Greek politics. The Entente powers put their support behind Venizelos and placed an embargo on grain distribution into southern Greece. This embargo was an attempt to weaken the power of the Royalist government and turn citizens' sympathies

[91]Benaki Museum, Collection: Venizelos Papers, File 13, 9/9/1916; 9/16/1916 (Julian Calendar).
[92]Benaki Museum, Collection: Venizelos Papers, File 13, 9/9/1916; 9/16/1916 (Julian Calendar).

towards the Venizelist faction. If a portion of Greek Society was to continue to support Constantine and a neutral policy, then an embargo limiting transportation and vital goods for sustenance might persuade many to shift support towards Venizelos, allowing him to form his own government.[93] It was the French government that devised the plan for the embargo and began a policy of coercion in Greece.

In the spring of 1916, while France took a more direct approach in influencing Greek politics, England attempted to garner support by means of propaganda. In a letter from Gerald Talbot to Lord Cecil, dated 6 April 1916, Talbot wrote that one of the main goals of the British government in Athens was "the strengthening…of the liberal press," in order to ensure that "public opinion became strengthened in favour of the Allies' cause and in favour of the policy of the Greek Liberal Party." Talbot also suggested that the Liberal Party needed funding so that its leaders may "commence" their propaganda.[94] Britain used its influence to help the Venizelist press in Athens fuel a interventionist agenda.[95]

Like England, France was involved in the production of interventionist propaganda, but in terms of political influence, France was by far the most involved. There is no doubt that France was very aggressive in its involvement in Greek politics, and this even caused the French government to apologize for some of its actions. In August of 1916 the French government expressed its support for the establishment of a new liberal government in Greece because King Constantine was too heavily influenced

[93]Mitrakos, 21.
[94]CAB 24/2/24, May 1916
[95]For an in-depth discussion on Greek political propaganda during the First World War see Lemonidou.

by his advisors who were "on the side of Germany" and "untrustworthy."[96] Naturally, such outspoken condemnation was met with backlash from the Royalist government and its supporters. Only a month later, French officials stated that they did not oppose King Constantine, but rather, their main interests in Greece were "to care for the safety of their troops and to limit German spying."[97] The Entente's presence in Greek politics and media did not go unnoticed by the Greek people.

With the country torn in two and the Entente expanding its diplomatic role, a portion of the Greek public became angered. A French diplomat in Athens noted that "Greek public opinion was deeply stirred," and for those who supported Constantine, the Entente had awakened a "consciousness that Greece was being cruelly wronged."[98] The growing divisions created by Entente policy now separated Greek society even more. This suggests that the National Schism, although still a question of intervention, was now characterized by a portion of Greek society who wished to realize the *Megali Idea* through Venizelos, or those who maintained a loyalty to Constantine and his desire to maintain neutrality.

In the autumn of 1916 the Entente was ready to reshape the Greek government to assure that Venizelos became the country's sole diplomatic authority. Constantine stood unwavering in his stance to keep Greece neutral, but the Entente had other plans. Greece's neutrality meant strategic advantages for the Central Powers in the Balkans, and successful Bulgarian offensives were sure to guarantee the state more territory in Macedonia. The Entente wanted the Royalist government to assure its neutrality, and so

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[96]Benaki Museum, Collection: Venizelos Papers, File 13, 8-6-1916 (Julian Calendar).
[97]Benaki Museum, Collection: Venizelos Papers, File 13, 9-3-1916 (Julian Calendar).
[98]Auguste Gauvain, *The Greek Question*, trans. Carrol N. Brown (New York: Oxford University Press, 1918), vi.

Britain and France demanded that Constantine demobilize and surrender war materials.[99] While Constantine ignored the demands of the Entente, Venizelos pleaded with the King to submit to the Entente and prove that the government in Athens was following a path of neutrality. On 27 August some of Venizelos's supporters protested in the streets of Athens. They demanded that Greece intervene in the war or withdraw troops form the northern borders. Venizelos himself gave a speech at the demonstration in which he chastised Constantine for being duped by his advisors. He warned that if Constantine did not yield to the Entente, then Greece was heading for certain disaster, and he closed his speech by asserting that if the King refused, then there were "other means to protect the country from complete catastrophe."[100] Constantine refused the Entente's demands, and Venizelos's warning of "other means" soon became evident.

On 29 August, just two days after Venizelos's ominous warning, several military officers who were dissatisfied with Constantine marched with their troops into Salonika. Many in the Greek army were angry that Constantine refused to keep troops in Macedonia, especially since Greece was losing vital territory to Bulgarian advances.[101] These troops called themselves the National Defense Committee. Colonel Nikolaos Trikoupis, who was loyal to Constantine, sent in his troops to halt the committee in Salonika. Trikoupis was successful at expelling many from the Barracks, but his actions sparked an uprising. The next day, the expelled troops blockaded Trikoupis and his men, leading to French intervention. When The French General, Maurice Sarrail entered Salonika, he demanded that any troops who were not willing to join the National Defense

[99]Leon, *Greece and the Great Powers*, 368.
[100]*Politiki Epitheorisis*, Athens (2 September 1916), 2.
[101]Joseph Davatinos, *Megali Stratiotiki kai Navtiki Enkyklopeidia*, vol. III (Athens, 1929), 496.

Committee should return to southern Greece.[102] Many royalist men were stripped of their weapons and sent back to Athens. Army officers in favor of Venizelos flocked to Salonika, and on 15 September 1916, the Provisional Government of National Defense was created.[103]

The Provisional Government of National Defense's purpose was not to cause an even deeper division of the Greek World or to claim sole legitimacy. Venizelos made it clear that he still hoped that the King would come to his senses and reunify Greece by intervening on the side of the Entente. "The political orientation of the movement is very clear. We want to build an army in order to recover…the territories occupied by our hated enemy [Bulgaria] and fulfill our treaty obligations to Serbia," Venizelos declared. Further, he stated that "naturally when the war is over, we shall…not change the structure of the state, or the dynasty, or restrict the prerogatives of the Crown."[104] Venizelos used the treaty with Serbia to justify intervention. He also anticipated that his promise to not restructure the government or to lessen the power of the King might persuade Constantine. Venizelos's appeal fell on deaf ears. Constantine refused to respond to Venizelos and, therefore, Venizelos approached the Entente to begin negotiations.

By mid-November Venizelos began minor military campaigns in Macedonia with the Entente's help. These military engagements were seen as undermining the King's efforts at ensuring neutrality, so Constantine tried to halt any action by Venizelos. Knowing that the Provisional Government's forces were all former members of the King's military, the Athenian government charged all military officers involved in any

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[102]Davatinos, 496.
[103]Davatinos, 496.
[104]Benaki Museum: Venizelos Papers, Venizelos to Raktivan, 27 October 1916 (Julian Calendar).

activity on the Macedonian front with desertion.[105] Because Constantine refused to entertain talks with Venizelos, the Entente Powers knew that only through the leadership of Venizelos was Greek intervention possible. Because of this, the Entente decided drastic measures were necessary.

Fearing the Athenian government and the King were secretly negotiating with the Central powers, on 1 December 1916 France sent a marine force of 2,500 troops into the Athenian port of Piraeus, where they found the Royalist army prepared to resist any military actions.[106] As the Entente forces reached their designated points of location, they found armed Greek forces already prepared for engagement. What ensued next is the Battle of Athens, or the *Noemvriana* (November Events or Greek Vespers).[107] The Battle of Athens was short and intense. After it was "reported" that the French began an attack, the Greek artillery fired upon the French Admiral Du Fournet's headquarters in the National Gardens, which caused French troops to respond by bombarding an area of Athens close to the Royal Palace.[108] After a brief fight, French forces were repelled by the Greek troops, and by the afternoon, the Battle of Athens was over. The following morning the French troops were evacuated from Piraeus. Although there was no proof that Venizelos collaborated or even leant support to the Entente, conspiracies soon ran rampant in Athens. One Conservative paper, *Politiki Epitheorisis* (Political Review), printed a headline story that suggested any follower of Venizelos should be "detained" so that "justice" was achieved.[109] Hysteria took hold in Athens, and over the next three

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[105]George B. Leon, *Greece and the Great Powers*, 430.

[106]Kitromilides, 125.

[107]Although the Battle of Athens took place at the beginning of December, it is referred to as the November Events because Greece used the Julian Calendar at this time (18 November).

[108]Abbott, 160.

[109]Quoted in Leon, *Greece and The Great Powers*, 437.

days, businesses belonging to Venizelos supporters were looted, and thirty five people were killed by angry mobs.[110] The mission to assert a military presence in Athens failed, and in the aftermath many Greeks began to question whether or not Constantine had a planned role in the event.

After the Battle of Athens, stories pinpointing Constantine circulated. It was reported that while the French troops were landing at Piraeus, "the houses and shops of many principal Venizelists were marked with red chalk," indicating something "sinister" was underway.[111] Because the French were still docking in the harbor, this meant that whoever marked the houses was, therefore, already present in Athens—likely tied to the Royalist government. Something else that helped substantiate these claims was a rumor that French guns were "loaded with blank cartridges," meaning that it was impossible for them to fire the first shot.[112] Furthermore, the homes of several prominent Venizelists were riddled with multiple bullet holes, suggesting that someone had intentionally fired upon them.[113] The *Noemvriana* cost numerous civilians their lives. It also created a conspiracy that pointed to the Royalist government as the instigator. This is turn made many people question the role of Constantine and suggested that his hatred for Venizelos outweighed his desire to keep his Greek subjects safe. Now, not only did Constantine not desire to realize a Greater Greece, he also was willing to sacrifice innocent lives to prevent it.

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[110]Samuel Chester, *Life of Venizelos: With a Letter from His Excellency M. Venizelos* (London: Constable, 1921), 294.

[111]In her introduction, Vaka informs the reader that she traveled to Greece to absolve Constantine of any wrongdoing. Instead, she uncovered a plot that suggested Constantine had betrayed his people. Demetria Vaka, *Constantine: King and Traitor* (London: John Lane, 1918), 24.

[112]Vaka, 25.

[113]Vaka, 31.

The National Schism had now gone beyond ideological differences in politics and foreign policy; it reached a point of hysteria and violence. Regardless of its failure, the Entente admonished the actions of the Royalist government as disgraceful. Just days after the French withdrew from Athens, several hundred pro-Venizelists were imprisoned, including the Mayor of Athens, Emmanuel Benakis. Before his imprisonment, Banakis was told by the government to "declare that it was the liberals who were responsible for the disorders and the accidental deaths on the second of December." Benakis refused the order and was "dragged…into the street, where they banged his head against the trees until his face was covered with blood."[114] The actions committed by the Royalist government did not stay limited to Venizelists in Athens. Constantine also issued a royal warrant for Venizelos's arrest.[115]

The Royalist government's actions fueled speculation as to whether or not Constantine was following a path of neutrality or strategical helping his brother-in-law, and likewise, Germany. To show their disapproval with Constantine and, perhaps, to finally bring Greece into the war, the Entente Powers denounced the government in Athens and recognized the Provisional Government of National Defense as the only lawful Greek government.[116] Both the French and the British governments knew that the only way to get Greece to intervene on the side of the Entente was to reunify Greece under Venizelos. In order to do this, they had to eliminate the main person blocking this: King Constantine.

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[114]Vaka, 30-31.

[115]Pavlos Karolidis, *I Istoria tou Ellinikou Ethnous*, vol XVI (Athens: Ekdotike Athenon, 1925), 248-249; Kitromilides, 367.

[116]David Burg and L. Edward Purcell, *Almanac of World War I* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 145-146.

One crucial event that further deepened the National Schism was the abdication of King Constantine. According to historian George Leon, there are three factors that can be attributed to Constantine's power weakening, which allowed for France and England to seize the opportunity to remove the King from power: "First, the Russian Revolution deprived the King of the Tsar's support, and, second, the Fall of Aristide Briand, French Premier since November 1915."[117] Because Briand was no longer in power, French leaders "insisted upon a more decisive policy." Lastly, "Allied political and military exigencies needed a united Greece on their side—an unlikely possibility so long as King Constantine remained on the throne."[118] With America now in the war and the possibility of an Allied win, French and British leaders took their farthest step yet into Greek politics and dethroned the Greek King on 11 June 1917.

When the Greek state was created in 1832, England, France, and Russia, became the guarantors of the country. It was at the London Conference in May of 1832 that the three powers ratified the Greek constitution; a constitution written without any Greek representation.[119] In Greece, this new constitution became known as the "Hegemonic Constitution" because it gave the Great Powers control over the new Greek state. Greece was established as a constitutional monarchy with Britain, France, and Russia as its co-guarantors, which were able to intervene in government affairs when constitutional breaches were committed.[120] In the *Noemvriana*, Constantine had acted against the

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[117]Leon, *Greece and the First World War*, 5-6.

[118]Leon, *Greece and the First World War*, 5-6.

[119]For the articles of the *London Protocol*, see http://www.heraldica.org/topics/royalty/greece.htm#Convention-1832; the foundation of the Greek state and the absence of Greek representation is discussed in Barbara Jelavich and Charles Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan Nation States, 1804-1920* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 50-51.

[120]See *The Treaty (Arrangement) of Constantinople* (21 July 1832), www.mfa.gr/1832_constantinople_treat.doc.

state's guarantors, and his government in Athens was perceived as bordering on absolute monarchical power, both flagrant violations of the constitution. England and France saw the Royalist Greek Prime Minister, Alexandros Zaimis, as a puppet to Constantine, and under their pressure he was forced to resign. Before his resignation, England and France instructed Zaimis to denounce the King and proclaim: "His Majesty King Constantine having manifestly violated the constitution of which France, England, and Russia are the guarantors…has lost the confidence of the Protecting Powers."[121] England and France had called upon their roles as guarantors to depose of Constantine. Without considering the will of the Greek people living in a "democracy," England and France invited Venizelos back to Athens and appointed Constantine's replacement.

On May 29 1917 Venizelos returned to Athens to resume his position as Prime Minister, and two weeks later, Constantine was forced into exile by England and France. As suggested by Greek historian, Georgia Eglezou, it is hard to interpret popular response after this event since "the violations of the constitutional liberties also involved the institution of the press," and it "gave the state the power to stop the publication of certain newspapers, using the excuse of external danger."[122] Even with the new government censoring the Royalist press, there was one thing the Greek people could not ignore: England and France were now visibly dominant in Greek politics, and this meant that it was no longer a question of intervention in another Balkan crisis; it was a much larger conflict. Whether or not the Greek popular majority wanted to intervene in a world war is impossible to ascertain. One thing is, however, certain. Venizelos was now

[121]*The Greek White Book, Diplomatic Documents, 1913-1917*, trans. Theodore Ion (New York: Oxford University Press, 1919), 48.

[122]Eglezou, 8.

undoubtedly the symbol of the *Megali Idea*, and only through him could the Greeks achieve their national aspirations.

The new King of Greece, Constantine's son Alexandros, was chosen and crowned by England and France. The two powers ignored Constantine's eldest son, George, who had rightful claims to the throne, and decided on Alexander because they believed he was politically aloof and sympathetic to the Allies.[123] Venizelos was once again Prime Minister and the new King was not seen as a threat to his agenda. Reflecting on the event a decade after the war, Churchill wrote favorably about Venizelos: "From that moment on Venizelos controlled the fortunes of Greece, and from that moment Greece shared the fortunes of the Allies." He continued to describe Venizelos's character: "his personal qualities, his prestige, the famous services he had rendered the Allies, secured him a position almost of equality with the heads of the greatest victorious states."[124] Although he was probably biased, Churchill's statements reflect the opinion of many in the British government at that time. Soon after regaining the office of Prime Minister, Venizelos prepared Greece for intervention on the side of the Allies, but all of the Greek government did not laud his decision, nor the Greek populace for that matter.

Constantine was sent into exile in Switzerland, but his supporters were not content with dismissing him from Greek politics. From Switzerland, Constantine corresponded with the Royalist who remained in Athens. Because they felt that he was illegally deposed, many Royalists discussed ways in which to return the King to his throne. Even in exile, Constantine continued to play a role in Greek politics. When

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[123]Chester, 295-304.

[124]Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis: The Aftermath* (London: Thornton Butterworth Limited, 1929), 382-3.

discussing Constantine's continued involvement in Greek politics, Churchill stated: "Constantine brooded in exile, and the Greek politicians, who, if they had their way, would have kept their country out of the share in the victory or indeed involved in the defeat, awaited morosely the hour of revenge."[125] Although some in the Athenian government remained loyal to Constantine and neutrality, Greece was now controlled by Venizelos. On 30 June 1917, just one month after Venizelos returned to Athens, Greece officially declared war on the Central Powers.

Greek participation in the First World War was brief, lasting only a year, but during that time Royalists continued to plot the return of their beloved King. One such attempt to weaken Venizelos's government was discovered and reported by the British in June of 1918. The report from the British government suggested that there was an "attempt by the adherents of the ex-king who continues his propaganda in Switzerland with connection to the Central Powers" to undermine "the stability of the Greek army and people." It was reported that two officers made their way into the Peloponnese aboard a German submarine "with the object of spreading sedition in that part of the country, and ultimately amongst the army."[126] Once again, allegedly, the Royalists, were willing to incite unrest and risk the lives of civilians all in the name of Constantine's authority. Plots to cause discord and garner favor for the King continued even after the armistice.

In late November 1918 another alleged plot was uncovered by the British and French governments. This time the Royalists played into revolutionary fears sweeping across the continent. The rise of the Bolsheviks profoundly affected Great Power policy throughout Europe, and created an atmosphere of fear that popular uprisings to overthrow

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[125]Churchill, 383.
[126]CAB 24/54/30, 18 June 1918.

governments might ensue. It was suggested that Constantine was working closely with Bulgarian revolutionaries in Switzerland to "incite a Bolshevik movement in Greece," which would be undertaken by "sending Bulgarian emissaries to Greece to create the desire for a Socialist Party."[127] Whether or not this plot is based in truth is unclear. A Socialist Party was founded, but that was not until 1920. Regardless of their attempts, Constantine and the Royalist were unsuccessful at preventing Greek intervention or inciting revolution after the war.

Conclusions

After the Balkan Wars, Constantine became the symbol of the *Megali Idea*; the King who led Greece through wars victoriously, reclaiming old lands, redeeming persecuted Greeks, and reviving the Byzantine Empire. Prime Minister Venizelos gained popularity through his reforms, which helped to rebuild a poor economy, and bring wealth and education to the rural areas in Greece. Although both men contributed to Greece's military successes, it was Constantine who became synonymous with Greek national aspirations. When the First World War erupted in 1914, for many Greeks, who were disconnected form the world beyond the Balkans, the events resembled another regional conflict. Unredeemed Greeks were being oppressed and mistreated by the states in which they lived, and by 1915, Serbia and Bulgaria were engaged in combat once again with Bulgaria hoping to gain more territory in Macedonia.

With Constantine as the legendary hero, the conditions seemed right to enter Greece in another conflict, especially if it meant realizing the *Megali Idea*. However, Constantine did not react as expected. Instead he chose a neutral path and challenged

[127]GAK, Collection: Political Papers, File 218, Bern, 11/15/1918 (Julian Calendar).

Venizelos's every attempt to intervene on the side of the Entente. This political battle between the two leaders created the National Schism, dividing the country in two. With the Entente promising him territory that was needed to achieve national aspirations, Venizelos and his supporters saw the First World War as a necessary step. It became Venizelos who could realize the *Megali Idea*, whereas Constantine was now in favor of small but strong Greece. Yes, on the surface the National Schism was a political divide over Greek intervention, but it also had a cultural aspect. The *Megali Idea* was engrained in Greek culture, even prophetic in nature. Therefore, the National Schism is also a result of a transfer in symbolism. Constantine was no longer the leader who would create a Greater Greece. Instead, Venizelos became the one who embodied the Greek vision.

With the First World War intensifying, the Entente continually approached the Greek government for support, and Venizelos repeatedly negotiated without Constantine's consent. To end the ongoing internal conflict, Constantine forced Venizelos to resign, which lead to the creation of a provisional government and further divided the Greek world. This divide led to the *Noemvriana*, resulting in an armed conflict in Athens that caused more political turmoil and cost innocent lives. After the *Noemvriana*, rumors abounded that the Royalist government used the event to rid Athens of any adversaries. Not only did Constantine no longer desire to realize the *Megali Idea*, he was willing to risk his subjects' lives to prevent it.

Using their roles as the guarantors of the Greek state, England and France accused Constantine of violating the constitution and forced the King to abdicate. Constantine was sent into exile in Switzerland, where he maintained influence in the Greek world by keeping contact with his supporters in the new Venizelos government. England and

France had deposed the King and reorganized the government, and this suggested to the Greek people that the war was more than just a regional conflict. Just how supportive the Greek population was for of intervening in the First World War is impossible to know, but with Venizelos in charge, intervention was certain. Greece was now on the path to realizing the *Megali idea*.

CHAPTER THREE: FROM IRREDENTISM TO CATASTROPHE

In 1919 at the Pan-Hellenic Conference of Unredeemed Greeks, the keynote speaker was Kyriakos Tsolainos, a Greek born in the Asia Minor city of Smyrna. He opened his speech with a section of a popular Greek poem: "Another Greece shall arise, and to remoter time bequeathed like sunset to the skies the splendor of her prime." Reflecting on the opinion of the Greeks living within the Ottoman Empire, Tsolainos posited that "to separate Smyrna from Greece would be as cruel as to separate Nancy from France." Furthermore, he proclaimed that Greece's claims to "the western literal of Asia Minor are consistent with the twelfth of the famous points, which reads, 'The other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.'"[128] These sentiments were not restricted to Mr. Tsolainos himself. Many Greeks, both within the state's boundaries and in Asia Minor, felt Smyrna was justifiably Greek. The poem that Tsolainos quoted suggests that the *Megali Idea* was well engrained in Greek culture, especially for those Greeks still living in the Ottoman Empire. For Greece, the First World War did not end with the armistice. Instead, Greek national aspirations carried the country into a war with the Ottoman Empire from 1919-1922. The Greco-Turkish war ended in catastrophe for Greece and it spelled the end of the *Megali Idea*.

[128]Kyriakos P. Tsolainos, "Paris Notes: Unredeemed Greece in Asia Minor. An Interview with Mr. Kyriakos P. Tsolainos," *The Advocate of Peace*, vol. 81, no. 6 (June, 1919), 186.

This chapter examines the diplomatic negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference to argue that Venizelos saw a war with the Ottoman Empire as a way to finally realize the *Megali Idea*. For Greek historians who study the Greco-Turkish War, the main consensus is that it is with Greece's defeat in 1922 when the *Megali Idea* ends.[129] However, this chapter suggests that the end of the *Megali Idea* came in 1920, when Venizelos lost the elections and King Constantine was reinstated. Venizelos was the symbol of Greek irredentism, but a war weary public no longer desired to see a Greater Greece realized. It is with Venizelos's fall that the *Megali Idea* fades from existence.

The Paris Peace Talks

Greek participation in the First World War, although brief, was characterized by great success. The first major event in which Greece was involved was the Battle of Skra di Legen. It was a battle on the Macedonian front that saw a decisive Greek victory against Bulgarian forces. Even though Greek victory was briefly dashed by the Bulgarians at the Battle of Doiran, by October 1918 the Greeks helped the Allies regain Serbia. Through all the success, one thing became apparent to the Greek government, by choosing to intervene on the side of the Entente, the right decision was made. Greece was one step closer to reaping the spoils of war and claiming the territory offered to her at the outbreak of the conflict.

Before the 11 November armistice, there was an armistice concluded between the Allies and the Ottoman Empire. On 30 October 1918 Allied representatives meet in the harbor of the Greek island, Lemnos, to negotiate a ceasefire with the Ottoman Empire. The result was the Armistice of Murdos. The armistice called for the Ottoman military to

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[129]See Llewellyn Smith; Kostas Chatzeantoniou, *Mikra Asia: Cho Apelevtheriotikos Agonas, 1919-1922* (Athens: Iolkos, 2003).

demobilize, retreat to pre-war borders, and it enabled the Allies to occupy Istanbul, and partition the crumbling Ottoman Empire.[130] The Armistice of Murdos is significant because it creates the conditions that will allow Greece to occupy Smyrna after the Paris Peace Conference. With the official armistice on 11 November, the next step for Greece was for Venizelos to defend the claims to Greek territory at the impending peace conference in Paris.

On 18 January 1919 Allied representatives met in Paris to discuss the capitulation terms for the Central Powers and how to deal with the Allied victors' territorial claims. Amongst the major powers, smaller allies had to present their claims at a conference that required them to subject themselves to the mercy of Great Powers.[131] From the onset of the conference, the Greek delegation was very clear with its aims. The delegation wanted to redeem what they considered historically Hellenic land. When the negotiations began, the Greek delegation asserted the state's aims and stated:

> The Greek people as a whole, independently of any divergence of opinion exclusively related to internal politics, solely aim to promote national claims, and believe that the only right solution of the eastern problems concerning Hellenism lies in the re-establishment of a single Greek state—constituted from the lands of the present kingdom, of Northern Epirus, Thrace including Constantinople with the Peninsula of Gallipoli, of the vilayets of Aidin and Broussa, the cazas of Nicodemia and Dardanelles, the Dodecanese and the isle of Cyprus—and assuring the Greeks of the Pont an independent political life.[132]

Such territorial claims seemed extreme to say the least, but if granted all of the land, Greece was one step closer to realizing a Greater Greece as envisioned in the *Megali*

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[130]For a full text of the Armistice of Murdos see www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/eng/armistice_turk_eng.pdf.

[131]Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking, 1919* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1965).

[132]N. Calogeropoulos and N. Stratos, *Notes on the Greek Question Addressed to the President Woodrow Wilson* (Geneva: Kundig, 1920), 6.

Idea. With the Greek claims on the table, Venizelos had to use his diplomatic skills and charm to ensure that he could realize the *Megali Idea*.

The charismatic Venizelos was known for using his appeal at the negotiations. Long before the war, and before Lloyd George became the British Prime Minister, the two statesmen had formed a bond. Because Lloyd George was a Philhellene, or lover of Greek history, his bond with Venizelos occurred naturally. There were even discussions between Lloyd George and the Foreign Office about the necessity for creating a strong Greek ally. When reflecting on the events at the Paris Peace Conference, Lloyd George passionately referred to Venizelos as "the greatest statesmen Greece had…since Pericles."[133] Venizelos also gained the admiration of Wilson since he penned an exhaustive memorandum as was suggested by the President. The memorandum played into the Fourteen Points and called for a settlement in Asia Minor that suggested an independent Armenia and the Greek annexation of the Aegean coast of the Ottoman Empire.[134] Venizelos argued that all Aegean islands were ethnically, historically, and culturally Greek and, therefore, should be ceded to Greece.[135] Using ethnographic claims was a very calculated move by Venizelos since it fell within the parameters of Wilson's concept of self-determination. Although Venizelos was respected for his diplomatic skills, not every delegation was supportive of Greek claims. The major opposition for Greece at the Paris Peace Conference was Italy, especially when it came to claims for the territory of Epirus and the littoral of Asia Minor.

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[133]David Lloyd George, *Truth about the Peace Treaties*, vol. II (London: V. Gollancz, 1938), 204.
[134]Eleftherios Venizelos, *La Grèce devant le Congrès de la paix* (Paris: Imprimerie Chaix, 1919).
[135]See Nicolas Politis, *Les aspirations nationales de la Grèce* (Paris: Ed. spéciale de "La paix des peoples," 1919).

Before the beginning of the First World War, the Greek and Italian governments competed over land that the believed rightfully theirs. The two countries' irredentist foreign policies shared similarities, but one problem was those similarities were overlapping territorial claims. During the war, the Entente tried use caution when promising land to both countries for fear of increased Greco-Italian tensions. Nonetheless, territorial promises were made, and both countries sent representative delegations to the conference to justify their claims. Just as the Greek delegation came with a long list of territorial claims, so did Italy. At the conference, Italy made claims to territory in Africa, the Adriatic, Albania, and Asia Minor. The Italian delegation believed their extensive claims to be justified since most of the territory was promised to them by the Entente in the secretive Treaty of London (1915).[136] The major issue with the claims in Asia Minor was that Italy was claiming Smyrna, but so was the Greek delegation, and Greece was promised the city in 1915 by the Entente as well.[137] Further complicating the issue was that the Entente has promised Italy large portions of Asia Minor in the event of the Ottoman Empire being partitioned.[138] The double-dealing of the Entente would soon erupt into a diplomatic commotion.

Italian and Greek claims now took center stage at the Paris Peace Conference. What happened next was a diplomatic power struggle in which England and France wanted to halt what they believed was Italian aggression. During the conference, Italy

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[136]For a detailed list of Italian claims, see the memorandum of 2/7/1919 published in René Albrecht-Carrié, *Italy at the Paris Peace Conference* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1966), 370-387. For more information on Italian irredentism and foreign policy see Annibale Carena, *La politica Italiana nell' Europa Orientale sui Documenti Diplomatici* (Milan: Fratelli Treves dell' A.L.I., 1930).

[137]On 23 January 1915 England promised Greece the Ottoman city of Smyrna and territory along the Aegean coast as compensation should Greece join the war on the side of the Entente. See British Foreign Office Papers, series 337, vol., 2242, "Grey to Elliot, 23/1/1915."

[138]"Agreement between France, Russia, Great Britain and Italy," (London: April 26, 1915), https://archive.org/details/agreementbetween00franrich.

became "intent on economic imperialism," and was "Greece's direct antagonist and a formidable competitor to French and English interests in the Near East."[139] Both the Greek and Italian delegations needed to convince the other representatives as to why their territorial claims were justified. The Greeks stood behind the claim that the land which they were demanding was comprised of a majority ethnic Greek population. Historically, the Asia Minor city of Smyrna was heavily populated with a large Greek community, which gave some basis to Greek claims. However, Italy possessed no ethnic ties to Smyrna. The Italian delegation's claims to the city were seen as unjustified, and England and France took the position that granting this Italian claim might strengthen the country's power in the Mediterranean. With England and France becoming suspicious of Italian goals, and American interests now coming to the forefront, the Italian delegation became incensed by the disregard for the promises made in the Treaty of London. As a result, the Italians ceased negotiations and walked out of the conference in mid-April.[140] With Italy out of the conference, Venizelos now concentrated on defending his claims for Smyrna.

Venizelos presented his claims with statistical information on the percentage of ethnic Greeks in each territory. The claims in Venizelos's memorandum produced questions about defining ethnicity in the Balkan zones that were constantly being passed back and forth under different states' control. Greek claims remained consistent with the

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[139]Admantia Pollis Koslin, "The Megali Idea: A study of Greek Nationalism," PhD dissertation (John Hopkins University, 1958), 354.

[140]President Wilson was very adamant in his discussions with Italian representatives, warning the country that it shouldn't forget how much territory it had already gained. American and Italian relations were weakened after the Italian delegation left the conference. For more details on the events leading to the Italian walk-out and the resulting anti-Wilson demonstrations in Italy see Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2001), 297-302 and N. Petsalis-Diomidis, *Greece at the Paris Peace Conference (1919)* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1978), 149-50; 200-201.

definition of Greek identity as defined through the *Megali Idea*, which was the Greek language, Orthodox Church, and historical Greek ties.[141] However, by the close of the conference Allied representatives decided not to fully grant the Greek requests. The Allied representatives gave Venizelos a small portion of his claims: Greece received territory in Epirus and Thrace, but the Dodecanese were to remain Italian territories. Although some territorial aspirations were realized, Venizelos failed to receive what the Entente promised in 1915: Smyrna. Venizelos and his supporters knew that the city was the key to get Greece into Asia Minor and pursue their irredentist policy. More than likely Greece did not receive Smyrna because it was promised the city as compensation in 1915, but did not intervene until 1917. All hopes of realizing the *Megali Idea* now seemed unattainable, but once again the Italian government's aspiration for territory in Asia Minor was noticed with disdain by England, France, and the Unites States, especially after Italy increased its military presence in the Near East.

Unsatisfied with the decisions at the Paris Peace Conference, the Italians landed troops in Adalia (modern day Antalya), on the southern coast of Turkey and marched towards the interior. The Italians responded to criticism by justifying their actions as necessary to suppress a local uprising.[142] Other European Powers wanted to intervene in Asia Minor, but to do so without causing a major diplomatic storm or international conflict, they needed a well-devised plan. In the beginning of May, President Wilson, Clemenceau, and Lloyd George were warned that Italian warships were approaching Smyrna. Once again, the charismatic Venizelos was able to use his aptitude as a

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[141]Renee Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean : An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 53-62.

[142]Churchill, 385-387.

statesman to gain support from the three leaders. After learning from Venizelos that the Italians brutally suppressed a revolt in the Dodecanese, the Allied Powers knew they must do something. Rumors of strengthening Italian-Turkish relations circulated. This allowed Venizelos to convince the representatives of England, France, and the Unites States to intervene militarily.[143] The three powers were willing to combat Italian aggression in Asia Minor, but they needed to figure out a way to avoid sending in their own troops. With advice and consent from Venizelos, the three decided to send Greek troops to counter Italian power in the East.

Although Venizelos lost his claims to Smyrna at the close of the conference, he was now one step closer to reigniting irredentist aspirations for Asia Minor. Venizelos and his supporters delighted in the news that England, France, and the United States wanted Greek forces to occupy Smyrna. Even the philhellenic Lloyd George suggested that the Allies undervalued Greece, and a greater Greece could emerge from the conflict: a Greece that included Constantinople and Cyprus. He also insinuated that the reason the Great Powers asked Venizelos to send troops to Smyrna was because they intended to eventually give Greece the city.[144] With the support of the Great powers, Greek troops landed in Smyrna on 7 May 1919. The new presence of Greek forces bolstered by allied support weakened Italy's position in Asia Minor, and the Italian government was ready to negotiate.

In late July Italy saw its power fading in the East, and at the suggestion of Clemenceau, approached Greece to hammer out a territorial agreement. In the secretive

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[143]Paul Mantoux, *Les Délibérations du Conseil des Quatre, 24 Mars-28 Juin 1919*, vol. I (Paris:Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1955), 422-423.

[144]Eleftherios Venizelos, "Imerologio kai Grammata ston Repouli, 1918-20" in *Tachydromos*, no. 788 (Athens: May 16, 1969), 10-16.

Tittoni-Venizelos agreement, Italy assented to Greece's claims in Epirus and offered the Dodecanese islands if Venizelos agreed to relinquish half of the claims in Asia Minor.[145] Even with Greece and Italy both accepting the deal, Italian power still dwindled away in Asia Minor as Italy saw the promises of the Treaty of London slipping further away. The death knell for Italian influence in Asia Minor was created by the Treaty of Sévres on 10 August 1920.

The Treaty of Sèvres partitioned the Ottoman Empire into spheres of influence with each Allied Power given a zone to oversee. The Treaty validated Greek claims by giving the state control over the Smyrna region and the Eastern side of the Bosphorus. As well as zones of influence, it mandated that after a five year period the people of Smyrna could have a plebiscite to decide on unification with Greece. Italy was also allowed influence over some of the coastal regions in the Aegean but those areas could not become colonies as hoped by Italy.[146] The outcome of the treaty increased Greece's territory by nearly thirty per cent and substantiated Greek claims in Asia Minor, whereas it directly challenged Italy's aspirations in the region. Unsatisfied by the Treaty of Sèvres, the new Italian Premier, Sforza, repudiated the Tittoni-Venizelos deal, and as a result, Italian power in the Near East abated.[147] Greece's irredentist competition with Italy in Asia Minor now subsided. The Venizelist government saw the chance to once

[145]For full details of the Tittoni-Venizelos agreement, see United States, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Paris Peace Conference, 1919*, vol. III (Washington D.C.: US Government, 1942), 194.

[146]For the full terms of the Treaty of Sèvres see Allied and Associated Powers (1914-1920), "Treaty of peace with Turkey. Signed at Sèvres, August 10, 1920" (London: H.M. Stationery Off., 1920); Franco Antonicelli, *Trent'anni di storia italiana, 1915-1945* (Torino: Mondadori Editore, 1961), 25.

[147]Count Carlos Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1930), 171-172.

again reach for the *Megali Idea*. Greece possessing Smyrna was the crucial factor that put the country one step closer to Constantinople.

Aside from the forced abdication of Constantine, the leading powers within the Greek government had remained unchanged throughout the First World War. Feeling pressure from Royalist parties, Venizelos promised to hold general elections once a treaty was established with the Ottoman Empire.[148] During Greece's involvement in the First World War, King Alexander remained aloof from Greek politics and posed no threat to Venizelos. However, on 30 September 1920, the King inadvertently became a major factor in the reshaping of Greek politics.

In the early morning of 30 September, King Alexander was walking his beloved wolfhound, Fritz, in the gardens of the Royal Palace. Fritz broke loose from King Alexander and ran into some nearby bushes where a scuffle with a pet Spanish monkey ensued. When Alexander tried to free the dying monkey from the wolfhound's jaws, he was bit in the calf by the monkey's male companion.[149] Three weeks after the incident, Alexander's wound became severely infected and the young King died of blood poisoning. With the death of the King, questions regarding dynastic succession emerged as the leading topic of political debate. Although it was never ratified, the Treaty of Sévres was used, along with Alexander's death, by Venizelos's opposition to signify that the time for general elections had come. In the late summer of 1920 Venizelos agreed to hold the general elections in November.

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[148]Spyridon B. Markezinis, *Politiki Istoria tis Neoteras Ellados*, vol. IV (Athens: Papyros, 1966), 310.

[149]For a full account of the incident see Christos Zalokostas, *Alexandros* (Athens: Alfa, 1952), 188.

In the weeks before the elections, Venizelos corresponded with the British government on how to effectively answer the dynastic question. It was well known that the Royalists wanted Constantine to return from exile and assume the throne once more. In order to prevent this possibility, Venizelos used British advice and offered the crown to Constantine's younger son, Prince Paul.[150] Prince Paul refused the invitation on the grounds that his father was the rightful king, and he remained by his father's side in exile. This rejection placed Venizelos in a tough predicament. He knew that the Royalists were building a strong resistance against him, which would increase their votes in the elections, and if he abolished the current constitutional monarchy and declared a republic, he would lose his closest ally, Britain.[151] The general election was nearing, and as a result, party politics within Greece entered a phase of heightened propaganda.

It was well-known in the international arena that Venizelos was facing tough opposition in Greece from Royalists and a war-weary public. In regards to the growing anti-Venizelist movement in Athens, the British foreign Minister in Athens, Lord Granville, wrote: "I have always felt confident that, provided the decision of the Peace Conference were favourable to Greece, Monsieur Venizelos was safe to secure a majority…at the elections. I confess that during the last few days my confidence has been a good deal shaken."[152] These fears became justifiable as prominent members of Royalist parties joined together to form the United Opposition Party. The United Opposition Party was grounded in the belief that Venizelos was a tyrant who had ignored the voice of the people and wrongfully forced the abdication of Constantine. Moreover,

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[150]*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, vol. XII (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1958), 497.

[151]George Ventiris, *I Ellas tou 1910-1920*, vol. II (Athens: Pyrsos, 1931), 417.

[152]*Documents on British Foreign Policy*, no. 335, 405.

The United Opposition voiced strong anti-British and French rhetoric and called for the dismissal of the Great Power's interventions in Greek affairs.[153] This challenge to foreign dominance in Greek affairs further indicates a desire to assert sovereignty, and some now saw Venizelos as a symbol of capitulation to the Great Powers.

On the eve of the elections, Venizelos's opposition staged rallies in the street of Athens. On 7 November the new figurehead of the anti-Venizelists, former Prime Minister Gounaris, spoke at a rally in Athens. In front of hundreds of spectators, Gounaris gave a vitriolic speech:

> Actually there is no dynastic question. The throne has its lawful occupant. The King of Hellenes is Constantine…The leader of our opponents says: the people in its great majority, does not want King Constantine. We reply: then let the people be asked. He rejects this strangely by saying that the Constitution says nothing about offering such a question to the people. But the constitution also says nothing about doubting the King's rights…These men are simply demanding to establish a doctrine that the results of the elections gives the elected the power to dispose of the crown. This is what they declare they will do. We have a duty to combat with all our force this sad doctrine, for it will make the King a mere servant of the victorious party at the elections.[154]

Gounaris continued to build his support in the hopes that he would regain the office of Prime Minister. At another rally headed by the United Opposition Party, Gounaris promulgated the idea of Venizelos's tyranny: "Three and a half years have passed since I was forcibly removed from you. Throughout the years violence and arbitrary leadership have been rampant. All personal and political liberties have been shamelessly trampled on in a manner unexampled in history…The constitution has been ignored…justice and law have been dissolved."[155] The United Opposition Party created a platform that played into the fears and anger of the people who distrusted Venizelos and now longer cared for

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[153]Calogeropoulos and Stratos, 56.
[154]Markezinis, 39-40.
[155]Markezinis, 36.

the *Megali Idea*. Many were growing tired of war and the involvement of the Great Powers in Greek politics. Many were also now uninterested in the *Megali Idea* and wanted Constantine back on the throne. After all, it was Constantine who had continuously opposed intervention in the war.

Just before the elections the United Opposition Party used the Royalist press to create a smear campaign that demonized Venizelos as a tyrant. The anti-Venizelist press portrayed the Prime Minister as a "compulsive" person who also possessed "satanic qualities." He was shamed as a despot who lustfully defamed opponents.[156] The Press negated all of Venizelos's positive achievements for the country by suggesting that his evil character spilled the blood of innocent Greeks in the name of progress. While Venizelos was characterized as a demonic tyrant, King Constantine was portrayed as the savior of the Greek people.[157] Whether or not the entire Greek public believed the anti-Venizelist press is impossible to discern, but what is evident is that Constantine was heralded as the figurehead of the United Opposition Party and the only person who could save Greece.[158] The United Opposition Party pushed the image of Venizelos as a tyrant who ignored the constitution and allowed Britain and France to control Greek affairs. Just how convincing the United Opposition's platform was would soon be tested.

On 14 November 1920 the general elections were held, and the results were startling. Venizelos was dealt a heavy blow. Although Liberal Party representatives had won minimal seats from the votes within the newly acquired territories, almost none were

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[156]*Kathimerini*, 11 September 1920 (Julian Calendar).

[157]George Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922-1936* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 60.

[158]Mavrogordatos, 60.

won within the borders of Greece that were established before 1913.[159] The election results suggest that while Venizelos was still seen as a liberator by the "reclaimed" Greeks, he had lost favor and popularity within old Greece. A majority of the Greek public had grown tired of war and voted to replace Venizelos. This also suggests that the *Megali Idea* was no longer important to the Greeks who had championed it before and after the Balkan Wars. Adding insult to injury, Gounaris—who was ousted by Venizelos in 1915—once more became Prime Minister in April 1921. The reestablishment of the regime prior to Greek intervention signaled a freezing in Great Power relations and increased the plausibility of Constantine's return. Upon defeat, Venizelos left Athens for France, and Gounaris with his Royalist supporters immediately called for a plebiscite to answer the dynastic question.

Although he was no longer the Greek leader, Venizelos remained loyal to his country and his conception of a Greater Greece involving Smyrna. Venizelos continued talks with Britain and France. When they learned of Constantine's possible return, French officials approached Venizelos for his advice. Venizelos advised the French that "The Treaty of Sévres must be saved at all costs," and if Constantine was to return, then he should be recognized only if he agreed to protect the treaty.[160] Regardless of Venizelos's advice, the French were not keen on the restoration of Constantine. With prompting by the French, the Allied governments made an official statement that the restoration of Constantine "could only be regarded…as a ratification by Greece of hostile acts. This step would create a new and unfavourable situation in the relations between Greece and the Allies." They went on to warn that if Constantine was restored to power,

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[159]For full election results see Llewellyn Smith, 151.
[160]*Documents on British Foreign Policy*, no. 451.

"then the three governments reserve to themselves complete liberty in dealing with the situation thus created."[161] In essence, if the Greeks decided to restore Constantine, then the Allies would withdraw support for the Greek campaign in Asia Minor. In spite of the Allies' warning, a plebiscite was held and with ninety-nine per cent of the vote in his favor, Constantine was restored to power on 19 December 1920.[162]

When Constantine returned the *Megali Idea* faded from existence. The election results meant that the Greek people no longer cared for war, Venizelos, or realizing the *Megali Idea*. Venizelos's defeat dealt a blow to the Greek irredentist vision, but it was Constantine who was its death knell. By the time he was dethroned by the Great Powers, the King had gone from the symbol of the *Megali Idea* to its antithesis. The plebiscite suggested that an overwhelming majority desired Constantine's return; the leader who for three years blocked every possibility for Greece to realize national aspirations. Therefore, it is when Constantine returns that the *Megali Idea* meets its demise. Although the *Megali Idea* was no longer guiding Greek foreign policy and the Greco-Turkish War, by January 1921 Greece was too involved in Asia Minor to end the campaign.

The decision to return Constantine was seen as unfavorable by the Allied Powers, and their support of Greece was withdrawn. Reflecting on the event, Churchill wrote: "The return of Constantine therefore dissolved all Allied loyalties to Greece and cancelled all but legal obligations."[163] Regardless of Allied condemnation, the atmosphere within Greece was far different. In Athens there was an air of excitement.

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[161]*Documents on British Foreign Policy*, no. 457.

[162]John Van der Kiste, *Kings of the Hellenes: The Greek Kings 1863-1974* (Stroud, UK: Sutton Publishing, 1994), 128.

[163]Churchill, 387.

Numerous parades were held in honor of Constantine. One observer noted that in Omonoia Square, "every shop that could produce photographs of the ex-King…did a roaring trade, and in front of practically every shop the pictures of M. Venizelos, which had adorned it for the past week, were replaced by that of Constantine."[164] It was published by the press in London that large masses of Greeks crowded the streets of Athens and shouted: "He has come home!" One soldier exclaimed: "We will die for you, Godfather," as people around him fainted at the sight of the King.[165] Regardless of the Allies' warnings, the people were ecstatic to see the return of Constantine. The celebrations, however, did not last long. The new Greek government had to decide on whether or not to continue the campaign in Asia Minor.

With such a heavy investment in Asia Minor, the Greek government decided to continue the Campaign, regardless of Allied promises to withdraw support. By mid-May 1921 the Greek army in Asia Minor began to lose ground and was wearing thin. Venizelos had remained in contact with his supporters in the Greek government. Fearing an impending disaster, Venizelos wrote to the Greek General, Panagotis Danglis, and stressed: "I maintain that our government has blundered criminally in not accepting Allied intervention…now that the refusal had come from us, the British public will not, under any circumstances, allow the government to assist us."[166] Venizelos was well aware that the Asia Minor Campaign could not succeed without support from the Allies. Venizelos was not the only one who had this fear.

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[164]E. Chivers Davies, "Election Week in Athens," *Balkan Review*, IV, no. 5 (December 1920), 342.

[165]*The Times*, 20 December, 1920; Abbott, 228.

[166]Panagiotis Danglis, *Anamniseis, Egrapha, Allilographia* (Athens, 1965), 396

The staunch Royalist, General Metaxas, warned that the he had no confidence in Greek victory and the government would be misleading the Greek people by continuing the war. Metaxas chastised the Defense Minister, Theotokis:

> Because you are seeking the conquest of Asia Minor, and without preparing through the Hellenization of the country…it is only superficially a question of the Treaty of Sévres. It is really a question of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of a Greek state on Ottoman soil. Even if it were only a question of the Treaty, we are ethnically a minority even in the area around Smyrna. In the interior of Asia Minor our own population is minuscule, and the Ottomans realize what we desire…They have proved that they have, not a religious, but a national feeling. They mean to fight for the freedom…They realize that Asia Minor is their country and that we are invaders.[167]

Metaxas was alluding to the growing Turkish nationalist movement under Mustafa Kemal and the Allied Powers' agendas in Asia Minor. A debate between the general and Gounaris's cabinet ensued. Gounaris asserted that if Greece were to evacuate Asia Minor, then it would lose Smyrna and possibly Thrace as well. Moreover, Gounaris was fearful that defeat in Asia Minor would sway public opinion towards support for the Venizlists who remained in office, creating the collapse of the current government and the return of Venizelos. Metaxas assured Gounaris that if the government was truthful with the Greek people, which was that the country was involved in an impossible war, then no harm would come to the current regime or the crown.[168] Ultimately, Gounaris decided to not heed the advice of Metaxas. During the autumn of 1921 Greek forces marched towards Ankara: the stronghold of the Kemalist forces.

Because Greek success seemed unattainable without Allied support, the advance was viewed as suicide by the Venizelists and the Allied Powers. In October, Venizelos attempted to use what last influence he held in Greek affairs and pleaded to the British for

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[167]Metaxas, vol. III, 83.
[168]Ioannis Passas, *I Agonia enos Ethnous* (Athens, 1925), 67-68.

help. He asked them to inform Gounaris that Constantine must be removed from power on the basis that his return to the throne was unconstitutional.[169] Venizelos did this for two reasons. First, if Constantine was removed, it would give Venizelos the opportunity to return to Athens. Second, with Constantine out of the picture, it meant that Greece could regain the favor and support needed from the Allies. The British government rejected the proposition and Venizelos retired his attempts to influence Greek affairs, for the time being.

The Gounaris government continued the campaign in Asia Minor and the Greek army pushed further into the Ottoman interior. By Early 1922 the Greek army was stretched thin. It found itself ill-prepared for the Kemalist counteroffensives. The Asia Minor Campaign was now becoming synonymous with catastrophe. The demoralized Gounaris government had to devise a unilateral plan to either raise money necessary to continue or end the ill-fated campaign.[170] With public support for Gounaris waning and the Greek coffers empty, the government created a plan to raise money. Unable to procure help from the Allies, the Greek government created the Forced Loan Bill. The Forced Loan Bill called for all currency in circulation to be devalued by half. Half of the currency remained in circulation, whereas the other half became redeemable by the state. The Forced Loan Bill enabled the government to raise 1,500,000 drachma.[171] The loan was received positively by the people, but it was hardly enough to increase Gounaris's popularity.[172] The limited funds raised were barely enough to sustain the Greek army

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[169]Kitromilides, 169.

[170]*Documents on British Foreign Policy*, vol. XVII, no. 536.

[171]For more information on the Forced Loan Bill see Andreas Andreades, *Les Effets économiques et sociaux de la guerre en Grèce* (Paris: The University of France Press, 1928), 59-60.

[172]Llewellyn Smith, 267.

much longer, and the Gounaris cabinet became divided over how the money should be used. While some agreed it should go directly to prolonging the campaign, others thought it would best be utilized by demobilizing.[173] With public disdain for the Gounaris government growing and Greece unable to make the Asia Minor Campaign a successful endeavor, it was becoming apparent that for too long Greece was dependent on the Great Powers, and continuing a solo campaign was proving to be ineffectual.

The Greek government became factionalized by the debacle happening in Asia Minor. As a result, Gounaris was forced to resign in May. Gounaris's Finance Minister, Petros Protopapadakis, quickly moved in to fill the position of Prime Minister. It was well-known that Protopapadakis and Gounais had a close relationship. The Venizelists were quick to suggest that the regime change was not drastic enough, but rather an extension of the Gounaris government. When Protopapadakis became Prime Minister on 9 May he appointed Gounaris as the Justice Minister. The pro-Venizelist newspapers condemned the new government as a "despotic regime," which used tyranny to maintain power. The relationship between Protopapadakis and Gounaris was deemed an "unholy alliance" that was destined for failure.[174] With a new government that mirrored the policies of Gounaris, the Greeks continued the Asia Minor Campaign. Now, however, they set a nearly impossible goal to march to Constantinople.

Marching the Greek army into Constantinople was a calculated move by the government. Constantinople was occupied by Allied forces. Therefore, the announcement of the Greek plan was meant to gain the attention of the Allies. The declaration that the government intended to make Constantinople a Greek zone was not a

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[173]*Documents on British Foreign Policy*, vol. XVII, no. 636.
[174]*Eleftheron Vima*, 29 April 1922 (Julian Calendar).

further attempt to realize the *Megali Idea*, but rather it was meant to incite Allied intervention in the Greek campaign.[175] The reaction form the Allies was not what the Greeks had hoped for. The British warned Greece that any attempt to march an army into Constantinople reflected a neglect of responsibility by the Greek government and a permanent regime in Asia Minor must be settled by a treaty between the Allies and the Ottomans.[176] Allied help never materialized and the Greek government's plan backfired. Now the Allies scrutinized the Asia Minor Campaign, and the Greece appeared doomed for failure.

On 26 August the Kemalist forces attacked the Greek stronghold of Afyonkarahisar, located in the central lands of Asia Minor. A serious crisis unfolded as the Greek army was surprised and sustained substantial losses. Fearful of impending doom, Greek sergeants commanded their soldiers: "sta spitia sas" (let's go home), and so they abandoned their posts and fled.[177] After the disaster at Afyonkarahisar, the Greek army began to retreat to Smyrna. The General in charge of the army, Trikoupis, later reflected on the somber event: "In such a fearful situation with a heavy heart I ordered the destruction of the artillery and machine guns…when I saw the Turkish soldiers were nearing our lines and my men would be slaughtered, I agreed to raise the white flag."[178] Trikoupis and his men became prisoners of war, while the rest of the Greek army continued their retreat towards Smyrna.

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[175]Antonios Frangulis, *A la Gréce, son statut international, son histoire diplomatique*, vol. II (Paris, undated), 388.

[176]Llewellyn Smith, 281.

[177]E. A. Stavridis, *Ta Paraskinaia tou K.K.E* (Athens, 1953), 81-82.

[178]Nikolaos Trikoupis, *Diikisis Megalon Monadon en Polemo, 1918-1922* (Athens, 1935), 368.

By 5 September 1922 the surviving members of the Greek army trickled into Smyrna with hundreds of Ottoman Greek refugees they collected as they marched through the countryside filled with burning villages. The American Consul in Asia Minor, George Horton, was awestruck by the number of soldiers and refugees he saw entering Smyrna, with many carrying the sick on their backs.[179] News of the defeat reached Athens and concern was magnified when the public learned that the last Greek division was arriving at Smyrna.[180] A Greek surrender made international headlines as well, as news that the Turkish National Army was close to entering Smyrna. The Manchester Guardian published a headline story that exclaimed: "Worse things feared in Smyrna," because the Greek army refused a final stand.[181] Bad news had reached Greece and abroad, but the worst was yet to come.

Turkish forces entered the city of Smyrna on 10 September and met no resistance. The Kemalist troops occupied the city for three days when a fire broke out in the Armenian quarter of the city, allegedly started by the Turkish forces. The fire quickly spread throughout the city creating a massive inferno. People fled in horror, many jumping into the sea to avoid the flames. One eyewitness aboard the British vessel, HMS King George V, recounted the situation as he saw it from the harbor:

> It was a terrifying thing to see even from the distance. There was the most awful scream one could ever imagine. I believe many people were shoved into the sea, simply by the crowds trying to get further away from the fire…many did undoubtedly jump into the sea, from sheer panic…I went in with our boats and made for the place where the fire seemed worst. It was certainly a horrible scene; mothers with their babies, the fire going on over their heads, and many of the bundle of clothes also on fire, and the people all screaming.[182]

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[179]Horton, 118.
[180]*Kathimerini*, 27 August 1922 (Julian Calendar).
[181]*Manchester Guardian*, 6 September 1922, 7.
[182]Quoted in Llewellyn Smith, 309-310.

Half of Smyrna burned to ash. It was reported that Kemalist forces allowed the fire to burn for 9 days, with estimates for the total deaths ranging from 10,000 to 100,000.[183] With the destruction of Smyrna, the last vestige of Hellenism in Asia Minor was destroyed. The Greek campaign in Asia Minor was now finished; an absolute defeat. Back in Athens the headlines read: "The Tragedy," and "Smyrna on Fire."[184] The clearing smoke signaled the failings of Greece as the remaining army was evacuated. The Asia Minor Campaign became known in Greek history as the "Asia Minor Catastrophe."

Conclusions

By the time Greece intervened in the First World War, Venizelos had become the symbolic champion of Greek irredentist aspirations, and Constantine, who had obstructed the vision of a Greater Greece, was still in exile. With the *Mgali Idea* as its guiding force, Greece emerged from three consecutive wars victorious and one step closer to achieving its vision. After the armistice on 11 November 1918, the next step was for Venizelos to defend Greek claims at the Paris Peace Conference.

Venizelos used his diplomatic skills to try and persuade the Allied Powers that Greece had justified claims to the Dodecanese, Smyrna, and the Asia Minor littoral. Greece did receive a portion of its territorial requests, but Venizelos fell short of securing any territory in Asia Minor. When Italy created a diplomatic crisis by attempting to undermine British and French influence in the Near East, it created the perfect

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[183] The total number of fatalities is highly disputed among scholars. For statistical information, see Mark Biondich, *The Balkans: Revolution, War, and Political Violence Since 1878* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 92; Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 47-52; Rudolph J. Rummel, *Death by Government* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction publishers, 1994), 224-240.

[184] *Embros*, 2 September 1922 (Julian Calendar).

opportunity for Venizelos to gain control of Smyrna. Greece was once again on the path to realizing the *Megali Idea* due to Italian aggression.

Greece began a campaign in Asia Minor with the hopes of defeating the Ottomans and reclaiming the Greeks and territory in the region. A year after the Greco-Turkish war began, a majority of Greek society—primarily in Old Greece—had grown tired of war and Venizelos's pursuit of the *Megali Idea*. The results of the elections and plebiscite suggest that many no longer cared for the vision of a Greater Greece. Because Constantine became the strongest opponent of the *Megali Idea*, it is when he returns that the irredentist vision ends, not with the destruction of Smyrna. With Constantine in power, his government continued the war for survival, not to achieve any irredentist aspirations.

A war that was begun by Venizelos to redeem the Greeks in the moribund Ottoman Empire turned into a fight for survival with the Royalist government at the helm. The Royalist government abhorred Venizelos so much that it was willing to sacrifice the relationships that he had created with the Allied powers, and the result proved disastrous. The vision of a Greater Greece ended with Constantine's return, and all hopes of its realization laid buried under Smyrna's ashes

EPILOGUE

After the destruction of Smyrna, the Greek public was devastated by the Asia Minor Campaign and its outcome. The Asia Minor Catastrophe resulted in the deaths of many Greek soldiers who had fought in wars for over a decade, and the Smyrna fire killed thousands of innocent Greeks who Greece had hoped to redeem and save from the ongoing persecutions by the Young Turks. With such a catastrophic conclusion to an ill-fated campaign, the Greek public and government demanded answers. It was true that Venizelos had put Greece on the course to a disastrous war, but the Greek people had shown their desire to halt the war and the pursuit of the *Megali Idea* with the November elections, which ended the Venizelist government. However, it was the Royalist government that decided to continue the war with the Ottoman Empire. Because the Royalist government was in charge when Greece faced a humiliating defeat, the Greek people and pro-Venizelists in the government demanded retribution.

By mid-September 1922 all the Greek troops had returned home and the Venizleists were ready to seize the opportunity that the failed campaign created. On 24 September the Greek navy and portions of the army mutinied. Led by two pro-Venizelist colonels, Stylianos Gonatas and Nikolaos Plastiras, a small contingent of Venizelists created the Revolutionary Committee and demanded the abdication of Constantine and requested that the Royalists commanders of the Asia Minor Campaign be put on trial for treason. Constantine's trusted friend and advisor, Metaxas, recalled that, given "the demands of the revolutionaries," he instructed the King to "abdicate quickly to avoid further defamation to his house," especially if the revolutionaries "formed a government

of Venizelists."[185] Just two days after the Revolutionary Committee made its demands, it airdropped pamphlets in the streets of Athens, signed by Gonatas, which demanded that the King abdicate.[186] The revolutionaries offered Constantine freedom to live within or outside of Greece, and given the severity of the situation, Metaxas advised the King to leave Greece and composed a proclamation of abdication for him.[187]

Constantine was stripped of his title by the afternoon of 27 September, and his son George II was crowned the new Greek King. The following day the Royalist leaders who were in charge during the defeat in Asia Minor were arrested and became the most hated men in Greece. The six men were: Protopapadakis, the Prime Minister; Gounaris, the former Prime Minister; Stratos, the Minister of the Interior; Theotokis, the Minister of War; and General Hatzianestis, who commanded the Greek army during the campaign. The Revolutionary Committee also issued a warrant for Prince Andrew's (Constantine's brother) arrest, who was a senior commanding officer during the campaign. Andrew was taken from the Royal residence in Corfu and transported to Athens to await a trial.[188] With a new King on the throne and the leaders of the Asia Minor Campaign arrested, the next step was to find a new Prime Minister.

The British Statesman Edward Lindley asked the Revolutionary Committee who they proposed to fill the vacancy, to which Gonatas made it clear that he "was well satisfied with the current state of affairs and that he considered himself quite fitted to continue to direct the state."[189] This was not considered a reasonable answer by the

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[185]Metaxas, vol. III, entry dated 13 September 1922 (Julian Calendar).

[186]Louis P. Cassimatis, *American Influence in Greece, 1917-1929* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1988), 80.

[187]Metaxas, vol. III, entry dated 14 September 1922 (Julian Calendar).

[188]John Laughland, *A History of Political Trials: From Charles I to Saddam Hussein* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008), 59.

[189]British Foreign Office Papers, 421-303, no. 54, Lindley to Curzon, 1 October 1922.

British government. After much debate, the Revolutionary Committee appointed Sotirios Krokidas as Prime Minister, and with Venizelos was still abroad, he was selected as a diplomatic representative. The committee also signed a republican manifesto, which did not bode well for the new King.[190] With new leadership, the Greek government was ready to initiate trials for the leaders accused of treason.

On 30 October 1922 a two week trial for the accused began. The men were charged with treason for, allegedly, giving up Greek territory to the enemy. As suggested by Michael Llewellyn Smith, these charges were erroneous because the Treaty of Sèvres was never ratified, and, therefore, the territory in Asia Minor was not officially Greek.[191] In order to make a valid claim the Greek government then accused the six of treason because they created the catastrophe by failing to heed the warnings of the Allies to not reinstate Constantine. The accused never stood a chance. On 28 November the six men were convicted of treason and sentenced to death. The British government condemned the sentencing and warned that a royal, Prince Andrew, could not be executed. Instead, Prince Andrew was banished from Greece. He fled into exile in France with his wife and newborn, Prince Philip (who eventually married Queen Elizabeth II).[192] The other five men were not afforded the same fate.

On the same day that the verdict was read—without the convicted present—the five men were told to say their final goodbyes to their families. At 11:00 the men were led into a field where they were met by a firing squad. Priests read the men their last rights and then they were lined up in front of their pre-dug graves. All five men refused

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[190]Llewellyn Smith, 314-315.
[191]Llewellyn Smith, 323.
[192]*The Times* (London), 5 December 1922, 2.

blindfolds and gazed at their executioners as the final shots were fired.[193] This event is known in Greek history as The Trial of the Six. Whether or not the men were used as scapegoats to appease the public, or if the public even agreed with the actions of the Revolutionary government has become the topic of much historical debate in the Greek world, but what is certain is that the event was condemned by the rest of the world. The *New York Times* reported the international outrage. The British Flag was raised on the island of Corfu to express condemnation over the event, and the French government protested the Greek government's attempt to execute Prince Andrew.[194] The Greek government used the Trial of the Six to bring a sense of closure to the disastrous Asia Minor Campaign. However, on an international scale the Greco-Turkish War had not officially concluded and the unratified Treaty of Sévres meant that the World Powers needed to diplomatically end the ongoing tensions in the Near East.

On 24 July 1923 the Allied Powers and the new Turkish state signed the Treaty of Lausanne. This meant the official end to the conflicts that began with the First World War. The treaty officially recognized the Kemalist government of Turkey and stipulated the new Turkish state's boundaries. The treaty was also necessary to end the ongoing ethnic conflicts in Turkey and Greece's claims to territory in Asia Minor.[195] One of the biggest outcomes mandated by the treaty was a population exchange on a scale never before seen internationally.

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[193]For a full account of the executions see A. F. Frangulis, *La Grèce et la crise mondiale*, vol. II (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1926), 565-566.

[194]*The New York Times*, 3 December 1922, 4.

[195]All articles of the Treaty of Lausanne can be found in *The Treaties of Peace, 1919-1923*, vol. II (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1924), 959-1022.

To end ongoing ethnic conflicts, a population exchange between Greece and Turkey was of the most importance. This exchange involved almost 2 million people (1.5 million Greeks living in Asia Minor and 500,000 Muslims living in Greece). Although it was rooted in the intent to end conflict and ethnic cleansing, the population exchange had profound consequences for both countries. For Greece, the exchange created a refugee crisis and a subsequent strain on an already debilitated Greek economy. For the new Turkish state, it created an economic crisis as well because well-educated and wealthy Asiatic Greeks were plucked from prosperous cities they historically created, leaving ghost towns and a crumbling infrastructure.[196] One thing was certain: Greece achieved its goal of redeeming its Greeks as envisioned in the *Megali Idea*. With consecutive wars that began in 1897, Greece finally received its unredeemed, but it was not in the manner originally hoped for. There was no Byzantine revival, and now a new Greek population, many of whom did not speak a dialect of Greek understood by the masses, had left one country where they were persecuted to make a new life in another where they faced a society that did not welcome them with open arms.

[196]For more information on the economic and social consequences of the population exchange see Hirschon.

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