

nent Russian linguist, the Mariupol Greeks numbered about 97,000 of whom 82,000 were Greek speakers.⁷⁸ The Soviet regime, contrary to the Russification policy of the late tsarist period, encouraged to a great extent the Hellenization of the Greek colonists in Mariupol. At least this was the case until the mid 1930s. Schools were founded, classed in demotic Greek was introduced, Greek newspapers and books were published.⁷⁹ Of course the tendency was to educate a peasant population in the communist dogma, but in a way this policy on the whole was beneficial to the majority of the Mariupol Greeks. Within the boundaries of the Soviet Union they did retain their singularity as a separate group through the preservation of the language. Today their language and culture remain to be studied. All the evidence suggests that we have to deal with a very interesting case indeed.

⁷⁸M. V. Sergievskii, "Mariupol'skie grecheskie govory," *Izvestiia AN SSSR, Otdelenie obshchetvennykh nauk* (Moscow 1934) 533 ff.

⁷⁹A. Karpozilos, "Οἱ Ἕλληνες τῆς Μαριανουπόλεως," pp. 105-08; see also the useful article by the same author "Ῥωσο-Ποντιακά," *Ἀρχεῖον Πόντου*, 38 (1983).

The Allied Opponent: France Versus Greece in Asia Minor

VICTORIA SOLOMONIDIS

DURING THE COURSE OF THE GREAT WAR France proved to be the strongest exponent of Greek participation in the Entente. Political expediency of the day dictated the unconditional backing of Venizelos and his liberal party to the extent of creating a national schism and an undeclared civil war in Greece. With the creation of the Venizelist provisional government in Thessaloniki, the French legitimized the presence of their military forces on the Macedonian front and participated in the Allied breakthrough which resulted in the capitulation of Bulgaria and Austria — Hungary in September 1918. With the promise of assistance in the vindication of Greek claims in Asia Minor at the forthcoming Peace Conference, French President Clemenceau convinced Venizelos to contribute Greek forces for the ill-fated Ukraine expedition of December 1918, resulting not only in the compromise of Greek interests but, what was more, in the uprooting of the long-established Greek communities of the Black Sea.

Despite French promises to assist with the realization of the *Megali Idea* once the Great War was at an end, French opposition to nearly all the Greek claims from the time of September 1922, seemed only second to that of the Turkish nationalists. Although France — together with Italy, the U. S. and Great Britain — had formally requested Greece to land troops at Smyrna to reestablish law and order, a consistently unfriendly policy was implemented not only by the Quai d'Orsay but also by the press, the military and the financiers. The pressure exercised by the latter in conjunction with the unfavorable military situation in Turkey after the conclusion of the Mudros Armistice, seemed to constitute the dominant factors in determining the policy of the successive French governments with regard to Greece's presence in Asia Minor.

Indicatively, the French envoy to Constantinople in October 1919 G. Cruppi, reported that French interests required that France should come to an agreement with the Turkish nationalists as soon as possible. Within two months, the French High Commissioner in Syria Georges Picot was already negotiating with Mustafa Kemal with regard to the French evacuation of Cilicia in return for economic concessions.

The divergence of attitudes and policies adopted by the Allies became apparent in Turkey soon after the arrival of the three Allied High Commissioners in Constantinople in November 1918, when they made clear to all concerned that their mission simply entailed the observation of the implementation of the armistice terms. However, as the Turks started to rearm themselves, it soon became evident that even this task would prove difficult to attain under the prevailing circumstances. The lack of unity among the High Commissioners dictated their alleged "non interference in internal Turkish affairs" which, in the past, had been a traditional area of western European intervention. As each of them strove to pursue strictly the interests of his country alone, old diplomatic methods that had failed in the past were followed and strong efforts were made to secure Turkish favors through undermining and antagonising each other. None of this was lost in Turkish quarters and the mutual mistrust cultivated among the Allies was fomented to the Porte's advantage. After the short interval of the Great War, the Anglo-French rivalry which historians trace back to the sixteenth century seemed to be revived with Greece as its first victim.¹

Before the official launching of the nationalist movement, it was well-known among the Allied circles in the Ottoman capital that the nationalist point of concentration was Panderma. Despite the proximity of this city to Constantinople, the possibility of sending forces to intimidate the rebels was not even considered either by the High Commissioners or by the Commander in Chief of the Allied forces in Asia Minor, Admiral Calthorpe.² Despite the latter's admittance of the intractability of the situation mainly because of Italian assistance to Turkey, he did not seem prepared to take any measures to remedy the Greek predicament.³

¹For sources used in the introductory paragraphs, of this article, V. Solomonidis, "Special Report: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922: A Bibliography," *Modern Greek Society: A Social Science Newsletter* vol. 11, 1 (December 1983). On the subject of Anglo-French antagonism in the Near East, see A. Toynbee, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey* (London, 1922), p. 44. H. Cumming, *Franco-British Rivalry in the Post-War Near East* (Oxford, 1938). Also, C. Andrew, and A. S. Kanya-Forstner A.S. *France-Overseas* (London, 1981).

²Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive, Athens [MOFA] File *Entypa*, 1919-1920 [Printed Material 1919-1920] telegram number [tel. no.] 5590/22.6.19, Repoulis to Venizelos.

³MOFA *Entypa* . . . tel. no. 1024/55/23.6.19, Greek High Commissioner at Constantinople Kanellopoulos to MOFA, reporting his meeting with Admiral Calthorpe.

The allied stance was rightfully interpreted in Constantinople as a weakness with the result that the Turks were emboldened in the organisation of the nationalist movement. However much prompted by the Greek landing at Smyrna in May 1919, this movement was sponsored and fostered at its initial stages by the Italian High Commissioner in Constantinople, who, on the eve of the Greek landing in Smyrna in May 1919, assured his government that it would be easy to organize nationalist armed resistance against the Greeks in the interior of Anatolia.⁴ Indeed, Count Sforza seems to have become the confidant of the Turkish nationalists from the outset. The Italian High Commissioner extended special protection to Mustafa Kemal and there is considerable evidence to show that he not only knew of his plan to start an insurgent movement in Anatolia but actually encouraged him, promising Italian sympathy and support.⁵

The resistance met by the Greek troops during their advance in May-June 1919, showed clearly that Turkey would not accept Greek occupation passively. As the military situation grew worse, the Greek High Commissioner in Constantinople was instructed to request the mediation of the Allied Commander in Chief in Constantinople so that measures would be taken by the Ottoman authorities to restrain nationalist resistance. This, though, was impossible as, in Calthorpe's words, most members of the Turkish government viewed the nationalist movement favorably.⁶

At the same time, the Porte was trying to present the resistance movement as a spontaneous reaction of the Turkish population against the Greek occupation, despite strong evidence suggesting that the nucleae of the resistance movement were outside the Greek zone of occupation, mainly in Panderma and Denizli, and that arms and ammunition were distributed to the Turkish population from the Ottoman state depots while a substantial number of civil servants actively participated in the organisation of resistance bands under the leadership of the Vali of Brusa.⁷ There was little doubt that Turkey was in breach of the armistice terms but, Calthorpe added, it would be very difficult to exercise any pressure on the Porte because of lack of consent among the High Commissioners.⁸ As the situation deteriorated, the Commander

⁴Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive, Rome [ASMAE] Turchia, Pacco 1646/7746 (1919), tel. no. 1281/14.5.19. Sforza to the Italian Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference [DPCI].

⁵Count Sforza, *Les Bâtisseurs de l'Europe Moderne* (Paris, 1931), p. 347ff and 358n. A. A. Pallis, *Greece's Anatolian Venture and After* (London, 1937), p. 134.

⁶MOFA *Entypa* . . . tel. no. 4203/25.6.19, Kanellopoulos to Venizelos.

⁷MOFA *Entypa* . . . tel. no. 1024/55/23.6.19, Kanellopoulos to Venizelos.

⁸MOFA *Entypa* . . . tel. no. 4203/25.6.19, Kanellopoulos to Venizelos.

in Chief of the Allied forces was again requested to mediate with the Porte because Athens was convinced that excuses furnished by the Turkish government regarding its inability to suppress the nationalist movement were mainly instigated by "the well known foreign propaganda," aiming at the Greek evacuation of Manissa, Kassaba and Aidin which "it was obvious that the Italians wanted to occupy."⁹

The image of Allied impotence was completed by the unnecessarily protracted armistice period with the result that the Turks soon forgot their defeat in the War and were encouraged to believe that they would go unpunished.¹⁰ The only points over which the Allied High Commissioners seemed to agree were that the partition of the Ottoman Empire should be avoided and that the terms of the treaty under negotiation should not be harsh on Turkey.¹¹ Two years later, Toynbee commented that "... the armistice line traced in the summer of 1919 is chiefly interesting for the light it throws on the Supreme Council's muddle-headedness. Were the Greek allies and the Turks recalcitrant defeated enemies or were they both naughty boys? The Supreme Council could never make up their minds. Logically either they themselves had done wrong in sending Greeks to Smyrna or else the nationalists deserved no mercy. They would not admit the former alternative but had not the nerve to act ruthlessly up to the latter."¹²

The consequences of this discord were not only apparent on the military front. The overall administrative task of the High Commission in Smyrna was impeded by the never-ending complaints of the local Allied representatives who insisted in the careful observation of the system of capitulations by the Greek authorities.¹³ The Greek High Commissioner in Smyrna A. Stergiadis was convinced that this stance

⁹Venizelos Archive, Benaki Museum, Athens [AV] File 21 tel. no. 1735/4410/2.7.19, Kanellopoulos to Venizelos.

¹⁰MOFA File A/5, 6 1919 tel. no. 5119/27.8.19, Kanellopoulos to MOFA. MOFA File A/VIII, 1919 Γαλλικαὶ Ἐνέργειαι κατὰ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Κατοχῆς [French Activities Against the Greek Occupation] tel. no. 4672/1928/22.9.19 and 4780/1959/25.9.19, General Nider to Greek High Commissioner in Smyrna A. Stergiadis.

¹¹MOFA File A/5/VI, 1919 tel. no. 7128/1.9.19, Kanellopoulos to MOFA and AV File 26, tel. no. 173/2689/10.3.20, the Allied High Commissioners to the Supreme Council of the Paris Peace Conference.

¹²Toynbee, *ἡεστηον*: θεστιονσ, p. 232.

¹³MOFA Gounaris Archive [GA], Ἀντίγραφα, κατηγορίαι ἐναντίον τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Κατοχῆς Συμῶνης κλπ., [Copies, Criticisms and Complaints against the Greek Occupation of Smyrna] tel. no. 825/16.7.20. Stergiadis to Venizelos. On the system of capitulations see Ch. Issawi, *The Economic History of Turkey, 1800-1914* (Chicago, 1980). B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford, 1961). D. Blaisdell, *European Financial Control in the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 1929). M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, (London, 1966), p. xvii.

aimed at reducing the authority of the Greek High Commission and, in the end, its substitution by a provisional interallied administration.¹⁴ Although such a plan would have been rather impractical to implement, issues such as that of press censorship were directly affected by the disputes among the Allies and their representatives. By November 1919, the situation had become so grave that Venizelos protested to French President Clémenceau and announced that a Greek board of censors would be instituted so that if interallied censorship chose to prohibit the publication of Philhellenic articles, the Greek censors would be able in turn to prohibit anti-Greek ones.¹⁵ However the fundamental problems facing the Greek presence in Smyrna could not be solved by the institution of Greek bodies to counteract the activities of their interallied counterparts.

Meanwhile, the intensive economic activities undertaken individually by the Allies in Turkey immediately after the armistice, were clearly intended to support the large scale business ventures under consideration. The way these activities were conducted reflected the ambition of each allied country to predominate through fighting a secret war with the aim to isolate its allies.¹⁶ Although the clash of interests among the Allies was no secret to the Greek government, its possible consequences did not seem to be fully appreciated. It is characteristic that, in a letter to Stergiadis in November 1919, Venizelos commented that the allied reservations regarding the final settlement of the Smyrna question stemmed from disagreements among the Allies which had no connection with Greece's ambitions in Asia Minor.¹⁷

The importance attached by the French to the preservation of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire was not difficult to interpret, if the vast French capital invested in Asia Minor and other territories under Ottoman rule was borne in mind. Railway installations only represented a capital of 373,545,000 francs. Major enterprises, such as the Société des Quais in Constantinople and Smyrna, totalled 96,050,000 francs while the French capital invested in the Ottoman Bank amounted to 62,050,000 and another 44,227,500 francs were invested in mining concerns. French investment also represented one third of the tobacco monopoly, the Régie des Tabacs, to a sum of 13,330,000 bringing the

¹⁴AV File 25 tel. no. 966/22.11.19, Stergiadis to Venizelos.

¹⁵MOFA Constantinople High Commission Archive [CHC] File E/1, 1919 tel. n. n./4.11.19, Venizelos to Clémenceau. On press censorship and related problems see V. Solomonidis, *Greece in Asia Minor: the Greek Administration of the Vilayet of Aidin, 1919-1922*. PhD Thesis, University of London 1984.

¹⁶AV File 18 tel. no. 1333/-/25.5.19, Diomidis to Venizelos.

¹⁷AV File 24 tel. no. 2457/173/15.11.19, Venizelos to Stergiadis.

total of French capital invested in Turkey to some 590,102,300 francs. This amount did not include the capital engaged in other enterprises such as the administration of the lighthouses and the Société Générale d'Enterprises, nor the funds invested in other concerns operating within the Empire such as the Crédit Lyonnais, the Bank of Athens, the Bank of Salonica, the Smyrna Water Company and the Smyrna Train Company. The list of French business concerns in Turkey was quite long and included Orient Carpets, Constantinople Tramways Company, Beyrout Water Company, Scutari Gaz Company, Constantinople Gaz etc. According to Greek estimates, together with the 2 billion francs' French participation to the Ottoman debt, the grand total of French capital engaged or invested in the Ottoman Empire came to approximately 3 billion francs.¹⁸ At the same time, Ottoman debt bondholders in France held sixty per cent of the bonds compared to a mere eleven per cent in the hands of British owners, and constituted a vociferous and powerful lobby, so much so that the French government would agree to nothing that might displease them.¹⁹

Early in the course of the Greek occupation, the strong anti-Greek feelings prevailing in the French High Commission at Constantinople were reported by the French journalist M. Paillares who, during his visit to the Ottoman capital, noted that the High Commissioner and his staff were actually working against Greece with regard to Smyrna and Thrace. They seemed to be of significant assistance to the pro-Turkish propaganda conducted by the French and Levantine financial circles both in Paris and Constantinople with the aim of preserving and safeguarding their highly important interests.²⁰ These reports were confirmed by information received at the Greek High Commission in September 1919 through intelligence channels, suggesting that French circles in Turkey were seeking to come to an understanding with the nationalists. French and nationalist goals coincided to a large extent

¹⁸AV File 21 tel. no. 1831/4559/10.7.19, Kanellopoulos to Politis. On the subject of French financial and economic interests in the Ottoman Empire, see J. Thobie, *Interests et imperialism français dans l'empire Ottoman, 1859-1914* (Paris, 1977). Also D. Blaisdell, *European Financial Control in the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 1929). N. Sousa, *The Capitulatory Regime of Turkey, its History. Origin and Nature* (Baltimore, 1933).

¹⁹For a detailed discussion of the history of the Ottoman debt, D. C. Blaisdell, *European Financial Control in the Ottoman Empire*. New York, 1929.

²⁰MOFA File A/5/VI, 1919 tel. no. 3276/26.8.19, Military Intelligence Bureau in Constantinople to Ministry of Defence. Paillares summarized the implications of Allied discord with the following words: "And voices whispered to him [Kemal] in the shadows: don't surrender your arms, don't be discouraged whatever may come, whatever thundery storms you can hear from the west. You have in the enemy camp accomplices who will work hard to ensure your glory and your triumph." M. Paillares, *Le Kemalisme devant les allies*, p. 149.

as both parties wanted to preserve the integrity of Turkey and, as a result, considered the immediate evacuation of Asia Minor by Greece an issue of top priority.²¹

It seems that it did not take long to achieve this understanding because soon it was not only the semi-official French government line which sought to placate the Turks and created problems for the Greek occupation. A substantial number of employees attached to major French concerns were known in Smyrna for their not so much pro-Turkish as anti-Greek feelings which they went at great pains to publicize and cast doubts in the minds of the local population as to the permanence of the Greek occupation.²² The situation was made worse by the stance of most of the French representatives of the Constantinople High Commission in the interior of Asia Minor who were, to their most part, in open collaboration with the nationalist groups active in their areas of jurisdiction. As an illustration, Colonel Hervé, French Representative in Manissa, actively helped the nationalists to travel and transport ammunition within the Greek zone, without the Greek gendarmerie being allowed to examine their documents or luggage. The Algerian soldiers under his command prohibited the entrance of Greek soldiers and officers in the train station while Turks suspected of nationalist affiliation were given special permits to enter at departure and arrival times.²³ Colonel Hervé's attitude was compatible with that of the French Consul in Smyrna who made strong efforts to stop the return of the 1914-1918 Ottoman Greek refugees to their homes, although the return of deported Christians from the French zone in Syria and Cilicia was permitted. As a result of this policy, the Turks were encouraged to defy martial law and to resist the orders of the Greek authorities.²⁴

In view of the strong evidence in the hands of the Greeks regarding Franco-nationalist cooperation, an official complaint was launched with President Millerand who had in the meantime succeeded Clémenceau. A multitude of specific incidents that took place between December 1919 and February 1920 was listed, mainly with regard to the transportation of war material to be used against the Greek army. The French President "expressed his surprise" at the incidents and promised to issue the relevant orders immediately.²⁵ It seems, however, that these

²¹MOFA File A/5/VI, 1919, tel. no. 7128/1.9.19, Kanellopoulos to MOFA.

²²General State Archives, Athens [GAK], Smyrna High Commission Archive [SHC] Files 11-14, tel. no. 1658/20.8.19, Smyrna Military Command to First Army Corps.

²³GAK SHC, Files 11-14, doc. no. 100/7.11.19, Smyrna High Commission Representative at Manissa to High Commission.

²⁴G. Gantherot, *La France en Syrie et en Cilicie*, p. 192.

²⁵GAK SHC File 3, Note 430/4.2.20, Romanos to Millerand and tel. no. 174bis/5.2.20, Romanos to MOFA.

orders, if they were ever issued, did not have any effect and were disregarded by the French representatives in Asia Minor because reports continued to provide evidence that not only unprecedented leniency was shown towards the nationalists but also that a number of French railway employees were engaged in espionage against the Greek army.²⁶ This should not have come as a surprise to the Greek government who had been informed by Venizelos that "the attitude developed by the French government becomes more disquieting daily because the French President is under the influence of the French financial circles, whose propaganda activities soon convinced him that the momentum achieved by the nationalist movement necessitated the reconsideration of the peace terms so far decided upon."²⁷ In fact, long before the signature of the peace treaty, President Millerand had spelled out to Venizelos that his country was not willing to go to war with Turkey in order to impose and that Greece would have to do it on her own if she insisted on such "harsh terms." In his eagerness to enlist if not French support at least French neutrality, Venizelos replied that it had never crossed his mind to request French assistance as Greece was capable not only to implement her vindications in Asia Minor but also to play a major role in the enforcement of the treaty in Turkey as a whole.²⁸

In the meantime, M. Kemal had arrived in Ankara in December 1919 and, by January 1920, the nationalist movement had intensified and full mobilisation was ordered.²⁹ The Greek authorities believed that the Porte was acting in full cooperation with Kemal and provided him with material and personnel. On its side, the Turkish government denied that it had any connection with the nationalist movement but, at the same time, it chose to appoint and insisted on the posting of a new Vali for Smyrna well known for his involvement with the nationalists.³⁰

In August 1920, the Treaty of Sévres was signed by the Turks of Constantinople but disowned by the Turks of Ankara. The Allies had concluded peace with the Turks of Constantinople and let Venizelos and Greece deal with Ankara. Article Thirty Six of the Treaty of Sévres

²⁶GAK SHC File 37, doc. no. 616/27.5.20, Smyrna Police Prefecture to High Commission and doc. n.n./25.5.20, Military Intelligence Bureau to High Commission.

²⁷MOFA File N/6 tel. no. 11686/26.3.20, Venizelos to MOFA.

²⁸MOFA GA Copies. . . tel. n. 11433/25.2.20, Venizelos to MOFA.

²⁹MOFA File A/5/VI, 1920, tel. no. 5795/19.12.19, Katakis to Ministry of Defence and tel. no. 1160/27.1.20, Stergiadis to MOFA. On the formation and development of the Turkish nationalist movement, see i.a. D. Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism, 1876-1908* (London, 1977). Adkisson, *Great Britain and the Kemalist Movement for Turkish Independence* (Michigan, 1958). S. Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton, 1962).

³⁰MOFA File N/6 tel. no. 11242/5.1.20, Kanellopoulos to Venizelos.

stipulated that in case Turkey refused to comply with its terms, Greece would be allowed to occupy Constantinople. However, the term "Turkey," signified for the allies the state of Constantinople which had signed the Treaty and had not put up resistance against its implementation.³¹ On the other hand, it was the Turks of Constantinople who had sided with the Germans in the War and whom the Treaty of Sévres set out to punish as enemies of the Entente. Therefore, one could argue that there could be no legitimate objection to one of the Allies promoting relations with the nationalist camp, which, in any case, aimed at doing away with Constantinople and the Sultan. Clearly, there seemed to be no side of the argument to be won by Greece.

Venizelos' certainty that Greece alone would be able to enforce the Treaty on Turkey did not seem to be shared in French quarters, especially after his loss of the elections in November 1920. On 12 December 1920, the British Ambassador at Paris informed London that, in view of their difficulties in Syria and Cilicia, the French government were entirely opposed to the ratification of the Treaty of Sévres and were advocating an agreement with the Nationalists on the basis of the restoration of the vilayet of Smyrna to Turkish sovereignty.³² True to their word, the French held secret talks with the nationalist delegation during the London Conference of February-March 1921 and the Italians followed suit. The Franco-Turkish armistice was concluded on 10 March 1921 and provided for the military evacuation of Cilicia in return for economic concessions. Though the fruits of these talks were later repudiated by the Ankara Grand National Assembly, the fact remained that the all-important Allied unity had become a farce.³³ Indeed, the return of Constantine to the Greek throne a few months earlier had helped bring to light the divergence existing between the French and British policies especially with regard to the Near and Middle East.³⁴

The return of king Constantine to Greece as a result of the December 1920 referendum, served as a pretext and not a motive for the official reversal of French policy. "France would not have reverted to the Lloyd

³¹I. Metaxas, *Ἡ Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἐθνικοῦ Διχασμοῦ καὶ τῆς Μικρασιατικῆς Καταστροφῆς* [The History of the National Schism and the Asia Minor Disaster] (Athens, 1936).

³²Documents of British Foreign Policy, [DBFP] First Series, vol. 13, no. 194, 12.12.20.

³³Frangoulis, A. F. *LA Grèce son statut international, son histoire diplomatique*, (2 vols., Paris, 1934). 2, pp. 205-07. For a detailed treatment of the nationalist participation at the London Conference and the initial refusal of the Grand Italy and France see Y. Mourellos, "Ἡ Γαλλοτουρκικὴ προσέγγιση τοῦ 1921" [The Franco-Turkish rapprochement of 1921] in *Δελτίον Κέντρου Μικρασιατικῶν Σπουδῶν* [Centre for Asia Minor Studies Bulletin], 4 (1983) p. 211ff.

³⁴Toynbee, *Western Question*, p. 39.

George policy to which she had been committed by Clémenceau even if Constantine and all his supporters had been turned out and Venizelos set up again. . . The change of the government in Greece was a welcome screen for the somewhat risqué metamorphosis in which French policy was already engaged. . . The French had been looking out for a grievance against Greece and they had found it."³⁵ Clearly, France could not be expected to work for the success of the Greek venture in Asia Minor both because she had not originated the idea and because the whole plan was originally conceived so as to saddle Greece with the military effort and to limit the Allies' liabilities to naval and diplomatic contributions. Therefore, when nationalist forces started attacking French positions in Cilicia, it became imperative for France to escape from her unwanted military burden in Asia Minor.³⁶

In the early summer of 1921, Curzon's attempts at mediation between Turks and Greeks were largely backed by a temporary restoration of harmony in Anglo-French relations. However, by the beginning of autumn, Henri Franklin Bouillon, the French emissary to Ankara, had concluded an agreement with the nationalists, supposedly only with regard to matters pertaining to the evacuation of Cilicia, the exchange of prisoners and the protection of minorities in the area. In reality, through this agreement not only did the Grand National Assembly declare its willingness to grand concessions to the French for the iron, chrome and silver mines in the Harchite Valley but also announced its readiness to consider with "the utmost good will" any other requests for concessions for mines, railways ports or rivers which might be put before them by French groups.³⁷ Indeed, this was in complete accordance with French intentions for which the British had been forewarned in June 1921: "Mr. Briand told me [Curzon] that with regard to finance, in which French interests were paramount, he would be willing to seek a method of securing essential control that would not offend nationalist susceptibilities."³⁸

The Franklin Bouillon agreement was another blow in the face of Anglo-French relations. The British were infuriated not only because

³⁵Ibid., p. 89.

³⁶Ibid., p. 87.

³⁷The Agreement concluded between Henri Franklin Bouillon and Ankara on 20 October 1921, was later published by the British as a white paper in CmD 1556/1921, Turkey no. 2. It is also published in Frangoulis, *La Grece*, 2, pp. 294-7 and in DBFP, 17. No. 502, with the comments of the Foreign Office as to "what must be totally rejected and what can be brought into harmony with any ultimate Allied and Turkish agreement or treaty."

³⁸Foreign Office Archives, Public Record Office, London [FD] E 11096/143/44, 7.10.21. Memorandum by Curzon.

the French had recognised indirectly the Ankara National Assembly as the official Turkish government and had prejudiced a common Allied policy in the Near East, but mainly because the agreement was in total conflict with the Tripartite Agreement of August 1920 which had been signed by the Allies alongside the Treaty of Sévres in order to determine their respective financial interests in the Near East. British circles were quick to criticize the Franco-Kemalist agreement on a number of points. First, it was pointed out, the agreement was tantamount to the recognition of the Grand National Assembly as the legitimate Turkish government. Also, this separate action encouraged Ankara and was prejudicial to mediation while, at the same time, it made it impossible for France to participate in energetic measures against the nationalists if the need arose. In Curzon's words, the agreement was also criticized for creating "the suspicion that one of our Allies had taken independent action or sought to secure special advantages behind the backs — and, as it would appear in some cases, to the distinct detriment — of others."³⁹ However, as the French maintained that their evacuation of Cilicia was a necessity to which alliances had to be sacrificed, the only resource left open to Curzon was to protest and an acrimonious correspondence followed that dragged on well into 1922 without any concrete results.⁴⁰ American Ambassador Morgenthau later commented on the agreement: "[it was] dictated by the greed of the French capitalists seeking concessions from the Turks for railways and commercial privileges. . . In exchange, the French shamefully deserted their support of the Greeks, whom in 1919 they had invited to take over the military occupation of Asia Minor. Not only they withdrew moral support and transferred friendship to Turkey but they abandoned great quantities of French ammunition in Asia Minor practically making a present to the Turks with which to destroy their former Allies, the Greeks. . . The division between the Allies was thus made evident and gave great encouragement to the Turks."⁴¹

True enough, British complaints did not even succeed in reversing the French decision to leave behind in Cilicia military equipment sufficient for two divisions for the nationalists to help themselves, and, to Greek requests for intervention, Curzon replied that the British government could not intervene in "the alleged" handing over of war material

³⁹FO E 12164/1/44, 3.11.21, Curzon to Lord Hardings in Paris. Also see DBFP, 17, nos. 434, 440, 497.

⁴⁰DBFP, 17. See mainly nos. 402, 445, 468, 470-1, 484, 490, 502.

⁴¹P. Morgenthau *I was Sent to Athens*. New York, 1929, pp. 30-3.

in Cilicia to the Nationalists.⁴² What was more, British GHQ in Constantinople had long since informed London of a leakage from arm stores under French control to the nationalists with whom, the same source indicated, the French were negotiating the direct supply of ammunition.⁴³ In the meantime, Lloyd George had made clear in the House of Commons that Britain would be "absolutely neutral" in the conflict between Greece and Turkey and that it was necessary to leave those two powers "to fight it out."⁴⁴ This policy of neutrality mainly stemmed from the belief that it would probably be impossible for Britain alone to help Greece defeat the nationalists and hold Smyrna "in the face of a benevolent French attitude towards the Kemalists, quite apart from the outweighing disadvantages of risking a split in the Entente."⁴⁵

"It may I think be taken as axiomatic," Curzon wrote, "that the Kemalists will never make a peace with Greece on less favourable terms than these, unless the Allies are prepared to unite in support for Greece and in hostility to Turkey (by which I mean the formal supply of arms and financial assistance to Greece and the blockade of the Mediterranean and Black Sea Kemalist ports at the least.) But it seems equally axiomatic that France, with King Constantine on the throne, anxious to recuperate herself economically in Turkey and probably committing herself to some support of Turkish aspirations in her negotiations in Angora, will not agree to support Greece."⁴⁶ True enough, a little after the conclusion of the Franklin Bouillon agreement, a rumour persisted that the Quai d'Orsay were advising Angora not to agree to any suggestions of negotiation until Greece found herself in greater difficulties. The French seemed to have made clear to the Nationalists that at that stage no Greek request for Allied mediation would be granted and seemed to go out of their way to convince Ankara to avoid seeking mediation herself as the weariness of the Greek army would finally compel Greece to accept terms far more favourable to Turkey than it would accept at this juncture.⁴⁷ And the *Times* commented:

The policy of backing the protagonists in the present Eastern War as if they were race horses, is a policy of which each of the Entente

⁴²DBFP, 17, no. 388.

⁴³FO E 11096/143/44, 7.10.21, Memorandum by Curzon.

⁴⁴See Parliamentary Question, 15.8.21 in 146 H.C. Deb. 5 s., col. 938. Also 146 H.C. Deb. 5 s., cols. 1233-6.

⁴⁵FO E 11096/143/44, 7.10.21, Memorandum by Curzon.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Toynbee, *Western Question*, p. 39.

powers in turn has been guilty, and must be abandoned if peace is ever to be restored in the Levant."⁴⁸

The Franklin Bouillon agreement was soon followed by French evacuation of Cilicia. Ironically, the proclamation issued in this respect stated that "France respecting the majority right, had decided on her own accord to return Cilicia to Turkish rule and promised freedom and justice to all inhabitants."⁴⁹ According to Greek intelligence, out of 125,000 Armenians and 28,000 Greeks residing in Cilicia before the French occupation, only 35,000 Armenians remained and were ready to emigrate in view of the French evacuation. However, the French not only allowed them to leave for Syria where the refugees were reluctant to go because they feared that the French would soon retreat from there as well. Their fear for the fate awaiting them should they remain under Turkish rule was justified by the extermination of 25,000 Armenians in Marash. Hadjin and elsewhere during the course of the French occupation.⁵⁰ The full story of what the Christian population suffered as a result of the withdrawal of the French troops was never known in the West because of the suppression of newspaper reports.⁵¹ As Toynbee commented, this French attempt to play off the Armenians against the Turks in Cilicia was of a piece with the British statemanship that sent the Greeks to Smyrna.⁵²

Soon, France openly assumed the sponsorship of the nationalists, together with the attitude that while the Greeks were expected to accept allied proposals, the Turks should be free to reject them with impunity. In line with this policy, the French peace proposals submitted at the end of 1921 were considered unacceptable by the British on account of their being "a statement of extreme Turkish claims."⁵³ Although Britain "deplored" the French support for the Turks in their demands for Greek evacuation of Anatolia and the failure of Paris to put forward concrete proposals as to the steps to be taken to force the nationalists into an agreement, the British government was not prepared to go as far as breaking up the Entente, despite clear indications that

⁴⁸*The Times* 10.10.21.

⁴⁹Copy of the proclamation in MOFA SHC File Z/11, 1920-1922 tel. no. 1088/27.12.21, High Commission in Constantinople to Athens.

⁵⁰MOFA SHC File Z/11, 1920-1922 doc. no. b/16.12.21, memorandum to the General Secretary of the High Commission.

⁵¹A. H. Henderson, "Aristides the Just of Smyrna," CH 16 (1922), pp. 595-96. For the exodus of the Christian population see DBFP, 17, no. 541.

⁵²Toynbee, *Western Question*, p. 312.

⁵³DBFP, 17, no. 515, 30.1.22.

French policy in the East was not so much pro-Turkish as anti-British.⁵⁴ Therefore, the vicious circle was perpetuated and while Stergiadis urged the powers to inform Greece what was wanted of her, the French did all they could to prevent any Greek loan being floated in London as they "evidently intended to bring about a military defeat of the Greek army."⁵⁵ How determined they were to bring about this defeat became quite clear by May 1922, when Curzon requested full information regarding French and Italian traffic in Turkish war material under Allied control. The Army Council reply stated that they "had no difficulty in obtaining absolutely clear and unimpeachable evidence as against the French." However, because the greater proportion of the evidence was derived "from a very secret source," it should not "under any circumstances be communicated to a foreign government" and the view prevailed that in the circumstances no representations could be made to the French.⁵⁶

Despite the unimpeachable evidence, it seems there was very little the British were prepared to do except for voicing their protests. A little before the Greek debacle in September 1922, Curzon wrote to Paris: "Since the admitted supply of uniforms and rifles to the Turkish gendarmerie in Cilicia, . . . there is abundant proof from sources which can not be divulged that the French authorities at Constantinople have been facilitating, if not actually transacting the leakage to the Kemalists of munitions from the Turkish stores under their guard."⁵⁷ By now, the British were worried unless these arms and ammunition were used for a possible eventual attack on British troops in Iraq.⁵⁸ A little earlier, British sources in Asia Minor had informed London that a party of Italians returning from Ankara where they had been delivering aeroplanes, announced that Kemal was preparing an offensive "somewhere on the Eski front" and thought it had a good chance of success. The Italians further stated that the French were pouring war material up to the Kemalists through the port of Mersin and that they

⁵⁴FO E 1248/5/44, 2.2.22, Curzon to Hardinge (Paris).

⁵⁵See DBFP, XVII, nos. 539, 553 and 721 in which the British representative at Athens expressed the fear lest the French were seeking pretext for trouble, possibly in the hope of embroiling Britain with the Greeks.

⁵⁶See DBFP, 17, no. 684, p. 883, n.1.

⁵⁷FO E8153/76/44, 29.8.22, Curzon to Hardinge (Paris).

⁵⁸Ibid. Future events were to justify British fears: D. Walder, *The Chanak Affair* (London, 1969), During this incident not only were the British forces left by the French to deal as best they could with the nationalist troops threatening Constantinople, but, in the case of hostilities, they were sure to be fired at by french arms and ammunition unherited by the nationalists as a result of the Franklin Bouillon agreement.

had seen many French officers serving in the nationalist army.⁵⁹ At this stage, the Foreign Office did not even launch a protest as the French were sure to reiterate that it was private firms who supplied the arms. Typically, Curzon minuted: "How then can we protest? I have always held that the action at Paris which authorised private supply to both belligerents was — in the interests of the Greeks to help whom it was designed — a deplorable error."⁶⁰

In the event, the unfortunate victims of this policy were the Christian minorities of Asia Minor, whom the Allies had set out to liberate but had ended by abandoning to their fate. It seems that France was the first of the Allies to do so since Georges Picot, French High Commissioner in Syria, started negotiating with Kemal as early as December 1919 with the view to evacuating Cilicia in return for economic concessions.⁶¹ As French High Commissioner to Athens during the fatal National Schism years M. Jonnart admitted for the 1914-1917 French policy in Greece, "Il y a là une page peu glorieuse pour la France, je la ferme bien vite."⁶² As it happened, this policy of leniency and assistance towards the nationalists did not prove profitable for France. The French sixty per cent of the Ottoman debt together with the fifty four per cent of the foreign capital invested in private enterprises in Turkey were soon curtailed substantially and so did the activities of the French educational institutions for which there seemed to be no place in the new Turkish state.⁶³

⁵⁹DBFP, 17, no. 738, 21.8.22.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Frangoulis, *La Grece*, 2, p. 134.

⁶²Ibid. 1, p. 498.

⁶³Ibid. 2, p. 141. Also Pallis, *Anatolian Venture*, pp. 97-103, chapter entitled "The Responsibility of France."