## THE CASE FOR THE CRETANS.

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## TRANSLATION

OF THE

## MEMORANDUM

ADDRESSED BY

### THE CRETAN GOVERNMENT

TO THE

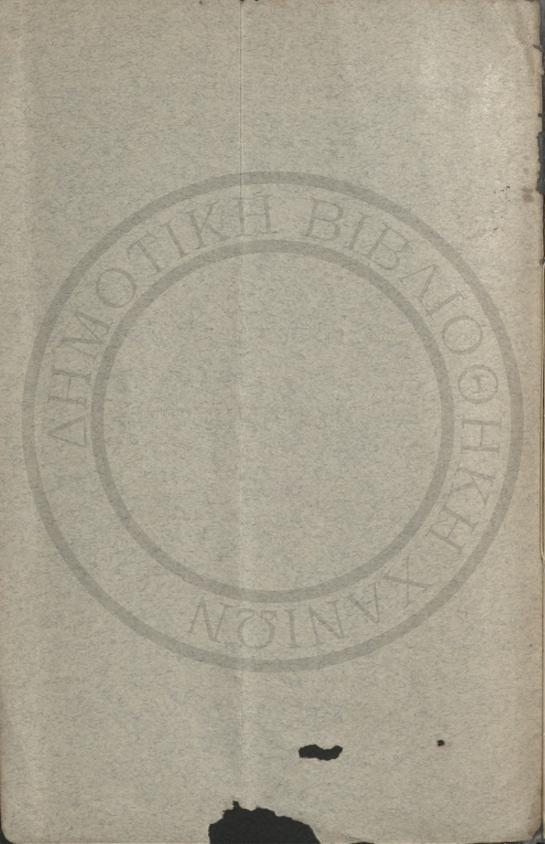
## CONSULS OF THE PROTECTING POWERS.

With a Letter from Monsieur E. Venizelos, and an Introduction by The Rt. Hon. Sir Charles W. Dilke, Bt., M.P.,

and Notes.

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T. FISHER UNWIN LONDON; 1 ADELPHI TERRACE LEIPSIC: INSELSTRASSE 20



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## MEMORANDUM

ADDRESSED BY

#### THE CRETAN GOVERNMENT

TO THE

#### CONSULS OF THE PROTECTING POWERS,

ON MAY 29TH, 1910.

With a Letter from Monsieur E. Venizelos, and an Introduction by The Rt. Hon. Sir Charles W. Dilke, Bt., M.P., and Notes.

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#### T. FISHER UNWIN

LONDON: 1 ADELPHI TERRACE LEIPSIC: INSELSTRASSE 20

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NOIN

#### Copy of Letter from Monsieur E. Venizelos to Sir Charles W. Dilke.

DEAR SIR,

The interest with which you once more defended the Cretan cause lately in the House of Commons has aroused a deep sense of gratitude towards you from the Cretan people.

The term "sovereign rights," of which the Protecting Powers made use in their Note to the Sublime Porte-after, for a period of thirteen years, only suzerain rights (symbolised by the presence of a Turkish flag on the islet in Suda Bay) had been recognised to the Sultan-has unfortunately encouraged Turkey in her claims, and has worsened the equivocal situation created by the policy pursued by the Powers in the Cretan question. What is most unfortunate for Crete is that Turkey, with the means at her disposal, may be able to create, little by little, an opinion in Europe favourable to her claims. But if public opinion in England should be sufficiently enlightened as to how the Cretan question stands, we are sure that that would be a serious factor towards the upholding of our rights. Having in view the magnanimity with which you have always spontaneously defended the interests of our people, I beg of you, on the part of the Committee of the Executive Power in Crete, to do a new and most valuable service to Cretans by publishing a pamphlet in order to show in England how the Cretan question stands, from a Cretan and a Hellenic point of view, after the successive acts of the Great Powers-a summary of which is to be found in the Memorandum of the Executive Committee, dated 16/29 May, 1910.

Hoping that this request will be considered by you, I beg to express to you the everlasting gratitude of the Cretan people and of myself, and remain, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

E. K. VENIZELOS.

Canea. 13/26 July, 1910.

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## INTRODUCTION.

AM asked to help in circulating a new translation of the Memorandum presented to the protecting Powers by the Executive which, since the departure of the second Greek High Commissioner, has been governing Crete under obvious difficulties, but with conspicuous success. The Cretans do well to call for publication and study of their case.

The islanders believe that all men know the history of their constant resistance to Turkish rule since the Osmanli conquest. Independence and liberty had intermittently survived by two centuries the taking of Constantinople, and by a far longer period Turkish domination in the neighbouring seas. Exhausted by the great insurrection at the end of 150 years of Turkish government, and abandoned by the Powers when these created the Greek kingdom, Crete was replaced capriciously, now under the Pashas of Egypt, and now under their overlord of Stamboul. But from 1830, for a generation and a half, an almost continual struggle in arms wrung from Turkey the constitution recorded in the Halepa Pact—an imperfect substitute for the complete independence once suggested by France during the Congress at Berlin. Next, Greece intervened and suffered in the Cretan cause, and then the Powers formed a "Concert," from which the German Emperor soon withdrew his "flute." After the surrender of the Turkish staff, it was a British admiral who forced evacuation. Neither Italy, France, nor Great Britain, under any circumstances, will let the Turks return. The Cretan Memorandum and covering despatch recall the recourse of the Powers to the King of Greece, the government of the island by Prince George, and then by an ex-Prime Minister of the Hellenic kingdom. It may be permitted to an Englishman to discuss with his fellow-countrymen the bearing on Cretan guaranteed autonomy, and virtual merger in the Greek nation, of the change in Turkish polity by the revival of Midhat's constitution.

Collectively, "the Powers," with all their fears of one another, and under the pressure of pro-Turk finance, can find nothing more awkward for them than a Greek island with a spark of spirit. The delicacy of the situation was increased by the instability of a military purification of the Ottoman State through Parliamentary forms.

France was represented at Constantinople by a considerable politician, whose help to French commercial interests in Turkey made French diplomacy more timorous than our own. But our peculiar difficulties were also great, suspected as we were in Central Europe of having prepared that Young Turk movement which our statesmen welcomed. The apparent danger of the moment seemed to become doubled when we allowed ourselves to be tempted, by the visit of the Russian Minister, into backing Servian claims for territorial extension in the direction of Montenegro.

The general satisfaction in this country at the change in the forms of Ottoman rule was followed by a reception of the representatives of Young Turkey in our midst. The deputation of pleasant politicians who came here to see their friends were, many of them, what we term intelligent "outsiders." They represented admirably the strange mixture of races and creeds that complicates the affairs of Turkey, not only in Europe, but in the Asiatic and African parts of the Ottoman dominions. They could not but admit themselves to be a little weak among the orthodox Mohammedans of the Turkish world. Arab dissent, Judaism avowed or veiled, and in some cases the representation of mixed communities of Christians, placed them in the position occupied by Home Rulers of "the Celtic fringe" towards London and South England. The great General of the Young Turks, whose word was law for the Turkish Parliament in politicomilitary matters, is himself an Arab. When the deputation returned to Constantinople, one of the most intelligent of its members told the Pester Lloyd that "the attitude of England was deplorable," though as a Liberal representative of Baghdad he noted such rapid improvement on our part that "confidence in England has revived"; but, while France had already favoured Turkey, Germany and Austria would "not let slip" the Cretan "opportunity of placing Turkey under a deep obligation." What was asked was "complete" Turkish suzerainty-whatever that may mean-and recognition of "the strategic interest of Turkey in Suda Bay."

The claim of suzerainty is accepted as meaning nothing, by all parties concerned in the existing situation. A member of the House of Commons, who so earnestly desired to bring the matter forward for debate that he did so without the support of the leading statesmen of either bench, was not consistent in his phrase. At one time he asked for recognition of "the absolute supremacy of Turkey." When this phrase was questioned, it was replaced by "suzerainty," with the explanation—"what was generally understood by the word." As soon as it was pointed out that the words "suzerainty" and "sovereignty" had both been used by all Powers, in all countries and in all periods, in varying senses, it was replaced by "possession" or by the desire to

make all admit that "the island belongs to Turkey," and that "the Turkish flag should fly there."

What the Turks understand by either of our terms is as much as pressure or threat can make it carry. That recognition of Turkish lordship by the Knights of the Religion, the refusal of which by Villiers de l'Isle Adam led to the great siege of Rhodes, would admittedly have meant little during the lifetime of the Grand Prior's bosom friend, though public enemy, Suliman the Magnificent. On the accession of some successor, it would have implied destruction of Christian rule, unless so powerful a Turkish interest as exists in the case of the Greek Patriarch and the Phanar sufficed to avert this fate. The real question in the present day is whether peace can be promoted, or Turkey helped towards improved government, if encouragement is offered to the crude desire to take back in the case of Crete what had long been lost and won, or to bar in advance by formal signatures the ultimate development foreseen by all the protecting Powers.

It is difficult for the Powers to escape criticism when they demand for Turkey "sovereignty" in states whose autonomy, won by centuries of war, has been recognised in diplomatic instruments. France has incorporated Algeria in face of Turkish protest continued to the present day. France occupies Tunis as a Protectorate. European intervention had previously helped Tunis to retain an independence of Turkey, which had been intermittent in the past. The Hinterland of Tripoli has been both promised to Italy and traversed by French columns, who, on two occasions, have come into conflict with Turkish troops in the course of the rolling back of an undecided frontier. Further South, across the desert, France joins hands with an "Anglo-Egyptian Sudan," from which her soldiers had been turned

back in the name of Turkish "suzerainty" and Turkish "sovereign rights." France, against England, had asserted the independence of Mehemet Ali, till Russia, holding Constantinople by her troops, joined England to maintain the Ottoman fabric. France and England together, at a later period, invited Turkey to show her generals—in good company—on Egyptian soil; but, when there was some hesitation in the acceptance of the offer, the Sultan was informed that it was too late, and that his ships would be sunk if they appeared at Alexandria to support his, admitted, "sovereignty." Cyprus is Turkish soil, though paid for by our taxpayers and administered by our Colonial Office.

So much for the relations of the Powers with the North coast of Africa in face of Crete, and with Tunis and Cyprus on Western and Eastern flank.

As for Italy, Great Britain at one time objected to her presence on the Red Sea coast, in the name of Turkish sovereignty over territories often contested by Turkish troops in conflict with those of the Egyptian vassal. When friendship with the Quirinal had replaced Egyptian arrangements with France, Italy was invited to occupy—without regard to Turkish sovereignty—the same ports and towns to which that very sovereignty had formed a paper bar.

The collective action of the Powers has been similar to that pursued by them in isolation or in pairs. The Powers all agreed that the essential stipulation of the Treaty of Berlin, in the matter of the actual existence of effective Turkish sovereignty in Eastern Roumelia, could not be violated by a Bulgarian stroke of policy. But in Eastern Roumelia the sovereignty, or even suzerainty, of Turkey has become as meaningless as it long has been in Cairo or Khartum.

The plain fact is that this country will not be bribed by favours into destroying that real freedom of Crete from Turkish interference, of which the strongest guarantee lies in the courage of the Cretans. The worst friends of the Young Turks are those who hold out vague hopes that it may be otherwise. The Austrian press, in supporting French financial interests, has declared that, as against the protecting Powers, the Young Turks occupy a perfectly strong position. It is not so; for the continued existence of the Ottoman Empire still depends on sea communication, and, in spite of railways in Arabia, will continue to depend upon the goodwill of the naval Powers. So thoroughly recognised, even at Constantinople, is this plain fact, that, when Italy put down her foot, demands, backed by the presence of a few ships near Mitylene, were in each case conceded in a day.

The best informed of those who write for our instruction on the changing affairs of Eastern Europehas joined in ridicule of the action of the protecting Powers. He concluded his criticism with proposals, not more free from difficulty than those which had already failed to form a ground for common action between two of them—France and the United Kingdom. The Powers were charged with "tabooing the kernel of the matter," but it was admitted by their critic that the "position is beset with difficulties."\*

<sup>\*</sup> Dr. J. E. Dillon, writing in the Contemporary Review on the international situation, expressed the opinion that "It is not an exaggeration to say that the protecting Powers committed a huge mistake in their conduct towards Crete. This is the second grave blunder to which our Foreign Office, which on the whole has been cautious and sound, must plead guilty: our hostile attitude towards Austria, and the well meant but harmful advice we gave to Greece and Crete. It is impossible for an outsider to say what were the grounds on which our Foreign Office based its policy. . . . 'Autonomous' Crete is their handiwork. Most of the incongruities that characterise it are but steps towards their ultimate goal—union with Greece, which was to have been proclaimed in 1909. But they missed

There is nothing possible at the moment except temporisation; but, in the pause, we desire to promote consideration of the Cretan case. All join in supporting that status quo which, oddly enough, is admitted by the diplomatists, and by Sir Edward Grey, to mean two different things.\* The actual state of Cretan affairs has long come close to union with the Greek kingdom, but the Powers have never recognised that virtual union as forming part of the legitimate or diplomatic

their opportunity. A statesman endowed with a constructive mind would have connived at the annexation in October, 1909, and been glad to think that it was effected spontaneously. The statesmen of the protecting Powers vetoed it because it would have weakened their case against Austria: they wanted respect for legality to serve as the distinguishing mark of the sheep when these and the goats should come up for judgment before a European tribunal—the Austrians and Bulgarians on the left, and the Greeks, Cretans and Montenegrins on the right. So they promised to reward the sheep for their patience, and to reward them soon. But the Congress never assembled, the promise has not been fulfilled, nor has the opportunity returned. The four Powers, bowing to the inevitable, have accordingly stayed their hand, but they are unwilling to undo the work they have accomplished. One day the opportunity may come round again."

\* The Paris Temps wrote in a leading article of June last as follows :- "Mais dans cette harmonie il y a des nuances. Il est certain que l'Angleterre est plus crétophile que les trois autres puissances. Notre correspondant de Londres nous signalait récemment que cela ne résulte pas d'une action personelle du roi Georges de Grèce sur son neveu, et de celui-ci sur ses ministres : rien de plus juste. Mais quelle que soit l'origine de cet état d'esprit, on continue à penser à Londres que l'union de la Crète à la Grèce reste possible et désirable dans un avenir indéterminé et c'est précisément contre quoi la Turquie proteste. En un mot, entre le statu quo pur et simple de 1898, le statu quo à tendances grecques de 1908, le statu quo à tendances ottomanes qu'on réclame à Constantinople, le gouvernement britannique préfère le second, tandis que le gouvernement français accepterait de revenir au premier. Ce n'est pas là un désaccord ; c'est une différence de dispositions qui n'empêche pas de trouver une formule acceptable à tous."

status quo which they have formally recognised and intend to maintain, even against the Turkish suzerain. It is clear from the words of Sir Edward Grey, passing as they did without challenge, that all here are united in maintaining at least the absolute autonomy of Crete. Neither will the Powers withdraw from that expression of the wish to remember the aspirations of the Cretan people which stands first in their Note to the Greek Government. The King of the Hellenes, on the proposal of the Powers, will continue to choose the High Commissioner of Crete whenever it is agreed that such a functionary is needed in the island.

C. W. D.

# CRETAN COVERING NOTE ADDRESSED TO THE POWERS.

THE Cretan Executive Commission have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the communication handed to them on the 12th of February last by the Consuls-General for France, Great Britain and Russia, and by the acting Consul-General for Italy, in accordance with the instructions of their respective Governments. The Commission request the Consuls-General to submit to their Governments the following observations, and the memorandum which accompanies them:—

On the withdrawal of their troops from Crete last July the Protecting Powers relied for the maintenance of public order, and the security of the Mussulman population, on the energy and loyalty of the constituted authorities. The Commission calls upon the Consuls-General to bear witness to the sincere efforts and to the activity displayed which the circumstances obtaining in the island have rendered peculiarly difficult.

To this end the Commission has not failed, either to impress upon the Cretan people the value, or continually to remind them of the price, of that benevolent initiative which was promised by the Powers in their Declaration of October 28th, 1908, on the condition that order was maintained and the safety of the Mussulman population assured. Believing, then, that they can to-day truthfully claim to have fulfilled loyally the expectations of the Powers, the

Commission ventures now to beg the Protecting Governments, in these very interests of order and peace, not to deprive them of that moral support which is so valuable; for it is only the confidence of the Cretan people in their Protectors which has given the Executive Commission the means and the authority to conduct affairs, until now, in accordance with the recommendations of the Powers.

For reasons which are not clear to the Commission, the Protecting Powers have not yet thought the moment opportune for the opening of the discussion which they declared, nineteen months ago, to be not distant. This has only rendered the task of the Executive Commission more difficult; for the anomalous situation in which Crete has now been placed for more than a year and a half cannot be prolonged indefinitely without danger.

The Cretan people, but recently emerging from an unequal and cruel struggle, have a deep consciousness of their rights. Their cause is sacred to them. Their claims are legitimate. Nothing can divert them from their pursuit.

The history of the past years, and the facts set forth in the accompanying Memorandum, are sufficient proof that Crete cannot live without Greek institutions. So strong is the national attraction towards the Mother-Country that every Government other than the Hellenic Government itself must inevitably fail, crushed by unpopularity, by public disaffection, and by lack of authority. No other Government, however strong, can give to Crete those indispensable guarantees of permanence and stability which would secure to the country that confidence and that welfare of which she has so great need.

The statu quo, as it has existed since September 24th, 1908, constitutes another step towards the realisation of the national vows. Sheltered from all external attack by the will of the Protecting Powers, and by their declarations to the Cretans, this statu quo is a positive element in the international position of the island, and is in the eyes of the

Cretan people a tangible proof of the intentions of the Four Governments. After the existence of such a régime for nearly two years the Executive Commission cannot doubt that the Protecting Powers, inspired by those sentiments of equity and of goodwill, of which the Cretan people have proved themselves not unworthy, will do nothing to compromise a situation already established and recognised in their official notes as existing, or to abandon the path along which they have themselves pointed the way.

The Commission hopes that the Consuls-General will convey to the Protecting Powers the ardent prayer, which it addresses to them in the name of the Cretan people, that they may not delay the only solution which can satisfy the just claims of the Cretans. The Commission makes this request in the sure conviction that recognition of the Union will come in good time to crown the work for which Crete has vowed to the Powers eternal gratitude.

The Executive Commission take this opportunity of expressing to the Consuls-General the assurance of their high consideration.

(Signed)

- E. VENIZELOS.
- G. MYLONOYANNIS.
- B. SCOULAS.

Canea, May 29th, 1910.

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#### MEMORANDUM.

THE delay in granting international recognition to the régime which has existed in Crete for more than a year and a half has not sufficed to shake the faith which the Cretan people has in the coming of the final solution—a faith which rests secure under the aegis of the promises made by the Protecting Powers. But in presence of the insidious proceedings instigated by the Sublime Porte, with the object of alienating the public opinion of Europe, and of representing Crete as culpably obstinate in the rejection of concessions which Turkey professes herself ready to grant, it is desirable to make the position clear.

The Executive Commission of Crete will therefore permit itself to set forth succinctly the acts which constitute Cretan autonomy and the historical events, and other official factors, which have determined the present situation of the island.

When, thirteen years ago, as a consequence of encouragement given by the Government of Contantinople, with the object of bringing about the failure of the reforms adopted by the Powers, Mussulman fanaticism gave itself free play once more, and caused a renewal of those massacres and cruelties which excited the indignation of the whole civilised world; the Great Powers, finding their intervention in Crete imperatively necessary, declared, on March 2nd, 1897, by their representatives at the Courts concerned—those of Constantinople and Athens—that "Crete will be endowed by the Powers with an autonomous régime which will be absolutely effective under the high suzerainty of the Sultan."

On March 17th, the Admirals commanding the squadrons of the Powers in Cretan waters, "acting under instructions from their respective Governments, solemnly proclaimed and made known to the people of the island that the Great Powers were irrevocably determined to guarantee Crete complete autonomy under the suzerainty of the Sultan." "It is quite understood," added their proclamation, "that the Cretans will be completely free from all control by the Porte in all that concerns their domestic affairs."

From these official notes, and from this solemn declaration, there emerges a perfectly clear principle—that since the Powers, by their intervention, had assumed the right of establishing in Crete an autonomous régime of which they themselves should, to the exclusion of Turkey, decide the organisation (Note to the Sublime Porte of October 4th, 1898), and since everything appertaining to the régime existing in Crete from that time derives its origin from the Powers, the Ottoman Empire retained no effective rights in Crete beyond a nominal suzerainty; for these rights, exercised by the Cretans, have not been expressly reserved to Turkey.

After the withdrawal of Germany and Austria-Hungary, the four Powers continued the work, of which the essential foundations had thus been laid.

Since, in the opinion of the Powers, the presence in the island of a Turkish armed force was incompatible with the principle of complete autonomy laid down by them (Note of October 4th, as above), they insisted upon the recall of the Ottoman troops; and the Admirals, enforcing this demand, compelled the Turks to comply strictly with the following ultimatum: "By sunrise of November 15th, the Turkish Officers, soldiers and gendarmes must, without exception, have left the island. The ships must have sailed. The ex-Governor is invited to follow the troops. The Turkish flag will be hauled down, and the situation will thus be made clear."

Shortly afterwards, on November 26th, the four Powers agreed to ask the King of the Hellenes to authorise the acceptance by H.R.H. Prince George of Greece of the office of High Commissioner of Crete on the condition that: "the High Commissioner will recognise the high suzerainty of the Sultan and will take measures to safeguard the Turkish flag, which, in accordance with the promise made by the four Powers to the Sultan, will fly upon one of the fortified places of the island."\*

The consent of the Sultan was not asked for the nomination of the Greek Prince to the post of High Commissioner, and his powers were solely derived from, as the situation consequent on his appointment was only created by, the Powers.

On November 30th, the four Governments merely notified the Sublime Porte of this appointment, declaring themselves "entirely disposed to confirm the *supreme rights* of His Imperial Majesty over Crete and to guarantee the interests and the lives of the Cretan Mussulmans."

Moreover, the Admirals by a proclamation which "confirms the realisation of the promises made in the month of March, 1897," announced to the Cretan people the appointment of Prince George to the post of High Commissioner and informed them that "he had recognised the high suzerainty of H.I.M. the Sultan, and had promised to take steps to safeguard the Turkish flag, which would fly only upon one of the fortified places of the island."

In the island itself, the Ottoman flag was replaced by a Cretan flag, of a design agreed upon by the Ambassadors at Constantinople, and recalling the Greek ensign.

In this manner the autonomous régime conferred upon Crete by the Powers received full application. Its details are defined and set out in the Constitution, submitted to,

<sup>\*</sup> The spot ultimately selected was in fact a rocky and uninhabited islet in Suda Bay, where the Turkish flag still remains, the solitary concrete symbol of the vague suzerainty still preserved to the Sultan.

and approved by, the Powers and proclaimed by the High Commissioner, whose prime duty, as stated in the Note addressed to the King of the Hellenes, was to establish, in agreement with the National Assembly, a system of autonomous government.

The system, established and confirmed by this Constitution, is that of an autonomous government in the widest possible sense.

"Crete forms a State enjoying complete autonomy under the conditions laid down by the four Great Powers" (Art. I). These conditions have already been specified in the declarations of the Powers mentioned above.

There remained no single effective bond with Turkey.

The Cretan State is not in any way tributary to the Sublime Porte.

Greek is the official language. Justice is administered in the name of the Prince, who was to be the supreme head of the armed forces, was to confer all military rank, was to nominate and dismiss the public officials and the Cadis, to promulgate laws, to bestow decorations, to exercise the prerogatives of pardon and amnesty, etc.

To the Cretan State was given, by Article 30, the right of making Treaties, of striking money, etc. In pursuance of this right arrangements were made, by the consent of the French Government, for the striking of money of all denominations at the mint in Paris: Crete has signified its adherence to the Postal Union and the International Telegraphic Convention, and has been represented at all the International Conferences held since then.

The Cretan Customs, in the same way as the other departments of the administration, such as the Postal and Telegraphic services already referred to, became absolutely independent of those of Turkey; and, as of right, Turkish commerce was by decree placed upon the same footing as that of foreign States, and was subjected to import and export duties. The Ottoman Government protested against

this measure, and declared to the Powers that, "unless it was immediately repealed, the Porte would consider the taking of such steps as should appear to it opportune." The Powers, however, decided that "fiscal autonomy was a natural deduction from the political and administrative autonomy conferred on the island, and that, consequently, the imposition of customs duties upon Ottoman merchandise was legitimate." Turkey thereupon acted upon its declaration, and subjected Cretan merchandize to the differential treatment imposed upon foreign States.\*

Even the system of Capitulations was modified by agreement between the autonomous Government and the Powers.

Constituted as a new State, and no longer forming an effective part of the Ottoman Empire, Crete had to bear a share of the national debt of the country from which she had just been separated. Despite the financial exhaustion of the country the Cretan Government, so far from attempting to evade a burden arising from the new international status of the island, concluded on August 25th, 1901, an agreement with the Administration of the Ottoman National debt, by which the entire payment of the portion chargeable upon the Cretan State was guaranteed. That the application of this principle to the case of Crete, as a consequence of its separation from Turkey, had the assent of the Powers, was shown by the fact that the Ambassadors at Constantinople, called in by agreement between the two parties, arbitrated and gave a decision upon a point of law.

Such in brief are the rights of which Crete, immediately after the introduction of autonomy, already enjoyed the exclusive exercise—a fact the more significant in that the Sublime Porte had already claimed a large number of these rights in the Note of October 30th, 1898, of which the Powers had taken no notice. That is in itself a fact sufficing

<sup>\*</sup> It may be observed that this fiscal recognition of independent political existence was only given to Eastern Roumelia after the Proclamation of Bulgarian Independence in the Autumn of 1908.

to determine the extent of the "supreme rights" in Crete which the Powers had safeguarded to Turkey.

In domestic affairs the Cretan State has exercised the most complete territorial sovereignty. In relation to Turkey, this is indeed the widest and most complete autonomy.

The second Constitution, also voted by the Cretan Assembly, and approved by the Protecting Powers, only develops, and once more confirms, the rights belonging to Crete.

If, in the form of government thus established by the Powers, the Cretans saw—and justly saw—only a step towards union with Greece, the political status of the island was, in the eyes of the Powers themselves, no less a transitional stage towards this future solution which it already foreshadowed, and for which it already prepared. The attitude adopted by the Powers, and their declarations to the Cretans, are the valued tokens of this: and it is evidence not to be questioned.

Thus, for example, in their declaration of April 3rd, 1905, although considering that "in the present circumstances no modification of the political status of Crete is possible," they yet promised "not to annex the island themselves or to permit its annexation by any other Power against the will of the inhabitants."\* If, as stated at the end of this declaration, the concessions thereby granted were to be "considered as the maximum to which consent could be given at the moment," is that not in itself a significant indication of the intention of the Powers in future to take into consideration the wishes of the people?—a factor the more important, for that these wishes have been unchangeably and perennially expressed in favour of the union with Greece.

<sup>\*</sup> These last words were by no means fortuitous and insignificant. The interpretation which would necessarily be placed upon them was pointed out at the time by Russia (see French Yellow Book).

It is this same principle which inspired, and of which the application was foreseen in, the drafting of the Cretan Constitution, where (in the 119th Article) it is laid down that, "When the time comes for taking the opinion of the Cretan people upon the permanent status of their island, the Chamber, which preceded that which shall have just been dissolved, or whose powers shall have just expired, shall be reassembled for that purpose."

A year later the Powers, in their collective Note of July 23rd, 1906, declare that, desiring "to prove to the Cretan people the interest which they take in their affairs and, at the same time, their sincere desire to take into account, as far as is practicable, their legitimate aspirations." they "hold it possible to extend the autonomy of the island in a more national sense." In communicating their decision to the Cretans, the Protecting Powers "do not doubt that they will understand that every step towards the realisation of the national aspirations is subject to the establishment and maintenance of order and of a stable régime."

With this object the Protecting Powers agreed to give to the King of the Hellenes the right of proposing, for their approval, the High Commissioner of Crete, whenever the post should fall vacant; and they decided upon "the reform of the gendarmerie and the formation of a militia, in which the Cretan and Hellenic elements could be gradually developed, upon condition that the Greek officers, whose assistance in the work should be accepted, should be removed from the active list of the Greek army"; they also decided upon "the withdrawal of the International forces as soon as the Cretan gendarmerie and militia should be formed and placed under the orders of the High Commissioner."

The first of these concessions, which "in the opinion of the Protecting Powers formed an integral part of the reforms" designed "to extend the autonomy of the island in a more national sense," was, in the language of the collective Note presented to the King of Greece on August 14th, 1906, agreed to with the object of "recognising in a practical manner the interest which H.M. the King of the Hellenes must always take in the prosperity of Crete." Was not the part thus assigned to the King of Greece in the nomination of the High Commissioner a sure guarantee of the ultimate solution, to which it pointed the way?

As regards the Sultan, he was informed of the nomination after it had been made.

And when, shortly afterwards, under the supreme control of the High Commissioner chosen by the King of the Hellenes, the reforms decided upon were carried out, the Protecting Powers again indicated the spirit and the significance. They made provision in November, 1906, for officers of the Greek Army, duly removed from the active list, to replace the Royal Italian Carabineers in the command of the gendarmerie; and in the following July they allowed invitations to be sent to the Greek officers and non-commissioned officers whose services were needed for the organisation of the militia destined to take the place of the international troops, then in occupation of the island.

To these troops the Cretans were deeply grateful, for they had helped, in a large measure, to gain for them freedom from a yoke which had seemed unbreakable; but the situation caused by their presence was a barrier to the realisation of the national ideals. The Powers knew this; and, in terminating the occupation of the island, they were about to give a new proof of their goodwill towards Crete, and to take the decisive step which would surely and certainly lead to the consummation of its future destiny.

In reply to the enquiry addressed to them on April 2nd, 1908, the Protecting Powers declared, on May 11th, that they had "decided to commence during that summer the gradual recall from Crete of the International troops by successive detachments, so arranged as to complete the evacuation of the island in the space of one year from the date of the departure of the first unit."

So, left to herself, Crete would find herself already endowed with Greek institutions; her finances, her postal and telegraphic services, were organised and controlled by officials of the kingdom; Greek judges, who had, in accordance with Article 112 of the Second Constitution, actually held office in Greece, occupied the higher positions in the two Courts of Appeal at Candia and Canea; the armed forces of the country, gendarmerie and militia, were commanded and staffed by officers and non-commissioned officers of the Greek Army.

Such were the measures by which, under the auspices of the Powers, material ties came to strengthen day by day the bonds of sentiment which had never ceased to exist between autonomous Crete and the free Kingdom; such were the measures by which an ever-increasing part was given to the Kingdom in the government of the island, measures of which the Protecting Powers had signified their approval; so that in January, 1908, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs spoke of them in the Chamber as being "of such a nature as to reduce to a minimum the motives for action or intervention on the part of foreign Governments, with the exception of the Greek Government."

It is thus clear that for the effective autonomy, which had from the beginning freed Crete from all dependence upon Turkey, there had been substituted, by the action of the Powers themselves—an action as continuous and deliberate as it was well-disposed—a very real dependence of the island upon the Hellenic Kingdom.

The 24th of July brought about the re-establishment of the Constitutional régime in the Ottoman Empire. That event had no effect upon Crete; how, indeed, could it have any bearing upon affairs in an island whence Turkish dominion had for ever disappeared more than ten years previously? So, giving effect to their promise of evacuation, the Powers, on July 27th, recalled the first detachment of troops.

Crete was confidently and calmly awaiting the completion, within the specified time, of the withdrawal of the garrison of occupation, when the double event of the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the proclamation of the independence of Bulgaria, which, at the same time, annexed Eastern Roumelia, broke the balance of power in the Balkans, removed the obstacles which had so far stood in the way of the union with Greece, and entirely modified the circumstances which the Powers had in the past found themselves bound to consider.\*

At a moment when the Bulgarian Principality, by so unexpected a step, upset a condition of affairs whose maintenance had been safeguarded by Europe, what could the Cretans do? Were they not bound to be faithful to the one resolve imposed upon them by their national traditions, by their sense of duty towards their fatherland, by their history—a history of cruel sacrifices made in the cause of liberty?

They had always conformed to the counsels of the Protecting Powers; they had always scrupulously respected their decisions. Had they not been encouraged, and led by the Powers themselves, to tread the path pointed out by those national aspirations which had been proclaimed legitimate? Certainly the Powers could not disapprove.

By repudiating the Ottoman suzerainty and by proclaiming, on September 24th, 1908, their independence and their union with Greece, Crete only legalised a situation already existing in fact.

From that date onwards, Crete has been governed in the name of the King of the Hellenes; the Constitution of the Kingdom has been put into force; the Greek flag has flown on every public building from one end of the island to the other; the public authorities, the militia, the gendarmerie, the

<sup>\*</sup> Not least among the objections previously urged against the completion of the union had been the fear that it would lead Bulgaria to take a similar step with regard to Eastern Roumelia.

Cretan officials, have taken the oath of allegiance to King George which is required by the Constitution; justice in Crete has been administered in the name of King George, as it is administered in Bulgaria in the name of King Ferdinand; the postage and other stamps have borne the national surcharge.

The Protecting Powers did not repudiate the Cretan proclamation. On the contrary, they accepted the situation which arose out of it. If, since they had not yet recognised officially the alterations which Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria had brought about in the status quo in the Balkans, they held themselves unable to adopt any different attitude in Crete, yet they gave nevertheless speedy and striking evidence of their intentions, when, faithful to their policy of the past eleven years, they promised themselves to take the initiative in obtaining international sanction for the union with Greece. This was the promise the Cretans received from the Powers in the Note of October 28th, 1908, declaring that "they were not far from considering in a spirit of goodwill the discussion of the question of union." For this they insisted upon one condition only: the maintenance of order and the protection of the Mussulman population.

Relying on the good faith of this declaration, the Cretans directed all their efforts towards facilitating the task of the Powers by conforming with their recommendations, and they hastened, on October 31st, to express their gratitude in terms which the Executive Committee find pleasure in re-

producing.

"The Cretan people, to-day more than ever attached to their traditions and to their national aspirations, so often recognised as legitimate, and relying on the justice of their claim, feel the deepest gratitude at the knowledge that the Powers have taken charge of their cause. Convinced that, in their goodwill, the Powers will complete and crown the work of liberation which they have undertaken, they place themselves in their hands with entire confidence, and in the certainty that their union with Greece, purchased by countless sacrifices, will be finally confirmed."

Thus the unalterable ideal of so many generations is to be realised: the four Great Powers—England, France, Italy and Russia — Protectors of Crete, have declared that they will at no distant date interpret it with goodwill and with authority.

The Cretan people calmly await the promised action in their favour; they await it with the greater confidence since the Powers have recognised the Bulgarian proclamation, of which the Cretan proclamation was only the natural consequence, and to which it was the direct reply.

By this situation, and by the attitude of the Cretans, loyal and regardful of the wishes of the Powers, Turkey is seeking to profit. To this end she is employing every means in her power: she asks that the liberties which thirteen years of goodwill and of quiet work have won for Crete, that the bonds which the Powers have created between the Island and the Kingdom, shall be destroyed and obliterated.

Turkey declares herself ready to grant to Crete "the widest measure of autonomy," but she is determined at all costs to maintain "her sovereign rights"!

The absurdity of these assertions it is scarce worth while to point out.

Since 1898, the rights which Turkey has held in Crete have been but nominal and entirely illusory. Save for that solitary emblem, lost upon the desert islet in Suda Bay, by which those "rights" are symbolised, there is no single right in Crete which has not been irrevocably lost to the Ottoman Empire.

As to the effective autonomy, which Crete has enjoyed in fullest measure for ten years, she received it at the hands, not of Turkey, but of the Powers, who, to extend it further, have introduced into it national elements which only the Hellenic Kingdom could supply.

The rights and concessions granted to Crete by the Powers formed already, in their entirety, the body of public law by which the situation of the island was determined before the proclamation of union. That is a thing well known to the Sublime Porte. Nor is the Ottoman Government ignorant of the fact that, in withdrawing their troops in 1909, and in hauling down with their own hands the only Cretan flag still flying on the island-last vestige of the "Cretan State"the Powers entrusted the maintenance of order, and the security of the Mussulmans, to those "constituted authorities" who were administering the island in the King's name, and who held office by virtue of the régime established since October 7th, 1908. That régime, until the Powers come to a definite decision, is under their protection. That decision can only have reference to the solution which, in their declaration of October 28th, the Protecting Powers reserved to themselves the right of discussing in a spirit of goodwill towards Crete-the Union of the Island to Greece.

#### HISTORICAL RETROSPECT.

By N. E.

I T seems desirable to supplement the Memorandum by a short sketch of the history of the problem under discussion. The Cretans have, it is true, preferred to base their claims, not upon an abstract appeal to the principles of liberty, or to the rights of nationality, but upon the historical evolution of their island during recent years. But in tracing that evolution they have dwelt upon the chief constitutional points which have arisen out of successive historic events. Those points can only properly be appreciated when brought into correct relation to their background.

Of the earlier years of the Turkish rule in Crete, of the final conquest in 1669—two centuries after the fall of Constantinople; of the first rising consequent upon the expedition of Admiral Orloff, the emissary of Catherine the Great of Russia to the Levant; of all that preceded the Great Insurrection of 1821, it is unnecessary to speak here. In the War of Independence Crete played a courageous and an important part; but, in the settlement of 1830, her claims were ignored, and she passed for a while under the rule of Mehemet Ali, the terrible Viceroy of Egypt. Rarely have the European Powers committed a greater error of policy. Greece would never be at peace without the "Great Island." Crete, becoming once more, in 1841, a portion of the Sultan's dominions, has since been a source of perennial trouble to Turkey and anxiety to Europe.

The disappointment of national ambitions, the horrors of Turkish misrule, brought about insurrection after insurrection. Each fierce rising, only with difficulty suppressed, led to cruel reprisal: reprisals, goading the people to fury, drove them once more to rebellion. The horrors of the period, the sufferings and the sacrifices of the Cretans are indescribable. At last the impossibility of crushing such a people was borne in upon the Porte. The insurrection of 1876, the Russo-Turkish war, the Conference of Berlin, forced the Sultan to concede to his Cretan subjects a certain measure of autonomy. The Convention of Halépa marks the first stage in the liberation of the island.

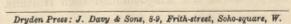
The second period-from 1878 to 1896-is marked by ceaseless efforts on the part of the Constantinople Government to bring about the collapse of the system of administration won for the island by the struggles of her people. Religious dissensions were fomented; rebellion was provoked; no means were neglected which could help to render unworkable the constitution of Halépa. By 1896 these efforts had proved but too successful, and the intervention of the Powers became necessary. Reforms were introduced. but still the action of the Moslems, inspired from Constantinople, rendered them valueless. The condition of the island became worse and worse, and at last Greece, driven to despair by the sufferings of her countrymen, herself came to their aid. The sequel is well-known-the Greco-Turkish war, the intervention of Europe, the treacherous attack of Mussulmans upon the English troops, the withdrawal of Ottoman rule from Crete, the consequent compulsory evacuation of the island by the Turks. These are the circumstances which led to the granting of autonomy, and in which the notes of 1897 and 1898, quoted in the Memorandum, were drafted.

Freed from the Turkish yoke, ruled by a Prince of the Hellenic dynasty, the Cretans yearned still for complete union with the Motherland. Patient for a while, they became at last restless. Prince George's internal administration was criticized, and his yearly appeals to Europe to unite the island to the Kingdom had been fruitless. At

last disquiet flamed into rebellion; the Prince, unable to secure for his subjects their one desire, resigned his post. The Powers recognised to the full the circumstances which had brought about that resignation, and, while taking measures to restore order, they proceeded at the same time to recognise the justice of the Cretan claims by the concessions enumerated below.

From 1906 to 1908 the Hellenisation of Crete proceeded apace under the able rule of Monsieur Zaïmis, the ex-Premier of Greece, who was appointed to succeed Prince George. Then came the *coups-d'état* which followed upon the Turkish revolution of July. The rest is fresh in everyone's memory.

In conclusion one may emphasise the main point which emerges clearly from the Memorandum: the duality of the Cretan question. Prior to 1897 there were two problems -that of oppression and that of nationality. Since that date there has been but one. Turkish tyranny and misrule vanished for ever with the Ottoman garrison. To Crete it has since then been irrelevant whether Old or Young Turk ruled in Constantinople, whether the Ottoman Empire were despotism or constitutional monarchy. There has remained but the problem of nationality, and every change in the status of the island, every constitutional reform, has had for object the satisfaction of national aspirations. That problem, those aspirations are unchanged to this day; they are unchangeable. The problem is insoluble save in the one manner long contemplated by the Powers. The Cretans have waited patiently for their reward; they ask that the weary period of probation be speedily ended, that the Powers fulfil at last the explicit and implicit promises of years. Is that request unreasonable? A generous and high-spirited race cannot be blamed if at times they are restless and impatient in their eagerness for the speedy consummation of that policy, which is but justice itself and which they know to be necessary for the fulfilment of their national destiny.





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