

Postscript

The 1940s were, like the 1917-1922 period in Europe, a time of revolutionary upheaval, when the old order faced a challenge from the new. The situation in Greece and Italy shared many common characteristics in the 1940s, but fundamental differences existed in terms of economic development, ruling class ideology and attitude, and the availability of commonly accepted democratic mechanisms to deal with social conflict. Although the end result was defined by the Western powers involved, the process towards that end was determined by the domestic situation. The more "advanced" Italian class, politically and economically, was able to defend itself through the ballot. The much "weaker" ruling class in Greece resorted to repression and violence which in turn allowed it to defend itself with the bullet after the Left resorted to civil war. Where the old order could not change sufficiently to contain the challenge from below, the confrontation was a bloody one. The Greek ruling class comes off very poorly compared to its Italian counterpart in facing the challenges of the 1940s, because it was less securely established and less prepared to deal with dissent and opposition.

Cyprus, the *Enosis* Struggle, and Greece: Sir John Stavridi and the British Offer of 1915

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS ESSAY IS TO PRESENT THE EVENTS preceding and leading up to the British offer of Cyprus to Greece in 1915 as they are recorded by Sir John Stavridi (1867-1948) in his diary for the period 1912 to 1915. The diary has been edited as to include only notes relevant to Sir John's secret mission to Greece in November 1915.*

Ottoman Occupation, 1571-1878

The capture of Nikosia and Famagusta by Sultan Selim in 1571 brought an end to Venetian (1489-1571) rule of Cyprus and established the Turkish occupation (1571-1878) of the Island. "The history of Turkish rule," wrote Sir Harry Luke, "is a story of provincialism and decay, of contracting commerce and unenterprising administration, a story not regal but parochial. . . . From a kingdom renowned throughout Christendom, the Island was to become an obscure Ottoman dependency."¹ While the crowned heads of Europe were not willing to leave Cyprus to the Turks, the Christian inhabitants of the Island and, in particular, the Greek Cypriots made repeated efforts to "induce" the kings and princes of Europe to "undertake expeditions" to liberate

*Sir John Stavridi, a close friend and confidant of the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George, and the Greek Prime Minister, Eleutherios Venizelos, was born in Manchester, England in 1867. He was educated in Geneva and Paris. In 1894 he married Annina Olga. They had three daughters and one son. Sir John served as Consul General for Greece in 1903 and from 1917-1920. In 1915 he was sent by the British Government on a secret mission to Greece. He was Chairman of the Ionian Bank and Chairman of Hellenic and General Trust Ltd. Sir John Stavridi died in 1948. He was made a Knight in 1919. The private papers of Sir John Stavridi are deposited in the library of St. Antony's College, Oxford. In May and June of 1984 I was given permission to study the papers of Sir John Stavridi and also to publish certain parts of his diary, especially notes relevant to my research. To the Warden, members of the Governing Body, and, in particular, Dr. A. J. Nicholls, Librarian of St. Antony's College, I am most grateful for their assistance and cooperation. It is also with pleasure that I record my debt of gratitude to Mr. Salvatore Stavridi who kindly met with me in London and with sympathy and understanding answered my queries about his late father.

¹Harry Luke, Sir, *Cyprus under the Turks, 1571-1878* (Oxford, 1921), pp. 2-3.

Cyprus.² Of all the European kings and princes with ambitions to re-establish their "rights" over the Kingdom of Cyprus, the Duke of Savoy showed the greatest sympathy and determination. The efforts of Charles Emmanuel to stir up the Christian subjects of the Sultan by raising false hopes of liberation and freedom were frequent and well recorded. "The Duke's ambition," wrote Sir George Hill, "was notorious in the Christian lands which had fallen into the hands of the Turks, and naturally excited the wildest hope."³ In 1600 Francis Accidas, a Rhodian and agent of the Duke, travels to Alexandria where he has a meeting with the Patriarch; he then goes to Cyprus, where he meets the Archbishop of the Island, and with him investigates the potential for a Christian uprising against the Island's Turkish masters, promising help from the Duke. Such vain proposals and promises gave the Greek Cypriots the "delusive hope that their deliverance would come from Savoy."⁴

A letter from one Peter Goneme of Cyprus, "interpreter of the Pasha of Cyprus," dated October 8, 1608 appeals to the Duke of Savoy in "the name of the Christian peoples of Cyprus" to act in concert with the King of Spain, Philip III, to liberate the "oppressed Christians" of Cyprus.⁵ A year later, on October 5, 1609, an appeal to Charles Emmanuel signed by Christodoulos, Archbishop of Cyprus (1609-1631), the Bishops of Famagusta, Limassol, Paphos, Kyrenia, and Amathos and other church dignitaries was delivered on their behalf to the Duke of Savoy by the Cypriot "Loizon, son of Nikolo."⁶ On April 6, 1611 the Cypriot hierarchs dispatched the Cypriots' "Loizon, son of Nikolo, and Konstantino, son of Demo" to Count Mombasiglio, Chamberlain of the Duke. In both communications the hierarchs appealed to Charles Emmanuel to help them free their Island from the rule of the Turks: "Clerus insulae Cypri carolo Emmanuele, Sebaudiae duce, auxilium petit contra Turcos."⁷ Alas, their efforts were in vain. The hierarchs were unaware that Charles Emmanuel's ambition far exceeded the strength, means, and abilities of his State: Savoy was too weak to take up the cause of Cyprus. In the course of the seventeenth century numerous other appeals were made; there was one in 1628, another in 1632, yet another in 1664, and a final attempt was made in 1668.⁸ The 1668 appeal, wrote Sir George Hill, represented

²George Hill, Sir, *A History of Cyprus* (Cambridge, 1952), 4, p. 36.

³Hill, *History*, p. 53.

⁴Ibid. p. 53.

⁵Ibid. pp. 53-54.

⁶Ibid. p. 54; F. Miklosich and J. Muller (eds.), *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medi Aevi Sacra et Profana* (Vindobonae, 1865), 4, pp. 266-69.

⁷Hill, *History*, p. 54; F. Miklosich and J. Muller (eds.), *Acta*, 4, pp. 266-69.

⁸Hill, *History*, p. 58.

the "last recorded attempt by the Cypriots to interest a Western prince in the deliverance of Cyprus."⁹

The struggle of the Greeks of Cyprus for union with Greece can be traced back to the early days of the birth of the modern Greek state in 1829. Victory came after a long and difficult war of independence which the Greeks officially launched against their Turkish masters on March 25, 1821. During the war (1821-1829) the Greeks of Cyprus, as with other regions of the Greek diaspora, actively participated in the preparations for and the upheavals of the Greek uprising. However, although they paid dearly for their evident sympathies and endured severe deprivations and hardships as well as bearing the brunt of Ottoman reactions, the Greek Cypriots were denied the fruits of victory.

British Administration, 1878-1960

In 1878 under the terms of the "Convention of Defensive Alliance between Great Britain and Turkey with respect to the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey" (commonly called the Cyprus Convention) the administration of Cyprus was transferred to Great Britain. On July 12, 1878 the British flag was hoisted in Nikosia.¹¹ The Greek Cypriots enthusiastically welcomed Britain's entry upon the Cyprus scene, interpreting the change as a prelude to *enosis* with Greece. In 1914 the British Government annexed Cyprus to the "dominions of His Britannic Majesty." The birth of the Republic of Cyprus on August 16, 1960 ended the eighty-two year long British rule of the Island.

The British Offer, 1915

The several appeals for *enosis* made by the Greek Cypriots to the British Government since 1878 are presented and discussed in detail by Sir George Hill in his indispensable and monumental four-volume *History of Cyprus*;¹² while the excellent study by Nancy Cranshaw,

⁹Ibid. p. 59.

¹⁰John Koumoulides, *Cyprus and the War of Greek Independence 1821-1829* (London, 1974).

¹¹Britain acquired Cyprus as a *place d'armes* not because Cyprus was situated at a sensitive point in the international political system but because Britain had guaranteed the Sultan's Asiatic possessions, after the cession of Kars, Ardahan and Batum to Russia. If this had to be implemented, it would involve sending troops to the Caucasus or Mesopotamia. The experience of the Crimean War had shown that Malta was too far from the Eastern Mediterranean, and had not adequate facilities as a military, as opposed to a naval, base. Stampalia was at one time considered as an alternative to Cyprus.

There was also the reason that Russia was gaining so much by the Treaty of Berlin — or so British public opinion thought — that said public opinion could only be appeased if Britain gained something too. Like Bismarck in Disraeli's epigram to Queen Victoria, its idea of progress was evidently seizing something.

¹²Hill, *History*, 4, pp. 488-586.

The Cyprus Revolt: An Account of the Struggle for Union with Greece is devoted to the struggle for *enosis* in this century.¹³

In 1915 Great Britain offered Cyprus to Greece in an effort to persuade Greece to give up her neutrality and assist the Allies by guaranteeing support to Serbia should she be attacked by Germany. The British offer brought *enosis* closer than ever to realization.

The British Government's offer was conveyed in a telegram from the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Edward Grey.

FOREIGN OFFICE,
16th October, 1915

Everything that passed between His Majesty's Government and M. Venizelos while he was Prime Minister was based on the supposition that Greece would lend her support to Serbia in conformity with her treaty with her.

It was a great disappointment for us to learn that Greece had not this intention, and we find the explanation of which M. Gennadios has transmitted us a copy hardly satisfying; nor does it appear to free Greece from her engagements.

It is in the firm conviction that it is quite specially in the interest of Greece to prevent the destruction of Serbia that we are asking her to lend her aid to the latter in her capacity of Ally.

Now that Serbia has been attacked by Bulgaria, if Greece is willing to come to her aid His Majesty's Government is ready to cede to Greece the Island of Cyprus.

If Greece joins the Allies for all purposes, she will naturally participate in the advantages secured at the end of the war, but the offer of Cyprus is made by His Majesty's Government independently of this consideration, and on the sole condition that Greece gives Serbia her immediate and complete support with her army.

Time is pressing and you will ask M. Zaimis to give you his reply without delay.

E. Grey¹⁴

But the Greek Government of Alexandros Zaimos, influenced by

¹³Nancy Crawshaw, *The Cyprus Revolt: An Account of the Struggle for Union with Greece* (London, 1978).

¹⁴In S. P. P. Cosmetatos, *The Tragedy of Greece* (London, 1928), pp. 70-71.

pro-German sympathies of King Constantine, rejected the offer.¹⁵ Cyprus remained in British hands as a British Colony until 1960.

In November 1915 Sir John Stavridi, a close friend and confidant of Lloyd George and E. Venizelos was sent by the British Government on a secret mission to Greece. In his diary Sir John provides an inside record of events preceding the British offer to Greece and preparations leading up to his secret mission to Greece. The first contacts were made during the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913. What follows are excerpts from Sir John's diary. The footnotes are the editor's.

¹⁵See the *Daily Mail* (London, Tuesday, November 23, 1915), pp. 5-6 and the *Westminster Gazette* (London, Tuesday, December 7, 1915), p. 1.

Sunday 10th November 1912

I dined tonight at 11 Downing Street; there were present Lloyd George, Masterman, Spender, Roberts, and three ladies. The conversation was all about the war. At dinner Lloyd George ordered the champagne and proposed the following toast: "I drink to the success of the Allies, the representative of one of whom we have here tonight, and may the Turk be turned out of Europe and sent to . . . where he came from."

As we stayed from 7:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. the conversation was long, but may be summarised as follows:

Lloyd George said his one hope was that the Turk would now be cleared out of Europe entirely. "Personally I don't want him even to keep Constantinople. This latter, however, is the most difficult question we shall have to deal with. In my opinion the best solution would be to have Constantinople and the Dardanelles internationalised.

I asked for a definition of the word and pointed out that it would be a novel experiment and one that had never been tried.

He replied that he thought that in older days the experiment had been made with some towns in Italy. He would put Constantinople under the management of Europe, each country to appoint a member of the governing body. He was quite willing to try the experiment and would not shrink from imposing it; it would solve many difficulties and avoid jealousies among the Powers.

Talking of the future, he said: "The one great thing for the Allies is to strike together. If they do, so many difficulties will disappear and no one will be found to oppose you. If you begin quarreling among yourselves as to the division of the spoils you will give a loophole to other powers to step in. You should arrange as soon as the war is over to have a fiscal union, postal union, judicial union, making, if possible, one final Court of Appeal to apply to all the countries and composed of one or several judges of each of the four countries. This would bind you together more than anything else."

He asked what was the intention of the Allies in regard to Salonica. I told him that, in my opinion, it was clearly within the Hellenic sphere of influence; that apart from the Jews the majority of inhabitants were Greek, and, therefore, should it fall, it should clearly belong to us. I pointed out to him what we had made of the Piraeus, the third port in the Mediterranean, although our railway system was not united to that of any other country, and that if we got Salonica, within ten years, we would make it the first port in the Mediterranean. He was, however, afraid that it might prove the apple of

discord among the Allies, in which case it would have to be internationalised. He discussed my views and thought they were sound, & said: "If the Allies are agreed among themselves, I think it might be arranged for the Greeks to have Salonica, but they must be united on the question. Unity alone on this & all other questions will carry you through."

In regard to the victories of the Greek army, he said: "You have wiped out the memories of 1897 and shown what you can do when properly armed, trained and led, and now nobody will be allowed to stand between you and your conquests. If the Allies are in agreement & can divide up European Turkey as they think best.

I asked him what was to become of Crete and pointed out the clever diplomatic move we had made in sending out a Greek Governor in order to see to the proper management & order of the Island "in conformity to the wishes expressed by the Powers."

He replied: "You may consider Crete as yours. The only power that could prevent you from having it is England and England will not fire a shot or move a single ship to prevent you from having it."

I pointed out to him the present hardships in regard to the Aegean Islands held by Italy & which the latter would not evacuate until the Turkish soldiers had been withdrawn from Tripoli. In fact, Italy was acting the part of policeman for the Turks and as long as she was there it was impossible for the Greeks to take the Islands. He said: "This is a disgrace. If Italy does not clear out before the end of the war, Greece should make it a *sine qua non* of her terms of peace that all the Islands are handed over to her. But you should assist in *creating* a public opinion in England by means of the press and public meetings, publications, etc. Officially the British Government cannot help at present, but England will do nothing to oppose Greece having the Islands if she makes it a term of her peace conditions. I suggested that if the Islands were refused to us they should make [sic] an autonomous entity as they had been in the past under the Venetians, but he did not like the idea; he said they wanted matters cleared up for a generation or so, & an autonomous state, populated by a purely Greek population, would simply mean the creation of a number of fresh Cretan questions which would leave no space to Europe or to Greece. "We want all questions finally settled & now is the time to settle them for good."

He asked me to see him as often as I liked on all questions of difficulty & he would assist me as much as he could.

15th November

A resumé of the above was written to Monsr. Venizelos.

Monday 18th November

I breakfasted with Lloyd George. I showed him reports that had been published in a number of French papers to the effect that England had decided to take Crete and keep it as her share of the spoils. I pointed out that the Greek Government had been rather startled at these reports which had some appearance of being inspired. He told me that there was not a word of truth in the statements, England had no desire & no intention of taking Crete; as a matter of fact, she had already informed the other protecting powers that at the end of this war it was her intention of withdrawing her ships, & he thought that the other protecting powers would follow suit. They could not hand the Island over to us but they would leave it & as we were there and the Turks could not bring their fleet out of the Dardanelles, we should naturally remain in possession. He suggested that the ownership of Crete by Greece should be made one of the conditions of peace. None of the powers would object.

We discussed the subject of Salonica & he asked me whether the delimitation of the various interests had not been settled between the Allies before the war was started. To this I could not reply, but I doubted whether such was the case in view of the attitude now taken up by the Bulgarians in Salonica. He thought this was very unwise & hoped we would settle the matter between ourselves & avoid the necessity of the Powers intervening which would mean that in all probability, neither of us would get the place, but that it would be made an international free port.

He then told me that he had discussed the whole question with Winston Churchill who particularly required a port close to the Adriatic for the use of the English fleet. We looked at the map issued by the *Daily Telegraph* that was hanging up and he suggested Corfu, but I told him that that was out of the question as by the treaty ceding the Ionian Islands to us we had undertaken not to fortify Corfu & not to use it as a military or naval station. He asked me whether in my opinion the Greek Government would be prepared to discuss the question in principle, as, if so, he would arrange for me to meet Winston Churchill. I replied that I was not in a position to reply to that question unless I knew something more about it, for instance, what would England do for Greece, but I knew for a fact that the sympathies of the country were all in favour of England and that our Government would look favourably upon any

scheme which might tend to draw the two countries together. He then told me that the idea of Winston Churchill, with which he quite agreed, was to cede to Greece the Island of Cyprus as compensation for one of our Islands in the Ionian Sea. I told him I should be quite willing to initiate the negotiations and submit the views of the English Government to Greece. He then telephoned to Winston Churchill & fixed up an appointment in his private room at the House of Commons for the afternoon at 4 p.m.

House of Commons

At the appointed time I was at the House. Lloyd George introduced me to Winston Churchill as an old friend. He said: "You can talk to him as openly as you would to me. I can answer for him." Winston Churchill went straight to the heart of the question. After a few questions as to the latest news from the seat of the war & the expression of hope for the final and complete success of the Allies, he explained the organisation of the British fleet in the Mediterranean & the working thereof in conjunction with the French fleet. As the powers were grouped at present, the enemies were Italy & Austria, & in any future war if they could close up the Adriatic, they could bottle up the whole of the Austrian & part of the Italian fleets, & would then be able to deal with any other ships of the enemy. Provided England had a base close enough to the Adriatic it would be an easy matter to close the Adriatic. It would only require ten to twenty torpedo boats & destroyers and a certain number of submarines & not a ship of the enemy could get through. The question he was now trying to solve was that of a naval base close to the Adriatic, & of all the available spots, the one the Admiralty would prefer would be Argostoli in the Island of Cephalonia. He did not ask us to cede the Island to England. He said: "Mark my words, I am not speaking of a cession or even of a lease, not a single man would change his nationality or his allegiance; the flag would remain the Greek flag. What I am asking for is *the uses*¹ [sic], the uses only, that is, at any time when the British Government may consider it necessary, in time of peace or war, it should have the right to use Argostoli as a port, as a naval base for its fleet, in any way it may think best. We would probably want to fortify the Island, but that could be done in agreement with your Government & either by us or by you at our expense, but on our plans & under our supervision." He then said that the arrangement would have to be absolutely secret & that

¹User is a technical legal term.

no other power should know of it, & asked me whether I thought my Government would agree. I replied that I was aware of the feelings existing in Greece in regard to England & that I felt sure that my Government would do all in its power to strengthen the ties existing between the two countries. Apart, however, from Cyprus which Lloyd George had told me they were willing to surrender to us, I should ask England to assist us in the negotiations which were sure to take place at the end of the war & more particularly in regard to Salonica where we were certain to have difficulties with our Allies; & in regard to the Aegean Islands where certain other European powers might raise objections. Lloyd George then said that it would be very difficult for England to intervene between the Allies & that we must endeavour to arrange matters between ourselves; as regards the Islands, Russia had notified England that it would "strongly object" to our keeping the four Islands at the mouth of the Dardanelles, Samothrace, Imbros, Lemnos, & Tenedos. So far as England was concerned, she would not object to our having either and would help us with the Islands. Turning then to Winston Churchill, he said: "If you are going to keep the Argostoli treaty secret, how can you justify the surrender of Cyprus to the public. You know that we in England never like to give something away for nothing." He said that if this Government did it, there would be a terrible outcry against "those awful radicals." I pointed out that they had a good precedent to go by: the cession of the Ionian Islands when they had got no quid pro quo; but he objected that times had changed & the public were not in a mood to see their possessions given away. Winston Churchill, however, said that he was not afraid of public opinion; the leaders of the Opposition & the editor of *The Times* would be told all the facts & he was certain that no outcry would be raised. He then went on to describe his visit to Cyprus, how the people had yelled themselves hoarse & had waved Greek flags all the time. When he told the Governor how pleased he was with the enthusiastic reception given to him, he was informed that the cries raised were "Ζήτω ἡ Ἑλλάς" & "Ζήτω ἡ Ἐνῶσις," that the enthusiasm was not for him but was raised by the hope that he would assist them in obtaining reunion to Greece. He was very much struck with this persistency of the Greek nationality. There were practically no complaints against the British Government, but only a great desire to be reunited to the mother country, & if it lay in his power he was going to see justice done.

I asked for leave to report this interview to our Prime Minister, but both stated that it must remain absolutely secret until they had

been able to talk matters over with Asquith & Sir Edward Grey. As soon as this had been done they would see me again & go further into the question. Just as I was leaving, Winston Churchill said: "What a day this would have been for Byron if he was alive," to which I replied: "Yes, what a poem the world has missed!"

Friday 22nd November, 9:15 a.m.

I breakfasted at 11 Downing Street with Lloyd George. He told me that he and Churchill had discussed the proposals made at our previous interview with Mr. Asquith & Sir Edward Grey, & that both had approved, but that there were, of course, a great number of details to be gone into & that it would take time to prepare the scheme to be finally adopted. I asked whether he would not authorise me to write to the Prime Minister giving him the broad outlines & asking for his views on the question of principle. But he refused, saying that he would neither trust the post nor a coded telegram. If the matter became prematurely known here in Greece or by any of the Powers it would put an end to the whole matter. Nothing could, of course, be done until the war was at an end, and then we would further discuss matters & he would ask me to go to Greece personally & lay the whole matter before Mr. Venizelos.

After a good deal of discussion about the war & the victories of the Allies & the fresh steps to be taken, we came back to the question of Argostoli. I told him I had looked up the Treaty of cession & found that there was nothing to prevent us from fortifying the Island of Cephalonia, the restrictions applying only to Corfu & Ithaca. I then suggested to him that when coming to an understanding with us in regard to Cephalonia, it might be to the benefit of England to have a more general understanding with Greece so as to enable them, if necessary, to make use of some of the Islands in the Aegean. He, however, did not think this was necessary as the enemies were Italy & Austria, & Cephalonia would be enough to enable them to deal with those two. I pointed out that I thought that policy was somewhat shortsighted. A generation ago it was Russia who was the arch enemy and what was there to prove that in another generation they would not have ascended to the same position. Moreover, a general understanding with Greece, with Great Greece as she would be in the future, would enable them to use all their ships for fighting the enemy, leaving us to police the seas & protect their commerce. We would undertake to strengthen our navy & to build under the guidance of England & act in all matters in conjunction with England. He replied that the proposal was a good one and well worth consideration, that

he would discuss it with Winston Churchill, & speak also to the Prime Minister & Grey about it. In the meantime, everything was to remain secret as before. I pointed out the questions that had been asked in the House in regard to Cyprus & wondered if anybody had got scent of what she was going on. He thought that perhaps somebody had heard of conversations taking place, but was certain nobody had any exact information. In any case we were to be extra careful if we wished to avoid spoiling the whole arrangement. He offered to help us in the forthcoming Conference & suggested that I should be appointed Secretary & keep him informed.

Friday 29th November, 9:15 a.m.

I breakfasted at 11 Downing Street with Lloyd George. We discussed the armistice signed at Chatalja; he could not understand why we had refused to sign when all the Allies had done so, & warned me that Greece would lose the sympathy of Europe if she were to break up the Alliance. I explained to him that our representatives had arrived three days after the Bulgarians at Chatalja, that they were then shown the proposed terms of armistice which were such as a beaten, but not a victorious, army might have signed, including as they did the revictualling not only of the invested fortresses & towns, but even the Turkish forces in the field, & the raising of the blockade. This latter would have enabled the Turks to obtain coal, food & men, & placed them in a much better position than they had even been [sic] before. On learning this, our representatives had refused to sign & telegraphed to Athens. The Greek Government then telegraphed to the Allies, pointing out the folly of agreeing to such terms and praying them to do nothing that would weaken or destroy the Alliance. The reply to this telegram had taken three days to reach Athens & in the meantime the terms had been altered, excluding all revictualling & the raising of the blockade, & the armistice had been signed by the Bulgarians. We immediately telegraphed to our Allies, offering to sign the armistice if they wished us to do so, but they had replied that they thought it was better to leave matters as they were, as they had notified the Turks that Greece would send delegates to the Peace Conference which was to be held in London. He would therefore see that Greece was not breaking up the Balkan Alliance, but, on the contrary, doing everything to keep it straight and strengthen it. He seemed pleased with this explanation & thought that we ought to have made the facts known through the press. He then asked me the names of our delegates. I told him I had no information but showed him the names printed in the paper. When he saw that the

Prime Minister's name was not there, he said: "M. Venizelos must come; the future of Greece will be decided in London, not at Athens. It is a question of life & death to you. Telegraph to him that his presence here is indispensable."

Saturday, 30th November

Telegram sent to M. Venizelos, reporting conversation & stating he must come here.

Sunday, 1st December

Telegram from Athens saying Venizelos was coming & giving the names of the delegates, St. Scouloudis, Gennadios, Dr. G. Streit, & Dr. Politis.

Tuesday, 10th December

I breakfasted at 11 Downing Street with Lloyd George. He expressed great pleasure at the news that the Prime Minister was coming to London. I suggested that the negotiations should begin as soon as he arrived & I would make all the necessary arrangements. He replied that every word that had passed at our various interviews had been repeated to Mr. Asquith & Sir Edward Grey who were both in agreement with him & Winston Churchill, but neither of them wished to be brought into the discussion until the peace negotiations [sic] had been brought to a successful issue. As regards Sir Edward Grey, he said he could never appear before the Ambassadors at their meetings if a convention had been signed with Greece; "he would feel as if the word 'Thief' were written in bold letters across his face." He went on to say that as Cyprus was dealt with by the Colonial Office it would be better if, on the arrival of the Prime Minister, we were to see Lulu Harcourt and begin negotiations [sic] with him.² Later on the other Ministers would join in &, after peace had been signed, the matter would be taken up by Sir Edward Grey & the Foreign Office.

I again broached the question of a general understanding between the two countries. He told me he had discussed the matter with the other Ministers & they all rather liked the idea, but they must, in the first instance, have the views of Monsieur Venizelos on the subject. As soon as I knew the date of his arrival I was to telephone & he would fix up an appointment with Harcourt. As I was leaving, he asked me what was going to happen to Salonica, as he had heard that there were serious difficulties between ourselves & the Bulgarians. I told him that I had learnt that we had

²"Lulu" was Harcourt's nickname; his Christian name was Lewis.

offered to submit all points of difference between ourselves & our Allies to the arbitrament of the three Powers of the Entente, England, France, & Russia, & to be bound by their decision, but so far Bulgaria had neither refused nor accepted. He thought the proposal was a good one & quite fair to both parties; it would probably save the Alliance, & he attached great importance to the maintenance of the Alliance for the future development & progress of the Near East.

Wednesday, 11th December

Telephone appointment with Harcourt on Friday at 10 a.m.

Thursday, 12th December

I went to Folkestone with Gennadios & met the delegates and came up to town with them. In the train Gennadios gave Mr. Venizelos a general outline of what had taken place; the President then called me & we had a long conversation together.³ He told me that Gennadios had suggested that he should first see Sir Edward Grey to ascertain whether he would mention anything about the negotiations [sic] and asked me to put off the appointment with Harcourt without fixing any other date, but to wait events. I was to see him tomorrow at 9 a.m. & give him all particulars.

Friday, 13th December

I telephoned Harcourt & put off meeting. — Long interview with Venizelos. I gave him all particulars & he approved of every step I had taken. He said, however, that we must keep the two questions, a) Cyprus & Argostoli, and b) general understanding, quite separate. In regard to the latter we might make it a condition that we should have the support of England during the negotiations [sic] for peace. — I told him that from what I had understood from Lloyd George & Churchill, England would not make such a bargain, as they would only enter into the agreement with us *after* the peace treaty had been signed. I pointed out that it would be better not to negotiate [sic] on that basis, but simply to try & bring about a general understanding without asking for a quid pro quo, as if we came to terms at an early date this was bound to influence the British Ministers as they would naturally wish to see Greece as large & as powerful as possible if they were to act together in the future. He asked me to fix up an appointment for him to meet Lloyd George.

³Stavridi here slips into translating "Proedros" as "President." Venizelos is earlier called Prime Minister which is more correct. Later Stavridi reverts to "Prime Minister."

Saturday, 14th December

Telephoned Lloyd George & arranged to meet on Monday.

Monday, 16th December, 9:30 a.m.

M. Venizelos & I breakfasted at 11 Downing Street with Lloyd George. Half way through breakfast Sir Rufus Isaacs came in and remained to the end of the conversation, taking part in it. The President stated that I had reported to him the conversation that had taken place between us, that he was very pleased to see the good feeling that existed towards Greece, that he quite approved of the negotiations [sic] that had taken place, & that he was prepared to continue the same. The main question discussed was that of Cyprus, and Lloyd George pointed out the difficulty they would have with the Opposition & with public opinion in England if the bargain in regard to Argostoli were kept secret. In any case, the arrangement would have to be deferred for some time after the signature of the Peace Convention, as otherwise they might be accused of having been bribed to support the cause of Greece. Mr. Venizelos saw no objection to the publication of the actual arrangement being postponed for a few months, provided he could come to an understanding with the British Government on the main lines during his stay in London. He was afraid that if the Argostoli part of the arrangement were kept secret & war broke out & England used the port, it would be considered by England's enemy that Greece had infringed the laws of neutrality & she would then be open to attack. Lloyd George thought that some means would have to be devised by which the whole arrangement could be made public & he was to talk the matter over with his colleagues. I then pointed out that the difficulty mentioned by the President would be overcome if the general understanding I had suggested was come to, for in such a case it would be more than probable that if England were at war, we should be at war also and no question of breach of neutrality could then arise. Mr. Venizelos said he was quite willing to discuss that question also, but as a separate entity quite distinct from the Cyprus-Argostoli arrangement. That all the national aspirations of Greece tended towards a closer union with England and that from the King down to the meanest subject, everyone in Greece would welcome such an understanding. Both Lloyd George & Isaacs agreed that it would be a good thing for both countries. Lloyd George pointed out that England had no treaties with any country & that our understanding would have to be on the same lines as their entente with France; that is to say, the Foreign Offices of both countries would have to keep in constant

and intimate touch with each other, & it would only be by an open & loyal understanding that either could call upon the other to assist in case of difficulties or war with other nations. Mr. Venizelos quite agreed and was prepared to discuss the subject on that basis. I suggested that England might, if an entente were come to, desire to see our navy strengthened, in which case it might be to their advantage to lend us a sum of money to be spent on building ships in England in accordance with plans to be drawn up in conjunction with the Admiralty. Lloyd George said this could be done, but the President thought the proposal perhaps premature, but he would also willingly consider it, if necessary.

It was agreed that we were to meet again this week to further discuss matters. On leaving, Lloyd George suggested that I should be appointed Secretary at the Peace Conference, & keep him informed of what was taking place.

Same day, 4 p.m.

Lloyd George telephoned with appointment for 9:30 a.m. tomorrow at Winston Churchills [sic].

Same day, 12 noon

I attended the opening of the Peace Conference at Saint James [sic] Palace as one of the Secretaries, & lunched at the Palace.

Tuesday, 17th December, 9:30 a.m.

Breakfasted at 33 Eccleston Square. Present Winston Churchill, Lloyd George, Prince Louis of Battenberg, Venizelo, & self.

Churchill repeated the whole of my first conversation with him at the House of Commons, laying special stress on the word "user" in connection with the port of Argostoli. He explained the scheme for "bottling up" the Austrian fleet in the Adriatic, & his requirements at the port of Argostoli. England must have the right to fortify the place, or Greece must do it at England's request and cost & under her guidance; the plans & means of carrying this into effect could be discussed later, but the principle must be granted. M. Venizelos said he saw no objection but would like to consider the question from the standpoint of international law. Prince Louis gave us a full & detailed statement in regard to our fleet; he thought we were practically strong enough, that if we built, it should be only small & very rapid craft, torpedo boats, destroyers, submarines, & small protected cruisers, but no more dreadnoughts

⁴A type of ship rather fashionable at the time.

or large cruisers. In his opinion, & the opinion of the Admiralty, Turkey would never do anything with her navy; she was incapable & nothing would ever make the Turk a good sailor. Churchill thought that it would be necessary to make the arrangement public in order to satisfy public opinion. He had talked matters over with Asquith & Sir E. Grey & they were both of the same opinion. The President repeated that he saw no objection, particularly if the larger question of an entente was settled in a satisfactory manner for both countries. Churchill was quite willing to discuss that question also but it must be kept separate from the Cyprus-Argostoli one; the latter concerned England & Greece alone; in regard to the former they might have to consult France & Russia. I asked what Turkey would have to say to the cession of Cyprus to Greece, & Churchill replied, with a smile: "We will arrange that!" We then talked of the Aegean Island [sic] & Churchill said he hoped we would arrange to keep them; England would not allow Italy to retain possession of those she now occupied & he hoped we would get them. Now that he had the Presidents [sic] views on the whole subject, & his agreement in principle, he would talk matters over with his colleagues, & he prepared to meet us again shortly & go more into details.

Same day, 12 noon

I attended the second meeting of the Peace Conference & lunched at St. James [sic] Palace.

Sunday, 5th January 1913

M. Venizelos wished to know exactly the attitude taken up by England in regard to the Aegean Islands & asked me to arrange an appointment with Lloyd George.

We met at 11 Downing Street at 4 p.m. Venizelos told Lloyd George that now Russia had waived her objections to our having the four Islands at the mouth of the Dardanelles on our undertaking not to fortify them or use them as a naval base; he was also told that France was willing to support our claim to the Islands & he wished to know what was the attitude of England & the other Powers on the subject in the Ambassadors [sic] Conference. Lloyd George said that during the last ten days he had been so busy with the doctors over the insurance that he had not been able to keep himself informed on foreign affairs, that he had not seen Sir Edward Grey & had hardly had time to look at the Foreign Office papers sent to him. He would, however, make a point of seeing Grey tomorrow between six and seven p.m., & would then

arrange to tell us what had taken place. As regards England, however, her sympathies were all in favour of Greece, & we might be certain that anything she could do to favour us she would. He then told the President that Churchill had prepared a scheme in writing & that he had discussed it with him last night at the Admiralty & they had decided, subject to Venizelos' approval, to submit it in the first instance to Delcassé. He pointed out that as our proposed entente concerned the Mediterranean, it was essential that all questions should be arranged in conjunction with France & that the entente be between the three countries. He wished to have the President's views on the subject. The latter replied that nothing would give him greater pleasure; the sympathies of the King & of the whole Greek nation were in favour of France & England & a general understanding with those two countries would be welcomed by one & all. Lloyd George then said that, under the circumstances, they would take the very earliest opportunity of discussing the whole question with Delcassé. He had no doubt that France would be delighted with the arrangements which could be carried into effect as soon as peace was signed. Venizelos asked whether it would be possible for him to see the scheme prepared by Mr. Churchill at an early date, as he would then send a special messenger to Greece to submit it to the King & on receipt of H.M.'s reply, as soon as the peace negotiations were concluded, he could complete the arrangements & sign any document that might be considered advisable or necessary. Lloyd George then went to telephone to Churchill & during his absence Venizelos suggested that, in case of need, I should act as the messenger to carry his dispatch to the King, as I could give any explanations that might be required. — Churchill was out of (his) house & Lloyd George arranged to fix up an appointment at an early date with Churchill to go further into the scheme.

He then asked the President as regards the loan I had suggested England should make to us; he wished to know whether it was our intention to increase our navy as the result of the extension of territory that would fall to us & altogether apart from any arrangement with England. M. Venizelos replied that, in his opinion, whatever the result of the negotiations with England, Greece's navy must be increased & strengthened & it was his intention to provide for this at an early date. Lloyd George said he had discussed the proposal for a loan with Asquith, & the latter thought there might be some difficulty in the way. Venizelos pointed out that he did not make a point of this question which had been raised by me. I told Lloyd George that, even if England could not officially make

a loan to us, it was very easy for her to give a hint to the bankers that they would like to see a loan granted & we could then obtain it on easier terms than would otherwise be the case. He replied that he was not at all adverse to granting us a loan & he thought that some means could be devised by which it could be carried through.

Monday, 6th January

Lloyd George telephoned, fixing appointment for tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, 7th January, 9:30 a.m.

Breakfast at 11 Downing Street. Present: Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, Prince Louis of Battenberg, Venizelos & I. At first the conversation ran on the subject of the deadlock in the Peace Conference. Subsequently Venizelos reported what Lloyd George had told us on Sunday and asked whether it would be possible for him to see the scheme that had been prepared. Churchill replied that there was some misunderstanding: he had discussed the whole proposal with Lloyd George but he had told him that he had prepared a scheme for the reorganisation & the working of the Greek naval forces in the future, & this Lloyd George had taken to refer to the proposed entente. Venizelos then asked if he could have a copy of the scheme & Churchill said he would give it willingly if it were asked for! Venizelos enquired what form the request must take, whether official, in writing, or what? Churchill said it was quite sufficient if he expressed a desire to have it, which Venizelos forthwith did. It was then arranged that as soon as the draft had been fair-copied, it would be handed to me for the President. Churchill then said that he understood that the dreadnought we had ordered in Germany had not been laid down yet & he strongly advised us to counterorder it & to order in its place a number of destroyers; the price would be the same but the destroyers would be much more useful to us. Venizelos was not aware /of/ the exact state of construction of the dreadnought; he knew that quite recently certain important alterations as to size & armament had been suggested & telegraphed to the German builders, but he would take steps immediately to ascertain the position of affairs. Churchill explained that if the builders were able to make alterations as to size, it was quite clear that the ship was not yet laid down; otherwise it was impossible to alter the size. He strongly urged that the order be cancelled & smaller ships built; he was not trying to get the order for England. Germany built splendid ships,

& the same yard (Vulcan) might build us several destroyers for the same price. He had dealt with the question of the use of small ships by Greece at length in his memorandum. Prince Louis then propounded his views as to /the/ role of the Greek navy in a future war, when we should be acting in conjunction with France & England as allies. Churchill stated that we should be required to police the Eastern part of the Mediterranean, the Aegean & the Islands; they would bottle up Austria & the Italian fleet in the Adriatic, using their new base at Argostoli, but even if they were too late the Greeks need have no fear because the Austrians would never dare go East, leaving the English at Malta in their rear. For the Aegean Sea & the Islands, small boats were an essential & high speed was also an essential. — He then further discussed Argostoli & the distance from the Adriatic straits; he suggested that Corfu was much nearer & Venizelos said that he would not object to Corfu. I pointed out that there were two great drawbacks to Corfu: 1) that the German emperor had his palace there & that a system of spies might easily be organised, & 2) that under the international treaty ceding the Island to us, & to which Austria was a party, we were forbidden to fortify the Island or to use it as a naval base. Churchill replied: "That settles the matter; we must not have other Powers objecting to our arrangements. Argostoli will do quite well for us." — He then discussed the question of France, & Venizelos repeated that nothing could give him & Greece greater pleasure than to have France a party to the understanding. Churchill said that he would shortly discuss the matter with the French Government & he felt sure they would be pleased to welcome us into the entente. He also stated that Asquith & Grey were of the opinion that the whole arrangement would have in due course to be made public; otherwise it would be difficult to justify the giving up of Cyprus &, therefore, perhaps some time ought to elapse between the termination of the peace negotiations & the publication of the entente. Venizelos agreed & suggested three or four months.

Prince Louis spoke of our naval victory & said a report had been received at the Admiralty saying that the Turkish ships had never gone beyond the range of the guns in the forts, that they had "exécuté une figure de quadrille" & reentered the Dardanelles. This was probably done to satisfy public opinion in Constantinople. — Lloyd George had to leave earlier as he had an appointment with the Prime Minister, & we were unable to ask him about the fate of the Aegean Islands.

Thursday, 9th January

Winston Churchill telephoned to say he was leaving town until Tuesday & wished to know whether the Prime Minister would be here on his return, as otherwise he would like to see him today before 2 p.m. I told him Venizelos would not leave next week & he said on his return he would fix up an appointment.

Same day, 4:30 p.m.

I saw Lloyd George in his private room at the House of Commons, & told him we were very anxious to know the views of England in regard to the Aegean Islands. He replied that the question had been brought up by Sir Edward Grey at the Cabinet meeting held yesterday, & all the members present, even those who were not aware of the present negotiations, were strongly in favour of their retention by Greece. Sir Edward Grey was authorised to press the question at the meeting of Ambassadors. If possible, France was even more favourable to us & would not hear of the Islands being surrendered. He said: "You need have no fear in regard to the Islands occupied; you will get them alright." I asked him what he meant by the "the Islands occupied" & whether he intended to exclude those in the occupation of the Italians? He said that was so. I asked whether it was in the contemplation of the Powers to allow Italy to keep these Islands? "Never," he replied. "We have told Italy in perfectly clear & unambiguous terms that we shall not allow her to retain a single one of the Islands, & she knows that we mean it & that we have the fullest support of France & Russia on the subject." I asked then what was going to happen to them, as they had on several occasions stated that they would not allow the creation of an autonomous state which would only mean the maintenance of an open sore in the East, as Crete had been in the past. He replied that probably those Islands would be allowed to return to Turkey under strict guarantees for their good government. I protested most energetically against this, & referred to the uselessness of Turkish guarantees, & to the statement that no territory once wrested from the Turk could be given back. I also showed that as regards population no difference could be drawn between those Islands liberated by us & those in the occupation of the Italians & appealed to the good sense of the English government to make a clean business of the final settlement. I also asked for his advice as to how we should act to avoid such a calamity as he had mentioned. He was quite frank. He thought we could prevent it. England might arrange for the evacuation of the Islands before the Turks returned. It would then be

for us to organise a revolution in every Island; we should have to arm the population, & they would have to declare their independence immediately & to notify the Powers that they would not allow a single Turk to land. With a view to avoiding bloodshed, England could then intervene & prevent the Turks from landing & the matter would then have to be settled on a different basis. He then asked me about Salonica & the arrangements with Bulgaria? I told him that nothing was settled. We had submitted our views to Daneff but had received no reply, that the Prime Minister had gone so far as to tell him that /we/ would only give up Salonica as the result of an unsuccessful war, & that Daneff had stated that he would report to Sofia, but so far we had heard nothing from them. I also told him that Daneff had told Spender that Bulgaria would insist on having Salonica, Monastir, & the Islands of Thassos & Samothrace. Lloyd George said they did not want any fighting between the Allies & that if we did not come to terms, the Powers would neutralise Salonica, & asked me what I thought of the proposal. I replied that so far as I was concerned, I preferred to have the place in the hands of the Powers rather than that [sic] of Bulgaria; & he asked me to obtain the Prime Minister's views on the subject. He told me Churchill had gone to Paris & would submit the proposal to Delcassé.

Same day, 6 p.m.

I had a long interview with Venizelos, & reported to him the above conversation. He was pleased in regard to the Islands in our occupation, but dumbfounded as to the news concerning those in the occupation of Italy. He would not believe that Europe would hand them back to Turkey. As regards Salonica, he entirely agreed with my views, as he considered that the surrender of the town to Bulgaria would be a deathblow to the prestige of Greece in the East.

In the course of conversation we discussed the alliance. He told me that he had proposed it to Bulgaria two years ago, that they had promised a reply, but for more than twelve months gave no sign of life. When they did approach Greece, they had actually adopted his plan & made all their arrangements with Servia & Montenegro & then offered us to join them. We wished to discuss terms but they were not prepared to agree spheres of influence. It was then too late to bargain as the others were ready to mobilise & we had to "take it or leave it."

I told him that I had heard from Greece that if we lost Salonica, there would be a revolution & that it would hardly be safe for the peace delegates to return to Greece. He did not discuss the

question but gave me to understand that he was well aware of the feelings in Greece, that he was doing his utmost for his country, & that, if he failed, no one else could possibly have succeeded.

Tuesday, 14th January

Dinner at the Legation; Venizelos was pleased. Sir W. Tyrrell, Sir E. Grey's private secretary, told him that the Ambassadors Conference were practically agreed that Greece should keep the Aegean Islands.

Wednesday, 15th January

Dinner at Spenders. He had had a long interview with Sir Edward Grey yesterday, & the latter had told him that on no account would any of the Islands be allowed to return to Turkey, not even those in the occupation of Italy. In all probability, the latter would be handed over to Greece on certain terms. Grey made some very flattering remarks about Venizelos. Daneff was a very shrewd, clever, & strong-willed man, but of all the delegates, Venizelos was the real statesman. Grey actually knew all the details of his life, his fights in Crete, his difficulties with Prince George, etc. . . .

Same day, 10 p.m.

Long interview with Venizelos. Repeated above to him.

Wednesday, 22nd January

Long interview with Gennadius [sic]. He told me that the Prime Minister had received a private telegram from Ractivand at Salonica informing him that he had positive information that the Bulgarians were making arrangements to march 60,000 men into Salonica the day peace was signed & it meant that either we should have to fight with our allies or leave the place. He thought we might do something to interest the press in England in the case & I was to see several people with a view to arranging a press campaign in favour of Greece.

Thursday, 23rd January

Telephoned to Lloyd George for memorandum promised by Winston Churchill. He informed me he was so busy interviewing suffragettes that he could not see me, but asked me to ring him up on Monday; in the meantime, he would remind Churchill of his promise.

Monday, 27th January

Telephoned to Lloyd George who said he had spoken to

Churchill, that the Memorandum had been amended, & would be ready in a day or so, & he would let me know when to call for it.

Wednesday, 29th January

I introduced Valaority to Rundle Shiff and Co. who offered to discount 10 million francs Treasury Bills; the terms were agreed, subject to Valaority telegraphing to me from Athens, & subject to the consent of the Foreign Office being obtained. I asked Benvenisti (R.S. 1°) not to approach the Foreign Office before mentioning it to me as I might be able to bring some influence to bear on the subject, & he promised to inform me in time. Valaority promised to send me his private telegraphic code.

Same day, 12 noon

Long interview with the Prime Minister. He informed me that the Note to the Turkish delegates, breaking off the negotiations was signed & was going to be presented, & that he intended leaving London on Friday morning next; he wanted me to arrange an appointment with Lloyd George & Churchill for tomorrow to further discuss the proposal & lay plans for the future.

I telephoned to Lloyd George who promised to speak to Churchill & to give an appointment later. He subsequently telephoned that Churchill was leaving for Dundee & could not see us tomorrow, & we fixed up an appointment for 6:45 at the House of Commons. I called for the Prime Minister at the Foreign Office where he had a interview with Sir Edward Grey & we walked to the House of Commons.

6:45 p.m. House of Commons

Chancellor of the Exchequer's private room. — We were received by Lloyd George, & a few minutes after Winston Churchill & Prince Louis of Battenberg came in. After a few words of greeting, Churchill told Venizelos that he had completed the Memorandum & he handed one print to Venizelos & another print to me. He had cut off the bottom of the last page which he said had the imprint of the Admiralty & no one must know whence the document comes; he told us that the same should be kept absolutely secret as it made suggestions for dealing with possible enemies & should not get into anybody's hands. He warned the Prime Minister that he felt sure the naval officers would not like the scheme because it favoured small craft, particularly destroyers & submarines & he knew from experience that naval officers preferred big ships, of which they were proud, but for Greece, big ships were not needed.

Her position was an exceptional one & a fleet of small boats would be much more useful to her. Moreover, for the price of one dreadnought or super-dreadnought — about £2,000,000 — she could buy 8, 10, or even 12 very fast destroyers & submarines, & in warfare, the loss of one of these would not be of great importance whereas the loss of her only dreadnought or one of her only two dreadnoughts, sunk by a single torpedo, might be of vital importance. If the understanding we had discussed was to take place, England would prefer us to have a strong navy of small boats, but in advising us he was only thinking of the best policy for Greece to pursue in her own interests & was not serving a selfish motive.

Churchill went on to say that the more he thought over the proposal, the more he was convinced that it was not possible to carry out the Argostoli-Cyprus arrangement alone, & that we were bound to come to the larger question of a general understanding. This could be done by a treaty which could be revealed to the world but with secret clauses that no one need know: "In fact, on the same lines as our entente with France." — I then took the opportunity of reminding him that at our last interview he said he would speak to Delcassé about the proposal; since then he had been to France & we should like to know whether he had mentioned it & with what result? He replied that he had spoken on the question with three of the French Ministers, not in detail, but on the broad lines of a general entente & cooperation, in case of war, between the three fleets, & they had all expressed their concurrence in & satisfaction with the arrangement.

He then questioned Venizelos as the dreadnought building in Germany, & wished to know whether he had been able to countermand it? The Prime Minister replied that he had no definite news; he felt, however, convinced that it was impossible to countermand it & his only hope was that the Ministry, in reply to his urgent telegram, had altered the size to that of the first proposal instead of the super-dreadnought which they had subsequently substituted for it.

I then asked whether France was going to help us to get & keep all the Aegean Islands; Churchill said they were as warm as England on the subject, but Lloyd George asked him whether he had seen the last telegrams from the Berlin Ambassador. It appears that Germany had asked England point-blank whether England "had any special interest in wishing Greece to have the Aegean Islands" and had put the same question to France. The Foreign Office had not yet given a reply & he had not enquired what reason would be given. Venizelos then said that he was leaving England & he would go

straight to Salonica to see the King & he wished for authority to inform His Majesty of the conversations that had taken place. Churchill unhesitatingly refused. "No, no, certainly not; it would endanger the whole of our negotiations, the matter would be certain to leak out, & there will be an end of it." Venizelos pointed out that the King was most discreet, that if he requested him not to mention the matter to anybody, he felt absolutely certain that he would not even speak of it to the Crown Prince. Thereupon Prince Louis chimed in & expressed a similar opinion of the King. Churchill turned to Lloyd George who was signing some documents & said: "Come here, David; this is your business and you must decide." I repeated the whole conversation to him, but he was as emphatic as Churchill at first. After, however, Venizelos insisted on the absolute reliability to be placed on His Majesty, Lloyd George said: "Well, we could not say the same in the same quarter here," to which Churchill & Prince Louis assented — Churchill then went on to give his views as to how the matter should be told to the King: that various non-committal conversations had taken place, that a basis of a possible entente in the future had been found, & that, after peace had been signed, the negotiations might be renewed & he hoped, carried to a successful & for both parties, a gratifying issue, that Asquith & Grey were favourable.

Both Lloyd George & Churchill insisted that none of the Ministers in Greece should be told a single word about the negotiations, & Venizelos reiterated that he would only speak to the King about it, no other living soul.

Before leaving, I mentioned to Lloyd George about the proposed discount of Treasury Bills & asked for his assistance; he told me that he would speak to Sir Edward Grey about it & that when the brokers called, he would not forbid the loan; he might, however, gently to advise them not to do it. "But I will tell him to wink, although Grey is so solemn & hardly knows how to wink." I arranged to telephone him as soon as I knew what day the brokers would call.

Same day

Venizelos dined with us at home. Grey had asked him to call on Friday afternoon & he had, therefore, postponed his departure till Saturday.

Friday, 31st January

Interview with the Prime Minister; he thanked me in terms much too flattering to set down here, for all I had done for Greece. He

felt happy at the thought that our negotiations would result in an entente with England, & probably with France, & that Greece's future would be very different to the past, when she had to stand absolutely alone, supported by no one, with not a single friend to care what happened to her. She would now build up a strong navy, develop [sic] her railways & commerce & with the friendship of England & France, would become a power in the East which no one could ignore.

Talking of Lloyd George, he compared him with the old prophets of the Ancient Testament, & expressed his great admiration for his splendid capacities & clear insight of people & events. He was very pleased because Sir Edward Grey had told him that England had always had very friendly feelings for Greece, & that when peace was signed, these could be strengthened & made public.

Saturday, 1st February

Mr. Venizelos left London for Paris, Vienna, Belgrade, & Salonica.

Sunday, 2nd February

I dined at 11 Downing Street. Present: Lloyd George, Masterman, Spender, & self. The whole evening we discussed English politics & Lloyd George told us of his life as a boy in Wales.

He, however, told me that the Turks intended doing all they could to get back the Aegean Islands & would be supported by the Triple Alliance. He had already advised me on the subject & repeated his advice: "Refuse to give them up, stick there, sit tight; the Turks can never get you out & Europe will not try her hand at that game." He also spoke of Venizelos & said how pleased he had been to meet him. "He is a big man, a very big man." He thought Greece was in safe hands so long as he was at the helm.

(to be continued)